



Assessment of Plant Growth Promoters on Growth Characteristics, Yield Attributes and Yield of Wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.) Varieties in Central Plain Zone of Uttar Pradesh, India

Prateek Saxena ^{a*}, V. K. Verma ^a, M.Z. Siddiqui ^a,
Tripti Singh ^b, Amreen Siddiqui ^c and Avnish Patel ^a

^a Department of Agronomy, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur (U.P.)-208002, India.

^b Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur (U.P.)-208002, India.

^c Department of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur (U.P.)-208002, India.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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*Corresponding author: E-mail: prateeksaxena687@gmail.com;

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation was carried out during *Rabi* season of 2022-23 at Students' Instructional Farm of Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur. The experiment was designed with two factors, viz. wheat varieties (DBW-187 and PBW-723) in the main plots and plant growth promoters (PGPs) viz., micronutrients (Zn, Fe, B, Cu) @ 0.5%, nitrobenzene @ 3 ml l⁻¹, gibberellic acid @ 2 ml l⁻¹, seaweed extract liquid @ 625 ml ha⁻¹, seaweed extract solid @ 25 kg ha⁻¹, UPL Macarena (Fermented extract nutrient 15%) @ 625 ml ha⁻¹, Humesol (humic acid 18 %, fulvic acid 15 %) @ 1250 ml ha⁻¹, and Amino Booster G (30 % amino acid solution) @ 5 ml l⁻¹ were selected in sub-plots. These treatments were compared with a control treatment. The experiment was laid out in a *Split Plot Design* and replicated three times. The results revealed that significant variations were noticed in different treatments. The wheat variety DBW-187 exhibited superior growth and yield attributes, with a grain yield of 4601.8 kg ha⁻¹, surpassing other variety. Among plant growth promoters the blend of micronutrients (Zn, Fe, B, Cu) @ 0.5% foliar spray at tillering stage resulted in the significant maximum plant height (86.55 cm), crop growth rate (0.243 g m⁻² day⁻¹), at 45 to 90 DAS, number of tillers (425.13 m⁻²) at maturity, grain yield (4572.17 kg ha⁻¹) and straw yield (7072.20 kg ha⁻¹). The gibberellic acid @ 2ml l⁻¹ and seaweed extract liquid @ 625 ml ha⁻¹ also showed significant results.

Keywords: Growth promoters; wheat varieties; grain yield; straw yield.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.) is one of the most important crops in terms of cultivated area and production rate in the world and plays an important role in providing the food needs of human societies” [1]. “In India, the total area under wheat is 30.46 million hectares with a production of 104.00 million tonnes and a productivity of 3.41 tonnes per hectare” [2]. “It is the staple food therefore, to ensure global food security for rapidly growing population, wheat production needs to be doubled by 2050. Soil micro-nutrients, including zinc (Zn), iron (Fe), Boron (B) and copper (Cu) have been found deficit in the majority of soils where intensive agriculture is being practiced and thus pose a serious threat to food production worldwide” [3]. “About 49% of India's cultivated land is deficient in Zn and Cu” [4]. “Further long-term soil health and sustained crop productivity cannot be maintained by using sole chemical fertilizers since they do not supply all the required nutrient elements particularly trace elements” [5]. “Plant growth regulators (PGRs) are one of the solutions to increase the yield of agricultural plants under different stress conditions” [6]. “It's yield depends on the intensity, genotype, time of application, concentration used, and intensity of the stress level” [7]. “In the current situation, it is vital to adopt agricultural management methods and the use of PGRs including cytokinins, gibberellic acid (GA3) and seaweed extracts. They have various effects on plants, inducing grain germination, and stimulating the production

of important hydrolyzing enzymes in the germination of leguminous grains” [8]. “Certified the alleviating effect of GA3 on plant tolerance to salt stress. CK reduces the adverse effects of non-living stresses and also causes cell division, removal of apical dominance, stem differentiation, and delaying ageing” [9]. The opportunity presented by growth promoters is great for improving soil sustainability as well as overall productivity, because of the global energy crisis and the ongoing increase in the cost of artificial fertilizers. Since growth regulators are employed in the commercial sector to boost wheat yield, it was important to investigate how exogenous biostimulants affect the wheat growth process. The totality of a plant's metabolic processes adds up to its yield, which is influenced by several elements that impact the plant's metabolic activity during growth. Materials known as bio-stimulants can stimulate plant growth in modest doses. This experiment aimed to implement a new method of nutrient management in relation to plant growth promoters on different wheat varieties, for use in agricultural fields to increase yield.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The field experiment was conducted at Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh during the rabi season of 2022-23. Kanpur is geographically located in the central part of Uttar Pradesh, It is positioned at coordinates 26° 29' 35" North latitude and 80° 18' 25" East longitude, with an

elevation of approximately 125.9 meters above mean sea level in the Gangetic plain. The weekly maximum mean temperature, ranged from 13.9°C to 39.2°C and the minimum mean temperature ranged from 4.4°C to 21.8°C during the period of crop growth. The maximum temperature of 39.2°C was recorded in April, whereas the minimum temperature of 4.4°C was observed in January. The total rainfall received during the crop growth period was 83 mm. Detailed information about the crop weather conditions during the cropping period can be seen in graph provided (Fig. 1). The soil texture of experiment field is characterized as sandy loam, with specific measurements including organic carbon (0.49%), available nitrogen (148.20 kg ha⁻¹), available P2 O5 (20.60 kg ha⁻¹), available K2O (215.50 kg ha⁻¹), and a pH of 7.7. Two timely sown varieties (V1 -DBW-187, V2 -PBW-723) were allocated in the main plots and plant growth promoters (G0 - Control, G1 - Nitro benzene @ 3 ml l-1, G2 - Gibberellic acid @ 2ml l-1, G3 - Seaweed extract solid @ 25 kg ha-1, G4 - Seaweed extract liquid @ 625 ml ha-1, G5 - Micronutrients (Zn, Fe, B, Cu) @ 0.5 %, G6 - UPL Macarena@ 625 ml ha-1, G7 - Humesol @1250 ml ha-1, G8 - Amino Booster G) were allocated in the sub-plots. The experiment was laid out in Split Plot Design with three replications. The other cultural practices were adopted as recommended packages of practice. The crop was given 4 irrigations at critical stages

excluding one pre-sowing irrigation. Three plants were randomly selected and tagged from each plot for measuring plant height (cm) from the soil surface to the basal portion of the flag leaf using a meter scale at 45 DAS, 90 DAS and at maturity. Number of tillers m-2 was calculated by counting total number of tillers in 1m×1m quadrat and expressed in terms of per m2. Crop growth rate (g m-2 day-1) is estimated by calculating the average daily increment of plant biomass per unit time interval. This provides the rate of dry matter production. Number of ears m-2 was estimated by counting number of spikes per meter square before harvesting of the crop from four places which were then averaged. The ear length (cm) was measured from the neck to the tip of the spike. The number of seeds ear-1 was calculated by counting number of filled grains in three random samples and finally, the means were computed. Seed weight per ear (g) was measured from randomly selected tagged ears which were balanced manually from each replication and averaged to get weight (g) of grain per ear. The grain yield was deducted from the biological yield of the corresponding plots to get the straw yield and was expressed as kg ha-1. The data obtained from the experiment were statistically analyzed with the help of analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique for split plot design. The LSD (Least Significant Difference) test was utilized to compare the means of the treatment at a 5% level of probability.

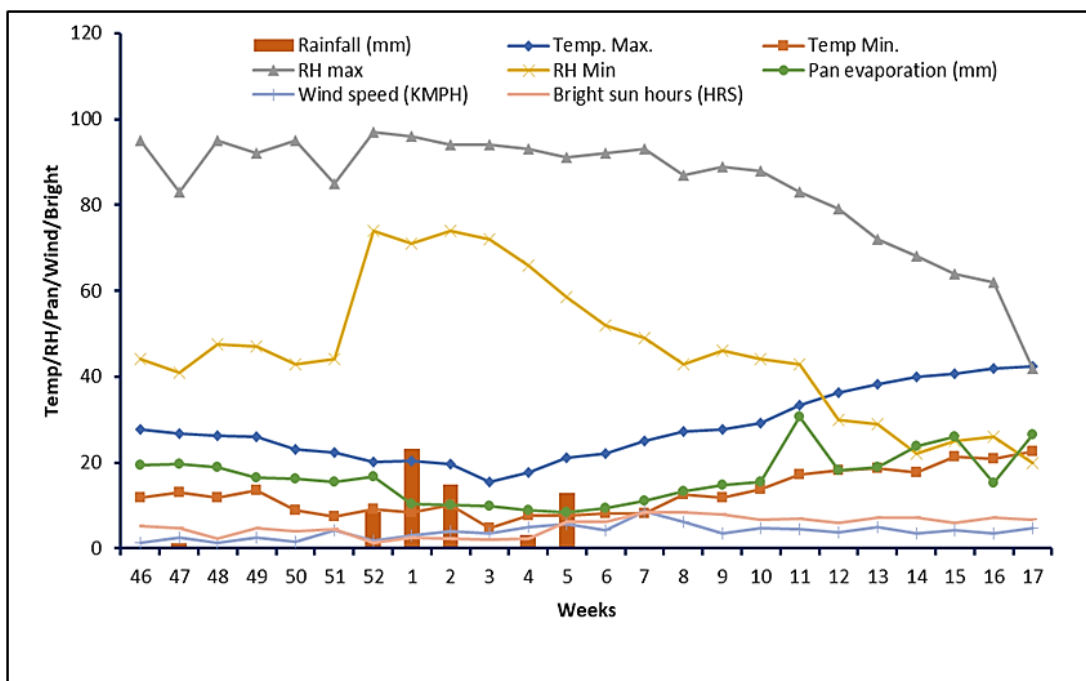


Fig .1. Details of weather data during crop season (Nov. 2022 - May 2023)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Growth Characteristics

The findings concerning growth characteristics (Table 1) such as plant height (cm), number of tillers (m⁻²) as well as crop growth rate (g m⁻² day⁻¹), revealed that timely sown wheat variety, DBW-187 recorded significantly more plant height (3.05 cm, 3.50 %), tillers (10.04 m⁻², 2.34 %), and crop growth rate (0.014 g m⁻² day⁻¹, 6.19 %) as compared to PBW-723, respectively. It might be due to better genomic characteristics and suitability in particular environmental conditions. Among plant growth promoters, mixture of plant micronutrients (Zn, Fe, B, Cu) @5 % exhibited more plant height (4.39 %), number of tillers (1.66 %) and crop growth rate (0.130 g m⁻² day⁻¹) as compared to control treatment. The gibberellic acid and sea weed extracts showed better performance but next to micronutrients in terms of increasing plant height, number of tillers and crop growth rate as compared to control treatments. The superior performance of the micronutrient mixture likely augmented the metabolic processes of wheat plants, thereby enhancing their growth traits compared to other growth-promoting substances. The application of micronutrients such as iron (Fe), zinc (Zn), boron (B), and copper (Cu) led to enhancements in both the nutritional status and physical conditions of soil. "Although the micronutrients are required in small quantity their supplementation during the crop growth help in better utilization of all other nutrients which intern result in increased growth of wheat. Similar findings were also reported" by Hamed et al. [10] and Alsudays et al. [11].

3.2 Yield Attributes

The data regarding yield attributing characters (Table 2) revealed that DBW-187 variety recorded significantly more number of ears m⁻² (3.6, 0.85%), length of ears (0.76, 7.04%), number of seeds ear⁻¹ (2.96, 4.41%), seed weight ear⁻¹ (0.21, 8.71%) and test weight (1.24, 3.14%) as compared to variety PBW-723, respectively. The better yield attributes in DBW-187 are due to better growth characteristics compared to other varieties. In plant growth promoter's the mixture of micronutrients (Zn, Fe, B, Cu) @ 0.5% recorded significantly more numbers of ear (2.09 %), length of ear (20.54 %), no. of grain ear⁻¹ (8.33 %), seed weight ear⁻¹ (46.96 %) and test weight (7.78 %). The Gibberellic acid showed better performance but

next to micronutrients mixture in terms of increasing number of ears (1.94 %), length of ear (19.21 %), number of seed ear⁻¹ (7.96 %), seed weight ear⁻¹ (45.73 %) and test weight (7.10 %) compared to control treatments. The combined use of organic and inorganic sources of nutrients could be attributed to the better synchronicity of nutrient availability to the wheat crop, which was evidenced by higher grain yield and dry matter accumulation. The growth promoter gibberellic Acid (GA3) stimulates plant height and promotes the emergence of a greater number of tillers and functional leaves, where increased photosynthesis occurs, ultimately leading to higher dry matter accumulation. Seaweeds, particularly red and brown algae, play a role in modulating phytochrome activity, delaying senescence, enhancing tolerance to biotic stress, reducing transpiration, and boosting stomatal conductance, all of which contribute to enhanced plant growth. Similar findings were also reported by Deepana et al. [12], Mishra et al. [13] and Navya et al. [14].

Yield: The comparison between wheat varieties DBW-187 and PBW-723 regarding grain yield and straw yield (Table 2) revealed noteworthy findings. DBW-187 exhibited a notable increase in grain yield (16.28 %) and straw yield (11.73 %) compared to PBW-723. This superior performance of DBW-187 in terms of these factors can be attributed to its enhanced growth characteristics and better yield-contributing traits. The micronutrient mixture (Zn, Fe, B, Cu) @ 0.5 % exhibited an increment in grain yield (31.16 %) and straw yield (17.32%) compared to control treatment. Next to micronutrient gibberellic acid also reported better performance in terms of increasing grain yield 4545.8 kg ha⁻¹ (30.7 %). Both humesol and amino booster G were found at par with each other but significant treatment better than control treatment. The increase in grain yield of wheat could be attributed to application of a mixture of micronutrients. "Further, the addition of micronutrients also helps in better utilization of the major nutrients to produce a higher yield of crops yield can be consider being the final expression of physiological and metabolic activities of plants and is governed by various factors. Seaweed extracts are known to improve to the source-sink relationship translocation of photo assimilates and their by photosynthetic ability of the plants and thus play significant role in realization of high productivity levels and higher grain yields. Similar findings were also reported" by Vivek et al. [15] and Jat et al. [16].

Table 1. Effect of organic and inorganic plant growth promoters on growth attributing characteristics of wheat varieties

Treatments	Plant height (cm)			Number of tillers (m ⁻²)			Crop growth rate (g m ⁻² day ⁻¹)		
	45 DAS	90 DAS	Maturity	45 DAS	90 DAS	Maturity	0 to 45 DAS	45 to 90 DAS	90 DAS to harvesting
Variety									
V ₁ - DBW-187	38.74	78.97	87.04	382.66	453.01	427.93	0.198	0.226	0.184
V ₂ - PBW-723	36.94	75.84	83.99	362.89	442.65	417.89	0.178	0.212	0.176
SED ±	0.53	0.61	0.42	0.502	3.211	0.75	0.002	0.003	0.002
CD at 5%	NS	2.825	1.947	2.326	NS	3.473	0.01	0.013	NS
Plant growth promoters									
G ₀ - Control	34.62	74.58	82.75	367.73	443.15	418.07	0.165	0.113	0.128
G ₁ - Nitrobenzene @3ml/L	37.92	77.68	85.78	373.07	448.22	423.62	0.190	0.23	0.186
G ₂ - Gibberellic acid @2ml/L	39.08	78.43	86.38	374.58	449.72	424.62	0.200	0.238	0.194
G ₃ - Sea weed extracts(solid) @25kg/ha	38.35	77.93	86	373.77	448.85	423.93	0.191	0.232	0.188
G ₄ - Sea weed extracts(liquid) @625ml/ha	38.92	78.23	86.17	374.1	449.23	424.22	0.194	0.236	0.191
G ₅ - Micronutrients(Zn, Fe, Cu, B) @0.5%	39.48	78.6	86.55	375.23	450.18	425.13	0.202	0.243	0.196
G ₆ - UPL Macarena (fermented nutrient extract 15%) @625ml/ha	37.03	76.68	85.1	371.52	446.3	421.12	0.18	0.224	0.177
G ₇ - Humesol (humic acid 18%, fulvic acid 15%) @1250ml/ha	37.75	77.43	85.65	372.77	447.78	423.2	0.186	0.229	0.182
G ₈ - Amino Booster G (30% amino acid solution)@5ml/L	37.43	77.1	85.28	372.17	447.05	422.32	0.183	0.226	0.18
SED ±	1.007	0.531	0.18	1.586	1.472	1.165	0.004	0.004	0.004
CD at 5%	2.06	1.088	0.367	3.245	3.011	2.383	0.008	0.008	0.009
Interaction(V×G)									
SED ±	1.424	0.752	0.254	2.243	2.081	1.647	0.006	0.005	0.006
CD at 5%	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS

Table 2. Effect of organic and inorganic plant growth promoters on yield attributes and yield of wheat varieties

Yield attributes Treatments	Yield								
	No. of ears m ²	Ear length (cm)	No. of seeds ear ⁻¹	Seed weight (g)	Test weight (g)	Grain yield (kg ha ⁻¹)	Straw yield (kg ha ⁻¹)		
Variety									
V ₁ - DBW-187	418.81	10.79	67.09	2.41	39.49	4601.8	6982.1		
V ₂ - PBW-723	415.21	10.03	64.13	2.2	38.25	3852.5	6204.3		
SED ±	0.158	0.106	0.19	0.023	0.18	30.446	27.709		
CD at 5%	0.734	0.491	0.882	0.105	0.834	141.038	128.36		
Plant Growth Promoters									
G ₀ - Control	411.72	8.78	61.92	1.4	36.72	3147.18	5847.18		
G ₁ - Nitrobenzene @3ml/L	417.42	10.52	65.95	2.4	38.98	4332.02	6648.57		
G ₂ - Gibberellic acid @2ml/L	419.9	10.95	67.28	2.58	39.53	4545.8	6961.08		
G ₃ - Sea weed extracts(solid) @25kg/ha	418.07	10.67	66.4	2.46	39.15	4405.5	6761.08		
G ₄ - Sea weed extracts(liquid) @625ml/ha	419.05	10.8	66.83	2.52	39.33	4465.23	6883.3		
G ₅ - Micronutrients(Zn, Fe, Cu, B) @0.5%	420.53	11.05	67.55	2.64	39.82	4572.17	7072.2		
G ₆ - UPL Macarena (fermented nutrient extract 15%) @625ml/ha	414.77	10.22	64.23	2.16	38.6	4133.3	6248.6		
G ₇ - Humesol (humic acid 18%, fulvic acid 15%) @1250ml/ha	416.2	10.43	65.47	2.33	38.88	4241.68	6506.92		
G ₈ - Amino Booster G (30% amino acid solution)@5ml/L	415.43	10.28	64.87	2.26	38.8	4201.35	6409.67		
SED ±	0.599	0.187	0.261	0.033	0.505	44.067	27.842		
CD at 5%	1.225	0.383	0.534	0.067	1.033	90.169	56.971		
Interaction(VxG)									
SED ±	0.847	0.264	0.369	0.046	0.714	62.32	39.375		
CD at 5%	NS	NS	NS	0.12	NS	161.635	117.003		

4. CONCLUSION

The result of the current investigation shows that the variety of wheat DBW-187 recorded better growth and grain yield (4601.8 kg ha⁻¹) under timely sown (5th December 2022) compared to other variety. Among plant growth promoters, the mixture of micronutrients (Zn, Fe, B, and Cu) recorded maximum growth attributes, grain yield (4572.17 kg ha⁻¹) compared to control treatment. These findings underscore the significance of both varietal selection and judicious use of plant growth promoters in enhancing wheat production.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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