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**TREATMENT OF RUBBER THREAD MANUFACTURING  
INDUSTRY WASTEWATER BY AN UPFLOW ANAEROBIC FILTER**

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## CONTENT

	<b>Page</b>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF PLATES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 General	1
1.2 Manufacture of Rubber Thread	3
1.3 Regulatory Standards	6
1.4 Scope and Objectives of the Present Study	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 Mechanism of the Anaerobic Digestion Process	9
2.2 Historical Development of Anaerobic Treatment of Wastewater	12
2.3 Factors Controlling the Anaerobic Digestion Process	29
2.4 Upflow Anaerobic Filter	38
2.5 Treatment of Wastewater from Rubber Products Manufacturing Factories	46

CHAPTER THREE: MATERIALS AND METHODS	53
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	73
4.1 Characteristics of Rubber Thread Manufacturing Industry Wastewater	73
4.2 Removal of Zinc from Rubber Thread Manufacturing Industry Wastewater	79
4.3 Start-up Performance of Anaerobic Filter with Rubber Thread Manufacturing Industry Wastewater	90
4.4 Study of Factors which Influence the Performance of Anaerobic Filter in the Treatment of Rubber Thread Manufacturing Industry Wastewater	
4.4.1 Influence of Organic Loading Rates	97
4.4.2 Influence of Hydraulic Retention Time	100
4.4.3 Influence of Temperature	103
4.4.4 Influence of pH	106
4.4.5 Influence of Micronutrients Addition	106
4.4.6 Specific Biogas Yield	109
4.4.7 Minimum Requirements of Nutrients	111
4.5 Attached versus Suspended Growth	114
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	119
REFERENCES	124

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## ABSTRACT

Wastewater from the rubber thread manufacturing industry is acidic in nature with pH ranging from 3.6 to 4.7 and contains high concentrations of COD, BOD, nitrogen and zinc. The high BOD to COD ratio of the wastewater indicated that the wastewater is easily biodegradable and therefore can be effectively treated by the anaerobic digestion process. However as the wastewater contained high concentration of zinc which could inhibit the digestion process, it was first pretreated by chemical precipitation for the removal of zinc. The study showed that the treatment using a combination of sodium sulphide and LT 27 at concentrations of 800 and 5 mg/L respectively is the most cost effective precipitation/flocculation system for removing zinc from the wastewater. The studies involving the use of an upflow anaerobic filter or reactor which contained polyurethane foam as the packing media have shown that the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater can be effectively treated by the anaerobic digestion process. The optimum loading rate and the HRT obtained were about 8 g COD/L/d and 1.5 days respectively. Other factors such as temperature and pH of the wastewater were also found to influence the anaerobic digestion process of wastewater from the rubber thread manufacturing industry. The study revealed that in view of cost, the

anaerobic treatment of rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater by an upflow anaerobic filter is best carried out at the mesophilic temperature of about 35 °C and pH of 6.0 to 9.0 although the highest biogas production rate was obtained at the thermophilic temperature of 50 °C. With regard to specific biogas yields and nutrients requirements, the study showed that by increasing the organic loading rate from 2 to 14 g COD/L/d, the specific biogas yield decreased from 0.250 to 0.069 L CH<sub>4</sub>/g COD added. At the same time, the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus utilized by anaerobic microorganisms also decreased from 1.53 to 0.26 mg and from 0.36 to 0.26 mg for each 100 mg of COD consumed respectively. On the effect of micronutrients, the study showed that the addition of micronutrients like Ni and Co improved biogas yield of the process. The present study also showed that the attached biomass in the upflow anaerobic filter contributed more than 70% to the COD removal in the treatment of rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater.

## LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1. NR consumption by product sector in Malaysia in 1995.
- Table 2. Regulatory standards for wastewater from rubber products manufacturing industry.
- Table 3. Chronology of development in anaerobic digestion.
- Table 4. Upflow anaerobic filter studies for industrial wastewaters.
- Table 5. Treatment of wastewater from rubber products manufacturing industry in Malaysia
- Table 6. Types of wastewater treatment systems adopted by the rubber products manufacturing industry in Malaysia
- Table 7. Composition of synthetic wastewater.
- Table 8. Characteristics of raw wastewater from the latex compounding stage of the rubber thread manufacturing factories.
- Table 9. Characteristics of raw wastewater from the leaching stage of the rubber thread manufacturing factories.
- Table 10. Characteristics of the combined raw wastewater from the rubber thread manufacturing factories.
- Table 11. Concentrations of total and soluble zinc in the combined rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater
- Table 12. Chemical cost of the chemical precipitation/flocculation method

- Table 13. Start-up performance of the upflow anaerobic filter fed with synthetic wastewater
- Table 14. Start-up performance of the upflow anaerobic filter fed with diluted rubber product manufacturing industry wastewater
- Table 15. Influence of organic loading rates on the performance of upflow anaerobic filter in treating the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater.
- Table 16. Influence of hydraulic retention time on the performance of upflow anaerobic filter in treating the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater.
- Table 17. Influence of temperature on the performance of upflow anaerobic filter in treating the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater.
- Table 18. Influence of pH on the performance of upflow anaerobic filter in treating the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater.
- Table 19. Effect of addition of micronutrients on the anaerobic treatment of rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater by an upflow anaerobic filter.
- Table 20. Specific biogas yield from the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater treated in an upflow anaerobic filter.



**Table 21.** Nutrient utilization in the anaerobic treatment of the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater by an upflow anaerobic filter.

**Table 22.** Percent attached biomass activity in total activity in the upflow anaerobic filter treating the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater.

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1. Schematic diagram of rubber thread products manufacture
- Figure 2. Flow of carbon to methane in a typical anaerobic reactor
- Figure 3. Conventional anaerobic reactors
- Figure 4. Anaerobic contact reactor
- Figure 5. Clarigester
- Figure 6. Downflow anaerobic fixed film reactor
- Figure 7. Fluidized and expanded bed reactor
- Figure 8. Upflow anaerobic sludge blanket reactor
- Figure 9. Upflow anaerobic filter
- Figure 10. Schematic diagram of the flocculation and activated sludge system
- Figure 11. Sketch of the laboratory scale upflow anaerobic filter
- Figure 12. Schematic flow diagram of the rubber thread manufacturing showing locations of wastewater sample collection
- Figure 13. Removal of zinc from rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater by precipitation with sodium sulphide at three pH levels.
- Figure 14. Effect of sodium sulphide addition on the pH levels of rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater.

- Figure 15. Removal of zinc from rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater by the chemical precipitation/flocculation with sodium sulphide and LT 27.
- Figure 16. Effect of settling time on the removal of zinc from the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater by precipitation/flocculation with 800 mg/L of  $\text{Na}_2\text{S}$  and 5 mg/L LT 27.
- Figure 17. Effect of flocculation time on the removal of zinc from the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater by precipitation/flocculation with 800 mg/L of  $\text{Na}_2\text{S}$  and 5 mg/L LT 27.
- Figure 18. Effect of flocculation speed on the removal of zinc from the rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater by precipitation/flocculation with 800 mg/L of  $\text{Na}_2\text{S}$  and 5 mg/L LT 27.
- Figure 19. Biogas production during the starting-up of the upflow anaerobic filter with synthetic wastewater.
- Figure 20. Biogas production during the starting-up of the upflow anaerobic filter with diluted rubber thread manufacturing industry wastewater.
- Figure 21. Influence of the organic loading rates on the COD and BOD removal efficiencies.

- Figure 22. Influence of the hydraulic retention time on the COD and BOD removal efficiencies.
- Figure 23. Influence of temperature on the COD and BOD removal efficiencies.
- Figure 24. Influence of pH on the COD and BOD removal efficiencies.
- Figure 25. Nitrogen and phosphorus utilization during steady state operation at different organic loading rates.

## LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1. Photo of the Laboratory Scale Upflow Anaerobic Filter

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOD	Biochemical Oxygen Demand
COD	Chemical Oxygen Demand
DOE	Department of Environment
d	Day
g	Gramme
HRT	Hydraulic Retention Time
L	Litre
m	Metre
mg	Milligramme
kg	Kilogramme