

Coffee processing

Coffee is the second most important commodity in the world trade after petroleum products. A native to tropical rain forest of Ethiopia and Central Africa, this stimulating beverage crop was introduced



into India during 1600 AD from Yemen and planted in the high hills in Chickmangalure district of Karnataka. However, it is only during 18th century that the British entrepreneurs established commercial coffee plantations in south India. At present coffee is cultivated in 3.4 lakh ha, covering Karnataka (56%), Kerala (25%), and Tamilnadu (9%). The annual production is around 2.9 lakh tones with an average productivity of 947 kg clean coffee /ha. As a rural enterprise primarily, coffee industry provides direct employment to nearly 5 lakh people. About 60 % is exported annually earning around Rs. 300 crores and rest consumed internally. There are 99,000 registered growers of whom 97.13% are small growers with 10 hectares and below.

Commercial production of coffee comes from two species, viz. *Coffee arabica* and *Coffee caniphora* popularly known as Arabica coffee and Robusta coffee. Arabica is suitable for high lands, producing superior quality mild coffee but it is susceptible to major pest and diseases. Robusta coffee more adaptable to lowlands and it is tolerant to major pest and diseases, producing rather inferior quality coffee.