



Impact of Live Mulch, Brown Manuring and Herbicides on Growth and Yield of Sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench) in Southern Midland Zone of Kerala, India

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Authors' contributions

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

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ABSTRACT

A field experiment was conducted during the *rabi* season of 2023 at the Farming System Research Station, Sadanandapuram, Kerala, to evaluate the effects of live mulch, brown manuring and herbicides effect as weed management method on growth and yield of sorghum. The experiment

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was conducted in a randomized block design with ten treatments, replicated thrice. The treatments included: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS, Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS, Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹ fb one HW at 25 DAS, fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₇:PoE 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, HW at 20 DAS, Weed free control and Weedy check. Among the treatments, broadcasting cowpea seeds at 30 kg ha⁻¹ followed by live mulch at 25 DAS (T₂) resulted the higher growth parameters, including plant height, number of leaves per plant, and dry matter production at 45 DAS and harvest. Leaf area per plant and leaf area index were also significantly higher in T₂ at 30 and 45 DAS. Yield attributes, such as panicle length, number of grains per panicle, grain weight per panicle, grain yield, stover yield and harvest index were higher in T₂. Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, pre-emergence pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹ fb hand weeding at 25 DAS, post-emergence fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS and weed free control performed statistically comparable with T₂ in terms of growth and yield attributes.

Keywords: Sorghum; live mulch; brown manuring; pre; post emergent herbicides; growth; grain yield; stover.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sorghum, also known as great millet, Indian millet, or jowar, is highly valued for its versatility, serving as a grain, forage, and sweet crop. It is the fifth largest cereal crop in the world. Nutritionally, sorghum is abundant in carbohydrates (70.7%), protein (10.4%), fat (3.1%), fibre (2.0%), calcium, iron, vitamin B, and niacin (Tiwari et al. 2023). Sorghum is used in the production of edible oil, starch, dextrose, alcoholic beverages, and can substitute wheat in making bread, pasta, cookies, and other baked goods. It is a safe food grain and an excellent alternative for individuals with celiac disease due to its gluten-free nature (Kumar et al. 2023).

India was the fifth-largest producer of sorghum, with a total production of 4.23 million tons across 3.9 million hectares (Acharya 2022). Maharashtra and Karnataka contribute to 57.2% of India's sorghum production.

Intense weed pressure can significantly diminish grain and stover yields of sorghum. The initial slow growth rate and wide space between plants are the shortfalls being utilized by weeds to hinder growth of sorghum (Mishra et al. 2015). Sorghum is relatively a poor competitor against weeds especially during the early growth stages due to their slow initial growth and wider spacing. Yield loss due to weeds in sorghum varies from 5 to 74 per cent depending on climatic, edaphic and biotic factors.

Live mulch (living mulch) is cover crops grown simultaneously with and in close proximity to

crops. Advantages of living mulches over dead cover crops may include increased weed suppression, reduced erosion and leaching, better soil health, and greater resource-use efficiency. Moreover live mulches may include enhanced agroecosystem biodiversity and suitability for a wider range of cropping systems (Bhaskar et al. 2015).

Brown manuring is a version of green manuring where fast growing crops are grown in standing crops as inter crop and later destroying them with the help of herbicide for manuring where the plant residues are left standing in the field along with the main crop without incorporation / in-situ ploughing until its residues act as mulch leading to suppress weeds besides adding organic manure. The post-emergence herbicide spray on green leaves of fast growing crops resulting in loss of chlorophyll in leaves showing brown in colour is referred to as brown manuring (Maitra and Zaman 2017).

Considering these facts the present research was conducted to find out the effect of different weed management on growth, grain and stover yields in sorghum.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Location

The experiment was laid out at Farming Systems Research Station (FSRS), Sadanandapuram, Kottarakkara which enjoy southern midland agro ecological zone of Kerala during *rabi* 2023-24. The geographical location of site was at 8° 59'

2.0328" North latitude and 76° 48' 31.176" East longitude.

2.2 Soil

The soil type identified was sandy clay loam, characterized by extremely acidic (4.35), normal EC (0.24) and a high content of organic carbon (1.74%). The available nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium were 175.6 kg ha⁻¹, 43 kg ha⁻¹, 174.4 kg ha⁻¹ respectively.

2.3 Plot Size

For this study, a total of 30 plots were used with each gross plot size 5.4 m x 3.0 m and net plot of 3.6 m x 2.4 m separated with bund space of 40 cm.

2.4 Crop Variety

The sorghum culture TNS 648 was released by the Department of Millets, TNAU, Coimbatore in 2020 and released as sorghum CO 32 was used for the study.

2.5 Herbicides

Pre-emergent herbicide pretilachlor (Trade name: Rifit 50 EC) and Post-emergent herbicides like 2,4-D (Trade name: 2,4-D Agan 80 WP) and fenoxaprop-p-ethyl (Trade name: Ricestar 6.9 EC) were used for the experiment.

Pretilachlor (2-chloro-N-(2,6-diethylphenyl)-N-(2-propoxyethyl) acetamide) belongs to chemical group of Chloroacetamide selected as pre emergent which control grasses, sedges and broad leaf weeds. 2,4-D Sodium salt belongs to phenoxy acids applied as post emergent which inhibit broad leaf weeds. Fenoxaprop-p-ethyl belongs to propionate chemical group is a selective post emergent herbicide which inhibits the acetyl coenzyme A carboxylase in the plant chloroplast leads to disrupting the synthesis of fatty acids in grass weeds.

2.6 Treatment Details

Ten treatments comprising of weed management practices viz., T₁: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS, T₂: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS, T₃: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₄: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-

D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₅:PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹fb one HW at 25 DAS, T₆:PDA fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₇:PoE 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₈:HW at 20 DAS, T₉:Weed free control (weeds removed by hand weeding as and when the weeds were observed) and T₁₀:Weedy check were evaluated in randomized block design with three replications. The crop was raised as per package of practices (POP) recommendation of Kerala Agricultural University.

2.7 Manures and Fertilizers

Well decomposed farmyard manure (FYM) analyzing 0.5 per cent N, 0.18 per cent P₂O₅ and 0.49 per cent K₂O was applied as organic source. Fertilizers were applied in the form of urea (46% N), rajphos (18% P₂O₅), and muriate of potash (60% K₂O) were used as the sources of NPK as per the package of practices recommendations of Kerala Agricultural University. Lime was applied as basal dose on soil test basis.

2.8 Live Mulching

The cowpea seeds were broadcasted at the same day of sowing and maintained. The cowpea crop and weeds present in the plot were uprooted and retained as live mulch in the plot itself at 25 DAS.

2.9 Brown Manuring

The cowpea seeds were broadcasted at the same day of sowing and 2,4-D were sprayed to the plot at 20 DAS. After the spraying resulted dried cowpea and weeds were retained in the plot till harvest.

2.10 Data Collection

Throughout the experimental period, observations on growth parameters of sorghum viz., plant height, number of leaves per plant, leaf area per plant and dry matter production were taken from five randomly selected plants at 15, 30, 45 DAS and at harvest. For computing the yield parameters, days to 50 per cent flowering, panicle length, number of grains per panicle, grain weight per panicle, test weight, grain yield and stover yield were recorded from net plot at harvest.

2.11 Statistical Analysis

All the parameters were subjected for statistical analysis using GRAPES, a collection of shiny

apps for agricultural research data analysis in R software developed by Department of Agricultural Statistics, College of Agriculture, Vellayani (Gopinath et al. 2020).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Effect of Weed Management on Growth and Growth Parameters of Sorghum (Table 1)

Growth parameters (plant height, number of leaves plant⁻¹, leaf area plant⁻¹, leaf area index (LAI) and dry matter production plant⁻¹), were statistically influenced by the weed management in sorghum.

Plant height: Weed management had profound effect on plant height in sorghum at 45 DAS and at harvest. However, plant height at 15 and 30 DAS, failed to respond significantly to the weed management practices. At 45 DAS and at harvest, significant taller plants were observed in T₂(Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (155.17 and 219.67 cm, respectively). However, at 45 DAS it were statistically comparable with T₅ (PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹fb one HW at 25 DAS) (152.03 cm), T₉ (Weed free control) (149.03 cm), T₄ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (148.90 cm) and T₆ (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (148.43 cm) and at harvest, it were on par with T₅(PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹fb one HW at 25 DAS) (210.03 cm), T₉(Weed free control) (209.83 cm), T₄ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (202.53 cm), T₆(fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (199.63 cm) and T₁(Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (189.33 cm). The shortest plants at 45 DAS and at harvest were observed in T₁₀ (weedy check) (126.57cm and 159.33 cm respectively).

Live mulches effectively controlled weeds by limiting their growth and reducing their capacity to deplete soil nutrients. Cowpea during the initial period acted as cover crop and later as live mulch declined the subsequent weed emergence. In addition, the presence of cowpea enhanced crop growth and made available the nutrient utilization to the favour of sorghum. The present investigation is harmonizing with findings of Saady et al. 2021.

Number of leaves per plant: At 15 DAS and 30 DAS weed management was not significant different. However number of leaves per plant at 45 DAS and at harvest was influenced by weed management practices. At 45 DAS higher number of leaves per plant was observed with T₂(Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (9.29) and it were statistically on par with T₁(Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (9.11), T₉ (Weed free control) (8.78), T₈(HW at 20 DAS) (8.73), T₅(PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹fb one HW at 25 DAS) (8.60) and T₄ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (8.53). The lowest number of leaves per plant was observed in weedy check (7.62). Significant higher number of leaves per plant at harvest registered with T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (12.35) and it were statistically comparable with T₉ (Weed free control) (12.09), T₆ (PDA of fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (11.73), T₅(PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹ fb one HW at 25 DAS) (11.65) and T₁ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (11.55). The lowest number of leaves per plant was recorded in T₁₀ (weedy check) (7.62).

The live mulches or brown manuring with cowpea helped to prevent the weeds vigour which led to the robust growth of sorghum. Ability of cowpea for weed management also emphasised by Mas-ud et al. 2021, Reddy et al. 2022.

Leaf area per plant: Leaf area of sorghum was not affected significantly by weed management at 15 DAS. However, weed management had significant effect on leaf area of sorghum at 30 and 45 DAS. At 30 DAS higher leaf area per plant was observed in T₂(Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (681.68 cm²) and was comparable with T₉(Weed free control)(672.94 cm²), T₈ (HW at 20 DAS) (0.77) (636.77cm²), T₆ (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (573.08cm²) and T₅ (PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹fb one HW at 25 DAS) (562.58cm²). The observation on 45 DAS registered T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) as higher leaf area per plant (4693.01cm²) and it was statistically comparable with T₉ (Weed free control) (4550.15cm²). At 30 DAS and 45 DAS the lowest leaf area in sorghum was noted in T₁₀ (Weedy

check) (351.09cm² and 2166.85cm² respectively).

The importance of integration of pretilachlor with other weed management strategies, could further optimize weed population resulted in ensuring sustainable sorghum production (Reis et al. 2019).

Leaf area index (LAI): The weed management practices were not significantly affected the LAI of sorghum at 15 DAS. However at 30 DAS and 45 DAS, the weed management treatments significantly enhanced the LAI of sorghum. At 30 DAS, the treatment T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) registered statistically higher LAI (1.01) and were comparable with T₉ (Weed free control) (0.99), T₈ (HW at 20 DAS) (0.94) and T₆ (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (0.85). At 45 DAS, T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) registered higher LAI (6.95) and was at par with T₉ (Weed free control) (6.74). During 30 DAS and 45 DAS the lowest LAI was recorded in T₁₀ (weedy check) (0.62 and 3.21 respectively).

The enhanced photosynthetic area and number of leaves resulted from the weed management techniques led to the increase of LAI.

Dry matter production per plant: Weed management notably influenced the dry matter production per plant in sorghum at 30 DAS, 45 DAS and at harvest. However the observation on 15 DAS was non-significant (Fig. 1). At 30 DAS treatment T₉ (Weed free control) resulted in the highest dry matter production (0.89 g plant⁻¹) and it were comparable with T₅ (PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹fb one HW at 25 DAS) (0.87 g plant⁻¹), T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (0.85 g plant⁻¹), T₆ (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (0.84 g plant⁻¹), T₈ (HW at 20 DAS) (0.79 g plant⁻¹) and T₄ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (0.74 g plant⁻¹). The lowest DMP was recorded in T₁₀ (weedy check). The treatment T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) resulted the higher DMP (25.87 g plant⁻¹) at 45 DAS and were comparable with T₉ (Weed free control)(25.38g plant⁻¹), T₅ (PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹fb one HW at 25 DAS) (22.39g plant⁻¹), T₈ (HW at 20 DAS)(21.38g plant⁻¹), T₁ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (20.69g plant⁻¹) and T₆ (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS)

(19.96g plant⁻¹) and T₄ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (19.43 g plant⁻¹). Weedy check registered the lowest DMP (14.75g plant⁻¹). The observation on harvest time indicated significant higher DMP with T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (71.49g plant⁻¹) and were comparable with T₄ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (68.15 g plant⁻¹), T₉ (Weed free control) (64.83g plant⁻¹) and T₆ (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (60.44g plant⁻¹). The lowest DMP was recorded in T₁₀ (weedy check) (60.44g plant⁻¹).

Weed management techniques effectively controlled weeds by limiting their growth and nutrient removal which made the crop for competition free efficient nutrient absorption resulted the higher dry matter accumulation. The importance of weed management during the critical period for enhancement of dry matter were also emphasized by Renjan et al. 2022.

3.2 Effect of Weed Management on Yield and Yield Parameters of Sorghum (Table 2)

Yield attributes like days to 50% flowering, panicle length, Number of grains per panicle. Grain weight per panicle, grain yield, stover yield and harvest index were statistically influenced by the weed management in sorghum.

Days to 50 per cent flowering: Weed management had profound effect on days to 50 per cent flowering in sorghum. The average days to 50 percent flowering varied from 63.33 to 67.33 days in sorghum. The treatment T₉ (Weed free control) took lesser number of days (63.33) to 50 percent flowering. However it were statistically comparable with T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (63.67), T₅ (PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹fb one HW at 25 DAS) (63.67), T₁ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹fb live mulch at 25 DAS) (64.00) and T₈ (HW at 20 DAS) (64.33) respectively. The more number of days (67.33) to 50 per cent flowering were taken by T₁₀ (weedy check).

Brown manuring and pre emergent application of pretilachlor helped the crop to make the crop weed competition to the favour of sorghum which

resulted the more nutrient absorption. The flowering cycle might have been triggered by the adequate and timely nutrient supply. Korav et al. 2018 also observed that weed competition significantly delays the flowering and leads to reduction of crop yield.

Panicle length: The results revealed that the panicle length was significantly influenced by the weed management practices. Among the weed management treatments, the higher panicle length was observed in T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ live mulch at 25 DAS) (27.23cm) and it was found to be comparable with treatments T₉ (Weed free control) (25.50cm), T₅ (PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹ one HW at 25 DAS) (24.67cm) and T₁ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ live mulch) (24.33cm). The lowest panicle length was recorded in T₁₀ (weedy check) (21.00cm).

The present investigation was also in confirmatory with findings of Yathisha et al. 2020 that suppression of weeds with pre-emergence application of bensulfuron methyl + pretilachlor 6.6% G @ 198 g a.i. ha⁻¹ + manual weeding at 30 DAS. Effective weed management resulted in noticeably greater yield attributes.

Number of grains per panicle: Weed management had significant effect on the number of grains per panicle of sorghum.

The treatment T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ live mulch at 25 DAS) recorded the highest number of grains per panicle (2991.3) and it were on par with the treatments T₉ (Weed free control) (2972.3), T₆ (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (2790.6) ,T₅ (PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹ one HW at 25 DAS) (2666.6) and T₁ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ live mulch at 25 DAS) (2488.3) and T₄ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (2458.0). Weedy check (T₁₀) recorded the lowest number of grains per panicle in sorghum among different weed management practices (1561.6).

Suppression of weeds by post emergence application of fenoxaprop-p-ethyl led to the effective control of predominant grassy weed flora present which resulted in higher yield attributes and agreeing with findings of Bhanwar et al. 2020, Kumar et al. 2022. The experimental field was predominated by grass flora, which was effectively suppressed by the post directed application of fenoxaprop-p-ethyl, while the sorghum crop showed zero phytotoxicity.

Grain weight per panicle: The weed management treatments significantly enhanced the grain weight per panicle of sorghum. The treatment T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ live mulch) registered statistically higher grain weight per panicle (64.30 g) and it were comparable with the treatments T₄ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (63.46 g), T₉ (Weed free control) (60.92g), T₅ (PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹ one HW at 25 DAS) (57.99g) and T₆ (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (56.31g). The lowest grain weight per panicle (36.45g) in sorghum was recorded in T₁₀ (weedy check).

Pre-emergent application coupled with hand weeding or post emergent application of fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS or hand weeding helped the proper weed management at critical stage of sorghum and helped to realize the grain weight Ramadevi et al. 2021 also observed similar results.

Test weight: The test weight of sorghum grain was not significantly influenced by any of the weed management treatments.

Grain yield: The result revealed that weed management profoundly influenced the grain yield of sorghum. Among the weed management treatments, T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ live mulch at 25 DAS) resulted in higher grain yield (2679kg ha⁻¹) which was statistically on par with T₉ (Weed free control)(2602 kg ha⁻¹), T₆ (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (2567 kg ha⁻¹) and T₅(PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹ one HW at 25 DAS)(2530 kg ha⁻¹) and T₄ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (2462 kg ha⁻¹). The treatment T₁₀ (weedy check) recorded the lowest yield among the treatments (1952kg ha⁻¹).

This might be as a result of early flowering, higher number of grains per panicle and grain weight per panicle due to smothering of weeds by live mulch using cowpea crop. The uprooted and live mulches helped to cover the soil surface and arrested the subsequent emergence of new flushes of weeds. It could also be supported that the already removed nutrients by the weeds and cover crop of cowpea made available to the further crop growth and supplemented the nutrient demand of sorghum. The prevention of growth of subsequent weed flora also made advantageous to the crop. In addition to weed

Table 1. Effect of weed management practices on growth and growth parameters of sorghum

Treatment	Plant height (cm)				Number of leaves per plant				Leaf area per plant (cm ²)			Leaf area index			Dry matter production (g plant ⁻¹)			
	15 DAS	30 DAS	45 DAS	At harvest	15 DAS	30 DAS	45 DAS	At harvest	15 DAS	30 DAS	45 DAS	15 DAS	30 DAS	45 DAS	15 DAS	30 DAS	45 DAS	At harvest
T ₁	29.72	56.77	141.27	189.33	4.89	6.22	9.11	11.55	86.31	516.31	3602.93	0.13	0.76	5.33	0.68	20.69	58.80	
T ₂	27.91	62.87	155.17	219.67	4.60	6.29	9.29	12.35	76.40	681.68	4693.01	0.11	1.01	6.95	0.139	0.85	25.87	71.49
T ₃	28.18	55.60	134.37	181.57	4.82	6.29	8.50	10.90	78.25	498.98	2399.62	0.11	0.74	3.55	0.159	0.73	16.11	57.08
T ₄	28.92	67.83	148.90	202.53	4.78	6.31	8.53	11.27	78.50	533.12	3000.62	0.11	0.79	4.44	0.162	0.74	18.43	68.15
T ₅	32.35	64.57	152.03	210.03	5.01	6.30	8.60	11.65	89.28	562.58	3676.58	0.13	0.83	5.44	0.186	0.87	22.39	60.11
T ₆	26.81	61.83	148.43	199.63	4.49	6.52	8.39	11.73	78.98	573.08	3571.19	0.11	0.85	5.29	0.178	0.84	19.96	60.44
T ₇	28.32	55.40	133.67	166.33	4.78	6.40	8.22	10.67	83.65	417.99	3505.23	0.12	0.64	5.19	0.162	0.72	18.41	45.17
T ₈	29.96	58.87	137.47	183.67	4.56	6.36	8.73	11.30	78.79	636.77	3654.44	0.11	0.94	5.41	0.158	0.79	21.38	57.15
T ₉	26.98	61.50	149.03	209.83	4.39	6.46	8.78	12.09	85.56	672.94	4550.15	0.12	0.99	6.74	0.156	0.89	25.38	64.83
T ₁₀	28.56	53.20	126.57	159.33	4.56	6.09	7.62	9.52	81.95	351.09	2166.85	0.12	0.62	3.21	0.174	0.63	14.75	42.82
SEm (±)	1.68	2.91	4.66	10.27	0.143	0.137	0.256	0.318	3.46	40.24	69.90	0.005	0.06	0.19	0.012	0.05	2.16	3.73
CD (0.05)	NS	NS	13.861	30.523	NS	NS	0.762	0.945	NS	119.564	207.712	NS	0.178	0.573	NS	0.149	6.436	11.088

*Note: T₁: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS, T₂: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS, T₃: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₄: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₅: PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹ fb one HW at 25 DAS, T₆: fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₇: PoE 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₈: HW at 20 DAS, T₉: Weed free control, T₁₀: Weedy check

Table 2. Effect of weed management practices on yield and yield parameters of sorghum

Treatment	Days to 50 per cent flowering	Panicle length (cm)	No. of grains per panicle	Grain weight per panicle (g)	Test weight (g)	Grain yield (kg ha ⁻¹)	Stover yield (kg ha ⁻¹)	Harvest index
T ₁	64.00	24.33	2488.3	50.39	22.17	2269	9050	0.251
T ₂	63.67	27.23	2991.3	64.30	25.07	2679	9896	0.271
T ₃	66.33	23.50	2338.6	52.60	22.47	2298	9153	0.251
T ₄	65.67	24.07	2458.0	63.46	24.77	2462	9387	0.252
T ₅	63.67	24.67	2666.6	57.99	23.93	2530	9556	0.265
T ₆	64.67	23.67	2790.6	56.31	23.87	2567	9561	0.269
T ₇	67.00	21.67	1867.0	44.47	22.30	2193	8982	0.245
T ₈	64.33	24.17	2375.3	53.01	23.83	2333	9420	0.248
T ₉	63.33	25.50	2972.3	60.92	24.23	2602	9605	0.271
T ₁₀	67.33	21.00	1561.6	36.45	21.53	1952	8321	0.235
SEm (±)	0.36	1.02	201.92	3.58	1.49	77	278	0.006
CD (0.05)	1.065	3.024	599.95	10.628	NS	227.7	826.7	0.017

*Note: T₁: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS, T₂: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS, T₃: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₄: Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₅: PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹ fb one HW at 25 DAS, T₆: fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₇: PoE 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, T₈: HW at 20 DAS, T₉: Weed free control, T₁₀: Weedy check

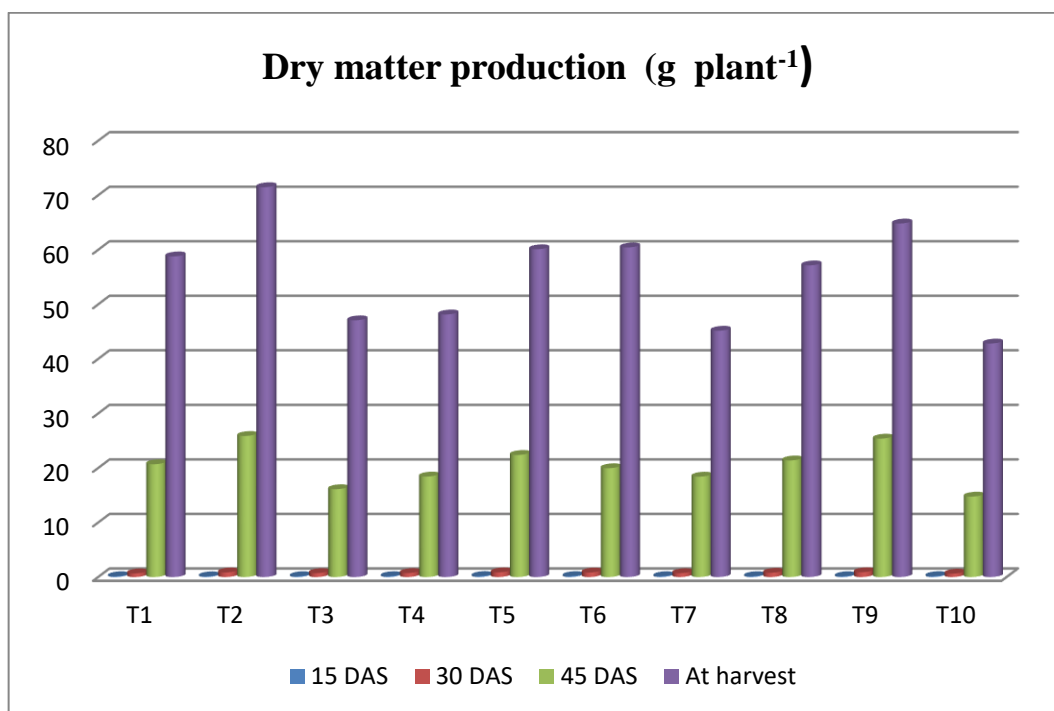


Fig. 1. Effect of weed management practices on dry matter production of sorghum

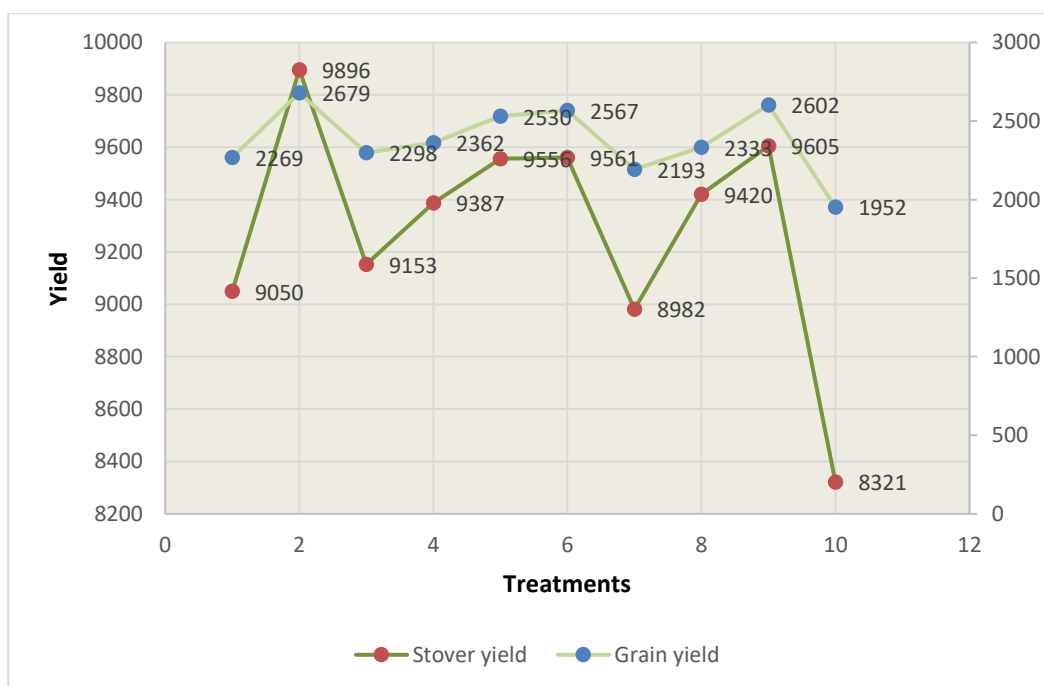


Fig. 2. Effect of weed management practices on grain and stover yield in sorghum

management live mulch provided a conducive microclimate for the beneficial microorganism, conservation of moisture. The increment in grain yield due to effective weed management emphasized by Renjan and George 2018.

Stover yield: The results indicated that stover yield was also significantly influenced by weed management practices in sorghum (Fig. 2). Significant higher stover yield (9896 kg ha⁻¹) was registered with T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹ live mulch at 25 DAS) and it was

comparable with all the treatments other than T₁(Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 15 kg ha⁻¹ fb live mulch at 25 DAS)(9050 kg ha⁻¹), T₇(PoE 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS)(8982 kg ha⁻¹)and T₁₀(weedy check) recorded the lowest stover yield (8321kg ha⁻¹) among all the weed management treatments.

Higher growth attributes like plant height and accumulation of dry weight resulted from the effective weed management adopted. This reflected in the significant enhancement of stover yield. The present investigation supported by the findings of Chaudhary et al. 2020, Keerthi et al. 2022, Kumar et al. 2023.

Harvest index: Perusal of the data revealed that the weed management markedly influenced the harvest index. The treatment T₂ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹fb live mulch at 25 DAS) and T₉ (Weed free control) resulted in the highest harvest index (0.271) and was at par with T₆ (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (0.269), T₅ (PE pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹fb one HW at 25 DAS) (0.265) and T₄ (Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS) (0.262).The treatment T₁₀ (Weedy check) resulted in the lowest harvest index (0.270).

The weed suppression by live mulches or post emergence application of fenoxaprop-p-ethyl helped to suppress the weed competition and enhanced nutrient status of soil. Weeds destroyed by herbicide might have become the food to microbes which encourage better absorption of nutrients and reflected in improved harvest index. Mupangwa et al. 2012 and Egesa et al. 2017 also found the importance of legumes in weed management increment of harvest index.

4. CONCLUSION

Broadcasting cowpea seeds at 30 kg ha⁻¹ followed by live mulch at 25 DAS in sorghum resulted the higher growth parameters including plant height, number of leaves per plant, leaf area per plant, leaf area index and dry matter production. It also enhanced yield attributes, such as panicle length, number of grains per panicle, grain weight per panicle, grain yield, stover yield and harvest index. Broadcasting cowpea seeds @ 30 kg ha⁻¹fb brown manuring with 2,4-D 1 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS, Pre-emergence application of pretilachlor 0.75 kg ha⁻¹ followed by hand weeding at 25 DAS or post-emergence

application of fenoxaprop-p-ethyl 0.06 kg ha⁻¹ at 20 DAS were also viable option for increased growth, yield attributes and yield in sorghum.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

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

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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