

TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURE TO COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF NATURAL RUBBER IN TRIPURA

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Received: 10 July 2017 Accepted: 03 August 2017

Sharma, G. and Dey, S. K. (2017). Transformation of traditional agriculture to commercial agriculture: A case study of natural rubber in Tripura, *Rubber Science*, 30(2): 140-147.

Although Indian economy is growing rapidly, however there has been widening of income disparity in the society. The present study highlights the relevance of comprehensive policy approaches in transformation of the economically and socially marginalized groups engaged in *Jhumming* to commercial cultivation of natural rubber (NR) in Tripura. The better livelihood pattern of the NR growers has been reflected in terms of self-sustaining occupational shift. The previous land use pattern of the surveyed NR cultivators revealed that majority of the area presently under NR cultivation was previously barren land (66%). The study suggests replication of the NR model in North and Dahaloi districts of Tripura. This success model of Tripura could also be replicated in other regions of the country having similar socio-economic and agro-climatic conditions to ensure rural upliftment and livelihood security of rural peasantry.

Key words: Economically and socially marginalized groups (ESMG), *Jhum*, Land use pattern, Livelihood security, Natural Rubber (NR)

INTRODUCTION

Though the Indian economy is growing rapidly in recent decades, there has been widening income disparity in the society. In particular, India's rural sector has been struggling to shake off the legacy of poverty, low per capita income, and poor human development indices. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in its 2016 Global Hunger Index (GHI) ranked India 97th among 119 countries with GHI score of 28.5 (IFPRI, 2016). Thus, there is an urgent need for policy interventions at the grassroots to revive the rural economy by empowering the

rural community with access to requisite livelihood. In this background, the present study is an attempt to analyze and highlight the transformation of the economically and socially deprived marginalized groups (ESMG) engaged in *Jhumming* to commercial cultivation of natural rubber (NR) in Tripura.

Tripura is the third smallest state of India located in the North East and whose 84 per cent of its boundary is encircled by Bangladesh. The state has varied topography, about 70 per cent consists of hills and small hillocks, the latter being called as tilla. The state being away from main land India, lacks basic infrastructure facilities. According to

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