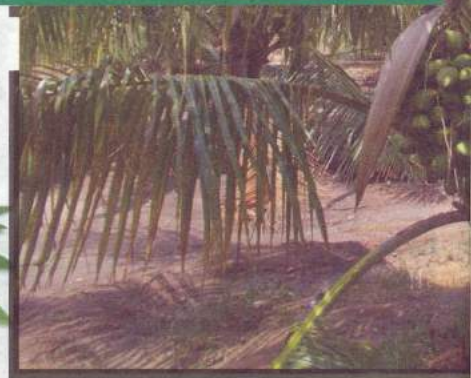




# The King of Coc

Lobo's business mantra is "A sale is not complete until the farmer receives the anticipated benefits." The DeeJay Group has received several Central and State awards for productivity and rural development, including from the National Productivity Council of India. Yet Lobo believes that his only "profit is and must be the legitimate reward for service rendered to society".



Bangalore is of course best known for its IT sector, which is a cause of anxiety even for U.S. President Obama who keeps raising the bogey of Bangalore snatching jobs from the U.S. Bangalore is also known for the King of Good Times – no prizes for guessing who that King-fisher is! You must have seen his cricketers, if not his calendar girls!

Bangalore is home to another King – the king

of nuts – coconuts. He has, over the last 40 years, been instrumental in bringing about a relatively unsung revolution in the production of coconuts and its various by-products. Meet the unassuming David J. Lobo (see pic), the Chairman of the DeeJay Group; that has stakes in coconut breeding, agriculture, aquaculture, Processed Foods and Information Technology. Lobo has also started the Bridge Foundation for micro enterprise development, and is the co-founder of the Xavier Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship, a lay initiative. It is a non-profit organization that is rated among the top 20 management colleges in India.

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T.V. Asokan of Coimbatore was scornfully referred to as the village drunkard. He had four acres of land and a monthly income of Rs. 6000/-. In 1993 he started off with 210 DeeJay hybrid coconut plants. He now earns Rs. 32,000/- per month and has purchased 5 more acres of land. At another extreme is Mukudapathy of Thiruppur. He started using DeeJay Hybrids in 1991. At that time he had 10 acres of land, which has now grown 10 times to 100 acres. He is now harvesting 97,000 coconuts a month and earning over

Rs 10 lakhs per month. He attributes 80% of his success and wealth to his coconut plantation.

How did Lobo and his DeeJay Group transform the lives of thousands of marginal and middle level farmers? It is long story, dating back to 1983. That is when the DeeJay Coconut Breeding Project was launched, under the able guidance of an UN Expert, Prof Anthony Davis. Today the enterprise has supplied over Twenty Lakh commercial coconut seedlings to farmers – resulting in high productivity, high performance and considerably enhanced income.

DeeJay was one of the first to computerize coconut production data, way back in 1981; and today has a data bank on the production history of over 20,000 coconut palm trees. Today DeeJay has huge breeding plantations in Madurai and Ambur in Tamil Nadu, Bailur in Karnataka and Sanguem in Goa.

**GO 'DWARF'**

DeeJay, through its scientific research and data banks, was able to produce a hybrid variety of coconut palm now known as the DeeJay Dwarf (see pic). The comparative chart of the DeeJay

is a staggering eight times more! So isn't the DeeJay coconut an agricultural marvel, and the man behind it truly the king of coconuts?

Other than nuts, copra, oil, TCW and sugar; this wonder tree's by products have several other uses. The wood is denser than teak and makes excellent rafters. Coir was of course being used for ropes and floor matting. But China is now picking it all up to make interiors for automobiles, which do not emit toxic gases like petroleum-based products. Even the lowly pith, a spongy brown and fluffy substance, mountains of which covered the countryside, is now being compressed into blocks and exported. Because of its high water absorption levels it is now being used extensively in horticulture, floriculture, etc.

Northerners like me aren't enamoured by coconut oil. But Lobo refers to Dr Mary Enig, an American nutritionist. She has been up in arms against the huge lobbies for corn, soya and groundnut oil in the U.S. There are two types of coconut oil – Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) that is less viscous and colourless, extracted from fresh coconuts. Enig says that VCO is even healthier than Virgin Olive Oil. Mediterraneans beware; the Indians are coming, with their VCO.

The regular coconut oil (CNO) is that which is extracted from the dried kernels, the copra. But VCO with its rich source of Lauric acid is the healthiest oil, says Enig. From the nutrition angle, TCW is the healthiest drink because of its natural electrolytes, minerals and potassium. In like manner palm sugar is also healthier; as its glycemic index is just 35 as compared to 80 for cane sugar. All in all one would have to bow one's head in wonder at the many attributes of the coconut tree. Small wonder then that even in North India, where coconuts don't grow, it is used in all auspicious Hindu rituals.

David J. Lobo has come a long way from the days when he had joined the Redemptorist congregation to be a priest. He calls them the 6 happiest years of his life. But he learnt the value of honesty and integrity in business from his father, Francis Xavier Lobo, a senior engineer in the railways. Despite hardships and set backs, especially in his earlier poultry business, David firmly believes that honesty is still the best policy. He has a word of advice for Christian youth who are always hankering after jobs and security. Business involves taking risks. He appeals to our youth "Get into business as your first

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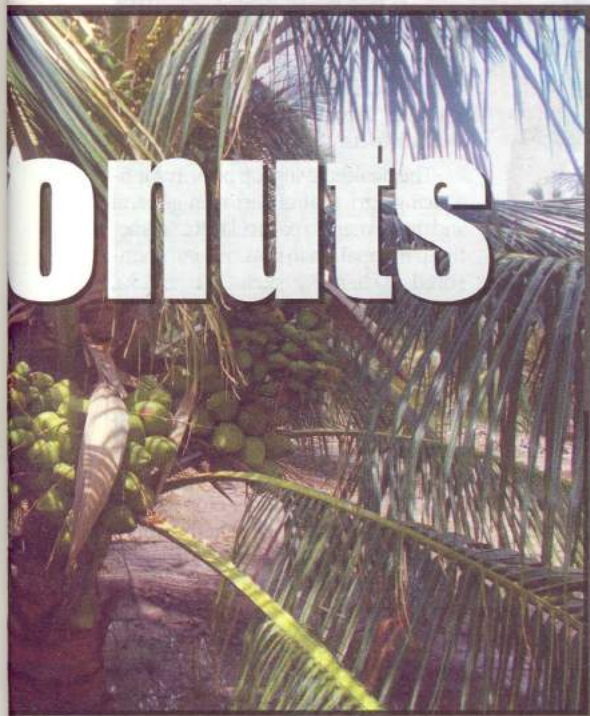
**David Lobo**

choice. Only through business can you become an agent of change in a major way".

The pillar of strength alongside David is his equally dynamic wife Aloma (nee Cordeiro) whom he married in 1972. A doctor by profession, she made great sacrifices to support her husband and care for their first three children. Later God

gifted three more to them, including Nisha (now 14), who was born with a congenital illness, Lamellar Ichthyosis, where her skin dies and peels constantly. She was born without eyelids. Nisha, together with her proud and caring parents appeared on actor Amir Khan's hugely popular TV show "Satyamev Jayate".

Aloma herself headed the Central Government's "Central Adoption Resources Authority", New Delhi, and it was largely through her efforts that the Government made an amendment to the



Dwarf with regular tall palms (see box) is an eye-opener. While a regular tree takes 6 years to flower, DeeJay does it in just two years. Since the gestation period is considerably less, it means that the return on investment starts coming in much faster. Though the price of a DeeJay seedling is 7 times that of a normal one, it is a small price to pay, considering the yield, and lower total investment. The nut yield per tree, besides being faster, is also much higher, and the amount of copra (dried coconut) per nut is almost double. The yield of Tender Coconut Water (TCW) is 2 1/2 times more than the normal, the nut yield per hectare (ha) is three times more, the copra yield is 6 times more and the coconut oil yield is 5 times more. The net profit over 50 years

Performance comparison of DeeJay Hybrids with Regular Tall Palms\*

PARTICULARS	DEEJAY HYBRIDS	REGULAR TALLS PALMS
Flowering begins in	24 months	72 months
Nuts yield /p.a. per tree	250 nos	80 nos
Copra content per nut	210 grms	125 grams
Oil content in Copra	68%	63%
Tender Coconut Water	500 ml+	200 ml
Coconuts per ha	43750 no's	14000 no's
Copra per ha	9187 kgs	1960 kgs
Coconut oil per ha	6247 kgs	1235 kgs

"Juvenile Justice Care and Maintenance Act 1990" that gave a legal right to all Indians, including Christians and Muslims, to adopt children.

So the Lobos are life givers, not just to coconut farmers, but also to childless parents, and a beacon of hope for the Catholic laity of India. Truly David J. Lobo of the DeeJay Group is not just he King of Good Coconuts, but the King of Hearts as well. The Ace is no longer up his sleeve, it is now out in the open for all to benefit from; for "a sale is not complete until the intended beneficiary receives the desired results".

**By Chhotebhai**

Cost and revenue comparison of DeeJay Hybrids and Regular Talls Palms\*

PARTICULARS	DEEJAY HYBRIDS	REGULAR TALLS PALMS
Year of first yielding	3rd Year	7th Year
Initial purchase price/seedlings	₹ 350	₹ 50
Expenses per Ha. up to first yield	₹ 3 Lakhs	₹ 3.87 Lakhs
Income by 5th year of planting per Ha.	₹ 8.12 Lakhs	NIL
Income by 10th year of planting per Ha.	₹ 30 Lakhs	₹ 3.07 Lakhs
Net Profit / (Loss) by the 10th year per Ha.	₹ 21.5 Lakhs	(₹ -2.47 Lakhs)
Net profit per Ha. per year after stabilization	₹ 3.75 Lakhs	₹ 0.55Lakhs
Net profit per Ha. over 50 years	₹ 172.50 Lakhs (46yrs*3.75)	Rs. 22.55 Lakhs (41 yrs*0.55)