Adaptation Approaches for Direct Seeded Rice to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emission in the Perspective of Climate Change

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author SRC conceptualized the work, analysis of greenhouse gases and prepared the final draft. Author AD performed the statistical analysis and manuscript writing and other authors conducted field experiment and helped in literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

A field experiment was conducted at research farm, Bihar Agricultural University, Sabour, India during 2017 and 2018 to gain insight crop phonology mediated greenhouse gas emission under different tillage and nitrogen management practices in direct seeded rice (DSR). The experiment was conducted in split plot design with two tillage viz. zero tillage (ZT) and conventional tillage (CT) as main plot and four nitrogen management practices viz. 100% nitrogen through neem coated urea (S\(_1\)), SPAD based nitrogen management (S\(_2\)), 75% through neem coated urea + 25% nitrogen through vermicompost, (S\(_3\)) and ¼ nitrogen as basal and rest in equal three splits at 20, 40, 60 DAS (S\(_4\)) as sub plot, in three replication. The highest yield (4.69 t ha\(^{-1}\)), net return (Rs 46440 ha\(^{-1}\)) and B:C ratio (1.44) were recorded from zero tilled DSR. Further, highest yield (4.82 t ha\(^{-1}\)), net return (Rs 44880 ha\(^{-1}\)) and B:C ratio (1.36) was obtained under split application of nitrogenous

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1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional rice establishment technique i.e. massive puddling followed by transplanting is not only exhaustive water user but also burdensome, energy consuming and laborious process [1]. Conventionally, rice is established by repeated wet tillage (Puddling) followed by transplanting of the seedlings in the puddled soil while wheat established (in rice residue burned fields) by broadcasting/drilling seed after diskimg, tilling and planking operations [2]. Seed bed preparation operations oxidises the hidden organic matter, break the macro-aggregates into the micro-aggregates which adversely affect the soil properties [3,4]. Besides, soil perturbation by conventional tillage makes the soil to serve as a source rather than a sink of atmospheric pollutants [5]. About 20-40% of entire water required for growing crops is utilized in preparation of land for transplanting paddy. The situation could be further aggravated with degradation of soil fertility, declining underground water level and lesser per capita land availability and water productivity which ultimately are threat in front of sustainable rice production system. In addition, contribution of agriculture in total N₂O, CH₄ and CO₂ emission are 60%, 39% and 1%, respectively. Rice based cropping system playing a principle role in global warming. Global CH₄ emission from rice paddies was estimated to be 20–40 Tg yr⁻¹ which accounted for approximately 5–19% of annual CH₄ emission to the atmosphere [6]. Nitrous oxide (N₂O) emission from cultivated area of low land rice was much lower ranging from 1.7–4.8 Tg N₂O N yr⁻¹ (Yao et al., 2013). Therefore, direct seeded rice (DSR) is the only probable alternative by offering certain advantages like saving irrigation water, labour, energy time [7] for better growth of succeeding crops as well as by reducing emission of greenhouse gases [8] and fruitless water flows. Zero tillage or reduce tillage establishment which is extensively used for many crops around the world and this technology when used in rice cultivation has potential to allow saving in time, energy, water and labour during rice establishment. Moreover, Zero tilled or no tilled system of crop establishment not only reduce soil disturbance but also increases soil organic matter accumulation and can also increase crop yield [9,10,11]. Consequently, application of appropriate quantity of N at the right time to restrict rapid mineralization losses through different pathways before it is utilized by the crop is, therefore, one of the most important factors to realize high yield and N use efficiency in DSR. Thus, there is an urgent need to focus on input management practices for improving use efficiency and sustaining the rice based production system under lower emission scenarios. To address the issues of sustainability of food production on account of changing climate, a combination of tillage and nutrient management practices were tested aimed at (1) to gain insight crop phonology mediated greenhouse gas emission under different crop establishment and nitrogen management practices and (2) to evaluate the effect of GHGs on productivity, profitability and subsequent impact on global warming.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Experimental Details

The field study was carried out at experimental farm of at Bihar Agricultural College Farm, Sabour, India (25°23”N, 80°07”E, MSL-37.19 m) during kharif season (June-October) of 2017 and 2018. The climate of Sabour, Bhagalpur is subtropical having moderate annual rainfall, hot and dry summer and cold winter. Maximum and minimum temperature recorded for the same period varied in between 30.7 to 34.9°C and 20.0 to 26.8°C, respectively. Wind...
speed was varied from 1.2 to 5.0 km hr⁻¹. The average annual rainfall of this place is about 1150 mm. Monthly average values of weather Parameters of 2017 and 2018 were presented in Fig. 1(a) and (b).

The soil was arable clay-loam having pH- 7.4, Electrical Conductivity- 0.29 dSm⁻¹, organic carbon- 4.6 g kg⁻¹, available N – 228.5 Kg N ha⁻¹, available P– 19.22 Kg P₂O₅ ha⁻¹, available K- 210.4 Kg K₂O ha⁻¹. The experiment was laid out in split plot design with 8 treatment combination and replicated thrice having two crop establishment method i.e. zero tilled DSR (M₁), and conventional DSR (M₂) and with four nitrogen Management Practices viz. S₁ as 100% nitrogen through neem coated urea where half was applied as basal and rest in two equal splits at active tillering and panicle initiation stage, S₂ SPAD based nitrogen management where SPAD threshold was 36 for rice whenever the SPAD reading was below critical value the N Fertilizer was applied (20 kg ha⁻¹) in form of Urea, S₃ with 75% through urea +25% nitrogen through vermicompost applied 15 days before sowing. And S₄ in which ¼ Nitrogen as basal and rest 3 in equal splits at 20, 40, 60 DAS. Each plot having dimension of 4.0X5.0 m². The plots were given uniform recommended dose of phosphorus and potassium @ of 60 and 40 kg P₂O₅ and K₂O ha⁻¹ respectively, during the crop season.

Rice variety Rajendra Sweta was sown in mid June with seed rate of 50 kg ha⁻¹ at a row spacing of 20 cm. The recommended dose of fertilizer of rice was 120 kg N + 60 kg P₂O₅ + 40 Kg K₂O ha⁻¹ in which full P and K was applied in form of diammonium phosphate (DAP) and muriate of Potash (MoP) respectively as basal and nitrogen (Urea and DAP) was applied as per the treatment. Source of organic fertilization was vermicompost with 1.5% N. Rice crop was harvested and threshed manually. Yield of rice was estimated by harvesting the entire plot and converted it to t ha⁻¹. The grain yield of rice was recorded at 14% moisture.

2.2 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Collection and Analysis

The greenhouse gases i.e. CH₄, N₂O and CO₂ were collected from each plot through closed chamber method with the help of 50 mL disposable injection syringe with three way leuer lock. At each sampling date, GHG samples were collected at 0, 30 and 60 minutes interval from each plot. The Gas samples were analyzed by a gas chromatograph (Trace GC 1100, Thermo Fischer) equipped with electron capture detector (ECD) and flame ionization detector (FID) for analysing N₂O and CH₄ respectively. CO₂ was reduced to CH₄ with hydrogen in a nickel catalytic methanizer at 350°C and then detected by the FID. The carrier gas was nitrogen at a flow rate of 35 mL min⁻¹. The temperatures for the column and ECD detector were maintained at 60°C and 300°C, respectively. The oven and FID were operated at 60°C and 300°C, respectively. The gas emission flux was calculated from the difference in gas concentration according to the equation of Zheng [12].

Fig. 1. Monthly mean weather parameter of 2017 and 2018
where $F$ is the gas emission flux (mg m$^{-2}$ hr$^{-1}$), $p$ is the gas density at the standard state, $h$ is the height of chamber above the soil (m), $C$ is the gas mixing ratio concentration (mg m$^{-3}$), $t$ is the time intervals of each time (h), and $T$ is the mean air temperature inside the chamber during sampling.

### 3.2 Greenhouse Gas Emission

Rice cultivation is an important anthropogenic source of methane emission. The statistical analysis revealed that lowest greenhouse gas emission was found in zero tilled plots.
irrespective of nitrogen management practices (Table 1). However, significant variation was found in methane emission at different stages of crop growth while there was no significant variation in nitrous oxide emission in different crop growth stages. Lowest methane emission was under Zero tilled DSR (1.47, 1.08 and 0.57 mg m\(^{-2}\) hr\(^{-1}\) at maximum tillering, panicle initiation and harvesting stage, respectively) as compared to Conventional tilled DSR. Although, the emission followed a decreasing trend from maximum tillering to harvesting stage. Generally, methane emission from rice field mostly depends on input and soil management practices. Anaerobic conditions are prerequisite for activities of methanogenic bacteria that enhance methane production. Several studies proved that zero tilled DSR resulted in lower methane emission than conventional DSR (Ahmed et al. 2009) through preserving methane oxidation potential that would get disturbed by tillage operation [26]. Basically, under zero tillage there is no disturbance of soil cause less exposure of organic matter as caused by tillage operation [27]. Higher methane emission was recorded at maximum tillering stage is due to lower rhizospheric methane oxidation and more effective transport mediated by rice plants [28], which was successively decreased to panicle initiation and harvesting stage. The same trend of emission pattern was also observed for CO\(_2\) and N\(_2\)O.

**Table 1. Effect of tillage and nitrogen management on greenhouse gas emission**

| Treatment | CH\(_4\) emission (mg m\(^{-2}\) hr\(^{-1}\)) | CO\(_2\) emission (mg m\(^{-2}\) hr\(^{-1}\)) | N\(_2\)O emission (µg m\(^{-2}\) hr\(^{-1}\)) |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
|           | Max. Till | PI | Harvest | Max. Till | PI | Harvest | Max. Till | PI | Harvest |
| ZT        | 1.47b     | 1.08b | 0.57b | 0.61b | 0.57b | 0.32b | 38.79b | 29.42b | 19.58b |
| CT        | 2.24a     | 2.20a | 2.09a | 1.52a | 1.39a | 1.24a | 63.46a | 54.78a | 46.54a |
| S\(_1\)   | 1.92a     | 1.74b | 1.37b | 1.07b | 1.01b | 0.82b | 62.37a | 51.85a | 41.71a |
| S\(_2\)   | 1.84ab    | 1.54c | 1.25c | 0.84c | 0.75c | 0.71c | 40.69d | 32.41c | 27.11c |
| S\(_3\)   | 2.08a     | 1.89a | 1.61a | 1.49a | 1.27a | 0.92a | 54.67b | 47.44b | 35.41b |
| S\(_4\)   | 1.59b     | 1.39d | 1.08d | 0.86c | 0.90b | 0.66d | 46.76c | 36.72c | 28.02c |

Values with different letters in the same column are significantly different at P = 0.05 in DMRT.

ZT: Zero tillage, CT: Conventional Tillage, S\(_1\): 100% N through neem coated urea, S\(_2\): SPAD based N management, S\(_3\): 75% N through urea + 25% N through organic, S\(_4\): ¼ of N as basal and rest in 3 equal split at 20, 40 and 60 DAS.
emission of 0.61, 0.57, 0.32 mg m\(^{-2}\) hr\(^{-1}\) from maximum tillering, panicle initiation and harvesting stage respectively under zero tilled condition. The emission of \(\text{N}_2\text{O}\) ranged from 19.58 to 38.79 µg m\(^{-2}\) hr\(^{-1}\) from zero till and from 46.54 to 63.46 µg m\(^{-2}\) hr\(^{-1}\) from conventional tillage. Plots with 100% nitrogen through neem coated urea emitted more nitrous oxide that also lowers the methane and carbon dioxide emission, however, split of nitrogenous fertilizer made lower emission irrespective of all three gases. Addition of organic matter to the soil increased the decomposition rate of soil organic content which resulted in higher emission of methane [8]. Nitrous oxide emission from soil is mainly by microbial process of nitrification and denitrification also [29]. Tillage may affect the biological, chemical and physical property of soil as well as influence the greenhouse gas emission like nitrous oxide [30]. Although there is large uncertainty regarding higher nitrous oxide emission under zero tilled DSR than conventional DSR [31] or nitrous oxide emission diminishes after long term practices of zero tilled DSR. Under nitrogen management practices, split doses of fertilizer application emitted lower ranged of all three greenhouse gases i.e. 1.59, 1.39, 1.08 mg m\(^{-2}\) hr\(^{-1}\) for \(\text{CH}_4\) and 0.86, 0.90, 0.66 mg m\(^{-2}\) hr\(^{-1}\) for \(\text{CO}_2\) and 46.76, 36.72, 28.02 µg m\(^{-2}\) hr\(^{-1}\) for \(\text{N}_2\text{O}\). It was also found that emission of nitrous oxide varied from 41.71 to 62.37 µgm\(^{-2}\)hr\(^{-1}\) from 100% nitrogen through neem coated urea i.e. maximum nitrous oxide emission was formed from this treatment as under such conditions there are chances of rapid mineralization and prone to loss through different pathways before it is utilized by crop. Fundamentally, application of nitrogenous fertilizers as basal to the soil would have further increased the substrate availability for soil nitrous oxide emission. Likewise, use of nitrogenous fertilizer is directly linked quantum of with nitrous oxide (Smith and Conen 2004). Split application of nitrogenous fertilizer had lowest nitrous oxide emission at each stage of crop growth, as application of adequate quantity of nitrogen at right time is one of the most important factors for highest nitrogen use efficiency and lower loss as denitrification. Exclusion of tillage (ZT) caused drastic reduction in total \(\text{CH}_4\), \(\text{CO}_2\) and \(\text{N}_2\text{O}\) emission, whereas split application of N fertilizer also attributed lowest emission (Fig. 3). Relative contribution in global warming potential (GWP) was highest in \(\text{CH}_4\) (68-75%) followed by \(\text{N}_2\text{O}\) (23-30%) and least in \(\text{CO}_2\) (1-4%) (Fig. 4). GWP was highest in CT-DSR (1931 kg CO\(_{2eq}\) ha\(^{-1}\)) which was double than ZT-DSR (949 kg CO\(_{2eq}\) ha\(^{-1}\)). Among the nitrogen management strategies, splitting of N-fertilizer reduced the GWP by 22 and 26% as compared to the 100% N through neem coated urea and 75% N through Urea + 25% N through vermicompost, respectively.

![Fig. 3. Total greenhouse gas emission from rice crop](image-url)
4. CONCLUSIONS

Above study concluded that Zero tilled method of crop establishment along with split application of nitrogenous fertilizer would not only boost the yields but also decrease the greenhouse gas emission as well as global warming potential. Thus, the wider adoption of resource conservation approaches in direct seeded rice has long run benefits in terms of conserving natural resources, saving energy, higher production and cost effectiveness in the perspective of climate change.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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