



## Physiological Screening of Green Gram (*Vigna radiata* L.) Varieties by Seedling Germination Traits under PEG Induced Drought Stress

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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

Pulses play an important role in Indian diet due to higher protein content. Among the pulses, green gram (*Vigna radiata* L.) is one of the leguminous crops with high nutritional value, short growing period and soil fertility restoration by biological nitrogen fixation. Drought stress is one of the major constraints for pulse production which negatively affects its growth and production. The present experiment was performed with the objective of studying the seedling germination traits differences in five mung bean genotypes namely, MH421, VBN2, VBN4, CO8 and CO(Gg)912 under water deficit environment. It was done at laboratory conditions using various concentration of PEG 6000 as 5%, 10%, 15%, 18%, 21%. Using this level of moisture stress, 5 green gram genotypes were screened for their drought stress and the following parameters such as radicle length, shoot length, plant height, germination percentage and seed vigour were noted. By observing physiological traits of different genotypes under stress condition and founded that VBN 2 has drought tolerant ability.

**Keywords:** PEG-6000 induced drought; green gram varieties; seedling germination traits.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Food productivity has emerged as a major concern worldwide due to the detrimental effects of abiotic as well as biotic factors. This has necessitated the study of stress and minimizing its loss. Among abiotic stresses, drought has been continuously impairing plant growth and imposing a threat to the worldwide food production. Pulses are a part of the daily diet of many vegetarians around the world. Being a short duration crop, it also provides an excellent green fodder for animals. Like other legumes, mung bean fixes atmospheric nitrogen in symbiosis with rhizobium, which not only meets its own nitrogen need but also benefits the soil fertility [1]. Green gram is rich in protein content. Mung bean is said to be the most enriched in protein, as compared to other pulses, it has about 24 grams of protein. Pulses are popularly known as poor man's meat and rich man's vegetable. The total area coverage of green gram is 1, 70,318 hectares with production and productivity of 76,862 tonnes and 451kg/ha respectively. In Namakkal, the total area coverage of green gram 6413 hectares with the total production of pulses is 8116.134 tonnes (Statistical of Tamil Nadu, 2020). The suitable climate for the cultivation of green gram should be warm humid and within a temperature range of 25°C – 35°C, with moderate rainfall [2-5]. Green gram accounts for about 65 and 64% of world acreage and production, among that India is the largest producer and consumer in the world. It thrives well in drought prone areas, it is cultivated in more than 6 million ha in the tropical regions of the world [6]. When compared to other legumes it requires less water for crop growth, however variability in drought tolerance among the green gram genotype is present. The genotypes which perform better under lower water potential rates enable the identification of plant genetic resources suitable for growing under water deficit conditions [7]. The objective of this investigation is to evaluate the green gram genotypes which can tolerate the moisture stress, so that it can be used as genetic materials in the crop improvement programme.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Experiment was conducted as petri plate culture with five genotypes in Department of Crop Physiology, PGP College of Agricultural Sciences, Namakkal which is located in the North Western zone of Tamil Nadu during May, 2022. Mung bean seeds of these genotypes such as

VBN2, VBN4, CO(Gg)912 and MH421 were obtained from ADA Office, Namakkal and the latest variety in green gram CO8 was obtained from the Department of Pulses, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. The seeds were treated with Bavistin @2g kg<sup>-1</sup> of seeds for protection against seed borne diseases. The seeds were sown uniformly in the petri plate. The treatment (T1) was maintained as control. For treatment, polyethylene glycol was used. PEG can be used to modify the osmotic potential of nutrient solution culture and thus induce plant water deficit in a relatively controlled manner, appropriate to experimental protocols. It was assumed that PEG of large molecular weight did not penetrate the plant and thus was an ideal osmoticum for use in hydroponics root medium. The PEG (6000) were given at the different concentration such as 0%, 5%, 10%, 15%, 18%, 21% as the treatments T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6 respectively. Observations were made before plant reaching the permanent wilting point level which was measured to be by 9<sup>th</sup> day.

The physiological parameters and germination traits were recorded under the PEG induced drought stress at the seedling stage. The experiment was laid out in Factorial Completely Randomized Design (CRD). The parameters such as germination percentage, vigour index, radicle length, shoot length, radicle fresh weight, plumule fresh weight, Stress tolerance index were observed. In addition to that some of the physiological growth parameters which influence the growth of plants are plant hormones and their activity, respiration, photosynthesis, function of stomata, rate of respiration, dormancy and environmental stress physiology.

### 2.1 Germination Percentage

The number of germinated seeds was recorded each day (24 hours interval) up to 14 days. Seeds were considered germinated when both plumule and radicle extended to more than 2 mm from the seeds. Germination percentage was calculated using the formula given below.

$$\text{Germination percentage (\%)} = \frac{\text{Number of germinated seeds}}{\text{Number of seeds kept for germination}} \times 100$$

### 2.2 Plant Height

Plants were selected randomly in the pots and tagged to measure the height of the plant in each treatment under each replication. The height of

plant was measured from the base of the shoot to the apical portion of the plant and the mean was worked out and expressed in cm.

### 2.3 Shoot Length

Seedlings from each replication, were randomly taken and shoot length was measured on 14<sup>th</sup> day from the collar region to the longest leaf tip and expressed in cm.

### 2.4 Root Length

Root length of seedlings were measured on 14<sup>th</sup> day from the stem base to the Longest root tip of the seedlings and expressed in cm.

The following formulas were used to compute the shoot and root toxicity of the plants which is expressed in terms of percentage,

$$\text{Shoot toxicity} = (\text{shoot length of control} - \text{shoot length of treatment} / \text{shoot length of control}) \times 100$$

$$\text{Root toxicity} = (\text{root length of control} - \text{root length of treatment} / \text{root length of control}) \times 100$$

### 2.5 Stress Tolerance Index

In order to observe the tolerance capacity of the plants at time of giving stress and at control, the tolerance index of the plants is calculated as follows,

$$\text{Tolerance index (100\%)} = (\text{Mean root length in stress} / \text{Mean root length in control}) \times 100$$

### 2.6 Statistical Analysis

The collected data on various germination traits, presented with means and standard errors by ANOVA were analysed using SPSS 13.0 (Version 133, LEAD Technologies Inc.) software.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Scarcity of water is the major constraint that affects agricultural production throughout worldwide and affecting the quality, growth and production of crops [8]. It is considered to be the leading cause of crops yield losses which decrease yield up to 50% depending on its severity. A standardization experiment was conducted with the green gram varieties VBN 2,

VBN 4, MH 421, CO 8, CO(Gg) 912 to determine the stress level at which the green gram collection could be screened. The Highest germination percent was observed in VBN 2 (96%) when compared with all other varieties (Fig. 1.).

It was noticed that the average plant length of control (T1) seems to be higher than the stress induced T2, T3, T4, T5, T6 heights (Fig. 2.). PEG induced drought stress reduced the plant height of all the varieties. The variety VBN 2 recorded lesser reduction of plant height at T3 (10% PEG) with a range of 30% when compared with other varieties.

Seed vigour index was an important parameter for deciding the ability of the seeds to germinate and to emerge in the soil. Seedling vigour index of genotypes such as Co 8, MH 421, VBN 2, VBN 4, CO(Gg)912 at control (T1) are 1947.75, 2416, 2436.75, 2200.5, 1697.5 respectively. Among these, VBN 2 shows the high vigour index of seed. Similar trend was followed in Shoot length and root length (Figs. 3,4). Root length and shoot length are the traits involved in determining the active growth of plants. When the growth of these parameters alters it indicates the responses of cell differentiation, division and elongation under PEG induced drought stress. This seedling germination trait indicates the tolerant level by showing an optimum range of reduction in its length. VBN 2, SVI level was classified as this pattern of T2 > T3 > T4 > T5 > T6. It indicates that the seed germination and seedling emergence are potentially the most critical stages susceptible to water stress [8,1].

Tolerance index (TI) was measured in terms of percentage. Tolerance index was also observed in the plants of control (T1) and stressed (T2 and T3) plants (Fig. 5.). On comparing the tolerance index of five genotypes at various concentrations of inducing stress at 5% and 10% are CO 8 (T2 83.7, T3 74.7), MH 421 (T2 68.8, T3 60.7), VBN 2 (T2 94.9, T3 73.4), VBN 4 (T2 73.7, T3 67.3) and Co(Gg) 912 (T2 82.7, T3 65.8). The above observed values allowed us to conclude that the variety VBN 2 has the ability to tolerate under drought stress.

In, all the five varieties, root toxicity and shoot toxicity were higher in T6 (21% PEG concentration). VBN 2 recorded less toxicity in T3 Peg treatment (Figs. 6,7). Similar, study were in accordance with [1]. By the help of seedling germination traits, potential indicator and

adaptive varieties were identified for further development in field conditions. From the present study, it was concluded that, under drought stress the green gram variety VBN 2 showed significant changes in its physiology attributes for its adaptation.

The seedling germination traits are the key parameters that can act as potential indicator for

deciding the capacity or tolerance ability of the seedlings under different concentration of PEG induced drought stress. Higher reduction of growth in the seedling parameters denotes that the varieties are not tolerant and optimum reduction in varieties denotes the tolerant ability to grow under unfavourable stress condition like PEG induced drought.

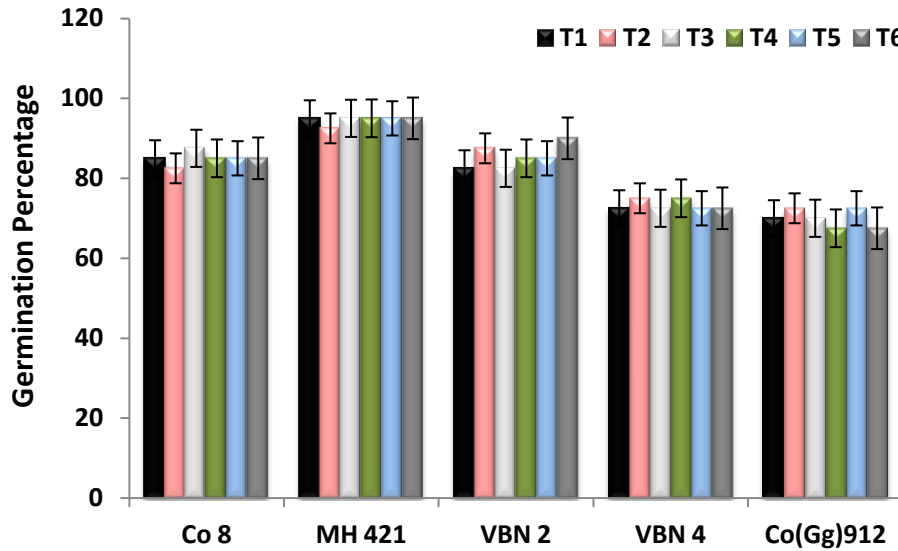


Fig. 1. Germination speed of green gram varieties at seedling stage

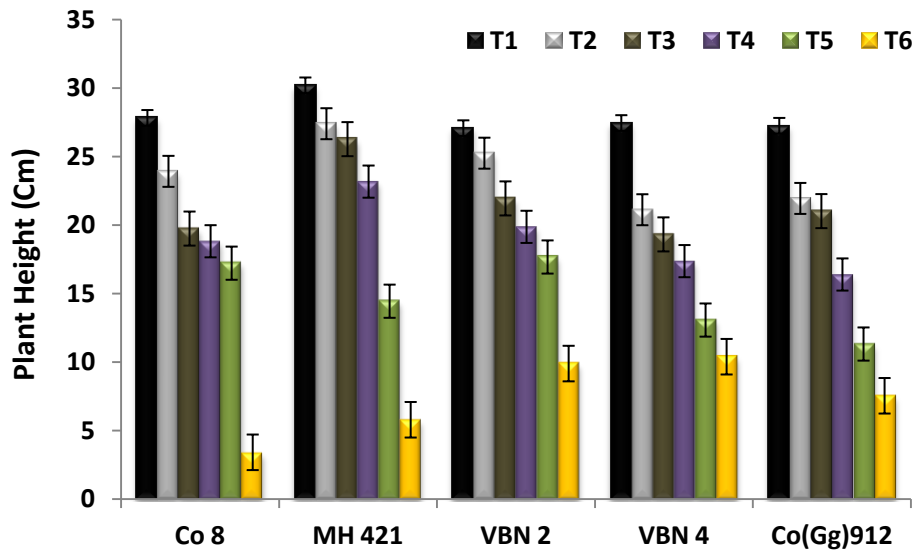


Fig. 2. Effect of drought on plant height of green gram varieties at seedling stage

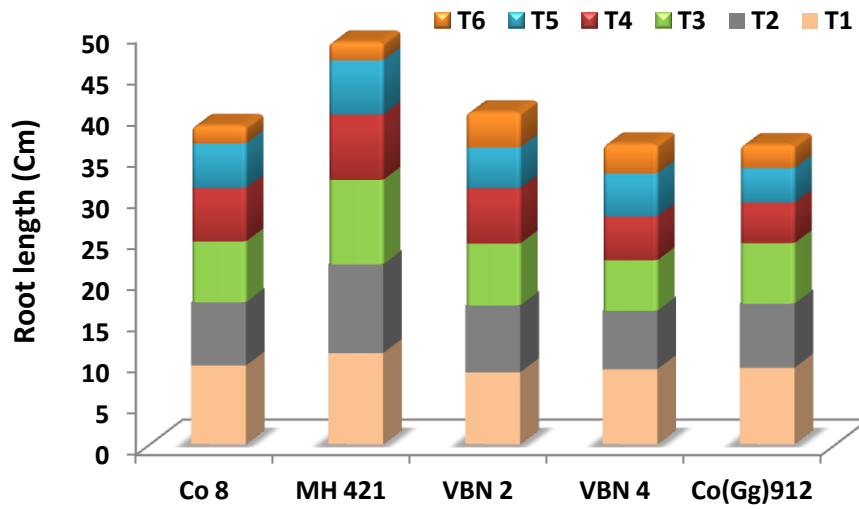


Fig. 3. Effect of drought on root length of green gram varieties at seedling stage

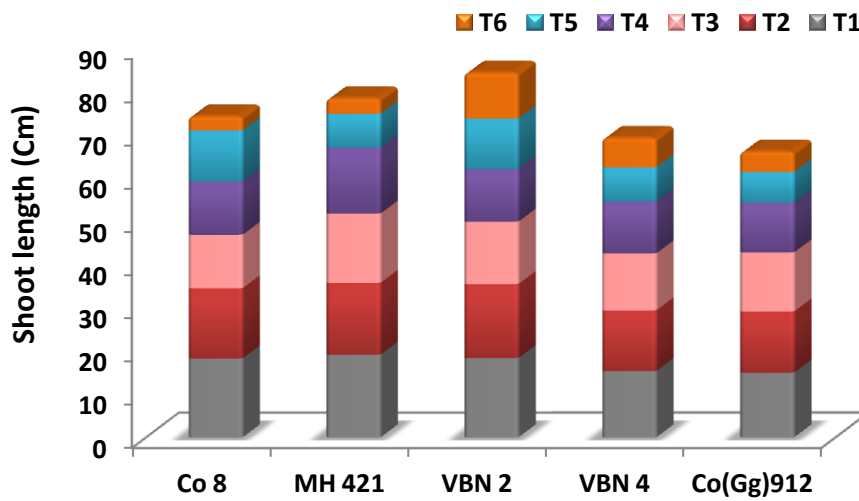


Fig. 4. Effect of drought on shoot length of green gram varieties at seedling stage

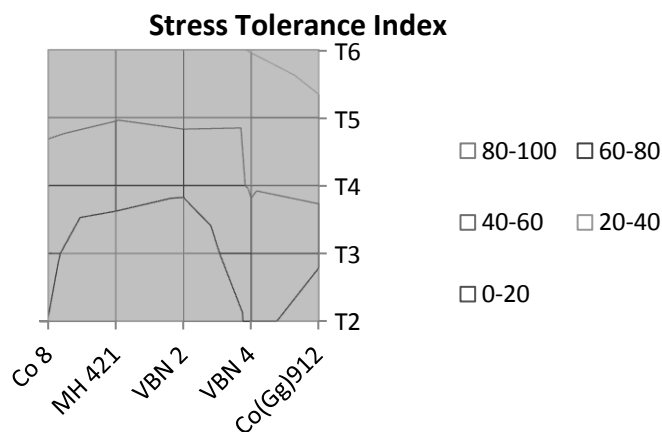


Fig. 5. Effect of drought on stress tolerance index of green gram varieties at seedling stage

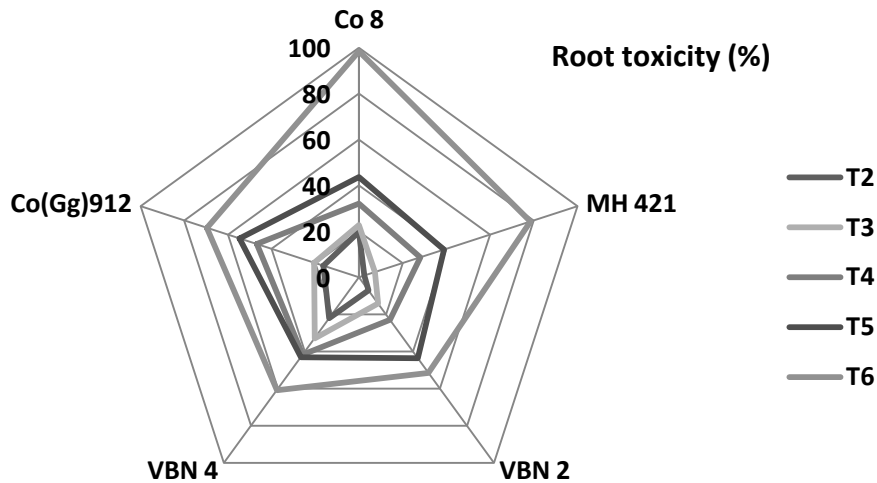


Fig. 6. Effect of drought on root toxicity of green gram varieties at seedling stage

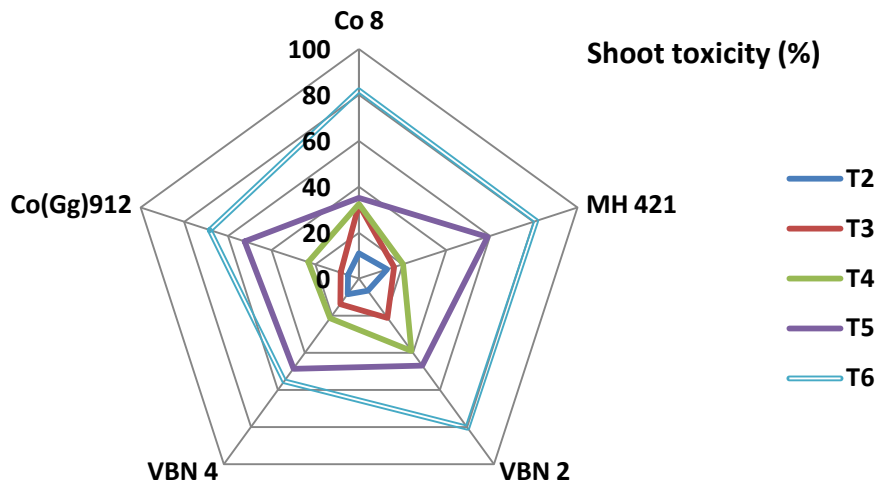


Fig. 7. Effect of drought on shoot toxicity of green gram varieties at seedling stage

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Drought stress is important limiting factor for the productivity of crops. Plant shows series of reaction towards drought conditions that are shown by a range of modifications in the morphology, physiology and biochemical parameters of the plants. However, the capability of plants to survive in drought stress condition significantly varies from one variety to another. Among all the varieties studied VBN 2 performed best for growth, yield and quality traits. By

screening the genotypes the potential indicators can be identified for sustaining the yield.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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