Rubber Science, **30**(1): 42-55, 2017 RESEARCH ARTICLE

PROMISING ORTETS OF *HEVEA* FROM SMALL HOLDINGS OF KERALA: SMALL SCALE EVALUATION IN DAKSHIN KANNADA DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA

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Received: 02 February 2017 Accepted: 22 March 2017

Sathik, M.B.M., Chandrasekhar, T.R. and Nazeer, M.A. (2017). Promising ortets of *Hevea* from small holdings of Kerala: Small scale evaluation in Dakshin Kannada District of Karnataka. *Rubber Science,***30**(1): 42-55.

As the cultivation of *Hevea* in India is extended to non-traditional regions, it is necessary to identify high yielding clones for each agro-climatic zone. For this purpose, three sets of ortets found promising from holdings in Kerala were planted in South Karnataka region and their performance was evaluated. This report discusses about the performance of one set of 14 ortets in comparison with the performance of check clones RRII 105, GT1 and RRIM 600. In terms of girth, tappability, annual yield, yield stability and summer yield stability, the ortets Tly 55, Tly 56, CES 140, Kly 30, Pal 39A and Kly 26 were superior among the ortets studied they were on par with the control clone GT1 in terms of yield in the agro-climatic conditions of the DK district of Karnataka. Among the above promising ortets, Kly 30 has an additional advantage of being tolerant to abnormal leaf fall disease. These clones need to be further subjected to large scale participatory on - farm trials to validate and confirm their superiority in this agro-climatic region.

Key words: Dakshin Kannada, *Hevea brasiliensis*, Ortet selection, Small scale evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Large populations of seedling stands that existed in various plantations in India were subjected to systematic ortet selection programmes from 1954 which led to the development of valuable primary clones in the RRII 1-10 series (Marattukalam *et al*., 1980). In the early years, primary focus was on ortet selection followed by hybridization.

Ortet selection consists of identification of elite trees from a large base population of genetically variable seedling trees, through regular monitoring of their performance over a period (Mydin and Saraswathyamma, 2005). Ortet selection programmes initiated in Indonesia and Malaysia in the early 1900's resulted in significant yield improvement over the parent population of unselected seedlings (Khoo *et al*., 1982). Some of the important primary clones developed through ortet selection are RRII 5, GL 1, Tjir 1, PB 86, PB 28/59, PB 280, GT 1, PR 107, Mil 3/2 and Haiken 1. These primary clones were subsequently used in the subsequent hybridization programmes which led to the evolution of successful secondary hybrid clones like RRII 105, RRII 203, RRII 208, RRIC 100 and RRIM 600.

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