



A Case Study

Rubber plantation : A new strategy for afforestation of rural areas in Tripura

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Abstract : The study made an attempt to assess the overall growth of rubber plantation in Tripura. The result indicates that rubber plantation was increasing very rapidly in Tripura. It is evident from the paper that smuggling of woods and illegal migration were the basic reasons for deforestation in the state. Government of Tripura introduced various institutions like, TRPC, TFDPC for extending rubber plantation in rural areas. Return from mature rubber plantation always motivated local people for rubber plantation. Therefore, rubber plantation is a new weapon before government for afforestation in rural areas.

Key Words : Rubber plantation, Forest, Income, Population, Migration

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Forest is an integral part of the culture and tradition of Tripura. It also maintains the environment, bio-diversity, land, soil, water, air regimes. Any imbalance in equilibrium of the components affects the system adversely and has an adverse impact on human life. The state has a geographical area of 10,492 sq. km of which 6,293 sq. km about 60 per cent is the forest area as per legal classification in the state. As per report of the Forest Survey-2003 of India, only 52.2 per cent are well stocked, the remaining forest areas are degraded. Rubber plantation has become a much-talked phenomenon in the State of Tripura. The State Forest Department, aiming at soil and moisture conservation, first introduced rubber in Tripura in 1963. India ranks third in terms of production of natural rubber in the World after Thailand and Malaysia. Kerala is the largest and Tripura is the second largest producer of natural rubber in the country. Rubber is a tropical crop. The species has proved excellent for permanent

settlement of tribal jhumias.

The main objectives of this paper are to evaluate the reasons of deforestation in Tripura and to analyze the growth of rubber plantation in the state.

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from various parts of the state. Secondary data were collected through available literature in form of books, journals, reports and websites.

The forests in Tripura are mainly tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist-deciduous. Substantial area is covered with bamboo and it forms the basis of tribal culture of the State. Forests maintain the environment, bio-diversity, land, soil, water, air regimes. Any imbalance in equilibrium of the above components affects the system adversely and has an adverse impact on human life.

A significant number of persons and families in Tripura continued to depend on forests and jhum or shifting cultivation as their main source of cultivation. Almost 10 per cent forests area is under jhum or shifting cultivation in the State. Jhum or shifting cultivation has an intimate relationship with forest use, not only in terms of habitation

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