

# From here, the toddy trade route begins

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**PALAKKAD:** The more than Rs. 1,500 crore annual toddy business in Kerala has shrunk virtually to the Chittoor taluk in Palakkad district, and it opens up the scope for adulteration of toddy. An excise official said that toddy from Palakkad sells up to Kasaragod.

The taluk boasts of 1,650 coconut farms and accounts for 2,34,000 toddy tapping trees for which tree tax has been paid for the first six months of the current financial year. It is estimated that there are a little more than five lakh coconut trees being tapped for toddy in the State.

The State Excise Department estimate is that more than 50 per cent of the toddy produced in Chittoor is sold in Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kottayam and Alappuzha. These districts have replaced Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Thiruvananthapuram, which formerly depended heavily on toddy from Chittoor.

The department has issued around 1,300 permits during the current financial year for supply of toddy from Chittoor taluk to various districts in the State, where toddy tapping has come to a standstill.

Excise Department's official estimate is that a coconut tree yields 2.5 litres of toddy a day, which means about 4.6 lakh litres of toddy is produced in the taluk daily. However, tappers say that

toddy yield varies from season to season, depending on rain and point out instances in which yields have gone up to nine litres a tree per day.

Chittoor taluk, which is well suited to coconut, has around 15 lakh coconut trees. "They not only yield more coconuts than trees in other parts of the State but also have records of high toddy production," said an official.

He said with copious rains like this year, coconut trees in Chittoor taluk could yield record toddy, ranging between three litres and eight litres a

day. The dependence of other districts on Palakkad for toddy business means there is a heavy transport cost involved, pushing up the price of toddy from around Rs. 10 a litre in Chittoor to between Rs. 45 and 60 a litre in different parts of the State.

## HEADY MATHS

**1,650** coconut farms and **2,34,000** toddy tapping trees in Chittoor

**5 lakh** coconut trees tapped for toddy in the State

A coconut tree produces **2.5 litres** of toddy a day, which means **4.6 lakh litres** of toddy produced in Chittoor daily

**50%** of Chittoor toddy sold in Ernakulam, Thrissur, Kottayam and Alappuzha



Satheesh Vellinezhi