

**OH, FOR A GLASS OF PURE TODDY!**

# Experts, Farmers Flay HC Directive on Toddy Ban

by Athul Lal A G

**Kozhikode:** Agriculture experts and farmers have taken the High Court directive to the State Government to consider banning toddy in the state with a pinch of salt. Experts endorse the view that fermented toddy consumption must be restricted but have pointed out that sweet toddy extracted from the coconut bud is hailed universally as a matchless natural drink.

"Fermented toddy is dan-

gerous to health but the production of sweet toddy, coco sugar and coco honey must be promoted," opines R Hali, former Director of Agriculture.

Toddy is now globally used as a raw material for producing coconut sugar, which could be used by diabetic patients. The recent international meeting 'Coco Tech' held in Kochi, Hali said, had decided to promote the production of sweet toddy and coconut sugar since it was found that both these mate-



rials are having nutritional and medicinal value.

"Indonesia is now producing six lakh tonnes of coco-

nut sugar every year and five times more than the same as coconut serum. Given the present day plight of the coconut growers, perhaps the most pathetic, value addition of coconut and toddy is much significant," he added.

Responding to the issue, All India Kisan Sabha state general secretary Sathyan Mokeri said the High Court's observation was 'just like burning the house to drive away the mouse'.

"If you are suffering from a disease, cure it and not

chop off your head. As far as coconut farmers are concerned, toddy is a priceless substance. And it's widely used in major coconut producing nations like Philippines and Sri Lanka. The High Court order could be a major blow to the coconut farmers and the State Government should take necessary step to deal with the issue," he said.

Dominic, Kerakesari award-winning farmer from Thiruvambadi in Kozhikode, feels that Government

should promote legitimate toddy business in the state.

"Toddy gives a substantial revenue for the farmers and pure toddy can be consumed by children as well. The Government and the Judiciary should act tough on the sale of spurious liquor in the state. High Court's observation that spurious liquor has been sold in the label of toddy is true to certain extent. But, imposing total ban on toddy will definitely become a setback for coconut farmers," he said.