PERFORMANCE OF *HEVEA BRASILIENSIS* CLONES IN MIZORAM

S.K. Dey, R.S. Singh, G.C. Satisha* and T.K. Pal
Regional Research Station, Rubber Research Institute of India, Agartala – 799 006, Tripura, India.
*Rubber Research Institute of India, Kottayam – 686 009, Kerala, India.

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A study was conducted to evaluate the performance of seven *Hevea brasiliensis* clones in different landforms *viz.*, foot hill, mid hill and hill top under the prevailing agroclimatic conditions of Mizoram. All the clones performed well in the foot hill compared to mid hill or hill top. The highest yield was recorded for the clone SCATC 93/114 followed by PB 255 and RRII 300. More yield per tap was recorded for ½S d/3 system of tapping compared to d/2 and d/1 systems, whereas annual yield was high for d/1 system. The incidence of tapping panel dryness was high on trees tapped under d/1 system. An increasing trend in the yield was observed from September onwards with a maximum in November and a decline thereafter in all clones under the different tapping systems.

Key words: *Hevea* clones, Landforms, Mizoram, North East India, Tapping systems.

INTRODUCTION

Mizoram state lies in the southern part of the north eastern region of India, adjoining Bengladesh in the west and Myanmar in the east between 21° 58' and 24° 15'North and 92° 20' and 93° 29' East. The state is covered by hilly terrains with altitudes ranging from 2100 to 2200 m above MSL. The terrain is steep towards the northern part of the state. Foot hill areas below 450 m with warm subtropical climate, running north to south along the western part of the state is being explored for rubber cultivation as an alternative for the traditional practice of shifting (jhum) cultivation. The shifting cultivation results in degradation of multi-tiered forest ecosystem into secondary bamboo forests with eroded, less fertile soil.

Rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*) being a relatively fast growing perennial tree crop which can ensure coverage of the denuded areas and provide economic returns to the cultivator is regarded as a good candidate crop for sustainable farming in this region. It was first introduced to Mizoram in 1965 by the state soil conservation department. Since then the cultivation of rubber in Mizoram has been continued as a part of jhumiya settlement scheme. At present, an area of about 619 ha is under rubber cultivation (Rubber Board, 2003) and there is scope for expansion up to 50,000 ha (Krishnakumar and Meenattoor, 2000). The objective of this study is to identify the suitable clones and tapping systems for successful rubber cultivation in Mizoram.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The experiment was laid out in the farm of the Regional Research Station of the Rubber Research Institute of India, at

Correspondence: S.K. Dey (E-mail: dey@rubberboard.org.in)