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BOOSTING GOAS' FOOD PROCESSING CAPACITY

Goa's climate is conducive for growing a variety of food crops that include rice and types of vegetables and fruits. Although most of the produce is consumed by locals, value addition for the remaining cannot be made due to lack of processing facilities. However, things are changing and a new beginning has been made with the setting up of a Multiproduct Processing Centre, Pale, situated in the Bicholim Taluka of North ON TRADE Participants at the Multiproduct Processing Centre, Pale, situated in the Bicholim Taluka of North Goa. Goa, which is an initiative of the Goa Biodiversity Board and supported by the Goa Shipyard Limited. The objective of this initiative is to create livelihoods for the locals as well as add value to the locally produced food crops. This initiative is the brain child of the dynamic Dr. Pradip Sarmokadam, Member Secretary of the Goa Biodiversity Board. World Trade Center Goa, organized a business cum educational field trip to the food processing center to understand its workings and figure if this model could be replicated in more areas of Goa to enable more utilization of local resources. Laid out in a lush green landscape, the center has various facilities like a dry area for receiving and storing various products, a pantry area for carrying out various processing activities, an oven and pulverize along with cold storage facilities that help in creating an end-to-end solution for completing the processing process. It is a perfect blend of minimalistic design, good hygiene, suitable machinery and compact space which together lead to produce world class products. The range of products include lime and jackfruit pickles, amla juice, jackfruit and mango food pulp, masalas, banana & jackfruit chips etc. All these products branded and marketed under the "GoVan" brand are fast moving and have established themselves well in the market. The center encourages locals to try and increase their produce, and then purchases the excess from them. Also, employment opportunities are provided to locals who carry out various processing activities by adding value to the raw materials. This helps the locals generate good returns by earning an extra income. This center currently employs around 12 to 15 women professionals. Participants discussed and debated on the business structure and feasibility of setting up such centers in various talukas of Goa, with the idea of catering to the local market as well as producing marketable surplus that could be exported to the global markets with the help and support of WTC Goa's network. The entire operations of the Center were well explained by Mrs. Jyostna Fatrekar who leads part of the team that runs the day-to-day activities of the center.

The visit was conducted on July 30, 2022 at Pale, Ussgao, Bicholim Taluka.