



TV

UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

U.N. IN ACTION

Release Date: March 2007

Programme No. 1065

Duration: 4'15''

Languages: English, French, Spanish and Russian

COCONUT DIVERSIFICATION TO FIGHT POVERTY IN INDIA

VIDEO

COCONUT PALM GROVE BY
OCEAN

VILLAGER CLIMING UP PALM
FOR COCONUT / ASOKAN
WORKING AT FARM

ASOKAN ON CAMERA

REMOVING NUTS AND
DISCARDING HUSKS

LOADING COCONUTS INTO
MACHINE / FIBRE MILL

AUDIO

NARRATION

The state of Kerala, on India's south-western coast, is known as the land of coconuts. (5")

The palm is a life giving tree, and its fruit, the coconut, is one of the most useful in the world. But in spite of its potential bounty, many rural farmers like Mini Asokan make less than two dollars a day. (15")

ASOKAN: (Malayalam)

"My trees produce two thousand coconuts a year but there is no market to sell." (5")

NARRATION

After removing the nuts, farmers discard the husks; a terrible waste since there is a substantial market for this fibre. (7.5")

A new enterprise – a fibre mill set up by a village group – is now buying the husks and creating jobs in the village. (7.5")

FIBRE SPINNING WITH TRADITIONAL MACHINES	Vayalar is a poor community of four thousand households. Three out of four homes derive their livelihood from the spinning of the coconut fibre. (9.5")
	The villagers, although surrounded by coconuts, have been buying fibre from outside sources, and supplies were sporadic. (7.5")
LATHA / UNFINISHED HOUSE	Latha was often out of work. Her husband died nine years ago, leaving her with an unfinished house, her mother and a daughter to take care of. (9")
LATHA ON CAMERA	<p><u>LATHA:</u> (Malayalam)</p> <p><i>"Life was extremely difficult. We didn't have money to send our children to school or to get food. But things are getting better."</i> (11")</p>
LATHA SPINNING FIBRE	<p><u>NARRATION</u></p> <p>Today, Latha has no shortage of work. She is getting a steady supply directly from the newly created village mill. (7")</p>
WORKERS CRUSH COCONUTS	The mill is capable of crushing about 15,000 coconut husks per day, producing 1,200 kilos of fibre. It provides the much needed raw material to keep villagers like Latha working full time.
WORKERS SEPARATE FIBRE FROM HUSKS	(13")
	The project started a year ago with a small grant from the Global Environment Facility. The

SODHI WITH VILLAGERS AT
MILL

fund helped villagers to secure bank loans to purchase equipment. Sodhi Prabhjot is from the Small Grants Program. (14”)

SODHI ON CAMERA

SODHI: (English)

“We have given them about 35,000 to 37,000 dollars. And with that, they have generated a co-financing of nearly 100,000 dollars.” (7”)

WORKERS WEAVING AT
FABRIC MILL / MATS

NARRATION

The Small Grants Program helped another group in the village to set up a weaving unit. With a grant of fifty thousand US dollars, the villagers managed to borrow an additional twenty-five thousand dollars from banks. (11.5”)

WORKERS WEAVING MATS

The unit produces industrial mats, a popular and useful product that requires a lot of fibre to manufacture. (7”)

If it can obtain more electricity, the fibre mill is planning to extend its working hours, says Manager K.S. Kausalya: (8.5”)

KAUSALYA ON CAMERA

VILLAGE MANAGER: (Malayalam)

“We want to fully utilize the equipment to extract 25,000 husks.” (5”)

WORKERS WORKING WITH
COPRA AND MAKING OIL

NARRATION

The village is now a flurry of entrepreneurial activity. People are exploring new ways to use coconuts. This group, also supported by a small grant, is working on producing virgin

coconut oil. (13”)

WORKERS SCOOPING OUT
COPRA / EXTRACTING
COCONUT MILK

Product diversification is the key to harvesting this tree of life, and unlocking the riches of the world’s most useful nut for the benefit of the villagers. (9”)

SODHI ON CAMERA

SODHI: (English)

“You can clearly see that they are making money out of it and they are using it in various ways” (4.5”)

BROKEN HUSKS ON THE
GROUND

NARRATION

Once treated as refuse, the coconut husks are now precious raw material for the fibre mill. (5.5”)

MONTAGE OF WORKERS AT
VARIOUS UNITS

As these efforts show, a small fund can unleash the spirit of enterprise, creating industry, and reinvigorating languishing farming communities. (8.5”)

The Vayalar project is now being used as a model for other rural communities in India. (5”)

UN LOGO

This report was prepared by Patricia Chan for the United Nations.