

## RUBBER CULTIVATION IN ORISSA

History has only very little to contribute on rubber cultivation in Orissa. Though the past few decades have no recorded development worth mentioning in respect of this plantation crop, there were few instances of fielding the experiment in a limited manner. Among the early entrepreneurs, the name of the then Maharaja of Mayurbanj is still remembered. 60 years ago he planted rubber in 6 hectares of land near Baripada in Mayurbhanj District. The trees though badly neglected since then, had comparable growth to any of the trees planted in the traditional rubber growing areas.

of rubber, vegetative growth, girdling of trunk, extent of canopy formation and bark characteristics are generally indicative of yield capabilities since in any given strain of rubber, latex production is directly linked to total biomass production.

Rubber cultivation was started in a systematic manner on 16th July 1984 at Sidingi near Pilasalki Minor Irrigation Dam in Phulbani District by the Soil Conservation Department. 2.00 hectares were planted with budded rubber plants supplied by the Rubber Board. The growth of the plants is reported to be satisfactory. The Rubber Board has granted subsidy under the Plantation Development Scheme to this plot.

Estate of Orissa Forest Corporation.

New trial plantations of rubber were established by the State's Soil Conservation Department in 1966-67 at Aiginia near Bhubaneswar in Puri District at Nilgiri in Balasore District and at Chennadhua near Baripada in Mayurbhanj District. They did not get adequate attention. Now 19 rubber trees are seen at Aiginia. They are fairly tall and healthy and indicative of the potential growth and development of rubber in Orissa. The trial planting at Nilgiri has totally failed due to poor site selection. At Chennadhua about 170 trees stand distributed over an area of about 2 hectares. Owing to lack of maintenance, the general growth is also far from satisfactory. However, the trees do not bear any visible signs of disease.

Owing to the neglect and improper maintenance, the trial plantations of rubber in Orissa have not registered a potential growth in the locality. The trees have not been subjected

to any regular tapping although test tappings were carried out recently which yielded fair exudation of latex. In the case

The State owned Orissa Forest Corporation has also taken up rubber cultivation in a big way. They have planted 20.00 ha.



Rubber Board Regional Nursery, Khandagiri, Orissa  
(More pictures on the following pages)



and 1000 budwood mother plants are available.

Encouraged by the performance of the successful plantations so far established, the Rubber Board has taken up keen interest in promoting rubber cultivation in Orissa by strengthening its infrastructural net work in the State for rendering need based service, both financial and technical to those who volunteer to plant rubber in various Districts in the State identified feasible for this crop. A full fledged Zonal Office of the Rubber Board in charge of a Deputy Rubber Production Commissioner assisted by a Deputy Development Officer and 4 Field Officers stationed at Bhubaneswar, Berhampur and Dhenkanal

in 1985 and 24.00 ha. in 1986 in Dhany Reserve Forest area of Puri District. They had started a rubber seedling nursery of 17,000 plants in 1985 out of which 7,600 plants were successfully budgrafted and raised in polythene bags in November 1986. During 1986 they had raised another seedling nursery with 25,000 plants for budgrafting in 1987. They had also established a budwood nursery with 2,000 plants of high yielding varieties like RR11 105, GT 1, PB 235 etc.

For the 1987 planting they have raised 18,000 budded plants in polythene bags and nearly 30.00 ha. can be planted with successfully grown up plants from this nursery. The growth and other behaviour of the plants in this plantation appear to be satisfactory.

#### Saptasajya Plantation

In Saptasajya Kamar of Dhenkanal District, another plantation of 1.00 ha. was also started in 1984. Since the planter who started the cultivation there left the scene, the plot is now in a neglected condition.

There is a good rubber nursery in an area of five acres near the Deer park at Kapilash in the land leased out by Debator, Dhenkanal, where 14,000 seedlings





has already started functioning from September 1986.

A rubber seedling nursery of 2.4 ha. has already started at Khandagiri near Bhubaneswar to ensure availability of high yielding planting materials during the next planting season in June-July. This nursery can supply upto 25,000 budded plants of superior strains adequate to cover an area of around 45 hectares.

Rubber Board has also started the work of establishing a Regional Centre (for undertaking investigative research studies on the special problems of rubber in Orissa) on 100.00 acres at Kamakhya Nagar in Dhenkanal District.

The efforts for getting 600.00 acres of Government land for establishing a Nucleus Rubber Estate and Training Centre at the forest land in Kapilash in Dhenkanal District are also progressing.

Board is also on the lookout of a suitable plot of 25.00 acres for rubber nursery to be established during this year itself

for distribution of available planting materials for 1988.

### Voluntary Agencies

Yet another step initiated by the Rubber Board for promoting rubber cultivation in Orissa is by involving voluntary agencies for raising rubber saplings in polythene bags sufficiently in advance. This would enable its members to obtain vigorous budgrafts for field planting in July 1987. 69 such voluntary agencies were contacted by our Field Staff and 12 of them have taken up the work. The Technical Officers of the Board will give necessary guidance and knowhow for raising nurseries. The polythene bags and plants needed for raising the nurseries are supplied free of cost to the Voluntary Organisations besides advancing Rs. 2/- per bag as cost of maintenance of the nurseries. 1,71,500 polythene bags valued at Rs. 2.8 lakhs were supplied to them during last December/January.

One consignment of 24,000 budded rubber plants is brought from Kerala and planted in the filled up bags of 4 such organisations. Another consign-

ment of 25,000 plants is expected to be supplied immediately.

### Marching Forward

Indications are that the stage in Orissa is set for massive development of rubber plantation. Recently the Government of Orissa have decided to encourage rubber planting by allotting 1000 ha each for rubber plantation to Orissa Forest Corporation, Similipahar Forest Development Corporation and Orissa Plantation Development Corporation. OPDC has already submitted a scheme for taking up rubber plantation in 500 ha. in various plots situated in Puri, Dhenkanal and Mayurbhanj Districts. The Deputy Rubber Production Commissioner of the Zonal Office has already visited various plots primarily selected by OPDC to assess the suitability of such lands.

With the whole hearted support and patronage of all concerned, rubber cultivation in Orissa will extend to new areas in the near future.

— K. K. KURIAN  
Dy. Development Officer

## EXXON CHEMICAL EXPANDS EP RUBBER FACILITY

Exxon Chemical affiliate, Socabu, has completed on schedule a 30% expansion to 65000 tonnes a year at its ethylene-propylene rubber plant at Notre Dame de Gravechon. EP and EPDM polymers, which Exxon Chemical markets under the Vistalon name, are widely used in the automotive, electrical, construction and polymer modifications sector. In addition to the French plant, Exxon Chemical operates a 70 000 tonnes a year plant at Baton Rouge, Louisiana in the US

## IN THE MARKET

Naphtha prices reached a peak of \$ 171-175/ton cif but have since fallen back to \$ 167-170/ton. This is still some \$ 8/ton up on a week earlier. Prices are firming in line with crude and other oil products and on the back of strong demand since freezing weather hit Europe. Butadiene prices are firm at up to \$ 220/ton fob with product in very tight supply. Problems in Antwerp are hitting production and strike action is affecting distribution. Contract prices look like settling at FFI, 800-1,900/ton.