



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**WOMEN'S ACCESS TO TRAINING IN THE RUBBER  
SMALLHOLDER SECTOR IN THE DISTRICT OF  
HULU LANGAT, SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN, MALAYSIA**

**VANAJA R. VAITHYANATHAN**

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**MASTER OF SCIENCE  
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1995**



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By

**VANAJA R . VAITHYANATHAN**

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**December, 1994**

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Faculty: Centre for Extension and Continuing  
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The focus of the study was on women's access to training which is operationally defined as getting to hear and participating in training in the form of short courses, workshops, seminars, demonstrations and study visits. The specific objectives of the study were: (1) to identify whether women in the rubber smallholder sector had access to training; (2) to identify reasons related to women's access and non-access to training; (3) to discover their understanding of training; (4) to discover the experiences during training of those women who had access; and (5) to discover their benefits and losses from training.



The data was obtained through in-depth interviews with 60 women respondents from several villages in three mukims (wards) in the district of Hulu Langat, Selangor Darul Ehsan utilizing the purposive sampling technique. Interviews with key informants comprising extension agents and local leaders and observation of training sessions were also conducted to provide the background context to the study.

The qualitative data showed that women who owned land had access to training. Owner operators and owner non-operators by virtue of being owners of their rubber holdings got to hear and participated in training regarding rubber cultivation. Membership in farmer's organisations and women's groups also enabled access to training on women's activities and other agricultural activities. Wives helping husbands got to hear about training regarding rubber from their husbands who were owners of the smallholdings. On the other hand, hired tappers who did not own rubber land and were not members of farmer's or women's organisations had minimal access to training.



Reasons for women's participation in training included: 1) informed and invited; 2) to learn and obtain relevant experience and knowledge; 3) socialising and visiting new places. Reasons for non-participation were: 1) not informed and invited; 2) baby-sitting and household duties; 3) family commitments; 4) other work commitments; and 5) age and health.

The findings generated are useful for extension policy and programme planning for women in the rubber smallholder sector, particularly, pertaining to targeting training activities to those who actually carry out the rubber farm activities. Theoretically, the study contributed towards literature regarding participation in adult education where the modified COR model incorporating concepts such as culture and gender subordination was found useful in understanding women's access to training in the rubber smallholder sector. The study concluded that culture and gender subordination should be included in adult education participation and non-participation studies especially in non-western situations for more meaningful understanding of the phenomenon.





Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti  
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**AKSES WANITA KEPADA LATIHAN DI SEKTOR  
PEKEBUN KECIL GETAH DI DAERAH  
HULU LANGAT, SELANGOR DARUL ESHAN, MALAYSIA**

Oleh

**VANAJA R. VAITHYANATHAN**

**Disember, 1994**

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Tumpuan kajian ini adalah akses wanita kepada latihan yang ditakrifkan sebagai mendengar dan menghadiri latihan dalam bentuk kursus pendek, bengkel, seminar, demonstrasi dan lawatan sambil belajar. Objektif spesifik kajian ini adalah: (1) untuk mengenal pasti sama ada wanita disektor pekebun kecil getah mendapat akses kepada latihan; (2) untuk mengenal pasti sebab mengapa wanita mendapat atau tidak mendapat akses kepada latihan; (3) untuk mengetahui kefahaman wanita terhadap latihan; (4) untuk mengetahui pengalaman mereka yang mendapat akses; dan (5) untuk mengetahui faedah dan kerugian dari latihan.



Data telah diperolehi melalui temubual yang mendalam dengan 60 orang wanita di beberapa kampung di tiga mukim di daerah Hulu Langat, Selangor Darul Eshan dengan menggunakan kaedah pensampelan bertujuan. Temubual dengan "key informants" yang terdiri dari egen pengembangan dan ketua-ketua tempatan juga dijalankan untuk mengetahui konteks latar belakang kajian beserta dengan pemerhatian sesi latihan.

Data kualitatif menunjukkan bahawa wanita yang memiliki tanah mempunyai akses kepada latihan. Pemilik pengusaha serta pemilik bukan pengusaha mendapat tahu dan menyertai latihan mengenai getah kerana memiliki kebun getah. Mereka juga menjadi ahli Pertubuhan Peladang dan Kumpulan Wanita yang seterusnya memberi akses kepada latihan mengenai getah, aktiviti-aktiviti wanita dan lain-lain aktiviti pertanian. Isteri-isteri yang membantu suami mereka mendapat tahu mengenai latihan tanaman getah melalui suami mereka yang memiliki kebun getah. Sebaliknya, penoreh upahan yang tidak memiliki kebun getah dan tidak menjadi ahli pertubuhan peladang atau wanita di dapati tidak mendapat akses kepada latihan.



Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa sebab-sebab wanita menyertai latihan termasuklah: (1) mereka diberitahu dan diundang; (2) mereka ingin mempelajari dan mendapat pengalaman dan pengetahuan; (3) kesempatan bergaul dan melawat tempat-tempat baru. Sebab-sebab wanita tidak menyertai latihan adalah: (1) tidak diberitahu dan tidak diundang; (2) menjaga anak/cucu dan mengurus kerja rumah; (3) urusan keluarga; (4) urusan kerja lain; dan (5) umur dan kesihatan.

Hasil kajian yang diperolehi sangat berguna dalam merangkakan polisi dan program perancangan, terutama sekali dalam menumpukan aktiviti latihan kepada mereka yang sebenarnya terlibat dengan penanaman getah. Secara teori, kajian ini telah memberi sumbangan kepada hasil pengajian mengenai penyertaan dalam pembelajaran dewasa di mana model COR yang telah diubahsuai dengan menggunakan konsep-konsep seperti budaya dan penindasan jantina telah didapati berguna dalam memahami akses wanita kepada latihan. Kajian ini telah membuat kesimpulan bahawa budaya dan penindasan jantina harus dimasukkan dalam kajian-kajian penyertaan dan tiada penyertaan dalam pembelajaran dewasa, terutama dalam situasi-situasi ketimuran bagi pemahaman yang lebih bermakna terhadap fenomena tersebut.



**CHAPTER 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**

**Background of the Problem**

The Natural Rubber (NR) industry has played a major role in the Malaysian economy since colonial times. Half a million families in Malaysia are directly or indirectly engaged in its cultivation. In 1993, NR contributed approximately 2 percent of Malaysia's total export value of primary commodities and ranked fifth after petroleum, timber, palm oil and liquefied natural gas (Economic Report 1993/94). The share of rubber to total agricultural value added was 11.8 percent. In terms of employment, approximately 770,000 people were engaged in rubber production. This is equivalent to 12 percent of the total labour force employed in the country and about 40 percent of that employed in the agricultural sector. Of the total number employed, about 419,000 were working on individual holdings and 17,000 in organised schemes. On the whole, it is estimated that some 2.5 million people are dependent on the rubber industry for their livelihood. Smallholder



rubber production is basically a family activity where the holding is usually operated by a husband-wife team, as well as, other family members. As such a high percentage of women are involved in rubber production.

Rubber is produced both by the estate and smallholder sub-sectors in the country. Estates are classified as being of more than 40 hectares (100 acres) in size and are well organised with high level of management efficiency and inputs. Rubber areas that are less than 40 hectares in size are termed as smallholdings. These rubber holdings are classified as organised and independent smallholdings; the former refers to agricultural land development schemes while the latter are individual scattered smallholdings. The independent holdings are units that have been under individuals since their original alienations during the 1920s and 1930s, and subdivided holdings which are pieces of land arising from subdivision of estates, a practice which was started in 1950 and stopped in the mid-1960s due to undesirable social, economic and political consequences. As at 1992 there were altogether 418,911 registered smallholders in Peninsular Malaysia with a total land area of 1,276,530 hectares (Table 1). Of this 137,184 (33 percent) were women smallholders owning approximately 335,922 hectares.

Table 1

Number and Hectarage of Registered Smallholders by Farm Size and Sex

Farm Size	Number			Hectarage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<3 ha	232,058	124,097	356,155	774,820	303,887	1,078,707
3 - <5 ha	43,245	11,414	54,659	144,351	27,964	172,315
5 - <10 ha	4,705	1,303	6,008	15,748	3,188	18,936
>10 ha	1,719	370	2,089	5,689	883	6,572
Total	281,727	137,184	418,911	940,608	335,922	1,276,530

Source: Banci Pekebun Kecil RISDA 1992

The smallholder sector is playing an increasingly important role in the nation's NR output. In 1993, out of the total production of 1,190 million tonnes, 74 percent was from the smallholder sector. In terms of total planted area under rubber, smallholdings occupied 82 percent (1,470,000 hectares) while 320,000 hectares were under estates. The national average yield per hectare for estates and smallholdings was 1,327 kilogrammes and 960 kilogrammes, respectively. (Rubber Statistics Handbook, 1993).

The yield gap between the estate and smallholder sector is still significant. This disparity can be attributed to fast adoption of speculative clones, advanced planting materials coupled with good agronomic, exploitation and processing practices in the estate sector. The well organised estate sector with high levels of management inputs has easy access and is able to efficiently adopt available technologies generated from Research and Development (R & D) associated with the rubber industry. On the other hand, the smallholder sector, particularly the unorganised or individual smallholders, do not have such easy access and knowledge of available technologies. Whatever knowledge obtained is either from extension services provided by the various

relevant implementing agencies or neighbouring smallholders and estates.

In their efforts to bridge this yield gap between the estate and smallholder sectors, the Rubber Research Institute of Malaysia (RRIM) and Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA) currently place greater emphasis on the adoption and usage of high yielding and promising planting materials, as well as, intensified efforts towards transferring relevant technologies to the smallholder sector. One way in which this could be achieved is by providing training to smallholders.

### **Women and Training**

Rural women generally have poor access to agricultural information and services. Their limited access to education and technical training further hinders progress. One FAO study found that women represented up to 80 percent of the food producers in some countries, but they received only two to ten percent of the extension contacts (FAO, 1990). Agricultural training is also mainly focussed on male farmers and extension personnel, both male and female, tend to overlook the needs of women farmers. Most



training programmes for women still emphasize domestic skills rather than agricultural skills though both are relevant and need to be combined.

Rahim M. Sail and Mazanah Muhamad's (1994) study regarding factors associated with non-adoption of technology by rubber smallholders found that information holds the key to decision-making and change processes and hence, technology adoption. Several constraints, among them weakness in extension services and communication support system were found to form negative forces that act against the adoption of recommended practices. The authors were of the view that some of these constraints could be overcome or minimized with the provision and implementation of a systematic flow of information from research to extension and from extension to smallholders. Training is an important flow of information that should be given due consideration.

A recent training needs assessment for smallholders found that rubber smallholders including women should be trained on ways and means to shorten immaturity period of rubber (Ibrahim Mamat, *et al.* 1992). This involved training on usage of good quality advanced planting materials, establishment of cover crops, proper fertilizer application, weed control and