

THE PROBLEMS OF RUBBER PLANTERS IN RAMAPURAM, KOTTAYAM, KERALA

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Abstract

In Kerala 80% of the rubber products are producing in Southern Districts. It has played an important role in the socio-economic progress of Kerala. But in recent years the price of rubber products falling down and it makes a miserable life of the poor cultivators. The study will be useful to those who are engaged directly or indirectly in the production and processing of rubber. The main objectives of this study are to find out the major problems of rubber planters in Ramapuram, Pala, Kottayam, Kerala and to know the attributes which create problems among rubber planters. The main problem faced by the planters are of Variation in price of rubber, Cost of labour, Natural disasters, Absence of government support and Deficiency of storing facilities etc.

Key Words: Rubber, rubber products, production processes, rubber planters

INTRODUCTION

India is one of the leading producers of natural rubber in the world. It has become an indispensable part of our everyday lives. We use different types of rubber products in our daily lives. In Kerala 80% of the rubber products are producing in Southern Districts. It has played an important role in the socio-economic progress of Kerala. But in recent years the price of rubber products falling down and it makes a miserable life of the poor cultivators. It adversely affected the production and productivity of rubber in the state. Due to the falling prices of rubber products, they are facing a difficult situation. Diminishing the prices of rubber has pushed natural rubber production to the lowest in the country and many of them stopped rubber tapping which has lessened the productivity of rubber in the country. Almost 88% Smallholdings are the dominating Sector in Rubber Plantation in India, of these 95% of

production is in Kerala. This paper examines the current problems and challenges facing by rubber growers in Ramapuram, Pala, Kottayam.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Even though rubber is one of the biggest exporting items from south part of India. The rubber planter or cultivators are not getting enough encouragement from the side of government and better supports from the rubber planters societies. The study will help to understand the problems of rubber planters at present.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will be useful to those who are engaged directly or indirectly in the production and processing of rubber in study area. It is designing to know the problem of rubber planters and the government can make different steps to improve the lives of rubber planters. The study is mainly focusing the major problems of rubber planters in Ramapuram, Pala, Kottayam, Kerala.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the major problems of rubber planters in Ramapuram, Pala, Kottayam, Kerala.
2. To know the attributes which create problems among rubber planters.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data collected through direct interview. Data were collected directly from Rubber planters of Ramapuram, Pala, Kottayam, Kerala. The secondary data is from internets, magazines and research works.

SAMPLE DESIGN

Ramapuram, the natural environment is now a well-developed growing town and has acres of rubber plantation. The researcher takes Five wards to collect the population and from these he selected 135 planters as samples. Stratified sampling method is used to choose samples.

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

The collected data are handled with the help of suitable statistical tools in order to achieve the objectives of the study. For the present study simple percentage analysis and Garretts Ranking Technique are adopted.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Some of the respondent had some problems to reading the questionnaire due to their illiteracy.
- Some of the respondents are not ready to cooperate.
- Some records are not available.
- Respondent gave vague answers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

LAND POSSESSED FOR PLANTATION

Table 1 land possessed for plantation by rubber planters.

| Acres | No. of person | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 0.50 acres- 0.99 acres | 51 | 37 |
| 1 acre - 3 acres | 64 | 47 |
| 3.1 acres and above | 20 | 14 |
| Total | 135 | 100% |

(Source: Primary data)

The above table shows the land possessed by the respondents. 51(37%) respondents have own land between 0.5 acre and 0.99 acre of land, 64 (47%) respondents hold land between 1 acre and 3 acres of land and 20 (14%) respondents holds land above 3 acres. The above table shows that the highest number of respondents owns land between 1 acre – 3 acres. Most of the planters utilize 0.5 acre and 0.99acres of land.

OWNERSHIP PATTERN OF LAND

Table 2 Ownership of land.

| Nature of land ownership | No. of person | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Owned land | 135 | 100% |
| lease | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 135 | 100% |

(Source: Primary data)

The above table shows whether the land is owned by the respondent or whether the land is taken for lease. According to their response none of the respondents has taken land for lease. Majority of the planters have their own plant.

DURATION WITH REGARDS TO RUBBER PLANTATION

Table 3 Years of experience

| Experience | No. of persons | Percentage |
|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| 5 – 15 years | 29 | 22 |
| 15 – 25 years | 63 | 47 |
| 25 years and above | 43 | 31 |
| Total | 135 | 100% |

(Source: primary data)

The above table shows for how many years the respondents are engaged in rubber plantation. 29(22%) respondents have 5 to 15 years of experience, 63(47%) respondents have 15 -25 years of experience and 43(31%) respondents have above 25 years of experience. Most of the planters have 15 – 25 years of experience.

AVERAGE ANNUAL PRODUCTION

Table 4. Average annual income

| Income | No. of Persons | Percentages (%) |
|----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Rs.50,000 – Rs. 1,00,000 | 12 | 9 |
| Rs.1,00,000 – Rs. 1,50,000 | 78 | 57 |
| Rs.1,50,000 and above | 45 | 34 |
| Total | 135 | 100% |

(Source: primary data)

According to the response of the respondents, 12(9%) respondents earns at a level between Rs.50,000 – Rs 1,00,000 and 78(57%) respondents earn between Rs.1,00,000 – 1,50,000 and 45(34%) respondents earn above Rs.1,50,000. Majority of the planters earn between Rs.1,00,000 to 1,50,000.

Table 5 problems faced by planters in rubber field.

| Problems | Garrett Ranking Mean Score | Ranks |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| Absence of government support | 49.45 | IV |
| Cost of labourers | 58.35 | II |
| Variation in price of rubber | 62.14 | I |
| High transportation cost | 35.42 | XIV |
| Marketing Problems | 49.25 | V |
| Environmental problems | 45.51 | XI |
| Waste elimination | 43.21 | XII |
| Natural disasters | 54.36 | III |
| Deficiency of storing facilities | 48.51 | VII |
| Absence of technology application | 47.25 | IX |
| Lack of Processing services | 38.14 | XIII |
| Quantity of Latex | 46.51 | X |
| Quality of seedlings | 47.84 | VIII |
| Intervention of middlemen | 49.02 | VI |

(Source: primary data)

Rubber planters had to face some problems at the time of cultivation, processing and marketing. It is clear from the table that major problems are , Variation in price of rubber with mean score 62.14 (ranked first), Cost of labourers with mean score 58.35 (ranked 2nd), Natural disasters with mean score 54.36 (ranked 3rd), Absence of government support with mean score 49.45 (ranked 4th), Deficiency of storing facilities 49.25 (ranked 5th), Intervention of middlemen with mean score 49.02 (ranked 6th), Deficiency of storing facilities with mean score 48.51 (ranked 7th), Quality of seedlings with mean score 47.84 (ranked 8th), Absence of technology application with mean score 47.25 (ranked 9th), Quantity of Latex with mean score 46.51 (ranked 10th), Environmental problems with mean score 45.51 (ranked 11th), Waste elimination High transportation cost 43.21 (ranked 12th), Lack of Processing services with mean score 38.14 (ranked 13th), and High transportation cost with mean score 35.42 (ranked 14th).

Thus, main problem faced by the planters are of Variation in price of rubber, Cost of labour, Natural disasters, Absence of government support and Deficiency of storing facilities etc.

FINDINGS

- Almost all the rubber planters have at least 1 acre of land for plantation.
- The rubber planter faces certain problems like lack of govt supports, shortage of workers, exploitation by middlemen etc.
- The Natural disasters has partially affected the plantation.
- The fluctuations of price in national and international market is affecting the life of rubber planters.
- The increase in labour cost affects the planters.

SUGGESTIONS

- The government should provide better support directly or through rubber planter's societies.
- The rubber planter societies should be active in both in district as well as in the state level.
- The societies should provide more supports like setting up small warehouses for heating latex.
- The societies should try to eliminate middlemen who exploit planters.
- Proper price level for latex sheet should set according to the variation in the price of rubber in the economy

CONCLUSIONS

The rubber planters face certain problems like Lack of government supports, price fluctuation, unobtainability of machinery, absence of warehouse of heat room., increasing cost of production, misuse by intermediaries, weak marketing system, shortage of labour, monsoon failure etc. According to the respondent's response one thing is clear that the rubber planter's societies are inactive. The solution to these problems can be solved to an extent if there is an active rubber planter's society in both district and state level. These societies should protect the planter from exploitation by intermediaries.

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