

Quadrant II - Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: Bachelor of Science (Second Year)

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Unit: 02

Module Name: Crops – Cash Crops

Module No: 23

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Notes

Agriculture plays a vital role in the World Economy. Agriculture is the art and science of cultivating the soil, growing crops and raising livestock. It includes the preparation of plant and animal products for people to use and their distribution to markets.

Cash Crops

A cash crop is one that is cultivated to be sold to gain profit from the sale. The term helps to distinguish crops grown for commercial gain from the subsistence crops which are mainly grown to feed the farmer and his family with little left to be sold in the market. In the past, most crops were grown as food for the producer and his family. However, most of the crops grown today, especially in the developed world, are cash crops which are sold in the national or international markets to earn profits. Most of the cash crops cultivated in the developing nations are primarily exported to the developed economies. Well known cash crops include Tea and Coffee, Jute.

Types of Cash Crops

- ❖ Tea
- ❖ Coffee
- ❖ Jute

Tea

Tea is an evergreen plant that mainly grows in tropical and subtropical climates. Tea is a labour-intensive crop and 50% of the labourers are women. It grows faster under light shade. Commercial cultivation of tea started in India British era. India is the 2nd largest producer and the largest consumer of tea in the world. Tea plants require high rainfall but its roots cannot tolerate water logging. Hence, it requires sloppy areas. The tea plant grows well in tropical humid and subtropical humid climates endowed with deep and fertile well drained soils, rich in humus and organic matter. It requires 150cm summer rain and 21°C to 27 °C daily temperature is needed for its cultivation. Tea bushes require warm and frost-free climate all through the year. Frequent showers evenly distributed over the year ensure continuous growth of the tender leaves. Tea is often cultivated on the hill slopes so that there is no waterlogging in its roots. Its leaves are to be plucked several times in a year, so availability of abundant and cheap labour is essential for its cultivation.

Coffee

Coffee is a tropical plantation crop. It requires 16 °C - 28 °C temperature, 150cm – 250cm rainfall and well drained slopes are essential for its growth. It grows on hilly slopes at the height of 900m – 1800m. Low temperature, frost, dry weather for a long time and harsh sunshine are harmful for its plants. Coffees are grown in shade and commonly with two tiers of shade. Both varieties are planted in well-drained soil conditions that favour rich organic matter. Coffee plantation is done along hilly slope. Slopes of Arabica tend to be gentle to moderate, while Robusta slopes are gentle to fairly level. The Arabica variety initially brought from Yemen is produced in the country. India contributes about 4% of the world's total coffee production. It ranks 6th in the world in coffee production.

Jute

Jute is a tropical plant that requires hot and humid climate. It is one of the most important natural fibers in terms of cultivation and usages. It is also known as the golden fiber and is India's major cash crop. Jute fiber is obtained from the inner bark of the jute plant. Almost 85% of the world's jute is cultivated in the Ganges Delta. It is a soil exhausting crop like sugarcane and lowers soil fertility rapidly. It thus grows well on the well-

drained fertile soils in the flood plains where the soils are renewed every year. High temperatures 24 °C to 35 °C, heavy rain 125cm – 200cm and low plain land are favourable conditions for the cultivation of jute. India is the largest producer of jute in the world.