

Original Research Article

Influence of Sulphur and Zinc on Growth and Yield of Pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum* L.)

ABSTRACT

A field experiment was conducted during *Zaid* season of 2022 at the Crop Research Farm, Department of Agronomy, Naini Agricultural Institute, Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Prayagraj (U.P.) India. To study the Response of Sulphur and zinc on the growth and yield of Pearl millet. The treatments consist of Sulphur 20, 30, 40 kg/ha and zinc 5, 10, 15 kg/ha. There were 9 treatments each replicated thrice.

The soil of the experimental plot was sandy loam in texture, nearly neutral in soil reaction (pH 7.8), low in organic carbon (0.35%), available N (163.42 kg/ha), available P (21.96 kg/ha) and available K (256.48 kg/ha). Results revealed that the higher plant height (198.06 cm), plant dry weight (75.83 g/plant), crop growth rate (47.70 g/m²/day), ear head length (25.2 cm), grains/ear head (2006.0), test weight (8.57 gm), higher grain yield (40.95 q/ha) and higher stover yield (40.95 q/ha) were significantly influenced with the application of Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha. Higher gross returns (INR 92145.00/ha), higher net returns (INR 62365.00/ha) and a higher B:C ratio (2.09) were also recorded in treatment-9 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha).

Keywords: Pearl millet, Sulphur, zinc, growth parameters and yield attributes.

INTRODUCTION

Pearl millet is commonly known in India as *Bajri* or *Bajra*. Pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum* L.) is also known as 'bullrush millet', originated in tropical western Africa, where the greatest number of both wild ancestors and cultivated forms occur. It belongs to the family Gramineae (Poaceae). Pearl millet is a staple diet of the rural population and also an important fodder crop in arid and semi-arid regions of India. The realized productivity of pearl millet is below its potential. The main reasons ~~of~~ for poor crop yield are low moisture availability to ~~crop~~ crops during the growing season and lack of proper nutrient management (Choudhary *et al.*

2016). The foodgrain demand of India will increase to about 291m ~~ton~~ tons by 2025 and to 377 m ~~ton~~ tons by 2050 (Amarasinghe *et al.*, 2010). Since there is limited scope to increase the net cultivated area

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(142 million ha), the improved per unit area productivity could trigger overall increase in food grain production (Reddy *et al.*, 2022). Pearl millet is a heavy nutrient feeder and leads to large withdrawal of plant nutrients from soil. This depletion will result in decline in yield of the crop.

Among various nutrients, sulphur and zinc play a crucial role in pearl millet production (Vinay Singh *et al.*, 2015). Sulphur performs important functions in pearl millet. It is well known for its role in the synthesis of proteins, oils and vitamins in pearl millet. Sulphur is associated with the production of crops for superior nutritional and market quality produce (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2014). Sulphur plays an important role in the formation of S-containing amino acids, which act as building blocks in the synthesis of proteins. It has to play in increasing chlorophyll formation and aiding photosynthesis in pearl millet (Pandey *et al.*, 2018).

Zinc plays a key role as a structural constituent or regulatory cofactor of wide range of different enzymes and proteins in many important biochemical pathways. These are mainly concerned with carbohydrate metabolism, both in the conversion of sugars to starch, protein metabolism, auxin (growth regulator) metabolism, pollen formation the maintenance of the integrity of biological membranes, and the resistance to infection by certain pathogens. Zinc deficiency is a common phenomenon in cereals, particularly in coarse treatment, soil semi-arid regions. Balanced fertilization is the key to achieve higher productivity and nutrient use efficiency (Vinay Singh *et al.*, 2015).

Keeping these points in view, the present investigation entitled “Effect of Sulphur and Zinc on Growth and Yield of pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum* L.)” was conducted during Zaid-2022, at crop research farm, SHUATS, Prayagraj (U.P.).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A field experiment was conducted during Zaid season of 2021-22 at the Crop Research Farm, Department of Agronomy, Naini Agricultural Institute, Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture Technology and Sciences (SHUATS), Prayagraj (U.P.) India. The soil of the experimental plot was sandy loamy in texture, nearly neutral in soil reaction (pH 7.8), and low in organic carbon (0.35%). The treatments consist of Sulphur 20 kg/ha + zinc 5 kg/ha, Sulphur 20 kg/ha + zinc 10 kg/ha, Sulphur 20 kg/ha + zinc 15 kg/ha, Sulphur 30 kg/ha + zinc 5 kg/ha, Sulphur 30 kg/ha + zinc 10 kg/ha, Sulphur 30 kg/ha + zinc 15 kg/ha, Sulphur 40 kg/ha + zinc 5 kg/ha, Sulphur 40 kg/ha + zinc 10 kg/ha, Sulphur 40 kg/ha + zinc 15 kg/ha. The experiment

was laid out in Randomized Block Design, with 9 treatments replicated thrice. The observations were recorded for plant height, plant dry weight, Crop Growth Rate ($\text{g/m}^2/\text{day}$), Relative Growth Rate (g/g/day), Ear head length (cm), Grains/ear head (g), Test weight (g), Grain yield (kg/ha) and Stover yield (kg/ha). The data were subjected to statistical analysis by analysis of variance method (Gomez and Gomez, 1976).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

GROWTH PARAMETERS

Plant height (cm)- At 80 DAS, the significantly higher plant height (198.06 cm) [Table-1] was observed in treatment-9 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha). However, treatment-8 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + zinc 10 kg/ha) was found to be statistically at par with treatment-9 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha). The significantly higher plant height was observed with the Application Sulphur 40 kg/ha. This increase may be due to the involvement of Sulphur in the bio-synthesis of Indole 3 acetic acid. And also, Sulphur plays an important role in the growth and development of crops. It owing an important role in the formation of S-containing amino acids like cysteine (27% S), Cysteine (26% S), and methionine (21% S), which act as building blocks in the synthesis of proteins. Similar results find out by Chauhan *et al.*, (2017). Further increase of plant height is might be due to application of zinc 15 kg/ha, due to the role of zinc as a "catalyst" in most physiological, metabolic, and tryptophan synthesis processes. Certain protein elements are required to produce growth hormones (auxins) including IAA. There were similar findings described by Reddy *et al.* (2022).

Plant dry weight (g/plant) - At 80 DAS, the significantly higher plant dry weight (75.83 gm/plant) [Table-1] was observed in treatment-9 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha). However, treatment-8 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + zinc 10 kg/ha) was found to be statistically at par with treatment-9 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha). The significantly higher plant dry weight (75.83 gm) was observed with the application of Sulphur 40 kg/ha. It has a role in play in increasing chlorophyll formation and aiding photosynthesis. Sulphur plays a role in the activation of enzymes nucleic acids and forms parts of biotin and thiamine. Further increase in the dry weight might be due to the application of zinc at 15 kg/ha. Zinc is essential for promoting certain metabolic reactions. It is necessary for the production of chlorophyll and carbohydrates. Zinc is directly or indirectly required by several enzymes, auxin and protein synthesis. The nutrients applied in one crop are not fully utilized which leads to their residual effect on

succeeding crop. Similar results conformity with **kaushalyadav and vinaysingh(2021)**.

Crop growth rate (g/m²/day) - At 60-80 DAS, the significantly higher crop growth rate (47.70g/m²/day)[Table-1] was observed in treatment-9 (Sulphur 40kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha) However, treatment-8 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + zinc 10 kg/ha) was found to be statistically at par with treatment- 9 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha). ~~the~~ The significantly higher crop growth rate was observed with the Sulphur application 40kg/ha, may be due to the **Increase in increase** in plant height with an increase in Sulphur level might be due to the beneficial effect of Sulphur on the various metabolic activities and also because of its important role in cell division, photosynthetic process and formation of chlorophyll in the leaf. Therefore, it shows a **a** positive reaction on crop growth rate. Similar results accordance with **Dadhichand Gupta (2003)**.

YIELD ATTRIBUTES

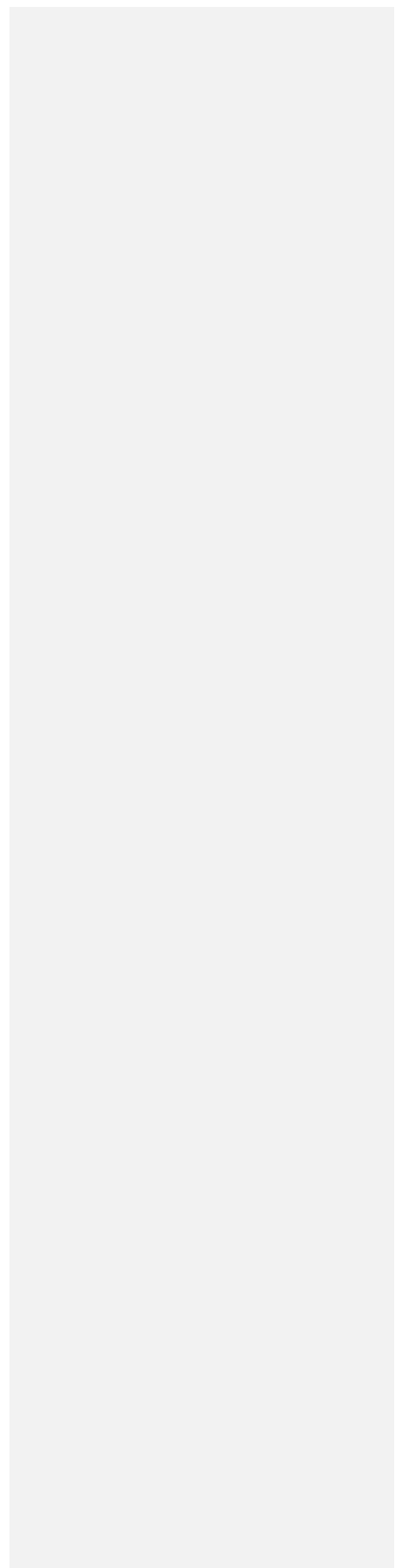
Ear head length (cm) - The significant and higher ear head length (25.2 cm)[Table-2] was observed in treatment-9 with (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha), which was significantly superior over rest of the treatments. However, treatment-8 (Sulphur 40kg/ha + Zinc 10 kg/ha), was found to be statistically at par with treatment-9 (Sulphur 40kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha). The significant and higher ear head length was observed with the application of zinc 15 kg/ha. Zn are involved in cell division, enzyme activation and with their increased supply, their availability, acquisition, mobilization and influx into the plant tissue increased and thus improved growth attributes and yield components. Similar results in accordance with **vinaysingh and mamtapandey(2018)**.

No. of Grains/ear head - The significant and higher Grains/ear head (2006.0)[Table-2] was observed in treatment-9 with (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha), which was significantly superior over rest of the treatments. However, treatment-8 (Sulphur 40kg/ha + Zinc 10 kg/ha), was found to be statistically at par with treatment-9 (Sulphur 40kg/ha + Zinc 15kg/ha). This significant and higher Grains/ear head was observed might be due to Sulphur application. Because Sulphur is a part of amino acid (Cystine) which helps in chlorophyll formation, photosynthetic process, activation of enzymes and seed formation. Similar results were observed by **Degraet al. (2008)**.

Test Weight - The significantly higher Test weight (8.57 gm) [Table-2]

was observed in treatment-9 with (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha) treatments. However,

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treatment-8 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 10 kg/ha), was found to be statistically at par with treatment-9 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha). The significant and higher test weight was recorded with the application of Zinc (15kg/ha), might be due to the application of zinc might have increased the photosynthetic efficiency due to improved enzymatic activity and thus might have increased thousand grains weight. similar results are in conformity with the findings of *Arshad et al. (2016)*.

Grain yield - The significantly Maximum Grain yield (40.95 q/ha) [Table-2] was observed in treatment-9 with (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha), which was significantly superior over rest of the treatments. However, treatment-8 (Sulphur 40kg/ha+Zinc 10kg/ha), was found to be statistically at par with treatment-9 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha). This significant and higher Grain yield was observed with increasing the Sulphur application level. And also, it performs important functions in pearl millet. It is the best known for its role in the synthesis of proteins, oils and vitamins in pearl millet. Sulphur is associated with the production of crops for superior nutritional and market quality produce (*Chaudhary et al., 2014*). Further, with the application of Zinc (15 kg/ha), might be due to the greater photosynthesis efficiency or more nutrients availability due to the increasing decomposition rate of organic matter or improved individual plant performance might be the possible reasons for higher grain yield in zinc applied plots compared to other plots. These results are in conformity with the findings of *Arshad et al. (2016)*, *Norwood (1992)* and *Jan et al. (2013)*.

Stover yield - The ~~significantly significant~~ Maximum stover yield (65.33 q/ha) [Table-2] was observed in treatment-9 with (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha), which was significantly superior over the rest of the treatments. However, treatment-8 (Sulphur 40kg/ha+Zinc 10kg/ha), was found to be statistically at par with treatment-9 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha). The significant and higher stover yield was observed by the application of Sulphur 40 kg/ha. Sulphur plays a vital role in proving vegetative structure for nutrient absorption, increasing sink strength through the development of reproductive structures by the production of assimilates to fill economically important ~~sinks~~ (*CHOUDHARY et al., 2016*). Further increase of stover yield may be due to the application of zinc 15 kg/ha. Zinc is critical to the growth and development of tryptophane, a necessary amino acid for plant growth and development. Similar results were in conformity with *Reddy et al. (2022)*.

The influence of sulfur and zinc on the growth and yield of pearl millet has been a topic of research interest in recent years. Sulfur and zinc are essential micronutrients for plant growth and development, and their deficiency can result in reduced crop yields (Olivares,

2016; Araya-Alman et al. 2020; Olivares, 2022; Olivares et al. 2022a; 2022b). Several studies have investigated the effects of sulfur and zinc on pearl millet growth and yield, and these studies have provided valuable insights into the importance of these micronutrients for crop productivity.

The influence of agro-environmental factors on tropical crops in Latin America is well known. These factors include soil fertility (Hernandez et al. 2018; Hernandez and Olivares, 2019; Lobo et al. 2023), water availability (Parra et al. 2017; Cortez et al. 2017), temperature, and humidity (Olivares, 2018; Hernandez et al. 2020). In this study, the soil was deficient in both sulfur and zinc, which could have affected the growth and yield of pearl millet. The regular watering of the plants could have compensated for the water availability factor. However, the effect of temperature and humidity on the growth and yield of pearl millet was not studied in this experiment.

CONCLUSION

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The significantly maximum grain yield was found in treatment (T9) with the application of Sulphur 40 kg/ha along with the zinc 15 kg/ha. However, treatment-8 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 10 kg/ha), was found to be statistically at par with treatment-9 (Sulphur 40 kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha). These findings are based on one season therefore; further trials may be required for further confirmation.

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Table-1.Effectofsulphurandzincongrowthofpearlmillet.

S. No.	Treatmentcombinations	Plantheight (cm)	Dry weight(g/ plant)	Cropegrowthrate(g/m2/day)
1.	Sulphur20kg/ha+Zinc5 kg/ha	180.38	62.90	36.73
2.	Sulphur20kg/ha+Zinc10 kg/ha	183.53	64.22	37.31
3.	Sulphur20kg/ha+Zinc15 kg/ha	184.62	65.87	36.65
4.	Sulphur30kg/ha+Zinc5 kg/ha	186.38	67.64	39.20
5.	Sulphur30kg/ha+Zinc10 kg/ha	188.94	68.22	40.22
6.	Sulphur30kg/ha+Zinc15 kg/ha	189.96	68.95	38.93
7.	Sulphur40kg/ha+Zinc5 kg/ha	192.27	71.20	41.65
8.	Sulphur40kg/ha+Zinc10 kg/ha	195.05	73.87	42.90
9.	Sulphur40kg/ha+Zinc15 kg/ha	198.06	75.83	47.70
	Ftest	S	S	S
	SEm.(±)	1.12	0.84	1.71
	CD (p=0.05)	3.37	2.53	5.12

Table-2. Effect of sulphur and zinc on yield of pearl millet.

S. No.	Treatment combinations	Ear head length (cm)	No. of Grains/earhead	Test weight (g)	Grain yield (q/ha)	Stover yield (q/ha)	Harvest index (%)
1.	Sulphur 20kg/ha + Zinc 5 kg/ha	19.8	1837.1	6.75	32.29	47.55	40.44
2.	Sulphur 20kg/ha + Zinc 10 kg/ha	20.8	1876.0	6.81	33.94	48.20	41.32
3.	Sulphur 20kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha	21.5	1902.4	7.19	34.61	49.11	41.34
4.	Sulphur 30kg/ha + Zinc 5 kg/ha	21.3	1911.1	7.45	35.24	50.99	40.87
5.	Sulphur 30kg/ha + Zinc 10 kg/ha	22.4	1929.6	7.81	36.16	54.03	40.10
6.	Sulphur 30kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha	22.7	1938.4	7.99	37.03	58.36	38.83
7.	Sulphur 40kg/ha + Zinc 5 kg/ha	23.5	1965.3	8.10	37.82	59.33	38.93
8.	Sulphur 40kg/ha + Zinc 10 kg/ha	24.5	1981.1	8.31	39.03	63.32	38.14
9.	Sulphur 40kg/ha + Zinc 15 kg/ha	25.2	2006.0	8.57	40.95	65.33	38.53
Ftest		S	S	S	S	S	S
Sem(±)		0.27	6.07	0.13	0.40	0.65	0.41
CD(P=0.05)		0.81	18.19	0.40	1.21	1.94	1.23