



Weed Management in Linseed: A Review

M. Mohanty ^{a*} and S. C. Sahoo ^a

^a Directorate of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/IJPSS/2022/v34i242731

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/96262>

Review Article

Received: 25/10/2022
Accepted: 30/12/2022
Published: 31/12/2022

ABSTRACT

Slow initial growth makes linseed crop more vulnerable to weed infestation, which requires proper attention to obtain expected plant growth and yield. Control of weeds at early stages play a vital role for attaining robust plant growth that results in higher yield. Depending on location and method of cultivation, various types of weeds such as broad leaf, sedges and grasses are found in linseed field. In linseed crop, weeds can be controlled by manual, chemical or both the methods. As manual weeding is labour intensive and needs more time, chemical method of weed control is preferred to enhance profitability of the crop. Pre-emergence application of herbicide controls the weeds from the initial stage of plant growth that culminates with higher yield and more profit.

Keywords: Linseed; *Linum usitatissimum* L.; weed management; chemical weed control; manual weed control.

1. INTRODUCTION

Linseed (*Linum usitatissimum*) is one of the oldest oilseed crop, grown across the world with an intention to obtain grain, fibre and oil [1].

Linseed occupies an imperative place among the oilseed crops due to its diversified use as oil, fibre and industrial raw material. It occupies a vital position among oilseed crops grown during rabi season in India.

*Corresponding author: E-mail: mmohanty877@gmail.com;

Usually, linseed is grown in less fertile, degraded land and with minimum care; which has resulted in substantial reduction of yield. Non application of fertilizer, poor weed management and lack of cultural practices are the major causes of low yield of linseed in India. Generally, this crop is cultivated under minimum input condition under various agro-climatic situations of the country.

Less competitive ability of linseed against weed infestation is a major challenge for this crop. Slow initial growth coupled with low spread of foliage makes the crop vulnerable to dominance by weed [2]. Effective management of weeds at proper time can ensure expected yield. Excess weed growth results in reduction of seed quality and increase in risk of disease and pest infestation.

The crop is often grown under minimum agronomic management practices, which adversely affects the crop yield and quality of produce. Weed management is one of the most important factors to obtain good quality produce. The crop is severely affected by weed competition during its early growth phase. This review article intends to throw light on effective weed control measures in linseed to enhance productivity both in quantity and quality.

2. WEEDS ASSOCIATED

Depending on agro-climatic situation and soil characteristics, several weed species are found in the field of linseed. The cropping pattern, crop management practices and availability of irrigation also influence the prevalence of weeds in linseed crop. Various types of weeds such as broadleaf, sedges and grasses are associated with this crop. Meleta et al. [3] observed more occurrences of broadleaf and grassy weeds in linseed under Ethiopia condition. Some of the predominant weed species found in linseed are *Chenopodium album*, *Amaranthus spp.*, *Avena fatua*, *Plantago lanceolata*, *Guizotia scabra*, etc. Puhup and Dwivedi [4] observed prevalence of weeds like *Medicagodenticulata*, *Convolvulus arvensis*, *Parthenium hysterophorus*, etc. at different growth stages. Under Patna situation, Acharya et al. [5] reported presence of diversified weed flora comprising of broadleaf, grasses and sedges.

3. EFFECT OF WEEDS ON GROWTH AND YIELD

Weeds are major threat to crop production, if appropriate control measures are not taken at

proper time. The weed population, type of weeds and their growth pattern vary depending on local climatic condition, cropping pattern and soil characteristics. Based upon the types of weed, weed density and competitiveness of the crop; the effect of weed on plant growth and yield is different at different places.

The competitive ability of plant to utilize the growth determining resources such as light, water and nutrients plays a vital role in determining crop yield [1]. Several authors have assessed the influence of various weeds on plant growth and yield of linseed crop. Meleta et al. [3] reported that weeds cause serious concern for growth and yield of linseed resulting in loss of seed yield and deterioration of oil quality because of severe competition for plant nutrients.

Sachin et al. [6] reported that reduced weed population results in availability of more light, water and plant nutrients to the crop plant, which reflects in better plant growth.

Conventionally, weed control by application of herbicides in linseed is a common practice. Linseed is associated with profused growth of heterogeneous weed flora, which is the biggest biological constraint for the crop. Weed infestation in linseed can reduce yields to 52 per cent [7] and losses even up to 85 per cent were reported by Singh et al. [8].

Presence of weeds has visible effect on the performance of linseed crop and the growth of plant is affected by weeds at all stages. Chhaganiya et al. [9] reported that the growth, yield attributes and yield of linseed were inversely proportional to weed count. Similarly, Shaheen [10] reported that plant height, yield attributes and yield of linseed are substantially affected by various weed control treatments. Mańkowski and Pudelp [11] reported that weed control practices are vital for reducing crop-weed competition and enhancing quality and quantity of production. Acharya et al. [5] recorded taller plants (53.2 cm) with more number of primary branches/plant (4.73), capsules per plant (39.55) and seeds per capsule (8.03) under hand weeding condition as compared with control plots because of reduced weed competition for resources like sunlight, plant nutrient and space. As observed by Meseret et al. [12], the pod count per plant thousand grain weight and yield of grain were visibly influenced by time of weeding and frequency of weed control.

Meleta et al. [3] observed that delayed weeding in linseed at 50-60 days after crop emergence led to reduction of seed yield by more than 18 per cent.

4. WEED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Linseed cannot compete with weeds at early stages of the crop due to slow initial growth. So, it is imperative to complete weeding as early as possible to allow the plants for attaining robust growth. Weeding the crop before flowering is very much important, because there may be yield loss up to 56 per cent in linseed due to presence of weeds at initial stages of plant growth [13]. Meleta et al. [3] opined that linseed crop cannot effectively compete with weeds at early growth stages, especially up to two months after sowing.

Weeds can either be controlled manually or by application of chemical herbicides or both. Manual weeding requires more human labour and comparatively more time consuming, hence it necessitates an alternative and cost-effective weed management practice through application of herbicide. Researchers have observed remarkable effect of various weed management practices on presence of weed, weed density, weed biomass and the influence of weeds on crop yield. Several authors [14] have established the superiority of various weed control practices over weedy check plot with respect to yield and yield attributing characters of linseed. Dwivedi and Puhup [1] recorded lowest value of weed density and weight of weed biomass with the treatment two hand spraying, which was statistically comparable with pre-emergence application of pendimethalin @ 1 kg ha⁻¹. Siddesh et al. [2] reported that application of pre-emergence herbicide followed by application of post emergence herbicide or hand weeding around 25 to 30 DAS controlled the weeds in linseed and augmented the yield. Kalal et al. [15] observed that the yield of grain increased under weed free condition maintained during critical growth stage of the crop.

5. CHEMICAL WEED CONTROL

As compared with the cumbersome manual weeding, chemical methods of weed control have been proven to control weeds more efficiently in linseed crop. Pre-emergence application of herbicides is more efficient for controlling weeds at the early growth stage and gives the crop a vigorous start. Kalal et al. [15] opined that in linseed crop pendimethalin is widely used as pre-

emergence herbicide for control of weeds, however, the effectiveness of this herbicide varies depending upon type of soil, availability of moisture and type of weeds present. Chhaganiya et al. [9] reported that imazethapyr inhibit amino acid synthesis resulting in interruption in synthesis of protein and DNA, which resulted in death of weeds shortly after application of the chemical mix. Similar result was also reported by Siddesh et al. [2], who advocated application of pre-mixed mixture of pendimethalin 30 EC + imazethapyr 2 EC @ 1.0 kg a.i. ha⁻¹ to obtain maximum weed control efficiency (68.9% at 30 DAS and 65.2 % at 90 DAS) and higher crop yield.

Shaheen [10] substantiated that application of pendimethalin 30 EC along with imazethapyr 2EC @ 1.0 kg a.i. ha⁻¹ produced the lowest quantity of weed biomass at early stages of plant growth, while use of isoproturon 75 WP @ 1.0 kg a.i. ha⁻¹ resulted in minimum weight of weed biomass (1.18 g 0.25 m⁻²) at 90 days after sowing. As per findings of Amare et al. [16], there was significant reduction in weed density and weed dry weight with application of isoproturon @ 1.50 kg ha⁻¹ due to effective control of various types of weeds.

Sachin et al. [6] reported that pre-emergence application of pendimethalin 38.7 % CS @ 750 g a.i. ha⁻¹ followed by post-emergence application of metsulfuron methyl 20 % WP @ 4 g a.i. ha⁻¹ at 2-3 leaf stage of weeds resulted in significantly higher seed (906 kg ha⁻¹) and straw yield (2348 kg ha⁻¹). Similar results were also observed by Ganvit et al. [17], who recorded significantly higher seed yield of linseed with pre-emergence application of pendimethalin @ 1.0 kg ha⁻¹.

Bali et al. [18] recorded higher plant population with post emergence application of isoproturon + metsulfuron-methyl (1 kg + 4 g ha⁻¹), of course, statistically comparable with post emergence application of metsulfuron-methyl (4 g ha⁻¹). Siddesh et al. [2] recorded taller plants (62.2 cm) with more number of primary branches (5.6) and capsules plant⁻¹ (48.0) with pre-emergence application of pendimethalin 30 EC along with imazethapyr 2 EC @ 1.0 kg a.i. ha⁻¹ because of waning in weed competition.

Abou-Zied et al. [19] reported that application of Brominal along with Select Super could result in more grain yield. Application of Fluazifop butyl in linseed crop controlled the weeds in an effective manner and augmented crop yield as reported by

Osman et al. [20]. Singh et al. [21] recorded significant reduction in weed density with application of imazethapyr @ 100 g ha⁻¹ and higher weed control efficiency with pre-emergence application of pendimethalin and imazethapyr than post-emergence application of clodinafop and isoproturon.

6. MANUAL WEED CONTROL

In conventional method, manual weeding is adopted to control weeds in linseed crop. Traditionally, manual weeding is done by removing the weeds by hand or doing intercultural operation in the standing crop. It requires more expenditure and ample of time in case of manual method of weed control as compared with chemical method. Due to delay in manual weeding, the crop suffers from substantial reduction in plant growth at early stage. However, various authors have reported positive effect of manual weeding on plant growth and yield of linseed crop. Meleta et al. [3] recorded more pods per plant and higher grain yield with two hand weeding at 30-35 and 55-60 days after emergence when compared to unweeded plots. The intensity and types of weed in crop field is also affected by manual weeding methods at various places. Devendra [14] had reported minimum density of weeds, lowest weed dry weight, maximum weed control efficiency (87.2%), the highest yield and maximum profit with two handweeding at 20 and 40 DAS.

7. ECONOMICS

The economics of cultivation is the single most deciding factor for sustainable cultivation of any crop. It is required to enhance the profitability of a crop to make it more competitive for its sustenance in an ecosystem. Siddesh et al. [2] reported that unweeded check recorded the lowest net profit and minimum benefit-cost ratio. However, more net profit and higher benefit-cost ratio was recorded with pre-emergence application of pre-mixed formulation of pendimethalin 30 EC + imazethapyr 2EC @ 1.0 kg a.i. ha⁻¹ as compared with other treatments. Sachin et al. [6] recorded that pre-emergence application of pendimethalin 38.7 % CS @ 750 g a.i. ha⁻¹ followed by post-emergence application of metsulfuron methyl 20 % WP @ 4 g a.i. ha⁻¹ at 2-3 leaf stage of weeds resulted in higher net returns.

Dwivedi & Puhup [1] reported that post-emergence application of metsulfuron @ 4 g ha⁻¹

resulted in the maximum benefit-cost ratio due to higher yield of grain along with low cost of cultivation. Compared with chemical method of weed management practices, manual weeding does not support to obtain higher profit due to increased cost of cultivation. As per Dwivedi & Puhup [1], the cost of cultivation was the highest under two hand weeding at 21 and 45 days after sowing due to higher cost involved in labour wages. Weed management is an important aspect of growing linseed crop to harvest more quantity of good quality produce.

8. CONCLUSION

The findings of various researchers revealed that pre-emergence and post-emergence application of herbicides have resulted in higher yield and net profit from linseed crop. Though involves higher cost for cultivation, manual weeding in some cases has also proved effective in controlling weeds in linseed field. Hence, it is inferred that weed management may be done at appropriate time to obtain higher yield and more net profit from linseed crop.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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