

Intercropping in immature rubber plantation of Dhalai district in Tripura

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Received : August, 2010; Revised : September, 2010; Accepted : October, 2010

SUMMARY

An attempt was made to assess the overall growth and benefits of intercropping in immature rubber plantation. The result indicated that through intercropping, growers can earn additional income. Banana and pineapple are more popular intercropping crops in survey areas. Banana cultivation is more profitable if compared with pineapple and through banana cultivation growers are able to cover 70-76 per cent cost of first three years. Therefore, intercropping in rubber plantation showed a new path for earning income in immature rubber plantation.

Sarkar, Sukanta, Pandey, Pradeep Kumar, Ghoshal, P.K. and Mallik, Rajib (2011). Intercropping in immature rubber plantation of Dhalai district in Tripura. *Internat. J. Plant Sci.*, 6 (1): 207-210.

Key words : Rubber plantation, Benefit, Cost, Cultivation grower and pineapple, Banana, Intercropping

Intercropping is the practice of growing two or more crops in close proximity. Careful planning is required, taking into account the soil, climate, crops, and varieties. It is particularly important not to have crops competing with each other for physical space, nutrients, water, or sunlight. Intercropping of compatible plants also encourages biodiversity, by providing a habitat for a variety of insects and soil organisms that would not be present in a single crop environment.

Intercropping with short-term crops provides a significant additional income during the long immature period of rubber tree growth when no latex is produced. Rubber was grown either as a sole crop, or intercropped for the first 4 years with banana. The intercrop comprised an additive series of one, two or three rows of banana to one row of rubber. Growth of rubber was monitored for 6 years, *i.e.* up to the time that tapping for latex began and a logistic growth function was fitted to girth data in order to assess growth.

Hevea brasiliensis is the most important commercial source of natural rubber- a product of vital important

recovered from its latex. It is a native of the Amazon River basin of South America. It was introduced to tropical Asia in 1876 through Kew Garden in the UK with the seeds brought from Brazil. The tree is now grown in the tropical regions of Asia, Africa and America.

One of the main challenges that Indian Government is facing after independence is provision of social justice to Indian scheduled tribes for the improvement of their socio-economic status. North-east India consists of seven states and in each state there are various types of tribal people live. They are basically poor and previously always exploited by outsiders. However, after independence, the government of India took some initiatives for tribal development. Indian constitution has made separate provisions for the upliftment and well-being of the tribal people in India.

Tripura is a state in Northeast India. Northeast India is the easternmost region of India consisting of the contiguous Seven Sister States, Sikkim, and parts of North Bengal (districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Koch Bihar). Linguistically the region is distinguished by a preponderance of Tibeto-Burman languages. Northeast India has a predominantly humid sub-tropical climate with hot, humid summers, severe monsoons and mild winters.

Objectives:

The basic objectives of this paper are as follows to analyze the opportunity of intercropping in immature rubber plantation and to assess the benefits of growers through intercropping .

The present study was conducted in Dhalai district of Tripura. The Dhalai district was selected purposely

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