



Full Length Research Article

**POWER FAILURE AND ITS IMPACT- A JOURNEY BY THE COCONUT FARMERS
PAVING TO LESS PRODUCTION**

Richard, M. P.

Assistant Professor, Department of Outreach, Loyola College, Chennai-34

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ABSTRACT

Indian economy is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The agriculture sector is the back bone of Indian economy as it accounts for about fifty eight percent of the employment in the nation (2001 census). India is the third largest producer of coconut and leads ninety coconut producing countries of the world. The New Agriculture Policy (NAP) which promotes the Rainbow revolution has a feature of promoting private investments in agriculture as one of its special feature. The LPG era has created electricity to become inseparable with the agriculture. The unpredictable power cut for the past two years has uprooted the farmer community as a whole. The study highlights the status of the economic struggle faced by the farmers which has a direct impact towards their family. The power failure has failed to empower the farmers and their family. Gone are those days where the coconut farmers earned a lot with coconut and its palms. The number of times irrigating the crop per month has been got reduced due to power failure. The insecure production, economic status of the farmer's family has worsened encouraging migration in search of jobs.

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INTRODUCTION

Indian economy is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The agriculture sector is the back bone of Indian economy as it accounts for about fifty eight percent of the employment in the nation (2001 census). The growth of agriculture and allied sectors is a critical factor in the overall performance of the Indian economy. During the first three years of the eleventh five year plan, the agriculture sector (including allied activities) recorded an average growth of 2.03 percent against the plan target of 4 percent per annum. India is the third largest producer of coconut and leads ninety coconut producing countries of the world. The area for coconut plantation in India has been mainly distributed over 18 states and 3 UTs, under different agro-climatic conditions. Tender coconut water concentrate is another product, apart from soft drinks, which is manufactured and marketed successfully. The New Agriculture Policy (NAP) which promotes the Rainbow revolution has a feature of promoting private investments in agriculture as one of its special feature. Doubling the rate of growth of irrigated area, improving water management, rain water harvesting and water shed development are some of the key factors to improve the agriculture yield. The LPG era has created electricity to become inseparable with the agriculture. The unpredictable power cut for the past two years has

uprooted the farmer community as a whole. The marathon power failure has made the policy makers to introspect their plans. The study highlights the status of the economic struggle faced by the farmers which has a direct impact towards their family. The power failure has failed to empower the farmers and their family. The unpredictable monsoon further increases the water deficit leading to a huge decrease in the total yield. Gone are those days where the coconut farmers earned a lot with coconut and its palms. The number of times irrigating the trees per month has decreased leading to debts and irregular repayments. The import of palm oil and the shrunken size of the coconut has made the price fallen creating a panic among the farmers. The free current usage to the farmers and three phase usage for taking the water through pump sets has just become a day dream to the farmers.

Objectives

To understand the difficulty of the farmers due to the power failure by preferring the motor pumps leading to low production. To highlight the need for promoting an alternate to electricity and reduce its dependent in agriculture

Field of Study

The respondents identified for the study were the coconut farmers from the rural areas of Theni District. A selective Questionnaire method was followed in data collection as

primary source. The total respondents identified for the study is fifty coconut farmers.

Comparative Table

Components	Before 2 years		After 2 years	
	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Water consumption per tree in liters	90 L	85 L	65 L	45 L
Rain fall in mm	805.52 L	927.13 L	909.8	798.6
Coconut production in numbers per acre	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Power cut in hours	7025	6895	5855	4500
Weight of coconut in gram	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
	500 to 750	600 to 700	350 to 450	300 to 400

The above table highlights the major difference between the past and the present economic status of the coconut farmers. The continuous power failure has led to poor yield in the production creating a poor GDP contribution. The continuous water supply from the well usually keeps the soil wet and reduces the consumption time. But in the recent past the power failure has led to interrupted water flow making the tree to consume more water. This has led to drain the well, also channeling to only a few trees in an acre. The unpredictable rainfall with its decreasing level has led to poor water consumption per tree and yielding even shrunken coconuts. The alarming issue among the farmers is the decreasing in size and weight of the coconut. The shrunken size and weight of the fruit of the coconut has led to decrease in the oil production and in the price.

Salient Findings

The following are the salient findings due to the inability to use the motor pumps caused by power failure. The number of times irrigating the crop per month has been got reduced due to power failure leading to depend on monsoon as the only alternate to the pump set water. The continuous flow of water has been totally stopped due to the irregular power supply leading to more consumption of water by the soil. The amount of water for irrigating one acre of coconut farm has got a huge decrease from the usual 7000 liters to less than its half per

irrigation period. The usual irrigating water amount of 80 to 90 liters per tree at a time has been reduced leading to a shrunken size of the coconut. The shrunken size of the coconut has led to the decrease in its price. The decrease in the coconut oil consumption due to the availability of palm oil for fewer prices has further panicked the farmers. The poor harvest of half the number of coconuts than their previous usual quantity has led the farmers to more borrowing. The failure of savings and the bureaucratic formalities has worsened the farmers to borrow easily from the money lenders paving them to be trapped with the huge interests. The delay and failure in their repayments for their borrowing has created a stress among the farmers. The unpredictable power supply has often created sleepless nights in irrigating the trees paving the increase in their stress. The economic status of the farmer's family has worsened encouraging their family members to migrate in search of jobs. The insecure production and improper income will have an impact in the country's economy.

Suggestion and Conclusion

The ignorance by the decision makers to promote alternate energies has increased the farmers to show poor GDP contribution. Agriculture despite being the primary sector is still being electricity dependent with the usual irrigation techniques. There is an urgent need to identify new strategies in the irrigation techniques and implement to the earliest. Proper the irrigation procedures be introduced, higher will the production of agriculture be. The promotion of lab to land exhibitions, making rain water harvest compulsory and providing credit to farmers on suitable conditions are the required measures to be done effectively to increase the production which will have a positive effect in the economy.

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