

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY THE RUBBER PRODUCERS' SOCIETIES AND STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THEIR PERFORMANCE

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A quick study was conducted to examine the reasons for poor/non-performance of Rubber Producers' Societies (RPSs) and device strategies to address the same. The study addresses ways to improve the performance of category B RPSs to become category A and the low performers in category A to become better performers. Existence of a group processing facility was the prime criterion which differentiated Category A and B RPSs in the study area. For enhanced resource use efficiency and to improve the income of farmers under Category B, the possibility of sharing non-functional GPCs among RPSs is proposed. The importance of group processing in RPSs to produce good quality sheets for realizing better farm gate price and the need to sensitize the farmers/RPSs on the same are highlighted. While majority of the RPSs limited their role as stockists and distributors of farm inputs, RPSs under category A having labour banks went a step ahead by organizing input application in member farmers' fields. Only 20 per cent of RPSs studied had labour banks. Though SHGs existed in 67 per cent of the RPSs visited, only 20 per cent were functioning properly. The study also revealed a decline in the share of members actively engaged with the RPSs. Since success of RPSs to a large extent depends on active participation of members and commitment/leadership qualities of the executive committee members, the study suggests identification and encouragement of dedicated farmers and youth having leadership qualities and commitment to serve the community, to participate in the management of RPSs. To keep pace with the changed socio-economic scenario, the study advocates diversification of activities of the RPSs to qualify as complete farm service providers.

Key words: Farm service provider, Group Processing, Labour Bank, Rubber Producers' Society, Sheet rubber, Self Help Group

The Rubber Producers' Societies (RPSs) were established during 1986 to serve as the extension hubs of the Rubber Board with the larger objective of enhancing productivity of rubber and improving income of small and marginal rubber growers through transfer of technology at the grassroots, subsidized input distribution, establishment of group

processing centers and marketing of rubber. Over the years, the RPSs have evolved as a major link between the Rubber Board and the farmers at the grassroots for technology transfer. There were systematic attempts to analyze the functions and outcomes of the RPS based schemes at various stages of evolution of the RPSs. The earliest attempts