



A Study about the opportunities and challenges in the coir industry to ensure employees' wellbeing through proper reward and recognition systems

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ABSTRACT:

Indian traditional cottage industries with a focus on employment include the coir industry. Added than 80% of the world's coir fiber is produced in India, making it the greatest coir producer in the world. India's two main producers of coir and coir-derived goods are Kerala and Karnataka. The Kerala-based coir sector, which also provides jobs, is now expanding to other Indian states that also cultivate coconuts. The needs of the export market have been the main focus of product value addition. Non-traditional goods are essential to the coir industry's future. Lack of knowledge on the creation of value-added goods is the main issue the coir sector now faces. Therefore, raising awareness and offering training are urgently needed. Private manufacturers account for 90% of the world's exports of coir, with co-operatives and other government-run businesses making up the other 10%. The coir business boosts the nation's economy by giving people, especially in rural regions, work opportunities and revenue. It is a labour-intensive sector that employs more than 7,00,000 people (as of the end of March 2017, according to the Coir Board's annual report), who are overwhelmingly from rural areas and come from socioeconomically challenged groups. Only 8% of the coir and coir-related items produced in India are exported; the other 92% are used domestically. For the purpose of comprehensive employee development and successful health promotion, health and wellness are crucial for employees. It improves productivity, raises morale, increases job satisfaction, reduces turnover, and prevents time wasted due to illness, stress, or absence. Overall, it is advantageous for both companies and employees.

Key words: Coir, Value-added product, Rural areas, Opportunities for export and Employees wellness.

INTRODUCTION:

Coir and coir-based goods are produced and exported in the most quantity by India. Currently, coir and its products are exported to more than 80 countries, with the United States

accounting for the largest share of exports (more than 40%). The main product expected to increase significantly over the next few years is probably pith and coir geotextiles. Coir pith offers sustainable qualities. Typically, they are used to enhance soil behaviors, stop soil erosion, aid in soil consolidation, and ultimately, to save soil. The viewpoint issue with the sector is that by using the leftover coconut material, the coir industry plays a crucial role in supplying livelihood chances for thousands of people. In order to advance the coir business in India, the Indian government offers coir units a variety of benefits, including subsidies and training for coir entrepreneurs.

To support the growth of the country's coir business, the Indian government has established a vast network of organizations, including the Coir Board, DIC, TIIC, and SIPCOT. At the pre-investment and post-investment stages, "The District Industries Centre" has served as a nodal organization, operating as a one-stop shop for small scale industry entrepreneurs to access all necessary services. Due to the labour-intensive nature of work options, the coir business offers people the chance to become self-employed with little effort and expenditure. It is crucial in lowering issues with underemployment and unemployment. "The significant increase in the consumption of coconut husk from 50% to 60% will result in the creation of up to 8,00,000 employees by the end of 2023." Entrepreneurship Growth The coir sector offers excellent opportunities for those without prior industrial expertise to develop and run their own businesses. It encourages individuals to save money and develop their business skills, especially in rural regions. As a result, a sizable number of human resources are not only mobilised but also employed by the coir industry to encourage entrepreneurship, particularly in rural areas, and so enhance the nation's economy.

People, both owners and employees, benefit financially from the coir industry. With minimal training and capital expenditure, it increases revenue for business owners. Additionally, it provides revenue to those working in the coir sector. The coir sector makes significant contributions to lowering unemployment, reducing poverty, raising people's standards of life, generating revenue, and protecting people's wealth in Indian society. It is a social uplift for individuals, particularly for those who are living in poverty. A significant number of the 80% of women working in the coir business are from the economically poorer segments of society. About 500,000 individuals in India alone rely on this sector for their livelihood.

People moving from rural to urban regions in search of work and higher money has numerous negative effects, such as slum development, pollution, and overpopulation. These social issues in India may be resolved by building and running the coir sector, which will disperse industries around the nation and encourage regional economic balance by employing local and available natural resources. In its early stages, the coir industry was established and run conventionally. It serves as a channel for consuming innovation today. They also make it easier for technology to be transferred from one to the other. As a result, the economy gains from technological breakthroughs. India currently exports 14 different varieties of coir and items related to coir to more than 105 different nations throughout the world, which has helped India earn more foreign currency. Due to its unique qualities including color, design, quality, applications, pricing, attractiveness, and workmanship, Indian coir and coir goods are in higher demand on the worldwide markets. India's coir businesses therefore have a chance to advertise themselves more effectively abroad. Through the Coir Board and DIC, the Indian government offers several benefits, including trainings and subsidies, to advance the coir business. Power, capital, and machinery subsidies as well as tax breaks are among the subsidies. In order to promote the coir business, the government is also offering a variety of training programs to coir manufacturers and entrepreneurs. For women craftsmen, specific training programs have been developed. The skilled women will be given contemporary tools to boost employment and income.

Good well-being provides advantages for the mind and body. Workplace wellness initiatives assist employees in adopting and maintaining better routines that reduce health risks. Chronic illnesses and absenteeism are reduced as a result.

Prioritizing other aspects of well-being, such as emotional, financial, social, occupational, intellectual, environmental, and more, in addition to mental health and good food, is also important. Controlling these elements results in total wellbeing, which vastly enhances output, workplace effectiveness, and increases business profitability.

IMPACTS OF COIR INDUSTRY

Even though the coir industry contributes positively to the nation's employment, income, and economy in a number of ways, it lacks the support it requires from the government, banks, financial institutions, and other lending institutions in order to compete, offer high-quality products and services, satisfy consumer demand, and draw clients in both domestic and foreign markets. The Coir Sector in India has promise, but there are a number of issues that need to be resolved. The main issues that India's coir industry is now dealing with are listed below.

- **Problems with Materials:**

Materials are the fundamental and primary input for any industrial concern. The availability of coconut husk is necessary for the coir units to function. Additionally, the coir units encounter a number of issues daily when obtaining and utilizing the raw materials. India's coir business is facing a variety of material issues, including a lack of materials, a scarcity of materials, poor raw material quality, and a high cost of resources.

- **Labour Challenges:**

One of the most important production elements that affects an industrial unit's success is labour. When compared to other village businesses, the productivity of unskilled employees employed in the coir industry is quite low. In the coir industry, women make up a sizable portion of the workforce, notably in the spinning and manufacturing sectors, however they are often far less productive than male employees. In the coir industry, absenteeism, low pay, turnover, boring work, and low labour productivity are the key labour-related problems.

- **Financial issues:**

For reasons of both establishment and operation, the coir units have a larger amount of debt than they have equity. As a result of their inability to access capital markets or any alternative long-term funding sources, these companies are dependent on State Financial Corporations, Commercial Banks, and Creditors for both their short-term and long-term capital requirements. The company's financial problems are brought on by the bank's stringent processes, increasing interest rates, and timely non-availability of borrowings. Because coir borrowers typically have poor credit, they must deal with recalcitrant lenders who might only agree to lend at extremely high interest rates.

- **Production Aspects:**

The lack of current equipment prevents coir units from competing with other small-scale enterprises. The majority of the coir manufacturing facilities employ conventional techniques and skills. Low productivity is the result of using outdated methods and approaches. Therefore, low worker productivity, equipment failures, low demand, power outages, and higher than average power prices are the main production issues for coir units.

- **Publicizing troubles:**

Another significant issue that industrial units deal with is marketing finished goods. The coir sector deals with a variety of marketing issues, including transportation costs, salesman expenditures, agency fees, intermediaries' costs, Alternative products, changes in the market's prices, and a lack of storage space for coir and its by-products.

- **Infrastructure Concerns:**

India's coir industry experiencing poor growth and development due to inadequate infrastructure facilities. Numerous obstacles, such as insufficient access to electricity, water, roads, communication, canteen facilities, and transportation, face the bulk of coir firms operating in remote areas. Because of the underutilization of both machine capacity and natural resources, inadequate infrastructure will have an effect on both the quantity and quality of coir produced.

AN OUTLINE OF THE PROBLEM

An agriculturally based village and cottage sector, the coir industry in India faces several issues with labour, equipment, and finances. The coir industry's expansion and growth may be hampered by several issues. Tremendous opportunities exist for investment, employment, labour, production, technology, marketing, productivity, profitability, and generating more revenue. What are the many issues the coir industry is facing? What are the industry's prospects for the future? How can such issues be resolved to support the trajectory of growth? The study's chosen research subject is the one mentioned above in order to investigate solutions to these issues.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE STUDY

The study aids in understanding the forthcoming opportunities that the coir sector must take advantage of in order to secure a lucrative market and hence support economic growth. In addition, this study is expanded to determine the main difficulties that the coir business has in marketing its goods. The study's objective is achieved by outlining sensible solutions to these problems.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- ☐ To recognize how the nation's coir business operates.
- ☐ To learn about the numerous issues the coir sector is now facing.
- ☐ To highlight the coir industry's potential for growth.
- ☐ To research and evaluate the best public policy options for advancing the coir industry.

SOURCES USED TO ANALYSE THE DATA

Primary data collection techniques: direct interviewing and self-observation.

Secondary data: Journals, magazines, old research papers, e-books, and websites are all sources of secondary data.

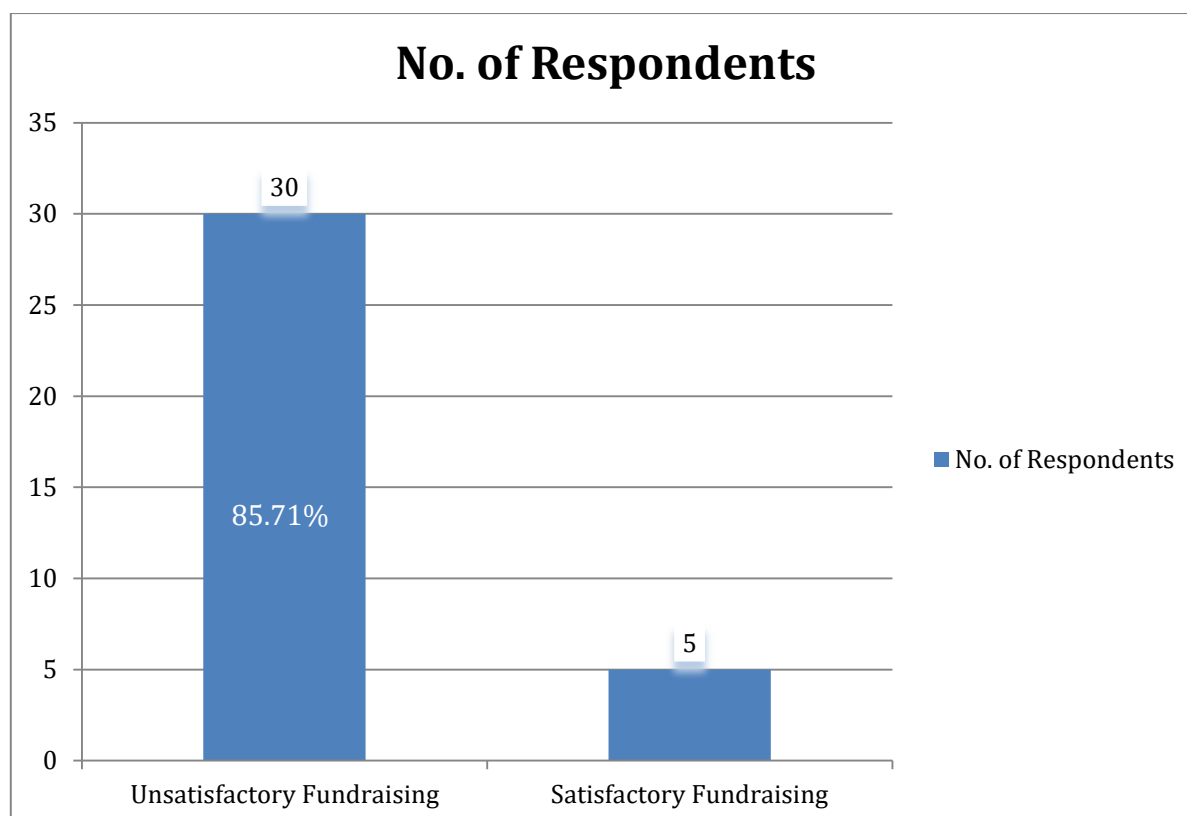
Type of study: Descriptive Research

Sampling Method: Simple Random Sampling

Sampling unit: Management staff from the HR division of several Coir enterprises.

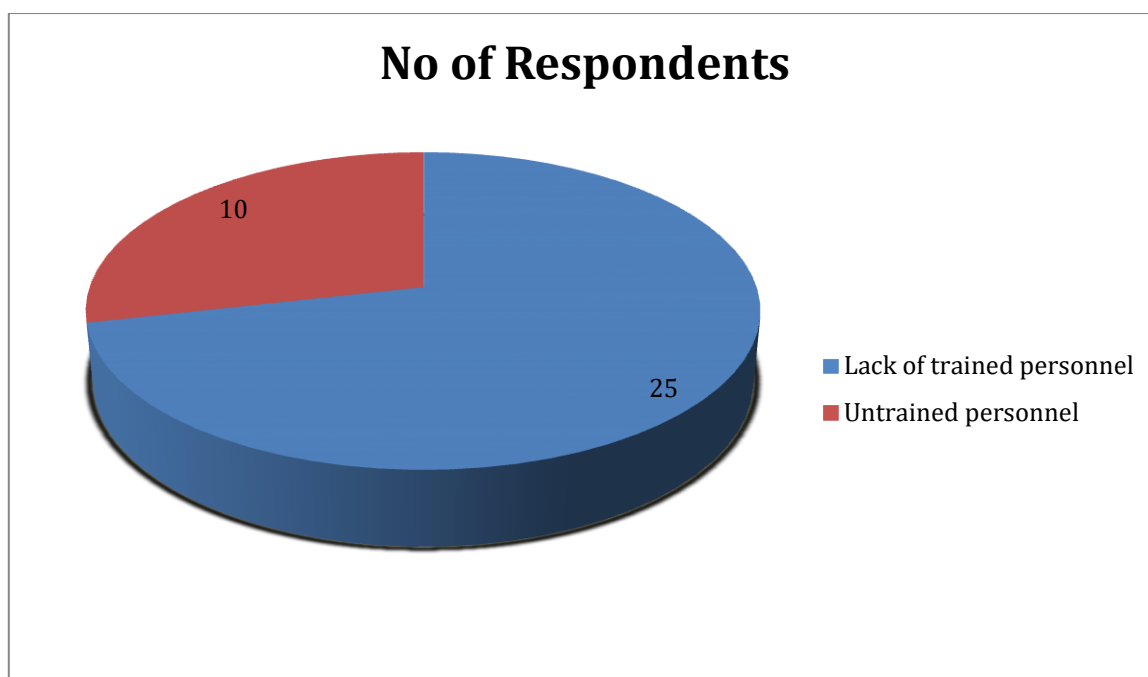
Data Evaluation: The data is represented using simple percentages, frequencies, tables, and ranking methods.

Problem	No of Respondents	% of respondents
Unsatisfactory Fundraising	30	85.71
Total	35	100



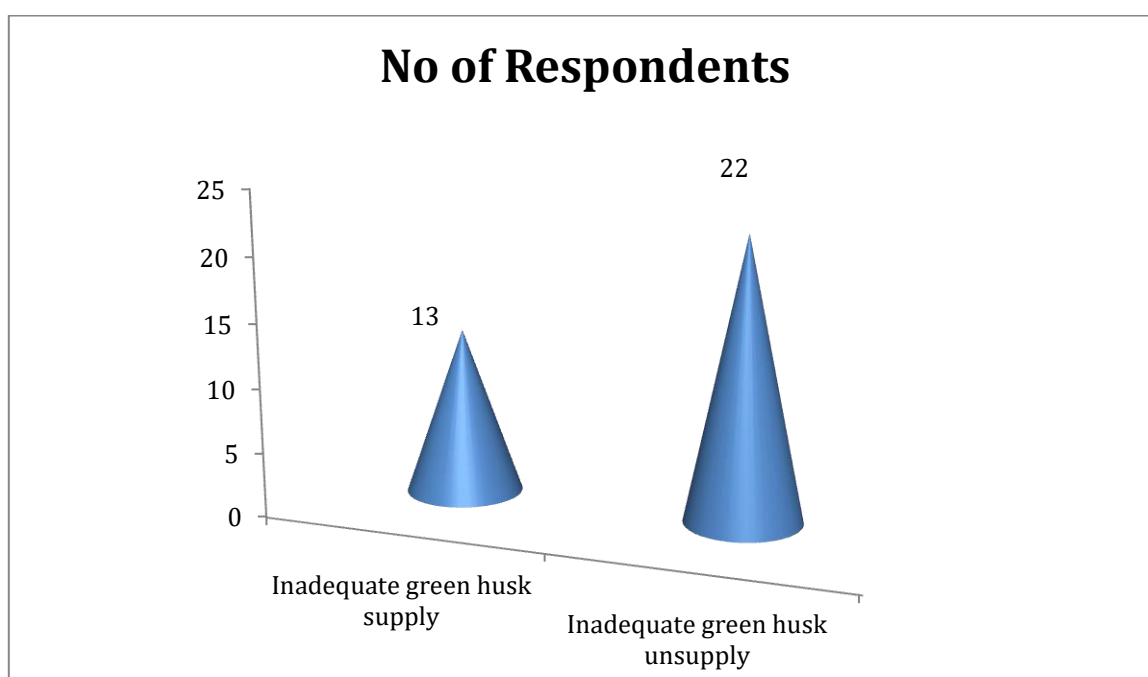
30 of the 35 owners of coir businesses who were questioned said that obtaining the necessary financing is the biggest challenge and that they frequently encounter obstacles. A whopping 83 percent of respondents believe that insufficient financing is one of the biggest issues facing coir mills.

Problem	No of Respondents	% of respondents
Lack of trained personnel	25	71.43
Total	35	100



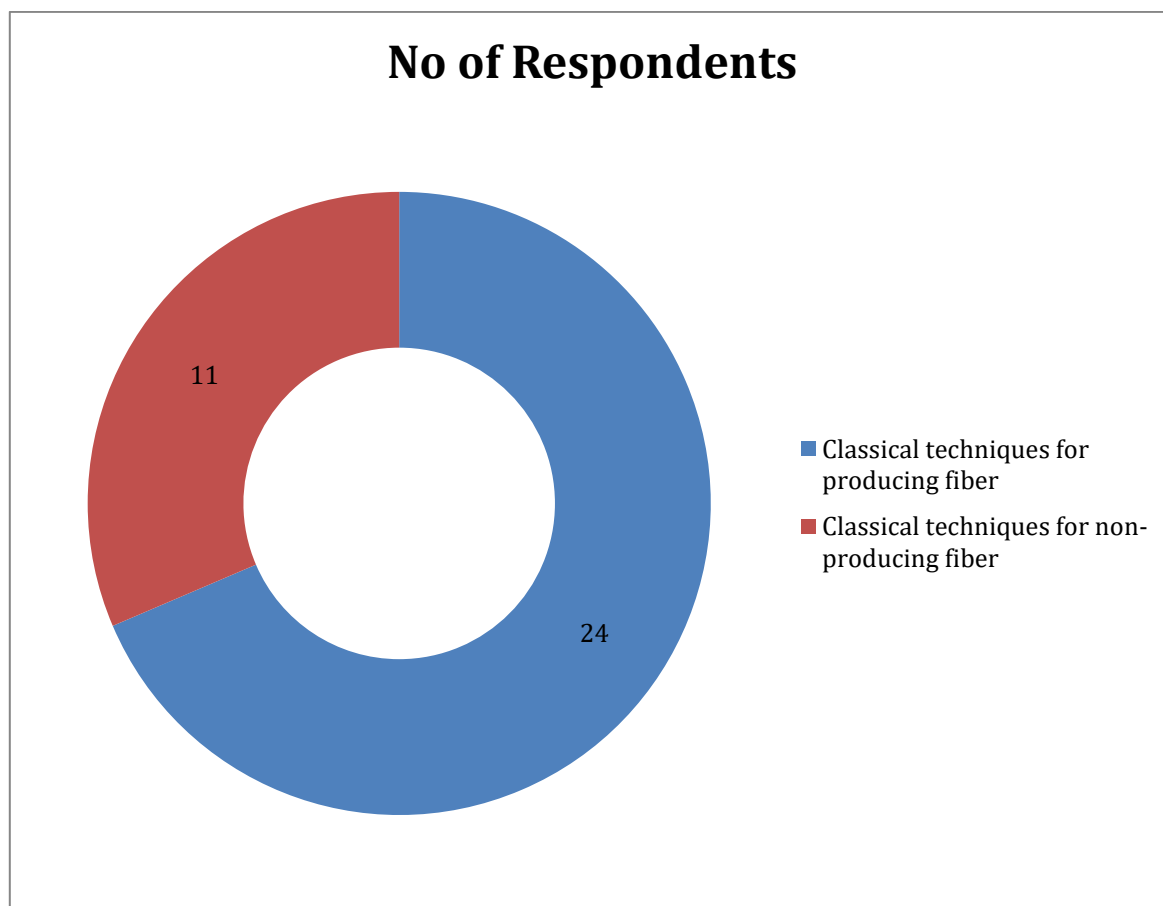
A whopping 71.43 percent of respondents said that a key issue was the lack of labour. Even other coir mills nearby experienced a similar set of issues.

Problem	No of Respondents	% of respondents
Inadequate green husk supply	13	37.14
Total	35	100



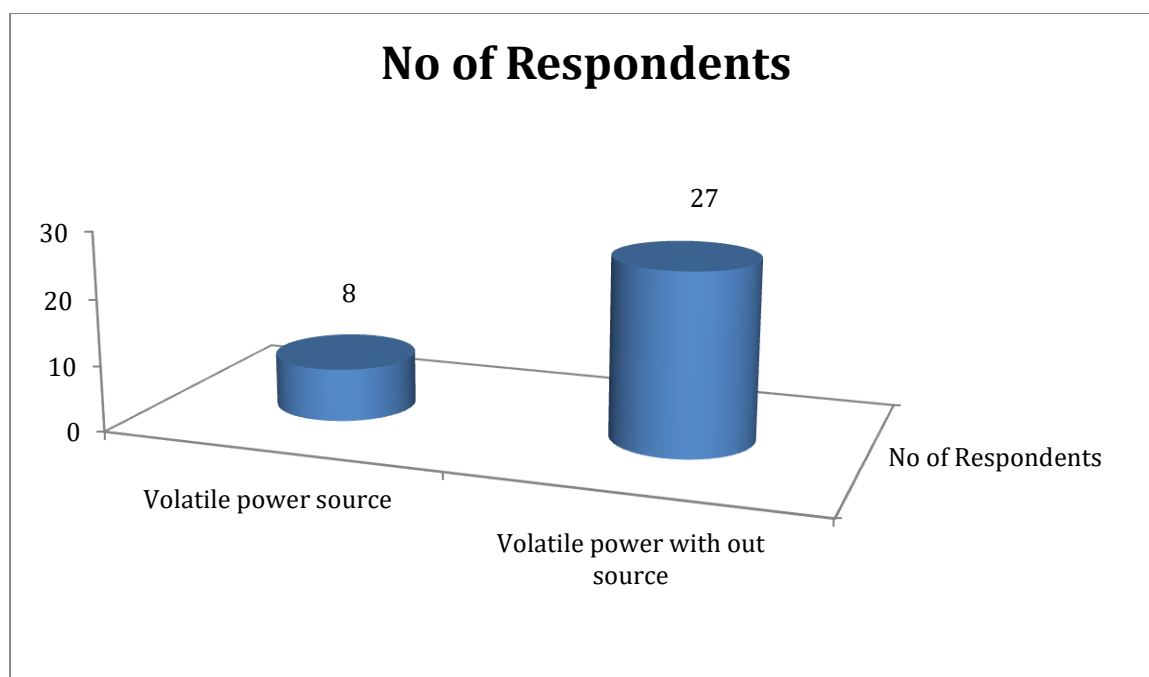
Nearly 37.14% of all respondents who were asked about the biggest challenges they encountered running the business said that a lack of green husk supplies was the biggest obstacle. The primary raw material used in this case to produce fibers for coir products is green husk.

Problem	No of Respondents	% of respondents
Classical techniques for producing fiber	24	68.57
Total	35	100



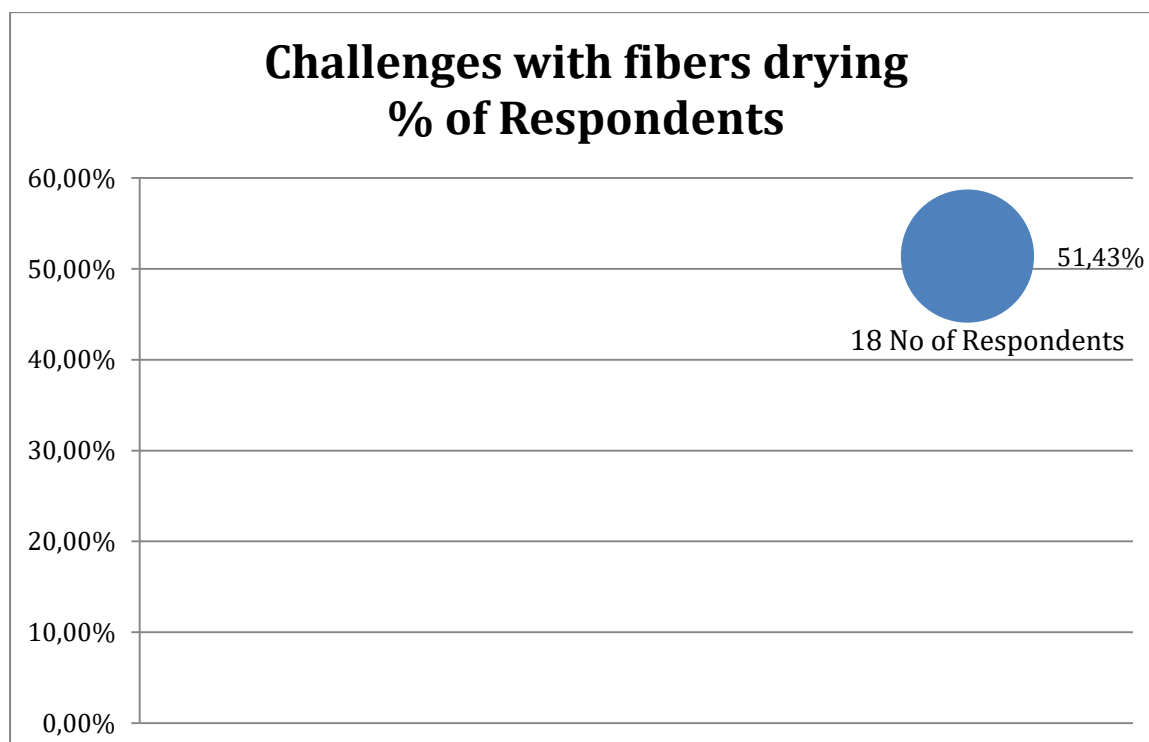
More than half of respondents concur that using traditional fiber production techniques is a significant challenge for business in promoting its properties. Older methods for making coir and its derivatives are extremely risky since they take a lot of time and money.

Problem	No of Respondents	% of respondents
Volatile power source	8	22.86
Total	35	100



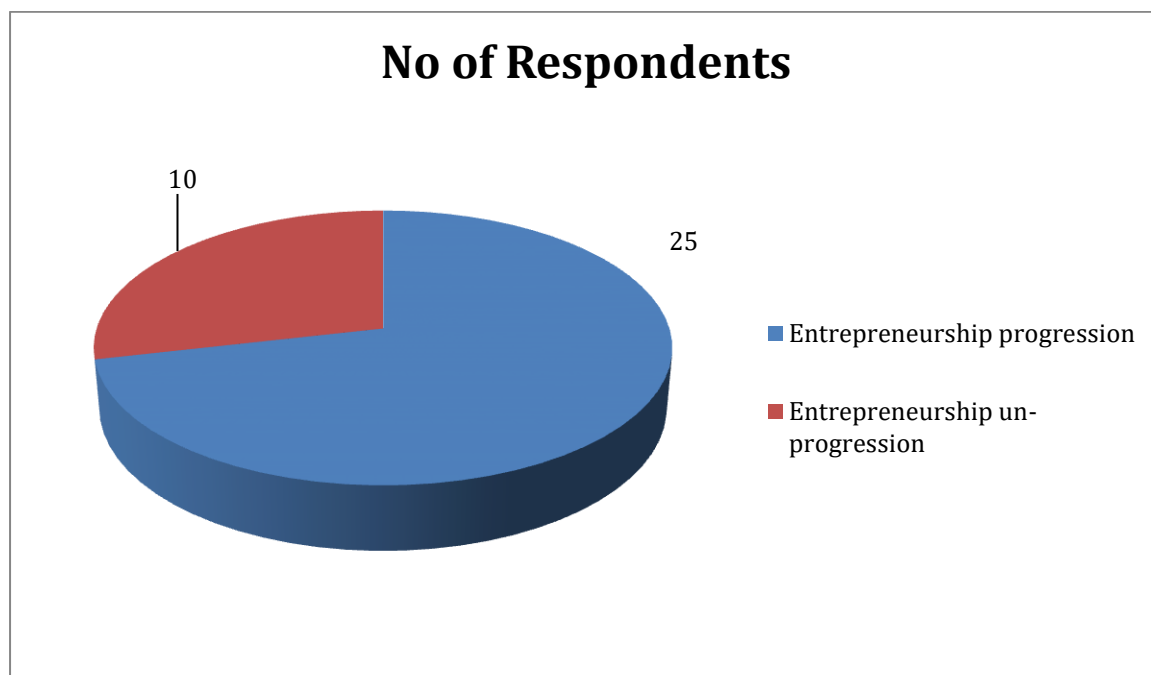
Unreliable power supply at National Coir mills is cited as a key issue by 22.86% of respondents. The ability of the industries to function efficiently has been impacted by frequent power outages over the summer. Respondents perceived these issues as serious obstacles that may delay manufacturing and result in fiber losses.

Problem	No of Respondents	% of respondents
Challenges with fibers drying	18	51.43
Total	35	100



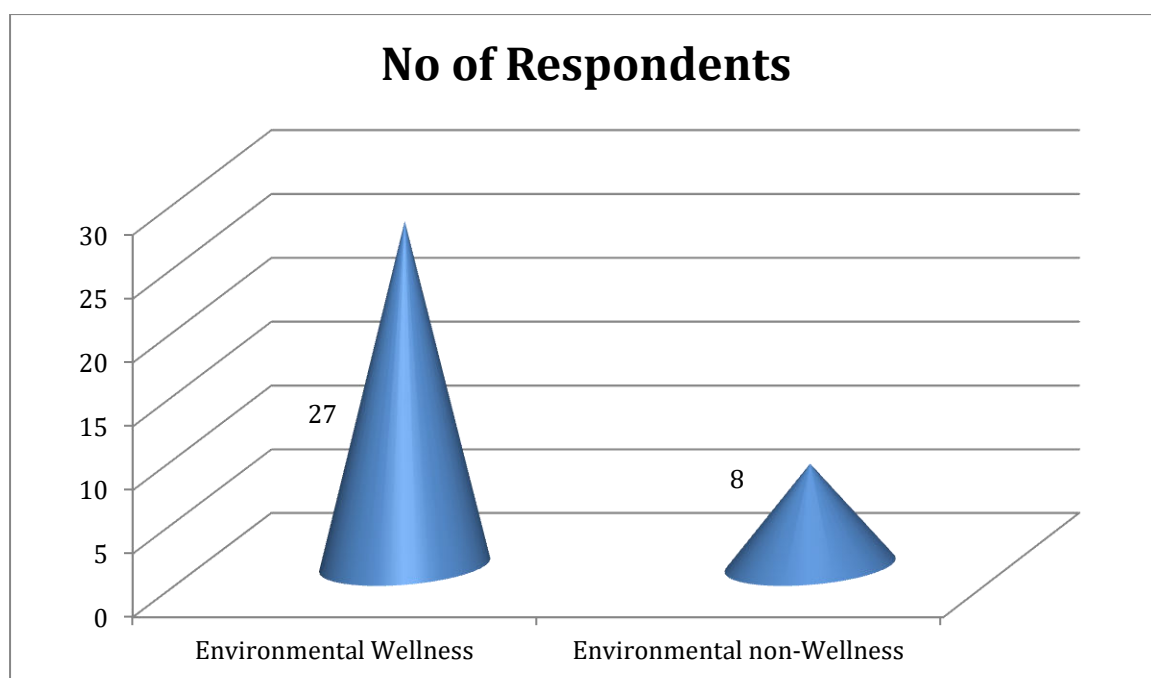
Coconut grows well in humid tropical climates. Without equipment to stop the coir components from drying and to dry the fiber to the necessary amount, it poses a threat to product marketing.

Problem	No of Respondents	% of respondents
Entrepreneurship progression	25	71.43
Total	35	100



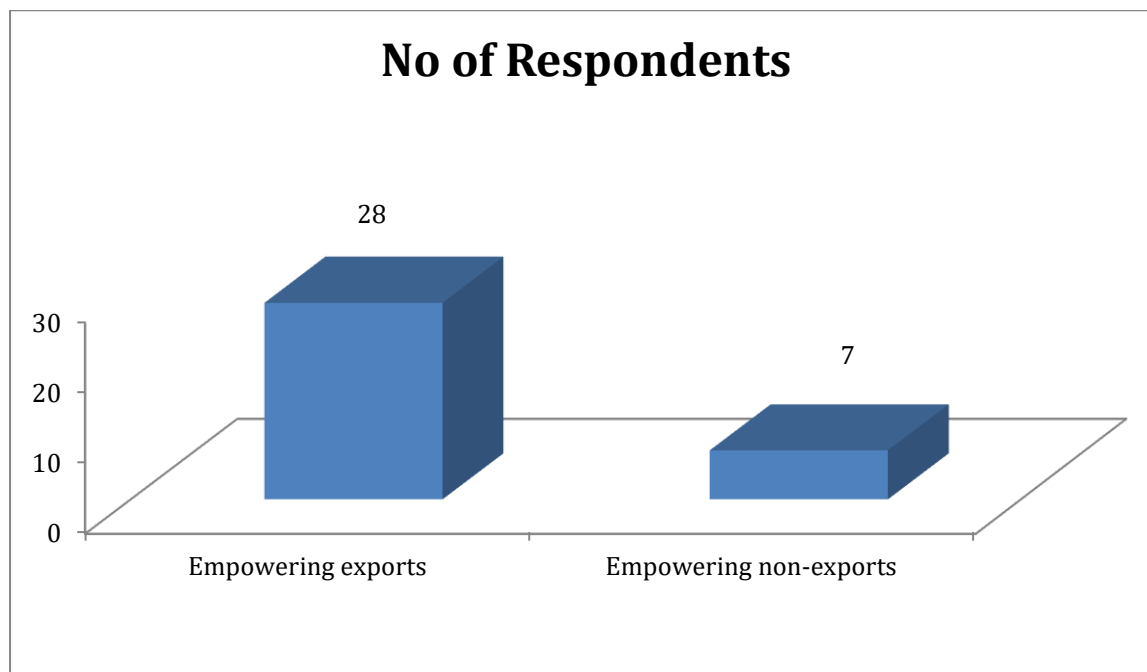
People from rural areas might develop strong savings habits and business abilities thanks to the coir sector. As a result, India's economy is enhanced.

Problem	No of Respondents	% of respondents
Environmental Wellness	27	77.14
Total	35	100



Nearly 77.14% of all respondents who were asked about the biggest challenges they encountered assisting companies and employees in creating a fully healthy environment.

Problem	No of Respondents	% of respondents
Empowering exports	28	82.86
Total	35	100



A significant potential for the coir business, according to 82.86% of respondents, is the promotion of exports. Due to its characteristics and quality standards, Indian coir goods are more popular in overseas markets. As a result, the Coir market frequently might be expanded outside. The Indian coir business has a lot of issues, but it also offers many prospects for future growth and development. The availability of coconut husks, the creation of jobs, the reduction of unemployment, the generation of money, the alleviation of poverty, the improvement of people's quality of life, the growth of entrepreneurship, and the promotion of the country's economy could all be advantageous to the coir industry in the future. It may be claimed that in light of this, the Government of India, working through the Coir Board, seeks to advance the coir sector in terms of all prospective development areas.

SUGGESTIONS:

The following realistic recommendations are made for enhancing the performance of the coir units in light of the study's findings:

- The coir mills in the study region are dealing with a number of issues, including a manpower shortage. In order to assist the businesses, earn more money and be able to pay their employees competitive wages, it is advised that the state government and the Coir Board encourage them to start producing value-added coir products like mats, rugs, carpets, etc. Even during the busiest agricultural seasons, more employees will be attracted to the coir units if attractive pricing are offered. Thus, the primary issue of a labour shortage may be solved.
- Small coir businesses frequently have production issues as a result of inadequate capital. In order to help small coir units, meet their working capital needs during peak seasons, it is advised that the government encourage commercial banks, cooperative banks, and other financial institutions to give lending facilities at lower interest rates.

- In addition, it is suggested that in view of the financial difficulties coir units face, commercial banks, cooperative banks, and other financial institutions host "Coir Loan Melas". As a result, the aforementioned problem could be fixed.

CONCLUSIONS:

It was chosen to look into the coir business because of its social and economic importance to the area. The sector employs a large number of socially excluded people, primarily from lower castes and outcastes, and a disproportionate percentage of them are women. Due to its unique characteristics of durability, biodegradability, and environmental friendliness, coir and coir products are seeing significant success on both the domestic and international markets. This industry today controls an incredible amount of the market for value-added coir products. However, the bulk of their operational issues may be resolved by enhancing value addition and access to technology and information. Study's conclusions have led to a number of sound suggestions. The efficiency of coir producing units may be increased if the relevant authorities gave these proposals careful thought.

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