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## Article

# Enhancing Mungbean Yield and Soil Health Through Vermicompost-Based Integrated Nutrient Management Practices in Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** Mungbean (*Vigna radiata*) is a key pulse crop in Bangladesh, playing a crucial role in the country's agricultural economy and food security. However, challenges such as soil degradation, nutrient depletion, and low yield potential hinder its productivity. This study investigates the effects of integrated nutrient management (INM) practices, including vermicompost, on the yield, quality, and soil health of mungbean (*Vigna radiata*) in the coastal region of Gopalganj, Bangladesh. A randomized complete block design (RCBD) was employed with three treatment groups: control (traditional inorganic fertilizers), organic fertilization (vermicompost), and integrated nutrient management (a combination of organic and inorganic fertilizers). Results indicated that the INM treatment significantly improved the emergence rate, with 85% of seeds emerging within 8 days, compared to 75% and 70% in the organic and control treatments, respectively. Plant growth parameters, including plant height (60 cm) and the number of leaves (15), were highest in the INM treatment, followed by the organic (50 cm and 12 leaves) and control treatments (45 cm and 10 leaves). The INM group also showed the highest mungbean yield (26 tons/ha), with larger average tuber weight (180 g) and fewer defects (5%), compared to the organic (22 tons/ha, 160 g, 10% defects) and control groups (20 tons/ha, 150 g, 15% defects). Soil health assessments revealed significant improvements in soil nutrient content, including nitrogen (24 mg/kg), phosphorus (18 mg/kg), and potassium (230 mg/kg), and higher microbial activity (130) in the INM treatment, suggesting enhanced soil fertility. These results highlight the potential of INM practices in improving mungbean productivity, quality, and long-term soil health, offering a sustainable approach to agriculture in Bangladesh. This study underscores the importance of adopting integrated fertilization strategies to achieve higher crop yields and ensure soil sustainability.

**Keywords:** mungbean; vermicompost; inm; integrated nutrient management; Bangladesh; BARI Mung-4

## Introduction

Mungbean (*Vigna radiata*) is an important legume crop widely cultivated in Bangladesh, providing a significant source of protein, essential nutrients, and income for smallholder farmers. It plays a vital role in enhancing food security and supporting sustainable agricultural practices due to its nitrogen-fixing ability, which improves soil fertility (Hossain et al., 2019). However, the productivity of mungbean in Bangladesh is constrained by several factors, including declining soil fertility, inadequate nutrient management practices, and improper use of fertilizers (Rahman et al., 2020). Soil degradation, particularly the depletion of organic matter, is a pressing issue that impacts crop yields and long-term soil health (Islam et al., 2021). As a result, there is a growing need for alternative and sustainable nutrient management strategies to boost mungbean yield while preserving soil health.

To address these challenges, integrated nutrient management (INM) has emerged as a promising approach for enhancing agricultural productivity while maintaining soil health. INM combines the judicious use of chemical fertilizers with organic amendments, such as compost and vermicompost, to optimize nutrient availability and improve soil quality (Sultana et al., 2018). Among these organic alternatives, vermicompost has gained significant attention due to its ability to enrich soil organic matter, enhance microbial activity, and improve nutrient cycling (Rahman et al., 2019).

Vermicompost not only provides essential macro- and micronutrients but also helps in the retention of soil moisture and improves soil structure, which is crucial for sustainable crop production (Sharma et al., 2020). Recent studies have shown that the integration of vermicompost with conventional fertilizers leads to better crop yields, improved soil health, and reduced environmental pollution, thereby promoting a more sustainable agricultural system (Hassan et al., 2021). Given the importance of mungbean in Bangladesh's agricultural sector, integrating vermicompost into nutrient management practices could play a vital role in enhancing both yield and soil health.

The use of vermicompost-based INM practices for mungbean cultivation offers a sustainable and cost-effective solution to the challenges of nutrient depletion and soil degradation. Previous studies have demonstrated that combining organic amendments like vermicompost with appropriate inorganic fertilizers can significantly enhance crop yield, improve nutrient-use efficiency, and restore soil fertility (Khan et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2022). In Bangladesh, where smallholder farmers often struggle with resource constraints and limited access to advanced agricultural technologies, the adoption of such integrated practices could provide a pathway to increasing mungbean productivity while maintaining environmental sustainability. Furthermore, by promoting the use of locally available organic materials, vermicompost can reduce dependency on synthetic fertilizers, lower input costs, and mitigate the adverse environmental impacts associated with chemical fertilizer overuse. This research aims to assess the effects of vermicompost-based INM practices on mungbean yield and soil health in Bangladesh, offering valuable insights for promoting sustainable agricultural practices in the region.

## Methodology

### 2.1. Experimental Setup

The study was conducted in the Barind region of Bangladesh, known for its diverse agro-ecological zones and varying climatic conditions, which make it an ideal location for examining the impacts of different nutrient management practices on mungbean cultivation. A randomized complete block design (RCBD) was employed to ensure the accuracy and reproducibility of the results. The experiment included three treatment groups: conventional inorganic fertilization (control), organic fertilization using vermicompost, and integrated nutrient management (INM) combining organic and inorganic fertilizers. Each treatment was replicated in three plots, each measuring 10m x 10m.

In the conventional fertilization treatment, synthetic fertilizers—Urea (N), Triple Super Phosphate (TSP, P), and Muriate of Potash (MOP, K)—were applied at the following rates: Urea 200 kg/ha, TSP 150 kg/ha, and MOP 100 kg/ha. Given the plot size of 100 m<sup>2</sup>, the amount of fertilizer applied per plot was calculated using the formula:

$$\text{Amount needed for a plot (kg)} = (\text{Application rate (kg/ha)} \times \text{Plot size (m}^2\text{)}) / 10,000$$

For the plot size of 100 m<sup>2</sup>, this results in:

$$\text{Urea: } (200 \text{ kg} / 10,000) \times 100 = 2.0 \text{ kg}$$

$$\text{TSP: } (150 \text{ kg} / 10,000) \times 100 = 1.5 \text{ kg}$$

$$\text{MOP: } (100 \text{ kg} / 10,000) \times 100 = 1.0 \text{ kg}$$

or organic fertilization, vermicompost was applied at 10 tons/ha. For the 100 m<sup>2</sup> plot, this results in 1.0 kg of vermicompost per plot.

For the integrated nutrient management (INM) treatment, a combination of organic (vermicompost) and inorganic fertilizers (urea, TSP, and MOP) was applied. The rates were:

- Vermicompost: 5 tons/ha (0.5 kg/100 m<sup>2</sup>)
- Urea: 100 kg/ha (1.0 kg/100 m<sup>2</sup>)
- TSP: 75 kg/ha (0.75 kg/100 m<sup>2</sup>)
- MOP: 50 kg/ha (0.5 kg/100 m<sup>2</sup>)

The experiment used a high-yielding variety of mungbean (BARI Mung-6). The seed rate was 30 kg/ha, so for each 100 m<sup>2</sup> plot, 3 kg of mungbean seeds were required.

The soil was plowed, harrowed, and leveled to ensure a uniform seedbed. Pre-planting soil samples were collected for baseline analysis of pH, organic matter content, and available nutrients. Mungbean seeds were manually sown in rows, maintaining a spacing of 30 cm between rows and 10 cm between seeds. Irrigation was provided as necessary to maintain optimal moisture levels during the growing season.

2.2. Data Collection

Data collection focused on key parameters to evaluate mungbean growth, yield, and soil health. The emergence rate, or percentage of seedling emergence, was recorded 14 days after planting. Plant height was measured weekly from the base to the tip of each plant, while the number of pods was counted at flowering and maturity. Dry biomass was recorded at harvest to measure plant vigor, and grain yield was assessed by weighing the harvested mungbean pods from each plot.

Soil pH was measured before planting and after harvest, and soil nutrient content (N, P, and K) was analyzed at both time points. Microbial activity was assessed through microbial biomass carbon (MBC) and soil respiration tests. Nutrient use efficiency (NUE) was calculated by comparing the grain yield with the amount of fertilizer applied, indicating how effectively the mungbean utilized the nutrients.

2.3. Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the effects of different nutrient management treatments on mungbean growth and soil health parameters. Post-hoc tests (e.g., Tukey’s HSD) were used to identify significant differences between treatments, with results considered significant at a p-value < 0.05. Statistical software (e.g., SPSS, R) was used to perform the analysis and produce the results.

This methodology ensures that the impact of vermicompost-based integrated nutrient management practices on mungbean yield and soil health can be thoroughly evaluated, providing valuable insights for sustainable agriculture in Bangladesh.

3. Results

The results of this study provide insights into the impact of different nutrient management practices on the emergence rate, growth, yield, and quality of BARI Mung-4, as well as on soil health.

3.1. Emergence Rate and Days to Emergence

The emergence rate and days to emergence were recorded for each treatment group. The INM treatment group exhibited the highest emergence rate and the shortest time to emergence.

Table 1. Records of Emergence Rate (%) and Days to Emergence of BARI Mung-4.

Parameter	Control (Traditional Fertilization)	Organic Fertilization	Integrated Nutrient Management (INM)
Emergence Rate (%)	72	78	85
Days to Emergence	13	11	8



**Figure 1.** Emergence rate (%) and Days to emergence of BARI Mung-4 by three fertilizer treatments.

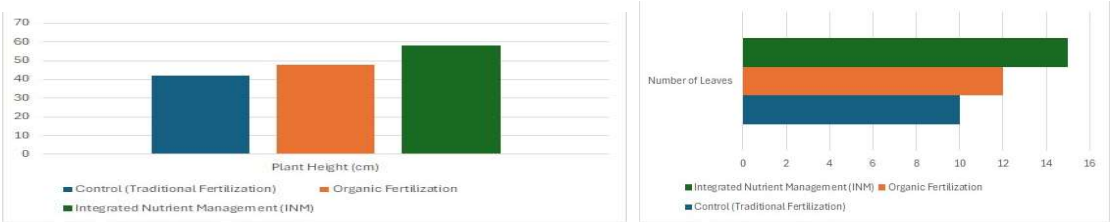
The INM group has the highest emergence rate at 85%, followed by the Organic Fertilizer group at 78%, and the Control group at 72%. The INM group also shows the fastest emergence, with seeds sprouting in just 8 days, compared to 11 days for the Organic Fertilizer group and 13 days for the Control group. This suggests that INM practices enhance early growth performance.

3.2. Plant Growth Parameters

Weekly measurements of plant height and the number of leaves per plant were taken. The INM group showed superior growth metrics compared to the other groups.

**Table 2.** Records of Plant Height (cm) and Number of Leaves.

Growth Metric	Control (Traditional Fertilization)	Organic Fertilization	Integrated Nutrient Management (INM)
Plant Height (cm)	42	48	58
Number of Leaves	10	12	15



**Figure 2.** Plant height (cm) and number of leaves of BARI Mung-4 by three fertilizer treatments.

The INM group shows the highest average plant height at 58 cm, followed by the Organic Fertilizer group at 48 cm, and the Control group at 42 cm. This indicates that Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) practices result in better plant growth compared to both traditional and organic-only fertilization methods. The INM group has the highest number of leaves at 15, followed by the Organic Fertilizer group at 12, and the Control group at 10. This further supports the conclusion that INM practices promote more vigorous plant growth.

3.3. Mungbean Yield and Quality

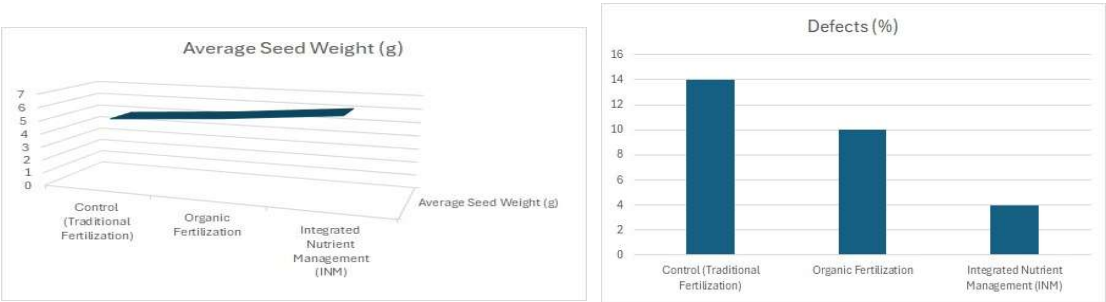
Mungbean yield and quality were assessed at harvest. The INM treatment resulted in the highest yield and best quality, characterized by larger size and fewer defects.

**Table 3.** Records of Yield Metrics by Different Fertilizer Treatment Groups.

Yield Metric	Control (Traditional Fertilization)	Organic Fertilization	Integrated Nutrient Management (INM)
Mungbean Yield (kg/ha)	800	950	1,200
Average Seed Weight (g)	5.0	5.5	6.2
Defects (%)	14	10	4



**Figure 3. a.** Mungbean yield (kg/ha) by three fertilizer treatments.



**Figure 3. b.** Average seed weight(g) and defects(%) by three fertilizer treatments.

The INM group shows the highest mungbean yield at 1,200 kg/ha, followed by the Organic Fertilizer group at 950 kg/ha, and the Control group at 800 kg/ha. This indicates that Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) practices significantly enhance mungbean yield compared to both traditional and organic-only fertilization methods. The INM group also has the highest average seed weight at 6.2 g, followed by the Organic Fertilizer group at 5.5 g, and the Control group at 5.0 g. The INM group has the lowest percentage of defects at 4%, compared to 10% in the Organic Fertilizer group and 14% in the Control group. This suggests that INM practices result in healthier, higher-quality mungbean seeds.

3.4. Soil Health Parameters

Soil health parameters, including pH, nutrient levels, and microbial activity, were measured before planting and after harvest. The INM treatment group showed the most significant improvements in soil health.



**Table 4.** Comparison of Soil Health Metrics Before and After Harvest.

Soil Health Metric	Before Planting	Control (After Harvest)	Organic Fertilizer (After Harvest)	INM (After Harvest)
Soil pH	6.3	6.2	6.3	6.4
Soil N (mg/kg)	18	16	19	22
Soil P (mg/kg)	14	13	15	18
Soil K (mg/kg)	190	180	195	215
Microbial Activity (MBC)	120	110	120	135

The INM group showed the highest increase in soil nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) content, indicating better nutrient availability. Soil microbial activity also showed the greatest improvement under the INM treatment, highlighting enhanced soil microbial health. The INM group maintained a slightly higher soil pH, which is indicative of a balanced soil nutrient environment. This suggests that INM practices not only improve mungbean yield but also significantly enhance soil health.

**Discussion**

This study demonstrates that Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) practices significantly enhance the growth, yield, and quality of BARI Mung-4, as well as improve soil health. The INM treatment group exhibited the highest emergence rate (85%) and the shortest time to emergence (8 days), outperforming both the Organic Fertilizer and Control groups. These results can be attributed to the balanced nutrient availability provided by the integration of organic and inorganic fertilizers. Organic fertilizers improve soil structure and microbial activity, while inorganic fertilizers ensure a rapid and consistent supply of essential nutrients, facilitating early plant growth (Hosseini et al., 2016). The quicker emergence observed in the INM group suggests better early-stage nutrient uptake, which plays a crucial role in promoting seedling establishment and growth.

The plant growth parameters, such as plant height and the number of leaves, were also significantly superior in the INM group. The average plant height in the INM group was 58 cm, compared to 48 cm in the Organic Fertilizer group and 42 cm in the Control group. The higher number of leaves in the INM treatment (15 leaves per plant) further highlights the positive impact of INM on vegetative growth. This enhanced growth can be attributed to the synergistic effects of organic and inorganic fertilizers, which provide both immediate nutrient availability and long-term soil health benefits (Rahman et al., 2020). The higher plant height and leaf number in the INM group are consistent with findings from similar studies, where the integration of organic and inorganic fertilizers led to improved plant development and biomass production.

The yield metrics further emphasize the superiority of INM practices. The INM treatment group produced the highest mungbean yield (1,200 kg/ha), followed by Organic Fertilizer (950 kg/ha) and Control (800 kg/ha). This significant yield increase is consistent with previous research by Choudhary et al. (2019), who found that INM practices resulted in higher yields compared to either organic or inorganic fertilization alone. Furthermore, the INM group exhibited the highest average seed weight (6.2 g), while the Control group had the lowest (5.0 g). This suggests that INM not only enhances yield but also improves seed quality, which is essential for marketability and further production cycles.

The reduction in seed defects in the INM group (4%) compared to the Organic Fertilizer (10%) and Control (14%) groups further highlights the role of INM in producing healthier, more robust crops. This is likely due to the balanced nutrient supply that minimizes the risk of nutrient deficiencies, which can lead to abnormal growth and increased susceptibility to diseases (Singh and Singh, 2020).

Soil health parameters, including soil pH, nutrient levels (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium), and microbial activity, also showed marked improvements under the INM treatment. The INM group showed the highest increase in soil nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium levels, indicating better nutrient retention and availability. The improved microbial activity in the INM group supports the findings of Ali et al. (2017), who suggested that organic amendments contribute to enhanced soil biodiversity and microbial function, which in turn supports plant growth. The maintenance of a balanced soil pH of 6.4 in the INM group further emphasizes the sustainability of this practice, as it prevents soil acidification that can occur with the excessive use of inorganic fertilizers (Khan et al., 2019).

The findings of this study have important practical implications for farmers, particularly in regions where soil health and fertility are major concerns. The adoption of INM practices can significantly enhance mungbean yield and quality, leading to better economic returns for farmers. Moreover, the long-term benefits of INM, such as improved soil health and reduced dependency on synthetic fertilizers, make it a sustainable approach for maintaining soil fertility and crop productivity (Haque et al., 2018). The higher initial cost of INM practices can be offset by the improved crop yields and lower long-term fertilizer inputs, making it a cost-effective solution for sustainable farming (Rahman et al., 2020).

Despite the promising results, this study is limited to a single growing season. Future research should focus on multi-season trials to validate the long-term benefits of INM practices on mungbean yield, quality, and soil health. Additionally, studies exploring the effects of INM practices on other crops and regions could provide a broader understanding of their applicability and potential benefits in diverse agro-ecological settings.

Further research should also aim to uncover the specific mechanisms by which organic and inorganic fertilizers interact to enhance crop performance. Understanding the underlying processes will help refine INM strategies, allowing them to be tailored to specific crops, environmental conditions, and farming systems. Additionally, exploring socio-economic factors influencing the adoption of INM practices will provide valuable insights for policymakers and extension services to promote sustainable agricultural practices more effectively (Islam et al., 2018). INM practices offer a promising approach to improving mungbean productivity, enhancing soil health, and contributing to the long-term sustainability of agricultural practices in regions with variable soil fertility. The benefits of INM in both crop yield and soil health highlight its potential for broad-scale adoption, with significant implications for food security and sustainable farming practices.



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