

# VIEWS OF A SMALL HOLDER

Mr. M.L.M.Naim Hadjiyar, a land owner from Dehideniya, Hatharaliyadda grows intercrops successfully in his coconut land at Rambukkana. Excerpts from a discussion with him are reproduced below:

**Q: What is the extent under intercrops in your land?**

**A:** The total extent of land is 25 acres. Out of this, about 15 acres have been planted with intercrops. I have planted 4000 cacao trees. Of this, 2000 are in bearing. In another 2 acres, I have established pepper. I have 300 clove trees and some coffee and bananas.

**Q: What is the planting system you have adopted for cacao and pepper?**

**A:** I have left a distance of 8 ft from the base of the coconut palm and planted 2 rows of cacao trees. Pepper vines have been established using gliricidia as supports planted in between two rows of coconut. Since pepper cannot be established with cacao, they have been planted in pits 2ft away from the coconut palms in order to allow the vines to grow onto coconut trunks.

Mr. M.L.M. Naim Hadjiyar  
explaining his experience



**Q: Have you encountered any adverse effects in this system of planting pepper on the yield of coconut?**

**A:** Some people think that this system will have some adverse effects on the yield of coconut. But I do not think this is so. I have a number of coconut palms used as supports for pepper. So far not a single coconut palm has shown any yield reduction since both coconut and pepper are given fertilizer.

**Q: How do you process cacao for the market?**

**A:** Ripe cacao pods are harvested and the seeds are taken out after splitting open the pods. These are allowed to ferment for two days in a box. Then after washing the seeds thoroughly, they are sun-dried.

**Q: What is the yield you get from your cacao trees?**

**A:** Last year, the total yield of cacao seeds was 25 cwt. This year it is about 75 cwt. Next year I expect a higher yield.

**Q: Do you experience any Problems in marketing your products?**

**A:** I have no such problems. In this area, even small quantities could be sold locally.



**Q: If you plant intercrops in coconut lands in this way, what is the minimum acreage of land that could sustain an average family.**

**A:** Provided all the management practices are carried out properly, even an acre of land will be sufficient to sustain an average family. If the interest as well as the enterprising attitude are lacking, even 100 acres of land cannot sustain an average family. Mere planting of coconut and other intercrops will not be sufficient. It is only by looking after these crops well and by adopting proper management practices, that best returns from these crops could be obtained.

**Q: Is it possible to grow intercrops in this way in the lands around your property?**

**A:** Of course. I know what I could do if I possess them

**Q: Why are the land owners in the neighbourhood not following you?**

**A:** They are used to that way of life. When they are pre-occupied with their employment or some other trade, they are compelled to neglect their land. When

they get used to spend the leisure hours doing nothing they lose interest in their land. They are contented with their salary.

**Q: Do you get visitors to see your land?**

**A:** Many visitors come to see my land and learn a great deal. But there are some people who visit the land with some ulterior motives.

**Q: What is the message you wish to convey to other coconut land owners regarding intercropping in coconut lands.**

**A:** The present coconut price is very low. Therefore if one wishes to get a better return from his coconut land, it is better to grow intercrops with coconut, particularly in this area. Intercropping in coconut lands will not only give an additional income but also improve the fertility of the land, thereby increasing the coconut yield.

---

---

Reported by

**P.A. Henry Nimal**

---

---