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“PRODUCTION AND MARKETING STRATEGIES FOLLOWED BY RUBBER GROWERS IN GOALPARA DISTRICT OF ASSAM: A STUDY BASED ON RUBBER PLANTATION”



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ABSTRACT:

Rubber grower is a farmer engaged in the activity of Rubber planting. Broadly speaking, a Rubber Grower is not person who plants a rubber tree but he is a person who has knowledge of rubber tree from its cradle to grave. Rubber growers are the people who provide rubber to the whole world for consumption and daily life use. Whatever rubber we use in our daily life is all because of the rubber growers.

In present day life, it is almost impossible to think our life without the use of rubber. Rubber is being used in our day-to-day life even without being our noticed. Examples like tooth brush, chairs, tables, slippers, tyres, tubes etc. and even those items which generally we do not notice. Therefore Rubber has international scope without which life cannot be thought for a single second.

In this regard the rubber growers are also playing a vital role for producing such commodities for our day-to-day life. Their main objective to grow rubber is primarily not for making such daily items but to make themselves financially sound through rubber cultivation. Rubber cultivation provides them a golden opportunity to become self-employed. Observing the prospect and potentiality of the rubber plantation for an improved livelihood of farmers in general and in particular to Goalpara District

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an in-depth study is necessary. Therefore, present study is an attempt to assess the *“Production and Marketing Strategies followed by Rubber Growers in Goalpara District of Assam: A study based on Rubber Plantation”*

KEYWORDS

Marketing Strategies, Rubber Growers, Rubber planting.

INTRODUCTION :



Figure1: A picture of a rubber grower during work at rubber garden

Rubber grower is a farmer engaged in the activity of Rubber planting. Broadly speaking, a Rubber Grower is not person who plants a rubber tree but he is a person who has knowledge of rubber tree from its cradle to grave. Rubber growers are the people who provide rubber to the whole world for consumption and daily life use. Whatever rubber we use in our daily life is all because of the rubber growers.

In present day life, it is almost impossible to think our life without the use of rubber. Rubber is being used in our day-to-day life even without being our noticed. Examples like tooth brush, chairs, tables, slippers, tyres, tubes etc. and even those items which generally we do not notice. Therefore Rubber has international scope without which life cannot be thought for a single second.

About Rubber

Rubber is a polymer consisting of hydrogen and carbon and is elastic in nature. It is found in the

fluid of some specific plants but it can also be produced synthetically. Naturally, rubber is produced by the process of tapping of the plant called *Hevea Brasiliensis*. These plants generally have 32 years of economic life but they may live up to 100 years or even more. Synthetic rubber is produced through the process of polymerization of various monomers. The basic property of rubber is that it comes back to its original shape if it is twisted or stretched but if heat is applied to the rubber, it won't return to its original shape easily.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A highlight of some research works that were being reviewed before undertaking the present study is as follows:

According to Sukanta Sarkar (2011) studied about “Rubber Plantation: A new hope for rural tribal's in Tripura”. This paper attempts to highlight the sources of income from rubber plantation. It has studied that various government agencies are present which are working for rehabilitate the tribal people through rubber plantation. In his study it was found that tribal's can earn income from both immature and mature plantation but the scope of income in mature plantation is higher than immature plantation.

According to M. Cotter, k. Martin and J. Sauerborn (2009) study about “How Do ‘Renewal Products’ Impact Biodiversity and Ecosystem services-The Example of Natural Rubber in China”. The paper has been seen the implications brought by the expansion of “Renewal Products” plantation system in the tropics with cultivation of rubber (*Havea Brasiliensis*) as a main focus. Throughout south East Asia, Natural forest being replaced by Rubber or Oil Palm plantations with severe consequences for the local flora and fauna.

Joseph A. Russell (1941) conducted a study on “Alternative Sources of Rubber”. It reveals that due to high demand of raw rubber whether any alternative sources of rubber supply in the market. In study it has find that there were four potentials relatively defensible in the event of an overseas emergency: (1) Synthetic Rubber (Elastomers) (2) Recovered Rubber (3) Natural rubber from latex producing plants such as Guayule (4) Production from *Hevea* Plantations of tropical America, chiefly Brazil.

K.J. Joseph and P.S. George (2010-11) of National Research Programme on Plantation Development (NRPPD), Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum prepared an annual project report on “Structural Infirmities in India's Plantation Sector – Natural Rubber and Spices” for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The report aimed at the study of administrative structure, legal framework & synergy with state governments, development regimes for replanting and rejuvenation, research and development, extension structure, land holdings and ownership pattern, production and productivity trends, price instability/cyclicality, export orientation, international competitiveness, social costs, labour shortage, climate change, challenges and opportunities in India's plantation sector.

N.M. Mathew (2011) of Indian Rubber Institute, Kerala Branch conducted a study on “Rubber Products Manufacturing Industry, Current Trends and Future Prospects” with the objectives to study the factors contributing to the growth in rubber production and consumption, structure, performance, foreign trade and important characteristics of the Indian Rubber Industry.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

There are over a million households in India that are directly dependent on natural rubber plantations for their livelihood. Much more is the number of people dependent on natural rubber processing and product making sectors in the country.

In Assam, the Farmers are taking up highly lucrative rubber cultivation on a large scale, as future prospects of the rubber industry grow brighter, as the Government has come up with various schemes for the entire region. Considering the excellent potential of the growth of rubber plantation in the state, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's Rubber Board has implemented various projects such as the 'Accelerated Development of Rubber Plantation' and 'Rubber Development in the North East'. The high demands for rubber in the national and international markets will help the economy of the state and improve the living standards of the farmers in the state.

Sensing the pulse of the rising demand for rubber products in markets across the country, farmers in various districts of Assam are taking up rubber cultivation on a grand scale. Rubber growers are tending to these crops leaving other corresponding crops from where they cannot get their expected benefit. That is to say that the crops have much more benefits in comparisons to other corresponding crops they usually engaged in. Not only the rubber grower himself is engaged in the activity but also offers job opportunities to other unemployed youths either male or female. Moreover, the crops last much longer than any other field crops (production of rubber tree last for at least 30 years)

In Goalpara District also the people have realized the benefits of rubber cultivation and are shifting their occupation towards the prospective venture. Rubber plantations are leading to increasing prosperity among people of Goalpara district. A lot of success stories have emerged largely cantered around those who have taken to growing rubber trees in their farms.

By observing all the prospect and potentiality of the rubber plantation for an improved livelihood of the rubber growers in general and in this area an in-depth study is necessary. Therefore, it is an attempt to assess *“Production and Marketing Strategies Followed by Rubber Growers in Goalpara District: A Study Based On Rubber Plantation”*. Because maximum earning livelihood of the people earn from rubber plantation depends upon its production of rubber and its marketing of that rubber. In view of the above, this study is undertaken with the following objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This study has been based on the following specific objectives:

- 1.To analyse the production policies followed by the Rubber Growers.
- 2.To study about the marketing practices followed by the rubber Growers in Goalpara District.
- 3.To find out the problems and prospect of rubber growers during Production and Marketing of Rubber.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is based on the literature view and field survey. In this study the data has been collected through primary data as well as secondary data. In primary data the main source was field

survey and by asking questions to rubber growers and marketing agencies of rubber through questionnaire. In secondary we have used books, journals, magazines, internets etc. to collect and gather information for the project. We have used random sampling method to collect information from 50 Rubber growers and from the marketing agencies under Goalpara District. In this study various research tools has been used like table, charts etc. The study has been done within April 2015 from the collection of data to analysis and interpretation.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

There may be some limitation in this study and may be they are:

- 1.Time of study may be not sufficient to complete such study within one month.
- 2.The study has been done in a specific area only.
- 3.Secondary data used in the study may have some errors.
- 4.Illiteracy of the respondents may be hurdle to collect information from them.
- 5.Most importantly study has been avoided scientific area and environmental components.

PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF RUBBER SHEETS:



Figure: Collection of latex by tapping of rubber tree.

Production Of Rubber Sheets:

Latex can be processed and marketed in several forms and grades. The most common forms are sheet rubber, crumb rubber, crepe rubber, cyclised rubber, and superior processing rubber, block rubber, and preserved filed latex and latex concentrates. Most rubber growers in India prefer to prepare latex into sheets. Some are dried in a smokehouse and sold as Ribbed smoked sheet (RSS), but most is purchased from the farm as dry un-smoked sheet and processed to RSS somewhere else. Ribbed Smoked Sheet (RSS) generally in India produces in grades namely RSS-1, RSS-2, RSS-3, RSS-4, and RSS-5 but in Goalpara district, grades sheet produces in two grades such as RSS-4 and RSS-5. There are also good lot and bad lot available in the markets which are after the category of RSS.

Making of such rubber sheets the following tools are required which are given below:

1) Jabong, 2) Cup 3) Hanger, 4) Rope, 5) Tray, 6) Formic acid, 7) filter, 8) Spout

MARKETING OF RUBBER SHEETS:

In India, there are many big market places to sell rubber sheets like Kottayam, Kochi, Kozhikode, Kannur etc. but in Assam or in North east there is no such market place to sell their Rubber sheets. In Guwahati, there is a dealership to gather rubber sheets from different part of the region. In generally, rubber growers in this region sell their rubber sheets to the agent available in the local market place. The prices of the rubber sheets are never stable in all days. Sometimes it's up and sometimes it's down in the market. Now a day the price of the rubber sheets of Grade RSS-4 was Rs.186 and RSS-5 was Rs. 175 average price of the month. The price of the lot rubber was Rs. 92-Rs.123. In Goalpara district sometimes latex also sold out in the market and it was cost Rs. 95 till same date.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The present study is based on above objectives and according to those objectives this analysis and interpretation part has been done. By following the objectives of the study the below analysis has been done:

1.To analyse the production policies followed by the Rubber Growers.

By analysing the objective of production policies followed by the rubber growers in Goalpara District, it's been found that the rubber growers in this region are mostly produces two specific grades of Rubber Sheets in the market. They are RSS-4 and RSS-5. Some more rubber also produces by the growers as Good lot and bad lot. For producing such rubber sheets the following procedures have been followed by the growers-the first process of the rubber sheets making is to collect latex from rubber trees by Tapping. Tapping is a process of carefully controlled wounding by paring off a small amount of the bark of the rubber tree, just enough to open up the ends of the latex vessels. Then latex are collected and gathered in a container it may be a bucket also. The 50 ml of formic acid are mixed with the latex of 5.0 litres of diluted latex to get 25 numbers Rubber sheets of 500 gms each. Rubber Sheets

are generally by keeping latex into tray after diluting formic acid, then it given on the rubber sheet rolling machine and after that some are dry that sheet in smoke house and some are on sunlight to complete the process of rubber sheet making process.

2.To study about the marketing practices followed by the rubber Growers in Goalpara District.

In Assam or in North east there is no such market place to sell their Rubber sheets. In Guwahati, there is a dealership to gather rubber sheets from different part of the region. In generally, rubber growers in this region sell their rubber sheets to the agent available in the local market place. Rubber Growers from different places in the District carry their lots from production to the local market and sometimes agent brought rubber sheets from their home. The prices of the rubber sheets are never stable in all days. Sometimes it's up and sometimes it's down in the market. Now a day the price of the rubber sheets in Goalpara district in market place are of Grade RSS-4 was Rs.186 and RSS-5 was Rs. 175 average price of the month. The price of the lot rubber was Rs. 92-Rs.123. In Goalpara district sometimes latex also sold out in the market and it was cost Rs. 95 till same date.

3.To find out the problems and prospect of rubber growers during Production and Marketing of Rubber.

In Goalpara district also follows the same procedures by doing other activity maximum growers engage themselves in the rubber production. Rubber sheets are sales from their home. By gathering all together rubber sheets from the area and send that to the agents or brokers. There are almost 6 sub-dealers and more than 20 unorganized agents available in the Goalpara district which deals the rubber sheets. The prices of the rubber sheets are fixed from the kottiyam given at internet and same price followed by the dealers in the Goalpara District. In Goalpara district most of all rubber sheets are purchase by the agents or brokers. The rubber sheets prepared by the growers are basically in the quality of RSS-4 and RSS-5. Due to non-availability of proper market place in the Goalpara district growers are need to sell their product to the agents and other brokers. Growers sell their rubber sheets within the period of 15 or more days. In the making of rubber sheets at least 7 to 8 days required for the completion of process. Due to not availability of big market place in the Goalpara district rubbers sheets are sales in the local market place. The amount of getting now may be more if big market would be available.

Due to growers are less educated the marketing strategies followed by them are not upto the mark. Though the regional office of Rubber Board in the district has been functioning well and is providing lots of facilities, yet some quarter of the rubber growers are not coming for registration with the rubber board and thereby failing to utilize the benefits provided by the board like training, financial assistance, fertilizers, seeds, machines, marketing of the products, loans and subsidies, information, advice and suggestions etc. Lack of scientific technique in production of rubber the quality of the rubber sheets are comparably low quality than the other states. Majority of the rubber growers in Goalpara district don't have their own machine to manufacture rubber sheets. Though they might be holding machine on a collective basis by forming societies, yet it is not satisfactorily usable for their production activities and the even the machine owned is not modern. Thereby, it leads to delay in production of rubber sheets. There is a lack of an organized market to sell the marketable products of

the rubber growers. Lack of transport and communication and inadequate infrastructural facilities, make rubber plantation suffer in the district.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

Conclusion:

India is the third largest producer, fourth largest consumer of natural rubber and fifth largest consumer of natural rubber and synthetic rubber together, in the world. Beside's India is the world's largest manufacturer of reclaim rubber. The plantation sector has a great future prospect of production and this will help in the radical and rapid growth of the Indian rubber industry in the near future. The growth prospect is further enlarged by a boom in the vehicle industry, improved living standards of the masses and rapid industrialization. The North-Eastern States has emerged as a major player in the economy, in rubber plantation.

In Assam, the farmers are taking up highly lucrative rubber cultivation on a large scale, as future prospects of the rubber industry grow brighter, as the government has come up with various schemes for the entire region. Sensing the pulse of rising demand for rubber products in the markets across the country, farmers in various districts of Assam are taking up rubber cultivation on a grand scale. In Goalpara district the people have realized the benefits of rubber cultivation and are shifting their occupation towards the prospective venture. Rubber plantation is leading to increasing prosperity among people of Goalpara district.

The study brings out that despite a good number of problems standing in the way of the marketing practices of rubber production in the district there is a significant progress in the marketing of rubber production in the district. However, there should be some help from the Government, the Rubber Board and the Rubber Growers to remove or minimize the hurdles for the smooth functioning of marketing practices of rubber production in the district.

SUGGESTION:

After analysing the whole problems and prospect regarding production and marketing strategies followed by the rubber growers in Goalpara District the following suggestion comes in the mind:

1. There are still lot of scope to upgrade production strategies to develop grades of rubber sheets. Rubber growers are produces only RSS-4 and RSS-5 rubber sheets. So, growers can have opportunity to produce RSS-1, RSS-2, and RSS-3 and for that technology have to upgrade by rubber board authority.
2. Growers are not able to reach the rubber sheet dealers directly so they don't receive actual price of their product. At least if there is particular market place nearby them, then they will get their prices.
3. License should provide to all the middle man or agent of rubber sheet carrier for the safety and security of the prices of rubber sheet marketing.
4. There are still problem in machine for making rubber sheet because growers have only one machine or two machines in a village. Rubber board should take care in this regard and at least provide rubber sheet roller machine in subsidy or any means that helps growers to purchase in a less price.

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