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Impact of palm climbing training programmes on trainees

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Abstract

Coconut is a crop of small and marginal farmers. Even though coconut industry has got potential to grow wide, it is also facing some problems. One among them is plucking of coconuts because of the height of coconut tree. The farmers are using traditional (physical) method till today which has got high risk. So, to help farmers Directorate of Extension, UHS Bagalkot conducted three Palm climbing and plant protection capacity building programmes for rural youth so that youth can become self employed. The programmes were funded by Coconut Development Board, Kochi, Kerala. So the study was conducted in Bagalkot district to critically analyse the extent of utilization of Palm Climbing Machine and to assess the economic benefits gained by the trainees. A purposive sampling method was used in selecting respondents, thus the rural youth who had undergone training were selected. Further, out of 60 beneficiaries, 45 rural youth were selected as sample for the study. Data were collected personally using structured schedule. The results revealed that those who were not climbing coconut tree before the training, are also climbing coconut tree using coconut climbing machine after the training programmer. Around 82 per cent of the respondents expressed training was Very much useful. Respondents could gain Rs.6315.56 as additional income per anum on an average. There was saving of 13.96 minutes time spent on climbing coconut tree on an average. So use of coconut climbing machine not only increased income but also reduced waste of time.

Keywords: Capacity building, impact, palm climbing machine, self employment

Introduction

Horticulture has become key driver for economic development in many of the states in the country and it contributes 30.4 per cent to the agriculture GDP. Among the plantation crops, Karnataka is the second larger producer of coconut contributing 26 per cent of the national output. Coconut assumes significance in the light of its contribution to employment (Anonymous, 2017).

Coconut tree is praised as Kamadhenu and worshiped by Indians, because each and every part of Coconut is very useful. It is used for edible purposes such as fresh nut, copra and cooking oil. It is also used industry to prepare products such as hair oil, cosmetics, body lotions, soaps, shampoos, making coir materials etc.

Tender coconut has possessed health values like vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants, along with properties of thirst satisfying and has provided employment to large number of poor people. Coconut is also a crop of small and marginal farmers. Thus it forms income generation of many small and marginal farmers either as main income or additional (subsidiary) income. The waste is also used in agriculture for making manure on one hand and firewood on other hand by households.

Even though coconut industry has got potential to grow wide, it is also facing some problems. One among them is plucking of coconuts because of the height of coconut tree. The farmers are using traditional (physical) method till today. This has got high risk of falling down which may lead to handicap or even death sometimes, injuries, trouble from ants, birds who make nest in the tree. So, to help farmers coconut climbing machines (coconut cycle) have been developed. Coconut Board conducts Palm climbing and plant protection training programmes so that youth can become self employed.

Capacity Building can be defined as "activities which strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviour of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes such that the organization can efficiently meet its mission and goals in a sustainable way. Training is one of the essential components of capacity building. Directorate of Extension, UHS Bagalkot conducted three Palm climbing and plant protection capacity building programmes for rural youth. The programmes were funded by Coconut Development Board, Kochi, Kerala.

The uniqueness of the training programme is, the training programme included overall development of the trainees, i.e. the rural youth. It included theory classes and practical, where

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more emphasis was given for practical class. Two master trainers had come to teach skills of using and climbing coconut climbing machines (cycles). One machine was also given free of cost to each respondent.

But a training programme is successful only when the trainees or beneficiaries really use the skills learnt in the training programmes in their day today life; otherwise it is merely waste of resources. The main purpose of conducting the training programme was to make rural youth self employed; to earn their livelihood.

So keeping this in mind the study was conducted with the following objectives

- To critically analyse the extent of utilization of Palm Climbing Machine by the trainees.
- To assess the economic benefits gained by the trainees.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Bagalkot district of Karnataka during 2016-17. Three training programmes were conducted during 2013-14 comprising of 20 rural youth in each batch and altogether 60 youth were benefited. The study was conducted (after three years of training) during 2016-17. A purposive sampling method was used in selecting respondents, thus the rural youth undergone training were selected purposively. Further, out of 60 beneficiaries, 45 rural youth were selected randomly; which comprised the sample for the study. Structured interview schedule was developed and data were collected personally.

Likert scale was used to know the extent of usefulness of the training programme. Simple statistical tools like frequency, percentages were used in the study. Because, the purpose of the study was to know whether the coconut climbing machines, given free of cost, are being utilized by the trainees or not; if they are using the machines, to what extent they are using it.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Number of palm climbers and non-climbers before and after training programmes N=45

Respondents	Before	After
Palm climbers	24 (53.33%)	45 (100%)
Non-climbers	21(46.67%)	0
Total	45 (100%)	45 (100%)

Out of 45 respondents, a little more than half were used to climb palm trees using conventional method before the training programme (Table 1). Other respondents had never climb palm trees earlier to the training programme. After the training programme, all the respondents i. e. cent per cent learnt to climb palm trees using coconut climbing machine.

This could be because of number benefits and more safety in using coconut cycle compared to conventional method. Further, training was more practical oriented and trained by master trainers.

Table 2: Extent of Usage of coconut cycle by the beneficiaries N = 45

Usage	Very much useful	Very useful	Average useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful
	37 (82.22)	8 (17.78)	0	0	0

A five point continuum of Likert scale was used to know the extent of usage of coconut cycle by the beneficiaries. Each respondent was asked, to what extent the machine is useful.

From the table 2, it is apparent that, 82.00 per cent of the respondents expressed that Training was Very much useful, whereas 18 per cent expressed as Very useful.

It could be because of the reason that the machine is user friendly; it needs mainly the practice. One can stand on machine for a prolonged period, can pluck the nuts easily, and clean the trees also. They are getting more income compared to the traditional method.

Table 3: Ave. No. of trees/ anum climbed by beneficiaries before and after training programmes

Ave. No. of trees (Before)	Ave. No. of trees (After)	No. increased
67	181	114 (171%)

The table 3 depicted that the beneficiaries used to climb on an average 67 palm trees using traditional method before undergoing training. After learning the skills to use coconut climbing machine in the training programme, beneficiaries could able to climb 181 palm trees on an average per year. So the per cent increase was 171.

Table 4: Average Height (of the tree) climbed by beneficiaries before and after training programmes

Ht. (Before) (ft)	Ht. (After) (ft)	Increased in ht. (ft)
17.78	51.56	33.78 (190%)

Table (4) showed that, beneficiaries could able climb on an average 17.78 feet height palm trees before the training programme, where as they could able to climb on an average 51.56 feet height palm trees after the training programme. It could be observed that the percentage increase is as high as 190.

Table 5: Ave. No. of coconuts/anum plucked by beneficiaries before and after training programmes

Ave. No. of trees (Before)	Ave. No. of trees (After)	No. increased
1451	5358	3907 (269.22%)

The table (5) highlights about the average number of coconuts plucked by the beneficiaries in a year. Around 1451 nuts were plucked by beneficiaries in a year before they undergo the training programme, whereas they could able to pluck 5358 nuts after they had undergone training programme. The per cent increase is 269 per anum.

Table 6: Average time taken to climb coconut trees by beneficiaries before and after training programmes

Ave. time to climb tress (Before) (Min.)	Ave. time to climb tress (After) (Min.)	Time decreased (Min.) ↓
39.38	25.42	-13.96 (35.45%)

It is legitimate from the table (6) that time taken to climb the tree was reduced while using coconut climbing machine when compared to traditional method. The average time taken to climb a palm tree was 39.38 minutes and 25.42 minutes before and after the training programme, respectively. The time saved was 13.96 min (35.45 %).

Table 7: Average income/ anum earned by beneficiaries before and after training prog. N=45

Ave. amount (Before) (Rs.)	Ave. amount (After) (Rs.)	Increased Amount. (Rs.)
2148.78	8463.33	6315.56(294.05%)

Average Income per annum earned by the beneficiaries before and after the training programme was shown in table (6). It was found that an average income was rupees 2149.00 before the training programme while it was rupees 8463.00. There was an increase in income as much as rupees 3615.00 and per cent increase is 294.00

So it could be inferred from the tables that the training was skill, practical orientated and each beneficiary was given a coconut climbing machine, which they could use immediately, so the training programme was more beneficial.

Similar results were found in the study conducted by Deepthi, V. (2017) ^[4] that advanced method of coconut tree climber harvested more number of nuts (20-30 nuts/tree) and more number of harvesting trees (60-70 trees/day) over traditional method (10-25 nuts/ tree) and lesser number of harvesting trees (18-22 trees/day after using the coconut tree climber, annual income increased to Rs.20000- 40000/-year and a person could climb coconut tree without any life risk.

Megha Varier (2016) ^[5], reported that, Suni, a woman palm climber, was glad that she sneaked out to learn to climb trees. She had trained about 400 women in Thiruvananthapuram district. She further wrote that Usha from Chembur village took a month to earn Rs. 3000 by working in other peoples' houses, but she now earns the same amount in just four days by climbing coconut tree with help of machine, who was trained by FoCT (Friends of Coconut Tree), club, Kerala.

In a success story written by Chander Mohan (2018) ^[3], highlighted that Coconut Plucking Fetching Women Climbers Rs.400 in Three Hours.

Conclusion

Cent per cent of the respondents were making use of the coconut climbing machine. Around 82 per cent expressed training was Very much useful followed by 18 per cent respondents who expressed as Very useful programme. Respondents could gain Rs.6315.56 as an additional income per annum on an average. There was saving of 13.96 minutes time spent on climbing coconut tree on an average. So use of coconut climbing machine not only increased income but also reduced waste of time.

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