

Impact of Diversification in Indian Coffee Plantations – A Sustainable Approach

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SUMMARY

Diversification has been the main characteristic feature of Indian coffee plantations because of the fact that coffee in India is shade grown and the conditions are ideal for cultivation of many fruit, spice and cash crops. The cultivation of black pepper, orange, banana, cardamom and areca in coffee plantations gained popularity in different regions in addition to the other minor crops. Thus, cultivation of intercrops could help the growers when coffee is not economical especially during drought years or when coffee prices plummet. In this study, it was possible to evaluate and study the economics and adoptability of different coffee based cropping systems in various coffee growing regions of India.

A field survey was carried out covering 132 arabica and 88 robusta coffee plantations of different coffee growing regions. The results revealed that in arabica coffee plantations the income from inter crops represented 12% in Karnataka and 37% in Tamil Nadu regions. While in robusta plantations the income from inter crops constituted around 40% in Karnataka and 26% in Kerala regions. The major intercrops in Chikmagalur region of Karnataka represented pepper, areca, while in Coorg, pepper, cardamom, areca and orange. In Kerala where robusta coffee is more, pepper as a major intercrop followed by areca. The arabica dominated Tamil Nadu region diversified their coffee plantations with varied crops in recent years which comprised of orange, pepper, banana, cardamom, lemon, avocado and vegetable crops. Thus, the results revealed that robusta plantations of all the regions and arabica plantations of Tamil Nadu region have varying coffee based cropping systems which generate an additional revenue to sustain in adverse coffee market scenario.