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TAPPING PANEL DRYNESS OF RUBBER: PREVALENCE, INCIDENCE AND SEVERITY IN TRIPURA

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A field survey was conducted in 43 rubber holdings of West and South Tripura districts to understand the occurrence, severity and seasonal variation of tapping panel dryness (TPD) of rubber. The lowest mean TPD of 7.5% was observed in BO-1 panel and the highest in BI-2 panel. The maximum mean TPD of 13% was observed at Kariamura II followed by Mirza (12.9%), Promodnagar (11.3%) and Rangamala (11.1%). The lowest TPD incidence was observed at Baghmara (1.9%) followed by Dariabagma (2.9%). The variation of TPD was observed for six consecutive seasons from winter (December-January) of 2007-08 to summer (April-May) of 2009. Mean TPD was maximum (16.6%) during the winter season of 2008-09 and minimum (9.1%) during the summer season of 2008. TPD intensity was observed to increase from summer to winter season. A tapping rest of around two months from middle of February to middle of April reduced TPD marginally in the subsequent summer season compared to that in the previous winter season.

Keywords: *Hevea brasiliensis*, Incidence, Season, Tapping panel dryness, Tripura

INTRODUCTION

Tapping panel dryness (TPD) is one of the factors affecting the yield of rubber tree, *Hevea brasiliensis* (Willd. ex Adr. de Juss) Muell. Arg. The etiology of TPD is not fully understood yet. Both partial and complete dryness in varying intensity in tapping panel are seen irrespective of clone, age, year of exploitation or location. This disorder may occur gradually or suddenly and ultimately results in economic loss. The primary symptoms of TPD are drying of the tapping cut at varying degrees, bark discolouration, bark thickening, scaling and flaking, woody burr formation, bark sloughing, cracking, peeling and drying on root stock near the bud union (Mathew *et al.*, 2006). In some cases, bark drying, cracking and bulging are seen even in untapped trees, while in some TPD-affected trees, the bark dries up internally without showing any visible external symptoms.

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