

From Coconut Husk to Enterprise: How Coir is transforming Rural lives

Coir Emerges as a Catalyst for Rural Entrepreneurship, Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Livelihoods

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What begins as coconut husk is becoming a source of enterprise and livelihood across India's coconut-growing regions. Coir, a natural, durable and eco-friendly fibre, has been part of India's rural economy for generations. Today, entrepreneurs are increasingly converting it into value-added products ranging from mats and ropes to handicrafts, bio-fertilisers and innovative packaging solutions. Behind this transformation are thousands of rural entrepreneurs and artisans who are turning a traditional activity into modern livelihoods. With support from the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), particularly through the Coir Board and the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), coir is becoming a pathway to self-employment, women's empowerment and local economic growth.

Turning Coir Waste into a Thriving Enterprise:

1. One Enterprise, 120 Women, Countless Opportunities

In Kadiyam, East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, **Ms. Allam Gowthamy** transformed coconut fibre and coir waste into a successful enterprise. She received specialised training at the Coir Board Training Centre, Dhawaleswaram and established **Adigo Coir Products** in 2024-25 with a project cost of **₹10 lakh**, supported by a ₹6.50 lakh bank loan and PMEGP assistance. The unit now produces eco-friendly doormats, ropes, decorative dolls and handicrafts.



The enterprise has achieved an **annual turnover of around ₹35 lakh and a profit of approximately ₹10 lakh**, while generating direct employment for six women. But her impact extends beyond her own enterprise. She has trained nearly 120 women in coir mat weaving, rope making and handicraft

production, helping them develop livelihood opportunities. Her success has also inspired around 5 additional coir units in nearby areas with Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme.

2. Shri Surendran's Green Coir Success Story

Turning coir pith into an opportunity for sustainable agriculture, **Shri P. Surendran** established **Sampoorna Plus Agro Fertilizer Enterprises (SAFE)** in Kozhikode, Kerala, in November 2024. With training and technical support from the Coir Board, Kannur and Central Coir Research Institute (CCRI), Kalavoor, he began producing eco-friendly coir pith bio-fertilizer that improves soil fertility and moisture retention.



In just one year his enterprise has built a customer base of 500+, sold over 20 tonnes of bio-fertilizer and generated a turnover of ₹13 lakh, with a profit of ₹4 lakh in FY 2024–25. The unit also employs five workers, including two women, creating local livelihood opportunities. From coir waste to a sustainable business, his journey shows how innovation and technical support can create new business opportunities from materials that might otherwise have limited economic value.

Why Coir Matters to Rural India

Coir is one of India's oldest natural fibres. Organised coir production in India began in 1859 with the establishment of the first coir factory in Alappuzha, Kerala. Since then, the sector has grown across major coconut-producing regions. India is the world's largest producer of coir and accounts for more than 80 per cent of global coir fibre production. The industry is also closely linked with women's livelihoods. Women account for nearly 80 per cent of those engaged in fibre extraction and spinning. This makes coir an important rural livelihood sector—connecting coconut farmers, workers, women artisans, cooperatives, entrepreneurs, manufacturers and exporters.

From Fibre to Finished Product

The potential of coir extends well beyond the production of raw fibre. Through processing, design and innovation, coir can be transformed into a wide range of higher-value products, including:

- Mats and doormats
- Ropes and yarn
- Brushes and other household products
- Decorative items and handicrafts
- Garden and horticulture products
- Innovative and eco-friendly packaging solutions

Supporting the Coir Value Chain

The **Coir Board**, a statutory body under the Ministry of MSME, works to strengthen the sector through skill development, technology, research, market promotion, exports and welfare initiatives.

The Coir Vikas Yojana (CVY) supports areas such as technology and research, skill development, women's training, domestic and international market promotion, industry development and worker welfare. The objective is to enable people associated with the coir sector to acquire new skills, adopt better technology, produce quality products and access larger markets. At the same time, exhibitions, fairs, showrooms and export promotion activities are helping coir producers showcase their products and connect with new customers and markets.

Innovation: Giving Coir a New Identity

The Central Coir Research Institute has developed **eco-friendly coir rail wheel axle packaging** cups as an alternative to HDPE plastic cups. Such innovations show how a traditional natural fibre can find applications in modern industries while supporting environmentally responsible production.

A Fibre with a Bigger Purpose

The stories of Shri Allam Gowthamy and Shri G. Sabu illustrate the changing face of India's coir sector. With skills, finance, technology, research and market support, India's traditional coir sector is steadily moving towards higher-value products and modern enterprises—turning locally available resources into opportunities for entrepreneurship and prosperity.

For more information, visit at: <https://coirboard.gov.in/>

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