



Standardization of Nipping Technique for Enhancement of Seed Yield and Quality in Sunn Hemp

Shivakumar B. Bagli^{a++*}, Basave Gowda^{b#},
N. M. Shakuntala^{a†}, S. R. Doddagoudar^{c‡},
Gururaj Sunkad^{d^} and M. K. Meena^{e##}

^a Department of Seed Science and Technology, UAS, Raichur, India.

^b University of Agricultural Sciences, UAS, GKVK, Bangalore, India.

^c Seed Unit, UAS, Raichur, India.

^d MARS, UAS, Raichur, India.

^e Directorate of Research, UAS, Raichur, India.

Authors' contributions

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

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/IJPSS/2023/v35i183360

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/85061>

Original Research Article

Received: 12/05/2023

Accepted: 18/07/2023

Published: 26/07/2023

ABSTRACT

A field experiment entitled "standardization of nipping technique for enhancement of seed yield and quality in sunn hemp" was conducted during *Kharif* 2019-20 and 2020-21 at Seed Production Block, NSP, Seed Unit, UAS, Raichur. The experiment was laid out in a randomized complete

⁺⁺ Ph.D scholar;

[#] Registrar;

[†] Professor and Head;

[‡] Assistant Professor (SST);

[^] Associate Directorate of Research;

^{##} Assistant Professor (CPH);

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

block design with fifteen treatments including nipping and foliar spray of cycocel and their combinations in three replications. The results emanated from the experiment recorded maximum plant height (cm), early 50 per cent flowering and maturity in T₁ (no nipping). Whereas, nipping at 30 and 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel at 50 DAS (T₁₅) recorded maximum number of branches per plant, chlorophyll content (SPAD Values), leaf area (cm²), number of pods per plant, seed yield per plant, seed yield (q ha⁻¹), seed germination (%), total seedling length (cm), seedling dry weight (mg) and seedling vigour index I and II. While the nipping at 30 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 40 DAS (T₁₂) is a better option in terms of obtaining higher net returns and B:C ratio in sunn hemp. Whereas, maximum cost of cultivation was found in nipping at 30, 40 DAS and 50 DAS (T₈).

Keywords: Nipping; cycocel; green manuring.

1. INTRODUCTION

Green manuring is an age old practice of farming for maintaining soil fertility. However, the advent of green revolution has not only increased chemical fertilizer consumption, but also marginalized the use of green manures in intensive cropping systems. This is evident from the declining area under green manure crops over a period of time. The area under green manure crops is estimated at as 1.23 million ha [1] in India.

Increased fertilizer use with subsidised pricing has transformed India from a food scarce region to one of food security, but organic manure use especially green manure crops has decreased significantly. Inorganic fertilisers have recently become more expensive and soil productivity sustainability has become fashionable. Green manure crops are a low-cost and effective method of reducing fertiliser costs while also protecting soil health and productivity. Almost all green manure crops, whether utilised in-situ or ex-situ, contain all of the plant nutrients necessary for improving crop growth and maintaining soil health.

Green manuring is a practice of incorporating green plant biomass into the cultivated fields, which is one of the most effective and environmentally sound method of manuring crops. In-situ incorporation of green manure crops provide an opportunity to improve soil physico-chemical condition, cut down the use of chemical fertilizers, which are often blamed for causing environmental pollution and escalating the cost of cultivation of crops. Interest towards green manure crops has been renewed with the growing emphasis on sustained soil productivity in agricultural systems. The benefits deriving from green manure crops are directly related to the amount of biomass and nutrients added into

the soil. Biomass production of green manure crops varies widely according to the species of the legumes, environmental conditions, nature of incorporation, native soil fertility, crop management practices and age of green manure crops at the time of incorporation [2].

The main green manure crops grown in India are dhaincha, sunn hemp, wild indigo, pillipesara, cowpea, cluster bean, greengram, mung bean and berseem. Among the green manure crops sunn hemp (*Crotalaria juncea*) is one of the most important green manure crops which is grown all over India. Sunn hemp, a member of the legume family (*Fabaceae*), has great potential as an annually renewable, multi-purpose fiber crop. It is being cultivated in an area of 11,000 hectares with an annual production of 46,100 metric tons [3]. The country's average productivity of sunn hemp crop is 681 kg/ha. Green manuring with sunn hemp improves the soil fertility by addition of large quantities of organic matter besides nitrogen to the soil. *Sunn hemp* can fix about 50-60 kg N/ha within 60-90 days of cultivation. It provides 60 kg N/ha to the soil when it is used as green manure. Sunn hemp has the potential to improve soil properties, to build organic matter and sequester carbon into the soil. It can also be used for soil reclamation.

In comparison to other crops, the seed multiplication rate in green manure crops is very low and there is a need to improve it. Nipping is a significant agronomic practice of removing the apical bud which helps to reduce apical dominance, increase the number of branches, per cent pod set, and achieve a better source sink relationship, all of which improve the plant's seed yield. For production potential to be realised, agronomic techniques must be standardised. Nipping method and an increase in reproductive sink per plant are two of the most important elements in determining production.

According to Reddy and Narayanan [4] pinching the terminal bud in sesamum caused the latent lateral buds to produce additional branches, resulting in a higher yield.

Nipping by removing tendrils is an important agronomic practice which helps to reduce apical dominance. These tendrils acts as sink in the plant, thereby affecting the translocation of photosynthesis to the reproductive parts. Nipping of tendrils has been found to increase the number of branches, pod set per cent and better source-sink relation, thereby enhancing the yield in pigeon pea [5]. Foliar spray of plant growth regulators are known to increase source-sink relationship due to increased translocation of assimilates towards seeds leading to more number of pods per plant, test weight and germination performance in cowpea [6]. Along with nipping practice, application of plant growth regulators also help in efficient utilization of metabolites in certain physiological processes going in plant systems [7]. Among the various plant growth regulators, cycocel has been reported to be very effective in improving yield and quality of certain field and vegetable crops, which causes retardation of vegetative growth and diversion of assimilates towards reproductive growth [8]. Application of cycocel had an inhibitory effect on plant height, increased number of branches and nodules per plant in green gram [9].

With the brief background, the present investigation was undertaken to standardize the nipping technique for enhancement of seed yield and quality of sunn hemp.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present investigation comprising fifteen treatments was carried during 2019-20 and 2020-21 at National Seed Project, Seed Production Block, Seed Unit, UAS, Raichur. The treatments which included nipping and foliar spray of cycocel and their combinations at different stages of crop growth are as follows, T₁ - control (no nipping), T₂ - nipping at 30 DAS, T₃ - nipping at 40 DAS, T₄ - nipping at 50 DAS, T₅ - nipping at 30 and 40 DAS, T₆ - nipping at 30 and 50 DAS, T₇ - nipping at 40 and 50 DAS, T₈ - nipping at 30, 40 and 50 DAS, T₉ - foliar spraying of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 30 DAS, T₁₀ - foliar spraying of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 40 DAS, T₁₁ - foliar spraying of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS, T₁₂ - nipping at 30 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 40 DAS, T₁₃ - nipping at

30 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS, T₁₄ - nipping at 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS and T₁₅ - nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS. The experiment was conducted using Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) with three replications in open field conditions following 45 cm x 10 cm spacing with the gross and net plot size of 4.5 m x 3.0 m and 3.6 m x 2.8 m, respectively.

The following doses of fertilizers i.e. 62.2 kg Nitrogen, 75 kg phosphorus and 65 kg of potash per hectare were applied at the time of sowing as basal dose. Irrigation was provided as and when necessary. Seeds were sown to a depth of 4 to 5 cm by dibbling method as per recommended plant placing. Standard agronomic practices and plant protection measures were adopted as per schedule. Observations were recorded from five tagged plants from each plot.

The observations on various plant growth, seed yield and quality parameters like plant height, number of branches per plant, chlorophyll content, leaf area, 50 per cent flowering, days to maturity, number of pods per plant, seed yield, economics, seed germination, total seedling length, seedling dry weight and seedling vigour index were recorded and the replicated mean data was subjected to statistical analysis and the interpretation of the experimental data was done by using Fischer method of Analysis of Variance technique as outlined by Gomez and Gomez [10]. The level of significance used in F test was 5 per cent for field experiment and 1 per cent for laboratory experiment.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Influence of nipping and foliar spray of cycocel on plant growth, seed yield and quality of sunn hemp:

Plant height and Number of branches per plant: The data in respect of plant height was recorded at 60 DAS and at harvest was found to be significantly different among the treatments in 2019-20, 2020-21 and pooled data of two years. From the pooled data of two consecutive years, highest plant height was recorded at 60 DAS (132.3 cm) and at harvest (160.3 cm) in T₁ (no nipping). Whereas, the lowest plant height was observed in T₈ (nipping at 30, 40 and 50 DAS) at 60 DAS (93.3) and at harvest (121.2). Similar trend was observed in 2019-20 and 2020-21.

The data in respect of number of branches per plant was recorded at 60 DAS and at harvest was found to be significantly different among the treatments. The pooled data of two years indicated that, T₁₅ (nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS) recorded significantly maximum number of branches per plant (14.3) at 60 DAS and at harvest (14.4) and lowest in T₁ (no nipping) (6.8) at 60 DAS and at harvest (6.8). Similar trend was recorded in individual years.

Nipping and foliar spray of cycocel had negatively influenced the plant height at 60 DAS and at harvest (Table 1 and Fig. 1). Highest plant height was observed in the treatment without nipping (T₁) and it was remarkably higher than treatment including pinching and cycocel spray i.e. T₈ (nipping at 30, 40 and 50 DAS) at 60 DAS and at harvest in 2019-20, 2020-21 and pooled mean data of two years, respectively. Reduced plant height due to pinching could be attributed to relative behaviour of sink and source and removal of apical dominance which lead to termination of vertical growth of the nipped plants [11]. These findings are consistent with Mishra and Nayak [12]. Cycocel acts in the sub-apical system, inhibiting cell division and preventing cell elongation due to its anti-gibberellic nature, the plant becomes small as the internodes fail to extend [13]. By preventing the conversion of guranyl pyrophosphate to copalyl pyrophosphate, cycocel, an anti-gibberellin dwarfing chemical, causes gibberellin deficit in plants and reduce its growth [14]. These findings are in line with Asghar *et al.* [15] in okra, Asane *et al.* [16] in pea and Mahorkar [17] in okra.

The number of branches noticed at 60 DAS and at harvest differed significantly among the treatments (Table 1 and Fig. 2). The maximum number of branches per plant were recorded in T₁₅ (nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray with cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS) at 60 DAS and at harvest. It might be due to better cell division and cell elongation and diverting all the food material leading to higher biomass production resulting in better plant growth and development [18]. The removal of apical dominance might have promoted the development of lateral buds, resulting in more branches per plant [19]. The terminal bud clipping exercise may have efficaciously altered crop architecture by activating lateral dormant buds by arresting terminal growth, which in turn might have increased the lateral branches, thereby allowing for better development of source and sink

features in sesame and therefore facilitating a significant increase in yield [20, Kokilavani *et al.*, [21] and Imayavaranban, [22]. Similar findings have been reported by Sajjan and Jamadhar [23] and Mahorkar [17] in okra.

Chlorophyll content and leaf area: Significantly higher (56.11 and 56.96 SPAD values) chlorophyll content and leaf area (45.85 cm² and 62.07 cm²) was recorded at 60 DAS and 90 DAS in T₁₅ (nipping at 30, 40 DAS and cycocel foliar spray @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS). Whereas, the lowest chlorophyll content (42.44 SPAD values at 60 DAS and 43.85 SPAD values at 90 DAS) and leaf area (41.97 cm² at 60 DAS and 57.98 cm² at 90 DAS) was recorded in no nipping (T₁) in pooled mean data of two years (Table 2).

The amount of chlorophyll content decides the ultimate growth of the plant. Hence, from the point of accumulation of more dry matter per plant, chlorophyll content play a major role. Pinching of plants prolongs the vegetative growth which is very well evidenced from delayed flowering in the plants that were nipped at 30, 40 DAS (T₅) and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm was given at 50 DAS (T₁₅). As the vegetative growth was extended the photosynthetic activity was also maximum. This might have caused for increasing chlorophyll content due to nipping and also it improves the translocation of photosynthates from source to sink increasing the chlorophyll content in leaf tissue in turn resulted in a significant increase in crude protein content [23] as reported in okra. Similar results have been reported by Mika and Antoszewski (1973) and Cheong *et al.* (2006). There's also the potential that spraying of growth retardant like cycocel @ 1000 ppm might have increased the availability of assimilates i.e. hormone directed translocation of photosynthates, which in turn might have caused prolonged chlorophyll synthesis (Stoddart, 1965). Similar results have been reported by Cheema *et al.* (1975) in barley, Jayakumar and Thangaraj (1998) in groundnut and Narsegowda and Mundappagowda (1980) in okra.

The more number of branches and leaves in nipped plants get more sunlight which increased leaf area (Dorajeerao and Mokashi, 2012) as reported in garland chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum coronarium*). While Salyh (2013) observed lower leaf area in non-nipped plant compared with pinched once and pinched twice in geranium plant. Maximum leaf area was recorded in plants with double pinching and

sprayed with cycocel @ 1000 ppm could be attributed to the production of more number of leaves and branches per plant. The foliar sprays of cycocel @ 1000 ppm was found better in arresting plant height with profuse branching and resulting higher leaf area (Umezaki *et al.*, 1992). The present results are in agreement with the earlier findings of Anuradha *et al.* (2017) in marigold and Sahu *et al.* (2017) in capsicum and Shinde *et al.* (2010) in chrysanthemum.

Days to 50 per cent flowering and maturity:

The data with respect of days to 50 per cent flowering and maturity was found to be significantly different among the treatments (Table 3 and Fig. 3). The pooled mean data of two years indicated that, T₁₅ (nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS) recorded maximum number of days taken to 50 per cent flowering (60.74 days) and maturity (135.76 days) and the least number of days to 50 per cent flowering (52.51 days) and maturity (125.31 days) in T₁ (no nipping). Similar trend was noticed in 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Nipping and spraying of growth retardant cycocel @ 1000 ppm delayed the days to 50 per cent flowering and maturity. This might be because the plants continued their vegetative growth after apical section was clipped, and the new shoots that emerged on the pinched plants took longer to initiate flower buds and mature physiologically. With respect to days to 50 per cent flowering and maturity, nipped plants took more time to grow compared to non-nipped plants. Perhaps, pinching helped in altering the source-sink relationship thereby advancing the reproductive phase. These results are in close conformity with earlier reports of Grawal *et al.* [24] in chrysanthemum, Srivastava *et al.* [25] in marigold cv. Pusa Basanti Gaiinda, Sharma *et al.* [26] in African marigold and Ravneet *et al.* [27] in marigold cv. Pusa Narangi Gaiinda.

Number of pods per plant, seed yield per plant (g) and seed yield (q ha⁻¹): The pooled mean data of two years was found to be significant which indicated that, T₁₅ (nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS) documented highest number of pods per plant (71.50), seed yield per plant (21.65 g) and seed yield (5.66 q ha⁻¹) and the less number of pods per plant in T₁ (no nipping) (52.59), seed yield per plant (13.96 g) and seed yield (4.01 q ha⁻¹). Similar trend was observed in

2019-20 and 2020-21, individually (Table 4 and Fig. 4).

A number of factors exhibit direct or indirect effects on seed production. The higher seed yield is the manifestation of more number of branches, pod number per plant due to nipping and foliar spray of cycocel. On the basis of the above findings, it can be concluded that nipping and foliar spray of cycocel produced higher pods per plant and seed yield per plant compared to control and other treatments. It could be due to nipping with manual and chemical sprays of growth retardants like cycocel, might break the apical dominance and efficiently modifies crop architecture by activating latent lateral branches, resulting in more lateral branches and ultimately more pods per plant, which may resulted in greater chance for development of source and sink relationship and thereby would have facilitated a significant increase in the yield attributes and yield in pigeonpea and this has also been reported by Singh *et al.* [20] in sesame, Mallesha *et al.*, [28] in pigeonpea, Lizabeni and Rajesh [29] in sesamum, Baloch and Zubair [30] in chickpea.

Economics of sunn hemp seed production as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel:

Data pertaining to cost of cultivation (Rs ha⁻¹), gross returns (Rs ha⁻¹), net returns (Rs ha⁻¹) and B:C ratio of sunn hemp as influenced by nipping and foliar application of cycocel was found to be significantly different among the treatments in 2019-20, 2020-21 and pooled data of both years and are presented in Table 5.

Cost of cultivation: With respect to nipping and foliar application of cycocel, T₈ (nipping at 30, 40 DAS and 50 DAS) registered the higher cost of cultivation (Rs. 47476 ha⁻¹). Whereas, T₁ (no nipping) had recorded the least cost of cultivation (Rs. 39307 ha⁻¹) on pooled basis. The trend was similar in 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Gross returns: Cycocel foliar spray and nipping had an impact on gross returns in 2019-20, 2020-21 and as well as in pooled data. The pooled data showed that maximum returns was significantly higher in T₁₅ (nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS) (Rs. 56400ha⁻¹) which was on par with T₅ (nipping at 30 and 40 DAS) (Rs. 56550ha⁻¹). Whereas, the lowest gross returns was recorded in T₁ (no nipping) (Rs. 40100ha⁻¹). The trend was similar during 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Table 1. Plant height and number of branches per plant as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

Treatments	Plant height (cm)									Number of branches per plant					
	30 DAS			60 DAS			At harvest			60 DAS			At harvest		
	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled
T ₁	61.1	64.4	62.7	132.4	132.3	132.3	165.5	162.9	160.3	6.6	7.0	6.8	6.6	7.0	6.8
T ₂	63.9	64.1	64.0	129.5	130.3	129.9	159.7	159.0	158.4	11.7	12.2	12.0	11.7	12.2	12.0
T ₃	61.0	63.3	62.2	115.5	117.2	116.4	150.2	151.3	152.4	11.6	12.2	11.9	11.6	12.2	11.9
T ₄	62.6	63.2	62.9	108.0	107.8	107.9	139.0	139.9	140.7	11.0	12.2	11.6	11.2	12.4	11.8
T ₅	65.8	64.6	65.2	108.5	105.4	107.0	139.2	139.4	139.6	13.6	12.9	13.3	13.6	12.9	13.2
T ₆	63.3	64.1	63.7	103.5	99.9	101.7	133.6	135.2	136.7	13.0	12.4	12.7	13.8	12.4	13.1
T ₇	66.4	64.5	65.5	101.7	103.3	102.5	121.0	121.7	122.4	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.3	12.2
T ₈	64.2	65.7	65.0	90.7	95.8	93.3	120.1	120.7	121.2	13.6	14.0	13.8	13.8	14.0	13.9
T ₉	64.5	62.4	63.4	131.4	128.8	130.3	164.1	161.5	159.0	10.4	11.2	10.8	10.4	11.2	10.8
T ₁₀	65.2	63.6	64.4	117.3	116.2	116.8	146.3	146.3	146.2	9.0	10.1	9.6	9.0	10.1	9.6
T ₁₁	66.4	62.2	64.3	116.0	114.3	115.1	154.5	152.4	150.2	8.0	9.7	8.9	8.3	9.7	9.0
T ₁₂	63.4	62.9	63.1	126.6	124.6	125.6	163.6	160.9	158.2	13.0	12.9	12.9	13.0	12.9	13.0
T ₁₃	61.9	62.9	62.4	119.9	119.2	119.6	161.4	158.9	156.3	12.4	12.7	12.5	12.7	12.7	12.7
T ₁₄	67.6	64.7	66.2	109.4	109.6	109.5	147.8	145.5	143.3	11.6	12.1	11.9	11.9	12.1	12.0
T ₁₅	62.5	63.8	63.2	94.1	96.8	95.4	120.1	121.6	123.2	14.2	14.4	14.3	14.6	14.3	14.4
Mean	64.0	63.8	63.9	113.6	113.4	113.5	145.7	145.1	144.6	11.5	11.9	11.7	11.6	11.9	11.8
S.Em±	2.6	1.5	1.5	4.7	1.2	2.5	5.0	2.0	3.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
CD at 5 %	NS	NS	NS	13.6	3.5	7.3	14.4	5.7	8.9	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.4

Table 2. Chlorophyll content and leaf area as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

Treatments	Chlorophyll content (SPAD Values)									Leaf area (cm ²)								
	30 DAS			60 DAS			At harvest			30 DAS			60 DAS			At harvest		
	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled
T ₁	34.81	35.10	34.95	41.44	43.44	42.44	42.85	44.85	43.85	27.32	28.41	27.86	40.98	42.96	41.97	55.40	56.51	55.96
T ₂	34.27	34.28	34.27	48.50	49.50	49.00	49.10	50.01	49.56	28.31	28.42	28.36	44.20	46.21	45.21	58.71	58.53	58.62
T ₃	34.23	35.01	34.62	47.40	47.52	47.46	47.65	49.25	48.45	28.44	29.01	28.73	43.12	44.18	43.65	57.22	58.34	57.78
T ₄	34.55	34.82	34.68	46.36	48.24	47.30	47.25	50.10	48.67	28.09	28.99	28.54	42.53	44.23	43.38	56.92	56.99	56.96
T ₅	33.60	33.12	34.24	56.58	54.32	55.45	56.35	56.42	56.39	27.40	28.43	27.91	45.67	45.45	45.56	61.03	60.99	61.01
T ₆	33.01	33.40	33.21	52.64	53.22	52.93	53.70	55.10	54.40	28.37	29.21	28.79	41.99	43.44	42.72	56.43	57.24	56.83
T ₇	33.44	34.11	33.78	50.28	51.48	50.88	53.00	51.26	52.13	28.43	28.53	28.48	41.70	42.87	42.29	56.11	57.28	56.70
T ₈	34.61	33.98	34.29	53.24	52.48	52.86	55.30	53.49	54.39	28.30	29.03	28.66	43.71	44.35	44.03	57.20	58.23	57.71
T ₉	33.03	33.09	33.06	44.80	56.80	50.80	45.70	47.21	46.45	27.70	28.52	28.11	42.95	44.10	43.52	56.01	56.99	56.50
T ₁₀	32.48	34.11	33.30	45.95	46.71	46.33	46.65	45.22	45.94	27.56	28.12	27.84	42.32	44.10	43.21	56.86	57.24	57.05
T ₁₁	33.60	34.12	32.51	44.80	44.91	44.86	33.60	45.71	45.66	27.77	28.41	28.09	41.22	43.21	42.21	55.86	56.20	56.03
T ₁₂	35.80	34.72	35.26	50.28	51.23	50.76	52.10	51.92	52.01	27.63	26.60	27.11	44.98	46.27	45.62	59.91	60.12	60.02
T ₁₃	34.16	33.91	34.04	49.94	50.01	49.98	51.12	51.28	51.20	28.01	28.09	28.05	44.10	46.28	45.19	59.54	60.09	59.81
T ₁₄	33.50	34.03	33.77	50.22	50.24	50.23	50.85	51.91	51.38	27.39	28.39	27.89	41.37	43.21	42.29	55.98	57.28	56.63
T ₁₅	34.00	34.20	34.10	56.94	55.28	56.11	56.70	57.21	56.96	27.31	28.52	27.91	45.80	45.90	45.85	61.23	62.91	62.07
Mean	33.94	34.13	34.01	49.29	50.36	49.83	49.46	50.73	50.50	27.87	28.45	28.16	43.11	44.45	43.78	57.63	58.33	57.98
S.Em±	0.80	0.46	0.53	0.76	0.57	0.47	0.71	0.91	0.58	0.40	0.42	0.33	0.68	0.63	0.34	0.91	0.63	0.64
CD at 5 %	NS	NS	NS	2.21	1.66	1.37	2.05	2.65	1.69	NS	NS	NS	1.98	1.85	0.97	2.65	1.85	1.86

Table 3. Days to 50 per cent flowering and days to maturity as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

Treatments	Days to 50 per cent flowering			Days to maturity		
	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled
T ₁	52.60	52.42	52.51	124.66	125.96	125.31
T ₂	52.66	52.49	52.58	126.00	127.25	126.63
T ₃	55.66	55.72	55.69	126.88	126.88	126.88
T ₄	57.66	57.69	57.68	126.88	128.01	127.45
T ₅	58.66	58.66	58.66	126.66	127.91	127.29
T ₆	59.67	59.70	59.68	132.66	133.01	132.84
T ₇	59.66	59.72	59.69	133.00	133.57	133.29
T ₈	60.02	60.01	60.01	133.00	135.54	134.27
T ₉	54.60	54.60	54.60	133.99	128.27	131.13
T ₁₀	56.60	56.72	56.66	126.66	127.62	127.14
T ₁₁	57.00	57.11	57.05	127.16	128.20	127.68
T ₁₂	57.33	57.33	57.33	128.78	128.78	128.78
T ₁₃	57.66	57.81	57.74	129.33	130.20	129.77
T ₁₄	58.00	58.11	58.06	130.66	131.22	130.94
T ₁₅	60.67	60.82	60.74	134.66	136.85	135.76
Mean	57.23	57.26	57.25	129.40	129.95	129.68
S.Em±	0.67	0.81	0.56	1.67	1.79	1.20
CD at 5 %	1.94	2.36	1.62	4.84	5.18	3.49

Table 4. Number of pods per plant and Seed yield as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

Treatments	Number of pods per plant			Seed yield per plant (g)			Seed yield (q ha ⁻¹)		
	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled
T ₁	51.95	53.23	52.59	13.72	14.20	13.96	4.03	3.99	4.01
T ₂	59.20	60.01	59.61	16.19	17.10	16.65	4.86	4.90	4.88
T ₃	57.80	58.89	58.35	15.95	15.99	15.97	4.64	4.72	4.68
T ₄	56.98	57.91	57.45	15.84	16.01	15.92	4.50	4.52	4.51
T ₅	69.47	70.12	69.79	20.46	20.85	20.65	5.61	5.63	5.62
T ₆	68.20	67.28	67.74	19.93	20.12	20.03	5.48	5.51	5.50
T ₇	62.60	63.71	63.15	17.29	18.45	17.87	5.16	5.26	5.21
T ₈	65.00	66.32	65.66	18.51	19.11	18.81	5.50	5.52	5.51
T ₉	55.20	56.34	55.77	15.69	15.83	15.76	4.45	4.35	4.40
T ₁₀	54.60	56.71	55.65	14.98	15.71	15.35	4.43	4.31	4.37
T ₁₁	54.20	55.32	54.76	14.43	15.09	14.76	4.42	4.27	4.35
T ₁₂	67.00	69.72	68.36	18.19	18.36	18.28	5.52	5.56	5.54
T ₁₃	63.80	64.89	64.35	17.04	17.33	17.18	5.44	5.54	5.49
T ₁₄	60.40	62.64	61.52	16.50	17.01	16.76	5.00	5.33	5.17
T ₁₅	71.00	72.01	71.50	21.50	21.80	21.65	5.64	5.67	5.66
Mean	61.16	62.34	61.75	17.08	17.53	17.31	4.98	5.01	4.99
S.Em±	0.85	0.97	0.74	0.19	0.13	0.14	0.10	0.07	0.06
CD at 5 %	2.46	2.82	2.13	0.56	0.38	0.39	0.29	0.19	0.18

Table 5. Economics of sunn hemp seed production as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel

Treatments	Cost of cultivation (Rs. ha ⁻¹)			Gross returns (Rs. ha ⁻¹)			Net returns (Rs. ha ⁻¹)			BC ratio		
	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled
T ₁	39442	39172	39307	40300	39900	40100	858	728	793	1.02	1.02	1.02
T ₂	42165	41895	42030	48600	49000	48800	6435	7105	6770	1.15	1.17	1.16
T ₃	42165	41895	42030	46400	47200	46800	4235	5305	4770	1.10	1.13	1.11
T ₄	42165	41895	42030	45000	45200	45100	2835	3305	3070	1.07	1.08	1.07
T ₅	44888	44618	44753	56100	56300	56200	11212	11682	11447	1.25	1.26	1.26
T ₆	44888	44618	44753	54800	55100	54950	9912	10482	10197	1.22	1.23	1.23
T ₇	44888	44618	44753	51600	52600	52100	6712	7982	7347	1.15	1.18	1.16
T ₈	47611	47341	47476	55000	55200	55100	7389	7859	7624	1.16	1.17	1.16
T ₉	40825	40555	40690	44500	43500	44000	3675	2945	3310	1.09	1.07	1.08
T ₁₀	40825	40555	40690	44300	43100	43700	3475	2545	3010	1.09	1.06	1.07
T ₁₁	40825	40555	40690	44200	42700	43450	3375	2145	2760	1.08	1.05	1.07
T ₁₂	43548	43278	43413	55200	55600	55400	11652	12322	11987	1.27	1.28	1.28
T ₁₃	43548	43278	43413	54400	55400	54900	10852	12122	11487	1.25	1.28	1.26
T ₁₄	43548	43278	43413	50000	53300	51650	6452	10022	8237	1.15	1.23	1.19
T ₁₅	46271	46001	46136	56400	56700	56550	10129	10699	10414	1.22	1.23	1.23
Mean	43173	42903	43038	49787	50053	49920	6613	7150	6240	1.15	1.16	1.16
S.Em±	-	-	-	723	851	687	143	159	147	0.02	0.02	0.02
CD at 5 %	-	-	-	2096	2465	1991	414	461	425	0.06	0.07	0.06

Table 6. Seed germination, total seedling length and seedling dry weight as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

Treatments	Germination (%)			Total seedling length (cm)			Seedling dry weight (mg)		
	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled
T ₁	71.5	73.8	72.8	13.2	13.3	13.2	13.2	13.5	13.4
T ₂	81.6	83.5	82.5	18.6	19.5	19.0	16.7	16.7	16.7
T ₃	81.6	83.1	82.4	17.5	18.4	17.9	16.2	16.4	16.3
T ₄	79.6	81.6	80.6	16.6	17.1	16.8	16.0	16.2	16.1
T ₅	84.7	86.1	85.9	19.9	20.2	20.1	18.6	18.7	18.6
T ₆	77.1	80.5	78.8	15.4	15.8	15.6	15.5	15.7	15.6
T ₇	76.3	83.8	81.3	15.1	15.8	15.4	14.8	16.1	15.4
T ₈	81.6	83.3	82.5	17.7	18.1	17.9	16.5	16.5	16.5
T ₉	80.9	82.6	81.7	17.3	17.8	17.6	16.7	17.0	16.9
T ₁₀	79.4	80.7	80.2	16.5	16.8	16.6	15.7	16.1	15.9
T ₁₁	73.6	76.0	74.8	14.1	14.7	14.4	13.5	13.8	13.7
T ₁₂	84.6	85.7	85.2	19.2	19.8	19.5	17.3	17.8	17.5
T ₁₃	84.1	84.9	84.5	19.3	19.9	19.6	17.0	17.3	17.1
T ₁₄	74.1	75.8	75.0	15.0	15.5	15.2	13.9	14.0	13.9
T ₁₅	84.9	86.6	85.7	20.9	21.3	21.1	18.7	18.8	18.8
Mean	79.7	81.9	80.9	17.1	17.6	17.3	16.0	16.3	16.2
S.Em±	0.2	1.2	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
CD at 1 %	0.6	4.7	2.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2

Table 7. Seedling vigour index as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

Treatments	Seedling vigour index - I			Seedling vigour index - II		
	2019	2020	Pooled	2019	2020	Pooled
T ₁	943	981	962	945	998	971
T ₂	1518	1625	1572	1360	1397	1379
T ₃	1424	1532	1478	1322	1367	1344
T ₄	1319	1393	1356	1272	1323	1297
T ₅	1705	1742	1723	1563	1598	1580
T ₆	1184	1274	1229	1191	1261	1226
T ₇	1153	1321	1237	1129	1346	1237
T ₈	1444	1512	1478	1350	1378	1364
T ₉	1401	1469	1435	1352	1405	1378
T ₁₀	1309	1353	1331	1249	1297	1273
T ₁₁	1039	1116	1077	992	1052	1022
T ₁₂	1627	1700	1663	1461	1527	1494
T ₁₃	1620	1686	1653	1425	1471	1448
T ₁₄	1107	1177	1142	1027	1059	1043
T ₁₅	1773	1840	1806	1585	1630	1608
Mean	1371	1448	1410	1282	1340	1311
S.Em±	9	20	10	5	21	10
CD at 1 %	35	76	39	18	79	38

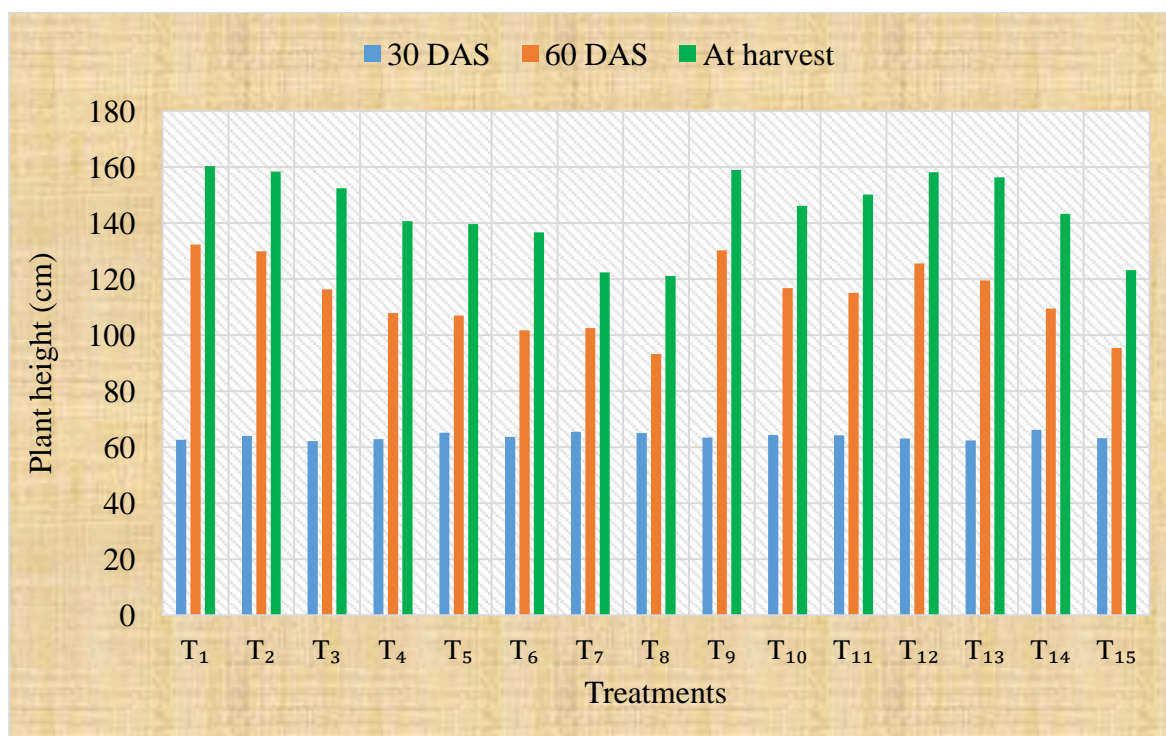


Fig. 1. Plant height as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

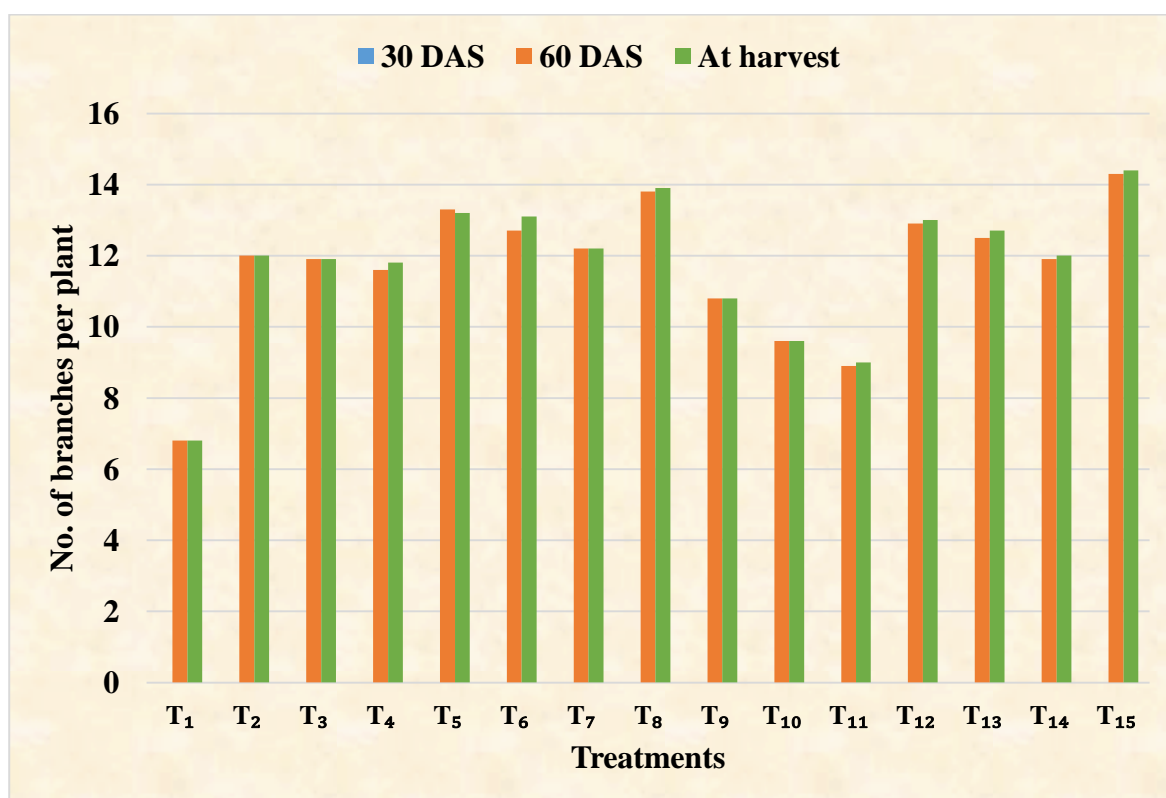


Fig. 2. Number of branches per plant as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

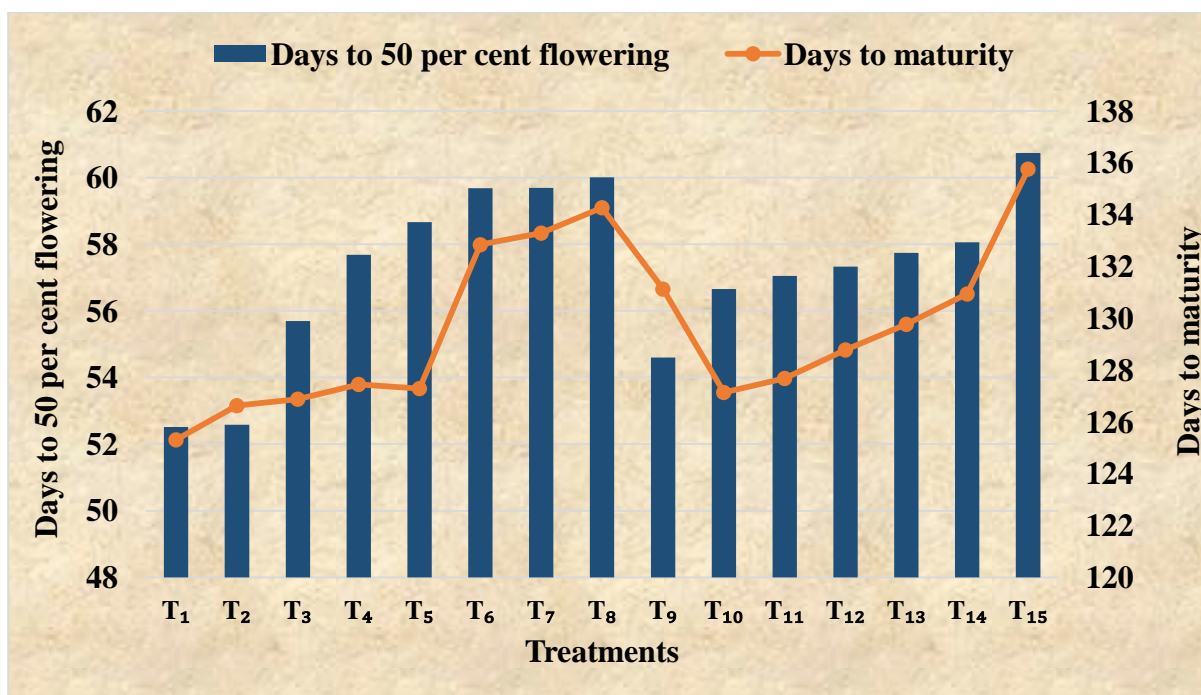


Fig. 3. Days to 50 per cent flowering and days to maturity as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

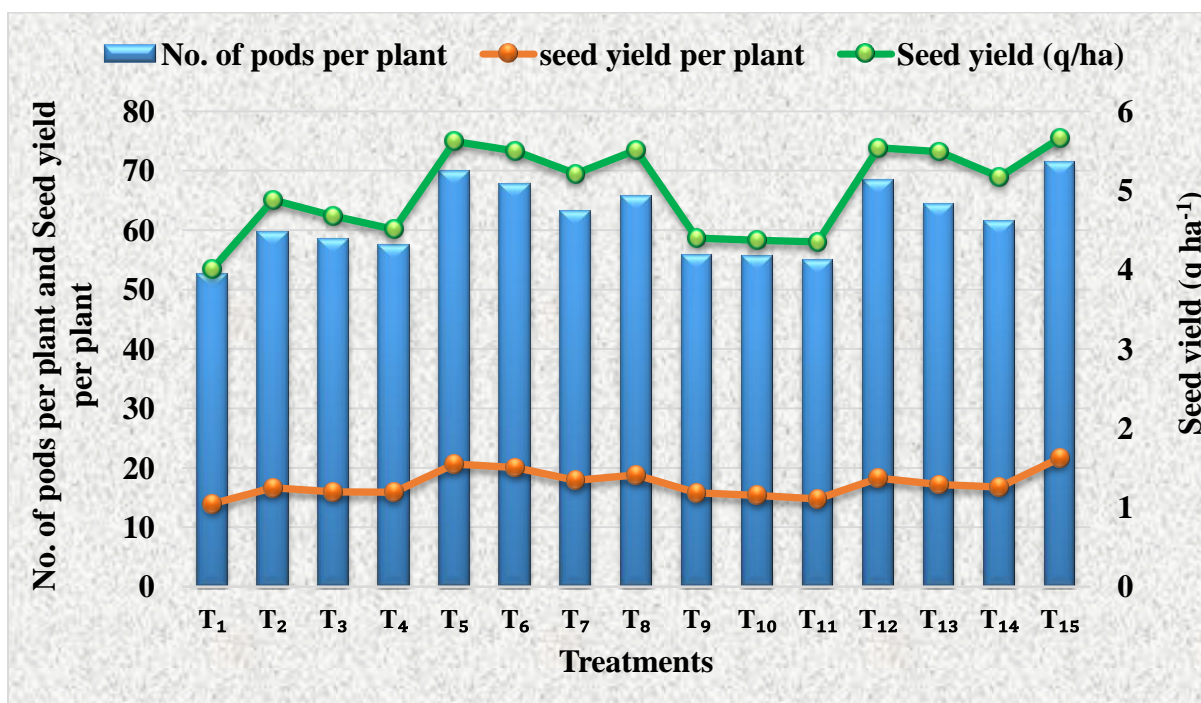


Fig. 4. Number of pods per plant, seed yield per plant and seed yield ($q\ ha^{-1}$) as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

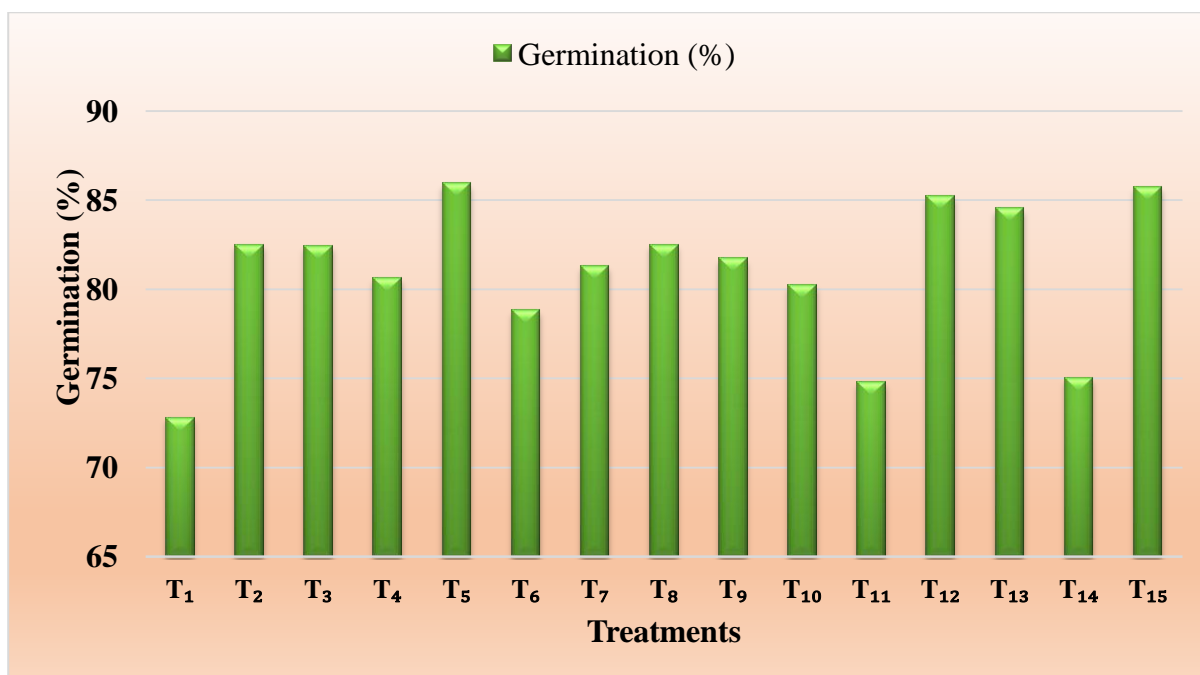


Fig. 5. Germination as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp



Fig. 6. Total seedling length, Seedling dry weight and Seedling vigour index I and II as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel in sunn hemp

Net returns: Due to nipping and foliar spray of cycocel during both the years, as well as in pooled data, the net returns differed significantly.

The pooled data showed that the net returns was significantly higher in T₁₂ (nipping at 30 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 40 DAS)

(Rs.11987 ha⁻¹). Whereas the least net returns was observed in T₁ (no nipping) (Rs.793ha⁻¹). The trend was similar during 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Benefit cost ratio: The nipping and foliar spray of cycocel influenced the B:C ratio in 2019-20 and 2020-21 as well as in pooled data. The pooled data showed maximum B:C ratio was recorded in in T₁₂(nipping at 30 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 40 DAS) (1.27)which was on par with T₅ (nipping at 30 and 40 DAS) (1.25). Whereas, the least B:C ratio was observed in T₁ (no nipping) (1.02). The trend was similar during 2019-20 and 2020-21.

The above mentioned data indicates that the treatment including pinching three times i.e. 30, 40 and 50 DAS in T₈recorded the higher cost of cultivation. This was due to more number of labours needed to perform the nipping operation and spraying of cycocel in this treatment when compared to other treatments which led to an increased cost of cultivation of this particular treatment. Gross returns was higher in treatment involving nipping twice at 30 and 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS (T₁₅) when compared to other treatments, this was due to higher yield recorded in respective treatment and obtained seed yield which could be marketed at good price which ultimately lead to obtaining higher gross returns. These findings are in agreement with Devi *et al.* [31] and Sanjay (2017) in soybean. The net returns was highly influenced in treatment including nipping at 30 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm (T₁₂) this is due to maximum yield obtained and lesser cost of cultivation recorded when compared to other treatments involving higher cost of cultivation although yield was on par with this treatment. The benefit cost ratio differed significantly among all treatment. Among all, the treatment involving nipping once at 30 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel at 40 DAS recorded highest benefit cost ratio compared to other treatments which involved nipping twice and thrice at different days of sowing and also involving foliar spray of cycocel. It was because the best treatment (T₁₂) recorded benefitable ratio of gross returns by cost of cultivation compared to all treatments. The economically valuable effect of pinching operation was earlier reported by Rathore [32].

Seed germination: In the pooled analysis, significant differences were found for seed germination among the treatments presented in Table 6 and Fig. 5. Wherein, maximum seed

germination (85.7 %) was registered in T₁₅ (nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS) which was followed by T₅(nipping at 30 and 40 DAS) i.e. 85.9 % and T₁₂ (nipping at 30 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000ppm at 40 DAS) (85.2 %) over T₁ (no nipping) (72.8 %).The trend was similar during 2019-20 and 2020-21.

From the above results it is revealed that the plants subjected to nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS (T₁₅) recorded superior seed germination (%) compared to control and other treatments during both years. It might be due to increase in the photosynthetic area leading to higher photosynthetic rate, better assimilation and accumulation of more photosynthates resulting into better seed development which resulted in production of healthy and bold seeds with more reserve food material as synthesized photosynthates might have translocated to seeds. These findings are in resemblance with Sudeep Kumar *et al.* [33] in field bean. Similar increase in germination of seed with apical bud nipping and foliar spray of cycocel was earlier revealed by Venkata Reddy *et al.* [34] and Sajjan and Jamadar. [23] in okra, Mc.Creaw and Greig [35] in capsicum, Sudarshan [36] in fenugreek and Iyyannagouda [37] in coriander.

Total seedling length and seedling dry weight: The results on total seedling length (cm) and seedling dry weight (mg) of sunn hemp as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel during 2019-20 and 2020-21 and pooled data are presented in Table 6, which differed significantly among the treatments.

T₁₅ (nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS) had a most significant effect on total seedling length and seedling dry weight (21.1 cm and 18.8 mg, respectively). While, the T₁ (no nipping) recorded the least total seedling length and seedling dry weight (13.2 cm and 13.4 mg, respectively) in pooled mean data of two years. The trend was similar during 2019-20 and 2020-21.

The better development of seed owing to greater accumulation of storage reserves, which in turn might have utilized for germination and seedling growth resulted in maximum total seedling length and seedling dry weight. These results are in resemblance with Sudeep Kumar *et al.* [33] in field bean. Similar increase in total seedling length with apical bud nipping and foliar

spray of cycocel was earlier revealed by Gopal Singh and Rama Rao [38] in sunflower. Narayanaswamy and Channarayappa [39] in groundnut.

Seedling vigour index I and II: The results on seedling vigour index I and II of sunn hemp as influenced by nipping and foliar spray of cycocel. Significantly higher (1806 and 1607) seedling vigour index I and II was recorded in plants which received with nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS (T₁₅). Whereas, the lowest seedling vigour index I and II (962 and 971) was recorded in no nipping (T₁) in pooled mean data of two years. Similar trend was reported in 2019-20, 2020-21. Similar trends was followed in 2019-20 and 2020-21.

The increase in seedling vigour index I and II was due to higher seed germination per cent, longer length of the root and shoot and seedlings dry weight [33]. Enhanced translocation of assimilates/photosynthates towards the seeds, as nipping treatment and foliar spray of growth regulators like cycocel are known to boost source and sink relationships, resulting in improved seed germination performance, growth, and dry weight of seedlings [6] in cowpea and Upadhyay, [40] in chickpea). Similar benefits were also reported in pigeonpea [41] and in black gram [42] with foliar spray of growth regulators [43,44].

4. CONCLUSION

The present experimental findings, it can be concluded that T₁₅ (nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS) is found to be the best for plant growth, seed yield and quality parameters. Nipping of the sunn hemp crop at 30 and 40 DAS in combination with foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS recorded maximum plant growth, yield and seed quality attributing parameters. Hence it is considered as the most ideal and beneficial treatment for nipping to get better yield. With respect to nipping and foliar spray of cycocel the nipping at 30 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 40 DAS (T₁₂) is a better option in terms of obtaining higher net returns and B:C ratio. Whereas maximum cost of cultivation was found in nipping at 30, 40 DAS and foliar spray of cycocel @ 1000 ppm at 50 DAS (T₁₅) and nipping at 30, 40 DAS and 50 DAS (T₈).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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