Effect of Growing Intercrops on Growth and Yield of Tree Mulberry in turn its Influence on Cocoon Yield

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A B S T R A C T

The study was conducted during 2017-2019 in Katharighatta and Jodighatta village of Channarayapatna Taluk, Hassan District by the intervention of Krishi Vignan Kendra, Kandali, Hassan as a part of On Farm Test to evaluate the effect of growing intercrops on growth and yield of Tree Mulberry. The experiment was laid out in RCBD with 5 replications and 4 treatments which includes T₁ (Sole Tree mulberry) as control, T₂ (Tree mulberry + Ragi), T₃ (Tree mulberry + Groundnut) and T₄ (Tree mulberry + Cowpea). The growth and yield parameters of Tree mulberry like average number of shoots/plant, shoot height(cm), number of leaves/shoot and leaf yield (Kg/ha/crop) were recorded significantly higher in T₄ (45, 120.34, 29 and 7955.82) as compared to control (31.64, 114.24, 24 and 7809.35), respectively. The cocoon yield attributes like larval weight(g), cocoon weight(g), shell weight(g), pupal weight(g), shell ratio (%) and cocoon yield (Kg/100 DFLs) were recorded higher in T₄ (4.56, 1.76, 0.44, 1.33, 25.02 and 70) as compared to control (4.54, 1.71, 0.43, 1.32, 24.94 and 68.41), respectively. Growing Cowpea as an intercrop given higher B:C (2.63) due to increased soil fertility, higher leaf yield, cocoon yield and additional income as compared with other intercrops (Ragi- 2.56, Groundnut-2.46) and control (2.54).

Keywords
Tree Mulberry, Intercrops, Leaf yield, Cocoon yield, Additional Income

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Introduction

Sericulture is an art of scientific cultivation of mulberry and rearing silkworms where money flows from rich to poor. Mulberry, a sole food plant for silkworm, Bombyx mori L. is a deciduous or moist deciduous tree species originated from foothills of Himalayas which can survive and grow up to an elevation of 9000 msl. In fact, other than being used for sericulture, it also used in most of the public places, courtyards of the houses as a popular fruit tree. Sericulture is facing tough competition due to limited land resources and competition with other agricultural crops. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop
mutual harmony between sericulture and agriculture for of sustainable co-existence. In general most of the sericulture farmers have very small land holdings and depend mainly upon family labor and simple tools, they neither have the capacity to take risk nor have enough land to diversify the cropping system. Thus, by growing other of short duration crops, the farmer gets additional benefits from intercrops (Ahasn et al., 1989). In states like Karnataka, intercropping of tree mulberry at 10 x 10 ft spacing with Ragi, Cowpea and Groundnut have maximum returns from sericulture and pulses thereby facilitating additional net gain from one acre of mulberry plantations during spring and autumn seasons. An additional income can easily be fetched by growing short duration crops. Lot of work has already been done for integration of Sericulture with agriculture and horticulture (Gargi et al., 1997). Intercropping of mulberry with saffron in Kashmir yielded a good quality of mulberry leaf from the same field. Where saffron was cultivated alone to generate work as well as good deal of returns to farmers during lean period when there are no operations related to saffron cultivation (Kaur et al., 2002). Various recent studies also suggest that mulberry can successfully intercropped with medicinal plants like Aloe barbadense, Asparagus racemosa, Acorus calamus (Madhusudan et al., 2015).

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted during the period of 2017-18 to 2018-19 in tree mulberry fields of farmers at Kathrighatta and Jodighatta villages of Channarayapatna Taluk, Hassan District. The farmers were selected through purposive sampling. This selection was based on the predominantly sericulture based families in the region. The experiment was laid out in Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) consisting of 4 treatments with 5 replications. In each year total of 5 farmers were selected with the land holdings of 0.4 ha and were considered as a replications. The farmer’s practice which is solely grown tree mulberry without any intercrop considered as control (Sole Tree Mulberry, Treatment-1). The tree mulberry was cultivated with a short duration crops in between the rows as Ragi (KMR-301, Treatment-2), Groundnut (K-6, Treatment-3) and Cowpea (KBC-1, Treatment-4) during the period of the study. The farmers selected were interviewed and questioned on various socio-economic parameters in order to obtain a baseline data about the economic status of the families before and after. The soil status was also recorded before and after the experimentation. The growth and yield parameters recorded on tree mulberry were number of shoots/plant, average shoot length height (cm), average number of leaves/shoot and leaf yield (kg/ha/crop). The leaves from tree mulberry were fed to silkworms and yield attributes like larval, cocoon, shell and pupal weights (g), shell ratio (%), cocoon yield (Kg/100 DFLs) and economics of tree mulberry leaf production with intercrops were also recorded during the course of study. The data collected on different parameters were statistically analyzed at 5% level of significance (Russel, 1986).

Results and Discussion

Soil fertility status

The soil fertility status was enhanced in the soils where the intercrops were taken up as compared to sole cropping of tree mulberry. There was no change in the soil pH (7.2, 7.12, 7.14 and 7.11 in T1 i.e. control, T2, T3 and T4, respectively). The electric conductivity was reduced in the soils where intercrops were taken up (6.8 to 6.5-6.7 (dS/m). There was an enhancement in organic carbon (0.50 to 0.60-0.63 %), N (310.2 to 315.7-329.8 Kg/ha), P (289.0 to 290.2-293.5 Kg/ha), K (184 to
188.5-190 Kg/ha), Zn (0.6 to 0.65-0.7 ppm) and B (0.5 to 0.52-0.53 ppm) from sole crop plot to intercrop plot (Table 1).

**Growth and yield performance of tree mulberry**

The number of shoots per plant was observed maximum in T₄ (45) followed by T₃ (35), T₂ (34) and least in T₁ i.e Control (31.6). The average shoot length (cm) was recorded higher in T₄ (120.34) followed by T₂ (116.84), T₁ and least in T₃ (107.94). The average number of leaves per shoot was recorded high in T₄ (29) followed by T₃ (25) and low in T₂ and control (24). The leaf yield (Kg/ha/Crop) was recorded maximum in case of T₄ (7955.82) followed by T₃ (7824.40), T₁ Control (7779.34) and least in T₂ that is 7635.07 (Table 2). These findings are supported by Shankar *et al.*, 1998.

**Performance of silkworm reared on tree mulberry**

Among all the treatments the silkworm yield attributes like Larval (4.56 g), cocoon (1.76 g), shell (0.44 g) and pupal weights (1.33 g), Shell ratio (25.01%) and cocoon yield (70 Kg/100 DFLs) were found maximum in T₄ as compared to control (4.54g, 1.71g, 0.43g, 1.32g, 24.94% and 68.41 kg/100 DFLs), respectively (Table 3). Growing cowpea as intercrop in tree mulberry given more additional income and improved soil fertility (Table 1 and 4). The present findings are supported by the reports by Koul *et al.*, (2008) and Singhvi and Katiyar (2009), who recommended the growing of mulberry with vegetables and leguminous crops as these don’t require additional inputs. Also this finding is in line with (Bravo-Monroy *et al.*, 2016; Current *et al.*, 1995; De Souza Filho *et al.*, 1999; Moreno and Sunding 2005) who found out that there was a positive and significant relation between economic return and espousal of agroforestry. Mushtaq Rasool Mir *et al.*, (2018) reported the similar findings on efficacy of mulberry based intercropping system in the pirpanjal and shiwalik regions of Himalayas.

**Economics of tree mulberry leaf production with intercrops**

The total gross return (Rs/ha), net return (Rs/ha) and BC ratio were recorded highest in T₄ (67779, 42079, 2.63) followed by T₂ (24500, 38325, 2.56), T₃ (57844, 34344, 2.46) due to higher leaf yield, cocoon yield and additional income from intercrop and least recorded in control i.e. T₁ (38895, 23595, 2.54), respectively (Table 4). These findings are in conformity with Ashan *et al.*, (1989), Kabir *et al.*, (1991), Gargi *et al.*, (1997), Dayakar Yadav and Nagendra Kumar (1998) and Shankar *et al.*, (2000) where in significantly higher net returns and BC ratio were recorded in mulberry and legume intercropping system compared to sole mulberry.

| Soil fertility status | pH  | EC (dS/m) | OC (%) | N (Kg/ha) | P (Kg/ha) | K (Kg/ha) | Zn (ppm) | B (ppm) |
|----------------------|-----|-----------|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Before               | 7.2 | 0.68      | 0.50   | 310.2     | 289.0     | 184       | 0.6      | 0.5    |
| After T1             | 7.12| 0.67      | 0.62   | 315.7     | 293.5     | 190       | 0.7      | 0.5    |
| T2                   | 7.14| 0.65      | 0.60   | 321.4     | 290.2     | 188.5     | 0.65     | 0.52   |
| T3                   | 7.11| 0.65      | 0.63   | 329.8     | 291.4     | 189       | 0.66     | 0.53   |
## Table 2 Growth and yield performance of tree mulberry

| Treatments | Number of shoots/plant | Average shoot length (cm) | Average number of leaves/shoot | Leaf yield (Kg/ha/crop) |
|------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
|            | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | Pooled | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | Pooled | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | Pooled | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | Pooled |
| T1         | 30.80   | 32.47   | 31.64  | 100.17  | 128.30  | 114.24 | 19.00   | 29.00   | 24.00   | 7329.71 | 8288.98 | 7809.35 |
| T2         | 31.00   | 37.00   | 34.00  | 112.34  | 121.34  | 116.84 | 17.00   | 31.00   | 24.00   | 7435.58 | 7834.56 | 7635.07 |
| T3         | 33.00   | 37.00   | 35.00  | 98.84   | 117.04  | 107.94 | 22.00   | 28.00   | 25.00   | 7514.59 | 8134.22 | 7824.41 |
| T4         | 44.79   | 45.20   | 45.00  | 106.44  | 134.24  | 120.34 | 24.86   | 33.14   | 29.00   | 7676.10 | 8234.74 | 7955.42 |
| SE.m±      | 2.25    | 2.26    | 1.40   | 4.25    | 4.84    | 3.21   | 1.31    | 1.37    | 1.01    | 94.56   | 93.88   | 63.24   |
| CD (p=0.05)| 6.94    | 6.98    | 4.33   | 13.09   | 14.90   | 9.90   | 4.03    | 4.22    | 3.11    | 291.38 | 289.26 | 194.85 |

*Significance T1= Sole Tree Mulberry T2= Tree Mulberry+ Ragi T3= Tree Mulberry + Groundnut T4= Tree Mulberry + Cowpea

## Table 3 Performance of silkworm reared on tree mulberry

| Treatments | Larval weight (g) | Cocoon weight (g) | Shell weight (g) | Pupal weight (g) | Shell ratio (%) | Cocoon yield (kg/100 DFLs) |
|------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
|            | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | Poole d | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | Poole d | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | Poole d | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | Poole d | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | Poole d |
| T1         | 4.55    | 4.53    | 4.54   | 1.70    | 1.72    | 1.71   | 0.43    | 0.43    | 0.43   | 1.36    | 1.28    | 1.32   | 25.18   | 24.69   | 24.94   |
| T2         | 4.50    | 4.58    | 4.54   | 1.71    | 1.74    | 1.72   | 0.42    | 0.42    | 0.42   | 1.26    | 1.34    | 1.30   | 24.32   | 24.51   | 24.42   |
| T3         | 4.54    | 4.56    | 4.55   | 1.74    | 1.75    | 1.74   | 0.43    | 0.43    | 0.43   | 1.27    | 1.35    | 1.31   | 23.72   | 24.71   | 24.72   |
| T4         | 4.54    | 4.58    | 4.56   | 1.75    | 1.77    | 1.76   | 0.42    | 0.42    | 0.44   | 1.28    | 1.38    | 1.33   | 24.94   | 25.09   | 25.02   |
| SE.m±      | 0.01    | 0.01    | 0.01   | 0.01    | 0.01    | 0.01   | 0.01    | 0.01    | 0.01   | 0.01    | 0.01    | 0.01   | 0.01    | 0.01    | 0.01    |
| CD (p=0.05)| 0.04    | 0.04    | 0.02   | 0.03    | 0.03    | 0.03   | 0.02    | 0.02    | 0.02   | 0.03    | 0.03    | 0.02   | 0.66    | 0.57    | 0.46    |

*Significance T1= Sole Mulberry T2= Tree Mulberry+ Ragi T3= Tree Mulberry + Groundnut T4= Tree Mulberry + Cowpea

3137
Table 4 Economics of tree mulberry leaf production with intercrops

| Particulars                        | Treatment-1 | Treatment-2 | Treatment-3 | Treatment-4 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Gross Return from Mulberry (Rs/ha)| 38895       | 38175       | 39127       | 39779       |
| Gross Return from Intercrop (q/ha)| -           | 14.5        | 8.51        | 7.5         |
| Additional Income (Rs/ha)         | -           | 24650       | 18772       | 28000       |
| Total Gross Return (Rs/ha)        | 38895       | 62825       | 57844       | 67779       |
| Gross Cost (Rs/ha)                | 15300       | 24500       | 23500       | 25700       |
| Net Return (Rs/ha)                | 23595       | 38325       | 34344       | 42079       |
| BC Ratio                          | 2.54        | 2.56        | 2.46        | 2.63        |

T1 = Sole Tree Mulberry  T2 = Tree Mulberry + Ragi Cowpea  T3 = Tree Mulberry + Groundnut  T4 = Tree Mulberry +

The results of the present study revealed that the farmers in the study area have been converted to mono cropping to intercropping of tree mulberry with short duration crops with maximum land use which enables the community to diversify their income. Moreover it has helped in the economic upliftment of the farmer in particular.

The intercropping will increase the income of sericulture farmers along with the sericulture activities. It provides multiple outputs, generates income as well as employment, and also protects the soil. Its large scale adoption will help in accomplishing the conservation-linked sustainable development goals in the long run, which helped in doubling the farmer’s income. Growing cowpea as intercrop in tree mulberry given more additional income and improved soil fertility.

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