

Mixed species gardens in Java and the transmigration areas of Sumatra, Indonesia: a comparison

R. Kusumaningtyas, S. Kobayashi, S. Takeda

Abstract

This study compared mixed species gardens in Java with those maintained by the Javanese immigrants in Sumatra. Two villages (Sedayu in Lampung Province of Sumatra and Watulimo in East Java) were selected based on similarity in the ethnic backgrounds of the inhabitants and the structure and socioeconomic attributes of the mixed garden systems evaluated. Floristic richness of Sedayu gardens was lower than that of Watulimo (38 and 55 species respectively). Although the vertical (multi-tiered) and horizontal structures of the mixed species gardens at both locations were mostly similar, differences in the number of vertical strata and the suite of species were evident. Plantation crops such as *Theobroma cacao* and *Coffea* spp. formed the predominant components at Sedayu, while fruit trees dominated the Watulimo site. Relative proportion of household income generated by mixed gardening at the two locations was also variable. At Watulimo, it accounted for a meagre 2% of the total household income as against 92% in Sedayu, reflecting greater economic dependence on mixed gardens at the latter site. Although such a situation would encourage greater commercialization of the gardens, the Sedayu gardeners seemed to value the multiplicity of products from these gardens; thus making large scale shifts towards monoculture less likely.

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*Kusumaningtyas,
Kobayashi, Takeda*

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