**Performance of finger millet varieties to different crop establishment techniques in rice-fallows**

**ABSTRACT**

**Aim**: A field experiment was conducted to study the effect of finger millet varieties to different crop establishment techniques under rice fallow situations.

**Study design**: The experiment was laid out in split plot design with three main plots (Crop establishment techniques) and four sub plots (Varieties) that were allocated randomly and replicated thrice.

**Place and Duration of study**: *rabi*, 2023-24 at Agricultural College Farm, Bapatla.

**Methodology:** The main plot treatments were Crop establishment techniques i.e., Transplanting (22.5 cm x 10 cm), Dibbling (22.5 cm x 10 cm) and Broadcasting. The sub plot treatments were Varieties which include Vegavathi, Indravathi, Gosthani and Gowthami.

**Results:** Finger millet grown under broadcasting method of establishment under rice fallow situation recorded higher growth parameters (plant height at harvest 92.0 cm) and drymatter accumulation at harvest (9535 kg ha-1), grain yield (2663 kg ha-1) and straw yield (6183 kg ha-1) over dibbling and transplanting methods of crop establishment. Among the finger millet varieties tested in rice - fallows, Vegavathi recorded significantly higher growth parameters (plant height at harvest 89.4 cm) and drymatter accumulation at harvest (9162 kg ha-1), Grain yield (2622 kg ha-1) and straw yield (6079 kg ha-1) in Krishna zone of Andhra Pradesh. The highest gross returns (112013 Rs. ha-1), net returns (700734 Rs ha-1) and Benefit-Cost ratio (1.71) were recorded in Broadcasting method of crop establishment. Vegavathi variety of finger millet recorded higher gross returns (109792 Rs. ha-1), net returns (65143 Rs. ha-1) and Benefit Cost ratio (1.49) in the study.

**Conclusion**: Broadcasting method recorded higher growth parameters, yield, gross returns, net returns and B:C ratio. Among the varieties tested, Vegavathi recorded the highest growth parameters, yield, gross returns, net returns and B:C ratio under rice fallow situations of coastal Andhra Pradesh.

Keywords: Rice fallow; Crop establishment technique; Broadcasting; Transplanting; Dibbling

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Millets are a group of small-seeded grasses that are highly nutritious, drought-resistant, staple food grains and have been consumed as staple food grains in many parts of Asia and Africa for thousands of years. With climate change and a growing focus on sustainable agriculture, millets are increasingly gaining attention as valuable food source that require minimal water and is resilient to challenging environmental conditions.

Finger millet, also known as *Eleusine coracana* or "ragi" in India, is a small-seeded cereal crop widely grown in Africa and Asia. Finger millet is packed with nutrients, especially calcium, making it unique among cereals. It is also a good source of iron, protein, fibre, and essential amino acids, particularly methionine, which is often lacking in other cereals. It has a low glycemic index, making it an excellent option for persons with diabetes. Finger millet is a hardy crop that can grow in semi-arid areas with low rainfall. It is highly resistant to pests and diseases making it economically feasible crop for farmers in challenging climates. The yield of any crop depends on the production potential of the variety, climatic, edaphic and management practices. Among the different agronomic practices, selection of suitable variety and establishment technique play major role in increasing the productivity of crop.

One of the cultural practices that affects the crop growth and development is the method of establishment (Gopi *et al*., 2006). Adopting a proper establishment technique ensures uniform germination and plant spacing, leading to a better crop stand and optimized yield. Different varieties are bred to perform well in specific climates, soil types, and geographic areas. Choosing a variety suited to the local environment helps ensure good crop establishment, growth, and yield, reducing the risks posed by unfavourable conditions like poor soil or inconsistent rainfall (Veeraputhiran *et al*., 2009).

**2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The experiment was conducted at Agricultural College Farm, Acharya N. G. Ranga Agricultural University, Bapatla during *rabi*, 2023-24. The experimental site is situated at an altitude of 5.49 meters above mean sea level (MSL), 150 54’ North latitude, 800 25’ East longitude and about 8 km away from the Bay of Bengal in the Krishna Agro Climatic Zone of Andhra Pradesh state of India. The experimental soil was sandy loam in texture, neutral in reaction, non-saline, low in organic carbon content, low in available nitrogen (161 kg ha-1), medium in available phosphorous (32.98 kg ha-1) and available potassium (270 kg ha-1). The experiment was laid out in split-plot design with three main plots, four sub plots replicated three times. The main plots include three crop establishment techniques (E1: Transplanting 22.5 cm x 10 cm, E2: Dibbling 22.5 cm x 10 cm and E3: Broadcasting) and sub plots include four finger millet varieties (V1: Vegavathi, V2: Indravathi, V3: Gosthani and V4: Gowthami). The Recommended Dose of Fertilizer was 60 kg N, 30 kg P2O5 and 30 kg K2O ha-1. Nitrogen was applied in two equal splits *viz*. Half of the dose (30 kg of N ha-1) was applied as basal and the remaining half of the dose (30 kg of N ha-1) was applied after 30 days after sowing in the form of urea. Entire quantity of phosphorus (30 kg P2O5 ha-1) and potassium (30 kg K2O ha-1) was applied as basal through Single Super Phosphate (SSP) and Muriate of Potash (MOP). Seeds were sown on well-prepared nursery bed on the same day of sowing in the main field and nursery was raised up to the age of 25 days with proper care and management. Irrigation was supplemented one day before transplanting in order to ensure plant stand and at alternate days after transplanting till proper establishment of the seedlings. Furthermore, irrigation was given at weekly intervals based on soil conditions. Two hand weddings each at 15 and 40 days after sowing were taken up in dibbling and broadcasting methods to check weed growth whereas in transplanting method two hand weedings after 15 and 30 days after transplanting were carried out.

 Growth parameters were recorded at harvest. Plant height was measured from the basal node of the plant to the tip of the topmost leaf at harvest and mean height was presented as centi meter. In each treatment, one m² area was demarcated in the net plot with small pegs. The above ground portion of the plant was collected and dried in hot air oven at 65°C till the constant weight was obtained and were weighed separately, then converted to kg ha-1. Plants in the net plot area were harvested separately in each plot threshed and grains were separated, dried under sun and the grain yield per plot was recorded after cleaning. After threshing the grain, the remaining straw was dried under sun and the yield per hectare was computed. By using all the inputs, total cost of cultivation was calculated for each treatment. Based on prevailing market price of the output, gross returns were calculated. The net returns from each treatment were calculated by deducting the cost of cultivation worked out based on the prevailing costs of inputs incurred and labour wages from gross returns. The Benefit: Cost Ratio (BCR) for all the treatments was worked out on the basis of net returns in terms of rupees after deducting the cost of cultivation from gross returns. The data obtained on the different parameters were analyzed statistically by the method of analysis of variance as per the procedure outlined for split plot design given by Gomez and Gomez (1984). Statistical significance was tested by F value at 0.05 level of probability and critical difference was worked out where ever the effects were significant.

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**3.1 PLANT HEIGHT**

Broadcasting method of crop establishment recorded the highest plant height (92.0 cm) at harvest which was statistically on par with dibbling (82.5 cm). Lowest plant height was noticed in transplanting method (77.7 cm) of establishment in finger millet. Among the finger millet varieties tested, the highest plant height was observed with V1- Vegavathi (89.4 cm) which is at par with V2- Indravati (86.7 cm). The lowest plant height was noticed in V4- Gowthami (78.4 cm) in finger millet under rice fallows. Difference in plant height among various establishment techniques under a given agro-ecological condition was given by several researchers (Gopi *et al.,* 2006, Thavaprakash *et al.,* 2008, Sarawale *et al.,* 2017 and Narayan *et al.,* 2018). The increase in plant height might be due to inherited disparity of the variety under investigation. Crop productivity increases with the number of effective tillers and plant height as suggested by Johnson *et al*. (1955). Similar results were also reported by Miko and Manga (2008) in sorghum crop reported that higher the number of plants in a unit area, greater is the height of the plant.

**3.2 DRYMATTER ACCUMULATION**

Among the crop establishment techniques, at harvest E3- Broadcasting (9535 kg ha-1) was recorded with highest drymatter accumulation followed by E2- Dibbling (8365 kg ha-1). Significantly the lowest drymatter accumulation was observed with E1- Transplanting (7896 kg ha-1). At harvest, among the varieties tested significantly the highest drymatter accumulation was recorded in V1- Vegavathi (9162 kg ha-1) which was found statistically similar with V2- Indravathi (8795 kg ha-1) followed by V3- Gosthani (8464 kg ha-1). The variety V4- Gowthami (7973 kg ha-1) was noticed with the lowest drymatter accumulation during the study. Variety with rapid growth during initial stages produced taller plants during growing period and also higher leaf area at early stage of plant results in higher production and accumulation of drymatter (Andhale *et al.,* 2003).

**3.3 GRAIN YIELD**

In rice fallow finger millet among the crop establishment techniques, E3- Broadcasting resulted in highest grain yield (2663 kg ha-1) followed by E2- Dibbling (2168 kg ha-1) method. Significantly the lowest grain yield was recorded in E1- Transplanting (1969 kg ha-1) method of crop establishment. Among the varieties, significantly higher grain yield was recorded with V1- Vegavathi (2622 kg ha-1) followed by V2- Indravathi (2337 kg ha-1) and V3- Gosthani (2214 kg ha-1). Grain yield was recorded to be the lowest in V4- Gowthami (1893 kg ha-1) variety of finger millet under rice fallows. Similar results were observed by Hugar and Halikatti (1998) and Leila *et al.* (2008). These results are in accordance with Shinggu and Mani (2012) and Bello *et al.* (2022).

**3.4 STRAW YIELD**

Among the crop establishment techniques, the highest straw yield was recorded with E3- Broadcasting method (6183 kg ha-1) which was on par with E2- Dibbling (5621 kg ha-1). Vegavathi variety of finger millet recorded the highest straw yield (6079 kg ha-1) which was at par with Indravathi variety (5811 kg ha-1) in rice fallow finger millet under the study.

**Table 1. Growth parameters and yield of finger millet varieties as influenced by different crop establishment techniques in rice fallows.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Treatments** | **Plant height****at harvest****(cm)** | **Drymatter accumulation at harvest (kg ha-1)** | **Grain yield****(kg ha-1)** | **Straw yield****(kg ha-1)** |
| **Crop establishment techniques** |
| E1: Transplanting | 77.7 | 7896 | 1969 | 5115 |
| E2: Dibbling | 82.5 | 8365 | 2168 | 5621 |
| E3: Broadcasting | 92.0 | 9535 | 2663 | 6183 |
| SEm± | 2.1 | 185 | 69 | 114 |
| CD (*P* = 0.05) | 8.4 | 727 | 269 | 448 |
| CV (%) | 8.8 | 7.5 | 10.5 | 7.0 |
| **Varieties** |
| V1: Vegavathi | 89.4 | 9162 | 2622 | 6079 |
| V2: Indravathi | 86.7 | 8795 | 2337 | 5811 |
| V3: Gosthani | 81.8 | 8464 | 2214 | 5483 |
| V4: Gowthami | 78.4 | 7973 | 1893 | 5187 |
| SEm± | 2.4 | 185 | 76 | 144 |
| CD (*P*= 0.05) | 7.2 | 551 | 225 | 427 |
| CV (%) | 8.6 | 6.5 | 10.0 | 7.6 |
| **INTERACTION** |   |  |  |  |
| SEm± | 4.2 | 321 | 131 | 249 |
| CD at 5% E × V | NS | NS | NS | NS |
| CD at 5% V× E | NS | NS | NS | NS |

**3.5 GROSS RETURNS**

Among the crop establishment techniques investigated, highest gross returns were noticed with E3- Broadcasting (112013 Rs. ha-1) followed by E2- Dibbling (91917 Rs. ha-1) and the lowest was recorded with Transplanting (83812 Rs. ha-1). Among the finger millet varieties, V1- Vegavathi (109792 Rs. ha-1) recorded the highest gross returns which was statistically similar with V2- Indravathi (98699 Rs. ha-1) under rice fallow situations in Krishna zone of Andhra Pradesh.

**3.6 NET RETURNS**

In rice fallow finger millet among the crop establishment techniques, significantly the highest net returns were recorded with E3- Broadcasting method (70731 Rs. ha-1) over the other methods of crop establishment. Among the varieties tested, V1- Vegavathi (65143 Rs ha-1) recorded significantly highest net returns which was followed by V2- Indravathi (54050 Rs ha-1) variety of finger millet.

**3.7 B: C RATIO**

Among the crop establishment techniques investigated in rice fallow finger millet the highest B:C Ratio was noticed with E3- Broadcasting (1.71) method in rice fallow finger millet. V1- Vegavathi variety (1.49) of finger millet recorded significantly highest B:C ratio followed by V2- Indravathi (1.23) while the lowest B:C was recorded with V4- Gowthami (0.84) variety under rice – fallows.

**Table 2. Economics of finger millet varieties as influenced by different crop establishment techniques in rice fallows**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Treatments** | **Gross returns (Rs. ha-1)** | **Net returns (Rs. ha-1)** | **B:C ratio** |
| **Crop establishment techniques** |
| E1: Transplanting | 83812 | 35870 | 0.75 |
| E2: Dibbling | 91917 | 47195 | 1.06 |
| E3: Broadcasting | 112013 | 70731 | 1.71 |
| SEm± | 2658 | 2658 | 0.06 |
| CD (p = 0.05) | 10437 | 10437 | 0.25 |
| CV (%) | 9.6 | 18 | 18.5 |
| **Varieties** |
| V1: Vegavathi | 109792 | 65143 | 1.49 |
| V2: Indravathi | 98699 | 54050 | 1.23 |
| V3: Gosthani | 93946 | 49298 | 1.13 |
| V4: Gowthami | 81218 | 36569 | 0.84 |
| SEm± | 2880 | 2880 | 0.06 |
| CD (p = 0.05) | 8558 | 4074 | 0.19 |
| CV (%) | 9.0 | 17 | 16.4 |
| **INTERACTION** |  |  |   |
| SEm± | 4989 | 4989 | 0.11 |
| CD at 5% E ×V | NS | NS | NS |
| CD at 5% V × E | NS | NS | NS |

**4. CONCLUSION**

Finger millet grown under broadcasting method of crop establishment showed better performance throughout the crop growth stages and recorded higher growth parameters, yield and economics over dibbling and transplanting methods in rice fallows. Among the finger millet varieties tested Vegavathi recorded higher growth parameters, yield and economics followed by Indravathi under rice fallow situations of coastal Andhra Pradesh.

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