**Effect of Lime, Boron and Farm Yard Manure on Cauliflower Yield and Soil Fertility in Acidic Soils of Keonjhar District in Odisha, India**

**ABSTRACT**

A field trial was conducted during 2012-13 and 2013-14 (*Rabi* seasons) to assess the combined effect of lime, boron (B), and farmyard manure (FYM) on soil fertility and productivity of cauliflower (*Brassica oleracea* L. var. botrytis) in acidic soils of Keonjhar District, Odisha. The experiment was laid out in a Randomized Block Design (RBD), replicated thrice, with eighteen treatment combinations consisting of two levels of FYM, three levels of lime, and three levels of boron. The treatments included different combinations of lime (0%, 0.1 LR, 0.2 LR), boron (0, 0.5 kg/ha + 0.25% foliar spray, 1.0 kg/ha), and FYM (0 t/ha, 5 t/ha). The recommended dose of nitrogen (150 kg/ha) plus 75 kg ha-1 as basal dose, phosphorus (60 kg/ha), and potassium (80 kg/ha) was applied uniformly across all treatments using urea, single superphosphate, and muriate of potash, respectively. Combined application of lime, boron, and FYM significantly improved some soil properties, such as soil pH, organic carbon, available nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, exchangeable calcium, and available boron. Additionally, it reduced the toxicity of available iron, creating a favorable environment for cauliflower growth. Among the eighteen treatments, the combination of FYM at 5 t/ha, lime at 0.2 LR, and boron at 1.0 kg/ha resulted the highest dry matter and curd yield. This treatment produced 29.8% increase in curd yield and a 40% increase in dry matter yield compared to the control. The findings suggest that integrated soil management practices involving lime, boron, and FYM can enhance both soil fertility and cauliflower productivity in acidic soils.

*Key words: Cauliflower; Boron; Lime; Farmyard Manure; Acidic Soil; Soil Characteristics; Curd Yield*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

India is the second-largest producer of vegetables in the world, trailing only behind China, and produces around 175 types of vegetables. Despite having favorable agro-climatic zones for vegetable cultivation, Odisha ranks third in vegetable production after Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, with an annual production of 90 lakh tonnes, against a requirement of 216 lakh tonnes (Odisha Agricultural Statistics, 2012-13). However, vegetable yields in Odisha remain low and unpredictable, mainly due to factors such as inadequate irrigation, aberrant weather conditions, limited access to modern agricultural technologies, poor soil fertility, and the lack of commercial farming practices. The soils of **Keonjhar district,** located in the **North Central Plateau Zone,** are predominantly **acidic,** with a high level of **Al, Fe, and Mn** saturation, poor **cation exchange capacity,** and low nutrient availability, posing significant challenges for vegetable cultivation (Pattanayak et al, 2011). Cauliflower (Brassica oleracea var. botrytis), a major vegetable grown in the district, is particularly affected by the acidic soils, which lead to **boron (B) deficiency,** resulting in **curd browning** and **reduced yield** (Sharma et al., 2015). Additionally, the low organic matter content exacerbates the problem, limiting the crop’s growth potential. In Keonjhar district, cauliflower is cultivated throughout the year, and its production as an off-season vegetable is particularly valuable because it fetches a high market price, thereby improving the economic status of local farmers. Nevertheless, the crop often exhibits deficiency symptoms such as browning of the curd, marginal leaf mottling, and a hollow stem, rendering the curd unfit for human consumption and reducing overall yield. The combined effect of acidic soils and low organic matter significantly hampers the productivity and quality of cauliflower (Sen et al., 2025; Singh et al., 2025). A promising approach to overcoming the soil acidity issue is **liming,** which helps to neutralize the soil pH, improving nutrient availability and enhancing crop yield. In addition to lime**, Farmyard Manure (FYM),** an organic source of nutrients, and **boron** supplementation can further optimize cauliflower growth (Bhattacharyya et al., 2013; Panda, 2009). However, the high cost of lime and the limited availability of traditional liming materials such as **dolomite** and **limestone** make it difficult for subsistence farmers to adopt liming practices. This has led to exploring alternative **liming materials,** such as **paper mill sludge** and **stromatolytic limestone,** which are more cost-effective and locally available (Misra, 2004).

 Therefore, the present investigation was conducted to assess the **combined effect of boron, lime,** and **FYM** on **soil properties** and cauliflower **yield** in the acidic soils of **Keonjhar district, India.**

**2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A field trial was laid out at the farmer’s field during *Rabi* (2012-13) and *Rabi* (2013-14) in the Village- Sitarampur, Block: Jhumpura District- Keonjhar, one of the adopted village of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Keonjhar ~~for consecutive two seasons~~. The experimental site is located at 21°51′01.4″ N latitude and 85°37′46.5″ E longitude. Farm yard manure @ 5 t/ha and recommended dose of N, P2O5 and K2O @150:60:80 kg/ha were applied through urea, single superphosphate and muriate of potash, respectively. Half dose of nitrogen and potassium along with full dose of phosphorus were applied as basal in the furrows by the trench hoe. The rest amount of nitrogen and potash was top dressed after 30 days of planting. Lime has been applied by means of Paper Mill Sludge as per lime requirement of the soil. The boron as per treatment applied as basal dose and foliar spray through borax and albor, respectively. The experiment was laid out in randomized block design and replicated thrice. There were eighteen treatment combinations consisting of two levels of Farm Yard Manure, three levels of Lime and three levels of Boron. Treatment combinations are as follows: T1: Untreated control (0) (without lime, born and FYM) ; T2: FYM (0) + Lime (0) + Boron (0.5 kg/ha + 0.25% foliar spray) ; T3: FYM (0) + Lime (0) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha) ; T4 : FYM (0) + Lime (0.1 LR) + Boron (0) ; T5 :FYM (0) + Lime (0.1LR) + Boron (0.5 kg/ha +0.25% foliar spray) ; T6 : FYM (0) + Lime (0.1 LR) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha); T7 : FYM (0) +Lime (0.2LR) + Boron (0) ; T8 : FYM (0) + Lime (0.2 LR) + Boron (0.5 kg/ha +0.25% Foliar spray) ; T9 : FYM (0) + Lime (0.2 LR) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha); T10: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0) + Boron (0) ; T11: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0) +Boron (0.5 kg/ha + 0.25% foliar spray); T12: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha); T13 : FYM (5t/ha) + Lime (0.1 LR) + Boron (0); T14: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0.1 LR) + Boron (0.5 kg/ha + 0.25% foliar spray); T15 : FYM (5 t/ha) +Lime (0.1 LR) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha); T16: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0.2 LR) + Boron (0); T17: FYM (5t/ha) + Lime (0.2 LR) + Boron (0.5 kg/ha + 0.25% Foliar spray); T18: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0.2 LR) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha). In each treatment the plot size was of 5m x 3m. Plant spacing of 45cm x 30cm was maintained. Twenty-five days old seedlings were transplanted into main field. The total curd weight per plant was measured for each treatment and calculated on a per-hectare basis (q/ha). All the scientific package of practices was followed uniformly to all the treatments. Soil pH was measured in a 1:2.5 soil-to-water suspension using a glass electrode digital pH meter (Jackson, 1973). Soil organic carbon was determined by the wet oxidation method (Walkley and Black, 1934). Available Nitrogen (N) was estimated by the alkaline KMnO₄ distillation method (Subbiah and Asija, 1956). Available Phosphorus (P) was analyzed using Bray’s No. 1 method (Bray and Kurtz, 1945) as outlined by Page et al. (1982). Available Potassium (K) was extracted using neutral 1*N* NH₄OAc and determined by flame photometry (Muhr et al., 1965). Available Calcium (Ca) was extracted with ammonium acetate and estimated by EDTA titration using Calcon and EBT indicators (Black et al., 1965; Page et al., 1982). Available Boron (B) was extracted by the hot water method and measured spectrophotometrically using azomethine-H (Page et al., 1982). Available Zinc (Zn) and Iron (Fe) were extracted with DTPA and quantified using Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometry (Lindsay and Norvell, 1978). Statistical analysis was carried out as per analysis of variance technique applicable for randomized block design (Gomez and Gomez, 1976).

#### ****3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****

#### 3.1 ****Effect on soil characteristics****

The application of FYM, lime, and boron significantly altered the chemical properties of the acid soil under cauliflower cultivation (0–15 cm depth) (Table 1). Soil pH showed a notable increase with application of 0.2 LR lime in T7, T8, T9, T16, T17, and T18. The highest pH values, ranging from 6.36 to 6.52 post-harvest, compared to the control (T1) with pH around 5.37. This indicates effective neutralization of soil acidity by lime, which has been well-documented in previous studies (Ameyu 2019; Barman et al., 2014). The addition of FYM further enhanced this effect, likely due to improved soil buffering capacity (Singh et al., 2009). The combination of FYM, lime, and boron most effectively neutralized acidity, improved cation exchange capacity, and enhanced the availability of essential nutrients making soil more conducive to cauliflower cultivation (Islam et al., 2021). Soil organic carbon (SOC) content showed slight increases after the cropping cycle, especially in FYM-amended treatments. The highest SOC values (up to 0.47%) were observed in T18 (FYM 5 t/ha + Lime 0.2 LR + Boron 1.0 kg/ha), suggesting that FYM contributes to maintaining and enhancing soil organic matter under acid soil conditions (Manna et al., 2007). FYM markedly improved soil organic carbon and nutrient availability, while boron further augmented organic carbon when used with FYM and lime (Zhang et al., 2023). Available N was generally higher in treatments receiving FYM and lime, with T18 showing the highest post-harvest nitrogen level (124.00 kg/ha) compared to the initial values and control (118.87 kg/ha). This increase is attributed to enhanced mineralization and reduced nitrogen losses in amended soils as observed by **Barman et al. (2014)** and **Singh et al., 2024).** Available P improved significantly with lime and FYM application, with post-harvest values increasing from 36.40 kg/ha in control (T1) to over 40 kg/ha in the combined treatments (T18). Lime likely increased P availability by reducing soil acidity and fixing phosphorus in more plant-available forms (Scanlan et al., 2017). Potassium availability remained fairly stable across treatments but showed slight improvement in FYM and lime-treated plots, with the highest post-harvest K observed in T18 (152.65 kg/ha), consistent with the findings of **Fekadu et al. (2018)**. Calcium availability increased dramatically with lime application, from 2.15 kg/ha in untreated control (T1) to 17.33 kg/ha in T18. This is consistent with lime being a direct source of Ca, essential for alleviating soil acidity (Barman et al., 2014). Boron levels increased in treatments receiving boron fertilizer, with the highest post-harvest B content in T18 (0.53 kg/ha). This reflects efficient boron supplementation through soil and foliar applications, as noted by **Jehangir et al., (2017)**. This reflects efficient boron supplementation through soil and foliar applications. Iron availability decreased in response to lime and FYM treatments, from 6.13 kg/ha in control to 4.65 kg/ha in T18, indicating reduced Fe toxicity in neutralized soils, as reported by **Islam et al. (2021)**.

#### ****3.2 Yield****

Yield data clearly indicates that combined amendments (lime + FYM + boron) perform single or dual amendments (Fig-1). The most effective treatment (**T18)**, delivered around **30% higher curd yield** and **40% higher dry matter yield** over control, underscoring the advantage of integrated nutrient management. **Curd yield** improved progressively from 16.48 t/ha in control (T1) to 21.95 t/ha in T18 (FYM + Lime + Boron). **Dry matter yield** also increased from 5.18 t/ha in control to 7.30 t/ha in T18. Treatments combining FYM, lime, and boron consistently outperformed others, indicating a synergistic effect on cauliflower productivity, which aligns with findings from **Sen et al. (2017)** and **Kumar et al. (2018)**.

 **Overall, the combined application of FYM, lime, and boron significantly improved soil chemical properties and nutrient availability, leading to higher cauliflower yields in acid soils.** These results are consistent with studies by **Sharma et al. (2022)** and **Gupta & Mehta (2019)**,who reported similar improvements in crop yields with integrated soil amendment strategies.

**4. CONCLUSION**

The study clearly demonstrated that the combined application of **lime (0.2 LR), farmyard manure (5 t/ha),** and **boron (1 kg/ha)** significantly improved soil properties and cauliflower productivity in the acidic soils of Keonjhar district. This integrated approach effectively increased soil pH, enhanced organic carbon content, and improved the availability of key nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and boron, while reducing potential iron toxicity. The treatment (T18) with the full combination resulted in the highest **curd yield (21.40 t/ha)** and **dry matter yield (7.30 t/ha)**, outperforming all other treatments. Thus, **integrated nutrient management using lime, FYM, and boron is a sustainable and economically viable strategy** to enhance soil fertility and maximize crop yields in acidic soils, particularly for cauliflower cultivation in tribal and resource-constrained regions like Keonjhar district of Odisha, India.

**DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)**

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

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**Fig 1. Effect of Lime, boron and FYM on curd yield and dry matter yield of cauliflower in acidic soil**

**Table 1: Effect of Lime, Boron and FYM on post harvest soil properties of cauliflower crop (Pooled data of 2 years)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Treatments** | **pH** | **OC (%)** | **Av. N** **(kg/ha)** | **Av. P** **(kg/ha)** | **Av. K** **(kg/ha)** | **Av. Ca (kg/ha)** | **Av. B (kg/ha)** | **Av. Fe (kg/ha)** |
| T1: FYM(0) + Lime (0) + Boron(0)  | 5.37 | 0.37 | 118.87 | 37.08 | 141.32 | 2.15 | 0.22 | 6.13 |
| T2: FYM(0) + Lime(0) + Boron (0.5 kg/ha +0.25% Foliar spray) | 5.41 | 0.38 | 116.47 | 37.78 | 148.15 | 2.52 | 0.33 | 6.13 |
| T3: FYM (0) +Lime (0) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha) | 5.36 | 0.35 | 111.77 | 37.37 | 143.83 | 2.75 | 0.34 | 6.12 |
| T4 : FYM (0) + Lime (0.1 LR) + Boron(0) | 6.14 | 0.36 | 116.05 | 37.37 | 142.82 | 8.83 | 0.33 | 5.60 |
| T5 :FYM (0) + Lime (0.1 LR) +Boron (0.5 kg/ha +0.25% Foliar spray) | 6.18 | 0.36 | 121.18 | 38.17 | 146.77 | 10.27 | 0.38 | 5.55 |
| T6: FYM (0) +Lime (0.1 LR) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha) | 6.12 | 0.37 | 119.30 | 40.07 | 149.25 | 9.47 | 0.37 | 5.38 |
| T7 : FYM (0) + Lime (0.2 LR) + Boron (0)  | 6.41 | 0.36 | 117.03 | 39.92 | 142.37 | 10.57 | 0.42 | 5.37 |
| T8 : FYM (0) +Lime (0.2LR) + Boron (0.5 kg +0.25% Foliar spray) | 6.41 | 0.36 | 118.95 | 39.18 | 144.15 | 10.97 | 0.43 | 5.37 |
| T9 : FYM (0) + Lime (0.2 LR) +Boron (1.0 kg/ha)  | 6.36 | 0.38 | 127.40 | 39.35 | 144.38 | 11.75 | 0.49 | 5.22 |
| T10: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0) + Boron(0)  | 5.47 | 0.42 | 128.83 | 38.68 | 142.38 | 8.10 | 0.31 | 5.32 |
| T11: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0) + Boron (0.5 kg + 0.25% Foliar spray ) | 5.43 | 0.45 | 120.02 | 37.82 | 140.07 | 8.57 | 0.34 | 5.18 |
| T12: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha) | 5.43 | 0.42 | 117.72 | 38.52 | 145.15 | 7.62 | 0.45 | 5.27 |
| T13 : FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0.1 LR) + Boron (0)  | 6.50 | 0.43 | 120.43 | 40.15 | 142.47 | 11.48 | 0.43 | 5.00 |
| T14: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0.1 LR) + Boron (0.5 kg + 0.25% Foliar spray) | 6.45 | 0.39 | 120.72 | 39.12 | 145.70 | 11.68 | 0.46 | 5.12 |
| T15 : FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0.1LR) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha) | 6.51 | 0.39 | 120.33 | 39.63 | 144.63 | 10.93 | 0.51 | 5.08 |
| T16: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0.2 LR) + Boron(0) | 6.48 | 0.42 | 123.95 | 39.48 | 140.83 | 16.37 | 0.45 | 4.83 |
| T17: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0.2 LR) + Boron (0.5 kg + 0.25% Foliar spray) | 6.52 | 0.42 | 122.80 | 40.75 | 146.77 | 16.73 | 0.51 | 4.93 |
|  T18: FYM (5 t/ha) + Lime (0.2 LR) + Boron (1.0 kg/ha)  | 6.50 | 0.47 | 124.00 | 40.93 | 152.65 | 17.33 | 0.53 | 4.65 |
| **SEm (**±) | 0.04 | 0.02 | 3.50 | 1.13 | 4.21 | 0.67 | 0.03 | 0.25 |
| **CD (p=0.05)** | 0.12 | 0.05 | NS | NS | NS | 1.94 | 0.08 | 0.71 |
| Initial soil status  | 5.34 | 0.37 | 118.90 | 36.40 | 147.13 | 2.52 | 0.28 | 6.35 |