

Original Research Article

A comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on growth, yield and economics of okra

ABSTRACT

The present investigation entitled “A Comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on growth, yield and economics of okra” was conducted at Horticultural Experimental Farm, B.A.C.A., Anand Agricultural University, Anand, in *kharif* season during 2022 and 2023. Ensuring proper plant nutrients and spacing is essential for achieving optimal okra production. Optimal plant density supports uniform and healthy growth by effectively utilizing moisture, nutrients, and light, thereby maximizing okra yield. Single source of nutrients whether chemical fertilizers, organic manures or biofertilizers that cannot adequately improve production, productivity and soil health. Sowing of okra at 60 × 30 cm spacing observed better leaf area (433.06 and 568.01 cm²) and number of nodes per plant (15.57 and 23.46) at 60 and 90 DAS. While, maximum yield per plot (9.20 kg) and yield per hectare (14.19 t) was found in 45 × 30 cm spacing. Application of 25% RDF + 50% RDN through Vermicompost + NPK consortium 1L/ha recorded maximum days to last picking (90.83), yield per plot (9.41 kg) and yield per hectare (15.33 t). According treatment combinations, sowing of okra at 60 × 30 cm spacing with application of 25% RDF + 50% RDN through Vermicompost + NPK consortium 1L/ha recorded the leaf area (458.88 and 598.27 cm²) at 60 and 90 DAS. However, maximum yield per plot (10.45 kg) and yield per hectare (16.13 t) was found in 45 × 30 cm spacing with application of 25% RDF + 50% RDN through Vermicompost + NPK consortium 1L/ha. On economic point of view, maximum net realization (218555.21 ₹/ha) and BCR (2.11) was obtained in 45 × 30 cm spacing with application of 25% RDF + 50% RDN through FYM + NPK consortium 1L/ha.

Keywords: *Integrated nutrient management, spacing, economics, okra*

1. INTRODUCTION

Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus* (L.) Moench) is a significant vegetable crop cultivated in our country which belonging to the Malvaceae family. Originating from Africa, its chromosome number is 2n=130. Achieving high production of okra requires specific care. Various factors can lead to lower yields, including the use of low-yielding varieties, poor plant density, incorrect planting dates, inadequate soil fertility, inappropriate fertilizer use, and infestations of insect pests and weeds. Among these factors, proper plant nutrients and spacing are crucial for optimal okra production [1].

Incorrect spacing of okra plants can result in overcrowded or overly sparse populations that reducing yield of okra. Optimal plant density promotes uniform and healthy growth by efficiently utilizing moisture, nutrients and light, leading to maximum okra production. The excessive use of chemical fertilizers poses serious threats to soil health, the environment and human health. Conversely, relying solely on organic fertilizers and biofertilizers is not feasible due to their lower nutrient content, making them better suited as supplements rather than substitutes. Therefore, using a

single source of nutrients whether chemical fertilizers, organic manures or biofertilizers that cannot adequately improve production, productivity and soil health. Integrated nutrient management is the best approach to maximize returns and ensure sustainable production.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Field experiments were conducted at the Horticultural Experimental Farm, B.A.C.A., Anand Agricultural University, Anand during the second week of July in 2022 and the first week of July in 2023. The experimental field's soil was sandy loam with a 7.36 pH, 0.31% organic matter, 0.24 EC, 180.03 kg ha⁻¹ available nitrogen, 28.24 kg ha⁻¹ available phosphorus and 191.83 kg ha⁻¹ available potassium. The experiment was laid out in Randomized Block Design (Factorial) with three replications and fourteen treatment combinations comprising of two levels of spacing (S₁: 60 × 30 cm and S₂: 45 × 30 cm) and seven level of integrated nutrient management viz., F₁: 10 t/ha + 100:50:50 kg/ha (RDF control), F₂: 75% RDF + 25% RDN through FYM, F₃: 75% RDF + 25% RDN through Vermicompost, F₄: 50% RDF + 50% RDN through FYM, F₅: 50% RDF + 50% RDN through Vermicompost, F₆: 25% RDF + 50% RDN through FYM + NPK consortium 1L/ha and F₇: 25% RDF + 50% RDN through Vermicompost + NPK consortium 1L/ha. The nutrient content of the organic manures, specifically 0.50% nitrogen in FYM and 1.20% nitrogen in vermicompost. Okra cv. Anand Komal was planted in plots measuring 3.6 × 3.0 m. All organic manures, along with half the dose of nitrogen and the full doses of phosphorus and potassium were incorporated into the soil during field preparation. Additionally, biofertilizer was applied according to the treatments, both as a seed treatment and as a drench at 45 DAS.

Observations on growth, yield and quality parameters were recorded from five tagged plants. The total number of green pods harvested from these plants was counted during each picking. The number of fruits per plant was calculated by summing the number of pods from all pickings and averaging the total. The weight of all harvested pods from each net plot during each picking was summed and converted into tonnes per hectare. Quality parameters, including mucilage, ascorbic acid and chlorophyll content, were measured at the fourth picking. Five pods per treatment were randomly selected for biochemical parameter observations. The pooled analysis, conducted according to Panse and Sukhatme [2], examined the average effect of various treatments over time.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 A comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on growth

The data concerning to the effect of spacing was significantly affected with regards to leaf area and number of nodes per plant in pooled analysis (Table 1). The plant growth in terms of leaf area (433.06 and 568.01 cm²) and number of nodes per plant (15.57 and 23.46) at 60 and 90 DAS was observed maximum with spacing S₁ in pooled analysis. All the growth parameters were recorded minimum in Spacing S₂. The wider spacing gave better results might be due to wider spacing recorded the maximum availability of nutrient as well as less competition for the resources that allow more accumulation of photosynthates that directly influenced on the leaf area of okra leaves as well

as reduces the internodal length by increased the lateral branches that increased the number of nodes. Similar results were also reported by Morwal and Patel [3] and Gbaraneh[4] in okra.

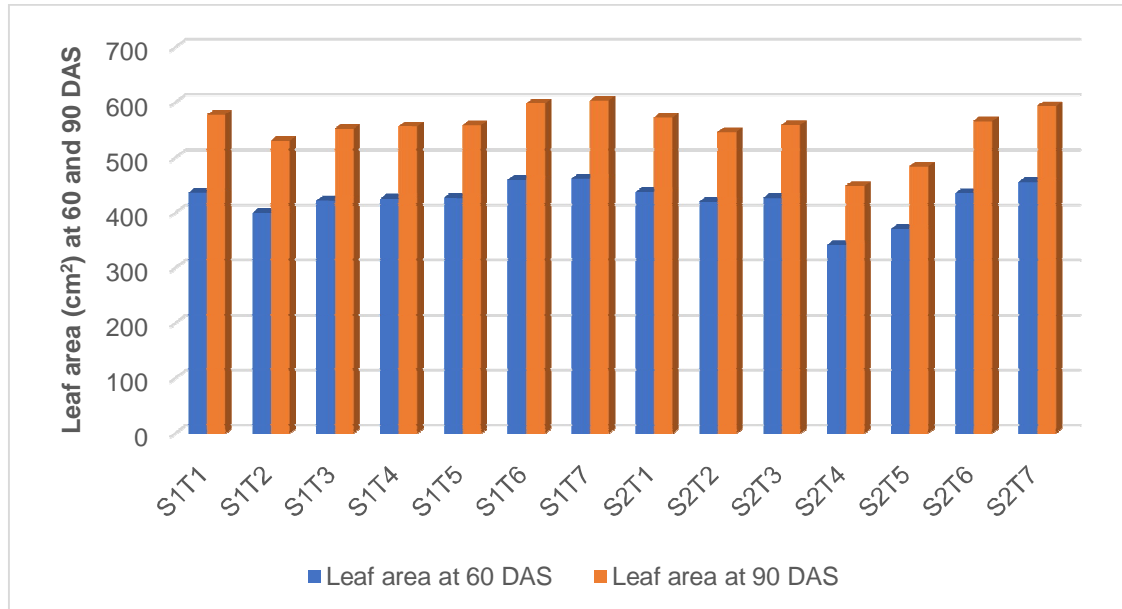


Fig 1. A comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on leaf area at 60 and 90 DAS

The data regarding leaf area and number of nodes influenced by integrated nutrient management was found significant in pooled analysis. Maximum plant growth parameters in terms of leaf area (458.88 and 598.27 cm²) and number of nodes per plant (16.27 and 24.63) at 60 and 90 DAS was observed with treatment T₇ which was found statistically at par with T₆ and T₁ in pooled data. Whereas, minimum growth parameters were registered in treatment T₄ in pooled data. It might be due to application of inorganic fertilizer and vermicompost with NPK consortium increased the nutrient availability that allow plants to increased vegetative growth by formation of more number of branches that reduce the internodal length that increased the number of nodes as well as increase more cell division and expansion of cell in this treatment which stimulate the growth of plant resulted in higher leaf area. Similar results found by Smriti and Ram [5] and Yadav *et al.* [6] in okra.

Interaction effect of spacing and integrated nutrient management on number of nodes per plant was found non-significant while, leaf area was observed significant results in pooled result (Fig. 1). Maximum leaf area (461.88 and 603.56 cm²) at 60 and 90 DAS was observed with S₁T₇ which was at par with S₁T₆, S₂T₇, S₂T₁, S₁T₁, S₁T₅ and S₂T₃ in pooled analysis. While, minimum leaf area (341.58 and 448.45 cm²) at 60 and 90 DAS was recorded with S₂T₄ treatment combination. It might be due to wider spacing allow sufficient availability of light and nutrients due to less competition between plants as well as treatment of INM *i.e.* inorganic nutrient, vermicompost and NPK consortium that supply all macro and micro elements and also enhanced their available forms and growth promoting substance which might be increased cell division and expansion resulted in higher leaf area [7]. Similar result was also obtained by Gbaraneh[4] in okra.

3.2 A comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on yield

The data regarding day to 50% flowering, day to first picking and day to last picking as influenced by spacing was found non-significant in pooled analysis but found significant on yield per plot and yield per hectare in pooled analysis (Table 2). The plants gave higher yield per plot (9.20 kg), yield per hectare (14.19 t) with spacing S_2 in pooled analysis. Maximum yield parameters were found in closer spacing might be due to maximum plant population per unit area was obtained in closer spacing which resulted into maximum yield per hectare. Whereas, maximum number of pickings was noticed with spacing S_1 might be due to wider spacing allows more resources for production of pods which ultimately increased the picking period of okra crop. Similar results were also found by Khanal *et al.* [1], Padhiyaret *al.*[8] and Vashi *et al.* [9] in okra.

The data regarding day to 50% flowering and day to first picking as influenced by spacing were found non-significant in pooled analysis but found significant on days to last picking, yield per plot and yield per hectare in pooled analysis. The plants yield parameters in terms of days to last picking (90.83), yield per plot (9.41 kg) and yield per hectare (15.33 t) were found maximum with treatment T_7 . However, minimum yield parameters were observed with treatment T_4 . Maximum yield parameters were observed with treatment T_7 might be due to increase availability of sufficient amount of nutrients present in soil and favour uptake of nutrient to increase metabolism, synthesis of carbohydrates and greater vegetative growth and number of pods per plant as well as pod length and diameter and pod yield per plant. That also increase the picking interval in okra. Similar result was also found by Gurjar *et al.* [10], Magar *et al.* [11] and Narwariya *et al.* [12] in okra.

The data regarding days to 50% flowering, day to first picking and days to last picking as influence by interaction effect of spacing and INM were found non-significant but found significant on yield per plot and yield per hectare in pooled data (Fig. 2). Yield per plot (10.45 kg) and yield per hectare (16.13 t) were observed maximum in S_2T_7 . It might be due to the combined effect of closer spacing that increased plant population as well as INM treatments supply all macro and micro nutrients to plants which ultimately enhanced the pod yield per hectare. These results were also found by Norman *et al.* [13], Khanal *et al.* [1], Vashi *et al.* [10], Magar *et al.* [11] and Narwariya *et al.* [12] in okra.

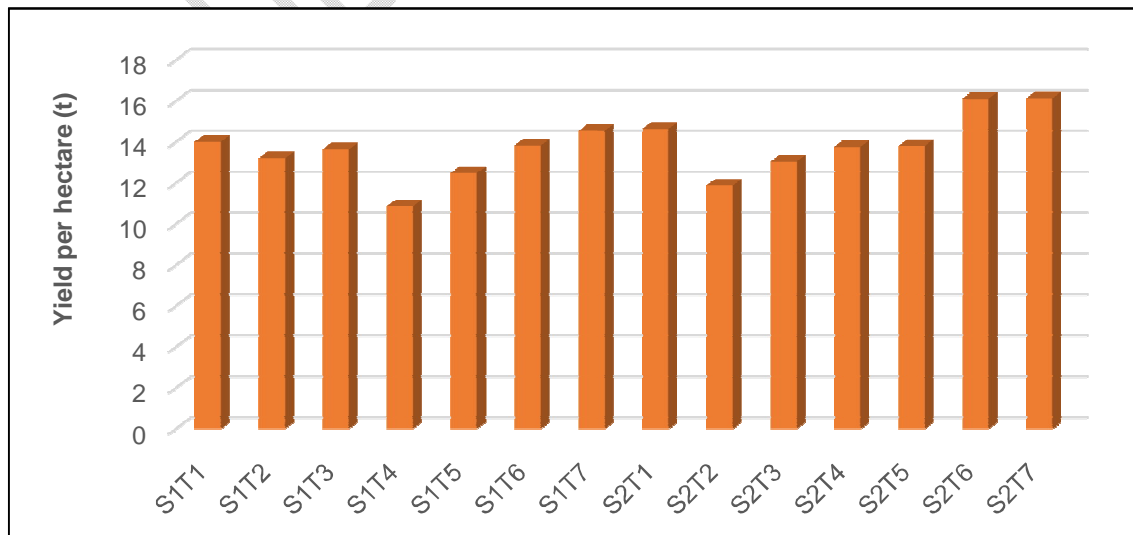


Fig 2. A comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on yield per hectare

3.3A comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on economics

The data regarding to cost of cultivation for different treatments depicted in Table 3. Maximum gross realization ₹ 3,22,600 per hectare was obtained in S₂T₇ while, maximum net realization ₹ 218555.21 per hectare and BCR of 2.11 was obtained in S₂T₆(Fig. 3). However, minimum cost of treatment ₹ 15140.75 per hectare and total cost of cultivation ₹ 91202.02 per hectare were observed in treatment S₁T₂.

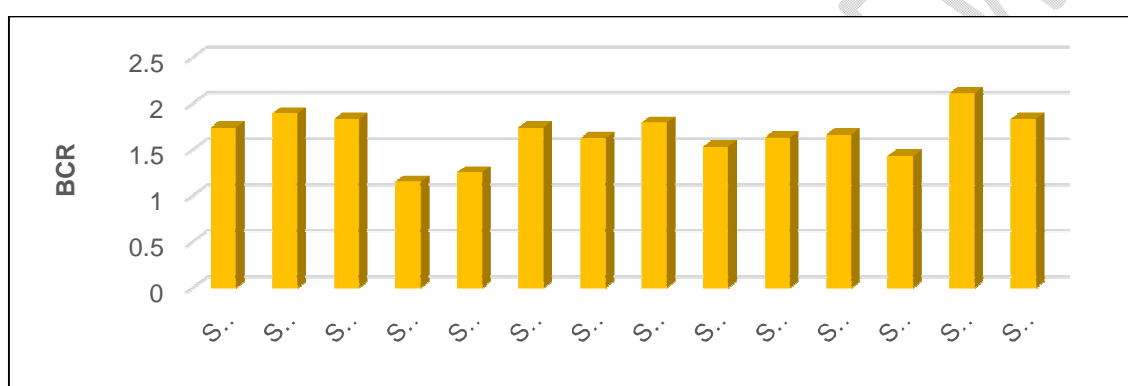


Fig 3. A comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on benefit: cost ratio

CONCLUSION

From the two years field study, it can be concluded that sowing of okra at 60 × 30 cm spacing observed better leaf area and number of nodes per plant. While, maximum yield was found in 45 × 30 cm spacing. Application of 25% RDF + 50% RDN through Vermicompost + NPK consortium 1L/ha recorded maximum days to last picking, yield and number of pickings. Sowing of okra at 60 × 30 cm spacing with application of 25% RDF + 50% RDN through Vermicompost + NPK consortium 1L/ha recorded the leaf area and number of nodes per plant. However, maximum yield was found in 45 × 30 cm spacing with application of 25% RDF + 50% RDN through Vermicompost + NPK consortium 1L/ha, while quality parameter was not affected significantly. On economic point of view, maximum net realization ₹ 218555.21 per hectare and BCR of 2.11 was obtained in 45 × 30 cm spacing with application of 25% RDF + 50% RDN through FYM + NPK consortium 1L/ha.

Table 1. A comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on growth of okra (Two year pooled data)

Application of INM (T)	Leaf area (cm ²)						Number of nodes per plant					
	60 DAS			90 DAS			60 DAS			90 DAS		
	S ₁	S ₂	Mean	S ₁	S ₂	Mean	S ₁	S ₂	Mean	S ₁	S ₂	Mean
T ₁	436.75	437.73	437.24	577.52	572.39	574.95	16.03	15.40	15.72	24.20	23.07	23.63
T ₂	400.10	419.97	410.03	530.31	546.37	538.34	15.23	14.60	14.92	22.83	21.93	22.38
T ₃	421.59	426.46	424.03	551.89	558.65	555.27	15.50	14.97	15.23	23.43	22.60	23.02
T ₄	425.14	341.58	383.36	556.33	448.45	502.39	14.53	13.80	14.17	21.83	20.50	21.17
T ₅	426.50	370.11	398.30	558.42	483.56	520.99	14.80	14.07	14.43	22.20	20.97	21.58
T ₆	459.45	434.88	447.16	598.02	565.79	581.90	16.30	15.63	15.97	24.57	23.67	24.12
T ₇	461.88	455.88	458.88	603.56	592.98	598.27	16.57	15.97	16.27	25.17	24.10	24.63
Mean	433.06	412.37		568.01	538.31		15.57	14.92		23.46	22.40	
	S	T	S × T	S	T	S × T	S	T	S × T	S	T	S × T
S. Em.±	4.71	8.81	12.46	6.73	12.59	17.80	0.15	0.28	0.39	0.24	0.45	0.63
C. D at 5 %	13.37	25.01	35.37	19.11	35.74	50.55	0.42	0.79	NS	0.68	1.27	NS

Table 2. A comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on yield of okra (Two year pooled data)

Application of INM (T)	Days to 50% flowering			Days to first picking			Days to last picking			Yield per plot (kg)			Yield per hectare (t)		
	S ₁	S ₂	Mean	S ₁	S ₂	Mean	S ₁	S ₂	Mean	S ₁	S ₂	Mean	S ₁	S ₂	Mean
T ₁	45.33	46.33	45.83	50.17	49.83	50.00	89.17	87.33	88.25	8.07	9.49	8.78	14.01	14.64	14.33
T ₂	47.00	47.17	47.08	50.50	51.00	50.75	85.00	83.83	84.42	7.61	7.70	7.65	13.20	11.88	12.54
T ₃	46.33	46.83	46.58	50.50	50.17	50.33	86.50	85.67	86.08	7.85	8.45	8.15	13.64	13.04	13.34
T ₄	47.67	48.17	47.92	51.00	51.67	51.33	82.00	79.67	80.83	6.26	8.91	7.58	10.86	13.76	12.31
T ₅	47.50	47.83	47.67	50.83	51.00	50.92	83.17	80.83	82.00	7.19	8.94	8.06	12.48	13.80	13.14
T ₆	44.50	45.00	44.75	49.50	50.00	49.75	89.83	89.50	89.67	7.97	10.44	9.21	13.83	16.11	14.97
T ₇	44.83	44.33	44.08	49.17	49.33	49.25	91.67	90.00	90.83	8.37	10.45	9.41	14.54	16.13	15.33
Mean	46.02	46.52		50.24	50.43		86.76	85.26		7.62	9.20		13.22	14.19	
	S	T	S × T	S	T	S × T	S	T	S × T	S	T	S × T	S	T	S × T
S. Em.±	0.57	1.07	1.51	0.67	1.26	1.78	1.09	2.04	2.88	0.14	0.27	0.38	0.23	0.43	0.61
C. D at 5 %	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	5.79	NS	0.40	0.76	1.07	0.65	1.22	1.72

Table 3. A comparative study of spacing and integrated nutrient management on economics of okra (Two year pooled data)

Treatment combination	Yield (kg/ha)	Gross realization (₹/ha)	Treatment cost (₹/ha)	Total cost of cultivation (₹/ha)	Net realization (₹/ha)	BCR
S ₁ T ₁	14010	280200	24117.00	102153.04	178046.96	1.74
S ₁ T ₂	13200	264000	15140.75	91202.02	172797.99	1.89
S ₁ T ₃	13640	272800	19342.75	96328.46	176471.55	1.83
S ₁ T ₄	10860	217200	23054.00	100856.18	116343.82	1.15
S ₁ T ₅	12480	249600	31450.50	111099.91	138500.09	1.25
S ₁ T ₆	13830	276600	23119.75	100936.40	175663.61	1.74
S ₁ T ₇	14540	290800	31516.25	111180.13	179619.88	1.62
S ₂ T ₁	14640	292800	26317.00	104837.04	187962.96	1.79
S ₂ T ₂	11880	237600	17340.75	93886.02	143713.99	1.53
S ₂ T ₃	13040	260800	21542.75	99012.46	161787.55	1.63
S ₂ T ₄	13760	275200	25254.00	103540.18	171659.82	1.66
S ₂ T ₅	13800	276000	33650.50	113783.91	162216.09	1.43
S ₂ T ₆	16110	322200	25339.75	103644.80	218555.21	2.11
S ₂ T ₇	16130	322600	33736.25	113888.53	208711.48	1.83

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