**Determining the Effect of Potassium and Zinc on the Growth and Yield of Mustard (*Brassica juncea* L*.*)**

*.*

**Abstract**

 A field experiment was conducted during the Rabiseason of 2023-2024 to assess the influence of potassium and zinc on the growth, yield, and quality of mustard (*Brassica juncea* L.) var. ‘Pant Shweta’ at the Agricultural Research Farm, Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. The investigational plot’s soil was sandy loam, with a pH of 6.00, electrical conductivity of 0.21dS/m, low in organic carbon (0.55%), available N (125 kg/ha), available P (54.82 kg/ha) and available K (89.8 kg/ha). The experiment was laid out in a Randomized Block Design (RBD) with eight treatments replicated thrice, including control (T1), NP + 30 kg K/ha (T2), NP + 30 kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha (T3), NP + 30 kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T4), NP + 40 kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha (T5), NP + 40 kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T6), NP + 50 kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha (T7), and NP + 50 kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8). Application of NP + 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) recorded highest plant height (60.77 cm, 85.63 cm, and 138.83 cm) and plant dry weight (5.56 gm, 19.42 gm, and 30.60 gm) at 30, 60 and 90 days after sowing (DAS), respectively. Additionally, maximum test weight (3.12 g), number of siliqua per plant (201.68), number of seeds per siliqua (28.82), seed yield (26.00q/ha), stover yield (34.13 q/ha), oil content (40.00%), monetary benefits like gross return (₹146900.00/ha), net return (₹91575.00/ha) and benefit: cost ratio (1.66) also noted for T8.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Oilseed crops play an important role in the agricultural economy of India which constitutes the second-largest agricultural product next to food grains in the country **(Mathal *et.al.,* 2011)**. Mustard (*Brassica juncea* L*.*) is considered to be one of the most valuable oilseed crops. It belongs to *Brassicaceae* (*Cruciferae*) family. Indian mustard is known as Raya, and is considered a vital oil-producing crop among *Brassica* species in India *(***Meena *et.al.,* 2018).** Mustard production in India has increased by 40%, rising from 91.24 to 128.18 lakh tonnes during last 3 years. The productivity saw an 11%, increase from 1331 to 1447 kg/ha. The area under rapeseed and mustard was increased by 29%, from 68.56 lakh ha in 2019-20 to 88.58 lakh ha in 2022-23. Timely action by central and state governments made this remarkable achievement possible **(PIB 2023)**. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Gujarat, Andra Pradesh, Karnataka, , Odisha, Punjab and West Bengal are major mustard growing states in India **(Sharma *et.al.,* 2020).**

Among the essential mineral cations that the plant needs, potassium is one of the key macronutrients in the soil. 2.4% of the earth's crust is potassium. Potassium is mostly found in complex silicate components, while some of it is also found in soil's organic matter and clay fraction. The amount of potassium in the soil can range from 0.1% to 3.0% or even higher. In instances of insufficient soil moisture, potassium is necessary for the root system to absorb water **(Umar *et.al.,* 2006).** The deficiency in potassium is responsible for low yields and poor crop quality, because, apart from other major physiological and biochemical requirements in growth, K is a key nutrient element for the biosynthesis of oil in oilseeds and protein (**Sinha *et.al.,* 2022, Solanki *et.al.,* 2016).**

Zinc (Zn) being one of the essential micronutrients, plays a significant role in various enzymatic and physiological activities of the plant system. It is also essential for photosynthesis and nitrogen metabolism. It is important for cytoplasmic ribosome stability, cell division, enzymatic activity (e.g., dehydrogenase, proteinase and peptidase). It also helps in the synthesis of protein and carotene. In India, Zn is now considered as fourth most important yield-limiting nutrient in agricultural crops. Zinc deficiency in Indian soils is expected to increase from 42% in 1970 to 63% by 2025 due to continuous depletion of soil fertility **(Bhatt *et.al.*, 2020).** Zinc is vital for vigorous plant growth, natural resistance to disease, pests and stress tolerance. Mustard plants absorb zinc in larger amounts than any other micronutrient **(Bartaria *et.al.,* 2002).**

1. **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A field experiment was conducted during the rabi season of 2023-24, at Agricultural Research Farm, Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand to assess the effect of potassium and zinc on growth,yield, and qualty of Mustard *[Brassica juncea (L.).* The experiment was laid out in a Randomized Block Design comprising 8 treatments which are replicated thrice. Each treatment net plot size is 3.5 m x 4.5 m. The treatments are categorized as with recommended dose of nitrogen through urea and phosphorus through SSP, in addition to Potassium and zinc when applied in combinations as follows, T1 – Control, T2 – NP+30kg K/ha, T3 – NP+30kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha, T4 – NP+30kg K/ha+ 15kg Zn/ha, T5 – NP+ 40kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha, T6 – NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha, T7 –NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha and T8- 5NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha. The mustard crop was harvested treatment-wise at the harvesting maturity stage. Growth parameters viz. plant height (cm), and dry matter accumulation (g/m2) were recorded manually on five randomly selected representative plants from each plot of each replication separately and after harvesting, seeds were separated from each net plot and were sun-dried for five days. Later winnowed, cleaned and seed yield per ha was computed and expressed in kilogram per hectare. After complete sun-drying for 10 days stover yield from each net plot was recorded and expressed in kilogram per hectare. The data was computed and analyzed by following statistical methods of Gomez and Gomez **(Gomez *et.al.*,1984)**. The benefit-cost ratio was worked out after price value of the seed with straw and total cost included in crop cultivation.

1. **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**A. Pre-harvest observations**

**a. Emergence Count/m2**

Data regarding the mean number of plants emerged per m2 at 20 DAS are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean number of plants emerged per m2 at 20 DAS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Treatments** | **Emergence/m2** |
|
| T1 (Control) | 30.67 |
| T2 NP+30kg K/ha | 43.33 |
| T3 NP+ 30kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 52.67 |
| T4 NP+30kg K/ha+ 15 kgZn/ha | 56.67 |
| T5 NP+ 40kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 60.00 |
| T6 NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha | 65.00 |
| T7 NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 57.67 |
| T8 NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha | 69.00 |
| SEm± | 1.63 |
| CD(5%) | 4.85 |

The result showed that maximum emergence count / m2 (69.00) is obtained with the application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8). Which was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha(T6) and significantly higher than the rest of the treatments. The results showed that NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) increased by 31.00% and 124% over NP+ 30kg K/ha and control respectively.

**b. Plant height (cm)**

At 30DAS which was statistically at par with NP+30kg K/ha+ 15 kg Zn/ha(T4), NP+ 40kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha(T5), NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha(T6), and NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha (T7) and significantly higher than the rest of the treatments. At 60DAS and 90DAS it was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha(T6), and NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha (T7) over NP+30kg K/ha and control. Application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) increased plant height by 41% over control and 30% over NP+30kg K/ha. The results are in conformity with **Farhad *et. al*., (2010)** the application of 50kg K/ha significantly increased plant height compared to lower potassium levels. An increase in plant height due to adequate availability of zinc might be attributed to a profuse root system which increases the plant growth by the enhancement in cell division because it influences the formation of several growth hormones like IAA in plants. Similar results were also reported by **(Husain and Kumar,2006).**

**Figure 1. Effect of Potassium and Zinc on Plant height of Mustard.**

**c. Dry Matter Accumulation/m2**

The results showed that maximum dry matter accumulation g/m2 (7.17gm, 89.90gm, 223.3gm) respectively at 30, 60 & 90 DAS) was obtained with the application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) at all the crop growth stages. At 30 and 90 DAS, it was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T6) and significantly higher than the rest of the treatments. At 60 DAS, it was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha(T6), NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha(T7) over NP+30kg K/ha and control. Application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) increased plant height by 226% over control and 85% over NP+30kg K/ha.

This might be due to Potassium. It influences the transport and assimilation of nutrients and water within the plant. Which was involved in maintaining osmotic balance and cell turgor, which are necessary for cell expansion and overall plant growth. This nutrient helps in the movement of sugars and other carbohydrates from leaves to storage organs, promoting the accumulation of biomass​ confirmed by **Hasanuzzaman *et.al.,* (2018).** This might be due to higher branches and more height. A similar result is also reported by **Kaur *et al.* (2017)** wherein they reported significant increase in mustard dry matter due to 5 kg Zn/ha.

**Table 2. Effect of Potassium and Zinc on Dry Matter Accumulation accumulation/m2**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Treatments | 30 DAS | 60 DAS | 90 DAS |
| T1 | Control | 3.33 | 42.03 | 68.33 |
| T2 | NP+30kg K/ha | 4.10 | 55.37 | 120.17 |
| T3 | NP+ 30kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 3.86 | 67.07 | 141.67 |
| T4 | NP+30kg K/ha+ 15 kgZn/ha | 4.78 | 62.73 | 148.00 |
| T5 | NP+ 40kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 5.02 | 70.87 | 168.39 |
| T6 | NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha | 6.33 | 79.63 | 210.67 |
| T7 | NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 5.97 | 75.63 | 161.63 |
| T8 | NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha | 7.17 | 89.90 | 223.33 |
| SEm± | 0.37 | 5.41 | 8.59 |
| CD 5 % | 1.12 | 16.57 | 26.30 |

**d. Crop Growth Rate (CGR)**

The results showed that the maximum Crop Growth Rate (1.00, 11.67 & 16.9 gm/m2/day, respectively at 30, 60 & 90 DAS) was obtained with the application NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) at all the crop growth stages. However, it was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T6) and NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha (T7) and significantly higher than the rest of the treatments. Application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) resulted in increased crop growth rate by 78% and 195 % over NP+30kg K/ha and control, respectively at 90 DAS. Minimum CGR (0.47, 5.19 & 5.47 ) gm/m2/day at 30, 60 & 90 DAS) was recorded under control at all the crop growth stages.

**Figure 2. Effect of potassium and zinc on crop growth rate**

**E. Relative Growth Rate**

At 60 DAS it was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha(T5), NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha(T6) and NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha (T7). At 90DAS it was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha(T5) and NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha(T6). RGR increased by 2.7% and 24% with application NP+30kg K/ha (T2) and control (T1), respectively. Minimum relative growth rate (0.087, 0.169, and 0.170 mg/g/day at 30, 60, & 90 DAS) was recorded under control at all the crop growth stages.

 **Figure 3. Effect of potassium and zinc on Relative Growth Rate**

**B. Post-harvest observations**

Table 3: Relative Growth Rate in different treatment varieties

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sl. No | Treatment | **No. of** **siliqua / Plant**  | **No. of****seeds/siliqua**  | **Test weight****(g)** |
| T1 | Control | 70.93 | 22.33 | 2.30 |
| T2 | NP+30kg K/ha | 83.10 | 23.40 | 2.95 |
| T3 | NP+ 30kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 87.90 | 24.67 | 2.23 |
| T4 | NP+30kg K/ha+15 kgZn/ha | 170.53 | 25.67 | 2.83 |
| T5 | NP+ 40kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 145.03 | 25.00 | 2.93 |
| T6 | NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha | 190.50 | 27.00 | 3.05 |
| T7 | NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 149.87 | 26.00 | 2.73 |
| T8 | NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha | 201.68 | 28.82 | 3.12 |
| SEm± | 9.20 | 1.52 | 0.21 |
| CD (P=.05) | 28.16 | 4.60 | 0.64 |

**a. Siliqua/plant (No.)**

The result showed that the maximum number of Siliqua/plant (No.) (201.68) was obtained with the application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) and it was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T6) and significantly higher than the rest of the treatments. The number of siliqua/plant have increased due to higher doses of potassium and zinc. Potassium is reported to enhance the absorption of native as well as added major nutrients and thereby improves the number of siliqua/plant. Potassium application enhances the development of strong cell walls and improves germination of pollen in the florets which leads to high fertility and Siliqua formation. The results were in accordance with **Cheema *et.al*., (2012).** This might be due to optimum availability of Zn which might/have resulted in balanced nutrition. Similar findings were also reported by **Kaur *et.al*.,(2017).**

**b. Seed/Siliqua (No.)**

The result showed that the maximum number of seed/siliqua (28.82 No.) was obtained with the application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) and it was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T6) and significantly higher than the rest of the treatments. The results showed that NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) increased by 23% and 29% over NP+30kg K/ha (T2) and control (T1), respectively.

Potassium might be attributed to better filling of grains and thus, an increase in different yield attributing characters. The results were found to be similar to **Singh *et.al*., (2017).** This might be due to higher growth attributes in the same treatments. **Kaur *et al*. (2017)** also found similar results which support the present findings.

**c. Test weight (g)**

The result showed that the maximum test weight (3.12g) was obtained with the application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) and it was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T6) and significantly higher than the rest of the treatments, the results showed that NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) increased by 5% and 35% over NP+30kg K/ha (T2) and control (T1), respectively.

**C. Yield**

**Table 4: Yield and harvest index**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S.No | Treatment | **Seed yield** **(q/ha)** | **Stover yield****(q/ha)** | **Harvest** **index (%)** | **Oil content****(%)** |
| T1 | Control | 18.08 | 22.75 | 43.84 | 36.00 |
| T2 | NP+30kg K/ha | 20.83 | 23.33 | 44.89 | 36.67 |
| T3 | NP+ 30kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 21.00 | 25.45 | 45.58 | 37.67 |
| T4 | NP+30kg K/ha+15 kgZn/ha | 22.73 | 24.07 | 49.57 | 37.82 |
| T5 | NP+ 40kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 23.01 | 25.66 | 47.82 | 38.75 |
| T6 | NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha | 25.44 | 32.06 | 44.23 | 39.33 |
| T7 | NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 24.08 | 26.08 | 48.86 | 39.00 |
| T8 | NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha | 26.00 | 34.13 | 44.17 | 40.00 |
|  SEm± | 0.44 | 1.76 | 1.94 | 0.64 |
|  CD (P=.05) | 1.33 | 5.34 | NS | 1.95 |

1. **Seed yield**

The table showed that the maximum seed yield (26 q/ha) was obtained with the application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8). It was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T6) and NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha (T7) but significantly higher than the rest of the treatments. Application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) resulted in an increased seed yield of 43% & 24% over control (T1) and NP+30kg K/ha (T2), respectively. Minimum seed yield (18.08 q/ha) was recorded under control (T1).

The fact that K is crucial for processes including photosynthesis, water interactions, protein synthesis, and at least 60 distinct enzyme systems inside the plant explains why there is an increase in seed production after K treatment. Similar findings are in agreement with **Rohit and Jitendra (2020).** The increase in the seed of mustard under higher zinc supply might be ascribed mainly due to combined effect of higher number of siliqua/plant and the number of seeds/siliquae, which was the result of better translocation of photosynthesis from source to sink. Similar results were also reported by **Chandra and Khandelwal (2009)** and **Meena *et al.* (2006).**

**c. Stover yield (q/ha)**

The results showed that the maximum Stover yield (34.13 q/ha) was obtained with the application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8). It was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T6) but significantly higher than the rest of the treatments. Application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) resulted in increased seed yield of 50% & 46% over control (T1) and NP+30kg K/ha (T2), respectively. The fact that K is the primary plant nutrient limiting yield in K-deficient soils may be the cause of the rise in Stover yields brought on by K treatment. According to reports, applied K increases the plant's general growth and development as well as the uptake of important nutrients, leading to increased Stover output. Additionally, the role of K in numerous enzymatic reactions, growth processes, hormone production, protein synthesis, and the translocation of photosynthates to reproductive parts may be responsible for the beneficial effect of K application on the yield of mustard (**Yadav *et.al*., 2013).** Applied Zn is reported to enhance the absorption of native as well as added major nutrients and thereby improves overall growth and development of plant and ultimately the seed and Stover yield. In addition, the beneficial influence of Zn application on the yield of mustard may be attributed to its role in various enzymatic reactions, growth processes, hormone production and protein synthesis and also the translocation of photosynthates to reproductive parts thereby leading to a higher yield of the crop (**Upadhyay, 2012 and Singh *et.al.,* 2013).**

**d. Harvest index (q/ha)**

The table showed that the highest harvest index was evident with NP+ 30kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T4) (49.57%) and the lowest value was found with control (T1) (43.84%) though the effect is non-significant among the treatments it is clearly visible with the application of balance dose of potash and zinc lead to achieve the proper growth and development throughout the crop span. The trend in the projected study under potash-applied plants might be due to a decrease in the transpiration rate which ultimately maximizes water retention and utilization (**Syrovy *et.al.,* 2015**). The performance of potash in plant growth and development might be due to triggering the biochemical, morphological and physiological processes as a catalyst in the mustard crop plants (**Trivedi *et.al.,* 2014)**

**e. Oil content**

The results showed that maximum oil content (%) (40.00) was obtained with the application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8). It was statistically at par with NP+ 40kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha (T5), NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T6) and NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha (T7) but significantly higher than the rest of the treatments. Application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8) resulted in increased oil content of 11% and 9% over control (T1) and NP+30kg K/ha (T2), respectively. Potassium might have activated the enzymes responsible for producing oil and caused higher oil content. The beneficial effect of K on oil content was also reported by **Singh *et.al.,* (2017).**

1. **Economic Analysis**

Significantly higher gross return (₹146900/ha) was recorded in 50 kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha. However, 50 kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha was found to be statistically at par with 40 kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha. The highest net return and benefit-cost ratio (91575 INR/ha and 1.66 respectively) were recorded under treatments 50 kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha. However, for net return and benefit-cost was found to be statistically at par with **Table 5. Effect of Potassium and Zinc on the economics of production of Mustard**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S.No | Treatment | **Cost of cultivation (INR/ha)** | **Gross return****(INR/ha)** | **Net Returns****(INR/ha)** | **Benefit: Cost** |
| T1 | Control | 45156 | 102171 | 57015 | 1.18 |
| T2 | NP+30kg K/ha | 52790 | 117708 | 64918 | 1.23 |
| T3 | NP+ 30kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 53930 | 118669 | 64739 | 1.20 |
| T4 | NP+30kg K/ha +15 kgZn/ha | 54500 | 128443 | 73943 | 1.36 |
| T5 | NP+ 40kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 54180 | 129999 | 75819 | 1.40 |
| T6 | NP+ 40kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha | 54750 | 143717 | 88967 | 1.62 |
| T7 | NP+ 50kg K/ha + 10 kg Zn/ha | 54755 | 136071 | 81316 | 1.49 |
| T8 | NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha | 55325 | 146900 | 91575 | 1.66 |
| SEm± | - | 2477.73 | 2443.24 | 0.06 |
| CD (P=.05) | - | 7515.02 | 7410.42 | 0.17 |

1. **CONCLUSION**

 The result obtained from the current study led to the conclusion that the application of NP+ 50kg K/ha + 15 kg Zn/ha (T8), resulted in enhanced plant growth, increased yield, and the highest benefit-cost ratio (B:C ratio). This outcome may be due to potassium which helps in the regulation of stomatal opening and closing. By managing water loss and maintaining turgor pressure, potassium ensures that plants are less stressed and more capable of resisting infections. Proper stomatal function can also prevent the entry of pathogens through leaf openings. Potassium ensures a balanced nutrient status within the plant, which is crucial for maintaining robust plant health. Healthy plants are better equipped to resist diseases compared to nutrient-deficient plants. Adequate zinc availability can enhance flowering, fruit set, and seed production, thus improving the overall yield and quality of mustard crops.

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