



Influence of Hydrogel and Different Sowing Methods on Growth and Yield Aerobic Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.)

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Authors' contributions

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

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ABSTRACT

The field experiment was conducted during Khairf 2022 at Crop Research Farm, Department of Agronomy, SHUATS, Prayagraj (U.P). To evaluate the influence of different level Hydrogel (0, 2, 4 kg/ha.) and methods of sowing (on growth and yield of aerobic rice. Hydrogel was broadcasting in the field before sowing (Flatbed sowing, Ridge sowing, furrow sowing) mixed well in the soil. The experiment was laid out in randomized block design and comprised of levels of hydrogel and methods of sowing with ten treatments and each were replicated thrice. The growth attributes which was plant height (96.20 cm), total tillers/m² (540.27), plant dry weight (1078.70 g/m²), and crop growth rate (65.27 g/m²/day) was significantly increased with increasing the level of Hydrogel (0, 2 to 4 kg/ha.) and maximum was obtained with application of 4 kg Hydrogel with Furrow sowing. The yield attributes was obtained highest effective tillers/m² (238.33), number of filled grains/panicle (172.83), grain yield (4.81 t/ha), Harvest index (44.35%), gross return (INR 1,76,043/ha), net return (INR 1,31,193/ha.) and benefit cost ratio (2.93).

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Rice is one of the most important staple food crops as it helps to sustain two thirds of the world’s population. India is an important centre of rice cultivation. It provides the bulk of daily calories for many companion animals and humans” [1]. “Rice is a nutritional staple food which provides instant energy as its most important component is carbohydrate (starch), it also provides 27% of dietary energy supply, 20% of dietary protein and 3% of dietary fat” [2]. “India cultivated the rice in 44 million hectares land. Total rice production of 130.29 million tonnes in the 2021-22 which is more 3% more in previous year 118.87 million tones. West Bengal first rank rice in production with 14.76 million tones” [3]. “It is higher by 13.85 million tonnes than the last five years’ average production of 116.44 million tonnes. It is the highest rice producing state in India with a yield of 2600 kilograms per hectare. Uttar Pradesh with 14.02 million tons of rice production, Uttar Pradesh ranks on the 2nd position in the country” [4].

“To maintains the soil moisture and increase the water use efficiency by adding “Pusa Hydrogel” in the soil” [5]. “Pusa Hydrogel is an indigenous product designed and developed to enhance the crop productivity per unit available water and nutrients, particularly in moisture stress agriculture” [6] “New strategies have to be adopted to mitigate the ill effects of drought. Due to their three-dimensional cross linked hydrophilic polymer networks, hydrogels are subjected to swelling and retain large amount of water or de swelling to loose its moisture. Thus, they act as miniature reservoirs. The swelling enables hydrogel to act as a water reservoir for plants in the root zone for uptake during water stress” studied by [7]. “Recently, hydrogel polymer technology has been widely used in the agricultural sector as soil conditioner because of its multifunctional roles in excellent water absorbency and water-retaining ability” [8].

“In the system of aerobic rice, especially adapted aerobic rice cultivars are grown under non-flooded or aerobic soils with supplementary irrigation” [9]. “Growing rice aerobically saves a significant amount of water which can be used for any other purpose. Although aerobic rice has a great potential for saving water but all this is at the cost of severe reduction in yield. A less water availability at reproductive stage is found to be a reason for

low yield of aerobic rice” [10]. “It is, therefore, obligatory to develop appropriate management strategies in order to make water available to maximize the income on sustainable basis. Aerobic rice is emerging water saving rice production system in which rice is grown like wheat or maize. However, with low available water there is a contradiction among researchers which of different sowing methods is better [11] and [12] have a view that shifting rice from flat to ridge increases the water use efficiency of rice resulting in yield improvement. While rice sowing in furrows also helps in light penetration and also reduce the humidity in the rice field”. “This method can reduced rice diseases and increase leaf area, tillering and weight of per thousand grains” [13]. “This technique reduces labour needs by more than 25% in term of working hours. Aerobic rice needs much lower amount of fertilizer and labour as compare to translating rice” [14]. Which can helping improve the production and reduce the cost of cultivation.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This experiment was laid out during Kharif season of 2022 at Crop Research Farm, Department of Agronomy, Naini Agricultural Institute, Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Prayagraj (U.P.). The crop research farm is situated at 25.57⁰N latitude, 87.19⁰ E longitude and at an altitude of 98 m above mean sea level. The soil of experimental plot was sandy loam in texture, nearly neutral in soil reaction (pH 7.0), low in organic carbon (0.40 %), available N (161.48 kg/ha), available P (151.2 kg/ha) and available K (232.5 kg/ha). The experiment was laid out in randomized block design and comprised of levels of hydrogel and methods of sowing with ten treatments and each were replicated thrice viz. T₁ - Flat sowing + No hydrogel, T₂ - Ridge sowing + No hydrogel, T₃ - Furrow sowing + No hydrogel, T₄ - Flat sowing + 2 kg Hydrogel/ha, T₅ - Ridge sowing + 2 kg Hydrogel/ha, T₆ - Furrow sowing + 2 kg Hydrogel/ha, T₇ - Flat sowing + 4 kg Hydrogel/ha, T₈ - Ridge sowing + 4 kg Hydrogel/ha, T₉ - Furrow sowing + 4 kg Hydrogel/ha, T₁₀ - Control (RDF 85:60:65).

2.1 Application of Hydrogel and Different Sowing Methods

Sowing methods comprised flat sowing, ridge sowing and furrow sowing. Hydrogel was applied

manually at the time of soil preparation at 0,2 and 4 kg/ha The material used as hydrogel was Pusa hydrogel There were three hydrogel treatments (0,2 and 4 kg)and application of Pusa hydrogel with rice variety Raja Dhan-309 was used as medium of trial with seed rate of 60 kg/ha. The rice crop was sown with a single row hand drill in lines at 20 cm spaced rows; while on ridges, seeds were planted on one side maintaining line to line distance 20 cm. In furrow sowing was done in dead furrow with the same line-to-line distance, size of the furrow 5cm x 5cm x 5cm (LxBxW) sowing was done in aerobic conditions and irrigation was applied just after the sowing of rice seed. The crop was sown on July 27, 2022. Total annual rainfall observed in cropping period was (98.68mm) The observation was recorded for plant height, tillers/m², plant dry/m², effective tillers/m², no. of grains/panicle, test weight, grain yield, straw yield, Harvest index. The collected data was subjected to statistical analysis using two way anova.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Plant Height

“At 80 day after sowing (DAS), Significant variation in plant height of rice was observed under different sowing methods Maximum plant height (96.21 cm) of rice was measured in application of 4 kg hydrogel/ha + furrow sowing compared to the minimum plant height (80.30 cm) in control. The plant should sow at suitable time, depth and distance provide favorable climatic conditions especially temperature might have resulted in maximum plant height” [15]. Application of hydrogel helps to maintain soil moisture which improves plant height and similar result was reported by [16].

3.2 Numbers of Tillers/m²

At 80 day after sowing (DAS), Significant variation in number of tillers/m² of rice was observed under different sowing methods, the maximum number of tillers/m² obtained Hydrogel 4 kg/ha + Furrow sowing (540.27), which is significantly superior over control (536.20). in furrow sowing a good amount of seedling emergence and also reduce the incidences of plant lodging. Results of 63-73% for seed establishment were obtained using this method, which can improve the tillers count per meter square [17] Application of 4 kg hydrogel/ha in significantly impacted plant population and tillering. The plant population per m² was highest

in hydrogel treated treatment and similar result was obtained by [18].

3.3 Plant Dry Weight

At 80 day after sowing (DAS), Significant variation in plant dry weight of rice was observed under different sowing methods, the maximum plant dry weight obtained was at 4 kg hydrogel per ha. And with furrow sowing (1078.70 g/m²) when compared to control (909.43 g/m²). Hydrogel also improves crop growth and development by increasing nutrient absorption of plant under limited moisture condition [19]. In furrow sowing crop plant bitterly utilize the solar radiation and improve the photosynthesis. An improvement of soil hydrothermal environment, optimizes canopy structure, and ultimately obtained increase growth of plant and same result was reported by [20].

3.4 Numbers of Effective Tillers/m²

Number of effective tillers per m² showed significant difference according to treatment combinations. Maximum effective tillers found application of Hydrogel 4 kg/ha + Furrow sowing (238.33 /m²), which was significantly superior over control (203.67 /m²). Whereas Hydrogel 4 kg/ha + Ridge sowing (235.00 /m²) and Hydrogel 4 kg/ha + Flat sowing (235.00 /m²) was found to be statistically at par with Hydrogel applied at 4 kg/ha + Furrow sowing

3.5 Number of Grains/Panicle

Highest Number of filled grain per panicle was recorded with the application Hydrogel 4 kg/ha. + Furrow sowing (172.83) which was found significantly superior over control (168.83). Whereas Hydrogel 4 kg/ha + Flat sowing (172.53/m²), Hydrogel 4 kg/ha + Ridge sowing (168.83) and Hydrogel 2 kg/ha + Flat sowing (168.83 /m²) along with RDF found to be statistically at par with Hydrogel 4 kg/ha + Furrow sowing. The result is inconformity [21].

3.6 Grain Yield (t/ha)

Significantly higher grain yield of aerobic rice was recorded with application of hydrogel 4 kg/ha + Furrow sowing (4.81 t/ha). Which was found significantly superior over control (3.12 t/ha), this treatment gave 35.13% higher yield than control plot. Similar result obtained by [22].

Table 1. Influence of hydrogel and different methods of sowing on growth and yield attributes of the aerobic rice

Treatments	Plant height in (cm)	Numbers of tillers/m ²	Plant dry weight(g/m ²)	Effective tillers/m ²	No. of grain/panicles	Seed yield (t/ha.)	Straw yield (t/ha)
Flat sowing + No hydrogel	82.83	477.23	983.17	207.67	151.20	3.26	5.37
Ridge sowing + No hydrogel	84.39	482.93	987.53	204.33	152.40	3.30	5.42
Furrow sowing + No hydrogel	85.78	487.87	974.63	208.33	158.07	3.37	5.43
Flat sowing + 2 kg Hydrogel/ha.	88.72	490.47	986.33	210.67	156.43	3.69	5.67
Ridge sowing + 2 kg Hydrogel/ha.	90.59	497.20	985.30	212.33	158.67	3.83	5.72
Furrow sowing + 2 kg Hydrogel/ha.	90.82	508.40	1018.17	218.67	163.90	4.08	5.78
Flat sowing + 4 kg Hydrogel/ha.	90.61	533.50	1064.10	228.00	172.53	4.76	6.05
Ridge sowing + 4 kg Hydrogel/ha.	93.65	536.20	1048.43	235.00	168.83	4.62	6.20
Furrow sowing + 4 kg Hydrogel/ha.	96.21	540.27	1078.70	238.33	172.83	4.81	5.93
Control (NPK – 80:60:65 kg/ha.)	80.3	461.93	909.43	203.67	148.77	3.12	5.43
F-Fest	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
SEm (±)	2.74	14.48	31.13	7.22	4.67	0.26	0.17
C D at 0.5%	8.13	43.03	92.49	21.44	13.88	0.77	0.51

Observation of the plant height, number of tillers and plant dry weight taken at 80 day after sowing (DAS) and RDF – recommended dose of fertilizer, CD significant different at $P=0.5\%$

3.7 Straw Yield (t/ha)

Significantly higher straw yield was recorded with application Hydrogel 4 kg/ha + Ridge sowing (6.20 t/ha). Which was found significantly superior over control (5.43 t/ha).

4. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that application of 4 kg/ha Hydrogel in rice with furrow sowing was found to be significantly more productive (4.81 t/ha) as well as economic (INR 1, 76,043/ha). when compared to other treatments. Since, the finding based on the research done in one season. In rice application of hydrogel along with furrow sowing which give good yield.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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