



Araku Coffee has developed a unique bean-to-cup philosophy centred around both farmers and customers | Photo source © ARAKU Coffee

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INDIAN COFFEE BRAND DEVELOPS BIODYNAMIC PLANTATION AND FARMER'S COOPERATIVE



Araku works directly with farmers and has opened a new café that it hopes will encourage greater support for its bean-to-cup philosophy

Spotted: Coffee, as a commodity, is often notable for its lengthy production chain and the wide disparity between the amount paid to the farmers for the beans, and what is paid by consumers for the finished product. Araku Coffee has set out to change this, with sustainable and “farmer-friendly” practices. Previously available only online and in one shop in Paris, Araku has recently opened up a flagship café in Bengaluru, India.

Araku's coffee is grown in India's Araku Valley. There, with support from the Naandi Foundation, Araku established a biodynamic coffee plantation and farmer's cooperative. The farmers produce 100 per cent organic Arabica beans on small-scale farms without the use of large-scale machinery or chemicals. All of the farms are owner-operated, and the farmers are independent producers. Around 10,000 farmers in 520 villages are involved in the project.

On top of this, Araku **describes** the farmers, roasters and marketers as part of “a single production line, meticulous, precise and sharp, which guarantees quality coffee from start to finish.” This means that when customers purchase a cup of coffee in an Araku café, they are buying as close to directly from the farmers as possible.

This has had a positive effect on the farmers, who earn a much higher price for their beans than if they sold to a separate distributor. Farmers have also seen the profits return to the Valley, in the form of higher incomes, new schools and hospitals. On its website, Araku points out this was all part of the design from the beginning. “We have often, in the team, talked about capitalism 3.0 or in other words, a fairer capitalism for all links in the chain... the goal of the Araku adventure is to create value, yes, to earn a little money, distributed among all the links in the chain, and in priority the farmers.”

There is no shortage of ideas for helping farmers to earn more from their labour. In addition to Araku's work with coffee farmers in India, we have recently covered how blockchain is being used to help [Haitian farmers](#) and [cocoa growers](#) to secure better prices for their produce and a map that scores [food sustainability](#).

Written By: Lisa Magloff

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Email: contact@arakucoffee.com

Website: arakucoffee.com

Takeaway:

Araku's story and unique philosophy has broad international appeal, and their new flagship café in Bangalore could help them make those in India more aware of this. Hopefully, this will encourage investment in similar projects in coffee and other industries. The café has been designed using all sustainable elements, including bamboo chandeliers, recycled paper planters, and plants brought in from the Araku valley. Customers can not only buy coffee but learn about brewing and purchase a range of home brewing equipment and books. There is also space for private functions, making this much more than just a coffee shop – it is an echo of Araku's mission to create much more than just a coffee brand.