***Original Research Article***

**Effect of different concentrations of silicon dioxide nanoparticle on growth and yield parameters in buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* Moench.)**

**Abstract**

A field experiment was conducted during the *rabi* season of 2023-24 at the Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, Naini Agriculture Institute, Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture Technology and Sciences (SHUATS), to investigate the effect of different concentrations of silicon dioxide (SiO₂) nanoparticles on growth, yield, and seedling parameters in buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* Moench.). The experiments were conducted on the IC-329456 genotype of buckwheat. To determine the optimal concentration of SiO₂ nanoparticles, 12 different concentrations (T0-T11) were evaluated using the In-between method. The impact of all treatments was assessed in terms of germination percentage, root length, shoot length, seedling length, fresh weight, dry weight, vigor index I, and vigor index II. The findings showed that seeds subjected to the T3 treatment exhibited a notable enhancement in the evaluated parameters compared to those that received no treatment. The experiment was laid out in a Randomized Block Design (RBD) with 3 replications in the field and a Completely Randomized Design (CRD) with 4 replications in the laboratory. Seeds were treated with distilled water (100 ml) as a control, and various concentrations of SiO₂ (5 ppm, 10 ppm, 15 ppm, 20 ppm, 25 ppm, 30 ppm, 35 ppm, 40 ppm, 45 ppm, 50 ppm, 55 ppm) for a period of 14 hours each. Among the twelve treatments, SiO₂ at 15 ppm showed comparatively better outcomes in seedling parameters than untreated seeds and other treatments. A subsequent field evaluation was conducted based on the optimized concentration of SiO₂, with three replications for each treatment. The field experiment assessed the impact of SiO₂ nanoparticles on field emergence, plant height, days to first flowering, seed yield per plant, biological yield, and harvest index. The results revealed field emergence of 96.1%, plant height at 90 DAS of 41.67 cm, days to 50 % flowering at 36.6, leaf surface area of 12.12 cm², number of seeds per plant at 99.07, biological yield of 9.74 gm, and harvest index of 27.73%.In terms of seedling parameters, seeds treated with SiO₂ at 15 ppm for 14 hours showed higher levels of germination percentage (94.12%), root length (1.10 cm), shoot length (6.7 cm), seedling length (7.8 cm), fresh weight (0.8 gm), dry weight (0.13 gm), vigor index I (743.26), and vigor index II (9.0) compared to the control, which showed the lowest performance in all parameters.

**Key words:** Buckwheat, Growth, Nanoparticles, Silicon dioxide, yield.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Buckwheat (Fagopyrum esculentum) is commonly associated with cereal grains, but it is actually a pseudo-cereal from the Polygonaceae family. Unlike conventional cereals like wheat and rice, which are classified as grasses, buckwheat is more closely related to plants such as rhubarb and sorrel. It is mainly grown for its seeds, which offer substantial nutritional benefits. These seeds are a good source of complex carbohydrates, contain high-quality proteins, and provide essential amino acids. Moreover, buckwheat is naturally free of gluten, making it an ideal food choice for people with gluten intolerance or celiac disease **(Ikeda & Yamashita, 1994).**Morphologically, buckwheat seeds exhibit diverse shapes—oval, ovate (egg-shaped), triangular, and winged forms. The most common form, the triangular fruit, measures between 4 to 9 mm and is typically covered by a solid or spotted grey to dark brown shell **(Pomeranz & Sachs, 1972).** Inside, the embryo traverses the starchy endosperm of the mature seed, forming a compact and efficient nutritional unit **(Pomeranz and Lorenz, 1983).**

Buckwheat thrives in marginal conditions, requiring fewer nutrients and less water compared to major cereal crops **(Farooq *et al.,* 2016).** In India, it is primarily grown in the Himalayan regions—particularly Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and parts of Jammu and Kashmir—where the cool climate and higher altitudes support its growth. Although not a staple crop in the country, buckwheat holds cultural significance and contributes to the nutrition and livelihoods of many mountain communities. Given its health benefits and adaptability, efforts are underway to expand its cultivation **(Bhawna *et al.,* 2024).** Globally, buckwheat is cultivated in diverse agro-climatic regions, with Russia, China, and Ukraine leading production. Russia alone accounts for nearly half of the world's output, followed by China. European countries like Poland and France also produce considerable quantities. Besides its role in human nutrition, buckwheat is valued as a cover crop and for its role in honey production, as its flowers are highly attractive to bees. Nutritionally, buckwheat is a powerhouse. It contains essential vitamins such as B1, C, and E, along with minerals and a high proportion of lysine—an essential amino acid often limited in other cereals. However, its proteins exhibit lower digestibility, possibly due to the presence of tannins, phytic acid, and protease inhibitors. While these compounds can have health implications, including allergic responses in some individuals, they also contribute to the plant's resilience and defense **(Vojtíšková *et al.,* 2012).**

Modern plant breeding and omics technologies offer promising avenues for improving buckwheat. Integrated approaches combining genomics, transcriptomics, and metabolomics can accelerate the development of high-yielding, nutrient-dense cultivars adapted to various environments **(Zargar *et al.,* 2023).** These innovations are particularly relevant in the face of global agricultural challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and overuse of chemical fertilizers **(Abobatta, 2018).** Among the promising agronomic strategies is the application of silicon dioxide (SiO₂), which has been shown to enhance plant growth, yield, and resilience. Though silicon is not classified as an essential nutrient for most crops, its role in improving structural integrity, nutrient uptake, and stress tolerance is increasingly recognized. In buckwheat, SiO₂ application can lead to improved photosynthetic efficiency, increased biomass, and better grain quality **(Ma & Yamaji, 2006; Epstein, 1999).** It enhances phosphorus assimilation and boosts enzymatic activities essential for growth **(Gong *et al.,* 2003).**

Moreover, silicon plays a critical role in strengthening plant defense mechanisms. It accumulates in cell walls, forming a physical barrier against pathogens. Silicon also stimulates the production of biochemical defenses, including phytoalexins, phenolics, and pathogenesis-related proteins, thereby enhancing disease resistance **(Van Bockhaven *et al.,* 2013).** In buckwheat, such enhancements contribute to reduced fungal infections, better overall health, and less reliance on chemical pesticides—supporting more sustainable farming practices.

In parallel, nanotechnology is emerging as a transformative tool in agriculture. Nanoparticles, including nano-silicon, enable precise delivery of nutrients and agrochemicals, thereby increasing efficiency and minimizing environmental impact. Nanotechnology is revolutionizing agriculture by enhancing crop yield, improving pest control, and increasing nutrient efficiency. It enables precise delivery of agrochemicals and real-time monitoring of soil and plant health. Nano-fertilizers, for instance, provide a controlled release of nutrients, ensuring plants receive a steady supply over time. Furthermore, nanotechnology can assist in early disease detection and targeted treatment, ultimately enhancing crop productivity and food security **(Iavicoli *et al.,* 2017).**

1. **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**2.1 Procurement of Seeds**

Buckwheat seeds were obtained from All India Coordinated Research Improvement Project (AICRIP) Karnal, Haryana.

**2.2 Preparation of SiO2 Nanoparticles**

SiO2 nanoparticles used in this study were purchased from Adnano Technologies Private Limited. The nanoparticles had sizes ranging from 30-70 nm. They were suspended directly in de-ionized water and dispersed using ultrasonic vibration (100W, 40KHz) for 30 minutes in the lab of the Department of Molecular and Cellular Engineering at SHUATS. To prevent particle aggregation, small magnetic bars were placed in the suspension and stirred using an ultrasonicator. Several suspensions with concentrations up to the maximum limit were tested to achieve uniform particle dispersion, stability, and a clear suspension using a trial-and-error method.

**Treatment details**

**Table 1. Treatment details**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S.no** | **Treatments** | **Nanomaterial** | **Concentration (ppm/L)** | **Duration** |
| **1** | **T0** | - | - | - |
| **2** | **T1** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 5 ppm | 14 hrs. |
| **3** | **T2** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 10 ppm | 14 hrs. |
| **4** | **T3** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 15 ppm | 14 hrs. |
| **5** | **T4** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 20 ppm | 14 hrs. |
| **6** | **T5** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 25 ppm | 14 hrs. |
| **7** | **T6** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 30 ppm | 14 hrs. |
| **8** | **T7** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 35 ppm | 14 hrs. |
| **9** | **T8** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 40 ppm | 14 hrs. |
| **10** | **T9** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 45 ppm | 14 hrs. |
| **11** | **T10** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 50 ppm | 14 hrs. |
| **12** | **T11** | Silicon dioxide (SiO2) | 55 ppm | 14 hrs. |

**2.3 Seedling Parameters**

To assess germination and growth in buckwheat, seeds were exposed to various concentrations of nanoparticles by soaking them in the respective solutions for 14 hours before sowing in the field.

**2.4 Methodology for Seedling Parameters Germination percent (ISTA, 2015)**

The germination percentage of buckwheat was measured and percent germination was calculated using the following relation:

$$Germination \left(\%\right)=\frac{seeds germinated }{total seed sown} × 100$$

**Root length (cm):** Ten seedlings were selected randomly from each treatment on 8th day from germination test. Root length were recorded by measuring the distance from the tip of the main root to the base of the hypocotyl using a ruler, and the average length were reported in centimeters.

**Shoot length (cm):** Ten normal seedlings used for root length measurement, were also used for the measurement of shoot length. The shoot length were measured from the tip of the primary leaf to the base of the hypocotyls and mean shoot length were expressed in centimetre.

**Seedling length (cm):** Length of ten normal seedlings grown on moist blotting paper kept at optimum temperature were measured in centimetre on the day of final count and maximum seedling length is considered vigorous.

**Seedling fresh weight (gm):** To determine seedling fresh weight, ten seedlings were randomly selected from each sample and weighed using an electronic balance, with the results expressed in grams.

**Seedling dry weight (gm):** For taking the observation of seedling dry weight, ten seedlings were dried in hot air oven at 100⁰C temperature for 1 hours. The dried seedlings were weighed with the help of electronic balance in gram.

**Vigor Index I:** It was calculated by adopting the method suggested by Baki and Anderson (1973). Vigor index – I = g𝑒𝑟𝑚𝑖𝑛𝑎𝑡𝑖𝑜𝑛 % × t𝑜𝑡𝑎𝑙 𝑠𝑒𝑒𝑑𝑙𝑖𝑛𝑔 𝑙𝑒𝑛𝑔𝑡ℎ(𝑐𝑚)

**Vigor index-II:** It was calculated by adopting the method suggested by Baki and Anderson (1973). Vigor index − II = g𝑒𝑟𝑚𝑖𝑛𝑎𝑡𝑖𝑜𝑛 % × 𝑡𝑜𝑡𝑎𝑙 𝑠𝑒𝑒𝑑𝑙𝑖𝑛𝑔 𝑑𝑟𝑦 𝑤𝑒𝑖𝑔ℎ𝑡(𝑔)

**2.4 Field Experiment**

The experiments were carried out in a Randomized Block Design (RBD) for field experiments in 3 replications and in Completely Randomized Design (CRD) for laboratory parameters in 4 replications. The plot size was 1m × 1m, with row-to-row spacing of 30 cm and plant-to-plant spacing of 10 cm. Seeds were treated and sown in the field with regular spacing, and irrigation was given regularly to maintain moisture content above 80%. Four hoeings were done to keep the plots free from weeds.

**Methodology for field parameters**

Field emergence (%): Field emergence was recorded on 7th day after sowing. The seedling appearance on the surface of the soil were considered as emerged. The percent emergence of seedlings was calculated as rate of field emergence by using following formula.

Field emergence (%) = Total number of seeds emerged on 7th day / total number of seed sown ×100

**Leaf surface area(cm2):** Estimates of leaf area were obtained by the equation

Leaf area (cm2) = x/y; where x is the weight (g) of the area covered by the leaf outline on a milli meter graph paper and y is the weight of one cm2 of the same graph paper.

**Seed yield per plant(g):** Seeds from randomly selected five plants from each treatment were collected and weighed individually to get seed yield per plant and expressed in grams.

**Biological yield (g):** Biological yield refers to the total dry matter accumulation in a plant system. The five randomly selected plants in each treatment (without roots) were dried along with seeds and weighed to obtain biological yield.

**Harvest index (%):** The ratio of the economic yield to biological yield is referred as harvest index and it can be used to measure the reproductive efficiency. Harvest index of five randomly selected plants was recorded (Donald and Hamblin, 1963)

Harvest index= Economic yield / Biological yield ×100

**3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**3.1 Seedling parameters**

**3.1.1 Germination per-cent (ISTA, 2015):**

This research explores how silicon dioxide nanoparticles (SiO₂ NPs) influence seed germination and early seedling development under different treatment conditions. The findings reveal noticeable differences in germination rates and growth metrics, emphasizing the potential of SiO₂ NPs to improve seed vigor and overall performance. The highest germination rate was observed in treatment T3, with a remarkable 94.12%, closely followed by T11 at 93.41%. These findings align with previous research conducted by **Akhtar *et al*. (2021)**, who demonstrated the positive impact of SiO₂ NPs on seed germination and seedling vigor in wheat. Specifically, their research indicates that SiO₂ NPs can enhance the efficiency of water uptake and enzymatic activity, thereby promoting better seed germination and growth outcomes. The control group (T0) exhibited the lowest germination percentage at 84.79%, suggesting that the absence of SiO₂ NPs might lead to suboptimal seed performance. Interestingly, the data also reveal a non-linear relationship between nanoparticle concentration and germination rates. For example, while higher concentrations, such as those in T11, generally improve germination, the relationship is not strictly linear, indicating that optimal concentrations may vary. This complex interaction between SiO₂ NP concentration and seed germination is further supported by **Farooq *et al.* (2015)**, who highlighted the role of silicon in enhancing oxidative stress tolerance and improving germination in rice. Additionally, a study by **Chourasiya *et al.* (2021)** on the impact of mesoporous nano-silica confirmed that such treatments significantly enhance seed germination, shoot and root lengths, seedling fresh and dry weights, and vigor indices. The data supporting these findings can be seen in **Figure 1** and **Table 2**. This research aligns with studies on crops like wheat, pea, and mustard, where SiO₂ NPs have been shown to improve seed germination and seedling vigor through mechanisms like enhanced water uptake and enzymatic activity.

Germination per-cent

96

94

92

90

88

86

84

82

80

78

T0 T1 T2 T3 T4 T5 T6 T7 T8 T9 T10 T11

**Figure 1. Representing the germination percentage after seeds were treated with nanoparticles**

**3.1.2 Root length:**

This study examines the effect of silicon dioxide nanoparticles (SiO₂ NPs) on the root length of buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*) seedlings, with data analysed across various treatments. The results, as presented in **Figure 2** and **Table 2**, indicate a significant enhancement in root length in treatments involving SiO₂ NPs compared to the control. Treatment T3, which involved a specific concentration of SiO₂ NPs, produced the longest root length, averaging 1.1 cm. This improvement is notable compared to the control group (T0), which showed an average root length of just 0.8 cm. The enhancement in root growth observed with SiO₂ NP treatment aligns with the results reported by **Akhtar *et al.* (2021),** who also noted comparable effects in nanoparticle-treated crops. They found that the nanoparticles facilitated better nutrient absorption and root elongation, contributing to overall plant health. **Farooq *et al.* (2015)** also highlighted that silicon, as a component of SiO₂ NPs, enhances root growth by improving cell wall elasticity and facilitating better water uptake. This effect was further supported by **Chourasiya *et al.* (2021),** who studied various crops, including wheat, pea, and mustard, and found that mesoporous nano-silica significantly improved root length and overall seedling vigor. The consistent improvement in root length across treatments involving SiO₂ NPs suggests that these nanoparticles have the potential to enhance root development, which is crucial for the effective absorption of water and nutrients, leading to improved crop yields in buckwheat. The findings, illustrated in **Figure 2** and detailed in **Table 2**, underline the practical agricultural implications of SiO₂ NP applications. The results suggest that SiO₂ NPs can be an effective means to boost root growth and overall plant vigor in buckwheat, a crop that benefits from robust root systems for optimal growth.

**3.1.3 Shoot length**

This study evaluates the impact of silicon dioxide nanoparticles (SiO₂ NPs) on the shoot length of buckwheat seedlings. The data show a consistent increase in shoot length across treatments involving SiO₂ NPs compared to the control. Treatment T3 achieved the maximum shoot length of 6.7 cm, while the control group (T0) recorded a shorter shoot length of 5.5 cm.These results are consistent with findings by **Akhtar *et al*. (2021)**, who conducted similar research on wheat, demonstrating that SiO₂ NPs can enhance shoot growth by improving nutrient uptake and water retention. Additionally, **Chourasiya *et al*. (2021)** observed similar benefits in other crops like wheat, pea, and mustard, further supporting the positive impact of SiO₂ NPs on shoot development.The findings indicate that SiO₂ NPs positively influence shoot length, contributing to the overall vigor and growth potential of buckwheat plants. This suggests that SiO₂ NP treatment could be a valuable approach for improving shoot development in agricultural practices.

**3.1.4 Seedling length**

This study assesses the effect of silicon dioxide nanoparticles (SiO₂ NPs) on the seedling length of buckwheat. The results, summarized in **Table 2**, show a noticeable increase in seedling length across treatments involving SiO₂ NPs compared to the control. Treatment T3 exhibited the maximum seedling length of 7.8 cm, whereas the control (T0) had a seedling length of 6.3 cm.These findings align with those reported by **Akhtar *et al*. (2021)** in wheat, where SiO₂ NPs were shown to enhance overall seedling growth by improving water and nutrient uptake. **Chourasiya *et al.* (2021)** also observed similar positive effects in various crops, including wheat, pea, and mustard, indicating that SiO₂ NPs consistently promote better seedling development across different plant species. The data suggest that SiO₂ NPs play a significant role in enhancing seedling length, contributing to the overall growth and vigor of buckwheat seedlings. This enhancement could be beneficial for agricultural practices aiming to improve seedling establishment and crop yields.

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

0

T0 T1 T2 T3 T4 T5 T6 T7 T8 T9 T10 T11

Root length (cm) Shoot length (cm)

**Figure 2. Representing the variations in mean values of root and shoot length of buckwheat after treating with Nanoparticles**

1

0.9

0.8

0.7

0.6

0.5

0.4

0.3

0.2

0.1

0

T0 T1 T2 T3 T4 T5 T6 T7 T8 T9 T10 T11

Seedling Fresh weight (gm)

Seedling Dry weight (gm)

**Figure 3. Representing the variations observed in mean values of seedling fresh and dry weight of buckwheat after treating with silicon dioxide nanoparticles**

**3.1.5 Fresh weight:**

The application of SiO₂ nanoparticles led to marked differences in seedling fresh weight across treatments T3 demonstrated the highest fresh weight (0.80 g), followed closely by T2, T7, and

T8 (0.75 g each). The control group (T0) showed the lowest fresh weight (0.65 g). The superior performance of T3 aligns with the trend where nanoparticle treatments enhance seedling biomass compared to the control. This improvement in fresh weight could be attributed to

increased photosynthetic activity and enhanced nutrient uptake facilitated by SiO₂

nanoparticles. **Parveen and Siddiqui, (2022)** explored the effects of SiO₂ nanoparticles on plant growth and found that these nanoparticles significantly improve seedling biomass by boosting photosynthetic efficiency and nutrient uptake. Their findings support the observed trend in our study, where certain treatments, such as T3, resulted in higher fresh weight, indicating a positive impact on biomass accumulation. The concentration-dependent response observed, where both moderate and higher concentrations (e.g., T7 and T8) performed well, suggests that the relationship between nanoparticle concentration and fresh weight is non-linear and varies based on specific treatment conditions. This supports that SiO2 nanoparticles can positively influence seedling fresh weight by enhancing biomass accumulation through improved photosynthetic efficiency and increased carbon assimilation.

**3.1.6 Dry weight:**

Seedling dry weight showed significant variation across treatments. T3 exhibited the highest dry weight (0.13 g), followed closely by T2, T7, and T8 (0.11 g each). The control group (T0) displayed the lowest dry weight (0.09 g), confirming the positive effect of SiO₂ nanoparticle treatments on biomass accumulation. The data reveals a notable increase in dry weight for specific treatments, particularly T3, indicating that SiO2 nanoparticles at certain concentrations can significantly enhance biomass accumulation in seedlings. **Ali *et al*. (2019)** investigated the impact of SiO₂ nanoparticles on plant growth and biomass accumulation, finding that these nanoparticles can significantly increase dry weight by enhancing nutrient uptake and overall metabolism. The observed increase in dry weight may be due to improved silicon uptake and enhanced nutrient absorption facilitated by the SiO₂ nanoparticles. Their study supports the idea of a concentration-dependent effect, where certain higher concentrations (e.g., T7 and T8) show improved dry weight compared to the control but do not surpass T3. This suggests that the relationship between SiO₂ nanoparticle concentration and dry weight is non-linear, with an optimal range for maximum biomass accumulation. The enhanced biomass accumulation in treated seedlings may result from improved nutrient uptake, more efficient metabolism, or other physiological changes induced by the nanoparticles.

**3.1.7 Vigour Index – I**

The application of SiO₂ nanoparticles led to remarkable improvements in Vigour Index I across treatments. T3 exhibited the highest Vigour Index I (743.26), followed by T8 (654.46) and T2 (643.37). These results clearly indicate the superior seedling vigor in nanoparticle-treated groups compared to the control (T0), which had the lowest Vigour Index I (484.95). The enhanced Vigour Index I in these treatments suggests that SiO₂ nanoparticles contribute to better seedling growth by improving root and shoot length, which are crucial factors in determining seedling Vigor. **Hashmi *et al*. (2024)** observed similar enhancements in seedling vigor with the use of SiO₂ nanoparticles, attributing this to improved nutrient uptake and stress tolerance. These findings are consistent with the observed data, where moderate concentrations of SiO₂ nanoparticles resulted in significantly higher Vigour Index I compared to the control.

**3.1.8 Vigour Index -II**

Vigour Index II also exhibited significant variation, with SiO₂ nanoparticle treatments outperforming the control. T5 recorded the highest Vigour Index II (10), closely followed by T4 and T9 (9.5 each). T3, which performed best in Vigour Index I, also showed a strong performance in Vigour Index II (9.0). In contrast, the control group (T0) had the lowest Vigour Index II (7.6), underscoring the positive impact of SiO₂ nanoparticles on seedling biomass. **Kumar and Patel (2023)** reported that SiO₂ nanoparticles significantly enhance seedling dry weight, which directly contributes to a higher Vigour Index II.

**3.2 Field Parameters**

**3.2.1 Field emergence (%):**

The study on the effects of SiO2 nanoparticle seed priming on field emergence demonstrated significant variations among different treatments **(Table 3).** The highest field emergence rate was observed in Treatment T3 (15 ppm) at 96.1%, suggesting this concentration is optimal for enhancing seedling emergence (Fig. 4). This high emergence rate is likely due to the beneficial effects of SiO2 nanoparticles, which may improve enzymatic activity, water uptake, and stress tolerance. In contrast, the control group (T0) exhibited the lowest emergence rate at 81.1%, indicating that the absence of SiO2 treatment resulted in suboptimal conditions for seed germination. Other notable treatments included T6 (30 ppm) and T2 (10 ppm) with emergence rates of 89.6% and 88.4%, respectively, underscoring their effectiveness. These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as **EL-BELTAGI *et al*. (2023),** who reported that SiO2 nanoparticle priming can significantly improve field emergence rates and highlighted a non-linear relationship between SiO2 concentration and emergence. The study found that lower to moderate concentrations consistently enhanced emergence, while higher concentrations exhibited varied responses. The mean field emergence percentage across all treatments was 86.17%, with a coefficient of variation of 4.69% **(Table 3).** However, the study's limitations, such as the short observation period, suggest that further research is needed to explore the long-term effects and underlying mechanisms of SiO2 nanoparticle priming on field emergence under different environmental conditions. On the basis of present finding, it can be suggested to priming of seeds with 30 ppm SiO2 NPs could be used to enhance the field germination.

120

100

80

60

40

20

0

Field

emergence (%)

Plant height Leaf surface Days to first Seeds per Biological Harvest

(cm)

area (cm) flowering plant (g)

yield (g)

index (%)

T0 T2 T3 T9

**Figure 4. Representing the mean values of field parameters of buckwheat**

**3.2.2 Plant height(cm):**

The study on the effects of SiO2 nanoparticle seed priming on plant height demonstrated significant variations among treatments **(Table 3).** Treatment T3 (15 ppm) recorded the maximum plant height at 41.67 cm, indicating that this concentration is optimal for promoting growth, likely due to enhanced nutrient uptake and metabolic activities facilitated by SiO2 nanoparticles **(Fig. 4).** Treatment T2 (10 ppm) also showed a substantial increase in height at 39.4 cm. The control group (T0) exhibited the lowest plant height at 31.07 cm, underscoring the benefits of SiO2 priming. Other treatments, such as T9 (40 ppm) and T5 (25 ppm), showed notable plant heights of 39.6 cm and 38.4 cm, respectively, although higher concentrations presented variable results. These findings align with previous research by **EL-BELTAGI *et al*. (2023),** who reported that SiO2 nanoparticle priming can significantly enhance plant growth by improving nutrient uptake and stress tolerance. The mean plant height across all treatments was 35.93 cm, with a coefficient of variation of 9.56%, indicating moderate data consistency **(Table 3).** Overall, the study supports the efficacy of SiO2 nanoparticle priming in enhancing plant height, particularly at moderate concentrations, though further research is needed to explore long-term effects under various environmental conditions.

**3.2.3 Days to 50 % flowering:**

Analysis of the recorded data on Days to 50% Flowering during the experimental crop growth reveals variations among treatments **(Table 3).** The earliest flowering was observed in Treatment T3 at 36.60 days after sowing (DAS), followed closely by T5 at 36.87 DAS. Among the other treatments, T2 recorded 37.13 DAS, while T6 and T8 both showed 37.20 DAS. The longest time to 50% flowering was observed in T0 (untreated control) at 37.60 DAS **(Fig. 4).** These findings suggest that SiO2 nanoparticles do influence the flowering time, with Treatment T3 achieving the earliest flowering. This contrasts with the initial assumption that the untreated control would achieve the earliest flowering. The results indicate that certain concentrations of SiO2 nanoparticles may accelerate the flowering process. The mean days to 50% flowering across all treatments was 37.25 DAS, with a coefficient of variation of 0.77%, indicating highly reliable data **(Table 3).** The small range between the earliest and latest flowering times (1 day) suggests that while there are differences, they are relatively subtle. It’s worth noting that T3, which showed the earliest flowering, also demonstrated the highest field emergence (96.1%), plant height (41.67 cm), leaf surface area (12.12 cm²), seeds per plant (99.07 g), and biological yield (9.74 g). This suggests that the treatment in T3 may have overall beneficial effects on plant growth and development, not limited to early flowering. These results indicate that SiO2 nanoparticles, particularly at the concentration used in T3, may enhance overall plant growth and accelerate flowering. This is consistent with research suggesting that SiO2 nanoparticles can influence various aspects of plant development, including cell protection, elongation, and stress tolerance. However, the specific mechanisms by which these nanoparticles affect flowering time and other growth parameters warrant further investigation. Overall, while SiO2 nanoparticles affect flowering time, their impact extends beyond this single parameter, potentially offering comprehensive benefits to crop growth and development. The varying effects observed across treatments highlight the importance of optimizing nanoparticle concentrations for desired outcomes in agricultural applications."

**3.2.4 Leaf surface area (cm²):**

The study on the effects of SiO₂ nanoparticle seed priming revealed significant differences in leaf surface area among treatments **(Table 3).** The highest leaf surface area was observed in T3 (15 ppm) at 12.12 cm², followed by T2 (10 ppm) at 9.66 cm² and T5 (25 ppm) at 9.57 cm². In contrast, the control (T0) showed the lowest leaf surface area at 5.19 cm². Treatment T8 (40 ppm) recorded a leaf surface area of 7.57 cm², highlighting those higher concentrations beyond 15 ppm had varied effects but generally outperformed the control (**Fig. 4).** This trend indicates that SiO₂ nanoparticle treatment enhances leaf surface area, with the optimal concentration being around 15 ppm. **Zhang and Li (2023)** also found that SiO2 nanoparticles significantly enhance leaf surface area, with the best results at moderate concentrations. Their research supports the observation that SiO2 nanoparticles have a concentration-dependent effect on leaf growth, aligning with the findings of this study. The mean leaf surface area across all treatments was 8.23 cm², with a coefficient of variation of 15%, indicating moderate consistency in the data **(Table 3).** Overall, SiO2 nanoparticle treatment effectively increases leaf surface area, particularly at optimal concentrations.

**3.2.5 Seed yield per plant(g):**

The data analysis from the experimental crop growth revealed significant enhancement in seed yield per plant when treated with SiO2 nanoparticles, as shown in **Table No. 3** and **Fig. 4.** Treatment T3 (15 ppm) yielded the highest number of seeds at 99.07, followed by T2 (10 ppm) with 73.67 seeds and T9 (40 ppm) with 80.33 seeds, indicating that low to moderate SiO₂ concentrations are effective in enhancing seed production. The control group (T0) had the lowest yield at 34.8 seeds, underscoring the benefits of SiO2 nanoparticle treatment. The trend shows that SiO2 nanoparticle treatments, especially at 15 ppm, significantly boost yield. **Rajput *et al*. (2021)** investigated the effects of SiO2 nanoparticles on seed yield and quality, finding that SiO2 nanoparticle treatment effectively increases seed yield by improving water and nutrient uptake. Their study aligns with the observation that T3 (15 ppm) produced the highest seed yield, suggesting that appropriate SiO2 nanoparticle priming can significantly enhance crop yield by improving nutrient absorption and overall plant performance throughout the growth cycle. The mean seed yield per plant across all treatments was 58.04 seeds, with a coefficient of variation of 12%, indicating moderate consistency in the data."

**3.2.6 Biological yield:**

The biological yield results demonstrate significant differences among the treatments, with Treatment T3 achieving the highest yield at 9.74 g, while the control treatment, T0, recorded a lower yield of 8.18g. This suggests that the application of SiO₂ nanoparticles in T3 effectively enhanced plant growth and biomass accumulation compared to the control. Similar results were found by **Özkan *et.al*., (2021)** in their study on bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.), where different fertilizer treatments improved yield components under stress conditions. This highlights the potential of nanoparticle treatments in optimizing crop productivity. Overall, SiO2 treatments significantly enhanced plant biomass, with the optimal concentration at 15 ppm showing the most pronounced effect. The mean biological yield across treatments was 8.92 g, and the mean harvest index was 23.98%. The coefficient of variation (C.V) for biological yield and harvest index were 4.96% and 14%, respectively, indicating moderate variability. The critical difference (C. D) and standard error of the mean (S.Em) for biological yield were 4.76 and 1.32, and for the harvest index, they were 2.84 and 0.79, respectively. The consistent improvement in biomass and yield observed in this study underscores the potential of SiO₂ NPs to boost agricultural productivity.

**3.2.7 Harvest index (%):**

The harvest index results highlight significant differences among the treatments, with T3 achieving the highest HI at 27.73%, while T0 recorded a lower HI of 18.01%. This indicates that the application of SiO₂ nanoparticles (T3) effectively enhanced the efficiency of converting biomass into grain yield compared to the control. This finding is supported by research conducted by **Pan *et. al.,* (2023)**, who reviewed the effects of silica nanoparticles on plants and found that SiO₂ NPs can improve nutrient absorption and stress tolerance, leading to better overall crop performance, including harvest index. The optimal concentration of 15 ppm SiO2 maximized yield efficiency, demonstrating the nanoparticles' potential to improve agricultural productivity by enhancing biomass allocation to economic yield.

**Table 2 Effect of treatments on mean performance of buckwheat for seedling parameters**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Treatments** | **Germination per-cent** | **Root length (cm)** | **Shoot length (cm)** | **Seedling length (cm)** | **Fresh weight (gm)** | **Dry weight (gm)** | **Vigour index-I** | **Vigour index- II** |
| **T0** | 84.79 | 0.8 | 5.5 | 6.3 | 0.65 | 0.09 | 484.95 | 7.6 |
| **T1** | 88.03 | 0.9 | 5.9 | 6.8 | 0.7 | 0.1 | 566.56 | 8.0 |
| **T2** | 91.62 | 1.0 | 6.3 | 7.3 | 0.75 | 0.11 | 643.37 | 8.5 |
| **T3** | 94.12 | 1.1 | 6.7 | 7.8 | 0.8 | 0.13 | 743.26 | 9.0 |
| **T4** | 85.08 | 0.8 | 5.8 | 6.6 | 0.68 | 0.09 | 505.81 | 9.5 |
| **T5** | 87.42 | 0.9 | 6.0 | 6.9 | 0.7 | 0.1 | 624.48 | 10 |
| **T6** | 88.36 | 1.0 | 6.2 | 7.2 | 0.72 | 0.1 | 707.46 | 8.0 |
| **T7** | 90.76 | 0.9 | 6.1 | 7.0 | 0.75 | 0.11 | 593.58 | 8.5 |
| **T8** | 85.21 | 1.0 | 6.3 | 7.3 | 0.75 | 0.11 | 654.46 | 9.0 |
| **T9** | 88.2 | 0.8 | 5.9 | 6.7 | 0.7 | 0.09 | 528.8 | 9.5 |
| **T10** | 86.78 | 0.9 | 6.0 | 6.9 | 0.72 | 0.1 | 628.44 | 7.4 |
| **T11** | 93.41 | 0.8 | 5.8 | 6.6 | 0.68 | 0.09 | 572.55 | 8.5 |
| **Mean** | 88.65 | 0.92 | 6.15 | 7.09 | 0.69 | 0.1 | 622.86 | 8.62 |
| **C.V (%)** | 3.45 | 12 | 5.53 | 5.21 | 7.25 | 12 | 12.83 | 9.31 |
| **C.D** | 2.96 | 0.21 | 0.95 | 1 | 0.13 | 0.03 | 89.24 | 0.51 |
| **S.Em** | 1.48 | 0.07 | 0.34 | 0.35 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 20.12 | 0.23 |

**Table 3. Effect of treatments on mean performance of buckwheat on growth and yield parameters**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Treatments** | **Field emergence (%)** | **Plant height (cm)** | **Leaf surface area****(cm)** | **Days to 50 %****flowering** | **Seeds per plant (g)** | **Biological yield (g)** | **Harvest index (%)** |
| **T0** | 81.1 | 31.07 | 5.19 | 37.60 | 34.80 | 8.18 | 18.01 |
| **T1** | 83.5 | 35.33 | 7.43 | 37.40 | 54.93 | 8.85 | 23.66 |
| **T2** | 88.4 | 39.4 | 9.66 | 37.13 | 73.67 | 9.20 | 25.98 |
| **T3** | 96.1 | 41.67 | 12.12 | 36.60 | 99.07 | 9.74 | 27.73 |
| **T4** | 85.9 | 32 | 8.57 | 37.47 | 48.8 | 8.71 | 18.82 |
| **T5** | 84.7 | 38.4 | 9.57 | 36.87 | 43.93 | 9.02 | 21.46 |
| **T6** | 89.6 | 36.07 | 8.44 | 37.20 | 39.73 | 8.32 | 27.12 |
| **T7** | 82.3 | 31.67 | 7.03 | 37.53 | 47.73 | 9.32 | 22.3 |
| **T8** | 87.8 | 35.8 | 7.57 | 37.20 | 60.47 | 9.24 | 21.48 |
| **T9** | 86.5 | 39.6 | 8.19 | 37.26 | 80.33 | 8.89 | 27.16 |
| **T10** | 85.2 | 36.87 | 8.39 | 37.46 | 49.27 | 8.52 | 27.68 |
| **T11** | 82.9 | 33.33 | 6.56 | 37.27 | 63.80 | 9.00 | 26.37 |
| **Mean** | 86.17 | 35.93 | 8.23 | 37.25 | 58.04 | 8.92 | 23.98 |
| **C.V (%)** | 4.69 | 9.56 | 15.00 | 0.77 | 12.00 | 4.96 | 14.00 |
| **C.D** | 1.94 | 1.81 | 1.01 | 0.71 | 14.32 | 4.76 | 2.84 |
| **S.Em** | 0.67 | 0.82 | 0.47 | 0.32 | 3.97 | 1.32 | 0.79 |

**CONCLUSION**

The application of SiO2 nanoparticles (NPs) has shown significant positive effects on various growth and yield parameters of plants. In terms of plant height, the highest increase was observed at treatment T3, reaching 41.67 cm, compared to the lowest at T0, which was 31.07 cm. Additionally, the leaf surface area was significantly enhanced, reaching up to 12.12 cm² at T3, indicating an improvement in photosynthetic capacity. Regarding yield parameters, the number of seeds per plant increased markedly with the application of SiO2 NPs, with T3 producing the highest number of seeds at 99.07, compared to 34.8 at T0. Furthermore, biological yields also improved significantly with SiO2 NP treatments, particularly at T3, indicating enhanced productivity and biomass. The harvest index was higher in SiO2 NP treated plants, suggesting a better allocation of resources towards seed production.

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1.

2.

3.

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