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Effect of single and dual bio-inoculants on chemical properties & nutrient availability in soil after harvest of sunflower

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Abstract

Biofertilizers are the alternate sources to meet the nutrient requirement of crops). Biofertilizer like *Azotobacter* fix atmospheric nitrogen. PSB plays a vital role for making unavailable phosphorus to available phosphorus by mineralization of organic phosphate or by solubilization of inorganic phosphate by production of acids.

The nutrient availability after harvest of sunflower noted significantly better in bioinoculant treated plots as compared to uninoculated control and only RDF. Through, liquid inoculants showed better performance but carrier based bioinoculants were also found equally at par with the respective N-fixer and P-solubilizer treatments).

Keywords: Bio-inoculants, pH, Ec, CaCO₃, nutrient, sunflower

Introduction

Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) member is of the family Asteraceae (compositae), native to Southern part of USA. It is popularly known as "Surajmukhi." The name "Helianthus" is derived from 'Helios' meaning 'sun' and 'anthos' meaning 'flower'. It is one of the fastest growing oilseed crops in India. This crop has gained importance due to its short duration of maturity, containing excellent quality oil, photo-insensitivity, wide adaptability in different agro-climatic region and different kinds of cropping patterns and drought tolerance. It is one of the most important oil seeds crops in the world's seed production. Oil seeds crops are known as the source of energy and protein. They are important in human and livestock nutrition and play a vital role in the economy of some countries.

One of the important oil seed crop is sunflower which contains 40-50% oil and 15-21% protein. Sunflower oil also has excellent nutritional properties. It is practically free of significant toxic compounds and has a relatively high concentration of linoleic acid. This polyunsaturated fatty acid is an essential fatty acid (not synthesized by humans), and is the precursor of gamma-linolenic and arachidonic acids (Seiler 2007) [14]. Because of sunflower's versatile nature is expected to play a crucial role in the oilseed economy of the country. In India during 2014-15 sunflower was cultivated on 5.52 lakh hectare area with a production of 4.15 lakh tones. The average yield of 752 kg/ha was one of the lowest in the world (Anonymous, 2015-2016). In Maharashtra sunflower is cultivated on an area of 0.47 lakh hectare with a production of 0.20 lakh tones with a productivity of 425 kg/ha during the year 2015-2016.

Liquid inoculants are special formulations containing desired microorganisms in viable form, their nutrients and certain chemicals primarily function as microbial cell protectants and amendments that promote cell survival during storage and after application to seed or soil. Various liquid media have been used to prepare the liquid biofertilizers of rhizobia (Singleton, *et al.* 2002) [12]. These media normally consist of carbon, nitrogen and vitamin sources, which promote the growth of bacteria. However, some additives have been identified for the development of liquid inoculants based on their ability to protect rhizobial cells during storage and on seeds at extreme conditions like high temperature, desiccation and in the presence of toxic seed exudates.

Treatments

T1: Un-inoculated and unfertilized (control)

T2: Only RDF (60:40:30 kg N, P₂O₅ and K₂O ha⁻¹)

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Carrier based inoculants (with RDF)T3: RDF + *Azotobacter*T4: RDF + *Bacillus megaterium* (PSB)T5: RDF + *Azotobacter* + *Bacillus megaterium* (PSB)**Liquid inoculants (with RDF)**T6: RDF + *Azotobacter*T7: RDF + *Bacillus megaterium* (PSB)T8: RDF + *Azotobacter*. + *Bacillus megaterium* (PSB)**Material and Methods**

The treatments comprising inoculation with carrier based and liquid inoculants of *Azotobacter* and *Bacillus megaterium* (PSB) for sunflower, used in alone and in combinations. Total eight treatments of bioinoculants were replicated three times in RBD. Seed treatment was done immediate before sowing with carrier based bioinoculants @ 250 g 10 kg⁻¹ seed and liquid bioinoculants @ 100 ml 10 kg⁻¹ seed. The crop was cultivated following recommended agronomic practices. The recommended dose of chemical fertilizers were applied at the time of sowing. Intercultural operations like thinning, weeding, spraying of insecticides, fertilizer application and schedule of irrigation for sunflower crop was carefully followed.

Soil pH

It was determined in (1:2.5) soil water suspension using digital pH meter (Jackson, 1973)^[4].

Digital electronic conductivity

It was estimated in (1:2.5) soil: water ratio using conductivity meter (Jackson, 1973)^[4].

Organic carbon

Organic carbon in soil was estimated by Walkley and Black's rapid titration method as described by Jacksons (1973)^[4].

Calcium carbonate

The free calcium carbonate was determined by rapid titration method as outlined by Piper (1966)^[9].

Available nitrogen

It was estimated by using alkaline permanganate method as suggested by Subbiah and Asija (1956).

Available phosphorus

It was determined by using 0.5 M sodium bicarbonate as an extractant as outlined by Olsen *et al.* (1954)^[16].

Available potassium

It was determined by using normal ammonium acetate as an extractant and measured on flame photometer Jacksons (1973)^[4].

DTPA extractable zinc and iron

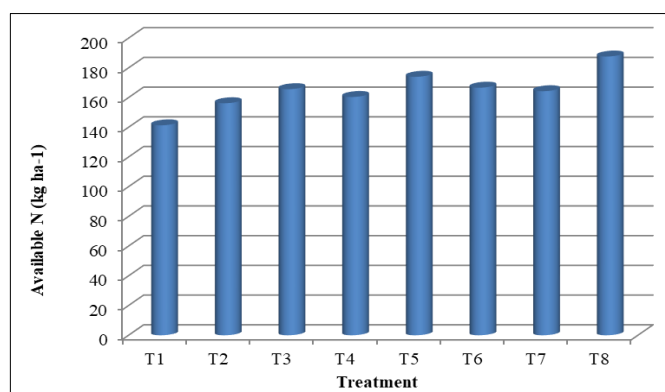
DTPA extractable zinc and iron in soil was estimated as per procedure described by Lindsay and Norvell (1978).

Result and Discussion

The data noted in Table 1 indicates fig (1, 2, 3) shows the significant increase in nutrient availability in soil after harvest of sunflower crop was also recorded with bioinoculants. Significantly the highest values of available K₂O were noted in treatment receiving both the inoculants along with RDF in carrier based form. However, in case of available N treatment T5 and T8 were found statistically at par with each other and available P₂O₅ was found maximum in dual inoculation with carrier based T5, T6 and T7 and liquid sources (T8) which were noted statistically at par with each other.

Table 1: Effect of liquid and carrier based bioinoculants on nutrient availability in soil after harvest of sunflower

Sr. No.	Treatment	Available N (kg ha ⁻¹)	Available P ₂ O ₅ (kg ha ⁻¹)	Available K ₂ O (kg ha ⁻¹)
T1	Uninoculated and unfertilized (Control)	141.33	13.50	598
T2	Only RDF (60:40:30 kg NPK / ha ⁻¹)	156.20	15.54	614
Carrier based inoculants				
T3	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i>	165.67	16.02	640
T4	RDF + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	160.42	16.49	643
T5	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i> + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	174.00	17.35	656
Liquid inoculants				
T6	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i>	166.67	16.71	649
T7	RDF + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	164.30	16.91	647
T8	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i> + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	187.65	18.04	655
	S.E.±	3.76	0.49	19.04
	C.D. at 5 %	11.36	1.50	NS
	C.V. %	3.96	5.29	5.17

**Fig 1:** Available Nitrogen

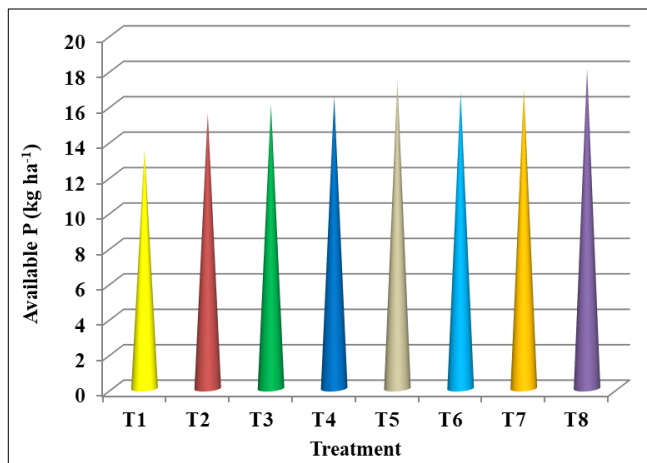


Fig 2: Available Phosphorus

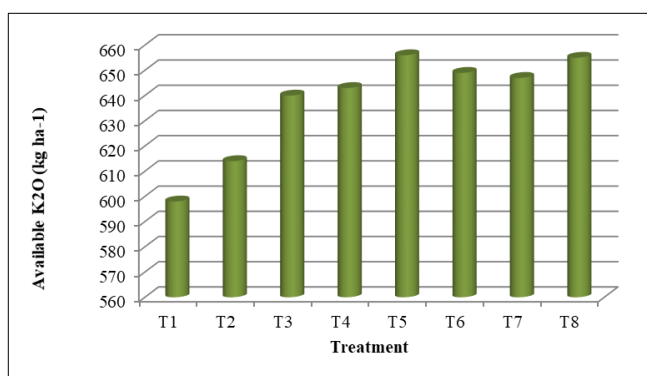


Fig 3: Available Potassium

The 100% RDF + dual inoculation treated plots showed the highest increase in available nitrogen which might be due to the direct addition of nitrogen through fertilizers to available pool of soil. This increase in available N might also be attributed to the greater multiplication of soil microbes which converts organically bound N to inorganic form as reported by Katkar *et al.* (2006). Increase in soil available nitrogen due to *Rhizobium* and *Azotobacter* inoculation and available P due to phosphorus solubilizing bacteria inoculation was also

documented by Gupta (2006) [3]. Further, Nirmal (2006) [8] reported that the dual inoculation of *Rhizobium* and PSB resulted more availability of soil N and P because of their associative effect plus solubilization from non-exchangeable to labile form. The PSB secretes different organic acids like citric acid and malic acid which act on insoluble phosphate to convert them into soluble phosphate near the root of the plant and hence availability of phosphorus increased. Further Kumar *et al.* (1998) [6] has also reported that seed inoculation with PSB significantly increased the available P in soil after harvest of sunflower might due to releasing native P as well as in protecting fixation of added phosphorus. However, the reason for more availability of K might be ascribed to and disintegration of K minerals due to reduction of K fixation and its release in K available pool of the soil. Similar findings were reported by Bellaki and Badanur (1997) [1]. Swaroop (2006) [13] noted that the available potassium was maximum with the application of *Rhizobium* inoculation + 20 kg N ha⁻¹. Further, Katkar *et al.* (2002) [5] reported that use of organic sources either alone or in combination with chemical fertilizer recorded higher available potassium in the soil.

The data pertaining to available phosphorus revealed that dual inoculation recorded higher available phosphorus as compared to single inoculation of *Azotobacter* and PSB. While effectiveness of PSB inoculation was superior over *Azotobacter* inoculation. This might be due to beneficial effect of phosphate solubilizing microorganisms which played a major role in solubilization of native and applied soil phosphorus and increased availability of P in soil.

Effect of liquid and carrier based bioinoculants on available micronutrients in soil after harvest of sunflower

The scrutiny of results presented in Table 2. and depicted in fig. (4 and 5) shown reveals that the available micronutrients (Fe and Zn) in soil after harvest of sunflower crop were also found significantly higher. Available Fe was noted maximum in treatment receiving both the inoculants along with RDF in liquid form. However, available Zn in dual inoculation which was at par with T5 and T7 treatments and liquid source (T8) was noted statistically at par with each other.

Table 2: Effect of liquid and carrier based bio-inoculants on available micronutrients in soil after harvest of sunflower

Sr. No.	Treatment	Available Zn (mg kg ⁻¹)	Available Fe (mg kg ⁻¹)
T1	Uninoculated and unfertilized (Control)	0.51	4.26
T2	Only RDF (30:60:30 kg NPK / ha ⁻¹)	0.55	4.58
Carrier based inoculants			
T3	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i>	0.58	4.65
T4	RDF + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	0.62	4.77
T5	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i> + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	0.67	5.13
Liquid inoculants			
T6	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i>	0.63	5.18
T7	RDF + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	0.68	4.89
T8	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i> + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	0.70	5.35
	S.E. ±	0.009	0.056
	C.D. at 5 %	0.029	0.169
	C.V. %	2.69	2.02

The bacteria in soil possess surfaces that interact strongly with metal ions in soil solution. They could absorb a greater amount of heavy metals than inorganic soil components such as montmorillonite, Kaolinite or vermiculite (Ledin *et al.*, 1996) [7]. Further, Treeby *et al.* (1989) indicates that

phytosiderophores are capable of increasing the amount of complex edcations in solution. Further, Chand and Somani (2003) [2] revealed that effective use of FYM, biofertilizers along with chemical fertilizers improved Fe and Zn content in mustard.

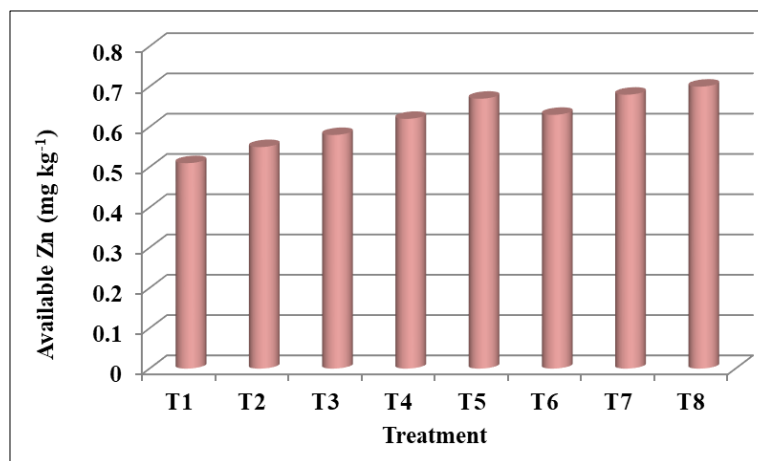


Fig 4: Available Zn

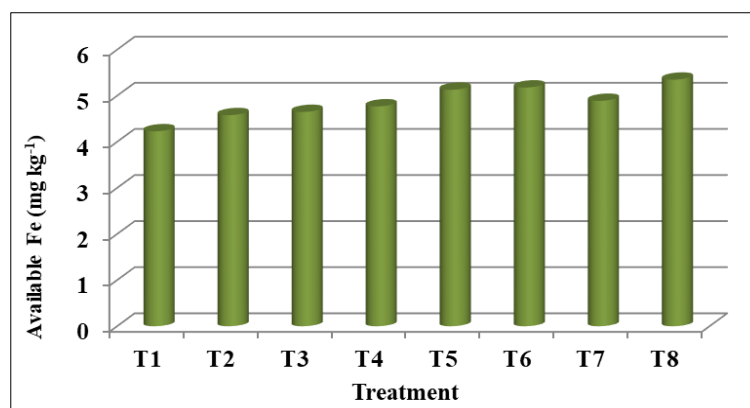


Fig 5: Available Fe

Effect of liquid and carrier based bioinoculants on chemical properties in soil after harvest of sunflower

The results presented in Table 3. regarding changes in soil pH, EC and CaCO₃ after harvest of sunflower indicates non-significant results. The organic carbon in sunflower crop was

influenced significantly with the seed inoculation with *Azotobacter* +PSB along with RDF as compared to control. However in case of organic carbon in dual inoculation with liquid sources T8 were noted statistically at par with T5 and T6 treatments.

Table 3: Effect of liquid and carrier based bioinoculants on chemical properties in soil after harvest of sunflower

Sr. No.	Treatment	Ph (1:2.5)	EC (dSm ⁻¹)	CaCO ₃ (g kg ⁻¹)	Organic Carbon (g kg ⁻¹)
T1	Uninoculated and unfertilized (Control)	7.78	0.26	43.19	4.72
T2	Only RDF (60:40:30 kg NPK / ha ⁻¹)	7.79	0.28	43.34	5.19
Carrier based inoculants					
T3	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i>	7.79	0.28	43.15	5.75
T4	RDF + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	7.78	0.27	43.00	5.34
T5	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i> + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	7.78	0.27	43.40	5.96
Liquid inoculants					
T6	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i>	7.79	0.26	42.59	5.82
T7	RDF + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	7.78	0.26	42.40	5.54
T8	RDF + <i>Azotobacter</i> + <i>Bacillus megaterium</i> (PSB)	7.78	0.25	42.40	6.04
	S.E. ±	0.11	0.011	1.69	0.10
	C.D. at 5 %	NS	NS	NS	0.329
	C.V. %	2.49	7.66	6.84	3.41

The observations recorded on soil organic carbon (g kg⁻¹) indicated that there was significant increase in OC at harvest. This could be attributed to the addition of organic materials of plants and roots which increased activity of microbes and also due to better root penetration. Soil available P resulting in better root growth consecutively leading to accumulation of organic matter in rhizosphere (Qureshi and Narayansamy 2005)^[10]. Santhy *et al.* (2001)^[11] reported that the addition of crop residues, over two decades resulted in the higher organic carbon content, improved crop growth and yield when compared to unfertilized control plots.

Conclusion

The significant increase in nutrient availability in soil after harvest of sunflower crop was also recorded with bioinoculants. Significantly higher values of available potassium was noted in treatment receiving both the inoculants along with RDF in carrier based form. However, in case of available nitrogen highest in treatment T8 and available phosphorus was found maximum in dual inoculation with carrier based T5 and liquid sources (T8) which were noted statistically at par with each other.

The available micronutrients (Fe and Zn) in soil after harvest of sunflower crop were also found significantly highest. Available Fe was noted maximum in treatment receiving both the inoculants along with RDF in liquid form. However, available Zn was significantly higher in dual inoculation with liquid source (T8).

Soil pH, EC and CaCO₃ after harvest of sunflower indicated non-significant results. The soil organic carbon in sunflower crop was also influenced significantly with the seed inoculation of *Azotobacter* and PSB along with RDF as compared to control. However, in case of organic carbon in dual inoculation with liquid sources (T8) were noted statistically at par with T5 and T6 treatments.

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