

Social Accounts of

Friends of the Coconut Tree

A Training Initiative of the Coconut Development Board

August 2011 – March 2015.



Coconut Development Board
(Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India)
Kera Bhavan, Kochi – 682 011

INDEX

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Background Information.....	3
3. Vision, Mission, Values, Objectives and Activities	5
4. Stakeholder Analysis	6
5. Scope of the Social Accounts	6
6. Methodology.....	7
7. Report on Performance and Impact	10
8. Other Stakeholder Views	47
9. Environmental Impact.....	47
10. Economic Impact	48
11. Key Achievements	52
12. Social Impact Rating.....	54
13. Recommendations.....	59
14. Compliance	61
15. Plans for Dialogue with Stakeholders.....	61
16. Plans for the next Social Accounting Cycle	61
17. ANNEXURES	62

1. Introduction

The Friends of the Coconut Tree (FoCT) is an innovative training program of the Coconut Development Board(CDB) making revolutionary changes in the coconut sector by providing the required work force for the coconut sector. In order to review the performance of the FoCT training and its effectiveness on the trainees, the impact on the coconut farmers and the coconut sector at large, the Coconut Development Board decided to conduct a social audit of the project. The Social Audit Network team of Ms.Latha Suresh, Mr.Sanoj Herbert, Mr. Jothi Sundar and Mr.Jesmis Joseph spearheaded the work and drafted the social accounts for the FoCT project along with the support of the following personnel of the Coconut Development Board, Cochin - Mr Sugrata Ghose, Ms Remany, Ms Mini Matthew, Mr.Vasanthakumar - CDB, Chennai – Mr Subramaniam, and CDB, Bangalore – Mr.Sadasivappa

2. Background Information

Coconut or the Kalpavriksha has an important place in the Indian culture. Coconut cultivation has been existent for over 3000 years in India and is currently the major coconut producing countries in the world. India accounts for nearly 31% of the world's coconut production. It is estimated that coconut is grown in 2.14 million hectares in India and around 21,665 million nuts are harvested every year. Coconut cultivation is distributed in 19 states and union territories under different agro-climatic conditions in India. Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are the leading producers of Coconut in the country followed by West Bengal, Orissa, Maharashtra and Assam. Apart from being a staple food in South India, coconut also forms part of the Indian religion and ethos and has primary importance in numerous rituals and customs across India.

The consumption of coconut in India is dominated by the food sector and Copra processing, coconut oil extraction and coir manufacturing are the traditional coconut based industries in the country. Coconut oil is used for cooking as well as in industrial applications like hair oils, soaps, shampoos, etc. Thus, the demand for coconut in the country is always been higher than the production which has now forced India to import coconut oil.

The Coconut Development Board (CDB) is a statutory body established under the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India for the integrated development of coconut cultivation and industry in the country with focus on productivity increase and product diversification. Headquartered at Cochin, the Functions of the board include -

- Adopting measures for the development of coconut industry, inter alia.
- Imparting technical advice to those engaged in coconut cultivation and industry.
- Providing financial and other assistance for the expansion of area under coconut.
- Encouraging adoption of modern technologies for processing of coconut and its products.
- Adopting measures to get incentive prices for coconut and its products.

- Recommending measures for improving marketing of coconut and its products.
- Recommending measures for regulating imports and exports of coconut and its products.
- Fixing grades, specifications and standards for coconut and its products.
- Financing suitable schemes to increase the production of coconut and to improve the quality and yield of coconut.
- Assisting, encouraging, promoting and financing agricultural, technological, industrial or economic research on coconut and its products.
- Collecting statistics on coconut and its products and publishing them.
- Undertaking publicity activities and publishing books and periodicals on coconut and its products.

The growth of the Coconut sector is dependent on several factors. They include –

- Low Yield
- Pests and diseases
- Scarcity of skilled labour
- Indiscriminate cutting of coconut trees
- Fragmentation of coconut lands leading to conversion of coconut farms into production of other profitable crops or housing development
- Low & fluctuating price of coconut products
- Natural calamities & Seasonal changes

To tackle most of problems listed above the Coconut Board came out with an innovative training program – the Friends of the Coconut Tree (FoCT) to bring a sustained interest for Coconut production among the coconut farmers. This training program was meant to attract the rural youth – both men and women – to create professionals in the Coconut sector. The Coconut sector requires manpower for sustaining the coconut production in the following areas -

- a. Coconut tree climbing
- b. Coconut Professionals to handle Pests and diseases control
- c. Coconut-based entrepreneurs

As a solution to the manpower requirement the CDB realized that an holistic training program should be developed that would provide skilled manpower to fulfill the needs of the coconut sector. This decision was also backed by the long standing demands of the coconut farmers in Kerala. The major challenge in the coconut sector was the dearth of coconut tree climbers as the entire coconut economy was centered on timely harvesting of coconuts. Realising that Coconut tree climbers were a vital link to the Coconut economy, CDB wanted to deliver a training programme that would create a workforce focused around coconut climbing and thus was evolved the Friends of the Coconut Tree program. CDB had a lot of deliberations with many of its well-wishers while framing the curriculum and brought in interesting dimensions like life skills, physical well-being, Technical session on coconut cultivation, Managerial sessions and practical sessions on tree climbing.

The training was conceived by a group of professionals at the Coconut Development Board after a lot of deliberations. It was designed to be a holistic training program that involved technical skills on coconut cultivation & climbing, soft skills and social security interventions. “The idea is to groom workers and provide them an all-round knowledge of coconut cultivation and makes their work socially respectable,” says T K Jose, chairperson of CDB. A trainee on completion of the program could evolve into a motivated, self-confident individual who could take up coconut climbing as his sole profession or an added work skill. A 5- day residential innovative program was designed which was christened “Friends of Coconut Tree” to groom people who would have a sustainable livelihood in the coconut sector.

Launched on 17th August, 2011 at Kerala, this programme has now trained over 75,000 individuals across 10 states of India. It has directly resulted in better coconut harvesting and management practices over the last few years.

3. Vision, Mission, Values, Objectives and Activities

Vision – Creating a sustainable coconut farming ecosystem in India

Mission – To generate sustainable employment opportunities in the coconut sector in India

Values

Equality

Empowerment

Objectives & Activities

1. To tackle the problem of unavailability of coconut tree climbers for coconut farming and plant protection activities by
 - a. Offering the “Friends of Coconut Tree” training to coconut farmers and unemployed youth
 - b. Networking with rural NGOs to offer FoCT Training
 - c. Promoting insurance among Trainees

2. To create employment opportunities for the Trainee as
 - a. Coconut tree climbers
 - b. Entrepreneurs

4. Stakeholder Analysis

The stakeholder groups were identified as follows

Key Stakeholders	Other Stakeholders
FoCT trainees	Service Providers
Trainers Master Trainers NGO Trainers	RAIDCO, KAICO, Union Bank, Cooperative Bank in Idukki dist
Partnering NGOs	Families of FoCT trainees
CDB Coordinators	Other Agencies
CDB Board	NRLM

Since the study was restricted to 7 districts in 3 states of India, it was decided to contact 500 FoCT trainees from each district. The partnering NGOs of each district were contacted and they shared the list of Trainees. A Focus Group Discussion was organised at all the NGO centres and a few FoCT trainees who were available within the vicinity of the NGO attended the FGDs and shared their valuable information about the FoCT training. The other trainees were randomly chosen from the list and telephonic interviews were conducted to elicit feedback.

5. Scope of the Social Accounts

The FoCT Training has been extensively delivered in the southern states India especially Kerala and Tamilnadu. For the purpose of this social audit, the study was restricted to 4 districts of Kerala, 2 districts of Tamilnadu and 2 districts of Karnataka which were predominantly coconut growing areas of the states. The districts selected were

1. Kerala – Alleppey, Kollam, Palakkad and Kozhikode districts
2. Tamilnadu – Krishnagiri and Dindigul districts
3. Karnataka – Hassan and Tumkur

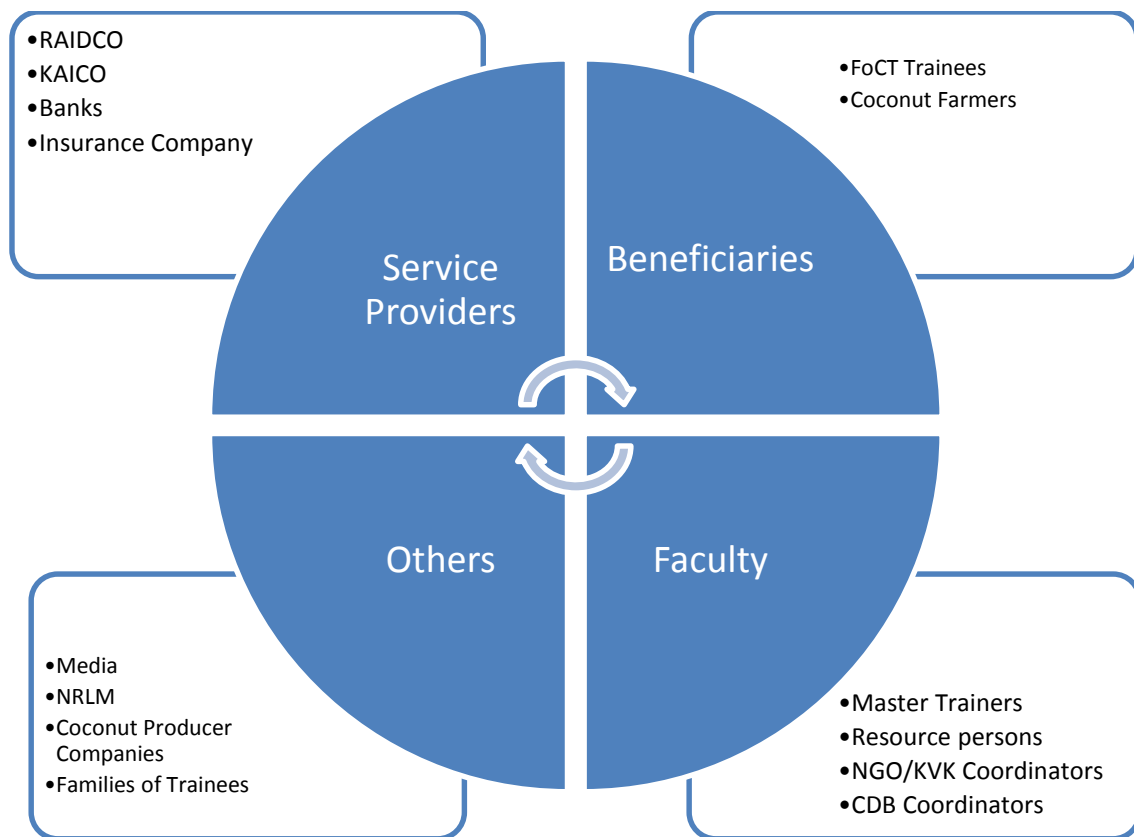
Stakeholders of only these districts were considered for this set of social accounts.

The scope for this report is August 2011 – March 2015.

6. Methodology

The VMVOA framework was finalized after deliberations with the CDB personnel involved in the FoCT training programs. Based on the discussions the stakeholder map and the Impact map was evolved. It was decided to use the questionnaire as a major tool for consultation among the trainees and hence a questionnaire was designed for the trainee group based on the Impact map. (Refer Annexure 1 for the Impact map and Annexure 2 for the Questionnaires)

Stakeholders of FoCT



The Beneficiaries, Faculty and service Providers were the primary stakeholders and the others were secondary stakeholders.

Stakeholders consulted

For the purpose of this social accounts stakeholders were consulted in 4 districts of Kerala - Alleppey, Kollam, Palakkad and Kozhikode, 2 districts of Tamilnadu – Krishnagiri & Dindigul, and Hassan & Tumkur district in Karnataka.

A target of interacting with 500 FoCT trainees from each district was kept. In Palakkad and Dindigul district, this number could not be met as most of the trainees never responded to the calls made by the social audit team and the NGOs in the area. Hence more stakeholders were met in Krishnagiri and Kozhikode to offset the number. Similarly since the number of trainees in Karnataka was small, a total of 500 trainees from both the districts were contacted.

The following stakeholders were consulted for this social audit.

Table 1: Stakeholders District wise

Stakeholder	Number	Number Consulted	% consulted	Method used for Consultation
Friend of Coconut tree – youth	42,948*	3510		
Districts covered				
Alleppey	1552	505	33%	Focus group Discussion, questionnaire, Telephonic interviews
Kollam	1751	516	29%	
Kozhikode	3639	541	15%	
Palakkad	2158	466	22%	
Dindigul	700	449	64%	
Krishnagiri	880	453	51%	
Karnataka	1388	506	36%	
TOTAL	10860	3510	29%	
Resource Persons – Master Trainers	35	7	20%	Interviews & Telephonic interviews
Partnering organizations – NGOs	15	10	67%	Questionnaire & Interview
Service Providers – RAIDCO, KAICO, Banks	4	2	50%	Telephonic interviews

*includes all the FoCT Trainees across India

Stakeholder consultations Schedule

The Stakeholder consultations were held on the dates as mentioned below –

Table 2: Stakeholder consultations Schedule

State - District	Partnering NGO	FGD dates	Telephonic Interview time line
Tamilnadu			
Krishnagiri	Perumal KVK	August 13 th	August 20 th – September 20 th , 2015
Dindigul	TAPWA MSSRF KVK	August 19 th & 20 th	August 20 th – September 20 th 2015
Kerala			
Alleppey		No FGD done	August 25 th – September 30 th 2015
Kollam	YMCA, Kollam	September 5 th and 6 th	August 25 th – September 30 th 2015
Kozhikode		No FGD done	August 25 th – September 30 th 2015
Palakkad	Peoples Service Society, Palakkad	August 18 th & Aug 19 th	August 20 th – September 30 th 2015
Karnataka			
Chanarayapatna Tumkur	KVK, Tumkur	Nov. 6 th	Oct 20 th – Nov 25 th 2015

Questionnaires were developed to get feedback from the FoCT participants. They were divided into two groups – Coconut professionals and Coconut tree climbers. Coconut professionals were people who had taken coconut climbing or coconut related activity as a profession post the training, and coconut tree climbers were people who had small to medium farms and used the coconut climbing skill for their personal use. A few of them had also taken to coconut climbing as their part-time profession.

The Focus Group Discussions were held at the coordinating NGOs offices in the all the districts.

7. Report on Performance and Impact

Objective 1

To tackle the problem of unavailability of coconut tree climbers for coconut farming and plant protection activities by

a. Offering the “Friends of Coconut Tree” training to coconut farmers and unemployed youth

Coconut Tree climbers is a slowly declining profession in Kerala and other coconut growing states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Goa, with very few taking on the traditional profession. Coconut tree climbers are a very vital link in the production chain of the Coconut farming ecosystem. The consistent supply of raw nuts for the market as well as for the processing sector can be ensured only by strict adherence to the regular harvesting schedule. In many areas, farmers are forced to seek help from migrant labourers, who charge exorbitant amounts, despite not being familiar with the art of coconut climbing. The scarcity of labour disrupts harvesting cycles thus causing loss of income to the growers. As against the general norm of harvesting cycles of 45-60 days, farmers are currently able to harvest only once in three to four months. There is a great reluctance for people to take up the profession of coconut climbing because of the occupational risk and the arduous labour involved in climbing tall coconut trees. Thus a dearth of coconut tree climbers resulted in irregular harvesting, poor health and productivity of the trees, and frequent pest infestations. This resulted in price fluctuations and restrictions on coconut export in the country which kept the fortunes of coconut farmers in doldrums.

To overcome this problem, technological support was sought and many coconut palm climbing devices were developed by individuals, Research Institutions, Universities and NGO's, which are claimed to be safe and easy to operate. But in spite of all the effort taken in the recent past, there is still an acute shortage of trained coconut palm climbers for harvesting and plant protection activities. With a serious view to tackle this problem, the CDB decided to embark upon an innovative training program to train underemployed youth in developing special skills and confidence in coconut palm climbing and plant protection activities for the benefit of the coconut community as a whole.

CDB then partnered with Kerala Agriculture University, The Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) in Kerala and a few NGOs to implement this innovative curriculum in rural areas of Kerala where coconut was a predominant crop.

The CDB embarked on the FoCT training programme on August 17th, 2011. The first phase of the Friends of the Coconut Tree Program was launched covering 11 districts in Kerala – Kozhikode, Kasaragod, Ernakulam, Kannur, Mallapuram, Palakkad, Kollam, Thrissur, Trivandrum, Kottayam and Alleppey. It was then taken across to the other states of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

CDB set a target of training 5000 individuals during the first year of its launch. In the first phase 25 batches comprising of 20 students each was planned.

About the FoCT training & curriculum

The FoCT training is a 6-day residential training program held at the partnering NGOs (KVKs / rural NGOs) premises which were in rural areas of the state. The curriculum for the training program had an interesting mix of deliverables and was very carefully evolved to sustain the interest in the participants during the training and after the training. (Refer Annexure 3 for the Training Schedule and Course coverage)

The Training components

S.no	Training Component	Training Objective
1	<p>Technical Session on coconut cultivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coconut varieties b. Cultural practices c. Plant protection operations d. Harvesting procedures e. Post-harvest operations 	<p>The trainee is educated on basic aspects of coconut cultivation so that he can not only undertake the practices, but also act as a disseminator of technical information.</p> <p>The trainees gain a thorough knowledge on coconut cultivation.</p> <p>Training is delivered in the local language to ensure absorption and retention of what is taught</p>
2	<p>Managerial sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Personality development b. Communication skills c. Leadership d. Savings approach e. Positive thinking 	<p>The trainees are educated as to how they should present themselves before the coconut grower. They are taught to be bold and confident and undertake the work as a serious profession.</p> <p>They are taught to document their daily activities so that they can maintain a register of the coconut growers whom they cater to.</p> <p>The trainees are trained to emerge as true professionals, maintaining a database of their clients and approaching them on their own when harvest time is due.</p> <p>They are taught to see life in a positive manner.</p>
3	<p>Practical Sessions on coconut tree climbing using a climbing device</p>	<p>The trainees are taken on a field visit to a nearby coconut gardens wherein they actually perform the role of a coconut tree climber and harvest coconut.</p> <p>This exercise increases the confidence of the climber to take up climbing as a respectable profession</p>
4	<p>Coconut Olympics</p>	<p>A test to assess the effectiveness of the training</p> <p>A competition is held among the trainees and the fastest climber is awarded</p>
5	<p>Physical well-being</p> <p>Jogging / walking</p> <p>Breathing exercise</p> <p>Yoga</p>	<p>Exercises helps freshen the participants and provides the base for creating a healthy routine for the trainees as only a healthy body can undertake the physical activity of coconut climbing in an efficient manner.</p>

On completion of the free training program, every participant is given a climbing device to enable them to pursue the coconut climbing activity and contribute to the growth of the coconut sector.

About the climbing Device

The climbing device consists of two metal loops that are meant for holding the legs. They have a handle at the top for hand grip and a pedal base at the bottom. The loops are put around the tree trunk on the opposite sides. The loop on either side is lifted up by the simultaneous movement of the hand and feet. By such alternate motion, one can easily climb a coconut tree in minutes.

Currently this programme has been attended by over 40,000+ individuals across India and over 1,800 training programs have been organized



Table 3: FoCT Training Programs conducted from August 2011- March 2015

S.No	State	FoCT Trainings				TOTAL
		Aug 2011- March 2012	Apr 2012 – Mar 2013	Apr 2013 – Mar 2014	Apr 2014 – Mar 2015	
1	Kerala	218	208	353	359	1,138
2	Tamilnadu	0	60	76	105	241
3	Karnataka	1	35	137	60	233
4	West Bengal	0	0	12	95	107
5	Andhra Pradesh	0	4	19	11	34
6	Maharashtra	2	10	15	7	33
7	Orissa	0	2	15	15	32
8	Assam	0	0	5	10	15
9	Chhattisgarh	0	1	5	3	9
10	Gujarat	0	0	4	4	8
11	Goa	0	3	3		6
12	Lakshadweep	4	0	0	0	4
13	Bihar	0	0	2	0	2
	TOTAL	224	323	646	669	1,861

Table 4: State wise list of FoCT Trainees from August 2011- March 2015

S.No	State	FoCT Trainees				TOTAL
		Aug 2011- March 2012	Apr 2012 – Mar 2013	Apr 2013 – Mar 2014	Apr 2014 – Mar 2015	
1	Kerala	5,445	5,197	8,818	8,982	28,442
2	Tamilnadu		1,196	1,520	2,100	4,816
3	Karnataka	18	705	2,740	1,200	4,663
4	West Bengal			237	1,896	2,133
5	Andhra Pradesh		80	380	224	684
6	Maharashtra	40	196	296	135	667
7	Orissa		40	300	300	640
8	Assam			100	201	301
9	Chhattisgarh		17	100	60	177
10	Gujarat			84	80	164
11	Goa		60	60	-	120
12	Lakshadweep	101				101
13	Bihar			40		40
	TOTAL	5,604	7,491	14,675	15,178	42,948

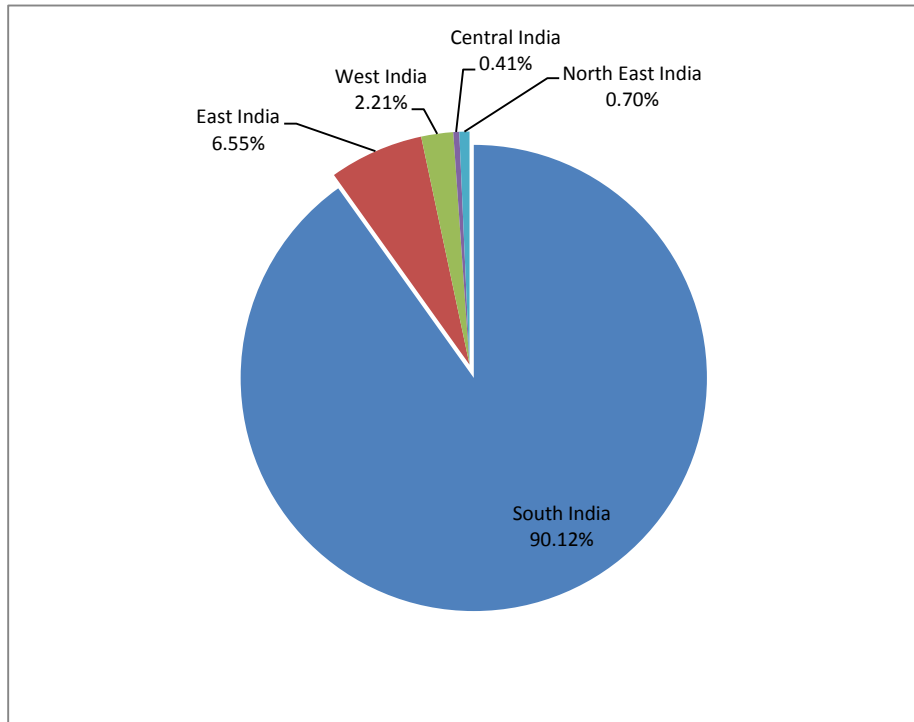
The training program is being implemented in the major States and Union Territories in India where coconut is grown. It is currently being offered in 13 states from 5 zones in India.

Table 5: Zone wise Trainees

Zone	States	Trainees
South	5	38,706
East	3	2,813
West	3	951
Central	1	177
North East	1	301
TOTAL	13	42,948

FoCT has been predominantly launched in South Indian states followed by East India.

Graph 1: Reach of FoCT

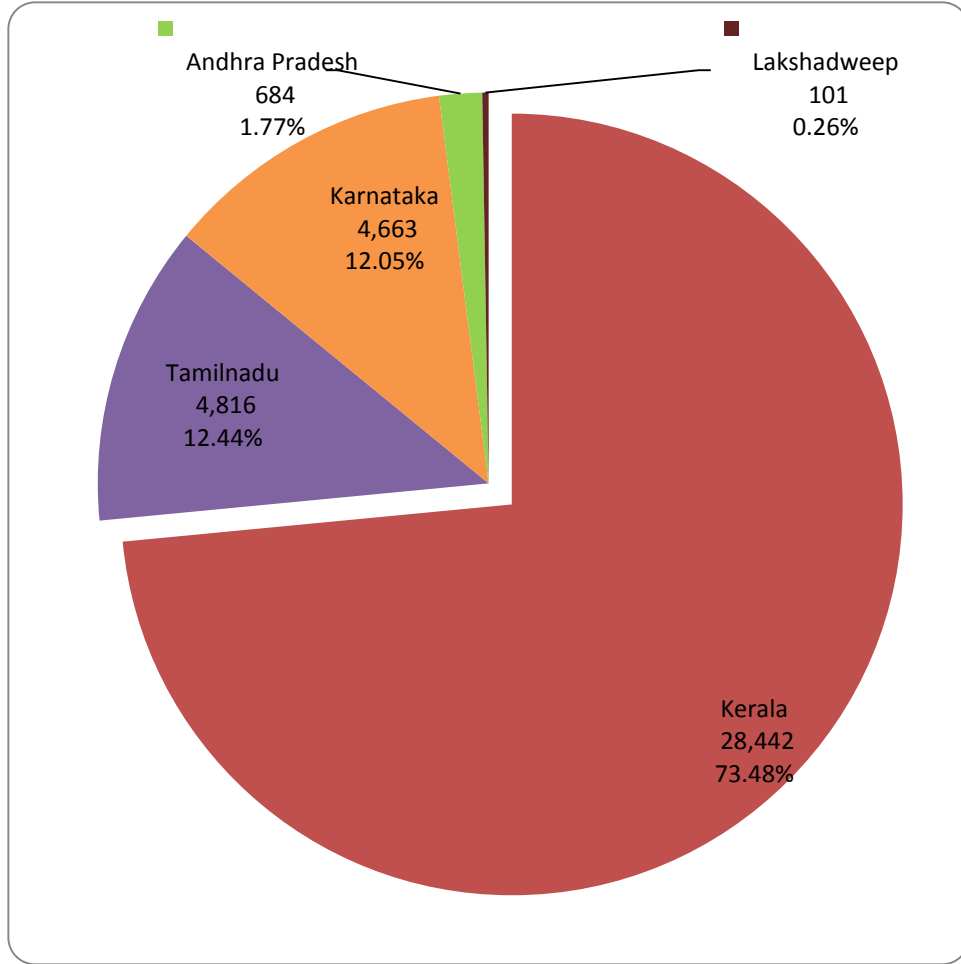


Among the Southern States, 73% of the trainees hail from Kerala and 1,138 Training programs have been conducted across all the districts of Kerala.

Table 6: FoCT Programs in South India - August 2011- March 2015

State	Training Programs	Trainees
Kerala	1,138	28,442
Tamilnadu	241	4,816
Karnataka	233	4,663
Andhra Pradesh	34	684
Lakshadweep	4	101
	1,650	38,706

Graph 2: Distribution of FoCT Trainees in South India



Profile of the Trainees:

The Trainees selected for the program are

- a. Unemployed youth – both men and women
- b. Farmers with small holdings
- c. Coconut farmers

To gather trainees for the first batch was a challenge for the partnering NGOs. The NGO staff had to convince the villagers that this was an innovative program and they would get a coconut tree climbing device free at the end of the training program. Since the program was a residential program and dealt with coconut tree climbing, there was a greater challenge in getting women participants. There was a lot of apprehension among the women to enroll in the training in the first few batches conducted at all the districts. Understanding the difficulty faced in marketing this innovative course, CDB offered a stipend of Rs.500 to all the participants who attended the first few trainings offered at each training Centre.

Gender

One of the main objectives of the FoCT program was to make it a very inclusive program and enroll women trainees to participate in the program. Around 4% of the trainees enrolled were women. Tamilnadu, Kerala and Maharashtra were able to attract many women trainees. All woman batches are also conducted in these states.

Table 7: Gender wise Trainee Reports

S.no	State	Male	Female	Female %
1	Kerala	27,085	1,357	4.77
2	Karnataka	4,632	31	0.66
3	Tamilnadu	4,458	358	7.43
4	Andhra Pradesh	679	5	0.73
5	Orissa	626	14	2.19
6	Maharashtra	627	40	6.00
7	Goa	119	1	0.83
	TOTAL	38,226	1,806	4.51

Table 8: District/State wise Gender of Trainee Reports

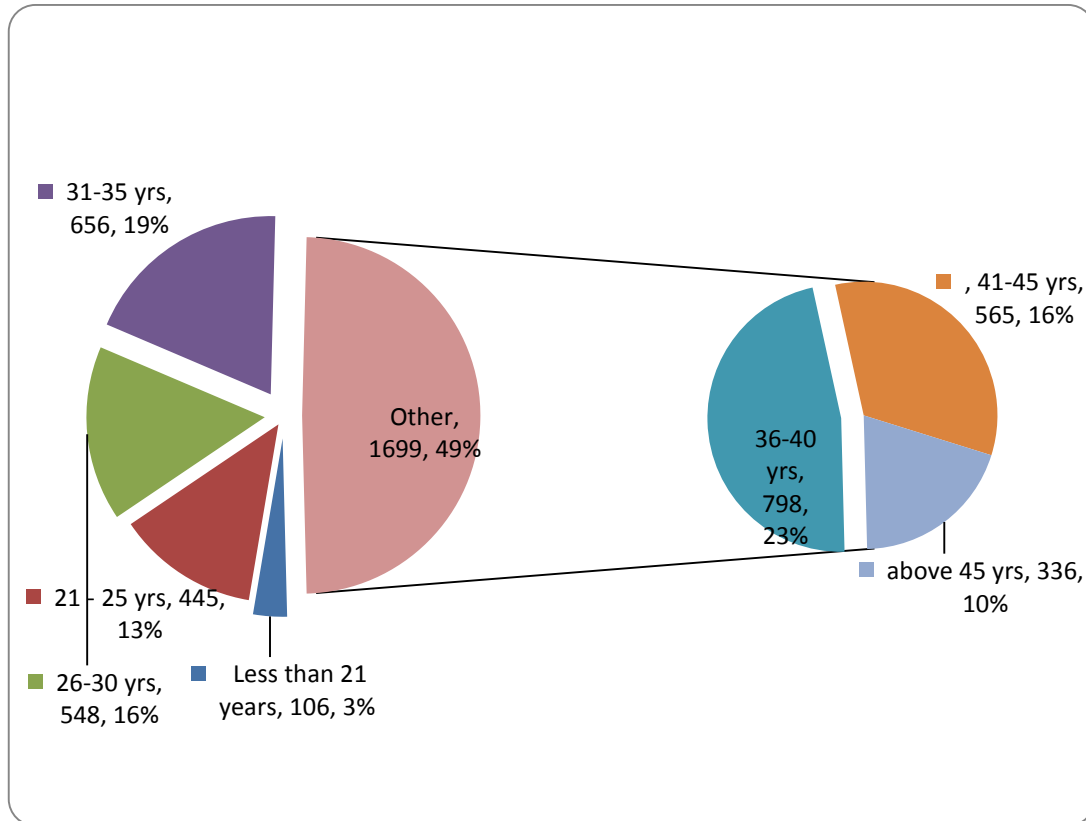
Place	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Alleppey	36	469	505
Palakkad	89	377	466
Kollam	31	485	516
Kozhikode	27	514	541
Krishnagiri	83	440	523
Dindigul	52	401	453
Karnataka	11	495	506
Total	329	3,181	3,510

90.63% (3181) of the FoCT Trainees surveyed were men and 9.34%(329)were women.

Age

51% of the trainees surveyed were less than 35 years and the 49% were above 35.

Graph 3: Age Distribution of the Trainees



Educational Qualification

Most of the trainees were rural unemployed youth who had completed schooling. 92% of the Trainees surveyed had completed school education (10th or 12th). It was interesting to note that 27 trainees surveyed were post graduates and 248 were graduates.

Graph 4: Educational Qualification

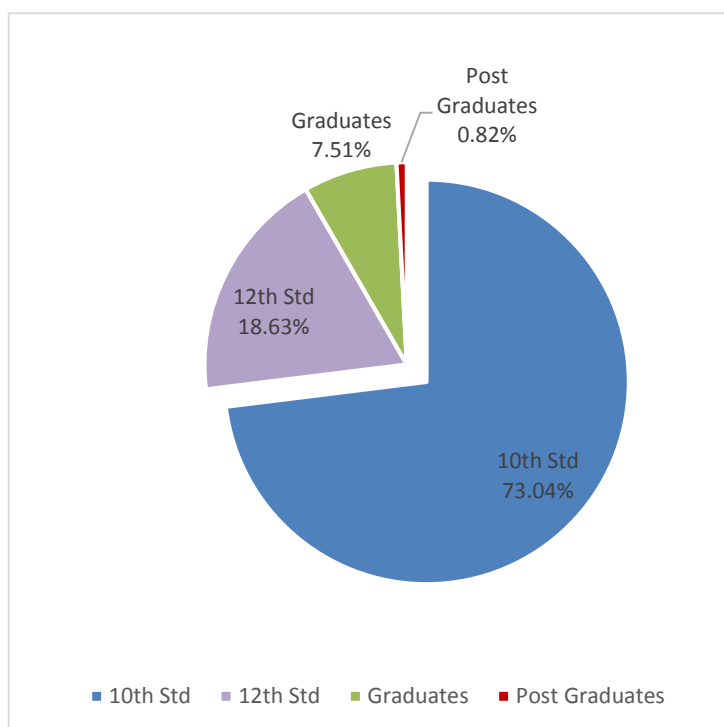


Table 9: Educational qualification - District-wise

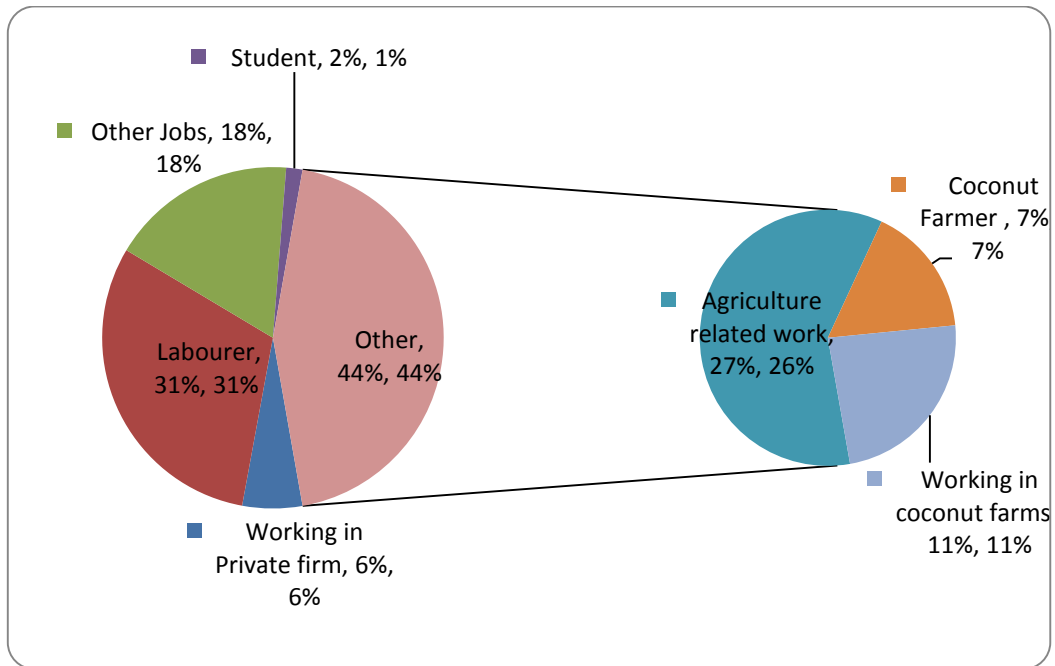
District	10th std	12th Std	Graduate	Post Graduate
Alleppey	82.1%	11.3%	5.0%	1.6%
Kollam	75.3%	18.1%	6.0%	0.6%
Kozhikode	69.1%	19.8%	10.1%	1.1%
Palakkad	77.0%	18.2%	4.5%	0.2%
Dindigul	76.6%	15.1%	7.7%	0.7%
Krishnagiri	73.0%	20.1%	6.8%	0.0%
Hassan	62.9%	28.6%	7.1%	1.4%
Tumkur	53.2%	29.8%	15.2%	1.8%
TOTAL	82.1%	11.3%	5.0%	1.6%

Of the 3510, trainees surveyed, it was found that Tumkur and Kozhikode had over 50 graduates who had enrolled in the course.

Occupation & Income Profile

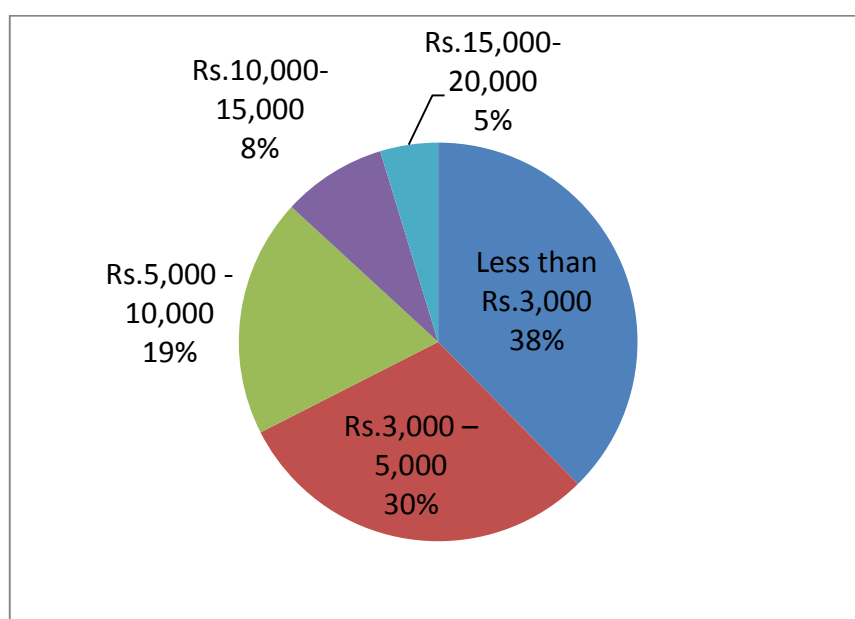
44% of the trainees were exposed farming activities either agriculture (26%) related or coconut farming (18%). 56% were not directly involved in agriculture but were interested to explore the opportunities of coconut climbing.

Graph 5: Occupation of Trainees



Of the 3510 trainees interviewed, 2104 were owners of farmlands and 1,406 trainees were employed either as labourers, farm hands, drivers, masons etc. The 2104 farmland owners were primarily holding small farms varying from 2 cents to a few acres. Apart from farming operations some of them were also working as labourers and farm hands.

Graph 6: Income profile of non-farm holders



Of the trainees who were not owning lands, 68% of them were earning less than Rs.5,000 a month and 5% were earning between Rs15,000-20,000. 18% of the participants who owned farms did not have coconut trees in their small farms and 30% of the farmers had less than 10 trees in their farm.

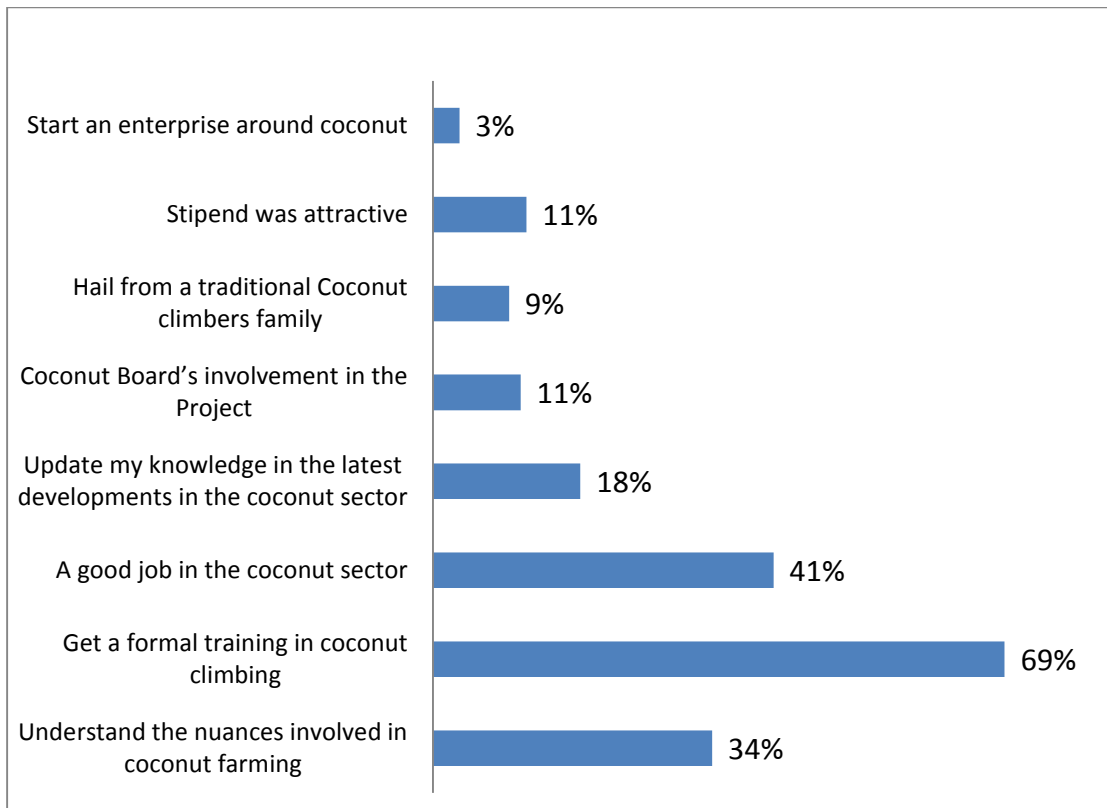
Table 10 : Distribution of coconut Trees among farmers

Coconut Trees	Number	%	
Less than 10	632	30%	50%
11 - 20 trees	183	9%	
21 - 50 trees	230	11%	
51 - 100 trees	184	9%	10%
101-200 trees	212	10%	24%
Above 200 trees	292	14%	
No trees	371	18%	
	2104		

Of the trainees surveyed, 50% were marginal coconut farmers, 10% small and 24% large coconut farmers

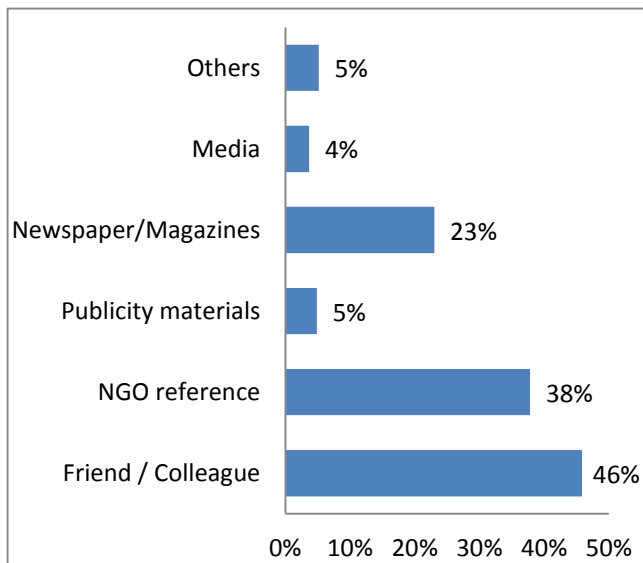
69% of the participants enrolled in the FoCT program as they wanted to get formally trained in climbing coconut trees. When asked what motivated them to join the training, most of them were interested to know about coconut farming and climbing. The various other reasons are listed below.

Graph 7: Reasons for Joining FoCT Training



71% of the trainees had never climbed a coconut tree prior to the training.

Graph 8: How they enrolled

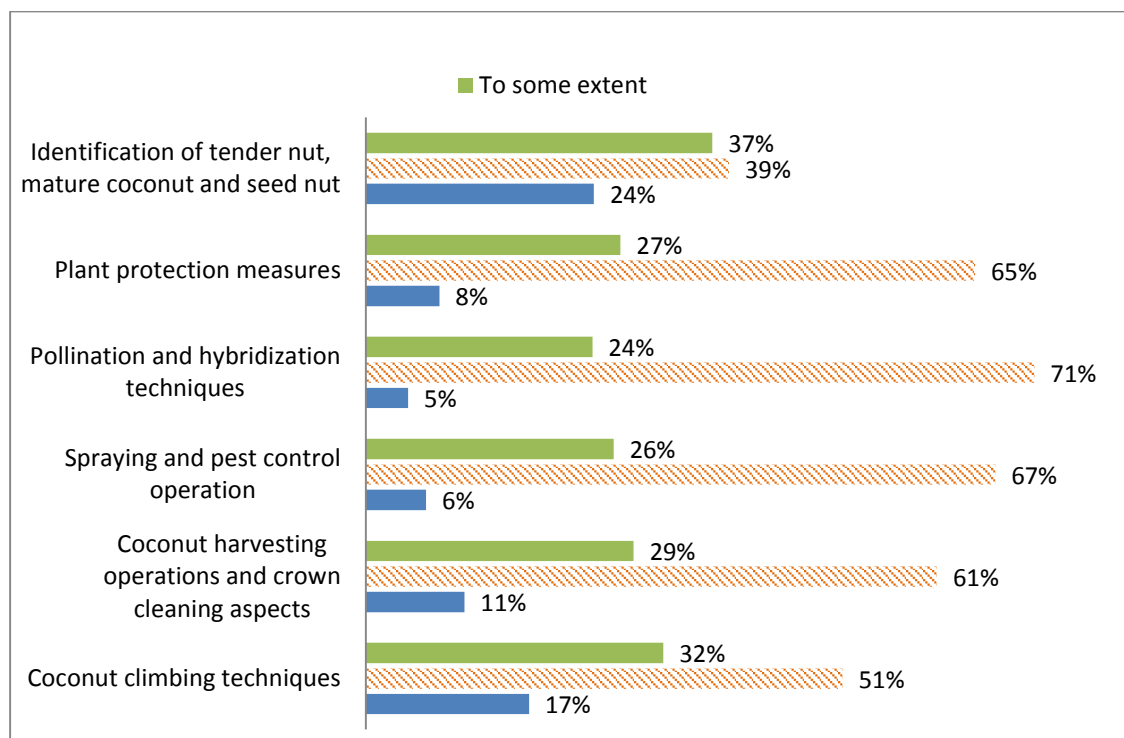


The Trainees knew about the FoCT program mainly from their friends or from the KVKs / NGOs in their neighborhood. Nearly 23% of the participants had read about the training in Magazines / Newspapers. 38% enrolled as they were referred by an NGO and 14% had read the brochures, publicity materials or had heard about the program in the local media.

Awareness before the Training

Coconut climbing and harvesting techniques was the main focus of the curriculum. Most of the trainees were not aware of most of the topics handled with respect to coconut climbing and harvesting in the training.

Graph 9: Awareness Pre- Training

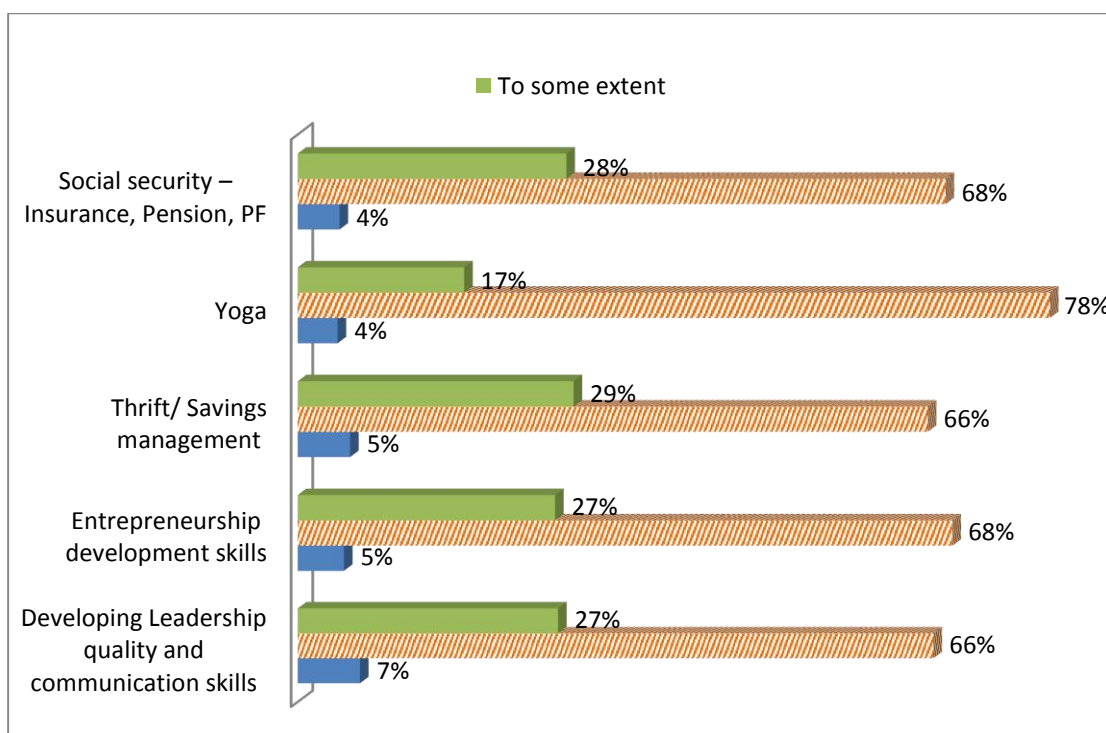


The trainees were also not aware of many other skills like Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Financial skills like savings and Insurance etc.

Trainee Talk

I have 1 acre of land and 30 coconut trees and am doing my third year B.Com. Since my father passed away, I have to manage the farm. I heard about the training from the earlier trainees. On seeing them earning well, I came to attend the training. Now I am earning well and am able to fund my college fees also.

Graph 10: Exposure to Other Skills



Participants were asked to rate the training components on a scale of 1 -10

Table 11: Feedback about the training:

	0- 5	6- 8	9 – 10
Coconut climbing techniques	5%	47%	48%
Coconut harvesting & crown cleaning	15%	42%	43%
Spraying and pest control operation	15%	47%	38%
Pollination and hybridization techniques	16%	47%	36%
Plant protection measures	15%	47%	38%
Identification of tender nut, mature coconut & seed nut	14%	40%	46%
Leadership & communication skills	17%	46%	37%
Entrepreneurship development skills	17%	47%	36%
Thrift/ Savings management	15%	11%	74%
Yoga	16%	15%	70%
Social security – Insurance, Pension, PF	15%	7%	77%

The content of the program was well appreciated by all participants. They were asked to rate in a scale of 1 – 10 where 10 was the highest. 95% of the participants had rated above 6 for the coconut climbing technique that was taught and over 80% of the participants had rated above 6 for the other aspects of training.

With regard to the duration of the training, 95% of the trainees felt that the six day programme was perfect, 4% felt it was too short and 1% felt that six days was too long for the training.

94% of the participants had recommended their friends / relatives to enroll in the FoCT program.

The trainees were asked to rate the following on a scale of 1 -5 where 1 was the lowest and 5 was the highest

Table : 12 Rate the Programme

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
FoCT Program module	0%	2%	9%	30%	59%
The mix of the class	0%	1%	16%	32%	51%
The Climbing device	0%	0%	6%	43%	51%
Guidance by the Resource Persons	0%	2%	6%	36%	56%
Coconut Board's involvement in FoCT	0%	1%	11%	35%	53%

Feedback on the climbing device

94% had rated 4 and above for the climbing device. 93% of the participants had no problem at all with the climbing device while 5% had problems while climbing up and down the tree and the rest had problems while plucking the coconuts. 10% of participants had gone to the NGO with some minor problems out of which 5% had gone once and 2% had gone twice.

A few of the participants wanted the size of the rope to be increased as they could not climb trees with fatter trunks with the existing rope length. Similarly some wanted the size of the pedal to be increased.

5% wanted an Increase in length of the Rope, while 2% wanted a Decrease in length of rope

4% wanted an Increase in size of pedal, whereas 3% wanted a Decrease in size of pedal

Trainee Talk.

Even though the coconut climbing machine is good, there are some problems associated with it. There is no safety belt, and I have problems while climbing taller trees. The length of rope is shorter and while climbing down from the tree I do not get a grip.

I have contacted the NGO regarding the belt issue but they did not offer any help. If protection belt is provided it would be very safe. Apart from this problem machine is working fine.

Other complaints reported during the Focus Group Discussions -

- The nail at the junction of the rope near the hip was not very strong and breaks easily which has to be welded or repaired locally. A stronger nail to be given.
- Holes in the pedal becomes big after constant use and has to be made small using washers
- Problem in getting spare parts locally

Post Training:

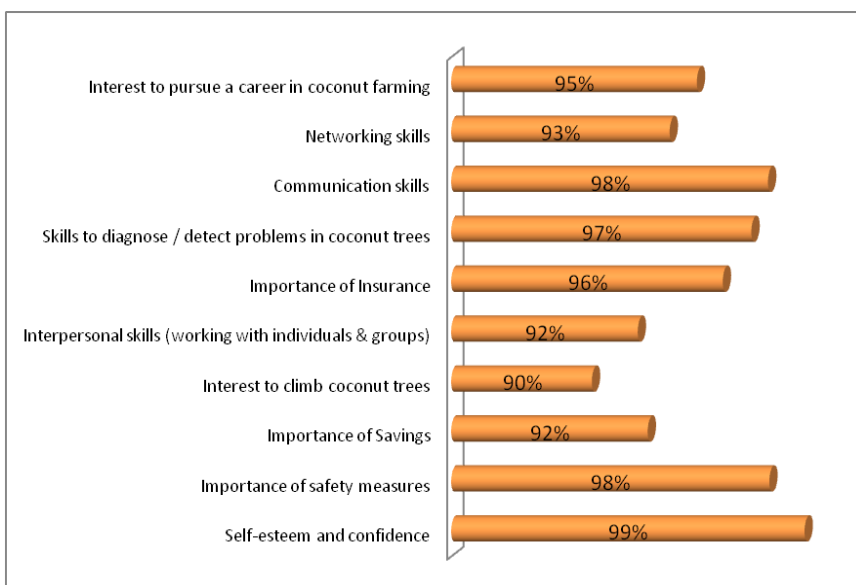
The feedback on the training was excellent. More than 90% of the participants were applying most of the learnings that they had gathered during the FoCT training program. They were using the coconut climbing device either for their own use or had made coconut climbing a profession.

Table 13 Application of skills - Post Training

Skills	Yes	No	To some extent
Coconut climbing techniques	97%	1%	2%
Coconut harvesting operations and crown cleaning aspects	97%	1%	2%
Spraying and pest control operation	95%	2%	3%
Pollination and hybridization techniques	93%	2%	4%
Plant protection measures	92%	6%	2%
Identification of tender nut, mature coconut and seed nut	98%	1%	1%
Developing Leadership quality and communication skills	94%	1%	5%
Entrepreneurship development skills	92%	1%	7%
Thrift/ Savings management	93%	1%	6%
Yoga	82%	10%	8%
Social security–insurance, Pension, PF	92%	2%	7%

The participants were very appreciative of the program as over 90% of them felt that they had gained a lot of new skills and interests after the training

Graph 11: Improved awareness, skills and interests - Post training



The participants were asked to give a feedback on the improvement in their skills sets based on various aspects of the training program. Over 90% of the participants had reported on an Improvement in all the skill sets addressed after attending the FoCT Training.

Trainer's talk

“Most of the participants are from ordinary family with very limited resources and with minimum education. They have never attended such programmes. It is really a new experience for them. Most of them are present before time and stay with us till late hours. It was virtually a calibration for them. Many of them commented that they never get such experience ever since their school days. Even if they do not work in this field they will follow the lessons they learned during these sessions

Trainee talk.

I enrolled in the second batch at KVK Dindigul. This training has changed my life and I owe it to the trainers and coordinators of KVK. They inspired us and ensured that we would all take up this profession earnestly.

I am now a part time coconut tree climber and I also have become a trainer at KVK.

I have around 250 trees in my farm. I climb around 10 – 15 trees a day and harvest my trees periodically. We save around Rs.12,000 a month as we do not have to pay the climber. It is not a very hard task for me also and I enjoy doing it.

- Women Trainee from Krishnagiri

I joined because the training was offered at KVK and they were giving a climbing device free. I knew KVK always thinks about the welfare of farmers and with this in mind I joined not knowing that it would change my life forever. FoCT is the best training I have ever attended in my life

- Small Farmer from Krishnagiri

To understand the outcome of the Training, the trainees were asked share the details on how many coconut trees they had climbed per day before and after the training. It was interesting to note that 63% of the trainees who had not climbed a single coconut tree prior to the training were climbing trees every day.

Table 14 : Training Impact of Participants

Before Training	After training	
	Below 50	Above 50
Climbed no Tree	1831	406
Less than 10 Trees	306	45
10-20 Trees	184	65
21 – 30 Trees	66	76
Above 30 Trees	11	295
NO Response - 225		
TOTAL	2398	887

482 trainees who had never climbed trees before were climbing less than ten trees and 1349 were climbing up to 50 trees.

To understand the interest of the trainees in developing the coconut sector, the trainees were asked to mention if they had planted any coconut tree after the training. 845 coconut farmers have planted around 10000+ coconut trees. This clearly shows a renewed interest in coconut farming among the trainees.

Table 15: Interest for planting of coconut tree after training

Tree Count	Farmers
1 tree	45
2 trees	113
3 trees	99
4 trees	44
5 trees	58
6 - 10 trees	167
11 - 20 trees	143
Above 20 trees	176
TOTAL	845

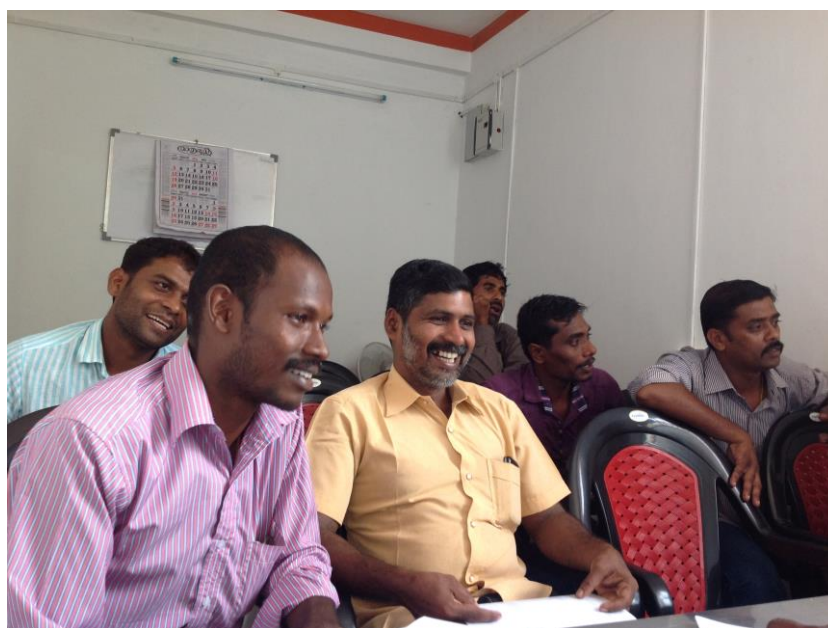
Trainee Talk

“This has proved to be an alternate source of employment for me. I do odd jobs like construction work, helping in the farms etc. Now I have started coconut tree climbing ever since I finished the training. I climb around 50-60 trees a day.” – Krishnagiri trainee

“This is one of the best training programs I have participated. I have now taken to coconut tree climbing as a full time profession. I get calls from many places now. I only wish we were all given an identity card like other Labour boards. We would be proud to say that we are trained by the government and we are also professionals. This would add value to our work.” – Dindigul trainee

“I am extremely happy with the training. I wish they also include a module on how to identify a good coconut sapling.” – Dindigul trainee

Trainees at a Focus Group Discussion in Palakkad



“I have attended this programme as a sweet revenge to our traditional climber. Once I begged him to pluck some tender coconuts for my wife who was pregnant. The climber used the situation and charged us Rs. 100/- for climbing one tree. Just a few days before her delivery I saw the advertisement and decided to participate. Just because of the provocative act from the traditional climber a big opportunity opened in front of me. My income multiplied several times. This programme is the answer to the shortage of man power to this particular agriculture produce”. – Kollam trainee

“We are from Thenmala- Kollam, the place sharing boundary with Tamilnadu. After the completion of the training a shocking reality revealed before us. No coconuts are available in this area. All are plucked by monkeys from the forest and people are not getting any. Once we travelled to Tamilnadu to attend one function and our friend requested to find one climber to their coconut field. We offered our service and they accepted with pleasure. Now, we have formed a team and we go from our place going to the neighboring villages to pluck coconuts. We really enjoy this job”. – Kollam trainee

“I am an auto rickshaw driver. I attended this programme to pluck coconut from my own land. Later my friends asked me to help them because there is an acute shortage of coconut tree climbers. Seeing my work others also invite me to pluck for them. Now it is my full time career and I am using my auto rickshaw as my transport vehicle”. Allapuzha trainee

“I am a teacher. During the School vacation time I attend this programme. It is a very good job opportunity for the unemployed youth and I encourage so many people to attend this programme. I do it in my own field and help my neighbors and friends”. – Kollam Trainee

“I needed to take some rest after climbing each tree before. Now there is no need to take rest for each tree. I can climb 30 trees at a stretch without any rest” – Kollam Trainee

“This device can be used in rainy seasons also without any problem. No traditional climbers are willing to work during this time. So it is a year round regular income source for us”. – Kozhikode trainee

“I am working in a construction company and because of the nature of work; we do not have work every day. Taking this as a part time job I could balance this issue. Now the income from climbing exceeds the other job and now I am planning to make it as my full time job”. – Kollam Trainee

“I am a traditional climber and can climb trees without using this device. But once I started using this I realized that there is no strain in climbing tree. So I can climb more number of trees and not getting exhausted after a day’s work”. – Palakkad Trainee

“We were very much enthusiastic to enter into this new opening. A shocking news spread among us- one of the trained climber fell down from the tree and his spine was seriously damaged. He is bedridden now. This frightened us and ever since we do not go for climbing” – Dindigul Trainee

Feedback from Women Trainees

Women trainees from Krishnagiri

“I am proud that I can climb the coconut tree and I am happy to see the look of astonishment in the faces of my friends and family when they see me climb a tree. I have become a role model in my village and all the girls and ladies want to learn this skill”

“Coconut tree climbing was the only farm related job that was done by a male. Now it is no longer their domain women can also climb them. I feel really empowered that I learnt this skill. Now women can do any work in the farms from sowing, tilling, climbing trees etc. I feel liberated. My husband also is very happy that I climb the trees so confidently and he talks about this to all his friends.”

“I also climb palm trees using this device. This year whenever I felt like eating the palm fruit (Nongu in tamil), I climbed the tree and ate it. It made me very happy as we always have to depend on a male climber who would never come when we call him and he would always come when the fruit is too ripe or wilting.”

Women trainees from Dindigul

“I came along with my father to attend the program. I learnt how to climb coconut trees but my father does not send me alone to pluck coconuts. I have to take care of my home as my mother is not alive.”

“I never in my wildest dreams thought that I would climb a coconut tree so easily. I feel extremely proud of learning this skill.”

Women trainees from Kollam

“We are working in plantations. Being women we are not confident to go alone to other farms for climbing. So we do it for ourselves, for our friends and for our neighbors. We are scared of accidents because there are no hospital facilities nearby”

“It was an opportunity uninvited. I have attended this programme just to give company to one of my friends. Later in field also I accompanied her. To give her confidence I did it myself and later she become comfortable with the device. Now we are a team and the entire people from our area call us to pluck coconut. Now I am the highest earning person in my family. It is the transformation from an ordinary home maker to a full time professional.”

Coordinator's Comments

“Getting people to enroll in the training for the first batch was a difficult task. KVK is popular among the farmers in the locality as they are aware that we offer them trainings and support for any farm related topic. They enrolled in FoCT because of the faith that they had in KVK in knowledge sharing. The idea of the free climbing device and the stipend attracted many genuine farmers and youth in our area” – Coordinator, KVK, Krishnagiri

“This has become one of the major hits in this side of Krishnagiri. We are currently having a big waiting list and I get at least ten calls a day enquiring about the program. When we launched it we were a bit apprehensive about women enrolling but now we have more women than men opting for the training”, Krishnagiri coordinator

“Convincing people was a huge risk. ‘Coconut climbing? Isn’t it a traditional job?’ this was the question we were often asked. ‘There is no scope for coconut farming. We are chopping down our coconut trees.’ Another question we faced. With the whole hearted support from CDB and charge officers we could find some people in our initial batches. Reference was the best source after the first programme.” – Kollam coordinator

“Female participation was one of the challenging area in the initial programmes. ‘Kudumbasree’ and ‘Stree Sakti’ groups were active in several areas and from among them they brought in a few brave souls to take up the challenge. Seeing them perform in the succeeding batches of female participants became a reality”.

“Majority of the participants were totally ignorant about the scope of the programme when they step in to the camp. From the day one they were surprised to see the big scope that could see change in their profession and their life style. They themselves are immersed into the programme gradually and we the coordinators got tender coconuts plucked by the trainees- that too from the female participants on their first field day. Excited participants request us to hold refresher programmes for getting updated on the latest developments in coconut farming and exchanging their experiences.” – Palakkad coordinator

Dr. Muralidharan, coordinator of the programme of Alappuzha district comments that the service of the FoCTs should work together with the Coconut Producer’s societies. The existing dearth of climbers can only be solved if more youngsters are coming to this field. Sivadasan, Agricultural Officer, Arukuty opines that we need to give wider publicity to such initiatives. This may attract more youngsters to his field.

Stories of change – FoCT Groups

Sree Ganapathi Boys Nanbargal is a group formed by 12 youth in Mottaiankoundanpatti village. These boys attended the FoCT training at Dindigul offered by MSSRF, Dindigul.

Our area is surrounded by coconut farms and each farm has about 200 trees. It was difficult for one person to climb all the trees to pluck the coconuts and to do crown cleaning in one farm. So the 12 of us from our village decided to go as a group and handle one farm at a time. We were able to easily climb 20 - 25 trees and also do a very good cleaning job. This work was done for the entire farm in one or two days depending on the farm size. The farmers were very happy that we did a dedicated job and cleaned all the trees in a day or two. When we get calls from 2 or more farms on a single day, we split up into 2 or 3 groups and do our jobs. Sometimes we stay overnight at the farms and finish the entire work. This has proved to be very beneficial to the farmers as they can call us once in two or three months and get their work done in the entire farm. Otherwise they were all dependent on one or two traditional climbers who would come at their own free will. The farmers were very irritated with them as they would not come on time and would also demand more money for completing the job especially during festival times. Now we go as a group and finish the job within three days and they call us after 60 – 70 days. They are also able to plan their business and we are also happy to have regular customers.

The farmers are very happy with our work. They tell us to take any number of coconuts free of cost and also give us a lot of incentives during festival times. We never have any demands but they fulfill all our needs without us asking them. We are all very satisfied and content to work with them as we are respected for the work we do and are also paid what is due to us without any bargaining.

We understand that coconut farmers make profit and our jobs are dependent on his prosperity. So we realized that we should not make coconut farmer be dependent on us but we should help him to grow his business by our dedicated and timely work.

We have a very strong Group Philosophy. If we climb 100 trees together, we share the money evenly amongst us even if all of us would not have climbed the same number of trees. Similarly, if one person is in dire need of money, we outsource the entire farm operations to one or two of the members so that he gets the money needed and we support him in his bad times without any hesitation.

There is a huge demand for our work in this area. The coconut climbing skill has become a great resource for us and we are having a sustained source of income now. We printed 50 visiting cards and distributed it to the local coconut farmers. They in turn have shared our details with many other farmers and we get calls from nearby towns and villages. As a policy, we cater to our local villages first and then only go for outside calls. We have been having climbing jobs every day since we started the group. And we are very happy to note that we have completed all our commitments without any complaints. We stopped sharing visiting cards as we cannot handle more customers.

There are 5 such groups in Dindigul. We have a very good relationship amongst us. When we need more people their members join us and when they need more members

they call us to help them. We refer clients to each other and maintain a healthy relationship.

We are now seen as a boon to the coconut farmers and we are happy to be part of the farmer's success. We are extremely grateful to the Coconut Board and MSSRF for having given us this free training which has changed our lives forever!!

The group members are Rajasekar, Ramalingam, Palanishamy, Shakthivel, Selvaraj, Sivakumar, Venkatesh, Subburaj, Vellichamy, Perumal, Balaji & Nataraj.



Members of the Sri Ganapathy Boys Nanbargal team

FoCT Group at Tumkur

I have 4 acres of land and do coconut and palm agriculture. I came to know about the training from Prasanth Sir of KVK. Initially, I was very apprehensive of the climbing machine. Then I decided to attend the training and found it very useful for me. Before training I used to earn Rs.150 – 200. But now I am getting Rs.500 – 600. After FoCT training, I felt confident of coconut tree climbing and then began to give my phone numbers to other farmers. I am receiving calls from them and earn a handful. If there is any problem in machine I will contact the KVK office through phone call and they will give me good remedy. Prasanth Sir and Jagadish Sir encouraged me to form a new group. I formed a new group with 25 members and named it as “Maruthi”. First when we approached the farmers they hesitated to give us jobs. But now they are happy to call and give us job. When we get calls from the farmers, we go in groups and do the work. If anyone gets a call, they will inform it to the others. Farmers are happy and give wages happily because we finish the work in time and do a committed job. Sometimes they give extra money than what they said. As groups we are able to succeed a lot and we are getting more work. Now we are living a happy life. - Manjunath

The Alappuzha Group

Sudheer, Deepu, Praveen, Sachu, Aneeth, Reji and Suresh have formed a group and they are undertaking the harvesting on a group basis. They are working from 6.30 in the morning to four in the evening and is making up to Rs.1000/- per day. Praveen was a painter earlier and Reji and Pradeep were doing some other works. As they are having the climbing machine, they can now work even during rainy season. This team from Alappuzha is also attending to the calls of the farmers from Ernakulam district. The only practical difficulty they are having is carrying the machine to far off places.

FoCT Groups at Kollam

22 FoCTs from Kollam have formed a group based at Ambalakunnam. They have hired an auto and are undertaking harvesting on group basis. Another group with 15 FoCTs based at Kareepra is also formed. Both these units together have so far climbed more than 50,000 coconut trees.

Stories of change – Individuals – Men

Biju, Kollam

“Fortunately I was the only participant from my area. So I am covering 10 kilometer radius from my home. I could buy a bike for my conveyance and within a very short span of time I could finish the Bank loan. My clients are very happy with my service because I use the entire techniques taught to me during the training programme. Crown cleaning is very important to maintain the plant’s health because it helps to keep pests away. I get regular calls for organic pest control from /my clientele.

Seeing this some people from my area purchased the climbing device from the open market and started using it without proper training. They could not last long in the field due to lack of knowledge and training. They simply faded out from the scene. The training moulded me from an ordinary person to a skilled professional.

I maintain punctuality and that is what my clients appreciate most. I am able to generate a good income for myself. This has made me an essential and socially relevant component of the society I live in.”

Madhavan, Pallakad

“I am the youngest member of my family. As suggested by my elders I joined an ITI Course in Air conditioner and Refrigeration. In between I got some part time jobs here and there but not that rewarding. One of my friends told me about the FoCT programme and I attended out of curiosity. Initially, I used this device to pick coconuts in our farms and later helped in my friend’s farms. Gradually it became a regular income source for me. Today I am contributing the major share in our family income. We could renovate our old house and could buy a few house-hold equipment. I am amazed that a one-week programme I attended has brought in such a big change in my life that a full time two year career course could not.”

Ramesh Kumar, K.K. of Muthukad, Kozhikode

Ramesh Kumar’s father is a traditional coconut tree climber. He came to know about the FoCT training from KVK and attended the very first batch of training held at Kozhikode district from 17th August 2011. He has become a professional coconut tree climber and his self-confidence has improved after the training. Ramesh is getting regular calls from the nearby areas. Along with harvesting, he is doing crown cleaning, application of pesticides and the maintenance of palms. He is sharing his knowledge with the farmers and he advises the youth of his area that the FoCT training would give them regular employment and a regular income. Ramesh and his family is grateful to the Coconut Development board and KVK for giving him the opportunity for attending the training, which has changed his life and his thinking and has made him independent.

Stories of change – Individuals – Women

Selvarani, Odapadi village, Dindigul

“I was the first women from my village to enroll in the FoCT program. My husband and I are farm labourers. We were struggling to meet ends and could not afford to pay the school fees for my children. When this program was announced to start an alternate livelihood, I enrolled in the program amidst great opposition among the villagers especially the men. But my husband supported me and I enrolled. Today, my life has changed because of the training. I have taken up coconut climbing as a profession and I climb nearly 300 trees a month in the nearby villages. Initially the crown harvesting job was scary but now I am very confident about it. I used to wear a saree and climb initially but now I have started to wear a salwar like a college girl since it is more convenient.

The coconut farmers were very reluctant to call me initially as I was a female, but now, since I climb faster than the men, many farmers have started to call me. I climb 10 – 20 trees nearly every day. I discuss about the pest control and pest management techniques extensively with the farmers and they are very happy to listen to me and follow the advice I give them. Today I am earning a minimum of Rs.5,000/- a month and we no longer have financial problems in our family.”

Shaji Paul , Kozhikode

“Hard work is always rewarded and it has changed my life” says Shaji Paul of Mudugad, Kozhikode who has undergone the friends of coconut Tree Training from KVK Peruvannamuzhi, Kozhikode district, she owes this to Coconut Development Board and KVK who gave her the opportunity to undergo the training. Before joining the training programme, she was a casual labourer. Her family consists of her husband Paul and two daughters. Her husband is a mazdoor and he works only 15 days in a month. Now she is earning more than her husband and can run her family independently. After getting income from palm climbing, the condition of the family has improved. She could refund the loan she has taken from different sources. She is getting regular calls from farmers from her nearby areas. She is climbing 40 palms per day. People come with their vehicle to take her from her residence since she cannot carry the palm climbing machine alone. After availing her service, farmers are happy that they can regularly harvest the nuts after 45 days interval. She does the crown cleaning and is giving the necessary advises to the farmers for the proper maintenance of the palm and garden. She came to know of the training from newspaper and she contacted KVK for further information and registered her name for the training and attended the training conducted for women at KVK Peruvannamuzhi. Now she is planning to make a women’s group who have completed the training so that they can do the work on a group basis. Shaji is very proud of herself that she is self-employed and can meet her own expenses. With her earnings from this new job, she has opened a bank account in the Service Co-operative Bank. Shaji is a social worker also.

Activity 2: Networking with rural NGOs to offer FoCT Training

One of the most important aspects of any training program lies in the hands of the trainer. CDB has partnered with all the Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) located in the states and districts where the FoCT programs are launched. KVK's major objective is training and education of farmers, entrepreneurs, farm women, rural youth, financial institutions extension functionaries as well as rural voluntary organizations. KVKs are considered as an innovative and different than other training intuitions/organizations for its need based and skill oriented training programs with approach of 'learning by doing' and 'teaching by doing'.

CDB has partnered with all the KVKs in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and in the other states where the FoCT program is implemented. Apart from the KVKs CDB has partnered with the following 31 NGOs to implement the FoCT programme in 7 states.

Partnering NGOs in Kerala - 14

1. Gandhi Smaraka Grama Seva Kendram, SL Puram, Alappuzha
2. Local Economic Development Society(LEDS), Puthenvelikkara
3. Kudayathoor Development Society, Idukki
4. Malanadu Yuvajana Samskarikavedi, Idukki
5. Gandhi Study Centre, Thodupuzha, Idukki
6. Malabar Social Service Society (MASSS), Chamathachal,Kannur
7. YMCA, Kottiyam,Kollam
8. KSSS Samaritan Resource Centre, Cherpunkal, Kottayam
9. Ujjaiyini Cultural Centre, Koyilandy, Kottayam
10. Peoples Service Society, Palakkad
11. Pazhakulam Social Service Society, Pathanamthitta
12. Anugraha Social Service Society, Pathanamthitta
13. Wayand Social Service Society, Wayanad
14. Trivandrum Grameena Padana Kendram, Karakulam,Trivandrum

Partnering NGOs in Tamil Nadu - 4

1. Annai Teresa Soc.Devpt.Org, Thiruchirapally
2. M S Swaminathan Research Foundation VRC, Tamilnadu
3. Good Shepherd Health and Education Centre (GSHE) Coimbatore
4. Marutham Research Foundation, Sivagangai
5. Snehalaya Agri.Mgmt.Soc., Thirupur
6. Social Change And Development (SCAD), Thirunelveli
7. Tamil Nadu Peoples Welfare Assocaition (TAPWA), Pallapatty, Nilakottai, Dindigul

Partnering NGO in Gujarat - 1

1. KG Trust, Bhuj - Navadra, Veraval, Junagad 2

Partnering NGOs in West Bengal -1

1. Tamrallpta gauchha samithi, Tamluk
2. Ramakrishna Mission, Belurmath

Partnering NGOs in Maharashtra - 5

1. Mahila Kathya kandar sahakari sanstha LTD, Vengurle, Sindhudurg
2. Mandangad Shikshan Prasarak, Mandal Dapoli
3. Mahasakathi Khadi Gramodyog Trust, Bhuj
4. Siddivinayak Naral Utpadak Samugh Sanstha, Talavade
5. Krushak Kalyankari Sanstha, Chaul

Partnering NGOs in Assam -1

1. Ganadu Social Welfare Society, Guwathi

Partnering NGOs in Karnataka - 1

1. BAIF Development Research Foundation, Bangalore

Partners Talk

Man power is the major problem in almost all areas in our District Kozhikode. It is really a surprise that a six days programme can convert an ordinary person or a home maker to a skilled professional. We wish all the best to our participants.

We the members of Gandhi Smaraka Grama Seva Kendram are extremely happy to conduct the FoCT training programme in Alappuzha. It is indeed a programme designed for reinstating coconut farming with all its past glory.

In Palakkad coconut farming is not considered as a serious occupation for several years. Due to many reasons its production is declining. No proper interventions like FoCT training programs were conducted to reinstate coconut farming. It is for sure we can say that this is a historic movement and its results will be unveiled within a few years

YMCA, Kollam, has completed the FoCT programme successfully. We take this opportunity to thank the panel of trainers and their expertise. The participants were motivated, trained and cleared all their apprehensions and doubts. We are also realizing the scope of Coconut promotion only when we conduct this programme.

It is indeed a great opportunity for KVK to conduct the FoCT program. It was a great challenge initially to get women to enroll. We had never done many programs with a mixed crowd. We were very apprehensive at first but now it is a great learning for us. We are happy to empower the women through this training. This was both a skill building and a gender development program for us. - KVK Dindigul

Impact @ Tumkur by Mr.Prashanth, KVK, Tumkur

To develop a professional group of youth for harvesting and plant protection operations in coconut we in collaboration with Coconut Development Board organized the FoCT vocational training. We have conducted 4 training programs since Jan 2013 to 2015. Totally 80 rural youths have been undergone the training and provided the climbing machine. Tumkur is known for coconut farming and having highest area of 1.25 lakhs ha of land in Karnataka state. There is a great demand for coconut harvesting and a great future for the professional climbers. Traditional or manual climbing was more prone to accident that leads to death. FoCT is a detailed skill oriented training pattern with a lot of practical sessions. The climbing sessions were conducted by experienced master trainers. Till date 2 coconut tree climbers group has been created in Tumkur. Growers are more benefitted by the easy access of the coconut tree climbers in the region. Each trainee earns approximately Rs.15,000/- per month and climb 60 to 70 palms a day and charges Rs.30/- – Rs.40/- per palm. This is impact of the professional training.

FoCT has created professional in coconut tree climbers in the district.

- Generated self-employment for the rural youth.
- Improved the economic condition of youth.
- Timely harvesting of the coconut nuts.
- Timely availability of professionals and short period harvesting done.
- Low harvesting cost and high profit for growers due to timely harvest.
- Health of plant will be improved.

Still more programs can be conducted and youth can be trained as Tumkur is well-known district for coconut growing. Lots of opportunities can be generated for Tumkur as accessibility is an advantage for this district. Women trainees were not enrolling in the last few past batches due to their family culture of not allowing women out of the houses. But now women are also aware of this training and in the last batch we have 3 women trainees in our other branch.

This programme is a great boon to the coconut farmers of the Tumkur district.

Activity 3: Promoting insurance among Trainees

Kera Suraskha Insurance scheme for coconut tree climbers was introduced by Coconut Development Board to extend insurance coverage to traditional coconut tree climbers and Friends of Coconut Tree (FoCT) trainees against any personal accidents. Coconut Board is implementing the scheme through M/s.Oriental Insurance Company Ltd, Divisional Office, Trippunithura, Ernakulam district from 1st October 2014 onwards. Under this scheme, all the trainees under FoCT training programme are provided insurance coverage for one year from the first day of the training itself. The annual policy amount of Rs.66/- is borne by the Board during this period. On expiry of the policy, the beneficiaries will have to renew the policy.

Under this scheme the insured coconut tree climber is entitled to get a maximum financial benefit of Rs.1,16,750/- against accident related death, permanent total disablement, permanent partial disablement, hospital expenses reimbursement, ambulance charges, weekly compensation, bystander expenses in case of hospitalization, and funeral expenses in case of death.

Total number of trainees who have taken insurance after training - 42,948

Total Renewals among the insured till March 2015 - 2,059

All the partnering NGOs were unaware of the renewal process. Since all the villagers approached them for support, they are not able to guide them properly. This has led to the decline in the number of renewals.

Trainees Talk..

I never knew what insurance meant. Only after attending the FoCT training, I know about this. The trainers explained it very well and I think every farmer should have insurance. – Kollam Trainee

We are all happy about the insurance scheme and understand the need for it. We are having a great problem while renewing the insurance. It has been nearly 3 months since my insurance has expired and it has still not been renewed. KVK does not know what to do and they asked me to get in touch with the insurance company directly. When I contacted them they told me this is a group insurance and I cannot renew it without the others renewing it. I request CDB to guide us on this matter. - Krishnagiri Trainee

One FoCT trained boy, from our village, fell down from the coconut tree while he climbed the tree to do the crown cleaning. He had a fall and has broken his spine and is bedridden now. We tried to get the insurance claim for him, but were not able to get it. The NGO staff are unaware of it. We were given various reasons. 1. The insurance is valid only in Kerala, 2. The insurance was not renewed 3. This was not an accident but was the fault of the boy as he stepped on the palm which was wilting. We do not know how to help him as he is very young and is suffering a lot. But this made us realize the importance of insurance and we have now taken individual insurance from another insurance company. – Dindigul Trainee

One FoCT trained boy in our village was electrocuted while climbing as a coconut palm of the tree was touching the electric wire nearby. He was thrown out from the tree and fell down unconscious. We gave him first aid and he started to breathe. We rushed him to a hospital in an ambulance and saved his life. When we approached the insurance company for a claim they said that this was not an accident but it was the carelessness from his part and did not give him any money. The NGO could also not help us as they did not know about how to apply for claims. What was told about the insurance in the training is different from what we are experiencing.- Dindigul Trainee

Renewal of insurance policy is an impossible task. When we go to the insurance agency they say it is not issued from this office and please contact the agency. For this we need to go to the issuing office. Again it is informed that it is a group insurance and cannot be renewed locally. We need a solution for this. Palakkad Trainee

The need and benefit of Insurance were elaborated during the training programme. But no steps for issuing the insurance policy to the participants are taken till date. – Kozhikode Trainee

We are heard about insurance policies several times but most of them are about life insurance. If we can take an insurance policy just like vehicle insurance policies we can avoid the financial risks relating to any accident occurred while we are working with this device.- Allapuzha Trainee

Coordinator's comments

The villagers think that the insurance claim is valid for any accident that they face. According to them, since they attended the training they are insured for life and they can claim when they face any accident. We are unable to explain to them that the insurance is for accidents related to coconut climbing only. One trainee met with an accident while cycling to work. He wanted to claim insurance and made a big fuss at the office. We need to communicate clearly about the insurance scheme in the FoCT Training.- Dindigul

I like the training environment, food, and the basic facilities at the training centre. I got a lot of information on coconut farming and also realized the importance of saving and insurance. After the training I have opened bank account and have insurance. - Kollam

Objective2: To create employment opportunities for the Trainees in the coconut sector

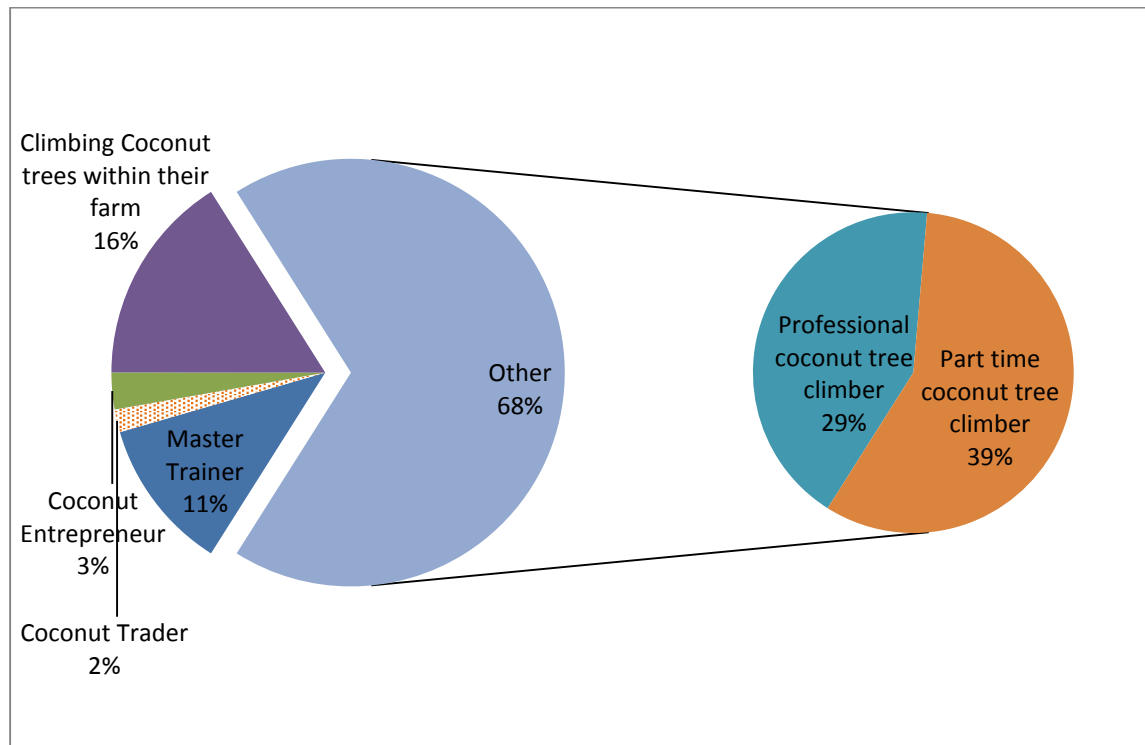
The objective of any skill training program is to make the participant employable. The FoCT program has provided a lot of employment opportunities for the Trainees in the coconut sector.

All the trainees who had undergone the FoCT program are using the skill taught to them. They use their skill in

- a. to harvest coconut in the their own farms
- b. take up coconut climbing as a part time profession
- c. take up coconut climbing as a full time profession

68% of the trainees had taken coconut tree climbing as a profession (full time + part time) while 16% of the farmers trained were using their skills for climbing coconut trees within their farms.

Graph 12: Occupation of FoCT Trainees- Post Training



Apart from this, the training has created new employment opportunities in the coconut sector. 11 % of the trainees have become Master Trainers. They help in the FoCT training programs and are a source of inspiration to the participants as they are role models for them. A few trainees have been inspired to start / revamp their coconut business and have become trader / entrepreneurs dealing with coconut.

Stories of Change

Andichamy, Dindigul – Master Trainer

“I am a graduate and was working in a cotton mill in Dindigul. My health did not permit me to continue there and hence I was jobless. My friend who attended the first batch of FoCT training referred me to enroll in the second batch. I joined the course and it changed my life forever. 12 of us who had enrolled in the program formed a group and we started plucking coconuts as a group from the local farms. The KVK Coordinator, Mr.Senthil Kumar, was impressed with me as I was a graduate. He identified my skills in communication and was very keen to make me a trainer. He was in constant touch with me and would call me whenever there was a FoCT Program. I have now been groomed as a Master trainer by him and I have started taking sessions. Now I have 2 jobs – a Master Trainer and a coconut tree climber.”

Jose, the preacher

Jose a trainee from Kollam was a charismatic preacher. After attending this training he goes for coconut climbing for five days and his work spreads over up-to even the neighboring district. He has made a bag for carrying the machine on his back. He carries the machine like a guitar on his back while travelling on his two wheeler. He is charging Rs.20 per tree and in city limits he charges Rs.30 per tree.

Babu, the fisherman

Babu a trainee from Alappuzha was a fisherman earlier. He enrolled in FoCT programme and now he is a climber and is earning a minimum of Rs.750/- per day. He now has two jobs as he goes fishing in the mornings and climbs coconut trees in the day.

Social Impact of the FoCT Training

Self-reliance among coconut farmers

The FoCT has led to a sustained solution to small coconut farmers by equipping them with professional climbing and harvesting skills. This has made them self-reliant and re-installed their confidence to work in the coconut sector. For those farmers who hire professional help for coconut harvesting, a coconut tree climber is a phone call away and he responds to his needs immediately. It is a boon for these farmers as there are many coconut tree climbers in the locality who can be contacted with ease.

Bridging the Gender divide

“Coconut tree climbing is a man’s job” – this adage has been broken by the FoCT training as many women have now been trained to climb coconut trees. This path breaking innovation of the CDB is applauded by all the trainees who have attended the program. The men are also happy that women can do this job and do not see them as competitors. This training has enabled gender equality and the traditional male profession has now opened a window of opportunity for women. Women climb the coconut trees in their farms or take it coconut climbing as an add-on profession and have started to earn money.

Timely harvesting of coconuts

The consistent supply of raw nuts for the market as well as for the processing sector can be ensured only by strict adherence to the regular harvesting schedule. In many areas, farmers are forced to seek help from migrant labourers, who charge exorbitant amounts, despite not being familiar with the art of coconut climbing. The scarcity of labour disrupts the harvesting cycle thus causing loss of income to the coconut farmers. As against the general norm of harvesting cycles of 45-60 days, farmers are forced to harvest only once in three to four months. This acute problem is being addressed and solved as more women and men are trained within the coconut farms and coconut producing areas and enough man power is created in rural areas for coconut climbing.

Safety

The climbing device is very safe and protects the climber from slipping. This has enabled the participants to lose their fear of climbing a tree within 2 days of the training. The climbing device has been instrumental in the success of the program and has motivated trainees to pursue coconut tree climbing either as a profession or for their personal reasons. It has minimized the reluctance to enter this field because of the occupational risk and the arduous labour involved in climbing tall coconut trees.

Motivated Families

It has been observed that most of the women, who have learnt the skill of coconut climbing, have inspired their children to learn the skill. Many of them have taught their children and the whole family is now motivated about climbing coconut trees and is also helping in coconut farming related activities. This renewed interest in the families has led to sustained coconut farming practice within families.

Prevention of rural migration & Youth empowerment

The prime target group for the FoCT program is rural youth and women. By training this category of people many of the youth and women have found gainful employment within the rural areas and hence have prevented them to migrating to other towns and cities for employment.

Boost in Local economy

The productivity of the coconut sector has been directly improved by the FoCT trainees. Many of the small coconut farmers have been equipped to handle their coconut harvesting activities independently. The big coconut farmers have also been able to do timely harvesting as they are able to hire more coconut tree climbers than before. This has directly led to the increase in their businesses which has further increased the local spend leading to a boost in the local economy.

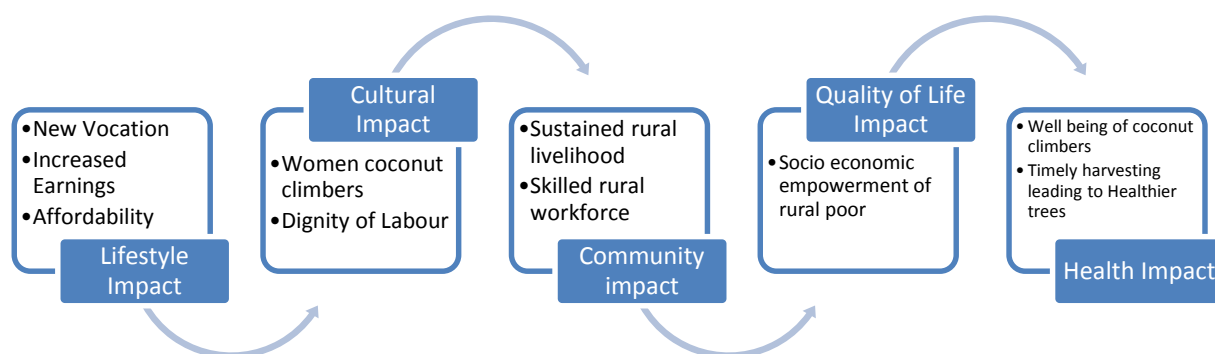
Dignity of Labour

The FoCT program has revolutionized made the profession of coconut tree climbers. Apart from bridging the gender divide, it has also become instrumental in lending a professional approach to this ancient profession. As the socio-economic condition of the traditional climbers has improved a lot post-training, the coconut tree climbers are now given a lot respect and dignity within their community. They are no longer treated as menial labourers but have earned a lot of respect and dignity for their work.

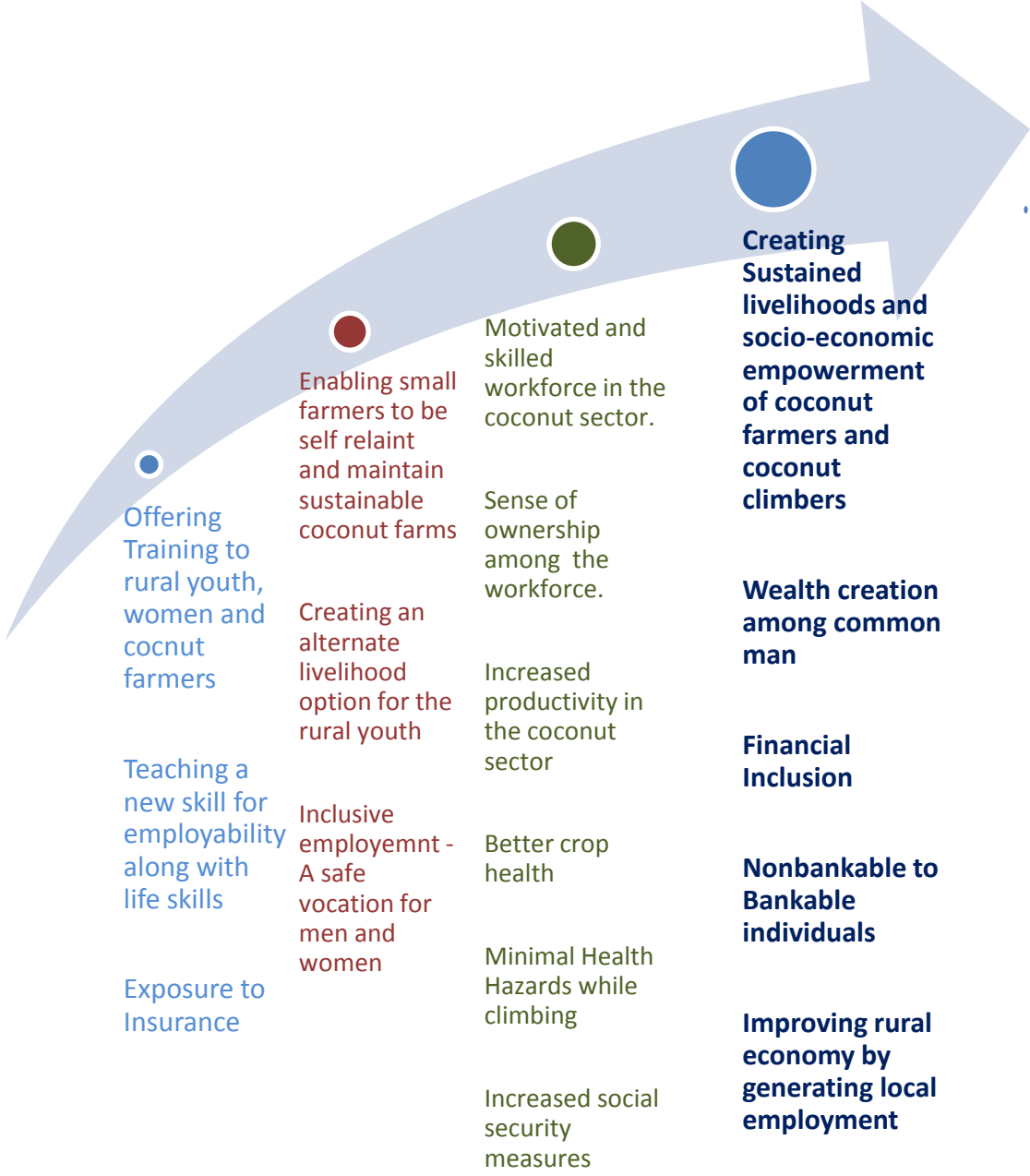
Financial Inclusion

The FoCT training has led to many of its participants opening bank accounts and having access to Insurance schemes thereby enabling Financial Inclusion among the rural population.

Based on the above, the Social Impact of the FoCT Training can be grouped into 5 overlapping categories - Life Style Impact, Cultural Impact, Community Impact, Quality of Life Impact and Health Impact.



OVERALL SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE FoCT TRAINING PROGRAM



8. Other Stakeholder Views

Mr.Naushad, KAICO

“KAICO, supplied approx. 10000 climbing devices to the Coconut Development Board. This has definitely improved the coconut harvesting. The scarcity of labour in coconut farms has been addressed. Very good training”

Mr.Kutti Krishnan, General Manager, RAIDCO

“RAIDCO is supplying around 7,000 – 10,000 climbing devices to the coconut Board every year. We feel very happy that this has benefited the common man and also enabled many people to get jobs. This device can be easily used by women and we find many women using this. It has changed their lifestyle.”

Resource Persons

Mr. G. Thirumalaichamy, Dindigul

“The FoCT Training programme is an excellent program. I handle the crown cleaning aspects and harvesting techniques. I appreciate the sincerity in each trainee when he attends the course. I enjoy answering the numerous questions they ask. Seeing most of them taking coconut climbing as a profession is very heart rending as this area was lacking skilled climbers.”

Mr. Sathiq Basha, Krishnagiri

“The FoCT programme has transformed the women in Krishnagiri district. I have never seen any other skill Training programme that has attracted women. We are having a waiting list of 200+ women who want to be trained to climb trees.”

9. Environmental Impact

Coconut is an ecologically sound crop. The numerous products from coconuts have less environmental impact than the synthetic ones. Coir, a byproduct of coconut, and the organic substances that make up coir products are fully biodegradable and therefore, do not cause pollution. Coir fiber products are used for soil stabilization, reinforcement, landscaping and soil erosion control. Coconut timber is also being widely used as there is an increasing scarcity and depleting supplies of other types of forest woods.

The FoCT initiative has encouraged coconut tree farmers not to fell trees and have motivated them to plant more coconut trees.

10.Economic Impact

Of the 3,510 respondents, 2104 were farmers owning land and coconut trees, and 1406 were people who were either working in the coconut sector or were interested to work in the coconut sector.

Impact on the small coconut farmers

The FoCT trainees surveyed and those having farms with 10 – 250 coconut trees, were asked to give details on the cost they incurred/saved every month on the following aspects before and after the training - Plucking coconuts, Incidental costs for coconut farming, Losses due to not plucking coconut at the right time, Profit by selling coconuts, and their personal savings. Only 440 responses were considered for analysis as their responses were complete.

Table 16 : Cost Benefit for coconut farmers

Activity	Before training	After Training	Gain
Plucking coconuts	1,530,156	604,245	925,911
Incidental costs for coconut farming (pruning, crown cleaning etc.)	471,800	93,585	378,215
Losses due to not plucking coconut at the right time	373,388	39,818	333,570
Profit by selling coconuts	1,093,246	2,259,686	1,166,440
Your personal savings	1,063,530	5,660,990	4,597,460

60% of the respondents were small farmers. Extrapolating this to the 42,948 FoCT trainees, round 25,700 trainees would be small farmers. Based on the feedback, the following details were arrived –

Table 17 : Increase in Income

	Survey Sample (440)	Extrapolated (25,700)
Average Increase in the monthly saving for a coconut farmer	Rs. 2675	Rs.6,87,42,243
Average reduction of expenses in plucking coconuts	Rs. 1357	Rs.3,48,74,900
Average Increase in profit by selling coconuts	Rs.1069	Rs.2,74,80,309
Average Increase in Income per tree	Rs. 62	Rs.15,93,400

Every farmer was having an average increase of Rs.62 per tree.

Then the total average monthly savings of small coconut farmers who had undergone the FoCT training would be **around Rs. 6.8 crore** and the total average increase in their profit would be **around Rs. 2.7 crores**.

Economic Impact on the Professional Climbers

The trainees who had chosen coconut climbing as a profession were asked to share their earning details before and after the training. On analyzing the data, it was found that the training has enabled upward mobility in incomes among the trainees.

Table 18 : Income slabs-Before & After Training

	Less than Rs.3000/-	3000- 5000	5000- 10000	10,000- 15,000	15,000- 20,000	20,000 – 25,000	Above 25,000
Before Training	51%	40%	26%	11%	6%	0%	0%
After Training	12%	31%	46%	21%	15%	6%	4%
Growth %			20%	10%	9%	6%	4%

Table 19 : - % of Increase through Income slabs

Income Slab (in Rs.)	Less than Rs.3,000	3,000 – 5,000	5,000 - 10,000	10,000- 15,000	15,000- 20,000	20,000 – 25,000	Above 25,000	Total % before Training
Less than Rs.3,000	12%	20%	12%	4%	2%	1%	0%	51%
3,000 – 5,000		11%	21%	5%	1%	1%	0%	40%
5,000 - 10,000			13%	8%	3%	1%	1%	26%
10,000- 15,000				3%	6%	1%	1%	11%
15,000- 20,000					2%	3%	2%	6%
20,000 – 25,000								0%
Above 25,000								0%
Total % after Training	12%	31%	46%	21%	15%	6%	4%	

51% of the trainees were earning Less than Rs.3,000 prior to the training and post training only 12% continued to be in that slab.

No trainee was earning above Rs.20,000 before training but 10% of the trainees were earning Rs.20,000+

Social Return on Investment (SROI)

While in financial management the term ROI refers to a single ratio, SROI analysis refers not to one single ratio but more to a way of reporting on value creation. It bases the assessment of value in part on the perception and experience of stakeholders, finds indicators of what has changed and tells the story of this change and, where possible, uses monetary values for these indicators. Some outcomes and impacts (for example, increased self-esteem, improved family relationships) cannot be easily associated with a monetary value. In order to incorporate these benefits into the SROI ratio, proxies are assigned for these values.

The Mission of FoCT is to generate sustainable employment opportunities in the coconut sector in India

FoCT's target was the rural youth and small coconut farmers belonging to low and middle income households to generate sustainable livelihoods for them and in turn increase the productivity of the coconut farms. The coconut climbing skill offered to them has enabled self-employment and created an alternate livelihood for many. It has become a sustainable solution for the coconut farmers who were otherwise at the mercy of the traditional climbers. It has also improved their standard of living and economic development, and further helped them to fulfill their aspirations. This has further led to the revived interest in the coconut sector, an increase in the manpower in the sector and thus leading to the growth of a sustained coconut ecosystem.

Any training leads to development of skills which enables the trainee to become employable. The Socio- economic impact can be captured based on these two parameters

1. Skill development and
2. Sustainable livelihood

A: Impact Weightage

Each of these impacts was assumed with weightages which were decided based on the futuristic impact it had for a sustained coconut ecosystem.

Impact	Weightage
Skill development	1
Sustainable livelihood	2

B: Assigned Weightage

Based on the above, the trainees were questioned on certain criteria under 2 heads

Skill development

Interest to climb coconut trees
Skills to diagnose / detect problems in coconut trees
Communication skills

Networking skills
Career in coconut farming
Interpersonal skills (working with individuals & groups)

Sustainable livelihood

Self-esteem and confidence
 Importance of safety measures
 Number and value of assets owned by you
 Loans/ Liabilities
 Increase in personal income
 Betterment in your life style
 Your savings potential

Personal Health
 Your social status
 Your capacity to provide a better life to your family
 Your capacity for self- development
 Respect from family
 Importance of Insurance
 Importance of Savings

They had to select one among the 3 options Improved /Remains the same /Decreased

Every Improved signifies development, and decreased signifies a reduced interest to develop the skill in the sector and remains the same meant that the trainees found no change in growth.

Hence, for Improved the assigned weightage was 1, for Remains the same it was 0 and for Decreased it was assigned -1.

The cost of each training program for 20 participants was Rs.56,500. Thus the training cost per participant was Rs.2,825. The cost of the climbing device was procured at Rs.2,300. CDB also sponsored Rs.66 towards the Insurance scheme for each participant. Hence cost per participant was Rs.5,191. The money spent for training was allocated for skill development and the cost of climbing device and insurance was allocated for sustainable livelihood.

Table 20:

	A	B	C	D	(A*B*C)/ (C-D)
	Impact Weightage	Assigned Weightage	Total cost of FoCT training (5191*42,948)	Money spent	SROI
Skill development	1	0.99	222,943,068	121,328,100	1.81
Sustainable Livelihood	2	0.87	222,943,068	101,614,968	3.81

Average SROI = 2.81

Thus, Social Return On Investment – Average Social value of Re 1 spent on a FoCT trainee is 2.81

The SROI for providing a sustainable livelihood was 3.81 thus proving that the FoCT program was in line with its mission of providing a sustainable livelihood option for the rural youth of India

11.Key Achievements

1. The FoCT training program is being implemented in the major States and Union Territories in India where coconut is grown. It is currently being offered in 13 states from 5 zones in India.
2. 42,948 participants have attended the FoCT training from Aug 2011 – March 2015
3. 1,861 training programmes offered from Aug 2011 – March 2015.
4. Among the Southern States, 73% of the trainees hail from Kerala and 1,138 Training programs have been conducted across all the districts of Kerala.
5. Around 4% of the trainees enrolled were women. Tamilnadu, Kerala and Maharashtra were able to attract many women trainees. All woman batches are also conducted in these states. 1,806 women have been trained
6. 51% of the trainees surveyed were less than 35 years and the 26% were above 40 years
7. Of the 3510, trainees surveyed, it was found that Tumkur and Kozhikode had over 50 graduates who had enrolled in the course 92% of the Trainees surveyed were rural unemployed youth who had only completed school education (10th or 12th). 27 trainees surveyed were post graduates and 248 were graduates.
8. Of the 3510 trainees interviewed, 2104 were owners of farmlands and 1,406 trainees were employed either as labourers, farm hands, drivers, masons etc. The 2104 farmland owners were primarily holding small farms varying from 2 cents to a few acres. Apart from farming operations some of them were also working as labourers and farm hands
9. 69% of the participants enrolled in the FoCT program as they wanted to get formally trained in climbing coconut trees and were interested to know about coconut farming and climbing.
10. 71% of the trainees had never climbed a coconut tree prior to the training.
11. The Trainees knew about the FoCT program mainly from their friends or from the KVKs / NGOs in their neighborhood. Nearly 23% of the participants had read about the training in Magazines / Newspapers. 38% enrolled as they were referred by an NGO and 14% had read the brochures, publicity materials or had heard about the program in the local media.
12. 96% of the Trainees are climbing coconut trees regularly.
13. 94% of the Trainees have referred a participant to enroll in the FoCT programme
14. Over 90% of the participants had reported on an Improvement in their skillsets – communication, interpersonal skills, networking skills - after attending the FoCT Training
15. 63% of the trainees who had not climbed a single coconut tree prior to the training were climbing trees every day.
16. Post training, 845 coconut farmers have planted around 10000+ coconut trees showing a renewed interest in coconut farming among the trainees.
17. CDB has partnered with all the KVKs in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and in the other states where the FoCT program is implemented. Apart from the KVKs CDB has partnered with the 31 NGOs to implement the FoCT programme in 7 states.

18. 68% of the participants did not know anything about Insurance and 28% knew to some extent.
19. 46 % of the participants have taken to coconut climbing as a full time profession and 8% have started coconut climbing as their part time profession.
20. 26% of the participants who own small coconut farms have stopped employing the traditional climbers to pluck coconut as they are trained to pluck them. The losses faced due to not harvesting coconut at the right time have been minimized by these farmers and their savings and income has increased.
21. A sustained livelihood option has been created for 74% of the trainees as a result of the FoCT training.
22. Traditional climbers who have enrolled in this program are now able to climb more trees and earn more money.
23. 51% of the trainees were earning Less than Rs.3,000 prior to the training and post training only 12% continued to be in that slab.
24. No trainee was earning above Rs.20,000 before training but 10% of the trainees were earning Rs.20,000+
25. All the FoCT participants have been insured under the Kera Suraskha Insurance scheme, wherein they are entitled to get a maximum financial benefit of Rs.1,16,750/- against accident related death, permanent total disablement, permanent partial disablement, hospital expenses reimbursement, ambulance charges, weekly compensation, bystander expenses in case of hospitalization, and funeral expenses in case of death.
26. Due to increased earnings and implementation of the Kera Suraksha insurance schemes, Financial inclusion has been made possible for this group of people who were otherwise not having bank accounts or insurance policies.
27. Average monthly saving for a coconut farmer was Rs. 2,675 after the training. And the average Increase in profit bt selling coconuts was around Rs. 1069. The average Increase in Income per tree was Rs. 62.

28. Around 10.5 % of the respondents who had taken to coconut climbing as a profession were earning Rs.10,000/- more every month after the training and 60% were earning above Rs.3,000 every month.
29. The SROI calculation reveals that the social value of Rs.1 spent on a FoCT trainee for his skill development is converted to Rs.2.81 (281%) and it leads to a sustained livelihood option for him.

12. Social Impact Rating

SAN, India has evolved a set of 10 criteria on the basis of which the community based training programs would be assessed for its social impact. They include

1. Addressing a socio-economic issue prevalent in the local community
2. An innovative, inclusive and simple curriculum that can be delivered effectively
3. Providing livelihood/ alternate jobs to trainees
4. Ensuring minimum wages for trainees
5. Renewed interest and community trust in engaging in coconut farming related activities
6. Offering Social security for the trainees
7. Improving the socio-economic conditions of the community
8. Scalability of the programme
9. Sustainability of the programme
10. Environment friendly practices

The training program would be rated on a scale of 1 -10 on all the criteria mentioned above. Based on the average rating, the community based training would be classified as below-

Rating	Grade	Classification
1 - 3	Poor	Not a socially relevant training
3 - 5	Satisfactory	Evolving as a Socially relevant training – Needs to relook on its activities
5 – 7	Good	Socially relevant training – Needs mentoring support to scale
7 - 9	Very Good	A Socially relevant training impacting society and facilitating social change – Needs to work on sustainability measures
10	Excellent	A perfect sustainable training module that can be replicated with ease

Criteria	Rating	Reasons for the rating
1. Addressing a socio-economic issue prevalent in the local community	8	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Issues addressed</u></p> <p>a. People not interested to pursue traditional coconut climbing as it is a difficult and risky profession</p> <p>b. Dearth of coconut tree climbers leading to the weakening of coconut related businesses</p> <p>c. Rural migration due to lack of local employment opportunities</p> <p>96% of the trainees are involved in coconut climbing</p> <p>46 % of the participants have taken to coconut climbing as a full time profession 8% as their part time profession.</p> <p>26% of the participants who own small coconut farms have stopped employing the traditional climbers to pluck coconut as they are trained to pluck them</p> <p>Dignity of the coconut climbing profession has improved to a large extent</p>
2. An innovative, inclusive and simple curriculum that can be delivered effectively	9	<p>The FoCT is a pioneering and innovative training program</p> <p>95% of the trainees have rated 4+ out of 5 for the training module</p> <p>FoCT programme has been attended by 42,948 individuals across India and over 1,861 training programs have been organized till March 2016</p> <p>4% of the trainees are women</p>

Criteria	Rating	Reasons for the rating
3. Providing sustained livelihood/ alternate jobs to trainees	8	<p>Providing a free coconut tree climbing device to all participants</p> <p>The program targets the rural youth who have no prior experience in coconut climbing</p> <p>62% of trainees have chosen coconut climbing as an alternate livelihood in the coconut sector</p> <p>98% of the trainees have reported a renewed self-esteem and confidence post training</p> <p>A new livelihood for women</p>
4. Ensuring minimum wages for trainees	8	<p>Traditional Coconut tree climbers were charging Rs.20 -40 per tree and could climb a maximum of 25 trees a day</p> <p>60% of trainees were earning Rs.3,000 / month more than what they were earning before</p> <p>They were able to climb a minimum of 40 trees a day and charging between Rs.30-50 per tree</p>
5. Renewed interest and community trust in engaging in coconut farming related activities	8	<p>94% of the Trainees have referred a participant to enroll in the FoCT programme</p> <p>Coconut climbing was always an individual profession. All districts have reported coconut tree climber groups formed by the FoCT Trainees belonging to the same area. There has been a great demand for their services by the bigger coconut farms.</p> <p>Post training, 845 coconut farmers have planted around 10000+ coconut trees showing a renewed interest in coconut farming among the trainees.</p>

Criteria	Rating	Reasons for the rating
6. Offering Social security for the trainees	5	<p>All trainees are being given free Insurance premiums for one year.</p> <p>68% of the trainees were not aware of Insurance schemes</p> <p>Renewal issues not addressed</p>
7. Improving the socio-economic conditions of the community	8	<p>SROI – 2.81</p> <p>Average monthly saving for a coconut farmer was Rs. 2,675 after the training.</p> <p>Average Increase in profit by selling coconuts was around Rs. 1069 per month.</p> <p>Average increase in income per tree was Rs. 62 thereby leading to the prosperity of the farmers and the climbers</p>
8. Scalability of the programme	8	<p>42,948 participants</p> <p>1,861 training programs held</p> <p>Main Networking partner – Krishi Vigyan Kendra – with a presence all over India</p> <p>Around 11% of the trainees have become Master Trainers</p>
9. Sustainability of the programme	5	<p>The FoCT training programme is offered free.</p> <p>Rs.56,500/- is spent for the training</p> <p>Free Trainings can be offered only for a limited time.</p> <p>Ownership of the training to be transferred from CDB to the beneficiaries.</p>

Criteria	Rating	Reasons for the rating
10. Environment friendly practices	8.5	Coconut harvesting and pest control modules help climbers to maintain healthy coconut palms. Teaching timely harvesting techniques has led to better maintenance and yield of coconut palms
Average	7.55	

With a rating of 7.55, the FoCT Training has been certified as a **Very Good socially relevant training programme impacting society and facilitating social change.**

13.Recommendations

The following are the recommendations to enhance the sustainability of the FoCT programme.

1. A one day refresher course could be offered to all the trainees after one year as they would like to share their experiences and also be updated on any new happenings in the coconut sector.
2. A session of live interaction with alumni who have become coconut tree climbers to be included in the training module which will inspire the trainees to make them understand the role of a coconut tree climber to improve the coconut ecosystem.
3. Films depicting the safety measures while climbing trees should be used during the training session as it would give the trainees an exposure on how to handle crisis situations like encounters with Snakes / bees while crown cleaning. *The women trainees and some of the trainees who have taken to climbing as a new profession are not exposed to such encounters.*
4. The climbing device should be able to cater to climbing all size of trees. If not, a few climbing devices for climbing fatter trunks to be made available at the NGO partners office which can be hired by the trainees whenever needed.
5. The repair and maintenance of the Climbing device plays a major role as there are no shops in the local areas that could do the repairs. A few climbers could be trained on repair operations of the climbing device and they could start an authorised repair shop that would cater to the needs of the climbers using the climbing device in the area. These shops could also sell a few climbing devices as they were not easily available in the market.
6. Many trainees have joined together and formed Coconut tree climbers groups which has created a great impact among the large coconut farmers and Coconut producer companies. CDB to support these groups by giving them financial or technical assistance to enable them to sustain their groups and also start group initiatives/enterprises revolving around coconut.
7. The Climbing device could have a safety belt with an alarm/bell which would indicate whether the belt has been properly fixed or not. This will ensure greater protection to the climbers.
8. A safety kit to be provided to all trainees comprising of a protection gear, helmet, and a first aid box to ensure their safety at all times.

9. An identity card can be given to all the trainees who have completed the program. This would give them a social recognition and they would be qualified to be known as professional coconut tree climbers.
10. A regular orientation to coconut value add products should be given to the trainees as they are in constant touch with coconut farmers and they could create awareness among them about the varied products that can be made using coconut.
11. CDB to give proper instructions/guidance to the partnering NGOs with regard to the Insurance renewals. The clarification with regard to personal and group insurance should be handled during the training program, to make the trainees understand the role of CDB with regard to paying the insurance premium.
12. CDB to highlight the FoCT training at all the forums and create more publicity for the program across India. This would enable many more youth to participate and benefit from the program
13. CDB to ensure that all Producer companies/Federations employ FoCT trainees. This will motivate many more youth to enrol in the program and get gainful employment
14. Orientation in Coconut related risk management programmes to be given to the coconut tree climbers. Coconut farmers in Dindigul are unaware on why and how to mitigate risks at coconut plantations. Coconut tree climbers, if trained on these aspects could educate the coconut farmers on the dos and don'ts of coconut cultivation.
15. CDB should encourage model coconut farms to be created in each district by the FoCT trainees. These farms or hubs should be centres of excellence in coconut farming and should provide training and support to the coconut farmers of each district in all aspects of coconut farming. These model farms should conduct the FoCT training and other trainings offered by CDB. By giving ownership to these groups, CDB can slowly phase out their operations and make these hubs to carry out the trainings in a sustained manner.
16. CDB to recommend Producer Companies to conduct the FoCT programmes as part of their social responsibility and make them avail subsidies from National Skill Development Centres.
17. CDB needs to focus on sustainability measures to enable the continuation and sustenance of the programme.
18. A directory of FoCT Master trainers and resource persons to be maintained at the state level.

14.Compliance

As the Coconut Development Board is a statutory body established under the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, it maintains all the regulatory and quality standards with which it is required to comply and affirm with the Ministry.

15.Plans for Dialogue with Stakeholders

The report shall be uploaded on the Coconut Development Board website for the general public to view it. The soft version of the report shall be sent to all the customers on request

16.Plans for the next Social Accounting Cycle

CDB would draft its social accounts every two years. All the recommendations suggested in the current set of accounts would be implemented in the next cycle and reported upon.

17.ANNEXURES

Annexure 1 - Impact Map of FoCT

Objective 1: To tackle the problem of unavailability of coconut tree climbers for coconut farming and plant protection activities by				
Activity	Input	Output	Outcome	Social Impact
Offering the “Friends of Coconut Tree” training to coconut farmers and unemployed youth	No. of Trainees	No. of Coconut farmers trained	Reduction of fear in climbing trees	Safety of coconut tree climbers
	No. of Trainers	No. of coconut tree climbers	Reduced dependence on climbers for small farmers	Sustained income for coconut farmers
		No of entrepreneurs groomed	Regular and better coconut harvesting	Dignity of labour
		No. of alternate livelihoods created	Better plant Protection systems	Better quality and yield of coconuts
			Minimal losses in agriculture due to falling of coconut palms and increase in earnings	Improved life style for small famers
			Family members interested to climb trees	Increase in climbers within the family and stigma of coconut climbing as a dangerous profession has reduced.
			Coconut Producer companies can be formed and can have a perennial supply of coconut tree climbers	Increase in Economy due to betterment in coconut related businesses

Activity	Input	Output	Outcome	Social Impact
Networking with rural NGOs to offer FoCT Training	No. of NGOs partnered No. of NGO Trainers	No. of villages covered	Strengthens the NGOs mission Enables them to provide an innovative training program that directly helps in the welfare of the farmers in their neighborhood	Safety of climbers Sustained income for coconut farmers Better quality and yield of coconuts – Healthier palms Improved income for small famers
Promoting Insurance among Trainees	No. of Trainees who were insured under group insurance	No. of Trainees who were insured under group insurance No of Trainees who renewed the insurance	Valuing the life of a coconut tree climber Motivating youth to fearlessly opt for coconut climbing as a profession	Providing social security Financial Inclusion

Objective 2: To Provide employment opportunities for the Trainees				
Activity	Input	Output	Outcome	Social Impact
Coconut tree climbers	No. of trainees who were unemployed before training	No. of trainees who post-training took to coconut climbing as their 1. full time profession 2. Part time profession	An alternate employment opportunity for unemployed rural youth	Sustainable employment opportunity
Entrepreneurs	No. of trainees	No. of trainees who started their own enterprise No. of 1. Enterprises started 2. Group Enterprises	An alternate employment opportunity for unemployed rural youth	Sustainable employment opportunity
Objective 3: To Provide sustainable solutions to small coconut farmers				
Activity	Input	Output	Outcome	Social Impact
Making them self-reliant and instilling their confidence	No. of coconut farmers who underwent the training	No of farmers who climb trees	New skill developed Reduced dependence on climbers for small farmers Regular and better coconut harvesting Minimal losses in agriculture due to falling of coconut palms Family members interested to climb trees	Safety of climbers Sustained income for coconut farmers Better quality and yield of coconuts Improved income for small famers Sustaining coconut farming activity within the family

ANNEXURE 2 - QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaire for the FoCT Trainees – Coconut tree climbers

1. Name
2. Age:
3. Gender: Male / Female
4. Educational Qualification: 10th std / 12th Std / Graduate / Post Graduate
5. When did you complete the FoCT Training?

6. Your occupation
 - a. Working in Private firm
 - b. Coconut Farmer
 - c. Working in coconut farms
 - d. Agriculture related work
 - e. Labourer
 - f. Student
 - g. Others...pls specify_____
7. What is the size of the farmland you own?
8. How many coconut trees do you have in your farm?
9. Have you climbed a coconut tree before the FoCT Training? Yes / No
10. How did you know about the Friends of the Coconut Project
 - a. Publicity materials b. Newspaper/Magazines c. Media
 - d. Friend / Colleague e. NGO reference f. Any other
11. Tick the reasons why you joined the Friends of Coconut training

Sno	Reason	Tick
a	Get a formal training in coconut climbing	
b	Hail from a traditional Coconut tree climbers family	
c	Coconut Board's involvement in the Project	
e	A good job in the coconut sector	
f	Understand the nuances involved in coconut farming	
g	Update my knowledge in the latest developments in the coconut sector	
H	Start an enterprise around coconut	
I	Any other – please specify	

12. Impact of Training

Theoretical inputs	Were you aware of this before training Yes (√) No(X) To some extent (-)	Have you been able to apply this learning at work Yes (√) No(X) To some extent (-)	Rate the training (1-10)
a. Coconut climbing techniques			
b. Coconut harvesting operations and crown cleaning aspects			
c. Spraying and pest control operation			
d. Pollination and hybridization techniques			
e. Plant protection measures			
f. Identification of tender nut, mature coconut and seed nut			
g. Developing Leadership quality and communication skills			
h. Entrepreneurship development skills			
i. Thrift/ Savings management			
j. Yoga			
k. Social security – Insurance, Pension, PF			
l. MILLI			

13. Have the following skills / awareness Improved post training

	Improved	Remains the same	Decreased
a. Interest to climb coconut trees			
b. Skills to diagnose / detect problems in coconut trees			
c. Communication skills			
d. Networking skills			
e. Coconut farming business			
f. Interpersonal skills (working with individuals & groups)			
g. Self-esteem and confidence			
h. Importance of safety measures			
i. Importance of Insurance			
j. Importance of Savings			

14. On completion of the Training do you (can tick more than one)

- a. Pluck Coconuts within your farm
- b. Pluck Coconuts as a profession
- c. Pluck Coconuts as a side business
- d. Any Other

15. Please rate the following training components on a scale of 1 -5 (1 lowest)

Components	Rating
a) FoCT Programme module	
b) The mix of the class	
c) The coconut climbing Machine	
d) Guidance by the Resource Persons	
e) Coconut Development Boards involvement in FoCT	

16. Do you think 6 days of training was _____ Too short / Perfect / Too lengthy

17. Do you have any problems in the climbing device while

- a. Climbing the tree
- b. Getting down from the tree
- c. Plucking the coconuts
- d. No problem at all

18. Would you like to have some modifications in the climbing device

- a. Increase in length of the Rope
- b. Decrease in length of rope
- c. Increase in size of pedal
- d. Decrease in size of pedal
- e. Any other, pls specify

19. How many times have you approached the NGO for solving some problems with the device?

20. Have you recommended any of your friend/relative to enroll in FoCT training? Yes / No

21. Are you interested in becoming a Master Trainer? Yes / No

22. How many trees do you climb in one month?

- a. Before FoCT Training _____
- b. After FoCT Training _____

23. In what ways does your family support you

- a. Joins you in climbing trees
- b. Helps in collecting coconuts
- c. No family support
- d. Any other

24. Post training, are you in touch with the following people?

	Yes	No	In what context
a. Faculty/Resource Persons			
b. FoCT participants			
c. Coconut Board members			

25. List the cost you incurred/saved every month for -

	Before Training	After Training
Plucking coconuts		
Incidental costs for coconut farming		
Losses due to not plucking coconut at the right time		
Profit by selling coconuts		
Your personal savings		

26. Please indicate the changes you have experienced in the following aspects (Please tick the relevant boxes)

	Improved	Remains the same	Decreased
Growth of your Coconut business			
Time spent waiting for the coconut tree climber's services			
Time to concentrate on your other agricultural needs			
Your family's interest in coconut farming			
Creating a Sustainable coconut farming ecosystem			

27. Please indicate impact of this training on your rural community in the following aspects (Please tick the relevant boxes)

	Improved	Remains the same	Decreased
Growth of Coconut business			
Coconut climbing as an alternate livelihood			
Coconut Production			
Coconut related businesses			
No. of coconut trees			
Coconut farming			
Coconut protection			
Loss in coconut business			
Interest in coconut farming			

28. Post training, how many new coconut trees have you planted?

29. Any other feedback

Questionnaire for the FoCT Trainees – Coconut Professionals

1. Name
2. Age:
3. Gender: Male / Female
4. Educational Qualification: 10th std / 12th Std / Graduate / Post Graduate
5. When did you complete the FoCT Training?

6. What was your occupation prior to the training
 - a. Working in Private firm
 - b. Coconut Farmer
 - c. Working in coconut farms
 - d. Agriculture related work
 - e. Labourer
 - f. Others...pls specify _____

7. How did you know about the Friends of the Coconut Project

g. Publicity materials	b. Newspaper/Magazines	c. Media
d. Friend / Colleague	e. NGO reference	f. Any other

8. Tick the reasons why you joined the Friends of Coconut training

Sno	Reason	Tick
a	Get a formal training in coconut climbing	
b	Hail from a traditional Coconut tree climbers family	
c	Coconut Board's involvement in the Project	
d	Stipend was attractive	
e	A good job in the coconut sector	
f	Understand the nuances involved in coconut farming	
g	Update my knowledge in the latest developments in the coconut sector	
H	Start an enterprise around coconut	
I	Any other – please specify	

9. Impact of Training

Theoretical inputs	Were you aware of this before training Yes (√) No(X) To some extent (-)	Have you been able to apply this learning at work Yes (√) No(X) To some extent (-)	Rate the training (1-10)
m. Coconut climbing techniques			
n. Coconut harvesting operations and crown cleaning aspects			
o. Spraying and pest control operation			
p. Pollination and hybridization techniques			
q. Plant protection measures			
r. Identification of tender nut, mature coconut and seed nut			
s. Developing Leadership quality and communication skills			
t. Entrepreneurship development skills			
u. Thrift/ Savings management			
v. Yoga			
w. Social security – Insurance, Pension, PF			
x. MILLI			

10. Have the following skills / awareness Improved post training

	Improved	Remains the same	Decreased
k. Interest to climb coconut trees			
l. Skills to diagnose / detect problems in coconut trees			
m. Communication skills			
n. Networking skills			
o. Career in coconut farming			
p. Interpersonal skills (working with individuals & groups)			
q. Self-esteem and confidence			
r. Importance of safety measures			
s. Importance of Insurance			
t. Importance of Savings			
u. Consuming alcohol (if applicable)			

11. On completion of the Training have you become (can tick more than one)
- Coconut tree climber
 - Master Trainer
 - Neera Technician
 - Coconut Trader
 - Coconut Entrepreneur
 - Coconut Consultant for local NGOs
 - Any Other

12. Please rate the following training components on a scale of 1 -5 (1 lowest)

Components	Rating
f) FoCT Programme module	
g) The mix of the class	
h) The coconut climbing Machine	
i) Guidance by the Resource Persons	
j) Coconut Development Boards involvement in FoCT	

13. Do you think 6 days of training was Too short / Perfect / Too lengthy

14. Do you have any problems in the climbing device while

- Climbing the tree
- Getting down from the tree
- Plucking the coconuts
- No problem at all

15. Would you like to have some modifications in the climbing device

- Increase in length of the Rope
- Decrease in length of rope
- Increase in size of pedal
- Decrease in size of pedal
- Any other, pls specify

16. How many times have you approached the NGO/Coconut Board for solving some problems with the device?

17. Have you recommended any of your friend/relative to enroll in FoCT training? Yes / No

18. If No, will you recommend? Yes / No

19. Are you interested in becoming a Master Trainer? Yes / No

20. Post training, are you in touch with the following people?

	Yes	No	In what context

d. Faculty/Resource Persons			
e. FoCT participants			
f. Coconut Board members			

ECONOMIC IMPACT

21. How many trees do you climb in one day?

- a. Before FoCT Training _____ b. After FoCT Training _____

22. In what ways does your family support you

- a. Joins you in climbing trees
 b. Helps in collecting coconuts
 c. No family support
 d. Any other

23. Economic Growth

	Improved	Remains the same	Decreased
Number and value of assets owned by you			
Loans/ Liabilities			
Increase in personal income			
Betterment in your life style			
Your social status			
Your savings potential			
Your capacity to provide a better life to your family			
Your capacity for self-development			
Personal Health			
Respect from family			

24. Assets owned by you

Assets	Tick the relevant assets	
	Currently owning	Owned before the Training
a. House		
b. Agricultural Land		
c. Two wheeler		
d. Four wheeler		

e. Shares / Fixed Deposits		
f. Others (please specify)		

25. Tick your approximate monthly salary

Before Training

- a. Less than Rs.3,000
- b. 3,000 – 5,000
- c. 5,000 - 10,000
- d. 10,000- 15,000
- e. 15,000- 20,000
- f. 20,000 – 25,000
- g. Above 25,000

After Training

- a. Less than Rs.3,000
- b. 3,000 – 5,000
- c. 5,000 - 10,000
- d. 10,000- 15,000
- e. 15,000- 20,000
- f. 20,000 – 25,000
- g. Above 25,000

26. How do you think that this training can contribute to the productive and sustainable coconut farming ecosystem?

27. Any other feedback

8. Did you face any problems in

		Reasons for the problem
a. Identifying local youth interested to work in Coconut Sector	Yes / No	
b. Getting Resource Persons for the training	Yes / No	
c. Honing the Skills in Communication & Leadership of the participants	Yes / No	
d. Getting placement opportunities in coconut holdings / FPOs	Yes / No	
e. Providing Market linkages for the participants (if needed)	Yes / No	
f. Providing/Renewing Insurance for the trainees	Yes / No	

9. How would you rate the impact of the FoCT programme on the trainees based on

Criteria	Improved	Remains the same	Decreased	Rating (1-5)
Their interest to pursue coconut farming				
Growth in the coconut business				
Social Security – Insurance				
Financial Inclusion				
Social Status				
Motivating the next generation to be interested in farming				
Creating a Sustainable coconut farming ecosystem				

10. Your feedback on Coconut Board’s initiative to Create professionals in the coconut sector through “Friends of Coconut Tree” Training

11. How do you think the FoCT project generates employment opportunities in the coconut sector

12. Your feedback to Coconut Board to improve their reach of the FoCT programme.

13. List of villages from where participants hail

14. List of Resource Persons