

Climb a Coconut Tree, Earn up to ₹30,000 Per Month

by Amritha K R

Kochi: The decline in the number of coconut tree climbers seems to be reversing owing to the initiatives taken up by the Coconut Development Board.

For, in less than two years since the Coconut Development Board introduced its programme to train coconut tree climbers in mechanised climbing, around 7,500 people have received training in this field. As of today, the board has as many as 7,973 trained coconut climbers under its 'Friends of Coconut Tree' (FOCT) project introduced in mid-2011.

"By the end of this financial year, we hope to train around 10,000 people under the FOCT programme. In 2011, we had conducted a study on the shortage of coconut tree climbers based on the number of trees in each block and the



availability of traditional climbers, and found that the state needed 40,000 more climbers if each tree had to be harvested at an interval of at least 45 days. So there is a lot more scope for training," said T K Jose, chairman, Coconut

Development Board. The main attraction of the programme is the high and steady income that mechanised coconut tree climbing guarantees.

As per the data available with the Coconut Development Board, there are days when the climbers get to make over ₹3,000. According to coconut climbers, the demand is so high that they cannot attend to all the calls seeking

Jithin, one of the first to get trained under the programme in the district.

Arun said that on an average he draws about ₹25,000-₹30,000 per month. Apart from full timers like Arun, there are also people who take to the coconut climbing on a part time basis.

The FOCT personnel are also trained to detect and treat trees with diseases, apply fer-

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their service. "The demand is too high. In fact, I have approached the board asking them not to give my number to the customers. I have about 90 customers whom I attend regularly. It assures a steady monthly income," said Arun

tilisers, coconut seed hybridisation etc. In fact, with the clearance from the State Government to produce the beverage, 'Neera, from coconut trees, they will also be trained and given licences for its production.