

## FEASIBILITY OF CREAMING NATURAL RUBBER LATEX IN SRI LANKA

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Natural rubber latex is one of the freely available raw materials in Sri Lanka. But unfortunately field latex cannot be used in latex-based industries such as in the manufacture of foam rubber, rubberized coir dipped products, etc. due to the low rubber content in the field latex. Instead concentrated latex (centrifuged) is used where the rubber content is about 60%. Although the centrifuging of latex is the easiest method of concentrating field latex the small industrialists here in Sri Lanka cannot use this technique as the cost of a centrifugal machine is of the order of one million rupees.

This paper suggests an alternative method of concentrating latex by chemicals using algenates or locally available tamarind seed kernel powder as creaming agents. The optimum concentration of these chemicals necessary for efficient creaming has been determined and the properties of the creamed latex studied. Further this paper discusses the setting up of a creaming plant in a rubber estate and the advantages and disadvantages of creaming of latex when compared with centrifuging.