



EFFECTS OF RISING TEMPERATURE ON EVAPOTRANSPIRATION AND ET CONTROL

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ABSTRACT

Evapotranspiration (ET) is a significant water loss from drainage basins. Types of vegetation and land use significantly affect evapotranspiration, and therefore the amount of water leaving a drainage basin. Because water transpired through leaves comes from the roots, plants with deep reaching roots can more constantly transpire water. Through ET, forests reduce water yield, except in unique ecosystems called cloud forests. Trees in cloud forests collect the liquid water in fog or low clouds onto their surface, which drips down to the ground. These trees still contribute to evapotranspiration, but often collect more water than they evaporate or transpire. In areas that are not irrigated, actual evapotranspiration is usually no greater than precipitation, with some buffer in time depending on the soil's ability to hold water. It will usually be less because some water will be lost due to percolation or surface runoff. Climate change (rising temperature) is likely to require adaption of agricultural practices such as irrigation in India. Due to sandy soils with low water retention capacity and occasional insufficient rainfall, irrigation is a basic condition for agricultural production in the county. Transpiration rates go up as the temperature goes up, especially during the growing season, when the air is warmer due to stronger sunlight and warmer air masses. Higher temperatures cause the plant cells which control the openings (stoma) where water is released to the atmosphere to open, whereas colder temperatures cause the openings to close.

KEYWORDS: *Evapotranspiration, precipitation, temperature, antitranspirant.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Under dry land conditions soil moisture is the most limiting factor for crop production and simultaneously increase in temperature (as per the IPCC, 5th AR (2014), the average global surface temperature has increased by nearly 1 °C over the past century and is likely to rise by another 1.4 to 5.8 °C over the next century) is more likely to affect the hydrological cycle. Water is lost as evaporation from soil surface and as transpiration from the plant surfaces. The combined loss of moisture through these two processes is known as evapotranspiration.

Irrigated agriculture is dependent on an adequate water supply of usable quality. Water quality concerns have often been neglected because good quality water supplies have been plentiful and readily available. This situation is now changing in many areas. Intensive use of nearly all good quality water and extreme dry weather conditions are decreasing the quality water (Jagermeyret *et al.*, 2015).

Low rainfall or failure of monsoon rain is a recurring feature in India. This has been responsible for droughts and famines. The word drought generally denotes scarcity of water in a region. Though, aridity and drought are due to insufficient water, aridity is a permanent climatic feature and is the culmination of a number of long term processes (Bunce, 1997). However, drought is a temporary condition that occurs for a short period due to deficient precipitation for vegetation, river flow, water supply and human consumption. Drought is due to anomaly in atmospheric circulation.

In middle latitudes drought occurs under cool temperature conditions. This is due to excessive transpiration and absence of absorption of moisture from the soil, when the soil is in extremely low temperature conditions (Collatz *et al.*, 1991).

II. EFFECTS ON EVAPOTRANSPIRATION

The rate of transpiration is fastest when air temperature is between 20°C to 30°C. At these temperatures the stomata apertures or opening are generally widest. In general, the stomata close at temperatures about 0°C and progressively increase in aperture up to about 30°C (Lu *et al.*, 2000).

In addition, there are fleshy or relatively thick leaves, stems and fruits which, upon exposure to sunlight, results to internal temperatures which exceed that of surrounding air. The difference may reach 10°C. This wide difference in temperature would result to a steeper water potential gradient between the plant organ and the external environment. Consequently, it will favour rapid rate of transpiration (Atkin and Tjoelker, 2003).

Temperature as an environmental factor affecting transpiration also relates to water potential and relative humidity. The relationship of temperature (T, in °K), relative humidity (RH, in %) and water potential (Ψ_w , in pascal) is shown in the following mathematical equation provided by Hopkins (1995).

$$\Psi_w = 1.06 T \log(RH/100)$$

Applying the equation, an increase in temperature will decrease water potential. Thus at the same RH of 50%, Ψ_w at temperature of 20°C or 293.15°K is -93.5 MPa but lower (more negative, $\Psi_w = -96.7$ MPa) at higher temperature of 30°C. Increase in atmospheric temperature will therefore steepen further the plant-air water potential gradient.

Solar or thermal energy is necessary to evaporate the water from both soil and plant surfaces. Thus, of the total solar radiation intercepted by the leaf, only 1 to 5% is used for photosynthesis and 75 to 85% is used for radiating the canopy surface i.e., leaves and for transpiration. Hence, increased solar radiation increases atmospheric demand and in turn evapotranspiration (Chartzoulakis *et al.*, 2000).

Increasing the temperature, increases the capacity of air to hold water i.e., vapour pressure deficit is high, which means a greater atmospheric demand i.e., greater ET (Bunce, 1997).

Hot waves are very harmful during summer. These are experienced over Deccan and Central parts of India during March to May. The harmful effects include shedding of fruits, plants drying of water resources, loss of water by evaporation from irrigation channels, transpiration increases from plants beyond recouping levels, plants tend to wilt and die owing to rapid desiccation and ultimately hot winds cause shrivelling effect at milk stage of all agricultural crops (Souchet *et al.*, 1998).



Increase in the temperature results in opening of stomata. Temperature has significant effect on the permeability of the wall of the guard cells and therefore greatly affects the osmotic phenomenon. This phenomenon is responsible for the movement of guard cells (Bernacchi *et al.*, 2001).

High air temperature, results in the desiccation of the crop plants also, injury caused because of short period fluctuation in air temperature is known as sunscald, the scorching of stem near the soil surface known as stem girdle is another injury at high air temperatures, plant tissues escape from high heat by emission of long wave radiation, convection of heat, and transpiration (Hikosaka *et al.*, 2006). However, transpiration is the most effective process in many natural situations; hence exposure of crop plants to temperatures over 45°C for just 30 minutes can cause severe damage to the leaves of plants. The effect of high temperature is the disruption of cell metabolism, production of toxic substances, and damage to cell membranes due to higher rate of transpiration.

Higher rising temperature alters the water status by its influence on absorption, translocation and transpiration. The lag in absorption behind transpiration results in loss of turgor as a result of increase in the atmospheric dryness. Photosynthesis is reduced by moisture stress due to reduction in photosynthetic rate, chlorophyll content, leaf area and increase in assimilate saturation in leaves. All most all metabolic reactions are affected by water deficits. Decrease in growth of leaves, stems and fruits maturity is delayed if drought occurs before flowering while it advances if drought occurs after flowering (Bjorkman *et al.*, 1980).

Drought at flowering and grain development determines the number of fruits and individual grain weight, respectively. Panicle initiation in cereals is critical while drought at anthesis may lead to drying of pollen. Drought at grain development reduces yield while vegetative and grain filling stages are less sensitive to moisture stress (Borrel *et al.*, 2006).

Because of high atmospheric temperature the atmospheric demand for moisture increases causing high evapotranspiration losses resulting in moisture stress. The effect on yield depends hugely on what proportion of the total dry matter is considered as useful material to be harvested (Brodribb and Jordan, 2008). If it is aerial and underground parts, effect of drought is as sensitive as total growth. When the yield consists of seeds as in cereals, moisture stress at flowering is detrimental. When the yield is fibre or chemicals where economic product is a small fraction of total dry matter moderate stress on growth does not have adverse effect on yields.

The organic matter content in most of the soils under dry-land conditions is very low (< 1 %) due to high temperature and low addition of organic manures. Poor organic matter content adversely affects soil physical properties related to moisture storage. Inoculating legumes with *Rhizobium* could not meet with success for increasing 'N' fixation under dry-land conditions probably due to unfavourable environment, especially prolonged soil moisture stress periods during crop season, high temperature stress and deficiency of other nutrients (Fletcher *et al.*, 2007).

Biofertilizers like *Azospirillum* commonly found in association with roots of cereals and grasses. High N fixation capacity, low energy requirement and abundant establishment in the roots of cereals and tolerance to high temperature (30-40° C) are responsible for its suitability to dry land conditions. It has been largely tested in sorghum and bajra and can substitute up to 20 kg N/ha (Jochum *et al.*, 2004).

All most all NPT (NEW PLANT TYPES) are photo insensitive and completely resistant to fluctuations in day length. They can be grown under all crop seasons provided inputs like fertilizers and irrigations are adequately made available, so higher yields can be obtained. However, some of the NPTs are thermo-sensitive and are affected by variation in temperature during season.

In India, maize cultivation extends from the hot arid plains of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Extremely high temperature and high humidity during flowering damage the foliage, desiccates the pollen and interferes with proper pollination which results in poor grain formation (Souch, 1998). The high temperatures on both ends of the wheat season restrict the cultivation of this crop in India. Too cooler months, high temperatures in September do not permit good tillering of the crop. They also favour root rot and seedling blight. Hot summer during the grain ripening period hastens the maturity of the crop giving inferior quality of the crop.

The ions of primary concern are chloride, sodium and boron. Although toxicity problems may occur even when these ions are in low concentrations, toxicity often accompanies and complicates a salinity or water infiltration problem. Damage results when the potentially toxic ions are absorbed in significant amounts with the water taken up by the roots. The absorbed ions are transported to the leaves where they accumulate during transpiration (Wieringa, 1986). The ions accumulate to the greatest extent in the areas where the water loss is greatest, usually the leaf tips and leaf edges. The degree of damage depends upon the duration of exposure, concentration by the toxic ion, crop sensitivity, and the volume of water transpired by the crop. In a hot climate or hot part of the year, accumulation is more rapid than if the same crop were grown in a cooler climate or cooler season when it might show little or no damage.

Salts are added to the soil with each irrigation. These salts will reduce crop yield if they accumulate in the rooting depth to damaging concentrations. The crop removes much of the applied water from the soil to meet its evapotranspiration demand (ET) but leaves most of the salt behind to concentrate in the shrinking volume of soil water (Sheffield and Wood, 2008). A toxicity problem is different from a salinity problem in that it occurs within the plant itself and is not caused by a water short-age. Toxicity normally results when certain ions are taken up with the soil-water and accumulate in the leaves during water transpiration to an extent those results in damage to the plant. The degree of damage depends upon time, concentration, crop sensitivity and crop water use, and if damage is severe enough, crop yield is reduced. The usual toxic ions in irrigation water are chloride, sodium and boron. Damage can be caused by each, individually or in combination.

The toxic ions sodium and chloride can also be absorbed directly into the plant through the leaves moistened during sprinkler irrigation. This occurs typically during periods of high temperature and low humidity. The leaf absorption speeds the rate of accumulation of a toxic ion and may be a primary source of the toxicity (Sherwood and Huber, 2010). The most common toxicity is from chloride in the irrigation water. Chloride is not adsorbed or held back by soils, therefore it moves readily with the soil-water, is taken up by the crop, moves in the transpiration stream, and accumulates in the leaves. If the chloride concentration in the leaves exceeds the tolerance of the crop, injury symptoms develop such as leaf burn or drying of leaf tissue.

III. CONTROL MEASURE

3.1 Methods of irrigation



Localized irrigation systems (drip, trickle or spitter) apply water on a daily or near daily basis at a very low application rate (2–8 litres per hour per emitter). The near daily replenishment of the water used by the crop keeps the soil moist and very near to or slightly above field water holding capacity. The irrigations should maintain a slight but nearly continuous downward movement of moisture and salts for excellent short-term salinity control. Irrigation efficiency can be close to 100 % during the cropping period, meaning that the crop evapotranspiration demand can be met essentially without losses due to runoff or deep penetration.

Irrigations to maintain high moisture content during the seedling stage of the crop have been found to be detrimental to the growth of jowar due to lowering of soil temperature below the optimum and leaching of plant nutrients from the root zone.

Irrigation at 45th day even for rainfed crops which coincides with boot leaf ensures good yields. Decreasing the turbulent transfer of water vapour to the atmosphere by growing plants, raising wind breaks, straw mulches etc. Decreasing capillary conductivity by rapid drying of the surface soil layers. Decreasing the capillary flow and moisture holding capacity of the surface soil layers. For evaporation control, mostly mulches are used (Mott, 2007).

3.2 Use of mulches (**)

Mulch is any covering material applied on the soil surface to reduce evaporation losses. This material may be grown and maintained in place, or any material grown and modified before placement or any material processed or manufactured and transported before placement.

Types of mulches

Soil mulch or dust mulch: Soil mulch is a thin layer of loose soil surface that can be created by frequently stirring the soil with surface tillage implements like danthis, gun takas. Soil mulch of surface 5-8 cm dry soil effectively reduces the evaporation losses by obstructing the raise of soil moisture through capillary action. The soil mulch also prevents deep cracks in soils by reducing the direct action of atmosphere and hence evaporation is also reduced. The repeated intercultural operations done in rabi crops even in the absence of weeds help in reducing evaporation losses. Among the different mulches soil mulch is the cheapest.

Straw and stubble mulch: Straw and other crop residues like stubbles, groundnut shells, cotton stalks etc; can be used as mulches on soil surface for moisture conservation. Straw mulches reduce both the amount of energy absorbed by the soil and its movement above the soil and hence reduce evaporation. However, the availability of adequate crop residues is a problem for use as mulches.

Plastic mulches: Plastic mulches are very effective as mulches for evaporation control provided cost is not a limiting factor. The plastic mulches may be either white or black. Black plastic mulches will absorb the solar radiation and enhance the soil temperature for hastening the germination of winter crops like wheat; barley etc., White plastic mulches will reflect the incident radiation and reduce evaporation of soil moisture.

Chemical mulches: Chemicals like hexadecanol, a long chain alcohol when mixed with surface 5 mm of soil can reduce evaporation by about 40%. The surface layer of a treated soil dries out more rapidly than that of untreated soil, creating a diffusion layer to evaporation.

Vertical mulching: It is a technique wherein trenches of 40 cm wide, 15 cm deep are dug at 2 to 4 m interval across slope and filled with stubbles or organic wastes to a height of 10 cm above soil surface. Runoff is checked, collected in the shallow trenches and redistributed to adjoining soil layers and infiltration is increased in black soils.

Live mulching: Is the term used to describe the covering of soil surface through the plant canopy in intercropping system. Eg. Sorghum + forage cowpea, sorghum + sword bean.

Pebble mulch: Where small pebbles like stone are placed on the soil surface. This mulching will be successful in dry-land fruit tree culture. The pebbles placed on the basis of trees not only reduce evaporation but also facilitate infiltration of rain water into the basin. Mulching is more advantageous during rabi/summer months than in kharif season. Organic mulches particularly under receding soil moisture conditions increase crop growth by conserving soil moisture.

Soil temperature: The effects of mulches on soil temperature are highly variable and depend up on the type of mulch material. White or reflective type of plastic mulches generally decreases soil temperature, while black plastic mulches may increase soil temperature. Crop residues moderate temperature by decreasing it in summer and by increasing in winter season. This is due to combined effect of radiation interception and evaporative cooling. The sugarcane trash mulch will enhance the germination of sugarcane setts during summer by temperature reduction.

IV. ADAPTATION STRATEGIES ()**

Reducing losses due to transpiration

Nearly 95% of water absorbed by the plant is lost in transpiration. Hence transpiration reduction is needed for maintaining favourable water balance in the plants. Transpiration has become unavoidable evil as the stomata, which allow CO₂ exchange also allows water vapour transfer into the atmosphere.

There are four principles of transpiration control

1. By increasing leaf resistance to water vapour transfer by application of materials, which tend to close or cover stomata (ex: both stomatal closing and film forming type of antitranspirants).
2. By reducing amount of energy absorbed by leaf surface (Eg: leaf reflectants).
3. By reducing top growth of plants (Eg: Growth retardants).
4. By increasing air resistance to water vapour transfer by shelter belts/wind breaks

The transpiration losses can be controlled by use of antitranspirants, use of wind breaks/shelter belts and efficient weed control.



Anti-transparent: Any material that is applied on transpiring plant surface for reducing water loss is called antitranspirants. The antitranspirants are also known as transpiration suppressants. The best antitranspirants reduce transpiration losses up to 30-40%.

There are four types of anti transpirants.

Stomatal closing type: Transpiration mostly occurs through stomata on the leaf surface. Some fungicides like PMA (phenyl mercuric acetate) and herbicides like atrazine in low concentrations serve as anti transpirants by closing of stomata. PMA is known to inhibit mesophyll photosynthesis. Though the success was reported from glasshouse studies, their effectiveness under field conditions is limited.

Film forming type: The plastic and waxy materials, which form a thin film on the leaf surface, retard the escape of water due to formation of physical barrier. The success of these chemicals is limited since they also reduce photosynthesis. Thin film forming type: Hexadecanol Thick film forming type: Mobileaf, Polythene S-60.

Leaf reflectant type: These are the white materials, which form a coating on the leaves and increase leaf reflectance (albedo). By reflecting the radiation they reduce leaf temperatures and vapour pressure gradient from leaf to atmosphere and hence reduce transpiration. About 5% of kaolin spray reduces the leaf temperature by 3-4°C and decrease in transpiration by 22 to 28 per cent. Celite and hydrated lime are also used as reflectant type of anti transparent.

Growth retardant type: These chemicals reduce shoot growth and increase root growth and thus enable the plants to reduce transpiring surface and resist drought conditions. They increase root/shoot ratio. Eg : Cycocel – (2-chloroethyl) Trimethyl ammonium chloride (CCC), Phosphon-D, Maleic Hydrazide (MH). Antitranspirants generally reduce photosynthesis. Therefore, their use is limited to save the crop from death under severe moisture stress.

Use of wind breaks and shelterbelts: Wind breaks are any structures that obstruct wind flow and reduce wind (hot wind) speed while shelterbelts are rows of trees planted for protection of crops against wind and high temperature. The protection offered by the shelterbelts is dependent on the height of central tree row in the shelterbelts. Generally, shelterbelts give protection from desiccating winds to the extent of 5 to 10 times their height on windward side and up to 30 times on leeward side. Due to reduction in wind speed, evaporation losses are reduced and more water is available for plants. The beneficial effect of shelterbelts is seen more clearly in drought years. In addition, shelterbelts reduce wind erosion.

Effective weed control: Weeds transpire frequently greater amount of water per unit of dry matter production than the crop plants. Therefore controlling weeds especially at early stages of crop growth will be most effective means of increasing the amount of water available for crops. This is the most useful method to reduce transpiration losses.

V. CROP ADAPTATION STRATEGIES

The ability of crop to grow satisfactorily under water stress is called drought adaptation. Adaptation is structural or functional modification in plants to survive and reproduce in a particular environment. Crops survive



and grow under moisture stress conditions mainly by three ways: (i) escaping drought, (ii) drought resistance and (iii) avoiding stress.

Escaping Drought-Evading the period of drought is the simplest means of adaptation of plants today conditions. Many desert plants, the so called ephemerals, germinate at the beginning of the rainy season and have an extremely short life period (5 to 6 weeks) which is confined to the rainy period. These plants have no mechanism for overcoming moisture stress and are, therefore, not drought resistant. In cultivated crops, the ability of a cultivar to mature before the soil dries is the main adaptation to growth in dry regions. Certain varieties of pearl millet mature within 60 days after sowing. Short duration pulses like cowpea, green gram, black gram can be included in this category (Nanet *et al.*, 2011).

Drought Resistance-Plants can adapt to drought either by avoiding stress or by tolerating stress due to different mechanisms. These mechanisms provide drought resistance.

Avoiding Stress-Stress avoidance is the ability to maintain a favourable water balance, and turgidity even when exposed to drought conditions, thereby avoiding stress and its consequences. A favourable water balance under drought conditions can be achieved either by: (i) conserving water by restricting transpiration before or as soon as stress is experienced; or (ii) accelerating water uptake sufficiently so as to replenish the lost water.

VI. UTILIZATION OF CO₂ FERTILIZATION

Water deficit stress can occur as precipitation does not adequately compensate for an increased evaporative demand due to a temperature rise. This stress could cause a decline in yield or require more irrigation to maintain yields. This negative effect of increased temperature may be counteracted by effects of elevated CO₂ on crop tolerance to water stress. Increased atmospheric CO₂ levels have important physiological effects on crop plants such as an increase in photosynthetic rate. Depending on the inclusion and exclusion of CO₂-fertilization effect, an increase, or a decrease is reported to occur in crop yields (Wassen and Joosten, 1996).

VI. STRATEGIES FOR DROUGHT MANAGEMENT (*)

The different strategies for drought management are discussed under the following heads.

Adjusting the plant population: The plant population should be lesser in dryland conditions than under irrigated conditions. The rectangular type of planting pattern should always be followed under dryland conditions. Under dryland conditions whenever moisture stress occurs due to prolonged dry spells, under limited moisture supply the adjustment of plant population can be done by the followings.

Increasing the inter row distance: By adjusting more number of plants within the row and increasing the distance between the rows reduces the competition during any part of the growing period of the crop. Hence it is more suitable for limited moisture supply conditions.

Increasing the intra row distance: Here the distance between plants is increased by which plants grow luxuriantly from the beginning. There will be competition for moisture during the reproductive period of the crop. Hence it is less advantageous as compared to above under limited moisture supply.

Mid-season corrections: The contingent management practices done in the standing crop to overcome the unfavourable soil moisture conditions due to prolonged dry spells are known as mid-season conditions.

Thinning: This can be done by removing every alternate row or every third row which will save the crop from failure by reducing the competition.

Spraying: In crops like groundnut, castor, redgram, etc., during prolonged dry spells the crop can be saved by spraying water at weekly intervals or 2 per cent urea at a week to 10 days interval.

Ratooning: In crops like sorghum and bajra, ratooning can be practiced as a mid-season correction measure after a break of dry spell.

Weed control: Weeds compete with crop for different growth resources more seriously under dryland conditions. The water requirement of most of the weeds is more than the crop plants. Hence they compete more for soil moisture. Therefore, weed control especially during early stages of crop growth reduces the impact of dry spell by soil moisture conservation.

Water harvesting and lifesaving irrigation: The collection of runoff water during peak periods of rainfall and storing in different structures is known as water harvesting. The stored water can be used for giving lifesaving irrigation during prolonged dry spells.

Avoiding Stress-CRI: In wheat, the first node of crown is formed near the soil surface irrespective of the depth of sowing. Crown roots start developing at this node. Depending upon temperature, CRI takes place 15-21 DAS. Plants at this stage are very sensitive to soil moisture stress. Hence, there is a need for adequate moisture at this stage (Longobardi and Villani, 2013).

VII. CONCLUSION

Global climate change may have serious impacts on water resources and agriculture in the future. Water deficit stress can occur as precipitation does not adequately compensate for an increased evaporative demand due to a temperature rise. This stress could cause a decline in yield or require more irrigation to maintain yields. In the future, water demand for irrigation will increase due to decreasing precipitation. Changes in climatic conditions and CO₂ concentration would result in changes in crop yields. Hence, methods of irrigation and its scheduling, use of mulches, anti-transparent, use of wind breaks and shelterbelts, crop adaptation strategies against high temperature and agronomic practices can play a vital role in reducing the adverse effect of rising temperature on evapotranspiration.

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