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THE TRIBES OF KORAPUT**

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Koraput Coffee: A boon for the tribes of Koraput

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Koraput, the heaven of Odisha, which is situated in the Eastern ghat at a height of 3000 ft. Above MSL, is well-known for its picturesque hills and streams and other magnificent natural views. The cool climate of this place is ideal for coffee farming. The coffee growing in the wild has more demand in national and international market for its unique taste and organic value.

back in 1930, has seen many ups and downs from the 20th century till now. Recently the organic coffee farming has become popular among the tribal and dalit community of the district.



Koraput Coffee packaging and marketing by TDCCOL (Odisha)

Now the area has been brought under coffee plantation is 4,238 ha while the potential area available in the district is 1,45,170 ha. "The trend shows a growing interest among tribal and dalit communities to diversify their income through coffee" says Karu Soren, the project administrator of Koraput's Integrated Tribal Development Agency. Three self-help groups (SHGs) in Golur village are actively involved in the coffee growing and are earning over Rs. 40,000 each from the sales of red wild cherry.

In 2016-17, the Koraput district administration founded the Coffee Development Trust to create a single platform to remove constraints for production and marketing. As per the 10-year plan, 46,500 ha will be brought under the shade plantation and 22,570 ha under the coffee plantation in the district. Around 25,000 families, mostly from tribal communities, will be given a record of rights for coffee plants as long-term livelihood. Earlier the raw cherries were sent to Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka for processing and the farmers earned Rs. 35 per kilo while the procurement



The wild red cherry of coffee plant

A coffee farm in Koraput



Coffee plantation, which was started in Bichalkota village on an experimental basis by the royals of Jeypore

price went upto Rs. 45 per kilo. Things changed when the Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation of Odisha Ltd. (TDCCOL) with technical support from the Regional Coffee board intervened in the market. They promoted the beans in the name of 'Koraput Coffee'. Now the beans of this brand are being effectively sold on several e-commerce platforms like Amazon and processing chain is being set up.

“To maintain the quality, the coffee fruit is de-pulped the same night at a processing unit in Koraput and the seeds are sun-dried for 11 days. The entire process conforms to international standards and tastes,” says Mansi Nimbhal, Managing Director, TDCCOL. The coffee plantation undoubtedly appears as a blessing for the local tribal communities to shift from age-old shifting cultivation to coffee production.

Diversification of the plantation along with some fruits and spices boosts income of tribals in the backward region. The shade plantation needed for coffee growing



Coffee processing unit inaugurated last year at Koraput

checks the soil erosion on the sloping terrain. The fallen timbers of the shade plantation meet the fuelwood demand of the local people and prevent migration of women workers in search for daily work. Mission

Shakti, launched by the State Department of Women and Child Development, is mainly focusing on the women of the area to make them economically independent through the wild cherry plantation.

It works with the Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) to create producers' group among the coffee growers and give working capital of Rs. 1 lakh to each producers' group and Rs.2.04 lakh for institution and capacity building. ORMAS supports the groups and the TDCCOL focuses on training.

Besides all this, the coffee plantation in the district needs more attention of the state government as it is still a district policy. A streamlined and developed marketing channel for the coffee plantation will encourage the tribal farmers to go for the plantation for many more years. Recently, last year, a coffee processing unit has been inaugurated in Koraput to help in the processing of the beans. It's time to make the slogan of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India "Vocal for Local" by making "Koraput coffee" a hit brand among the domestic and foreign consumers.



Slogan of Koraput coffee brand