Effectiveness Measurement of Bio-agents and Botanicals against *Pyricularia oryzae*

Vipul Kumar, Adesh Kumar, Vinit Paratap Singh and Ajay Tomar

Lovely professional University Phagwara Punjab, India.

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Rice is an important crop, widely affected by blast; a devastating disease incited by *Pyricularia oryzae*. Rice blast caused by *P. oryzae* Cave continues to be a major constraint in rice production. Since, the existing chemical control measures being costly and may favor development of resistance in pathogens, the potential alternative methods have been explored in the present studies. The biological method; an ecofriendly and economic approach seems to be an alternative to chemotherapy in managing virulent strains like *P. oryzae* causing blast of rice. Biocontrol agents *Trichoderma viride*, *T. harzianum*, *Pseudomonas fluorescens* and botanicals; neem oil and neem oil + neem leaf extract (*Azadirachta indica*) were evaluated for their efficacy against blast in Pusa Basmati 1121; a high yielding variety of rice. Carbendazim was used for standard check fungicides for comparison. The result concludes that *T. viride* is best bio-control (24.53%) which was followed by *T. harzianum* (23.08%), neem oil (26.20%) and neem oil + neem leaf extract (24.15%) inhibit the blast respectively while *P. fluorescens* inhibit the blast (21.99%) as compared to treated and untreated control (18.57% and 34.15 %, respectively).

**Keywords:** Rice; *Pyricularia oryzae*; biocontrol; botanicals; *Trichoderma viride*; *T. harzianum*; *Pseudomonas fluorescens*.

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About the production and consumption, 90 per cent or more of the world’s rice is grown and consumed in Asia, known as rice bowl of the world. Among the Asian countries, India is one of the leading producers of rice (Tony Cisse, 2005).

Rice is widely affected by *P. oryzae* in almost all the rice-growing areas of the world and is the most destructive fungal disease of rice causing yield loss up to 90 per cent (Mehrotra, 2003; Gupta and Kapoor, 2002) but normally can lead to 30% yield loss annually (Talbot, 2003). This disease was first reported in India in 1913 caused by an ascomycetes fungus, *M. grisea* Barr (anamorph *F. grisea* Sacc, synonym *P. oryzae* Cav.) (Padmanabhan, 1965). *M. grisea* is a hemibiotrophic pathogen, initially grow biotrophically and then switch to necrotrophic growth, killing the infected tissues (Perfect and Green, 2001; Munch et al., 2008). *M. oryzae*, however, invades foliar tissues biotrophically and necrotrophically simultaneously (Kankanala et al., 2007). The fungus is able to infect all plant parts except root. Symptoms can be either lesions or spots; the shape, color and size vary depending on varietal resistance, environmental conditions and the age of the lesions (Ou 1985). *P. oryzae* can survive on seeds and can easily move over other parts of plant if proper safety checks are not in place.

The use of bio-control agents and botanicals, for plant protection, has assumed greater importance in recent years all over the world.
due to environmental pollution and health insecurity associated with the promiscuous use of factitious fungicides. Use of natural compounds as economically accessible methods of disease control is receiving increased attention due to their nontoxicity and biodegradability (Sivamani, E. and Gnanamanickam, S. S. (1988); Zarandi et al., 2009; Sukanya et al., 2011; Hajan etc., 2012; Bhattacharji and Dey, 2014 and Ali and Nadarajah, 2014). With this aim of controlling the rice blast by using biological control methods the present investigation was undertaken as a field trail experiments against the disease in order to find out suitable biological control for soil borne pathogens.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The present investigation was conducted on “Evaluating efficacy of bio-control agents and botanicals against blast of paddy (\textit{P. oryzae})” during 2015-16 in the Research field of C.S. Azad Univ. of Agri & Tech., Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh), India. The details of materials used, experimental procedures followed and techniques adopted are described as follows-

**Experimental site**

The experiment was conducted in Laboratory and the Research field of C.S. Azad Univ. of Agri & Tech. during 	extit{kharif} season in the year 2014-2015.

**The nursery**

Seeds of rice cultivar Pusa basmati-1121 were soaked in water for 24 hours and incubated for 48 hours to hasten early germination. Pre-germinated seeds were uniformly broadcast @60g per square meter in the nursery on 15th may 2014.

**Preparation of the experimental field**

The selected field area was well prepared and plot marked as per the lay out plan of the experiment. The selected field was dug up, cleaned and the soil was pulverized after which the total area was divided in to sub-plots. Maximum Relative Humidity (%) during the crop period (July-October 2015) was in the range of 71.43-89.85. Minimum Relative Humidity (%) during the crop period (July-October 2015) was in the range of 34.29-64.24. Maximum temperature was 37.82°C. Minimum temperature was 20.79°C and rainfall 00.01-16.94 mm.

**Microbial cultures**

\textit{Pyricularia oryzae} was isolated and maintained on potato dextrose agar (PDA) (potato, 250 g; dextrose, 20 g; agar, 15 g; and distilled water, 1000 ml; pH 7.0) medium. The most effective rhizobacterial isolate which was isolated from rice rhizospheric soil that showed the highest antifungal activity against rice blast pathogen, \textit{P. oryzae} in dual culture was selected and it was identified as \textit{P. fluorescens} used for further studies. \textit{P. fluorescens} was grown on KB broth in a shaking bath at 28±2°C for 24 h. The bacterial culture was centrifuged at 5000 × g for 10 min, the supernatant discarded and the bacterial pellet suspended in 0.1M phosphate buffer (pH 6.8). The cell density was adjusted to 1x10^7 cfu/ml with the same buffer by measuring the absorbance at 420 nm and used as inoculum.

**Method of application**

Time of the application of the \textit{Trichoderma} is also important. \textit{Trichoderma} can’t tolerate heavy pressure. Therefore, it may be used strictly as a preventive measure, it can’t cure infection. \textit{Trichoderma} is least effective against the systematic disease than against more superficial one. It cannot control the existing disease. A combination of a chemical treatment with \textit{Trichoderma} will be highly effective. A single strain of \textit{Trichoderma} spp. may not be sufficient to be effective under all conditions and agents are effective against the disease.

**Count the colony forming units of \textit{T. viride} and \textit{T. harzianum}**

One gram of bio agents powder respectively \textit{Trichoderma} and \textit{Pseudomonas fluorescens} was weighed and the volume was made up to 10 ml with sterilized distilled water, shaken well (1:10) inside laminar flow hood. Out of this suspension 1 ml was taken out and transferred to 9 ml of sterilized distilled water in a test tube (1:100). Serial dilution were made similarly by transferring 1 ml of each suspension to the subsequent tubes to get 10^-7and 10^-8 dilution respectively. 1 ml of each suspension (10^-7&10^-8) was transferred to sterile petri plates. 15 ml of each medium such as PDA for \textit{Trichoderma} and Kings B Agar for \textit{P. fluorescens} was poured into plates. The plates were incubated in an inverted position at 25 ± 2°C. After 3 days, average numbers of colonies were counted per plates of both bio agents. Colonies were observed.
per plate and the number of colony forming unit (c.f.u) present in 1 g was calculated by the formula (Aneja, 2004).

\[
\text{c.f.u} = \frac{\text{No. of colonies}}{\text{Amount plated} \times \text{dilution factor}}
\]

**Use of Neem Botanical**

**Preparation of neem leaf extracts**

The collected plant leaves were chopped after cleaning in running tap water three times to remove soil materials. The dried leaves of each plant species were made into powder separately using a sterilized mortar and pestle and then sieved with one millimeter sieve. The extracts were filtered through cheese cloth. The powder of neem leaf extracts was packed in water proof plastic bags and labeled appropriately as described by Akinbode & Ikotun and stored at 4°C until used.

Crude plant extracts were obtained by infusing 50 g of plant material in 100 ml SDW to give 50% w/v in a 500 ml conical flask and the mixture was incubated at 25°C - 28°C for 20 hours. The infusion was filtered separately through sterile double-layered cheese cloth into a sterile 400 ml beaker and the resulting stock solution was collected and stored at 25°C - 28°C until used.

**Application of spray solution**

Plant extracts and chemicals were sprayed as solution into the experimental plots as per treatments. Spraying was done for 3 times with 10 days interval at 65, 75 and 85 DAT respectively. Adequate precautions were taken to avoid drifting of spray materials from one plot to the neighboring ones.

**Assessment of the disease incidence**

Each plot was visited for recording the incidence. The disease incidence was recorded in the three growth stage of the plant namely flowering stage, milking stage and maturity stage. Assessment of the disease severity in the field five plants from each unit plot were randomly selected and tagged for grading the severity of diseases. Disease severity of leaf blast (Pyricularia oryzae) of rice was recorded by Singh (2000) used a 0-9 scale as follow: 0 = no lesion observed; 1 = 1% leaf area covered; 3 = 10% leaf area covered; 5 = 25% leaf area covered; 7 = 50% leaf area covered and 9 = more than 50% leaf area covered by using the disease rating scale of 0-9 developed by International Rice Research Institute (IRRI. 1996) and then converting into percent disease by using the formulas.

\[
\text{Disease severity} = \frac{\text{Sum of diseases grades} \times \text{No. of infected tillers/hill}}{\text{No. of tillers} \times \text{Maximum disease grades} \times \text{No. of tillers assessed}} \times 100
\]

**Measurement of Shoot and Root weight**

After the assessment of disease, 60 days after transplanting plants were uprooted carefully from the field. The root region was cut separated from the plants and washed thoroughly to remove adhered soil particles with much care and the fresh shoot weight, dry shoot weight, fresh root weight and dry root weight of the plants of each treatment were measured in gram.

**Experimental design and statistical analysis**

The experiment was done following Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) with three replications. The experimental field was primarily divided into 7 blocks. Each block was further divided into 3 plots. Total number of plots was 21.

**Treatments**

- **T₀** Untreated control
- **T₁** *Pseudomonas fluorescens* @ 8g/kg (ST) & 0.2% (FS)
- **T₂** *Trichoderma harzianum* @ 8g/kg (ST) & 10g/l(FS)
- **T₃** *Trichoderma viride* @ 8g/kg (ST) & 10g/l(FS)
- **T₄** Neem oil @ 1 ml/kg (ST) & 0.5 ml/l(FS)
- **T₅** Neem oil @ 1 ml/kg (ST) & Neem leaf extract @ 20ml/l(FS)
- **T₆** Carbandazim 50 WP @ 2g/kg (ST) & 0.2% (FS) (Treated control)

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Effects of biotic and botanicals inducers on rice crop**

**Number of tillers of paddy at 60 DAT**

Among the bio-agents and botanicals used, the maximum number of tillers were recorded in **T₁** *P. fluorescens* (46.43) as compared to treated
and untreated control (38.46 and 25.93, respectively). The second best treatment was $T_2$ - *T. harzianum* (19.53), which was followed by $T_1$ - *T. viride* (44.13), $T_3$ - neem oil (42.66) and $T_4$ - neem oil + neem leaf extract (40.50) as compared to $T_0$ - untreated control (36.86). Among the treatments most effective was $T_4$ - *Pseudomonas fluorescens* (46.43) (Table 1 & Fig 3).

**Shoot length (cm) of paddy at 90 DAT**

Among the bio-agents and botanicals used the maximum shoot length (cm) was recorded in $T_1$ - *P. fluorescens* (74.70) as compared to treated and untreated control (66.00 and 62.23, respectively). The second best treatment $T_2$ - *T. harzianum* (62.23), which was followed by $T_3$ - *T. viride* (70.16), $T_4$ - neem oil (69.56) and $T_5$ - neem oil + neem leaf extract (67.93) as compared to $T_0$ - control (62.23). Among the treatments most effective was $T_1$ - *P. fluorescens* (74.70). Similar findings were reported by Meera and Balabaskar (2012); Karpagavalli (2001); and Shyamala and Sivakumara (2012) under field condition all the treatments tested in this study gave satisfactory result against blast of paddy (*P. oryzae*). Malleswari and Bagyanarayana (2013) and Sivakumar et al., 2012 suggested that growth promotion by bio-agents might be due to direct involvement of some plant hormones such as auxins, cytokinins etc. (Table 1, Fig 3)

**Fresh shoot weight and dry shoot weight (g) of paddy as affected by different treatments at 60 DAT**

The result presented in table 1.1 and in fig. 4.4 depicted shows that all the treatments were significant and fresh shoot weight (g) and dry weight as compared to control. Among the bio-agents and botanicals used the maximum fresh shoot weight (g) and dry shoot weight was recorded...
in T₁* P. fluorescens* 126.16 and 30.63 respectively as compared to control (120.40 and 25.66 respectively). The second best treatment was T₂*, T. harzianum* (19.53, 29.26), which was followed by T₃* T. viride* (124.73, 28.50), T₄* neem oil* (122.33, 26.90) and T₅* neem oil+neem leaf extract* (123.40, 27.80) as compared to T₀ control (120.40 and 25.66). Maximum fresh shoot weight in *P. fluorescens* may be due to activation of plant growth promoting indole acetic acid (IAA) of an array of host defense

![Shoot weight and disease severity at 90 DAT](image)

**Fig. 4.** Fresh and dry shoot weight from different treatments and disease severity at 90 DAT

![Root weight and disease severity at 90 DAT](image)

**Fig. 5.** Fresh and dry root weight from different treatments and disease severity at 90 DAT

**Table 1.** Fresh and dry shoot weight from different treatments and disease severity at 90 DAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatments</th>
<th>Shoot length</th>
<th>No. of tiller</th>
<th>Fresh shoot wt. (g)</th>
<th>Dry shoot wt. (g)</th>
<th>Fresh root weight (g)</th>
<th>Dry root weight (g)</th>
<th>Disease severity at 90 DAT</th>
<th>Yield (q/ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T₀</td>
<td>62.23</td>
<td>36.86</td>
<td>120.4</td>
<td>25.66</td>
<td>26.46</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>34.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>T₁</td>
<td>74.7</td>
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<td>126.16</td>
<td>30.63</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>8.53</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>38.22</td>
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<tr>
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<td>42.83</td>
<td>124.76</td>
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<td>30.46</td>
<td>7.63</td>
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<tr>
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<td>124.43</td>
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<td>7.33</td>
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<td>37.26</td>
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<tr>
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<td>69.56</td>
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<td>7.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>67.93</td>
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<td>123.4</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>28.03</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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<td>T₆</td>
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<td>121.8</td>
<td>26.53</td>
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<td>6.5</td>
<td>18.57</td>
<td>39.9</td>
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<td>0.252</td>
<td>2.566</td>
<td>2.556</td>
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<td>0.47</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2.976</td>
<td>1.335</td>
<td>0.553</td>
<td>1.268</td>
<td>1.268</td>
<td>0.523</td>
<td>3.014</td>
<td>0.636</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mechanism including induced activity of enzymes accompanied by a significant increase in the growth of *P. fluorescens* has also been reported to enhance the crop growth and yield in rice (Pathak et al., 2004; Arshad and Frankenberger, 1991 and Khalimi et al., 2012) (Table 1 & Fig 2, 4).

**Fresh root weight and dry root weight (g) of paddy as affected by different treatments at 60 DAT**

Among the bio-agents and botanicals used the maximum fresh root weight (g) was recorded T1-*P. fluorescens* (32.20, 8.53) as compared to treated control (26.46, and 5.80 respectively). The second best treatment was T2-*T. harzianum* (19.53, 19.53), which was followed by T3-*T. viride* (29.06, 7.33), T4–neem oil (28.60, 7.30) and T5–neem oil + neem leaf extract (28.03, 6.70) as compared to T0- control (26.46, 5.80) (Table 1 & Fig 2, 5).

**Disease severity per cent at 90 DAT**

It is clearly shown from the Table No 1 that among the bio-agents and botanicals used the minimum disease severity per cent was in T1-*P. fluorescens* (21.99%) as compared to treated and untreated control (18.57% and 34.15 %, respectively). The second best treatment was T2-*T. harzianum* (23.08%), which was followed by T3-*T. viride* (29.06, 7.33), T4–neem oil (28.60, 7.30) and T5–neem oil + neem leaf extract (28.03, 6.70) as compared to T0- control (26.46, 5.80) (Table 1 & Fig 2, 5).

**Yield of paddy as influenced by different treatments**

Among the bio-agents and botanicals used yield was recorded in T1-*P. fluorescens* (38.22) as compared to treated and untreated control (39.90 and 35.43, respectively). The second best treatment was T2-*T. harzianum* (19.53), which was followed by T3-*T. viride* (37.26), T4–neem oil (36.81) and T5–neem oil + neem leaf extract (36.15) as compared to T0-untreated control (35.43). Among the treatments most effective was T1-*P. fluorescens* (38.22). Similar findings were reported by Islam and Faruq, 2012; Razu and Hossain, 2015; Jha and Subramanian, 2013; Sharma, 2013; Ramezanpour, 2010 and Khorshidi et al., 2011 and they evaluated the efficacy of biocontrol agents used against blast of paddy incidence and promoting plant growth of paddy in field conditions.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Growers, in general still rely on the use of factitious fungicides for the management of plant diseases. However, the misuse of these chemicals may cause serious environmental and health problems. Microbial antagonists can be used as bio-pesticides to provide effective and safe means to manage plant diseases. Several microorganisms have been caught and proven having antagonistic properties against plant pathogenic fungi and other plant pathogens. Our findings showed that *Pseudomonas fluorescens*, *Trichoderma viride* and *T. harzianum* suppressed the growth of *P. oryzae* and proved its potential as bio-control...
agents. More studies are therefore needed to confirm the current findings and to determine the most effective formulation against *P. oryzae*.

**REFERENCES**


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