

REVIEW ON BANDED LEAF AND SHEATH BLIGHT OF RICE CAUSED BY *Rhizoctonia solani* KÜHN

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INTRODUCTION

Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) is a graminaceous crop. It is one of the important staple foods for Asian countries. Sheath blight disease is an important fungal disease of rice. Currently, this disease is distributed in almost all the rice growing states. The disease is alarming due to its intensive cultivation of modern high yielding varieties with high doses of nitrogenous fertilizers. Crop with a high plant density and close canopy associated favors disease build up from panicle initiation onwards. Poor weed management practices and increase in frequency of irrigation have aggravated, incidence of the disease due to modified micro climatic conditions. The disease was first recorded from Japan (Miyake, 1910). In India, the disease was first reported from Gurudaspur, Punjab (Paracer and Chahal, 1963) and later it was reported from Uttar Pradesh (Kohli, 1966). The management of this disease is possible only after the detailed study of different aspect of this disease and the pathogen. Management of the disease below its economic threshold is important for increasing the production, productivity and quality of the produce. Recognizing the importance of the problem, need for the effective and socio economically feasible management of the pathogen, the present review presented by keeping the above stated factors of the disease into consideration.

SYMPTOMATOLOGY

Ou (1972) studied in detail the symptoms of sheath blight under field conditions. Initial symptoms of sheath blight appear in the form of circular, oblong or ellipsoid, greenish-grey water-soaked spots about 1cm long that occur on leaf sheath near the water level. These lesions enlarge and become oblong and irregular in outline, the center of which become grey white with brown margins. Lesions may also appear on any part of sheath and several lesions may unite to encircle the whole Culm. Under humid conditions, the infection may spread to upper leaf sheaths and leaf blades, which ultimately results in rotting of leaf sheath and drying up of the whole leaf. In severe cases, most of the leaves in a plant may be blighted. Sclerotia were formed in the lesions and were easily detachable. The size and color of the sclerotia depend on the soil factors, rice variety involved and environmental conditions. The lesions enlarge the centers of which become pale-green or grey and are surrounded by an irregular purple border (Webster and Gunnell, 1992). Heavy infected plants produce poorly filled grains and may die immature panicle (Dasgupta, 1992). Initial symptoms consist of lesions on the sheaths of lower leaves at late tillering or early inter nodal elongation growth stages. Under favorable conditions of low sunlight, high humidity ($\geq 95\%$) and warm temperature (28-32°C), the infection spreads rapidly by means of runner hyphae to upper plant parts. Lesions may coalesce to encompass the entire leaf sheath and stem (Rush and Lee, 1992). Singh *et al.* (2003) reported about the growth of mycelium on the affected parts of the plant under humid conditions and this aids in the spread of the disease to a considerable distance in the field through irrigation water. Lodging may occur in diseased plants, particularly in taller varieties (Rangaswamy and Mahadevan, 2005).

Morphological Characters of Imperfect State and Mycelial Characters

Young colonies on the media may be nearly white but all older colonies have some shades of brown. For these reasons, the brown pigment appears to be stable diagnostic character. Any mycelia remaining permanently white or showing pigmentation other than any shade of brown are not considered as *R.solani* (Palo, 1926).

Hyphae diameter varies widely both within and among the isolates. Measurements by Matsumoto (1921), Thomas (1925), Ritcher and Schneider (1953) indicated that most isolates fall within 5-14 μ m range. The diameter of hyphae within a colony varies widely according to age and composition of medium and temperature (Palo, 1926; Dahl, 1953). Bracker and Butler (1963) reported that the dolipore septa are a prominent feature of *R. solani*. This apparatus is also common in many other basidiomycotina members and its presence in a non-sporulating mycelium is not itself indicative of *R. solani*. Right angle branching sometimes cited as a diagnostic feature but it is not considered reliable. Other features of branching are diagnostically more important. Branching almost invariably occurs near the distal septum of a cell in young and advancing hyphae. In older hyphae, branching may occur at any place along the cell. Constriction of branch hyphae at the point of origin and formation of septum at right angle in the point of origin appear to be stable and reliable characteristics of *R. solani* (Parmeter, 1970). Thind *et al.* (2008) reported that *R. solani* isolates of rice grew 66.6 percent faster than potato isolates. Hyphal width of isolates from both hosts varied from 7.2 to 12.1 μ m and rice isolates formed larger sclerotia (1.5-2.0 mm in diameter) and of potato isolates produced 0.5-1.0 mm diameter sclerotia.

Monilioid Cells

Monilioid cells may be hyaline or brown, barrel-shaped, pyriform, irregular or lobate, rare or numerous, loosely grouped or tightly clamped (Duggar, 1915; Dodge and Stevens, 1924; Palo, 1926). Saksena and Vaartaja (1960, 1961) have placed considerable emphasis on the use of monilioid cells in distinguishing species of *Rhizoctonia*. However, the wide variation in dimensions of monilioid cells reported by Matsumoto (1921) and Saksena and Vaartaja (1960) that, such measurements do not provide suitable criteria for distinguishing the species. In addition, many fungi, including both Ascomycetes and Basidiomycetes produce monilioid cells similar to those of *R. solani*.

Sclerotia

Several workers have reported that sclerotia are first grey white, later brown to black in color, sub-globose slightly flattened in shape and vary from 0.5-5.0 mm in size [Matsumoto and Yamato(1935); Ryker (1939) and Palo (1926)]. Sclerotia of *R. solani* are quite variable. Studied by Exner and Chilton (1943); Whitney and Parameter (1964) on variation among single spore isolates showed that sclerotia of sibling isolates varied widely in size, shape, shade, surface texture and distribution on culture medium.

Perfect State

The perfect state, *Thanatephorus cucumeris* is known under different names and includes familiar names like *Hypschnus cucumeris*, *Hypschnus solani*, *Corticium solani*, *Corticium microsclerotia* (*Rhizoctonia microsclerotia*) and *Pellicularia filamentosa*. Other possible synonyms are *Corticium sasakii* and *Corticium aeorolatum*, *Thanatephorus particolus* (Kotila) Flintje which were earlier considered as distinct species have also been included in *Thanatephorus cucumeris* by Talbot (1965). The perfect state of *Rhizoctonia solani* is considered to be *Thanatephorus cucumeris* (Frank.) Donk. The taxonomy and nomenclature of *Thanatephorus cucumeris* (Frank) Donk is discussed by Talbot (1970). He placed the genus *Thanatephorus cucumeris* in the family, Tulasnellaceae and order, Tulannellales and recommended that sub-classes, Heterobasidiomycetidae and Homobasidiomycetidae should no longer be recognized.

Mode of Survival of Pathogen

Muller (1924) observed that sclerotia remained viable for more than 18 months in soil. Palo (1926) reported survival for several months in soil. Itaka and Hitomi (1930) observed exclusive presence of sclerotia *Hypochnus sasakii* from rice plants in the field. The pathogen survives in the field as sclerotia and infects the rice crop in the following season. At room temperature on dry or moist soil, the sclerotia survived for at least 130 days and for 224 days when submerged under deep tap water (Park and Bertus, 1932). The survival and inoculum potential of the *R. solani* is directly related with severity and incidence of disease. Sclerotia are the most important source of inoculum (Allison, 1951). The survival of *R. solani* and its transmission through seed tuber is well known for black scurf of potato (Baker, 1947 and Neergaard, 1958). Strains of *R. solani* from weed hosts have been reported to be pathogenic to several crop plants (Herzog, 1961; Deniels, 1963 and Oshima *et al.*, 1963). Kulkarni (1967) observed that sclerotia of *Claviceps microcephala* remained viable for longer time if buried at deeper levels in soils. Saksena and Chaubey (1973) observed the external as well as internal seed borne nature of *R. solani* in case of banded blight disease of paddy. The sclerotia of *Corticium sasakii* kept at depth of 2.5, 5.0, 7.5, 10.0 cm in different soil types (clay, sandy and red loam) remained viable for 200, 220 days irrespective of conditions of treatments. In the treatment where the sclerotia were placed on the surface of the soils, they lost viability after 160 days, thus indicating that the viability of sclerotia was increased when buried in soil (Mahendra Pradhat *et al.*, 1974).

Onesirosan and Sagay (1975) reported that the aerial strain of *R. solani* survived for some period only in diseased leaves on the soil surface, but in the buried leaves infectivity was lost with the disintegration of leaves. Kannaiyan and Prasad (1978) reported that there was 100% viability of sclerotia of *R. solani* up to 240 days followed by gradual decrease when they were buried in soil or floated on water. On the other hand, 100% viability of sclerotia placed on surface of soil was observed up to 120 days followed by a drastic decrease during the subsequent period. The sclerotia lost viability after 210 days when they were placed on surface of soil and remained viable for 390 days when buried in soil at 5 cm depth. Tu et al. (1979) found that on the surface of the field soil, sclerotia of *R. solani* survived for more than 16 months but while buried just under 2 cm of soil longevity came down to 8 months. Sclerotia may be produced loosely externally on the sheaths or between the sheath and Culm (Gangopadhyay and Chakrabarti, 1982). High correlation with increase in disease index with the number of viable sclerotia of *R. solani* was observed. There was no correlation between the pathogen from plant debris and damping off of sugar beet. But, there was high correlation between the number of viable sclerotia and damping off incidence. These workers concluded that sclerotia and plant debris are the main source of inoculum (Hyakumachi and Ui, 1982). Sclerotia of coffee isolate of *R. solani* placed on soil surface of coffee nursery beds, survived up to 225 days but those buried in soil survived up to 375 days (Venkatasubbaiah and Safeeulla, 1983). Dash (1985) observed that population of sclerotia in ploughed field was higher 6-12 cm than in upper layers and the sclerotia buried deep in soil have better buoyancy and viability. Maiti (1978), Ahuja and Payak (1988) reported that the fungus *R. solani* f.sp. *sasakii* (Kühn) Exner survives in the form of sclerotia which serve as primary source of inoculum. Sudhakar et al. (1998) reported that *R. solani* sclerotia remained 100% viable up to 120 days of incubation in dry soil when buried at 5 cm depth. The viability of sclerotia was 78.5% at 150 days and 31.5% at 180 days after incubation. Tan Genjia et al. (2000) studied the germination rate and underground infectivity of *R. solani* sclerotia was studied. The germination rate of sclerotia increased with temperature and can infect rice plants at a soil depth of 1-3 cm. Li Shi Dong (2004) reported that 60.9% sclerotia could survive after 265 days of being buried in natural sandy loam under field conditions in Beijing, while colonized rice straw debris (0.5-10 cm long) could not yield the fungus on medium plates after 88 days of being buried under same conditions. Singh and Singh (2008) reported that the infected leaf pieces incubated at 10 and 28°C also showed a steady reduction in fungus survival with an incubation period from an initial 100% to 53.3% and 63.3% respectively after a period of 5 months. At all observations time, except 150 days after incubation, 10 and 28°C recorded significantly more survival than at 0 and 40°C.

Role of Basidiospore in the Secondary Spread of Disease

Basidiospores were shown to be a major factor in dissemination of aerial strain of *R. solani* (Carpenter (1949, 1957); Kotila (1945b); Lorenz (1948). It was observed that the fungus grow from leaf to leaf (Luttrell, 1962) and from cotyledon to stem (Weber and Abrego, 1958) through basidiospore. According to Saksena (1961), basidiospore was germinated by one germ tube and rarely by two from any point of spore wall. He also reported that in rare case, basidiospore germinated by repetition. The rapid spread of web blight of common bean in warm humid conditions can also be explained by efficient production and dissemination of basidiospore (Echandi, 1965). The rapid spread of leaf sheath blight of paddy in this country can also be explained due to abundant production of basidiospores (Saksena and Chaubey, 1973). The early infection in the field came from *R. solani* stage of the organism and the secondary spread of the disease took place through basidiospores where the fungus known to produce perfect stage (Dwivedi and Saksena, 1974, 1975 and Chaubey, 1976.). In the tropics, where the telomorph of *R. solani* develops regularly, the pathogen spreads rapidly by the production and dissemination of basidiospores (Galindo et al., 1983). Naito (1984) reported foliar blight of sugarbeet by *T. cucumeris* spread by formation of replicated hyphae and basidiospore.

Host Range

Kozaka (1961) from Japan recorded 188 species of plants from 32 families that can be infected by this fungus. Two virulent isolates of *Thanatephorus cucumeris* could infect and survive on several weed hosts which are commonly found in rice fields namely *Echinochloa crusgalli*, *E. colonum*, *Fimbristylis littoralis*, *Cyperus rotundus*. Kozaka (1965), Tsai (1974) observed that rice fungus infected 20 species which are from 11 families and observed that the sclerotia from diseased tissue of weed hosts produced typical symptoms of sheath blight on paddy plants. Singh and Saksena (1980) found that aerial strain causing banded blight disease in bajra infected 22 plants species of both crop and wild plants belonging to 6 different families. Kannaiyan and Prasad (1980) have listed 30 monocot weed species as host of *Thanatephorus cucumeris* (*Rhizoctonia solani*). Goswami et al. (2010) reported that isolate SYL-13 possessed narrow host range and low avirulent while DIN-8 and GAZ-18 had wide host range and considered as virulent isolate of *Rhizoctonia solani*. The isolate GAZ-9 had highly virulent and wide host range of 35 different crops.

Screening of Chemical Fungicides against test Pathogen

Prophylactic and therapeutic sprays of Carbendazim, Carboxin and Kitazin using as soil drenching with Carbendazim, Carboxin and PCNB effectively controlled sheath blight disease (Viswanathan and Mariappan, 1980). Arunyanart *et al.* (1986) have observed the effectiveness of Pencycuron, Jintumycin, Validamycin and Carbendazim against *Thanatephorus cucumeris*. Das and Mishra (1990) obtained best disease control with Topsin-M (Thiophanate methyl) seed treatments followed by foliar sprays of same fungicide. Akter *et al.* (2001) reported that six fungicides namely Bavistin 50 WP (Carbendazim), Contaf 5 EC (Hexaconazole), Forastin 50 WP (Carbendazim), Anvil 5 SC (Hexaconazole), Tilt 25 EC (Propiconazole) and Thiovit 80 WP (Micronized sulfur) and fertilizer, Muriate of Potash were tested in Gazipur, Bangladesh against sheath blight of rice (cv. Swarna) caused by *R. solani*. Contaf appeared to be the best in reducing the percent relative lesion height, per cent disease index and tiller infection.

Lixili *et al.* (2001) reported that the toxicity of Carbendazim, Thiram, Tolcofos-methyl and mixtures of Carbofuran + Thiram + Tolcofos-methyl (20% CTR) and 20% Carbofuran + Carbendazim + Tolcofos methyl S (20% CSR) to the rice pathogen *R. solani* was determined in laboratory experiments. Tolcofos-methyl provided a good control for *R. solani*. Ali *et al.* (2002) reported the seed treatment with Mancozeb, Copper oxy chloride, Captan and Contaf reduced sheath blight incidence. Three sprays of Bavistin (0.1%) and Mancozeb (0.1%) + seed treatment reduced disease incidence significantly. Tiwari *et al.* (2002) used 7 fungicides to control sheath blight of rice and reported that Carbendazim + Epoxiconazole (0.2%), Hexaconazole (0.2%), Epoxiconazole (0.24%) and Propiconazole (0.2%) were significantly more effective in controlling disease severity than other fungicides. Chahal *et al.* (2003) managed sheath blight of rice by using 8 fungicides Propiconazole (0.1%) minimized the disease to maximum extent followed by Edifenphos (0.1%), Iprodione (0.3%) and Carboxin (0.2%).

Screening of Bioagents against test pathogen

Trichoderma viride has been attributed to their production of antibiotics as well as mycoparasitism reported by (Dennis and Webster, 1971). *Trichoderma harzianum* and *T. viride* have been reported as effective antagonists against *R. solani* *in vitro* (Elad *et al.*, 1980; Gokulapalan and Nair, 1989). Baby and Rao (1993) reported that soil application of *T. longibrachiatum* and wheat bran dust survived well in the soil and reduced *R. solani* population, and increased yield. Foliar sprays with *T. harzianum*, *T. viride* and *Aspergillus terreus* significantly reduced sheath blight severity (Das *et al.*, 1996). Das *et al.* (1998) reported that application of *T. viride* and *B. subtilis* as seed treatment showed reduction in sheath infection percentage. Das and Hazarika (2000) reported that seed treatment with antagonistic fungi *T. viride* and *T. harzianum* showed significant reduction in sheath infection grain yield. Among them, *T. harzianum* was more effective than *T. viride*.

Surilirajan and Kandhari (2005) studied to access the disease severity, Percentage Disease Incidence (PDI) and yield parameters. Out of 16 treatments, *T. viride* (TV-3235) + Carbendazim 50WP (0.1%) spray along with soil amendments (FYM 1% + saw dust 1%) showed that maximum reduction in sheath blight severity, percent disease incidence and higher grain yield over the control. Singh (2006) found that single application of Carbendazim @ 0.1% was best in reducing the sheath blight severity and increasing the rice grain yield as compared to application of combination of *T. harzianum*+ *Pseudomonas fluorescens* or also with single application of validamycin at any stage of crop seed, seedling tillering and symptoms initiation. Khan and Sinha (2007) reported *T. harzianum* and its volatile compounds inhibited *R. solani* followed by *T. viridae* in dual culture techniques.

Screening of Botanicals against test Pathogen

Antifungal activity of *Allium sativum* leaf extract against 11 fungal pathogens observed by Misra and Dixit (1977b). Naidu and John (1981) observed that the leaf extract of *Parthenium hysterophorus* inhibited growth of *R. solani*. Dubey and Dwivedi (1991) found fungicidal properties of Allicin a constituent found in *A. cepa*, against vegetative growth and sclerotial viability of *Macrophomina phaseolina* at 0.1% concentration.

Tiwari and Nayak (1991) found leaf extract of *Ocimum sanctum* quite effective in reducing the growth of *R. solani* *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Narasimhan *et al.* (1998) carried out laboratory evaluation of botanical formulation against sheath blight diseases of rice. Meena *et al.* (1998) evaluated a plant extracts in which bulb extract of garlic at 5% concentration (W/V) completely inhibited the mycelial growth of *R. solani* causing sheath blight of rice.

Upmanyu and Gupta (2002) evaluated 16 plant species against *R. solani* and found that extracts of *Ocimum sanctum*, *Allium cepa* and *Phyllanthus emblica* completely inhibited the growth of *R. solani* on 25, 50 and 75% concentration at 24, 48 and 72 hours of inhibition. Gautham et al. (2003) evaluated 24 botanicals belonging to family compositae (Asteraceae) *in vitro* for their fungitoxicity against *R. solani*, the caused agent of sheath blight of paddy. Mishra et al. (2005) evaluated 7 aqueous plant extracts (*Calotropis gigantea*, *Vinca rosea*, *Ocimum sanctum*, *Azadirachata indica*, *Eucalyptus citriodora*, *Allium cepa* and *Zingiber officinale*) against *R. solani* in green gram *in vitro* and found that highest inhibitory action (86.11%) was recorded in ginger. Somani (2009) evaluated fresh leaf extract of 20 botanicals against *R. solani* causing black scurf of potato and found tulsi was effective and neem and onion gave good control when used as seed dip treatment of potato.

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