

C. Thamban and S. Arulraj

Coconut-based cropping system for sustainable income

Mr Kunhambu Maniyani, Pallikkara, Kasaragod, got the prestigious award 'Best intercrop farmer' from COGENT. He is practising coconut-based intercropping for higher income. An active member of the Pallikkara Community Coconut Development Centre (PCCDC), he effectively utilized the interspace in his coconut farm.

COCONUT-BASED cropping system involving cultivation of compatible crops in the interspace of coconut lead to considerable increase in production and productivity per unit area, by more efficient utilization of resources like sunlight, soil, water and labour. The CPCRI has developed several successful cropping models which help enhance profitability from coconut plantations. This has been effectively demonstrated to farmers under the IPGRI/ COGENT project on "Developing sustainable coconut-based income generating technologies".

Mr Kunhambu Maniyani owns 0.88 ha of farm with coconut as main crop. There are 110 coconut palms. Of them, 75 are in bearing stage. By adopting intensive intercropping with banana, tapioca, cowpea and okra in his coconut garden he get a net income of Rs 10,000–12,000 from farming.

He predominantly grows coconut variety West Coast Tall. This cultivar is well-adapted to local agroclimatic situations. Its average yield is 80 nuts/palm/year. The interspace available in coconut garden is very effectively utilized for cultivating tapioca, banana, okra and cowpea. Though not a recommended practice, he has also accommodated a few arecanut trees in between coconut palms near his house. He raises

- Coconut yield 80 nuts/palm/year compared with an average yield in Kerala (40 nuts/palm/year)
- Net profit by cultivating tapioca (Rs 3,000 in 0.2 ha)
- Banana Nendran (0.1 ha, 75 plants)
- Yield: 10–12 kg/plant; net profit, Rs 6,400
- Cowpea and okra Rs 10,000–12,000/year
- Backyard poultry: 8–10 birds (breed: Gramalakhshmy)



Kunhambu Maniyani busy in his coconut garden

tapioca as intercrop in 0.5 acre, earning a profit of Rs 3,000.

Nendran banana can be profitably cultivated as an intercrop in coconut garden in early phase of coconut growth, says Mr Maniyani. He is cultivating banana in 0.25 acre as intercrop, accommodating 75 plants. The average yield of banana obtained is 10–12 kg/plant. Banana intercropping fetches him a profit of Rs 6,400. He also cultivates okra and cowpea, earning a profit of Rs 1,000. On an average his additional income generated from intercropping is Rs 10,000–12,000/year. Besides, 8–10 poultry birds are also maintained in backyard rearing system in his homestead.

Mr Maniyani attaches much importance for the maintenance of local coconut germplasm available in his coconut garden. He was actively involved in organizing the Coconut

Diversity Fair organized by PCCDC. The intensive intercropping practices adopted by him is an indication of exploiting the opportunities available for enhancing income from coconut farming.

SUMMARY

After interventions, Mr Maniyani participated in training programmes on coconut-based farming systems under COGENT/IPGRI Project on Poverty Reduction. He availed micro-credit for procuring planting material and other inputs, raised intercrops systematically and became a farmer who adopted the technology.

For further interaction, please write to: Dr C. Thamban (Scientist) and Dr S. Arulraj, Project Coordinator, AICRP (Palms), CPCRI, Kasaragod 671 124 (Kerala).