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## UGC MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT ON

### **“PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS OF RUBBER WOOD INDUSTRY IN KERALA IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER WOOD BASED INDUSTRIES-A CASE STUDY OF WOOD INDUSTRIAL UNITS IN ERNAKULAM DISTRICT”**

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#### ABSTRACT

Rubber wood has become an eco- friendly and sustainable alternative to traditional timber in the backdrop of shrinking forest wealth and growing demand for wood. The present study on the prospects and problems of rubber wood industry has been carried out by conducting a sample study of the Secondary processed rubber wood products (SPRWP) sector in Ernakulum District. The SPRWP sector is compared with the plywood which is one of the primary processing of rubber wood sector. Data were also collected from other wood based Products (OWBP) sector in the district and was compared with the rubber wood sector. In terms of output per unit, employment per unit and value added per unit, the performance of SPRWP is slightly better than OWBP. The employment per unit in the rubber wood plywood sector is 81 and in SPRWP sector it is 48. But it is only 28.1 in OWBP. This high employment in rubber wood units is because of the additional processes in the industry like chemical treatment of rubber wood, seasoning of rubber wood and the processes involved in making finger jointed boards or edge glued panel boards. The demand for plywood is so high that the manufacturers are not able to meet the demand. But at the same time, it is not as competitive as EGP due to the legal barriers of entry in the plywood sector. The SPRWP sector has high value addition ranging from 233 to 2033 percent, but in other wood based units it ranges between 150 to 900 per cent. Unlike natural rubber; rubber wood industry has high linkages in the state as 85 per cent of the SPRWP units are located within the state. With potential increase in the supply of rubber wood, R&D in innovative seeds with high latex and high quality stem content, better chemical treatment methods, Kerala could become the destination for rubber and rubber wood products in India and the world.