PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RUBBER CULTIVATORS IN KANJIRAPALLY PANCHAYATH

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ABSTRACT

This project represents the various problems faced by the rubber cultivators in Kanjirapally Panchayath. The project states the various economic and social problems which were faced by the rubber cultivators. From the study we can concluded that the main reasons which were faced by the rubber cultivators are price fluctuation, climate change and lack of skilled labours. As a result of that the cultivators were not able to maintain a stable income for their family.

Keywords: Problems of rubber cultivators, Price fluctuations, Climate changes, Lack of skilled labours

INTRODUCTION

As we know that the Kerala has the tradition of the cultivation of crops such as rubber, tea, coffee and cardamom. In the first decade of the percent century the rubber cultivation were begined. Under the Rubber Act (1947) Rules, owners of rubber plantations are classified in to two groups viz; small growers and large growers. A small grower is defined as an owner whose rubber plantation does not exceed 20.23 hectares (50 acres) an owner having more than 50 acres of rubber cultivation is considered to be large grower. About 9 lakhs small holders occupy 93 percent of total rubber area and contributing 85 percent of total rubber.Rubber is one of the most important plantation crops that cultivated in Kerala. About the total rubber produced in the country, more than 90% comes from the state, total area under rubber cultivation in the state is 5.45 lakh hector and rest of natural rubber production is done on Tamil Nadu and North east.Interference by the government with normal agriculture operations is also causing loss of production and consequent loss of employment.Climate change has also played a major role in the reduction of total production over the last five years. In the annual report of Association of Planters of Kerala (APK) it's pointed out that the production of natural rubber in the state in the financial year 2017 was 455600 tonnes and in the financial year 2016 its 438630 tonnes from this we can notice that there is a slight increase of 3.87%. The Kerala's share has now come down to 69.66% of the national production from around 92% a decade ago.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study the problems faced by the rubber cultivators.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Karunakaran (2017) point out that rubber is an important plantation crop cultivated in Kerala. The state holds a dominant position both in area and production. It is the main source of income for majority of farmers. Any volatility in the price of rubber put them in a miserable situation. Recent years witnessed unprecedented volatility in rubber price. Declining trend in the prices of rubber has pushed natural rubber production the lowest in the country. The study revealed that prices were so low so that the rubber cultivators cannot even pay workers' wages and the recent unprecedented volatility in prices declined rubber production leads to the falling standard of living of the rubber farmers in Kerala. Rubber cultivators in Kerala are mainly small growers and any financial constraints, fluctuations in price or backwardness in technology will affect the growers considerably.

Shanumugavadivu and Kavitha (2015) says about the state of Kerala occupies 1.2 percent of the total area of the country and accommodates nearly 4 percent of the population in India. The state of Kerala, with 90 percent of the total production of natural rubber in India, is the largest producer of natural rubber. Small rubber growers suffer from problems like low productivity, poor quality of processing and weak marketing system. The prevalence of smallholdings makes the sector vulnerable to fluctuations in price, exploitation by middlemen, etc.

Tapas Sadasivan Nair (2015) points that the Kerala produce nearly 90% of Indian's natural rubber output. Rubber plantation workers are vulnerable to a variety of health hazards. The workers are facing the common health issues like musculoskeletal, respiratory, dermatological, and ophthalmological disorders. Proper health and safety training of rubber plantation workers on workplace hazards and ergonomics is essential to reduce work related morbidities.

Chattopadhyay(2014) says about the Environmental consequences of rubber plantation replacing natural vegetation and also traditional land use practices have been a matter of serious concern among the natural rubber producing countries across the World (Fox, 2014). While this change may pose a threat to fragile local environments, it may not be possible to turn back the clock as rubber plantations have proved to be highly profitable and helped regeneration of economy in general and rural economy in particular. In view of the current space of expansion, economic reality and potential environmental problems associated with the rubber plantation it may be prudent to critically examine the environmental implications of this large scale change in land use at local level.

L. M. Kumar(2013) it points out that it is important to strengthen the price stabilisation fund scheme. It needs to be made the focal point for formulation and implementation of programmes related to price stabilisation, insurance and credit. The PSF programme should be made mandatory or redesigned in such a manner that it is adopted by large number of farmers. This could be done by linking credit, insurance, subsidies for replanting/new planting, etc., with PSF.

A.R Anuja (2012) points out that the small rubber growers suffer from problems like low productivity, poor quality of processing and weak marketing system. The prevalence of smallholdings makes the sector vulnerable to fluctuations in price, exploitation by middlemen, etc. To overcome the problem of small rubber growers, the formation of cooperatives called Rubber Producers' Societies (RPSs) was suggested. The present study has assessed the role of RPSs in providing services for input delivery, processing and marketing of natural rubber in Kerala. The study has revealed that RPS members have a lower cost of production and better price realization for their product compared to non-members.

T.V Ushadevi(2001) says about the tapper's workers. The study found that tapper work is not an easy work as it requires skill and is labour intensive for the good health of the rubber tree and maintaining the longevity of its production period.

George(1993) says that the important problem faced by the small growers are the ignorance of adopt scientific processing of latex, the absence of proper training to tapper; the non-expert trappers damaged

rubber trees which resulted in poor yield and the crude method of grading of sheets help rubber dealers exploit the small rubber holders.

Haridasan(1990) points out that in 1990 covering the 480 small rubber growers in Kottayam district and came to the conclusion that only if the small growers are given adequate training then only their income from cultivation will increase.

Peries(1989) from their several year experience in the rubber research institute of Srilanka believe that the adoption of improved techniques and technology can evoke progressive change in the condition of small rubber holding sector and can produce sustainable economic benefits.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sources of data for the purpose of the study were collected by using both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected by conducting the interview schedule in the rubber cultivators in Kanjirappally Panchayath and secondary data were collected from various journals, articles, newspapers and websites etc…

For conducting the study sixty samples were selected. Sample from Kanjirappally Panchayath. Convenience sampling a non-probability method of sampling techniques had been used for the study. The data were analysed using SPSS.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 Profile of the respondents

1.1 Age of respondents				
	25-30	30-40	40-50	Above 50
No of respondents	5	7	28	20
Percentage	8.3	11.7	46.7	33.3
1.2 Age of respondents				
	Male	Female		
No of respondents	52	86.7		
Percentage	8	13.6		
1.3 Education qualification				
	SSLC	PLIS TWO	DEGREE	PG
No of respondents	4	15	16	15
Percentage	6.7	15	16	15
1.4 Annual income				
	1lakh	1lakh -5 lakh	5 lakh -10lakh	Above 10 lakh
No of respondents	0	28	14	18
Percentage	0	46.7	23.0	30.3
1.5 Land				
	1 acre	2 -5 acres	6-10 acres	10-15 acres	Above 15 acres
No of respondents	0	17	24	10	9
Percentage	0	28.3	40.0	16.7	15

Table 1 represent the profile of the people included in the study. Table 1.1 indicate that majority of them belongs to the age group of 40-50 and they constitute 46.7%, 33% were above age group of 50, 11.7% of them belongs to 30-40 and 8.3% were belongs to 25-30. In table1.2, 86.7% of the respondents are male and 13.6% of them are female. Table 1.3 represent the education qualification of the respondents. 43.3% of them hold degree as their qualification, 25% of them hold PG and plus two as

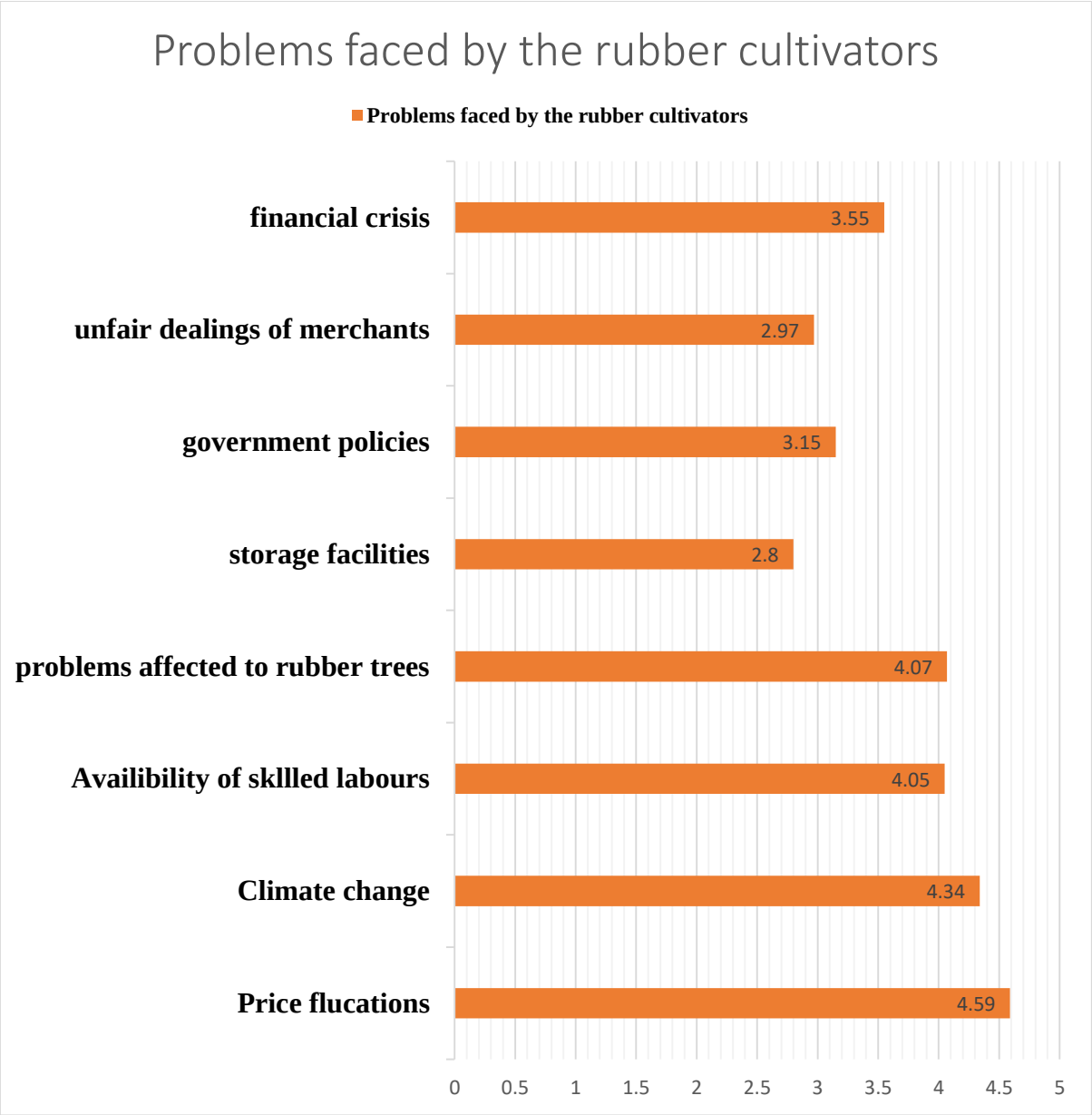
their qualification and only 6.7% of them have SSLC as their qualification. Table 1.4 represent the annual income of the respondents. Majority of them have an annual income between 1,00,000 -5,00,000 (46.7%) and 30.3% of them have above 10,00,000 and 23.3% of them have an income between 5,00,000- 10,00,000. Table 1.5 represent the acres of land possessed by the respondents. 40% of them have 6-10 acres of the land, 28.3% of them belongs to the category of 2-5 acre of land, 16.7% of them posses 10 – 15acres of the land and 15% of them hold above 15 acres of the land.

Inferential analysis

Table 2

Problems faced by the rubber cultivators								
	Price fluctuation	Climate change	Availability of skilled labours	Problems to trees	Storage facility	Govt policy	Unfair dealings of merchant	Financial crisis
Mean	4.59	4.34	4.05	4.07	2.8	3.15	2.97	3.55
Standard deviation	.495	.605	.680	.446	.846	.880	.938	.723

Table 2 represent the problems faced by the rubber cultivators. It is clear from the table that price fluctuation is the one of the major problem which is affected by the rubber cultivators. Along with that changes in the climate conditions, problems affecting to the rubber tree and the availability of skilled labours also affect the rubber cultivators.



FINDINGS

- The major problem faced by the rubber cultivators is price fluctuations, climate changes, problems affected to rubber trees and skilled labours.
- Generally the cultivators were preferring permanent tappers for tapping the rubber trees.
- The cultivators are not able to maintain a stable income as part of price fluctuation.
- As a result of fluctuation in climate changes the productivity of the trees is also reducing.

CONCLUSION

As we know that the rubber is one of the major crop which is cultivated in Kerala. As far as our nation is concerned more than 90% of total production comes from the state.

This study intended to analyse the problems faced by rubber cultivators. From the results observed we can conclude that the rubber cultivators are facing some problems such as price fluctuation, climate change, lack of training etc. Price fluctuation is the one of the main problems which is affected by the cultivators. As a result of that the cultivators are not able to maintain stable income for their family. Climate change is another problem which is affected by the cultivators. As it is uninhibited in nature we

are not able to control it. Lack of training is also a major problem affected by the cultivators. Most the cultivators are not getting any training program from the side of the rubber board. Most of the cultivators are not aware about the different programs which are conducted by the rubber board. So from these we can determine that the rubber cultivators are facing different types of problems in their day to day life.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Mixed cropping should be encourage, it will help the cultivators to gain more income from the land.
2. The subsidies program should brought back by the rubber board for the financial assistance.
3. The government should take more steps for bringing price stability for the rubber cultivators.
4. The government should bring more subsidies program for the betterment of the cultivators.

LIMITATION

1. The study is limited only to Kanjirappallypanchayath.
2. Deep study was not possible due to shortage of time.
3. The sample size was limited to 60 only.
4. Some respondent were not interested and not serious in giving the answers to the questions.
5. The availability of samples is very difficult because they are busy in their jobs

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