

BIO-DIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND COFFEE CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Kodagu District of Karnataka is regarded as the Scotland of India and Southern Kashmir. It is not only famous for its brave soldiers, sportsmen, beautiful ladies, but also for the lush green coffee estates with Coorg oranges and buzzing honey bees. Coffee growers in Kodagu are considered as the conservators of bio-diversity to a greater extent because almost all the coffee grown in Kodagu is grown under shade. Shade is maintained not only for the coffee plants but also to support the pepper creepers. The lush green canopy of trees (both natural and planted) found in the estates in Kodagu not only houses different varieties of insects, birds and animals, but also provides year long food for these. Most of them own ponds for irrigation and paddy field which houses a large variety of aqua based animals.

Thus an attempt is made in this study to lean the extent of bio-diversity conservation taken up in the coffee estates of Kodagu district. The district grows more than 50 percent of total coffee production of Karnataka and there are approximately 43286 holdings having less than 10 hectares and 489 holdings having more than 10 hectares. Yet another specialty of Kodagu and the natives of Kodagu is that the natives are the nature worshipers. They worship the water (river), trees and the animals (cows, snakes). They also have a tradition of having reserved forests in the name of God in almost every village, where cutting of trees, hunting and any type of mining is prohibited. This also helps in conserving the bio-diversity. The study is also aimed at knowing the different bio-diversity available (both botanical and zoological), the fading species (both plants and animals), the reasons for their disappearance, the relationship of the growers with these species and to give some suggestions as to how best or to what an extent the estate owners can contribute towards the diversity.

KEY WORDS: Bio-Diversity, Coffee Estates, Trees and Animals, Fading Species, Conservation.