



## An Integrated Study of 'Black Head Moulds' Disease in Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) Caused by *Alternaria triticina* with an Eco-friendly Management in Conventional Agro-climatic Approach

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### ABSTRACT

The In-vitro laboratory experiment was conducted to evaluate the efficacy of Indian Medicinal Plant like Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), Neem (*Azadirachata indica*) and Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) by 'Agar Disc Diffusion' methodology. Beside of that a study was held parallel to exhibit the Concern of Eco friendly treatment as compared to Chemical fertilizer/pesticide, that going to be uncontrolled threat to us upon agro climatic environment. In this Integrated study we obtained antifungal activity resulted as  $2.93 \pm 0.78$  mm of 400mg/ml Ethyl acetate extract of Neem (*Azadirachata indica*) beside of that the other one determined as  $2.35 \pm 0.23$ mm of 400mg/ml Ethyl acetate extract of Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*) followed by  $2.10 \pm 0.45$ mm of Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) on the same concentration as compared to very high and effective rather than those Chemical Hazards.

**Key Words:** Black Head Moulds; Chemical fertilizers; *Alternaria triticina*; Agar Disc Diffusion; IC<sub>50</sub> value; Antibiotics.

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### INTRODUCTION

Black (sooty) head mold of wheat and barley is commonly in association with a diverse group of saprophytic or weakly parasitic fungi (Bockus et al. 2010). The typical symptom of black head mold in wheat and barley is the blackened appearances of mature or dead spikes under wet or humid weather conditions (Prescott et al. 1986). The presence of *Stemphylium* species with black head mold symptoms and grain discoloration of cereals have been reported in several publications (Zillinsky 1983; Prescott et al. 1986; Sisterna & Sarandon 2010; Hershman 2011; Zare 2013). Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) stands as one of humanity's foundational crops, sustaining populations across the globe for centuries. Its significance in providing nourishment, sustenance, and economic stability cannot be overstated. However, the path to abundant wheat yields is laden with challenges, one of which is the insidious 'Black Head Moulds' disease caused by the fungus *Alternaria triticina*. This disease has far-reaching consequences, compelling agricultural communities to seek innovative and sustainable solutions to safeguard their harvests. *Alternaria triticina*, a fungal pathogen, orchestrates the 'Black Head Moulds' disease in wheat. Recognized by the characteristic darkening of wheat heads, this malady casts a shadow over grain development and quality, thereby undermining the productivity of wheat cultivation. The optimal conditions for *Alternaria triticina*'s

proliferation are synonymous with humid environments, rendering regions susceptible to this disease particularly vulnerable. As modern agriculture grapples with the delicate balance between productivity and environmental stewardship, there has been a notable shift towards embracing eco-friendly management practices that coalesce with conventional agro-climatic realities. This paradigm shift embodies the ethos of sustainable agriculture, aiming to mitigate disease impact while minimizing the ecological footprint of traditional farming methods. The eco-friendly management of 'Black Head Moulds' disease in wheat within a conventional agro-climatic context transcends a single methodology and encompasses a holistic approach. At its core, this approach entails a harmonious integration of strategies that synergistically tackle the intricate web of disease dynamics while bolstering the overall agro-ecosystem resilience. The various fungi that cause black head mold primarily live on dead plant tissue and are typically only a problem when wheat dies prematurely. Also known as sooty head molds, black head molds appear dirty and come in a variety of colors (black, white, pink, or green) depending on the causal fungi. Growing on dead leaves, stems, and heads, these fungi are of most concern when they occur on heads. If kernels become infected by certain fungi and weather is favorable, they will develop a discoloration of the seed known as black point. The best time to scout is towards the end of the season during flowering and ripening. Some species of sooty molds produce as many as three different asexual forms (Hughes 1976). The mycelium of a sooty mold is composed of a weft of dark hyphae, which may be several millimeters thick. Conidiogenous cells and various types of conidia are formed within the mycelium. In some species, the weft of hyphae apparently is unorganized, whereas in other species the mycelium is highly organized and has a characteristic appearance (Parbery and Brown 1986). The conidia vary in size, shape, septation, and pigmentation. Species of the Metacapnodiaceae produce distinctive, tapering, moniliform hyphae with rigid smooth-walled cells. The colonies are dense and lustrous (Parbery and Brown 1986). Another sooty mold in the family Seuratiaceae produces dark, gelatinous, lobed thalli, with reproductive structures quite different from those of other sooty molds (Parbery and Brown 1986). The aim of the current study is to analyze the Eco-friendly treatment of Black Head Moulds disease in Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) caused by *Alternaria triticina* and its management through Ethyl Acetate extracts of different concentration of some Medicinal Plant like Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), Neem (*Azadirachata indica*) and Bel (*Aegle marmelos*). and this study also depicts the variation and helpfulness of using eco friendly treatment instead of Chemical fertilizers like Tricyclazole, Propiconazole and Mancozeb. In recent years, there has been growing interest in adopting eco-friendly management approaches to control plant diseases while minimizing the ecological impact of conventional agricultural practices. This approach aligns with sustainable agriculture principles and aims to reduce the reliance on synthetic chemical treatments. Eco-friendly management of 'Black Head Moulds' disease in wheat within a conventional agro-climatic context involves the integration of various strategies that collectively contribute to disease suppression. These strategies not only target the pathogen but also focus on enhancing the overall health of the agro-ecosystem.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Sample Collection**

The infected wheat seed sample was collected from farmers of Chinsurah, a agro facilitated area in Hooghly District of State West Bengal and the same was Checked and identified by Prof. Tanmay Ghosh, Assistant Professor in Microbiology, Dinabandhu Andrews College, Garia, Kolkata, WB. IN.

### **Collection of Medicinal Plants**

The Medicinal Plants Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), Neem (*Azadirchata indica*) and Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) was collected from various location from Tarakeswar in Hooghly District of State West Bengal and the same was Checked and identified by Prof. Tanmay Ghosh, Assistant Professor in Microbiology, Dinabandhu Andrews College, Garia, Kolkata, WB. IN.

### Collection of Chemical Fertilizer

The Chemical fertilizers like Tricyclazole, Propiconazole and Mancozeb was collected from Local Pesticide shop in Tarakeswar, Hooghly, West Bengal and the same was Checked and identified by Prof. Tanmay Ghosh, Assistant Professor in Microbiology, Dinabandhu Andrews College, Garia, Kolkata, WB. IN.

### Preparation of Plant extract

At first the plant structure (leaf) was washed with H<sub>2</sub>O, dried in shade, grinded to fine powder and hold on in air tight containers at natural room temperature in dark till used. The fine-grained samples were subjected to extraction. 2g of air dried powder of Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), Neem (*Azadirchata indica*) and Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) leaf extract was mixed with 5 ml Ethyl Acetate to obtain a final concentration of 400 mg/ml. Each solution was stored at 4°C after collecting in sterilized glass tubes until use.

### Preparation of extract concentration

Four concentrations (50mg/ml, 100mg/ml, 200mg/ml and 400mg/ml) were made of Ethyl Acetate extract. In each case 2gm of Extract was mixed with 5ml DMSO (Dimethyl sulfoxide) to organize four hundred mg/ml stock concentration. Then different 3 concentrations were created by adding further DMSO with the Stock in different tubing. Besife of that the concentration of chemical fertilizers was made by dissolving 0.5g and 1g sample in 10ml distilled water (dH<sub>2</sub>O) respectively to obtain concentration of 0.05mg/ml and 0.1mg/ml.

### Antifungal activity by 'Well plate diffusion method'

Muller Hinton agar was use to check antimicrobial activity by well diffusion method. Autoclaved medium was poured in to petriplates in the laminar air flow hood. On cooling the medium within petriplates the isolated *Alternaria triticina* from 24 hrs old culture were spread then wells were made on the petriplates with the help of stainless steel borer of diameter 6- 8 mm. Five plates were also made for each microorganism and one wall (Two part) made on each plate the entire surface at angle 180°, Two plate was for four type of concentration (400 mg/ml, 200 mg/m; 100 mg/ml, 50 mg/ml) of each extracts Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), Neem (*Azadirchata indica*) and Bel (*Aegle marmelos*), Two plate is for same type of concentration (as the leaf extract) of each type of Chemical fertilizers like Tricyclazole, Propiconazole and Mancozeb and one for Control (by DMSO). Because we have to prove the extracts have large zone of inhibition of fungi against medicinal plants than those Chemical fertilizers by this parallel study. These plates were incubated for 48 hrs and the diameter of zone of inhibition was measured.

### Statistical Analysis

Results obtained were analyzed statistically and values were expressed as Mean ± SD.

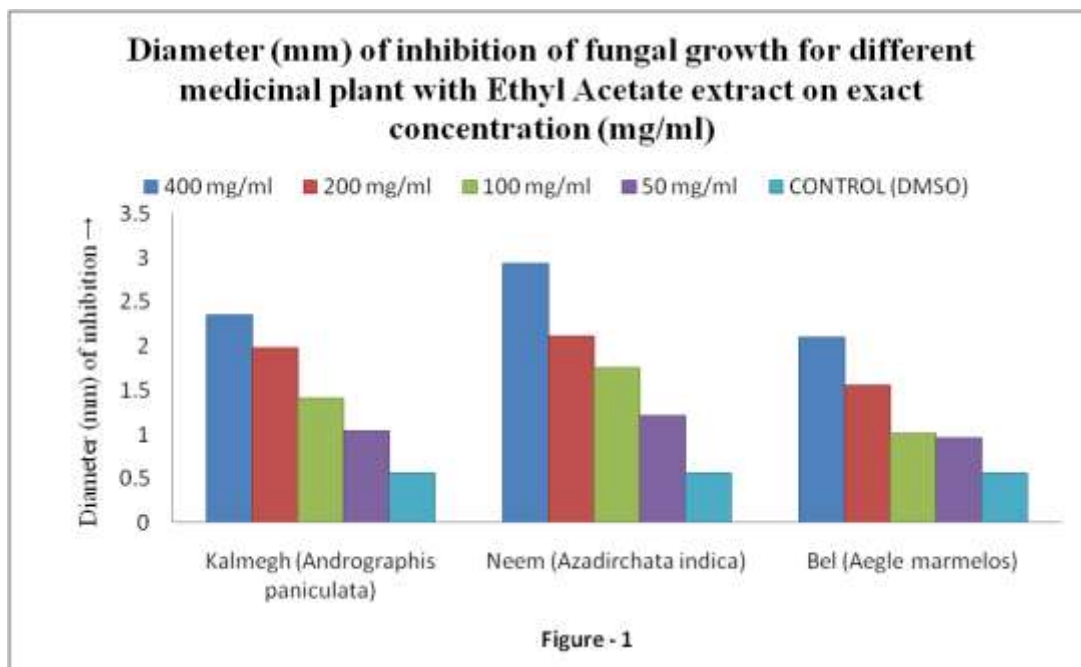
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Resulting antifungal activity

The Ethyl Acetate with grinded leaf of Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), Neem (*Azadirchata indica*) and Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) were extracted to test the antifungal activity on the *Alternaria triticina* Fungi isolated from Black Head Moulds disease in Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) with respect to standard antibiotic by the “agar well diffusion method” and the diameter zone of inhibition was measured in 'mm' parameter. Antifungal activity of extract with different concentrations on the *Alternaria triticina* is given as in Table 1 and Figure 1.

**Table 1 :** Diameter (mm) of inhibition of fungal growth for different medicinal plant with Ethyl Acetate extract on exact concentration (mg/ml).

Concentrations (mg/ml)	Diameter (mm) of inhibition		
	Kalmegh ( <i>Andrographis paniculata</i> )	Neem ( <i>Azadirchata indica</i> )	Bel ( <i>Aegle marmelos</i> )
400	2.35±0.23	2.93±0.78	2.10±0.45
200	1.98±0.25	2.11±0.72	1.55±0.42
100	1.40±0.23	1.75±0.70	1.01±0.45
50	1.03±0.22	1.21±0.71	0.96±0.41
CONTROL (DMSO)	0.56±0.1	0.56±0.1	0.56±0.1

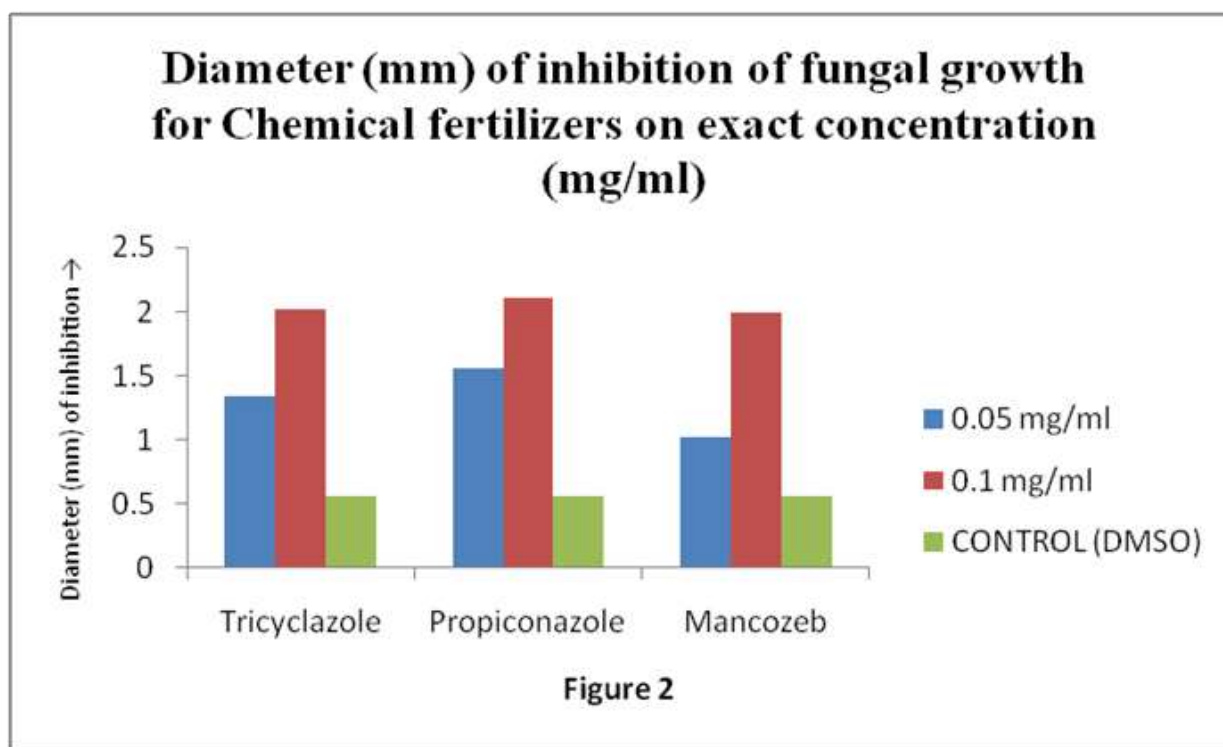


With doing parallel study we have proved that The Chemical fertilizers (Tricyclazole, Propiconazole and Mancozeb) that cures naturally the Black Head Moulds disease in Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) have less zone of inhibition as the Ethyl acetate extracts of Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), Neem (*Azadirchata*

*indica*) and Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) have. The zone of inhibition of those Chemical fertilizers is given as Table 2.

Table 2 : Diameter (mm) of inhibition of fungal growth for Chemical fertilizers on exact concentration (mg/ml).

Concentrations (mg/ml)	Diameter (mm) of inhibition		
	Tricyclazole	Propiconazole	Mancozeb
0.05	1.34±0.54	1.56±0.15	1.02±0.33
0.1	2.01±0.55	2.11±0.16	1.99±0.34
CONTROL (DMSO)	0.56±0.1	0.56±0.1	0.56±0.1



Here we can easily determine that the Ethyl Acetate extract of Neem (*Azadirchata indica*) is more effective than Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*) followed by Bel (*Aegle marmelos*). On the basis of above mentioned analysis, the most efficient effect of antifungal activity resulted as 2.93±0.78 mm of 400mg/ml Ethyl acetate extract of Neem (*Azadirchata indica*) beside of that the other one determined as 2.35±0.23mm of 400mg/ml Ethyl acetate extract of Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*) followed by 2.10±0.45mm of Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) on the same concentration and lower value evaluated as 0.96±0.41mm of Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) considered respectively by Control valued 0.56±0.1mm. On the other hand, here is some another comparing study, that proves the Ethyl acetate Extracts of Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), Neem (*Azadirchata indica*) and Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) have much antifungal activity than the Chemical pesticides against Black Head Moulds disease in Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*).

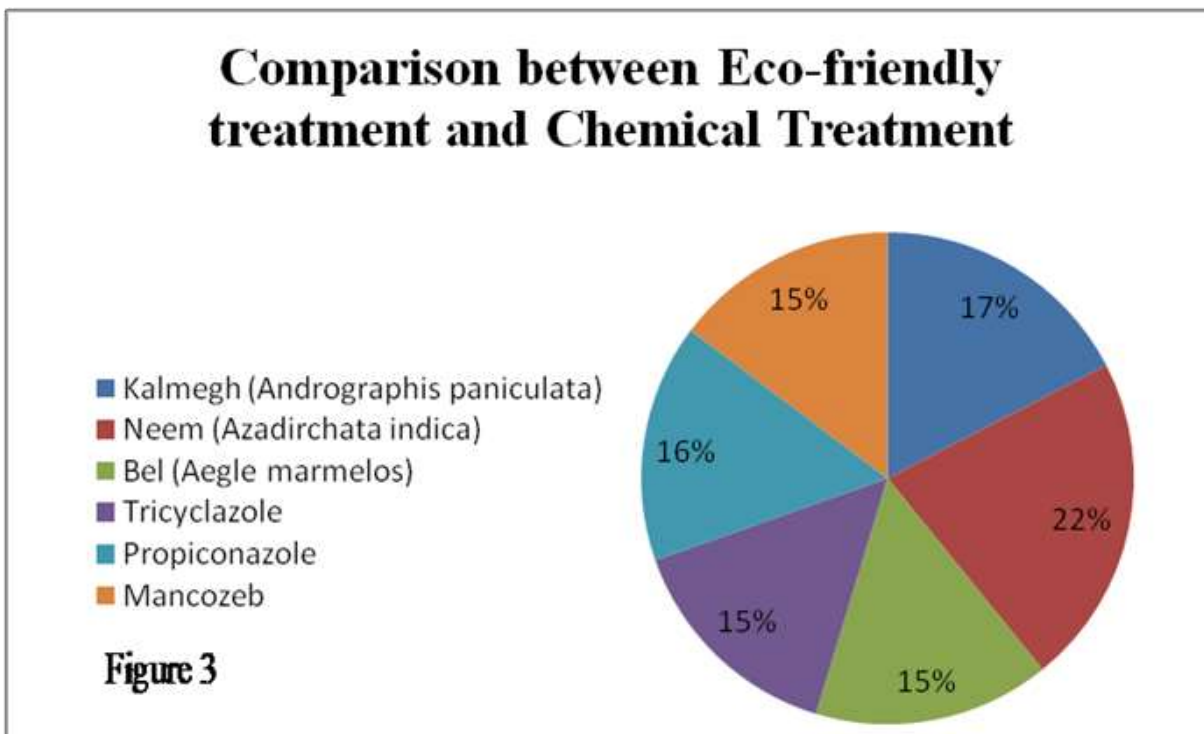
caused by *Alternaria triticina*. Graphical evaluation upon above discussion is given below as Figure 3, Determining the highest concentrations of each attempts.

**IC<sub>50</sub> Screening of above evaluation :**

As we know IC<sub>50</sub> represents the concentration at which a substance exerts half of its maximal inhibitory effect. This value is typically used to characterize the effectiveness of an antagonist in inhibiting a specific biological or biochemical process, the higher IC<sub>50</sub> value depicting lower antifungal value respectively the determination is opposed to lower value.

**Table 3 :** IC<sub>50</sub> value of each antifungal agents.

Highest concentration (mg/ml) used in inhibitory effect	IC <sub>50</sub> value
Kalmegh ( <i>Andrographis paniculata</i> )	3.05
Neem ( <i>Azadirchata indica</i> )	1.23
Bel ( <i>Aegle marmelos</i> )	5.66



Significantly we can conclude on the basis of Table 3 and Figure 4 that Neem (*Azadirchata indica*) is most efficient antifungal agent for *Alternaria triticina* compared to Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*) following by Bel (*Aegle marmelos*).

**CONCLUTIONS**

Both barley that is still in the field and wheat that was not sprayed with fungicides are beginning to blacken in the field. The blackening of the heads is caused by several fungi that are referred to as “sooty molds”. Sooty mold fungi colonize wheat heads when wet, humid weather occurs during the latter stages of grain

development and crop maturation. Molding is frequently most severe when harvest is delayed. We know that organisms are gaining resistance day by day towards the multi drug or antibiotics, so that some natural product should be try to overcome these antibiotic resistant organisms. Moreover the plant extract of Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), Neem (*Azadirachata indica*) and Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) have several antifungal efficacy against Black Head Moulds disease in Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) caused by *Alternaria triticina* That's why we can say that the Ethyl Acetate extract of Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), Neem (*Azadirachata indica*) and Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) can be used for designing several drugs to treat complicated Black Head Moulds disease in Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) in future.

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