

# Problems encountered ~~from-by~~ Coconut growers by adopting TNAU Coconut tonic and their perceived benefits

## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** The study aims to analyse the problems encountered ~~from-by~~ Coconut growers by adopting the TNAU Coconut tonic and their perceived benefits

**Study design:** Ex post facto research design.

**Place and Duration of Study:** The study was conducted in ~~the~~ Coimbatore district which represents a major ~~coconut-coconut~~-growing tracts of ~~the~~ Western zone of Tamil Nadu.

**Methodology:** From the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, 120 Coconut growers ~~from-from~~ three different blocks namely Pollachi(North), Pollachi (South) and Anaimalai block were purposively selected for conducting the study. Data were collected from coconut growers who are all adopting TNAU Coconut tonic. The well-structured pre-tested interview schedule was used to collect data from farmers. Garrett ranking and weighted average method ~~was-were~~ computed to analyse the constraints and perceived benefits of coconut growers who are all adopting the TNAU Coconut tonic as their nutrient management practices.

**Results:** The major constraints were reported by the growers viz., availability of tonic at TNAU (8.75%), Unskilled labour (8.57%), difficulty to identify the root (8.04%), ~~the~~ absorption rate of tonic is low (7.92%), non-availability of labour (7.31%), high cost of labour (7.13%), High cost of crop boosters (6.81%), poor knowledge on ~~the~~ availability of tonic at TNAU Agri cart, Coconut Research Station, Aliyar & Courier services (6.45%) as major constraints. The obtained key benefits include increased chlorophyll content and greenness of leaves (16.93%), improved photosynthetic efficiency of leaves (11.73%), decreases button shedding (30.53%), increased number and size of nut (22.27%), increased nut yield up to 20 per cent (18.20%), increased longevity and vigour of the palm (19.40%) and resistance to pests, diseases and environmental stresses (24.20%) shows that maximum number of coconut growers benefited by adopting TNAU Coconut tonic.

## Conclusion:

To overcome these constraints, concerted efforts from researchers with government and institutional support set forth the easy adoption of TNAU Coconut tonic. The adoption of TNAU Coconut tonic technology brings forth a multitude of perceived benefits to the coconut growers, along with their conventional, recommended nutrient management practices and the livelihood of coconut growers will be improved.

**Keywords:** Coimbatore; TNAU Coconut tonic; technological and labour constraints; perceived benefits; institutional support.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L.) serves as a monocot classified into the Arecaceae, subfamily Arecoideae and ~~is~~ the only species in the genus *Cocos* (Gurbuz and Manaros 2019). In ~~the~~ western zone of Tamil Nadu, the maximum productivity under ~~the~~-coconut cultivation was majorly in ~~the~~ Coimbatore district with an area of 88467.00 hectares, annual production of 13,237.00 million nuts

and productivity of 14,963 nuts/hectares (Department of Agriculture & Co-operation, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (Horticulture division), Govt. of India, 2021). In despite of the state, it is impractical to expand the production ~~in~~-area-wise due to pests and disease attacks, environmental distress, water deficit, utilization of land for other purposes and unavailability of labour. As a result, ~~the~~ productivity should be increased within the existing area by using site-specific technologies (Srinivasan, Kumar *et al.* 2021). In ~~the~~-palm production, the enhanced tree growth characteristics and yield attributes i.e., improved button nut productivity and nut setting and hence increasing yield while adopting the improved technologies (Jayakumar, Janapriya *et al.* 2017). Although the coconut palm yields fronds and nuts ~~are~~ year-round, it requires a steady supply of necessary nutrients from the soil. In a coconut system, nutrient replacement demands increase ~~at~~ faster than uptake and loss, and because root surface for absorption is limited, it is critical to keep nutrient supply at a level of modest extravagant consumption (Hameed Khan. H. 1993). ~~Interaction~~-The interaction effect of potassium and boron application on improving nut productivity encompassed that improved yield (15642 nuts/ha/year) (Babu S. *et al.* 2022). Thus, the coconut was commercially cultivated, the coconut growers lack the potential yield is due to unaware of ~~scientist~~-~~scientist~~-generated innovations and technologies and are not persuaded to accept the latest technology in their fields (Archana *et al.* 2022).

A nutritional crop booster is a complex mixture of all the essential nutrients that the crop requires for proper vegetative development and growth. It mostly contains nutrients that are unavailable in ~~the~~ soil for each crop. Each plant will require a different crop booster based on its growth and development requirements. Considering the problems faced by coconut growers around the coconut belts of Tamil Nadu, the Department of Crop Physiology, the crop booster's division, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University released the "TNAU Coconut tonic" (A technique of feeding nutrients to trees through the root) during the year 2003 for the welfare of coconut growers. The technology provides the application of nutrients and growth regulators in the form of liquid directly to ~~the~~ root of the plant. Hence, the study will examine the constraints encountered by coconut growers to adopt the TNAU Coconut tonic technology and the key advantages attained by farmers after using the root feeding of TNAU Coconut tonic over the years.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Research location

The deliberate selection of the Coimbatore district was made in part because of the importance of coconut farming. This district was selected, since it has the maximum area covered in coconuts of any district in the state, as well as the highest productivity. The major perennial crop raised in the district was coconut (49% of ~~the~~ net sown area) and 28.2 per cent of ~~the~~ total area in the plantation crop, it could be seen that coconut is the predominant crop of the district with an area of 83887 ha (According to TNRTP- Coimbatore DDR, 2019). For this, ~~the~~ Coimbatore district was purposively chosen and three blocks (Pollachi (North), Pollachi (South) and Anaimalai block) were selected purposively.

### 2.2 Data collection

A well-structured ~~pre-pre~~-tested interview schedule was prepared for ~~the~~ collection of constraints and perceived benefits obtained by coconut growers while adopting TNAU Coconut tonic. After contacting the respondents, the gathered data were coded and tabulated for statistical tests ~~s~~ to get meaningful results.

### 2.3 Research design

An ex-post-facto research design was used for the present study to be consistent with the research objective. The sampling unit was coconut growers adopting TNAU Coconut tonic. From each block,

40 coconut growers were selected randomly with a sample size of 120 respondents from the Pollachi taluk of Coimbatore district.

## 2.4 Statistical tools employed

### Garret ranking

Garrett's ranking encompasses the score for constraints and advantages. The major benefit of this technique over simple frequency distribution is that the constraints are decided based on their seriousness from the point of view of respondents. Garrett's formula for converting ranks into percent is:

$$\text{Percent Position Value} = 100 * (R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$$

Where,

$R_{ij}$  = rank given for  $i$ th constraint by the  $j$ th individual;

$N_j$  = the number of constraints ranked by  $j$ th individual.

The per cent position of each rank will be modified into scores with the help of the table given by Garrett and Woodworth (1969). For each constraint, the scores of individual respondents will be added together and divided by the total number of the respondents. These mean scores for all the constraints will be arranged in descending order; the constraints will be accordingly ranked.

### Weighted average

A weighted average is a calculation that takes into account the varying degrees of importance of the numbers in a data set. In calculating a weighted average, each number in the data set is multiplied by a predetermined weight before the final calculation is made. A weighted average can be more accurate than a simple average in which all numbers in a data set are assigned an identical weight.

$$W = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i X_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i}$$

Where,

$W$  = Weighted average

$n$  = number of terms to be averaged

$w_i$  = Weights applies to  $X$  values

$X_i$  = Data values to be averaged

$$\sum_{i=1}^n w_i X_i = \text{Sum of numbers with the weighting factor}$$

$$\sum_{i=1}^n w_i = \text{Sum of all the weights}$$

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Problems Encountered from by Coconut Growers by Adopting TNAU Coconut Tonic

The coconut growers facing face the various constraints while adopting the TNAU Coconut tonic on in different categories viz., technological constraints, labour constraints, economic constraints and accessibility constraints was listed in the Table 1.

**Table 1. Ranking of constraints faced by coconut growers while adopting root feeding technology of TNAU Coconut tonic= 120**

S. No.	Constraints	Sum	Average score	Percentage	Garrett rank
<b>A. Technological constraints</b>					
1.	Difficult to identify the root	7248	60.40	8.04	3
2.	Low absorption rate of tonic	7139	59.49	7.92	4
3.	Loss of tonic due to packet damage	4921	41.01	5.47	12
4.	Lack of awareness on mixing and quantity of application	4924	41.03	5.46	11
5.	Lack of adequate training and demonstration	5428	45.23	6.02	10
6.	Poor post care maintenance	3901	32.51	4.33	15
7.	Involvement of private players	6214	51.78	6.9	7
8.	No difference in yield and income	4857	40.48	5.39	14
<b>B. Labour constraints</b>					
9.	Non-availability of labour	6584	54.87	7.31	5
10.	High cost of labour	6427	53.56	7.13	6
11.	Unskilled labour	7719	64.33	8.57	2
<b>C. Economic constraints</b>					
12.	High cost of crop boosters	6137	51.14	6.81	8
13.	Additional costs incurred for the cost of cultivation	4916	40.97	5.45	13
<b>D. Accessibility constraints</b>					
14.	The tonic is only available at TNAU	7890	65.75	8.75	1
15.	Poor knowledge on the availability of tonic at TNAU Agri cart, Coconut Research Station, Aliyar & Courier services	5815	48.46	6.45	9
<b>Total</b>		90120		100	

### A. Technological constraints

Difficult to identify the root (8.04%) was one of the predominant technological constraints as expressed by the majority of coconut growers and rank 3 is due to the non-availability of skilled labour. This finding is in line with the findings of (Kalarani, Raja *et al.* 2009). The absorption rate of tonic is low was reported by coconut growers (7.92%) with rank 4 is due to excess moisture retained in the soil while root feeding of the tonic. Thus, the absorption rate of tonic by the roots was low in water-logged soil when compared by non-water-logged soil. The time taken

for absorption of the tonic was 6-8 days. This findings was in close contact with [the](#) findings of (Kalarani, Raja *et al.* 2009). Loss of tonic due to packet damage (5.47%) with rank 12 was reported by meagre of coconut growers by cause of birds, domestic animals and less thinness or gauge of polythene bags after the use of tonic. Similar findings were reported by (Kalarani, Raja *et al.* 2009). Lack of awareness on mixing and quantity of application (5.47%) with rank 11 ~~this~~ might be due to poor awareness ~~on-of~~the application of TNAU Coconut tonic. (Archana *et al.* 2022) revealed that [a](#) lack of awareness of the latest technologies in coconut cultivation ~~is as~~ personal constraints. Lack of adequate training and demonstration (6.02%) with rank 10 reported by coconut growers was due to inadequate ~~capacity-capacity~~-building programmes and demonstrations ~~with regards to~~concerning new technologies and innovations. Poor ~~post-post~~-care maintenance (4.33%) with rank 15 was noticed very less among the coconut growers. Involvement of private players (6.90%) with rank 7 expressed by coconut growers because of easy availability in local extent by input dealers or commission agents or mandis ~~in-on a~~ contractual basis. No difference in yield and income (5.39%) with rank 14 was due to [the](#) application of coconut tonic ~~as-for~~the first time in their field thus reported by [the](#) majority of coconut farmers.

## B. Labour constraints

Labour constraints includes the non-availability of labour (7.31%) with rank 5 expressed by most of the respondents. This might be due to labours ~~are~~-migrating towards ~~high-high~~-wage employment in other sectors as guaranteed jobs, so labour scarcity occurs. Farm labourers are currently transferring to [the](#) industry due to the higher income they receive. This manpower migration to industry has resulted in a labour shortage in agriculture. Because of this, producers are forced to pay high wages to agricultural labourers. This finding aligns with that of (Archana *et al.* 2022). ~~High-The high~~ cost of labour (7.13%) with rank 6 was the significant labour constraints because of [the](#) unavailability of labour there is more demand in that particular region, [and](#) the existing labour hike their wages. Unskilled labour was [a](#) major constraints faced by coconut growers (8.57%) with rank 2. This might be due to the root feeding technology ~~requires-requiring~~the skill and experience to adopt, in the study area there was labour but they are not trained and skilled in the specific technology. The labour constraints ~~is-are~~in line with [the](#) findings of (Kalarani, Raja *et al.* 2009).

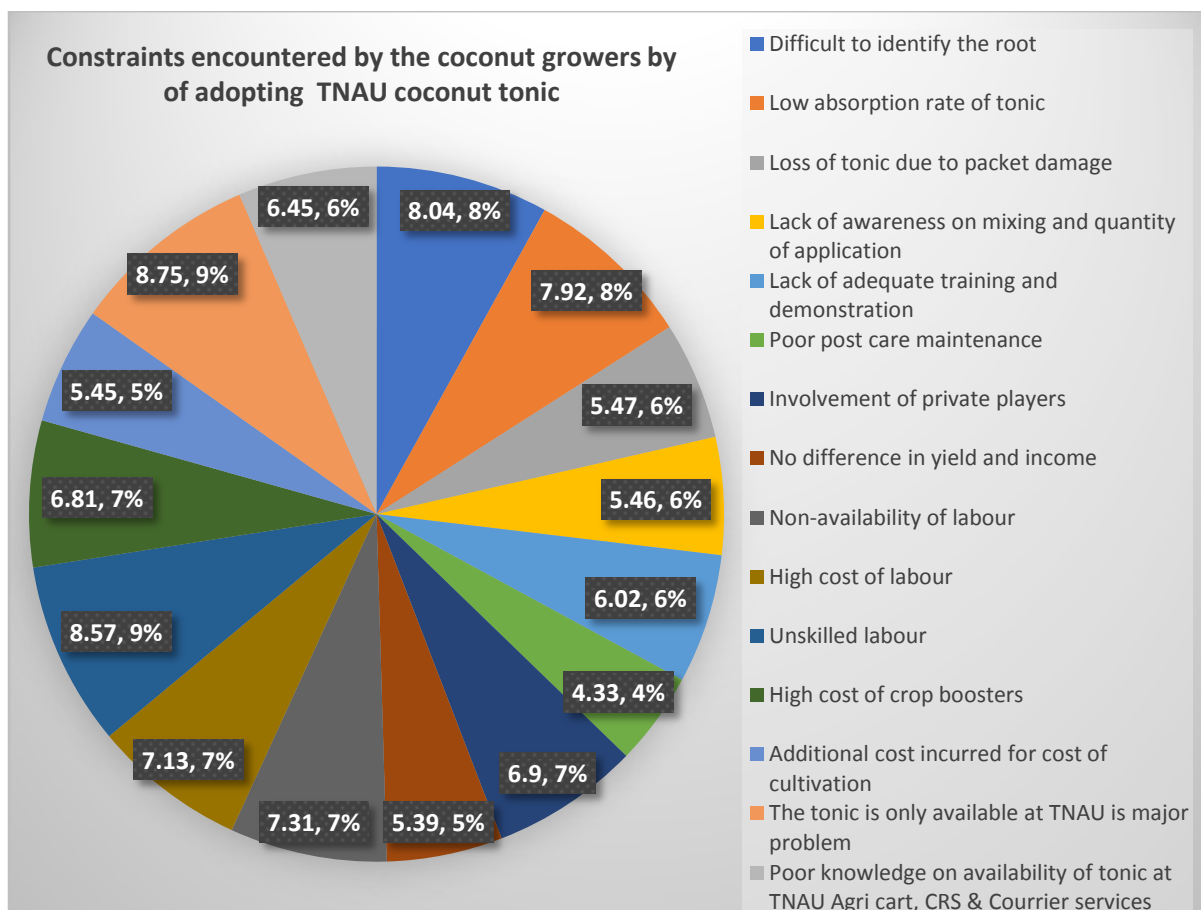
## C. Economic constraints

~~High-The high~~ cost of crop boosters was experienced by coconut farmers (6.81%) with rank 8, followed by additional cost incurred for [the](#) cost of cultivation (5.45%) with rank 13 ~~was~~-due to usage of TNAU Coconut tonic and labour charges. This finding is in line with [the](#) findings of (Kalarani, Raja *et al.* 2009). Therefore, governments, agricultural universities, and development agencies can play a critical role in providing financial assistance, training programmes, and demonstrations for coconut growers ~~in-order~~ to overcome these economic barriers. Collaboration between the public and private sectors can also aid in the adoption of TNAU Coconut tonic and the reduction of nutritional disorders and environmental stress.

## D. Accessibility constraints

The tonic is only available at TNAU (8.75%) with rank 1 ~~was~~-encountered by [the](#) majority of coconut growers ~~was~~-due to the production unit ~~is-being~~only available at TNAU, Coimbatore only. So, government take [the](#) necessary steps to take additional sales centres to overcome these constraints. ~~The-s~~Similar findings ~~was-were~~reported by (Kalarani, Raja *et al.* 2009). Poor knowledge ~~on-of~~the availability of tonic at TNAU Agri cart, Coconut Research Station, Aliyar & Courier services (6.45%) with rank 9 was faced by coconut growers ~~is~~-due to lack of mass media exposure and illiteracy among coconut growers.

**Figure 1. Pie chart for the constraints of adopting TNAU Coconut tonic technology**



### 3.2 Perceived benefits obtained by coconut growers while adopting TNAU Coconut tonic technology

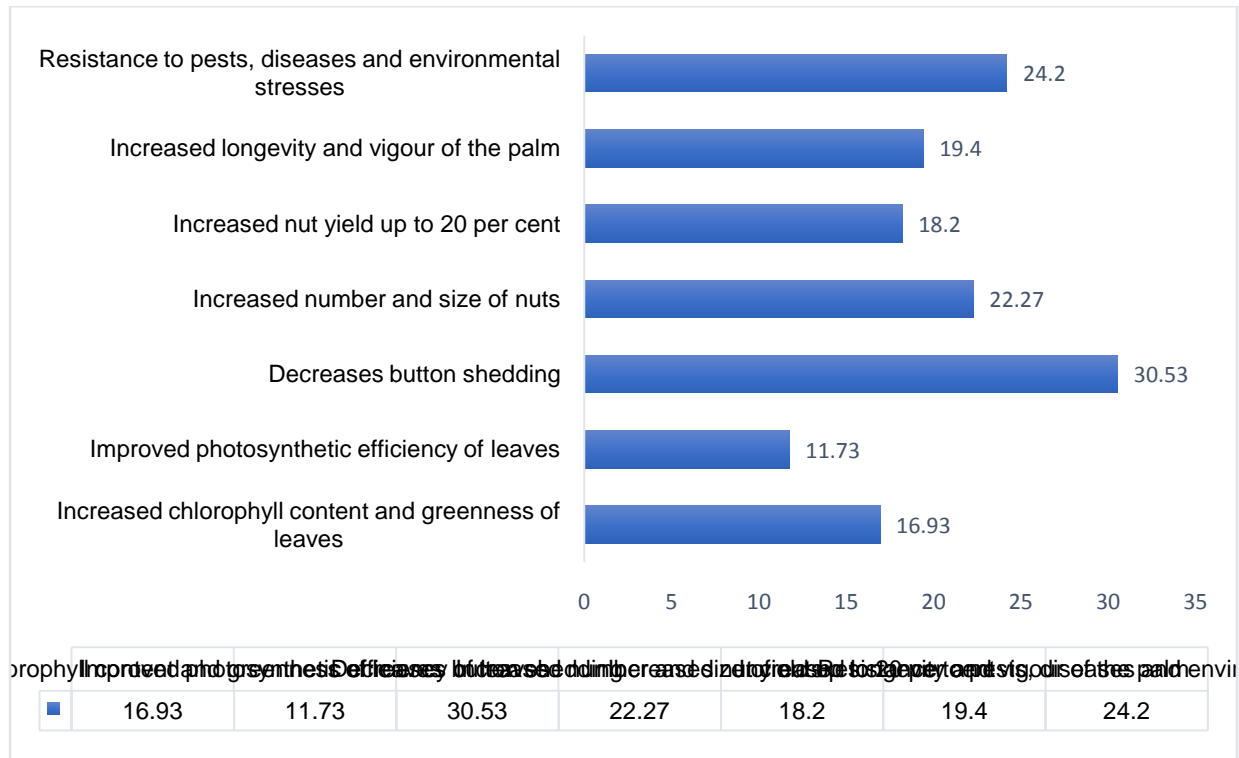
The key advantages benefited by coconut growers in Table 2. ~~while~~ While adopting the root feeding of TNAU Coconut tonic technology was decreases button shedding (30.53%), followed by resistance to pests, diseases and environmental stresses (24.20%), increased number and size of nuts (22.27%), increased longevity and vigour of the palm (19.40%), increased nut yield up to 20 per cent (18.20%), increased chlorophyll content and greenness of leaves (16.93%) and improved photosynthetic efficiency of leaves (11.73%). Coconut growers can experience numerous perceived benefits when adopting TNAU Coconut tonic in their cultivation practices. The major problems in coconut cultivation such as pests and diseases, nutritional deficiencies and hormonal disorders, small size and less number of nuts, nut cracking and poor pericarp formation, button shedding, drying of buttons and spath, pencil point disorder, improper nutrient supply, yellowing and scorching of leaves were drastically reduced. This findings was also similar in connection with (Kalarani, Raja *et al.* 2009). These benefits can positively impact various aspects of coconut farming and improve the overall well-being of farmers.

**Table 2. Item-wise perceived benefits attained by coconut growers n=120**

S. No	List of key advantages	Weighted average
1.	Increased chlorophyll content and greenness of leaves	16.93
2.	Improved photosynthetic efficiency of leaves	11.73
3.	Decreases button shedding	30.53
4.	Increased number and size of nuts	22.27
5.	Increased nut yield <del>by</del> up to 20 per cent	18.20
6.	Increased longevity and vigour of the palm	19.40

7.	Resistance to pests, diseases and environmental stresses	24.20
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**Figure 2. Percentage of key benefits of adopting TNAU Coconut tonic technology**



## 4. CONCLUSION

### 4.1 Constraints of adopting TNAU Coconut tonic

The adoption of TNAU Coconut tonic in coconut cultivation offers the potential for improved productivity, efficiency and sustainability. However, several constraints hinder the widespread integration of these ~~technology~~ technologies within the coconut farming sector. Technological constraints, labour constraints, economic constraints and accessibility constraints can **deter farmers** from investing in modern practices.

To overcome these constraints, concerted efforts from researchers with government and institutional support and coconut research stations set forth the easy adoption of TNAU Coconut tonic are essential. Adapting root feeding of TNAU Coconut tonic technology to specific regional conditions and encouraging knowledge sharing will enable farmers to make informed choices about technology adoption. Collaboration between the public and private sectors can help speed up the adoption of TNAU Coconut tonic technology, ensure sustainable coconut cultivation practices, and ultimately benefit farmers, consumers, and the environment. By overcoming such challenges, the coconut farming sector could achieve its full potential and contribute to boosting the income of coconut growers and ~~overcome~~ overcoming the environmental distress such as drought, pest and disease attacks.

### 4.2 Perceived benefits of TNAU Coconut tonic technology

The adoption of TNAU Coconut tonic technology brings forth a multitude of perceived benefits for coconut growers, along with their conventional, recommended nutrient management practices, root feeding of TNAU Coconut tonic was added to their cultivation practices and ~~improving~~ improved their livelihoods. The integration of TNAU Coconut tonic offers the potential for increased productivity and improved quality, which translates into higher income and market access for farmers. Furthermore,

TNAU Coconut tonic technologies contribute to the resilience of coconut cultivation by mitigating risks associated with pest and disease and environmental challenges.

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