

Biodiversity board steps in to develop jackfruit's potential

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Panaji: Processing of jackfruit is a multi-crore industry in some states like Kerala, generating employment and a wide array of food products. In Goa over 80% produce of the fruit is wasted, indicating a continuing failure to tap the nutrition-rich resource.

In a bid to reduce wastage and develop a workable model for replication, Goa state biodiversity board's (GSBB) has set up a multi-processing centre at Pale-Kothambi employing 13 women from the locality to tap the local produce.

"The first multi-processing unit in Goa is aimed at some value addition to sustainably utilize bioresources such as jackfruits, kokum, jamun and mango which could encourage their conservation," Pradip Sarmokadam, member secretary, GSBB said.

At the recently-started centre, a host of products are rolled out from jackfruit, anv-

MIRACLE FRUIT

> Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus* Lam) is regarded as a food of the future & like a coconut tree - a kalpvriksha - nothing of the crop is wasted

> Goa state biodiversity board's Pale centre makes pickles, chips, dehydrated bulbs for cooking, pulp, jelly, seed powder (medicinal), sattam



(sweet), papad. The skin and other waste is dried for use as cattle fodder

> Jackfruit pulp is used to make honey, ponnospoll, modaks, chocolate cakes, juices, ice creams or as pizza topping in some places

> It has been termed as miracle fruit, as it helps control diabetes & cancer

lam, karmalam, mangoes and other produce. "From tender jackfruits to completely ripened ones, nothing is wasted and our workers prepare nine products from jackfruit, besides, anviam, karmalam and bimlam squash and anviam candy." Samiksha Chari, GSBB programme

officer said. Jackfruits are mainly sourced from government farms in Kulem, Chinchinim, Old Goa and from nearby villages, while the end products are marketed through local entrepreneurs and associates like Sunraj's Indrapet Ltd. Though jackfruit's health

benefits are well-known the produce ends up rotting on trees in Goa. "It has immense potential and 70 to 80 items can be made from jackfruit but sadly very little income is generated," nutritionist and subject matter specialist (home science) at ICAI's Kriahd Vigyan kendra, Old Goa said.

Around 25 women were trained on GSBB's behalf as well as 40 self-help groups (SHGs) in processing the fruit.

"Many of these groups are making chips and other products, but utilization can be improved," Talaulikar said.

While the centre's activities have been funded entirely by Goa Shipyard Limited, GSBB is planning ten more in the mining belt of both districts. "After a year or two we are expecting to use the revenue generated for conservation of local unique varieties of jackfruit, kokum, jamun and other species," Sarmokadam said.

Agri dept eyes more area for cultivation

Panaji: Jackfruit is recognised as a superfood today but has been neglected for far too long by agriculturists and local authorities. This financial year the directorate of agriculture has taken an initiative to bring more area in Goa under jackfruit cultivation.

"Jackfruit is not seen as a cash crop but in the future it will be. Since we do not have any organized plantation of jackfruit in Goa, we are in the process of motivating farmers to do so," said agriculture director Nevil Alphonso.

To begin with, the agriculture department will start cultivating jackfruit at its farms at Calem and Codar. Two hundred saplings each will be cultivated in a one-hectare area each at either of the farms where various varieties will be planted with a total of 400 saplings in two hectares of agricultural land. tw