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Coca-Cola India launches Unnati Litchi

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By **Jyoti Pandey** | February 13, 2020



coca-cola-india-launches-unnati-litchi

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An initiative to kickstart a virtuous cycle of "Fruit Circular Economy" in Bihar

Following successful Unnati interventions in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, Coca-Cola India has launched *Unnati Litchi* in Bihar together with DeHaat, National Research Centre for Litchi (NRCL), and Kedia Fresh. The initiative is aimed at enhancing efficiency of the Agri value chain and farmers' capability building on high-density plantation, farmer training for Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) and creation of demo orchards through appropriate technology interventions.

The initial phase of this initiative has been launched across Muzaffarpur, Samastipur and Vaishali districts of Bihar which are the major hubs for Litchi cultivation in the state. Encompassing the entire value chain from grove to glass, Unnati Litchi aims at educating and training 80,000+ farmers in revitalizing the existing orchards, rejuvenating old and senile farms spanning over 3000 acres, and introducing modern techniques like high density plantation to double Litchi productivity.

The project announcement was made in the presence of *Prem Kumar - Minister of Agriculture, Bihar, Shashank Kumar - Founder & CEO, DeHaat; Dr. S.D. Pandey, Principal Scientist NRCL; R.K. Kedia - Chairman, Kedia Fresh; Asim Parekh - Vice President, Fruit Circular Economy, Coca-Cola India; and Ishteyaque Amjad - Vice-President, Public Affairs, Communications & Sustainability, Coca-Cola India & South West Asia.*

Shashank Kumar, Co-Founder and CEO of DeHaat said, *"Litchi is a heritage crop of Bihar and our farmers have been experiencing the declining productivity of crop on yearly basis & being a high value crop for farmers- Litchi has a major role for the livelihood of farmers. We aim to mobilize and train the farmer community to transition from conventional methods to modern agriculture practices by providing them end-to-end support, training, and associated cultivation techniques. We're confident that Coca-Cola's involvement in the project will bring in the necessary scale and excellent oversight."*

Coca-Cola India will work closely with the project implementation partner DeHaat (Green Agrevolution Pvt. Ltd.), towards increasing the productivity of Shahi and China, the Litchi varieties known for their unique strengths. Kedia Fresh will bring in the expertise towards creating a state-of-the-art demonstration orchard in Muzaffarpur and lead technology partner, National Research Centre for Litchi, Muzaffarpur (NRCL), will develop complete Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Litchi cultivation and ensure their implementation during the project timeframe.

Ishteyaque Amjad - Vice President, Public Affairs, Communications & Sustainability, Coca-Cola India and South West Asia *said, "We are committed to promoting Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) across various fruits in the country. Litchi is the biggest fruit cultivation in Bihar and employs a large part of the state's population. We'll continue to create demand for locally grown fruits through our fruit-based beverages and progressively invest in the agri-ecosystem of the country, and working directly with the farmers through Unnati projects, we will continue to help farmers improve their incomes and living standards."*

Asim Parekh - Vice President, Fruit Circular Economy, Coca-Cola India said, *"India is the second largest producer of Litchi in the world. The States of Bihar and West Bengal, together account for 50% of the Litchi cultivation in India. Bihar is the largest producer of Litchi. In addition to the conventional practice of Litchi cultivation, adoption of modern technologies and GAP can enhance the productivity of Litchi in Bihar by 2X. Unnati Litchi in Bihar is a humble yet a significant step in that direction."*

The increased productivity through Unnati Litchi is expected to accelerate local procurement of the fruit that will aid the horticulture ecosystem in the state. The project will also facilitate farmers' access to enabling infrastructure including high-yielding planting material together with modern Package of Practises (POP), which would make Litchi cultivation lucrative.

Coca-Cola India and its partners are on track to create virtuous value chains in horticulture by infusing over USD 1.7 Billion to develop Fruit Circular Economy in India. Subsequently, after the roll out of Project Unnati Litchi in Bihar, states like West Bengal and Odisha would be considered in the next phase.

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