

**Original Research Article****Iron Overload in the Root Environment of Rice (*Oryza sativa- L*)  
with a Miserable Nutrients Specification.****Abstract:**

In waterlogged soils under low pH, Fe<sup>2+</sup> availability increases and may reach toxic levels. The conditions of iron toxicity are quite well established over the World. The physiological effects of Fe<sup>2+</sup> within plant with subsequent plants' nutrients status are well documented in many literatures. Despite our current knowledge of the processes and mechanisms involved, iron toxicity, a function of growth conditions and the cultivar types remains as an important constraint to rice production, together with nutrients deficiency in the regional levels. To screen Fe tolerant cultivars and thus to evaluate the mechanisms involved in response to excess Fe, experiment was carried out with rice cultivars – Ranjit, Siyal Sali and Mahsuri, grown by developing artificial Fe toxic conditions in the soils of experimental pots applying different Fe<sup>2+</sup> concentrations (control- normal soil iron from rice field, +100, +200 and +300 ppm respectively). The study of plants' biochemical parameters confirmed the resistance of Mahsuri plants to Fe excess. With steady recovery of neutral pH and better chlorophyll contents, the root and shoot nutrients of Mahsuri were found to be higher compared to the plants of other two varieties when exposed to excess Fe. Except Fe and N in roots and shoots, the excess of Fe caused a negative impact on other nutrients in these vulnerable cultivars. Plants of Ranjit and Siyal Sali seem to be affected directly by Fe toxicity and also by the pseudo Fe toxicity, whereas Mahsuri seems to make use of the exclusion /and or avoidance mechanism to Fe overload.

Key Words: toxicity, nutrients, *Oryza sativa- L*, investigation, vulnerable

**Introduction:**

Iron is essential for plant growth and development<sup>1</sup>. In anaerobic acid soils, however, high concentrations of ferrous (Fe<sup>2+</sup>) ions may lead to Fe toxicity due to excessive Fe uptake<sup>2</sup>, which can result in yield reductions from 12 to 100 percent<sup>3</sup>. Excess Fe can be extremely toxic, as it reacts with oxygen and catalyses the production of free radical species. In waterlogged soil iron toxicity may disrupts or over expresses a number of metabolic routes

33 can bring about nutrient disorder in rice cultivars. The expression of iron-toxicity symptom  
34 requires the excessive uptake of  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  by roots and its acropetal translocation via xylem flow  
35 into the leaves.

36 In North East India, a major portion of the rice is grown under lowland conditions<sup>4</sup>, and  
37 Assam is the highest rice producing state, where all rice is grown in waterlogged soils. Use of  
38 tolerant rice cultivars retaining better nutrients level is the best alternative and inexpensive  
39 technologies for rice production on Fe toxic soils of this area<sup>4,5</sup>.

40 Although several research work have been conducted worldwide to identify adaptive  
41 responses of different rice genotypes still rate of nutrients absorption (ionic competition for  
42 absorption) and their availability (in favourable oxidation states) under higher iron  
43 concentrations is a matter of debates. Under anaerobic conditions  $\text{O}_2$  release from rice roots,  
44 oxidise  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  to polymeric oxy-hydroxide which coats on roots surface preventing the uptake  
45 of  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$ ,  $\text{Mn}^{2+}$  and also acts as P reservoir<sup>6</sup>. Silveira et al (2007)<sup>6</sup> had also cited that except for  
46 Mn, no other nutrients seemed to have impaired uptake due to Fe toxicity in the vulnerable  
47 cultivar (I409 plants) and not in the resistant one (E108 plants).

48 The  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  concentrations in the soil solution that reportedly affect lowland-rice yields can  
49 range from 10 to >2000 mg per liter<sup>7</sup>. Iron-induced yield reduction is frequently associated  
50 with a poor nutrient status of the soil<sup>8</sup>. Hence, many workers suggest that excess  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  may  
51 result in lower uptake of other essential nutrients due to chemical interactions in soil  
52 ( $\text{ZnFe}_2\text{O}_3$ , K-Fe complex). Sahrawat (2004, 2010)<sup>3, 9</sup> has reported the possibility of “pseudo  
53 Fe toxicity” (Fe toxicity symptoms induced by nutrients deficiency) and “true Fe toxicity”  
54 (caused by excessive  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  uptake) in rice grown at higher iron concentration.

55 Plant's tolerance to excess Fe might be the effect of Fe avoidance and/or tolerance to  
56 high internal Fe concentration. Such avoidance and/or tolerance capacity to Fe overload is a  
57 genotypic function<sup>6,10</sup>. To sum-up, the conditions of iron toxicity are quite well established all  
58 over the World. The physiological effects of  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  within the plant with subsequent plants  
59 nutrients status are well documented in many literatures. In spite of our current knowledge of  
60 the processes and mechanisms involved, iron toxicity remains an important constraint to rice  
61 production in regional level where selection of cultivars having the ability to maintain high  
62 levels of essential micro and macro nutrients under Fe toxic condition is a successful  
63 approach for lowland rice cultivation in acid soil. To screen Fe tolerant cultivars and thus to  
64 evaluate the mechanisms involved in response to excess Fe, experiment was carried out with

65 rice cultivars – Ranjit, Siyal Sali and Mahsuri, grown by developing artificial Fe toxic  
66 conditions in the soils of experimental pots applying different  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  concentrations. In this  
67 work we were studied the differential responses of three rice cultivars to iron excess by  
68 evaluating the influence of Fe nutrition on other nutrients uptake, their elemental  
69 concentrations in rice roots and shoots, to help the investigation of mechanisms involved in  
70 resistance to Fe toxicity.

#### 71 **Materials and methods:**

72 An artificial Fe toxicity conditions in the experimental pots were developed with soils  
73 collected from a rice field located at Titabor of state Assam, India (soil type-sandy clay loam,  
74 total soil iron 345ppm, pH 5.4, available phosphorus  $18.1\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$ , nitrogen  $460\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$ , potash  
75  $127\text{kg}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  and organic carbon 1.2%). The experiments was conducted with three rice (*Oryza*  
76 *sativa*-L) varieties viz. Mahsuri, Ranjit (high yielding varieties) and Siyal Sali (traditional tall  
77 variety) and were grown in four different levels of  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  -- control (normal soil + 0 ppm),  
78 +100 ppm, +200 ppm and +300 ppm in the form of  $\text{FeSO}_4\cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ . Treatments were replicated  
79 four times in a randomized block design (Fisher and Yates, 1957). Thirty days old seedlings  
80 of uniform vigour were transplanted at the rate of three seedlings per pot. The  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  solutions  
81 were added in the pot one week after transplanting at an interval of seven days till panicle  
82 initiation stage. A uniform waterlogged environment was maintained with distilled water in  
83 the pots throughout the experimental period.

84 **pH record:** pH of soil solutions were recorded (from each pot) *in-situ* at an interval of seven  
85 days from days after transplanting (n=5 for each pot) with the help of a digital pH meter.

86 **Total Leaf chlorophyll:** Extraction and estimation was done by spectrophotometric  
87 method<sup>12</sup>.

88 **Nutrients analysis:** The K content was determined flame photo-metrically from mineral  
89 solution obtained after tri-acid digestion<sup>13</sup>. P was estimated from mineral solution converting  
90 phosphate to phosphomolybdic acid and finally reducing with hydroquinone. The blue colour  
91 developed was measured in a spectrophotometer (Systronics UV-VIS Spectrophotometer  
92 118) at  $660\text{nm}$ <sup>13</sup>. The total nitrogen in roots and shoots were determined by Micro-Kjeldahl's  
93 method<sup>14</sup> with 0.5g powdered sample after digesting with concentrated  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$  and catalyst  
94 mixture. N content was determined by titrating the distillate with 0.1N HCl.

95 Mineral solution was prepared by digesting 1gm dry samples in tri-acid mixture and  
96 extracted with concentrated nitric acid. Fe, Mn, Zn & Cu were determined by Atomic  
97 Absorption Spectrophotometer (Chemito, AA 203D) from mineral solution using separate  
98 primary standard for each micro-nutrient<sup>14</sup>.

99 Statistical analyses of experimental data were carried out by using SPSS software.  
100 Analysis of variance was carried out to test the significance of treatment effect. F-test,  
101 coefficient of variance and critical difference were calculated by standard method<sup>15</sup>.

## 102 **Results and Discussions:**

103 The pH of the growth medium has significant impact on the properties of soils and  
104 consequently on the nutrient uptake by crop plants. The pH of soil solution is thought to be  
105 best for plant growth when kept between 5.5 and 6.5. Plant growth in acid soils may be  
106 limited by pH-induced Fe<sup>2+</sup> toxicity as acidity increases the solubility of Mn and Fe in acid  
107 soils<sup>7</sup>. In such adverse pH condition plants suffer from ionic imbalance through a competition  
108 between the similarly charged ions for binding and carrier sites. Although acidic injury is  
109 negligible in a medium at a pH above 4, lower pH in acid soils is one of the factors  
110 responsible for growth retardation, empies mineral nutrients in plants<sup>16</sup>. In our investigation  
111 we detected an interesting relation between soil pH vs varieties and also these variables with  
112 Treatments (Figure 1). The initial pH rested in between 5 to 5.5 irrespective of treatments.  
113 Here Mahsuri considered being efficient variety which showed recovery of pH after sharp  
114 drop in the initial period. Similar improvement of pH was not observed in varieties Ranjit and  
115 Siyal Sali. The varieties Ranjit and Siyal Sali could not recovered the initial pH (pH=5.2) up  
116 to 70 days after transplanting (DAT), rather a decreasing trend was detected for Ranjit at 300  
117 ppm Fe<sup>2+</sup> in the medium (Figure 1D). Of course Mahsuri showed a differential behaviour in  
118 the change of pH and showed better recovery at different growth stages. At maximum  
119 tillering stage (MTS) and panicle initiation stage (PIS) we observed a sharp increase in soil  
120 pH (pH =6) and a quick revival after 70 DAT (as straight line) at 300 ppm Fe<sup>2+</sup> (Figure 1D).  
121 A sound recovery in the pH in the efficient plants might lower the reduction of Fe<sup>3+</sup> to Fe<sup>2+</sup>  
122 on root surface through the release of other reductants and the plants sustain better  
123 physiological, biochemical activities. At nearly neutral pH solubility of Fe in the rooting  
124 medium is reduced by the fast oxidation of ferrous-Fe, favours the formation of iron plaque  
125 and hence iron immobilization occurs in the roots. Although we conducted the experiment

126 with similar soil environment, different pH curves were documented by the three varieties  
127 which signify that pH variation in water saturated soil is also a varietal function.

128 A marked reduction in chlorophyll contents were observed at 300 ppm and 200 ppm Fe<sup>2+</sup>  
129 in the growth medium (Figure 2). Maximum chlorophyll content was recorded in the plants  
130 grown in control soil iron. Total leaf chlorophyll content was found to be reduced in the  
131 varieties Ranjit and Siyal Sali grown at higher level of iron (Figure 2). Interactions between  
132 levels of Fe<sup>2+</sup> and varieties were also found to be significant on the total chlorophyll content.  
133 Mahsuri recorded relatively higher chlorophyll content irrespective of the treatments  
134 compared to Ranjit and Siyal Sali (Table 1). Mahsuri might have been able to maintain higher  
135 chlorophyll content through chloroplast development<sup>4</sup>. Ranjit recorded lower chlorophyll at  
136 200ppm and 300ppm Fe followed by Siyal Sali. Our findings also revealed the variation of  
137 total chlorophyll in different growth stages. Mahsuri sustained stable leaf chlorophyll content  
138 at different growth stages, quite reverse to the other two varieties (Figure 3). Perhaps, severe  
139 damage in cell structural components in early growing stages due to Fe<sup>2+</sup> mediated ROS,  
140 might be the reason of rapid reduction of chlorophyll content in these varieties.

141 The detrimental effect of Fe<sup>2+</sup> became more pronounced when its concentrations increase  
142 in waterlogged soil. In waterlogged soil, excess uptake of Fe<sup>2+</sup> by the roots and its acropetal  
143 translocation into the leaves must have catalyzed the generation of active O<sub>2</sub> species or free  
144 radicals which could render the peroxidation of chloroplast membranes, damage cell  
145 structural components and impair the plants' physiological processes and subsequently lead  
146 to a decrease in chlorophyll content in the sensitive varieties.

147 As expected, plants grown in higher soil Fe<sup>2+</sup> had higher Fe concentrations than those  
148 grown under control Fe levels, both in roots and shoots (Figure 4). Of course higher Fe  
149 concentrations were found in roots than in shoots. At 200 & 300 ppm Fe<sup>2+</sup>, higher  
150 concentrations of total Fe were detected in the plants of Ranjit and Siyal Sali, more  
151 susceptible to Fe toxicity, both in roots and shoot; with shoot concentrations nearly 2 times  
152 higher than in Mahsuri plants.

153 Expression of some plant ferritin isoforms can be induced by Fe overload<sup>17</sup> and iron  
154 storage inside ferritin could be related to Fe overload tolerance in some rice cultivars<sup>6</sup>.  
155 Surprisingly, lower shoot Fe in the present investigation could not define the tolerance  
156 capacity of the cultivars to ferritin expression. Audebert and Sahrawat (2000)<sup>18</sup> reported that  
157 Fe tolerant cultivar absorbed less Fe or translocated less Fe from root to shoot, a mechanism

158 involved in cultivar differences in Fe toxicity tolerance. Here we suggest that Mahsuri plants  
159 are more resistant to excess Fe due to the possible induction of avoidance and / or exclusion  
160 mechanisms, allowing the plant to keep lower Fe amounts in its tissues and reducing Fe  
161 translocation to shoots. Moreover a large concentration of root Fe compared to shoot Fe  
162 concentrations might also be attributed to the formation of root plaque in the form of  
163 *Compound B* (goethite and lepidocrocite) as stated by Silveira et al. (2007)<sup>6</sup>.

164 The root Zn concentrations for the three cultivars were found higher up to 1.5 times than  
165 shoot (Figure 5 A and D). Marked treatment effects were predicted in root and shoot Zn  
166 concentrations. Here Zn concentration decreases both in roots and shoots of the tree cultivars  
167 with the increment of Fe<sup>2+</sup> treatments. An apparent difference observed in Zn concentration  
168 under Fe excess was a higher Zn concentration in shoots of Mahsuri plants than in Ranjit and  
169 Siyal Sali plants. Shoot Zn concentration in Mahsuri was about 6 times higher than Ranjit and  
170 also above 2 times compared to Siyal Sali when the plants exposed to 300 ppm Fe<sup>2+</sup>.

171 Iron (III)-oxides are known to have a strong zinc-binding tendency. In waterlogged soil  
172 environment, Zn becomes available in the process of iron oxide reduction<sup>19</sup>. At the same time  
173 the plaque formation resulting from Fe re-oxidation around the rice root can reduce the  
174 concentration of soluble Zn in the rhizosphere by forming sparingly soluble ZnFe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>  
175 complex<sup>20</sup>. Moreover reduced Fe can also exert a direct antagonistic effect on Zn uptake<sup>20</sup>.  
176 Sometimes it might also happened that the Fe plaque can lead to higher or lower Zn  
177 concentrations in shoots, depending on the size of plaque layer<sup>21</sup>. In the present work, the  
178 lower shoot Zn content compared to root in excess Fe<sup>2+</sup> may be referred to the root Fe plaque  
179 formation that seem to be acting either as a Zn reservoir or preventing Zn uptake. On the  
180 other hand a better shoot Zn content in Mahsuri indicates its tolerant capacity to higher Fe<sup>2+</sup>  
181 levels than the other two cultivars which may attributes to up regulation of some *ZIP* genes in  
182 Mahsuri plants<sup>22, 23</sup>.

183 Mn concentration in shoots were higher than roots in all the three cultivars, but a  
184 considerable reductions were observed in both roots and shoots subjected to higher Fe levels,  
185 with Ranjit reaching lowest levels of Mn concentration in roots and shoots (Figure 5 B and  
186 E).Of course, shoot Mn content in Mahsuri was significantly higher than other two cultivars  
187 at 300 ppm Fe<sup>2+</sup>. Precipitation of Mn in the Fe plaque may have resulted in its lower  
188 absorption by the cultivars where highest Fe concentrations were found. Such negative  
189 interactions between Fe and Mn have also been reported in plants<sup>24</sup>.

190 Except Mahsuri, lower Cu concentrations were recorded in roots and shoots of Ranjit  
191 and Siyal Sali when submitted to Fe excess. It has been suggested that the Fe plaque could act  
192 as a Cu reservoir in plants, increasing Cu absorption<sup>25</sup>. But in our experiment, reduction of  
193 Cu content in roots and shoots of Ranjit and Siyal Sali (Figure 5 C and F) might be due to  
194 formation of Fe plaque, being able to act as a barrier to Cu absorption<sup>6</sup> or preferential uptake  
195 of Fe<sup>2+</sup> on Fe overload, supported by highest shoot Fe concentrations. Mahsuri, on the other  
196 hand only the variety that could sustain better Cu concentrations by active absorption through  
197 roots and dynamic translocation to shoots even 300 ppm Fe supplementation. The varietal  
198 differences in shoots Cu and Zn concentrations may also be attributed to higher Cu/Zn SOD  
199 activities in tolerant plants in Fe overload<sup>5</sup>.

200 The nitrogen concentrations for the plants grown in higher Fe were high than grown  
201 under control Fe levels, both in roots and shoots (Figure 6 C and F). Of course rate of  
202 increment in shoots were higher than roots. The percentage increase of shoots nitrogen  
203 concentration in Mahsuri plants was higher than the other two varieties. The variations  
204 pattern of nitrogen concentrations were similar to that of root and shoot Fe concentrations in  
205 the cultivars. Since in water saturated acidic soil Fe<sup>3+</sup> and NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> act as electron acceptors, a  
206 strong ionic competition of Fe<sup>2+</sup> and NO<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> might developed around roots' periphery and  
207 accelerated the uptake of nitrogen adduct along with Fe. Earlier studies have also  
208 demonstrated a direct relation in the uptake of Fe and N in wheat plant or seed and external  
209 supply of N at different phenological stages<sup>26,27,28</sup>.

210 Moreover, the uptake and transport of metals in plant is regulated by some special N  
211 loaded transporter proteins situated in different tissues of root, stem, leaf and reproductive  
212 parts. Many of them, like the proteins of *NRAMPs* and *ZIP* family are specific in transporting  
213 iron<sup>29,30</sup>. Thus the rice plants grown in higher soil Fe<sup>2+</sup>, the superior uptake rate of Fe from  
214 soil and their translocation to leaf and to grain is facilitated by transporter proteins, which  
215 might be considered as the possible mechanism of higher N supplement to plants.

216 Phosphorus concentration decreased considerably in roots and shoots of Ranjit and Siyal  
217 Sali plants submitted to excess Fe but not in roots of Mahsuri plants (Figure 6 A and D). A  
218 decreasing trend of phosphorus concentration also observed in the shoots of Mahsuri plants  
219 when exposed 200 & 300 ppm Fe<sup>2+</sup>, was suggesting the limited P translocation to the shoots  
220 of all the cultivars.

221 The concentration of phosphorus in the soil solution depends mainly on soil pH, and a  
222 decrease in pH can reduce P concentration by causing precipitation of amorphous Fe-  
223 phosphate polynuclear complexes with high surface area. In the present investigation we  
224 proposed that at low soil pH, higher amounts of Fe(III) oxides may be accumulated in the  
225 roots that can absorb anions such as phosphate and control the uptake of apoplast P into the  
226 simplast<sup>31,6</sup>. Our shoot data seems to agree with Howeler (1973)<sup>32</sup>, who states that, the root's  
227 apoplastic precipitation results in lower P absorption by the plant.

228 Potassium is a common macronutrient in plants that activates many enzymes involved in  
229 photosynthesis, respiration and plays important roles such as starch and protein synthesis, cell  
230 expansion, and stress alleviation<sup>33,34</sup>. However, higher Fe concentration in the medium plays  
231 an antagonistic role in plants' K uptake. Mehraban et al, (2008)<sup>34</sup> reported lower root and  
232 shoot K concentration under high Fe nutrition. In the present experiment K concentration  
233 decreased in the roots and shoots of Ranijt and Siyal Sali under excess Fe<sup>2+</sup> in comparison to  
234 the control treatment (Figure 6 B and E) which may be considered as the consequence higher  
235 Fe nutrition and formation of Fe—K complex in soil solution. In contrast the plants of  
236 Mahsuri sustained stable K concentrations in roots and shoots, where it would be expected  
237 due to its higher sustainability to excess Fe toxicity.

#### 238 CONCLUSION:

239 The variability observed in the results of soil pH, leaf chlorophyll contents and all the  
240 major nutrients in roots and shoots under excess Fe<sup>2+</sup> indicate the differential tolerance  
241 capacity among the cultivars. Although, root and shoot Fe and N concentrations showed  
242 positive correlation among the cultivars, the remarkable shoot Fe concentrations with  
243 simultaneous reduction in leaf chlorophyll contents explains the oxidative damage in the  
244 plants of Ranjit and Siyal Sali due to Fe<sup>2+</sup> induced reactive oxygen species, OH<sup>-</sup> radicals  
245 through Fentons' reactions. On the other hand, variety Mahsuri probably with its tolerable  
246 shoots Fe concentration and radical pH recovery, sustained ionic balance around root surface  
247 and thereby showed a positive respond to Fe overload. This variety recorded superior  
248 nutrients status even at 300ppm and may be conspired as Fe tolerant cultivars. With deferred  
249 pH recovery, low leaf chlorophyll and reduced root and shoot nutrients level, the plants of  
250 Ranjit and Siyal Sali exhibited Fe susceptible nature when grown in Fe<sup>2+</sup> excess medium.  
251 Moreover, except Fe and N, all other nutrients seemed to have impaired uptake due to Fe  
252 toxicity in these susceptible cultivars compared to Mahsuri. Thus the plants of these cultivars  
253 appear to be affected by direct Fe toxicity as well as by pseudo Fe toxicity"-- Fe toxicity



254 symptoms induced by nutrients deficiency. The Mahsuri cultivar seems to keep up mostly on  
 255 avoidance and/or exclusion of Fe uptake into the plant and decreased translocation to shoots,  
 256 being able to maintain higher nutrients levels in roots and shoots.

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333 **Figure and Table Captions:**

334 Figure 1: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on pH change in the soil solutions at different  
335 growth stages.

336 Figure 2: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on leaf chlorophyll contents at different growth  
337 stages (in mg g<sup>-1</sup> FW). The vertical bars represent the standard errors.

338 Figure 3: Varietal change on leaf chlorophyll contents at different growth stages (in mg g<sup>-1</sup>  
339 FW). The vertical bars represent the standard errors.

340 Figure 4: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on roots and shoots Fe. The vertical bars  
341 represent the standard errors.

342  
343 Figure 5: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on roots and shoots Zn (A, D), Mn (B, E) and  
344 Cu (C, F) (in µg g<sup>-1</sup> DW). The vertical bars represent the standard errors.

345 Figure 6: Varietal impacts of Fe treatments on root and shoot P (A, D), K (B, E), and N (C, F)  
346 (in µg g<sup>-1</sup> DW). The vertical bars represent the standard errors.

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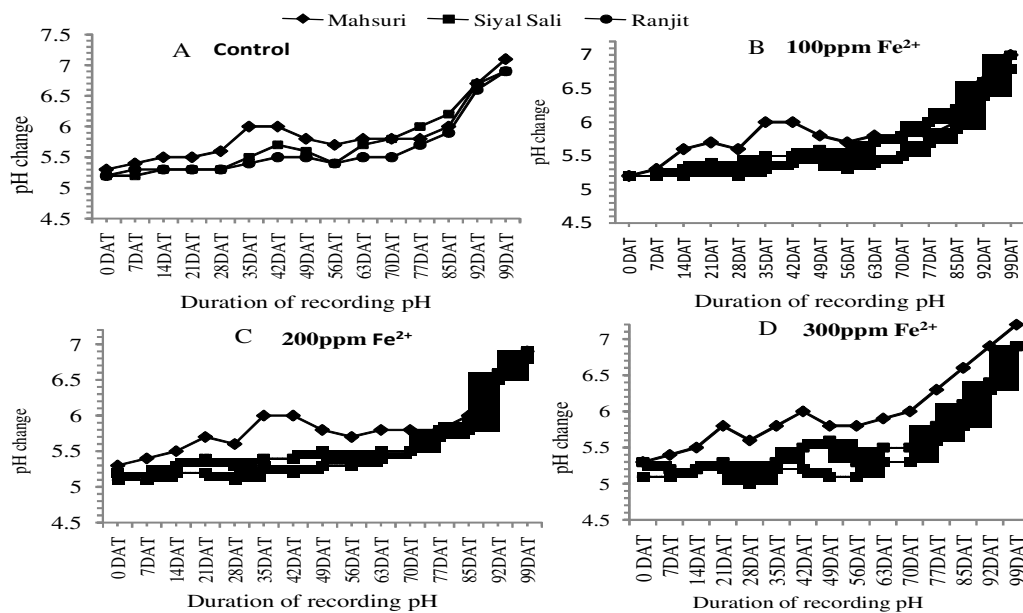
348 Table 1: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on leaf chlorophyll contents (in mg g<sup>-1</sup> FW) at different  
349 growth stages.\* Significant at 5%, \*\* Significant at 1% level and \*\*\* significant at 0.1% level of  
350 probability.

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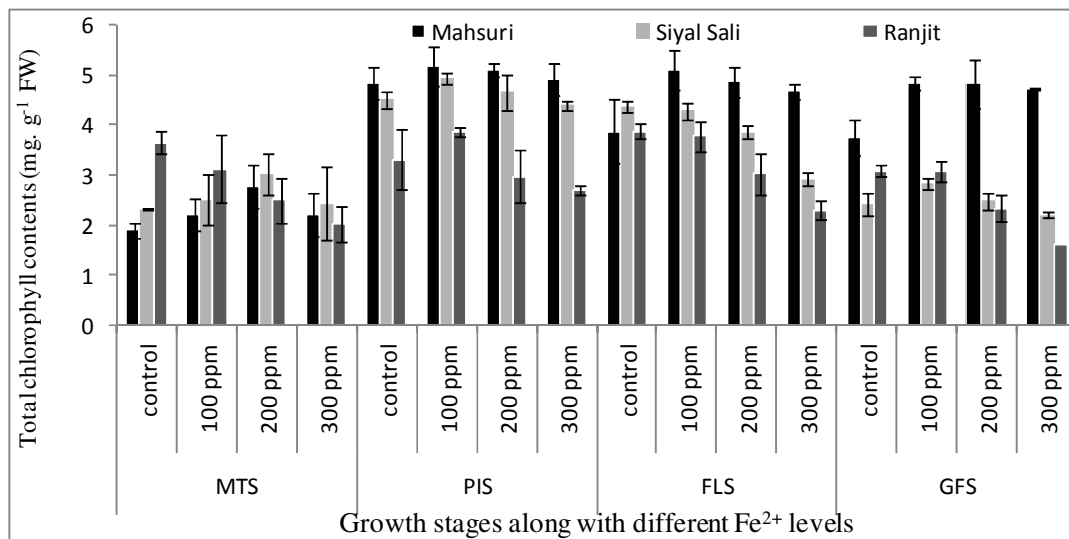
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356 Figure 1: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on pH change in the soil solutions at different  
357 growth stages.

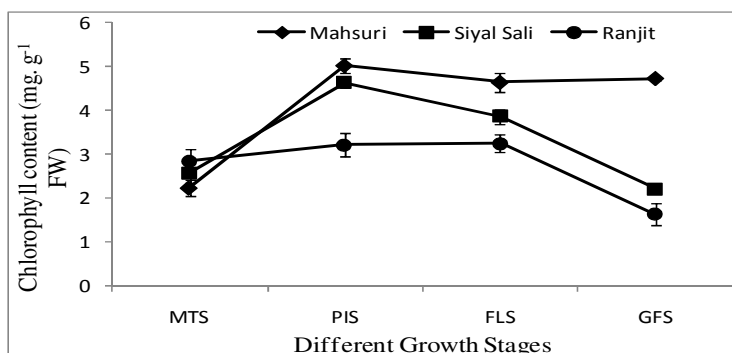
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360 Figure 2: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on leaf chlorophyll contents at different growth  
361 stages (in mg g<sup>-1</sup> FW). The vertical bars represent the standard errors.

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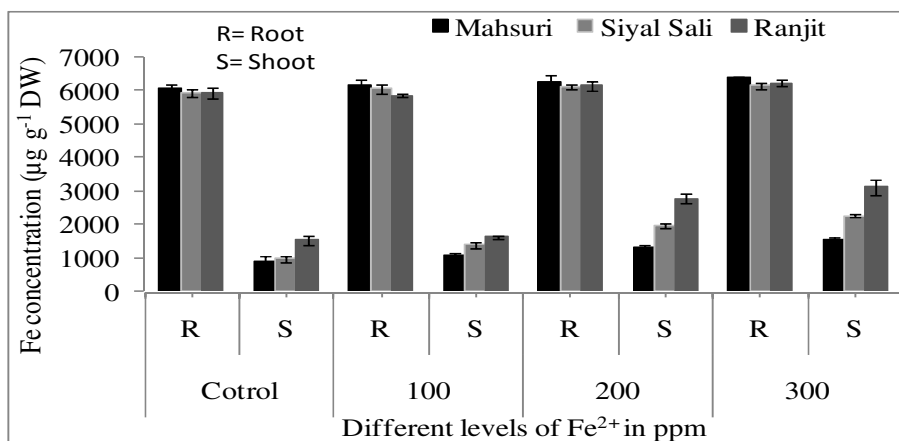


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364 Figure 3: Varietal change on leaf chlorophyll contents at different growth stages (in mg g<sup>-1</sup>  
 365 FW). The vertical bars represent the standard errors.

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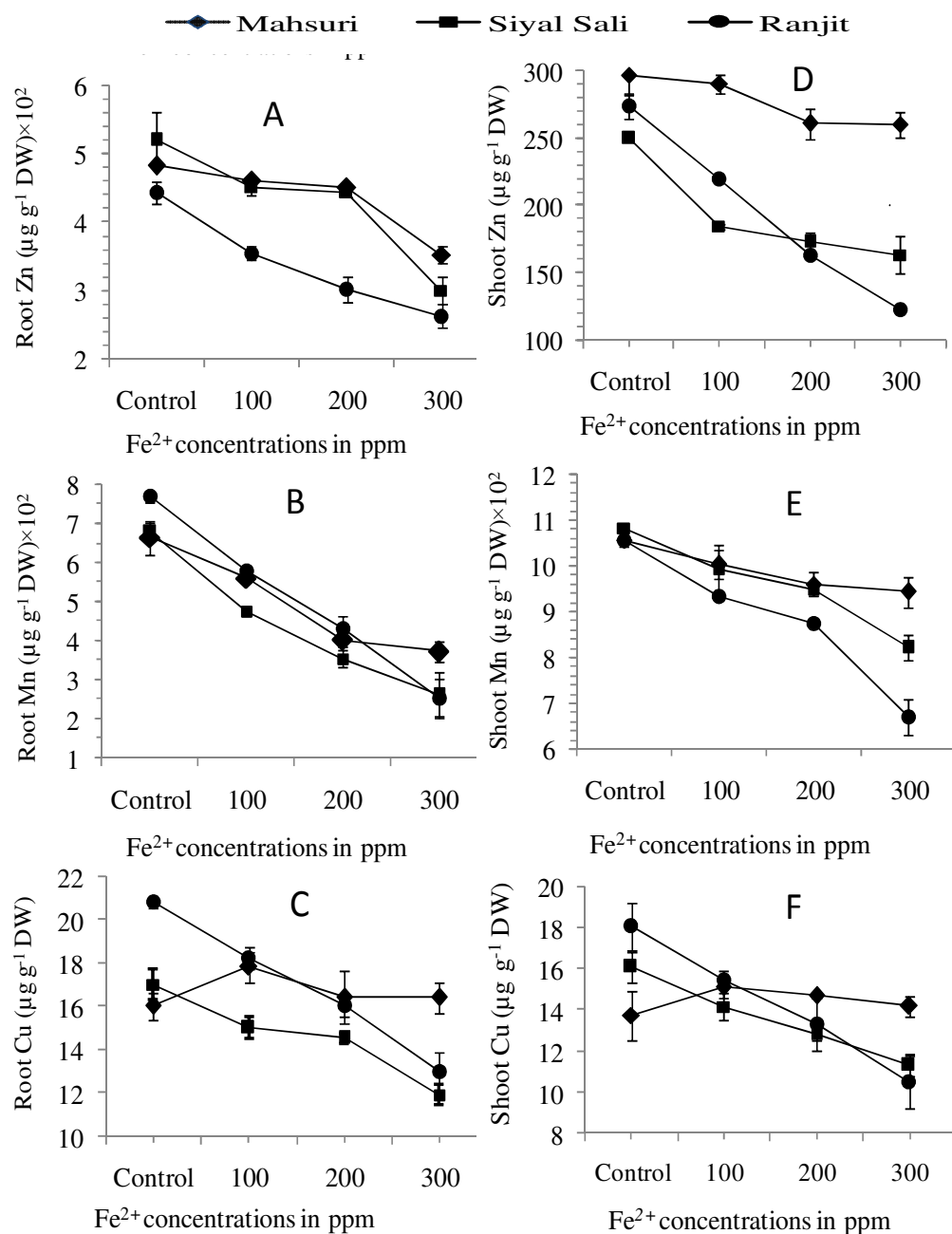
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369 Figure 4: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on roots and shoots Fe. The vertical bars  
 370 represent the standard errors.

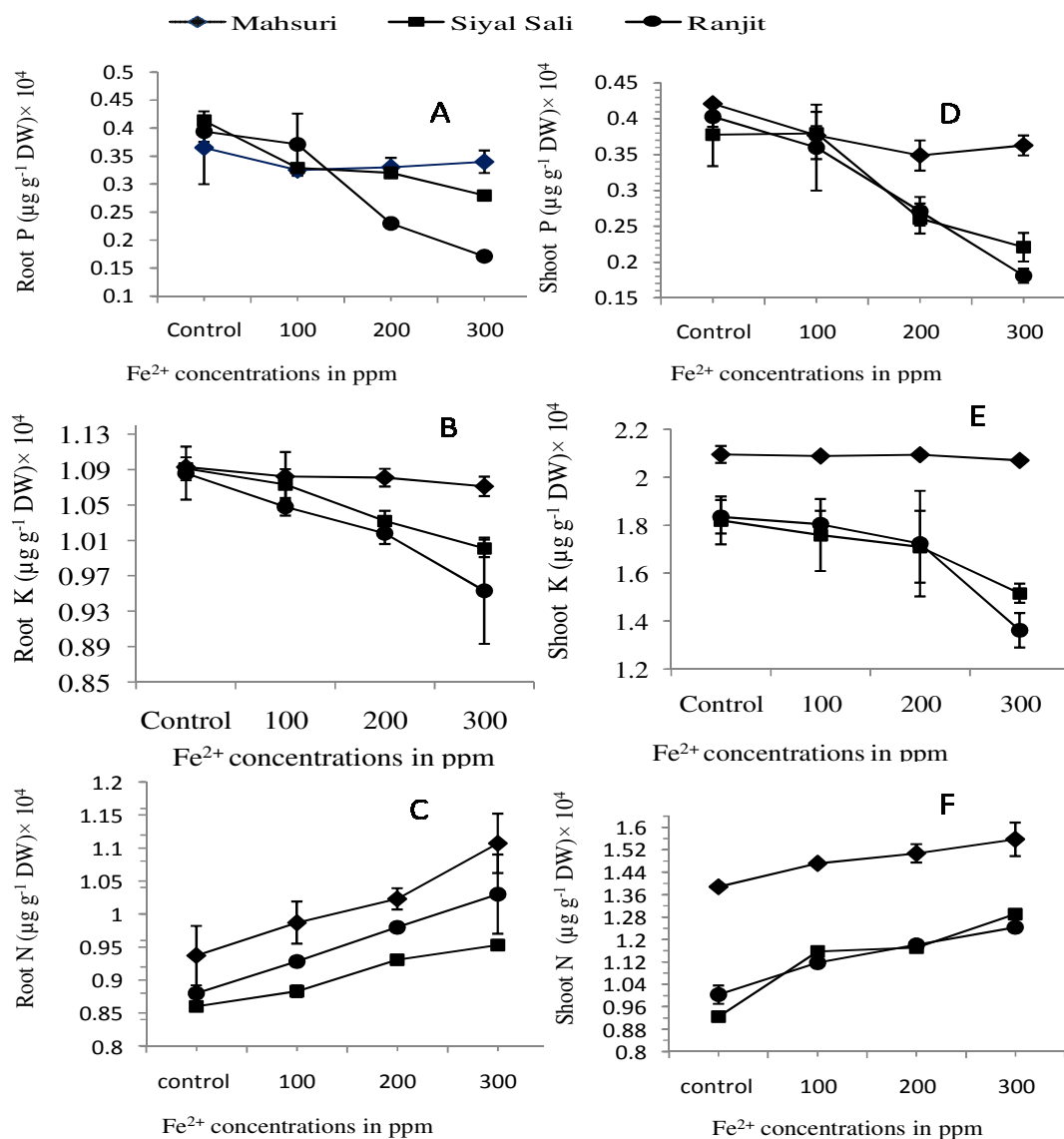
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373 Figure 5: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on roots and shoots Zn (A, D), Mn (B, E) and  
 374 Cu (C, F) (in  $\mu\text{g g}^{-1}$  DW). The vertical bars represent the standard errors.

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377 Figure 6: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on roots and shoots P (A, D), K (B, E), and N  
 378 (C, F) (in  $\mu\text{g g}^{-1} \text{DW}$ ). The vertical bars represent the standard errors.

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Growth stages	Maximum Tillering Stage (MTS)					Panicle Initiation Stage (PIS)				
Treatment→ Variety ↓	Different levels of Fe <sup>2+</sup>									
	control	100 ppm	200 ppm	300 ppm	Mean	control	100 ppm	200 ppm	300 ppm	Mean
Mahsuri	1.91 ±.15	2.01 ±.32	2.78 ±.42	2.22 ±.44	2.23±.18	4.84 ±.33	5.18 ±.40	5.09 ±.13	4.91 ±.31	5.01±.16
Siyal Sali	2.31 ±.02	2.51 ±.51	3.01 ±.42	2.43 ±.74	2.57 ±.23	4.5 ±.16	4.93 ±.11	4.65 ±.35	4.39 ±.10	4.62±.11
Ranjit	3.64 ±.23	3.13 ±.69	2.51 ±.45	2.02 ±.36	2.83 ±.27	3.31 ±.60	3.87 ±.10	2.98 ±.59	2.71 ±.51	3.22±.26
Mean	2.62	2.55	2.77	2.22	2.54	4.22	4.66	4.24	4.01	4.28
SEm(+)	0.26	0.16	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.23	0.23	0.32	0.33	0.23
Variables	F- Value	CD--	5%	1%	0.10%	F- Value	CD--	5%	1%	0.10%
Treatment	4.55*		0.32	0.44	0.6	3.82*		0.42	0.57	0.78
Variety	10.120***		0.28	0.38	0.52	60.08***		0.36	0.49	0.67
T X V	8.45***		0.55	0.76	1.04	3.50*		0.72	0.99	1.38
C V %	14.73					11.3				

Growth stages	Flowering Stage (FS)					Grain Filling Stage (GIS)				
Treatment→ Variety ↓	Different levels of Fe <sup>2+</sup>									
	control	100 ppm	200 ppm	300 ppm	Mean	control	100 ppm	200 ppm	300 ppm	Mean
Mahsuri	3.87 ±.63	5.1 ±.38	4.86 ±.31	4.67 ±.16	4.63±.22	3.75 ±.37	4.84 ±.12	4.83 ±.49	4.72 ±.03	4.54±.18
Siyal Sali	4.36 ±.1	4.27 ±.16	3.85 ±.14	2.92 ±.14	3.85±.16	2.41 ±.23	2.84 ±.11	2.48 ±.17	2.21 ±.05	2.49±.10
Ranjit	3.87 ±.10	3.78 ±.14	3.02 ±.30	2.3 ±.42	3.24±.20	3.09 ±.20	3.07 ±.12	2.34 ±.20	1.62 ±.25	2.53±.18
Mean	4.03	4.38	3.91	3.3	3.91	3.08	3.59	3.22	2.85	3.18
SEm(+)	0.08	0.19	0.27	0.35	0.17	0.19	0.32	0.4	0.47	0.29
Variables	F- Value	CD--	5%	1%	0.10%	F- Value	CD--	5%	1%	0.10%
Treatment	8.35**		0.46	0.64	0.87	5.11**		0.41	0.55	0.76
Variety	26.340***		0.4	0.55	0.75	98.68***		0.35	0.48	0.65
T X V	4.41**		0.8	1.1	1.5	4.99**		0.7	0.96	1.31
C V %	13.85					14.83				

386

387

388 Table 1: Varietal impacts of iron treatments on leaf chlorophyll contents (in mg g<sup>-1</sup> FW) at different  
 389 growth stages.\* Significant at 5%, \*\* Significant at 1% level and \*\*\* significant at 0.1% level of  
 390 probability.