Original Research Article

Effect of weed management practices on growth, yield of vegetable cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp.) cv. Kashi Kanchan

ABSTRACT

The present investigation seven different treatments *viz.*, weedy check (control), weed free check (3 hand weeding) (first HW at 25 DAS), pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L, pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding, pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS, post-emergence application of Metribuzin @ 525g/ha at 25DAS and post-emergence spray of Imazethapyr @ 100 g ai/ha at 25 DAS replicated thrice. The cowpea variety 'Kashi Kanchan' was used in experiment. Results of the experiment revealed that though, the weed free check (T_2) recorded zero weed population and slightly higher values of growth and yield parameters but among tested treatments, pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding (T_4) and pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS(T_5) significantly reduced weed number (48.12 and 52.18/m^2) and produced significantly highest plant height (47.30 and 45.98 cm), pod length (21.64 and 20.86 cm), number of pods/plant (35.94 and 34.18), average pod weight(11.18 and 11.06 g), green pod weight/plant (367.84 and 348.63g), green pod weight/plot (11.24 and 10.54 kg) and green pod yield per hectare(118.96 and 111.55q). However, these three treatments (T_2, T_4 and T_5) were statistically at par with each other in terms of growth and yield parameters.

Hence, these two weed management practices (T_4 and T_5)may serve as alternative of manual weeding and may be recommended for farmers of the central plain zone of Uttar Pradesh for higher returns from vegetable cowpea crop.

Keywords: - Pre-emergence, Quizolofop ethyl, Weed-free check, Hand weeding

Introduction

The history of cowpea dates to ancient West African cereal farming, 5 to 6 thousand years ago, where it was closely associated with the cultivation of sorghum and pearl millet. Worldwide cowpea production has increased dramatically in the last 25 years. Cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* L. Walp.) a legume, is one of the most ancient crops known to man. It belongs to family Papilionaceae and sub family fabaceae. Its primary centre of origin is in Africa. It is widely adopted and grown all over the world.

India is next only to the China in area and production of vegetables. Immature cowpea green pods are commonly referred to as southern pea, black eye pea, crowder pea, lobia, niebe, caupi or frijole. The name "cowpea" probably derives from when it was an important livestock feed for cows in the United States. Among the different pulses grown in the world,

cowpea is grown in 14.5 million ha with production of 6.5 million metric tonnes and the productivity of 387 kg per ha. This crop can be grown in kharif and summer season in North India, while in South India it is grown throughout the year. Cowpea is grown in small scale throughout the country for long green pods as a vegetable, seeds as pulses and foliage as fodder for milch animal. In India, the cowpea is grown in an area of about 3.9 million ha with a production of 2.2 million tonnes having a productivity of 600-750 kg seed per ha. **(Shivnanda, 2005)**.

Cowpea is commonly cultivated as a nutritious and highly palatable food source in Asia, and throughout the tropics and subtropics. Green pod of cowpea contains 85 g moisture, 3.0 g protein, 1.0 g minerals, 2.0 g fiber, 8.0 g carbohydrates, 72 mg calcium, 59 mg phosphorus, 2.0 mg iron, 0.09 mg riboflavin and 0.07 mg thiamin per 100 g of edible portion (Ananomus, 2011).

Cowpea competes poorly with weeds in the growing stage. This is made under irrigation where adequate moisture supply encourages the rapid growth of weeds. Traditional hoe-weeding is expensive, labour intensive, strenuous and may cause mechanical damage to the crop, and for this reason it is not recommended once the plants have spread out in the rows, as it may cause injury to the growing branches and roots.

Weeds emerge fast and grow rapidly competing with the crop severally for growth and pod period. Weeds not only compete with crop plants for nutrients, soil moisture, space and sunlight but also serve as an alternative host for several insect pest and diseases. So, control of weeds in the initial and pod stages appears imperative as it plays an important role in maximizing the cowpea production. Thus, to enhance crop yield and its effect on soil fertility, the control of weeds in irrigated crop is very important. The conventional method of weeding such as hoeing, hand- weeding and harrowing is expensive and labour is not available during peak workload (**Khan *et al.*, 2000**). Therefore, the use of herbicides in cowpea to control weeds appears to be useful (**Silva *et al.*, 2003**). In general herbicides are effective only against few weed species, which results in serious infestation of other weeds. Weeds are of negative values, which lower the input efficiency. Besides quantitative effects on yield, weeds deteriorate the quality of produce through the physical presence of their seeds and debris. Weed density, type of the weeds, their persistence and crop management practices determine the magnitude of yield loss. Yield loss in cowpea due to weeds was 12.7 - 60.0% (**Li *et al.*, 2004**). The phenomenon involved in crop yield increase as affected by different

weed control method have already been well described by **Mathew and Sreenivasan (1998**), **Patel *et al*. (2003).Tripathi and Singh (2001)** reported that presence of weeds in cowpea reduced yield by 82% and significant increase in pod yield was noted by controlling weeds up to 45 days of sowing.

Hand weeding is a common method of weed control adopted by farmers but comparatively this method is costly and time consuming. This problem assumes added significance due to non-availability of adequate laborers during peak period of operation. Whereas, pre- and post-emergence herbicides kill weeds and keep the hardy uncontrolled weeds under control by arresting their growth through various kinds of deformities in foliage, growing and pod point. The research information regarding appropriate practice of weed management in vegetable cowpea under this zone is not available. However, much needed information on the right kind of herbicides, time of application and rate as well as method of application are lacking in our country, especially with regard to vegetable crops.

Material and method

The experiment of the present research work entitled **"Effect of weed management practices on growth, yield and economics of vegetable cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* L.Walp.)"**were conducted during *kharif*,2021 at vegetable research farm , Department of vegetable science, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology Kanpur (208002) (U.P.). The experiment included seven treatment combinations in a Randomized Block design with three replications. All the different combination of treatment. *viz.*,T_1:Weedy check (Control), T_2:Weed free check (3 hand weeding) (first HW at 25 DAS)T_3: Pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L T_4:Pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding T_5:Pre- emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS T_6: Post- emergence application of Metribuzin @ 525g/ha at 25DAS T_7: Post-emergence spray of Imazethapyr @ 100 g ai/ha at 25 DAS. The seeds of Kashi Kanchan were sown in a plot size of 3.15m×3.0m, spaced with 45cm×15cm. All other recommended cultural practices were followed to raise healthy crop. The observation was record in randomly taken and tagged plant from each other replication on morphological traits *viz*, plant height(cm), Number of weeds per m^2 at 60 DAS, Pod length(cm), Number of pods per plant, Avg. pod weight(g) (Avg. of 10 pods), Green pod weight per plant(g), Green pod yield per plot(kg), Green pod yield per hectare(q).

Results and Discussion

Plant height

The plant height is one of the major morphological characters related to growth and as such has a great bearing on yield. The weed free check (T_2) recorded significantly tallest plant (48.88 cm). It was followed by treatment T_4 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding with 47.30 cm and T_5 pre- emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS with 45.98 cm. This might be due to the reason that, the crop faced minimum crop weed competition because of pre-emergence herbicidal action plus hand weeding or post-emergence practice. The smallest plants (26.16 cm) were found under treatment T_1 weedy check (control). Similar results were reported by Fayinminnu and Adesiyan (2010), Madukwe*et al*. (2012), Choudhary *et al*. (2013) and Usman (2013) in cowpea.

Pod length

It is evident from the data that pod length was influenced significantly by different treatments of weed management practices. The pod length is one of the major yields attributing character and as such has a great bearing on green pod yield. The weed free check (T_2) produced significantly highest pod length (22.12 cm). It was followed by treatment T_4 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding with 21.64 cm and T_5 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS with 20.86 cm. It might be attributed to effective weed management in the crop, which helps in minimum competition between crop plants and weeds. The shortest pod length (13.28 cm) was found under treatment T_1 weedy check (control). Similar findings are reported by Attia (2002) and Olorunmaiye (2010).

Number of weeds/m^2 at 60 DAS

It is evident from the data that number of weeds/m^2 at 60 DAS was influenced significantly by different treatments of weed management practices. Though, the weed free check (T_2) recorded zero weed population but among tested treatments, treatment T_4 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding and T_5 pre- emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L +Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS significantly reduced weed number (48.12 and 52.18/m^2). It might be attributed due to efficient control of weeds in the early as well as at later stages of crop by sequential weeding or post-emergence herbicide. Sah *et al.* (2015) also reported similar results. The treatments of single application of herbicide were not

effective in weed control due to presence of complex of the weed species in the field. The highest numbers of weeds (130.08/m2) were found under treatment T_1 weedy check (control). The above findings are in close harmony with the results of Zenawigebregergis and Rosmaru (2019).

Number of pods/plants

It is evident from the data that number of pods/plants was influenced significantly by different treatments of weed management practices. The number of pods/plants is one of the major yields attributing character and as such has a great bearing on green pod yield. The weed free check (T_2) produced significantly highest number of pods/plant (37.04). It was followed by treatment T_4 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding with 35.94 and T_5 pre- emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS with 34.18 pods. It might be attributed to effective weed management in the crop, which helps in minimum competition between crop plants and weeds. The lowest value of number of pods/plant (24.26) was found under treatment T_1 weedy check (control). The above findings are in close harmony with the results of Gutierrez *et al.* (2001), Chattha *et al.* (2007), Hussaini and Lado (2010), Olorunmaiye (2010), Madukwe *et al.* (2012), Choudhary *et al.* (2013) and Usman (2013).

Average pod weight (g)

It is evident from the data that average pod weight was influenced significantly by different treatments of weed management practices. The average pod weight is also one of the major yields attributing character and as such has a great bearing on green pod yield. The weed free check (T_2) produced significantly highest average pod weight (11.24 g). It was followed by treatment T_4 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding with 11.18 g and T_5 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS with 11.06 g. It might be attributed to effective weed management in the crop, which helps in minimum competition between crop plants and weeds. The lowest value of average pod weight (6.72 g) was found under treatment T_1 weedy check (control). The results are in propinquity with the result of Gutierrez *et al.* (2001) and Attia (2002).

Green pod weight/plant (g)

It is evident from the data that green pod weight/plant was influenced significantly by different treatments of weed management practices. The green pod weight/plant is one of the

major yields attributing character and as such has a great bearing on green pod yield. The weed free check (T_2) produced significantly highest green pod weight/plant (379.06 g). It was followed by treatment T_4 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding with 367.84 g and T_5 pre- emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS with 348.63 g It might be attributed to effective weed management in the crop, which helps in minimum competition between crop plants and weeds. The lowest value of green pod weight/plant (144.45 g) was found under treatment T_1 weedy check (control). This might be due to stress experienced by the plants in this treatment. The findings corroborate the observations made earlier more or less by Sah *et al.* (2015) and Gupta *et al.* (2016).

Green pod yield per plot (kg)

It is evident from the data that green pod weight/plot was influenced significantly by different treatments of weed management practices. The green pod weight/plot is one of the major yields attributing character and as such has a great bearing on yield per hectare. The weed free check (T_2) produced significantly highest green pod weight/plot (11.35 kg). It was followed by treatment T_4 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding with 11.24 kg and T_5 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS with 10.54 kg. It might be attributed to effective weed management in the crop, which helps in minimum competition between crop plants and weeds. The lowest value of green pod weight/plot (4.21 kg) was found under treatment T_1 weedy check (control). These findings are in the agreement with the findings of Hulugalle and Palada (1990), Singh and Katyal (1994), Tripathi and Singh (2001), Chinnusamy *et al.* (2010) and Hussaini and Lado (2010).

Green pod yield per hectare (q)

It is evident from the data that green pod yield per hectare was also influenced significantly by different treatments of weed management practices. The weed free check (T_2) produced significantly highest green pod yield per hectare(120.07 q). It was followed by treatment T_4 pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding with 118.96 q and T_5 pre- emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS with 111.55 q. It might be attributed to the sufficient availability of nutrients, soil moisture, space and light for crop use. The lowest value of green pod yield per hectare (44.58 q) was found under treatment T_1 weedy check (control). This might be due to

stress experienced by the plants in this treatment. These findings are in the agreement with the findings of Hulugalle and Palada (1990), Singh and Katyal (1994), Tripathi and Singh (2001), Chinnusamy*et al.* (2010) and Hussaini and Lado (2010).

Table:1. Effects of treatments on weed population, growth, yield attributes and green pod yield of cowpea

Treatment details		No. of weeds/ m^2 at 60 DAS	Plant height (cm)	Pod length (cm)	No. of pods/ plant	Avg. pod wt. (g) (Avg. of 10 pods)	Green pod weight / plant (g)	Green pod yield per plot (kg)	Green pod yield per hectare (q)
T_1	Weedy check (Control)	130.08	26.16	13.28	24.26	6.72	144.45	4.21	44.58
T_2	Weed free check (3 hand weeding) (first HW at 25 DAS)	0	48.88	22.12	37.04	11.24	379.06	11.35	120.07
T_3	Pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L	68.46	42.78	19.38	32.86	9.78	292.78	8.97	94.92
T_4	Pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + one hand weeding	48.12	47.30	21.64	35.94	11.18	367.84	11.24	118.96
T_5	Pre- application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L + Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS	52.18	45.98	20.86	34.18	11.06	348.63	10.54	111.55
T_6	Post- emergence application of Metribuzin @ 525g/ha at 25DAS	94.16	37.13	18.26	31.19	9.18	254.14	7.87	83.32
T_7	Post-emergence spray of Imazethapyr @ 100 g a.i./ha at 25 DAS	87.89	38.87	18.92	32.28	9.46	272.16	8.27	87.48
SEm±		2.42	1.53	0.76	1.22	0.44	10.92	0.32	3.38
CD (P=0.05)		7.46	4.72	2.34	3.77	1.34	33.64	0.98	10.42

CV	6.11	6.47	6.87	6.52	7.71	6.43	6.21	6.21

CONCLUSION

It is evident from present experimental finding that cowpea is an important nutritious crop and weeds are menace during the crop growth period and affect the green pod yield considerably. The weeds in crop field have high competitive ability, as they compete with crop plant (cowpea) for space, moisture, nutrient, sunlight etc. On the basis of present investigation, it is concluded that cowpea variety Kashi Kanchan responded well in terms of weed control, growth, yield and net profit to application of herbicide along with agronomical approach and herbicidal sequences. Pre-emergence application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L supplemented with one hand weeding and sequential application of Pendimethalin @ 6ml/L with Quizalofop ethyl @ 40-50 g/ha at 25 DAS can manage the weeds effectively in cowpea and offered highest economic returns. Hence, these two weed management practices may serve as alternative of manual weeding and may be recommended for farmers of the central plain zone of Uttar Pradesh for higher returns from cowpea crop.

References-

Ananomus. 2011. Annual report of Indian Council of Medical Research. 2011, Hyderabad.

Attia M. 2002. Effect of some herbicides on cowpea plants inoculated with arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi and rhizobia. Proceedings International Congress of the European Society for Soil Conservation 1: 683-691.

Chattha MR, Muhammad Jamil and Mahmood TZ. 2007. Yield and yield components of cowpea as affected by various weed control methods under rain-fed conditions of Pakistan. International Journal of Agriculture and Biology 9 (1): 120-124.

Chinnusamy, C., Senthil, A., Kumar, G.P. and Prabhakaran, N.K., 2010. Identification of threshold level of horse purslane in irrigated cowpea. *Indian Journal of Weed Science, 42*(1&2), pp.91-94.

Choudhary SK, Choudhary GL and Prajapat K. 2013. Response of cowpea (Vigna unguiculata (L.) Walp.) to fertility levels and mulching. Environment and Ecology 31 (2): 492-495.

Fayinminnu OO and Adesiyan SO. 2010. The toxicological effect of paraquat post emergence herbicide on growth characteristics of cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp.). Journal of Agriculture and Social Research 10 (1): 30-35.

Gutierrez W, Medrano C, Villalobos Y, Medina B, Narvaez J, Martinez N, Montiel R, Higuera A and Baez J. 2001. Weed control on cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp.) under direct sowing in Maracaibo plateau, Venezuela. [Spanish]. Revista Unellez de Cienciay Tecnologia, Produccion Agricola 19: 115-124.

Hussaini MA and Lado A. 2010. Influence of weed control methods on yield and yield components of irrigated and rainfed cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp.]. Crop Research (Hisar) 40 (1/3): 76-82.

Joshi, D., Gediya, K.M., Patel, J.S., Birari, M.M. and Gupta, S., 2016. Effect of organic manures on growth and yield of summer cowpea [Vigna unguiculata (L.) Walp] under middle Gujarat conditions. *Agricultural Science Digest-A Research Journal*, *36*(2), pp.134-137.

Khan BM, Asif M, Hussain N and Iqbal M. 2000. Agro-economic impact of different weed control strategies in wheat. *Journal of Research Science*, 11: 46–49.

Li R, Guidong Z, Yumei Z and Zhanzhi X. 2004. Damage loss and control technology of weeds in cowpea field. *Weed Science*, 2: 25–26.

Madukwe D K, Ogbuehi H C and Onuh M O. 2012.Effects of weed control methods on the growth and yield of cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp.) under rain-fed conditions of Owerri. American-Eurasian Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences 12 (11): 1426-1430.

Olorunmaiye KS. 2010. Reproductive performance of two cowpea (Vigna unguiculata (L.) Walp.) varieties Ife brown and TVX3236 as influenced by Imidazoline and Dinitroaniline herbicides. Australian Journal of Agricultural Engineering 1 (3): 101-105.

Patel MM, Patel AI, Patel IC and Tikka SBS. 2003. Weed control in cowpea under rainfed conditions. *Advances in arid legumes research*, 23 (2): 203- 206.

Patil, B.C., Padanad, L.A., Yashvantkumar, K.H., Soumya, S. and Ravi, L. (2014). Efficacy and economics of integrated weed management in vegetable cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp]. *Agriculture Update*, **9**(1), 124-127.

Sah, Dinesh, Dubey, R.K., Singh, V., Debnath, P. and Pandey A.K. (2015). Study of weed management practices on growth, root nodulation and yield components of vegetable cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp.]. *The bioscan*, **10**(1): 421-424.

Silva JBF, Pitombeira JB, Nunes RP, Pinho JLN and Cavalcante Junior AT. 2003. Weed control in cowpea under no-till system. *Planta Daninha*, 21 (1): 151-157.

Singh R and Katyal SK. 1994. Influence of weed-control method under different planting patterns and fertility levels on growth and yield of summer cowpea (Vigna unguiculata (L.) Walp). Indian Journal of Agricultural Sciences 64 (9): 639-641.

Tripathi SS and Singh Govindra. 2001. Critical period of weed competition in summer cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata (L.)* Walp.]. *Indian Journal of Weed Science*, 33 (1/2): 67-68.

Usman I. 2013. Effect of pre-emergence herbicides on weed control and performance of cowpea in Samaru. Journal of Agricultural Sciences (Sri Lanka) 8 (2): 76-81.

ZENAWIGEBREGERGIS, F. and ROSMARU, G., 2019. Evaluation of the efficacy of pre and post emergence herbicides to manage grassy and broad leaf weeds on mungbean (Vignaradiata L.) in Western Tigray. *Journal of Crop and Weed*, *15*(3), pp.160-166.