

# RUBBER CULTIVATION DRIVEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN ODISHA

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The present study was taken up in Mayurbhanj district in Odisha where the Rubber Board, in association with the Government of Odisha, has implemented Rubber Block Plantation Projects for the socio-economically marginalized scheduled tribes. The study found that the average annual household income of the respondent households with income from rubber was 188 per cent higher than that of households without income from rubber. The average expenditure of households for personal conveyance, education and healthcare with income from rubber was 879, 491 and 481 per cent, respectively higher than their counterparts without income from rubber. A transformation was noticed in the type of houses constructed from the traditional mud huts to *pucca* houses having modern amenities to enhance the standard of living, as income from rubber started to flow in. It is highly encouraging that the tribal households with income from rubber were investing the additional income earned from rubber in both physical and human capital. This can lay the foundation for a discernible change in the socio-economic status of the tribal communities and overall development of the region in the future.

**Key words:** Block rubber plantation, Household income, Natural rubber, Odisha, Socio-economic development, Standard of living, Tribal households

## INTRODUCTION

Natural rubber (NR) cultivation was introduced in Odisha by the Rubber Board in the late 1980s on an experimental basis. The first large scale commercial cultivation of NR in Odisha was started in Jadunathpur in 1995 as Rubber Block Plantation Project implemented by the Rubber Board in association with the State government for development of the tribal communities (Rubber Board, 2017a). According to the census of India 2011, tribal communities form nearly 60 per cent of the total

population of Mayurbhanj district. The tribal households of the region were primarily agrarian, engaged in subsistence rain-fed farming. At present, the state has 11 Rubber Block Plantations (Table 1) implemented by the Rubber Board, covering over 500 ha in Mayurbhanj district, for the tribal communities. Various other agencies like the Odisha Forest Development Corporation, Similipal Forest Development Corporation, Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) and the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) are also engaged in promoting NR cultivation in the