

# KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES OF SMALL RUBBER GROWERS TOWARDS INTERCROPPING PRACTICE

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Rubber has been grown mainly as a single crop in the past. However, the practice of monoculture cannot be continued because of the pressure for land for cultivation of food crops. Intercropping of rubber lands during the immature period of rubber, should therefore be given high priority. The practice of intercropping has other

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advantages; the improvement of maintenance quality of rubber lands which results in the shortening of immature growth period and the supplementation of growers income during the non-productive phase of rubber are two important considerations.

The objectives of this study are to: (a) enumerate farmer's knowledge and attitudes on different aspects of intercropping and (b) identify the farmer's source of knowledge with regard to intercropping.

The area selected was one where intercropping was not adopted.

The investigation indicates that most farmers are not conversant with all technical aspects of intercropping practice. Nevertheless, all growers are aware of the existence of the practice of intercropping.

The study reveals two types of farmer attitudes towards intercropping; firstly, the attitudes towards specific technical components which make up the entire process of intercropping and secondly those which are related to the concept of intercropping, in general.

Analysis of sources of information on intercropping reveals that the majority of rubber farmers obtain such knowledge from mass media such as printed form and radio, while less significant sources include extension agents and other farmers. However, a noteworthy feature of intercrop-adoption behaviour is that all sources identified have been instrumental mainly in making farmers aware of the existence of practice. The study suggests that a well planned motivational campaign with much emphasis on extension inputs is vital for wide scale adoption of intercropping practice on rubber holdings.