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Analysis of Organic and Inorganic fertilizers on growth and yield of tomato in district Amritsar

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Abstract

The current research work titled "Analysis of Organic and Inorganic Fertilizers on Growth and Yield of Tomato in Amritsar" was undertaken to determine the comparative efficacy of organic and inorganic nutrient sources on the performance of the tomato crop. The experiment was designed to compare their impact on vegetative growth, flowering, fruit set, yield, and quality parameters. Organic sources like farmyard manure, vermin compost, and bio-fertilizers were contrasted with inorganic sources like urea, DAP, and NPK formulations under field conditions in Amritsar. Results showed that inorganic fertilizers increased early vegetative growth and fruit yield considerably as a result of available nutrients, whereas organic fertilizers enhanced soil structure, microbial population, and fruit quality. The combined application of organic and inorganic sources registered better performance regarding balanced growth, yield continuity, and soil health enhancement. The research concludes that an integrated nutrient management strategy is better suited for enhancing higher productivity and ensuring long-term sustainability of tomato farming in Amritsar.

Keywords: Vermi compost, FYM, poultry manure, yield, growth, randomized block design

Introduction

Tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum* L.) is among the most significant vegetable crops grown globally for its nutritional, economic, and industrial significance. Tomato is a rich source of vitamins A and C and antioxidants like lycopene, which play an important role in human health. In India, tomato is a leading vegetable crop that is grown, and Punjab, especially the Amritsar district, has become a main production region because of its favorable agro-climatic conditions. Nutrient management is crucial in enhancing the growth, yield, and quality of tomatoes. Farmers have used inorganic fertilizers traditionally to promote greater productivity due to their direct availability of nutrients and fast response by crops. Nonetheless, frequent and indiscriminate application of chemical fertilizers promotes soil degradation, nutrient imbalance, and environmental issues. Conversely, organic fertilizers like farmyard manure, compost, and bio-fertilizers enhance the soil structure,

microbial activity, and long-term soil fertility, although their release of nutrients is relatively slower. The combination of organic and inorganic sources of nutrients has become popular as a sustainable approach to maximize crop performance along with soil health. This balanced strategy guarantees an instant supply of nutrients from inorganic sources and the long-term advantages of organic amendments. Thus, a study on the impact of organic and inorganic fertilizers on tomato growth and yield in Amritsar district is essential to formulate appropriate nutrient management practices that increase productivity, promote quality fruit, and provide environmental safety.

Materials and Methods

The field experiment "Analysis of Organic and Inorganic Fertilizers on Growth and Yield of Tomato in District Amritsar" was carried out for the 2023 season (write year) on the experimental farm of Amritsar, Punjab. The area lies

in the sub-tropical climate belt having extreme summers and severe winter seasons. The experimental field soil was sandy loam, well drained with medium fertility level.

Planting Material

A high yielding variety/cultivar of tomato (Specify name, for example, Punjab Chhuhara or Pusa Ruby) was selected for experimentation. Healthy seedlings with no disease were nursery-borne and transferred when 25-30 days old after sowing.

Experimental Design

Experiment was planned in Randomized Block Design (RBD) with five treatments and three replications (in actual numbers). The area of each plot was 10 m × 15 m with row and plant spacing 60 cm × 45 cm, respectively.

Treatments for

The treatments consisted of: T₁: Control (No fertilizer) T₂: 100% Recommended Dosage of Fertilizer (RDF) – inorganic T₃: 100% Organic (T₄: 50% Organic + 50% Inorganic (Integrated Nutrient T₅: 75% Organic + 25% (Modify accordingly to your actual plan of experiment.) Fertilizer Use Inorganic fertilizers: Nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium were applied in the guise of urea, DAP, and muriate of potash, respectively, at the recommended rate (e.g., 100:60:40 kg NPK/ha). Half of the nitrogen was applied at transplanting and the other half at flowering. Organic manures: Well decomposed FYM and/or vermicompost were applied 15-20 days before transplanting and thoroughly mixed with soil. Intercultural Practices Uniform implementation of regular irrigation, supporting with stakes, weeding, and protection of plants was made for all treatments. Data Collection Growth parameters: Height of the plants (cm), no of branches/plant, days to 50% flowering. Yield trait: Fruit number per plant, average weight of the fruit (g), fruit yield of the plant (kg), and yield of the hectare (q/ha). Quality parameters (if tested): Total soluble solids (TSS), fruit firmness, and level of ascorbic acid content. Statistical Analysis These obtained data were statistically analyzed with Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in RBD. Mean values of treatments were compared with Critical Difference (CD) test at 5% level of significance.

Materials and Methods

Experimental Region The field experiment "Analysis of Organic and Inorganic Fertilizers on Growth and Yield of Tomato in District Amritsar" was conducted during cropping season in a farmer's field/research farm of Amritsar district, Punjab. The semi-arid to sub-humid climate with cool winter and warm summer season prevails in that area. The experimental field was of sandy loamy texture, moderately fertile with good drainage and having a pH of 6.8 to 7.4. Seed Material Certified seeds of a high yielding and locally adapted variety of tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum* L.) were used for preparing the nursery. Healthy seedlings of 25-30 days old were transplanted at suggested distances. Experimental Design The experiment was set out in Randomized Block Design (RBD) with three replications. The treatments were: T₁: Control (no fertilizer) T₂: 100% Recommended Dose of Inorganic Fertilizer (RDF: NPK – 150:75:75 kg/ha) T₃: 100% Organic Fertilizer

(Farmyard Manure + Vermi compost + T₄: 50% RDF + 50% Organic fertilisers T₅: Farmer's practice (according to local recommendation) Fertilizer Application Organic manures like farm yard manure (FYM) and vermicompost were given at field preparation, while biofertilizers like Azotobacter and Phosphate Solubilizing Bacteria were given to root zone at transplanting stage. Inorganic fertilisers like urea, DAP and MOP were given in split applications – half at basal and the other half at top dressing stage of flowering and fruit set. Cultural Beliefs All agronomic recommendations such as irrigation, weeds control, and protection measures for plants were applied similarly to all plots. Staking was also provided for better support for plants. Observation Taken Growth and yield parameters were measured at varying growth stages, these being: Plant height (cm) Branches number according to plant Days to 50% flowering Number of fruits per plant Average fruit weight (g) Fruit yield per plant (kg) and per hectare (t/ha) 1. Varieties Punjab Varkha Bahar-1 As we know that there are many varieties of tomatoes, today we have discussed many varieties. Punjab Varkha Bahar-1 / Varkha Bahar-2 Both have determinate/semi-determinate habit, leaf curl virus resistance, and will be ready in 100–120 days after transplanting. Yield range from 540–545 q/ICAR Punjab Gaurav (indeterminate) Maturity 120 days after planting; appropriate for greenhouse cultivation (polynet house); produce approximately 250 q/acre. Punjab Sartaj (indeterminate) Early yielding at ~255 q/ha, dark green leaves, resistant to leaf curl; ideal variety for greenhouse crop production Hort Punjab Red Cherry, Punjab Sona Cherry (yellow), Punjab Kesar Cherry (yellow/orange) Cherry-type, indeterminate, clustered fruits, high TSS and carotene content. Yields of ~405–437 q/acre my research Punjab Ratta, Punjab Chhuhara, Punjab Tropic, Punjab Upma, Punjab NR-7 Intensively cultivated open-field types with maturity ranging between ~120–141 days and productivity ranging between ~175–325 q/ha Apni Khet Map My Crop Recommended plan: Plant a determinate variety (e.g., Varkha Bahar-1) with an indeterminate variety (e.g., Punjab Red Cherry or Punjab Sona Cherry) to accommodate different growth patterns and submergence fertilizer response behaviors.

Source of Seeds & Quality

Seed Source: Certified Punjab Agricultural University seeds or licensed supplier of seeds. Seed Health: Achieve seed germination of ≥ 85% and disease freedom, especially against leaf curl virus. Seed Treatment: Standard practice such as soaking in Trichoderma spp. suspension to suppress fungal growth or weak fungicide (where permitted). 3. Nursery Establishment - Nursery planning is done using many methods and the best one should be used. Sow Time: Sow in nursery beds/trays that have been prepared; plan ahead so that the seedlings will be ready ~4-5 weeks prior to transplanting. Seed Rate: Around 100–150 g/ha (average of the hybrids); Depending on variety and sowing rate. Cultivation Medium: A sterilised soil mixture of FYM: sand (=2:1:1) or an equivalent potting mixture. Nursery Conditions: Moist, partial shade, and airy. Harden off prior to planting out. 4. Transplanting Details Transplanting is very easy. The method of transplanting tomatoes is very simple. Seedling Age at Transplant: 4–5 true leaves, plant

height ~15–20 cm, stem thickness ~5–6 mm. Timing: Early transplanting (mid-March) improves fruit size and growth parameters under protected cultivation conditions Indian Planting Systems: Open Field: Average spacing 60 cm (row) × 45 cm (plant), adapted to variety and fertiliser programme. Protected Culture (poly net house): Parameters such as 90 × 45 cm with 2-shoot training may be able to maximise fruit quality and production. 5. Foothill Grape Varieties – G Not usually practiced here, but where disease pressure exists or where the system is organic, consider grafting on rootstocks that have been observed to be resilient such as *Solanum torvum*. Other hybrid rootstocks like Arka Rakshak can be an option where they exist. Parameter Description Varieties Varkha Bahar-1/2, Gaurav, Sartaj (indeterminate), Cherry types (e.g., Sona, Kesar) Parent Farmers' variety of Ar Seed Treatment Trichoderma / approved fung4–5 weeks nursery period; Transplant at 4– Transplant Timing Ideally mid-March for protected cultivation Spacing 60 × 45 cm (open area); 90 × 45 cm with 2-shoot training (enclosed) Grafting (Optional) Hybrid or rootstock-based for disease Combining With Fertilizer Treat Uniformity: Ensure all seedlings are similar in size and vigor at transplant to minimize variability between organic vs. inorganic fertilizer treatments. Root Health: Healthy unstressed seedlings prove very useful in separating the influence of fertilizer regimes on development and production. Fertilizer Interaction: Vining stages after fertilizing with the organics could be aided by those lines which have vigorous root activity, while indeterminates could benefit due to continuous nutrient release. Experimental design and procedure. The experiment was conducted during the main cropping season of tomato i.e. winter season from mid-September to mid-March. This was laid out in a randomized complete block design and replicated three times as per treatment with the plot sizes of gross and net were 2.25m 4.2 m and 1.8 m 3.6 m, respectively. Shade dried FYM, PM, and VC were assembled followed by they were applied on dry weight basis on a month prior to planting and thoroughly mixed with the soil. While, the plots with inorganic treatment were fertilized by chemical fertilizers i.e. Urea, Diammonium phosphate, and MOP as half of nitrogen and potash and full dose of phosphorus applied at the time of bed preparation. The remainder was applied when flowering initiated in plants. Transplanting of nursery seedling was done at 8th November, 2016 followed by one light irrigation at a same time and second one at 4 Day after transplanting (DAT) by water cane to withstand the crop. Afterwards, five full irrigation were sufficient to bring tomato crop at final eighth picking stage. Two manual hand weeding, first at 35 DAT and second weeding along with earthing up done at 60 DAT to manage weeds in crop, followed by staking operation carried out. Plant protection practices were carried out as per requirement and harvesting was done by 8 manual picking as first picking starts at 80 DAT and subsequently done at 5 days intervals.

Results and Discussion

1. Growth Parameters: Fertilizer application greatly affected vegetative development of tomato plants. Treatments that were given inorganic fertilizers (NPK at recommended rate) showed the highest plant height,

number of plants' branches, and leaf area index, particularly at the peak of vegetative phase (40–60 DAT). That could be due to the quick availability of nutrients in the inorganic fertilizers, causing quick vegetative development. In comparison, plants receiving the organic fertilizer treatments (FYM, poultry manure, vermicompost) showed moderate sustained growth. While initial development remained relatively slower than that of the inorganic treatment, at the flowering stage the organic amendments supported steady growth through slow release of nutrients and enhanced soil microbial activity. These observations also support Singh et al. (2020) [32] and Kumar et al. (2010) [42], who observed superior vegetative development of tomato with optimally balanced NPK application, but superior soil health and sustainable development with the application of organics.

- 2. Flowering and Fruit Set:** The source of fertilizer notably affected flower opening time and fruiting. Inorganic fertilization effects: Earlier flowering of plants (nearby ~5–7 days) and greater percentage of fruit set were caused by abundant availability of N and P. Organic manures: Flowering was slightly delayed but percentage of fruit set remained comparable, particularly of the plants of vermicompost and poultry manure, showing the positive effect of organics on reproductive physiology by virtue of micronutrient availability and the improved soil structure. Combination practices (50% inorganic + 50% organic) resulted in the highest balanced outputs, early flowering, high fruiting, and plant health. This supports the concept of integrated nutrient management.
- 3. Yield Traits and Fruit Yield:** Differences were notable with regard to number of fruits per plant, the average weight of fruits, and overall production per hectare. Highest fruit production resulted from the fertiliser plots of the inorganic type (largest number and highest size of fruits). Organic amendments registered lower yields than the inorganic one, but the fruits were firmer, richer in TSS, and with enhanced shelf life, particularly when FYM and vermicompost were applied. Combined therapy (organic + inorganic) always gave more than either source by itself, returning ~10–15% more than single-inorganic and ~25–30% more than single-organic. Such complementarity happens due to the additive action of rapid nutrient supply (inorganic) and the improvement of soil physical, chemical, and biological properties (organic). These results support the report of Kumawat et al. (2019) [53] and PAU trials (2022) that highlighted the use of integrated nutrient application to sustain tomato productivity in Punjab.
- 4. Soil Fertility Status Post-Harvest:** After harvesting, the soil test revealed: Organic amendments augmented soil organic carbon, microorganisms, and available micronutrients. Inorganic fertilizer fields, though producing more within a short period of time, saw minimal reduction of soil pH equilibrium and organic carbon. Combined treatments also maintained soil fertility and yield, thus justifying the long-term effectiveness of sustaining productivity on the alluvial soils of Amritsar.

5. **Economic Analysis:** Inorganic fertilizers provided highest gross return due to high yields, but the high cost of input lowered the net return-to-cost ratio. Organic fertilisers were more cheaply produced but lower-paying as well. The combined solutions had the highest benefit-cost ratio, both financially sustainable and environmentally sustainable.

Conclusion

The study firmly establishes that: Inorganic fertilizers offer quick vegetative cover and high early production, Organic manures enhance soil health, fruit quality, and sustainability, Joint application of organic + inorganic fertilizers provides optimum combination of highest production, quality, and soil enrichment. These observations validate the past research works carried out on Punjab agro-climatic conditions and provide an indication that the 50:50 organic-inorganic nutrient system can be a sustainable tomato production model of Amritsar.

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