

Original Research Article

Somatic embryo formation from the fused protoplasts of *Brassica rapa* & *B. juncea*

ABSTRACT

Aims: The objectives of this experiment was to establish initial steps of somatic embryogenesis from the fused protoplasts between two *Brassica* species: *Brassica rapa* L. (var. Agrani, AA, 2n=20) and *Brassica juncea* L. (var. BINA Sharisha-7 and var. BINA Sharisha-8, AABB, 2n=36).

Study Design: The experiment was carried out in completely randomized design with three replications.

Place and Duration of Study: An experiment was conducted in growth room of tissue culture laboratory at the Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh during the period from April, 2013 to May, 2014.

Methodology: Mesophyll protoplasts were isolated from the young leaves of aseptically grown plants. Variety combinations for protoplasts fusion were: Agrani+BINA Sharisha-7 and Agrani+BINA Sharisha-8. 100% polyethylene glycol-400 was used as a fusogen. Pellieter different compositions of liquid media were used for protoplasts cultured, microcalli, calli and somatic embryo formation.

Results: Fused products were cultured in a modified Pellieter B liquid media with different combinations of auxins and cytokinin for callus induction. A medium having 1 mg L⁻¹ NAA + 0.5 mg L⁻¹ 2,4-D produced micro-calli of 518 µm diameter on 15 days after dark treatment. The same hormone combinations produced 1.6 mm visible calli 10 days after incubation. After 82 days of culture, a medium composition of 0.5 mg L⁻¹ BAP + 0.5 mg L⁻¹ NAA resulted in 76% somatic embryo formation. Agrani+BINA Sarisha-7 produced significantly higher somatic embryos compared to Agrani+BINA Sarisha-8.

Conclusion: Our results might be helpful for developing a complete and efficient protocol of somatic hybridization in *Brassica* species.

Keywords: protoplast fusion, somatic embryo formation, *Brassica rapa*, *Brassica juncea*, polyethylene glycol.

33 Introduction

34 *Brassica rapa* and *B. juncea* are the two prime oil producing mustard species in Bangladesh. In
 35 Bangladesh, approximately 70% edible oil comes from mustard and rest is covered by other oil
 36 producing crops [1]. Majority of the cultivated mustard varieties in Bangladesh are low yielding
 37 approximately 1.0 t ha⁻¹ compared to European varieties that yield more than 2 t ha⁻¹ [2].
 38 Furthermore, existence of low range of variation for those *Brassica* species make the situation
 39 more worse for improving mustard varieties through conventional breeding. Due to cross
 40 incompatibility among the U triangle species the scope of creating variation and resynthesizing
 41 *Brassica* through conventional breeding is limited to some extent. Therefore, application of
 42 different available biotechnological tools is required to increase yield mustard varieties.
 43 Somatic hybridization is a potential tissue culture technique might be used to produce high
 44 yielding mustard. This technique is capable of overcoming sexual incompatibility among the U-
 45 triangle species, i.e. *B. juncea* and *B. campestris* [4]. Considering the available advantage
 46 somatic hybridization, an experiment was planned to establish initial steps of somatic
 47 hybridization between *B. rapa* and *B. juncea* which includes evaluation of suitability of different
 48 hormone combinations for calli induction and subsequently somatic embryo formation from the
 49 fused cells.

50 1. Materials and Methods

51 Two cultivars of *B. juncea* namely BINA Sarisha-7 and BINA Sarisha- 8 and one genotype of *B.*
 52 *rapa* namely Agrani were selected for this study. Thus the fusion combinations were: i) BINA
 53 Sarisha-7 x Agrani and ii) BINA Sarisha-8 x Agrani. The seeds of all three cultivars were
 54 collected from the Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA), Mymensingh. These
 55 cultivars were used as the donor plants for protoplast fusion. Seeds were surface-sterilized for 3
 56 min in 70% ethanol and 2 min in a 0.1% mercuric chloride (MgCl₂) solution and then rinsed
 57 three times with sterile distilled water. Seeds were placed in vials containing Pelletier A media
 58 [5] supplemented with 30 gL⁻¹ sucrose and solidified with 9 g L⁻¹ agar (pH 5.8, adjusted before
 59 autoclaving) for germination. The vials were kept under controlled conditions (Tem. 22 ± 2 °C,
 60 16 hour photoperiod and fluorescent light, 50 μ mol m⁻² s⁻¹, see Fig. 1a).

62 2.1. Protoplast isolation

63 Approximately 0.5g broad young leaves from 22 days old plants were segmented to 1.0 mm
 64 slices and placed separately to 60 mm glass Petri dishes with 5 mL of an enzymatic solution
 65 (mixture of 1% Cellulase, Sigma-Aldrich and 0.1% pectinase, Sigma-Aldrich in modified B

media [5]. Plasmolisation in the osmoticum was carried out on a shaker with 20 rpm at room temperature in the dark, for 16 to 18 h. The protoplast mixture was filtered through a 100 μ m cotton mesh and distributed into four 15 mL conical centrifuge tubes for each cultivar, 10 mL mixture per tube (Fig.1c). Protoplasts were pelleted by centrifugation with 1000 rpm, 5 min and the supernatant was discarded. The protoplasts were washed by re-suspending the pellet in the W5 wash solution [6] containing 16% sucrose and again centrifuged 3 times with 800 rpm for 7 min. After the final rinse with W5 wash solution and repeating final centrifugation at 800 rpm for 7 min, pellets of viable protoplasts were separated by discarding the supernatant, and observed under a microscope. Before fusion, 2 mL of modified B media [5] was added onto the pellets of the protoplasts and those were suspended to prepare a mixture of 10^4 - 10^5 protoplasts per mL. The size of isolated protoplast from Agrani, BINA Sarisha-7 and BINA Sarisha-8 was measured with an eye-piece micrometer (μ m) scale.

2.2. Protoplasts fusion

About 80 μ L of protoplast suspension of each of two different cultivars were pipetted onto the bottom of a petri dish and placed side-by-side. Eighty microliters of fusogen containing 100% PEG (Mn 400, Sigma), 0.15% (w/v) $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ and 0.01% (w/v) KH_2PO_4 (pH 5.8) was added gently in between two protoplast drops of two cultivars. After 10 min, 160 μ L of solution containing 5% (w/v) glucose, 0.735% (w/v) $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, (pH 10.5) was poured to enhance protoplast fusion process.

2.3. Culturing fused protoplasts towards micro-calli formation

Fused protoplasts were cultured in 60 mm Petri dishes in 4.0 ml of liquid culture medium B [5] supplemented with 0.5 mg L^{-1} NAA+ 0.5 mg L^{-1} 2,4-D+ 0.5 mg L^{-1} BAP and 3% sucrose. The cultures were kept at $22 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$ in dark condition. After 7 days 2 mL modified Pelletier C media [5] which supplemented with three different hormonal combinations a) 0.5 mg L^{-1} NAA+ 0.5 mg L^{-1} 2,4-D, b) 1 mg L^{-1} NAA+ 0.5 mg L^{-1} 2,4-D or c) 0.5 mg L^{-1} NAA+ 0.5 mg L^{-1} 2,4-D+ 0.5 mg L^{-1} BAP was added to each petri-dish. Culture medium was refreshed after 11 days with same composition for further development of micro-calli. Cultures were maintained in dark condition over 15 days under controlled temperature ($25 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$) for micro-callus induction. Star-shaped micro-calli developed within 15 days of culture as observed under a light microscope. Diameter of micro-calli was measured using an eye-piece micrometer scale.

2.4. Somatic embryogenesis from micro-calli

When the micro-calli became visible (0.5-1.0 mm) they are removed aseptically from the culture vessels and placed onto a sterilized petri dish inside the laminar airflow cabinet. The micro-calli were placed into modified Pelletier D media [5] containing two different hormonal combinations a) 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA+ 0.5 mg L⁻¹BAP and b) 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA+ 1 mg L⁻¹BAP. The cultures were kept at 23°C under fluorescent light (50 µ mol m⁻² s⁻¹) in a 16/8 h day/night regime. Repeated sub-culturing was done at interval of 10 days. Micro-calli were maintained to get visible calli in modified Pelletier C media. Visible callus induction was studied through three quantitative traits viz. size of visible callus, days to callus induction and colour of callus. Whitish, yellowish and greenish coloured calli were respectively scored numerically as 1, 2 and 3. The data were recorded for days to somatic embryogenesis and percentage of somatic embryo. Data were statistically analyzed with MSTAT-C software and least significant difference (*lsd*) test was carried out for a significant treatment difference.

2. Results

2.1. Protoplast size

Size of protoplasts varied significantly among three varieties. The variety Agrani had the largest size (82 µm) and BINA Sarisha-8 had the smallest size (56 µm) of protoplasts (Fig 2a, Fig. 3).

2.2. Size of micro-calli

Protoplasts fusion process was observed under a light microscope as shown in Fig.2b. The fused protoplasts started to divide and formed micro-calli. Size of micro-calli was significantly different under three different treatment combinations (Fig. 4) and that ranged from 393 µm to 518 µm. The largest size (518 µm) of callus (Fig.2c) was observed in modified Pelletier B media supplemented with 1 mg L⁻¹NAA and 0.5 mg L⁻¹2,4-D whereas the smallest size of callus was found in Pelletier B media supplemented with 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA; 0.5 mg L⁻¹2,4-D and 0.5 mg L⁻¹BAP (Fig.4).

2.3. Calli traits

Three different hormone combinations brought significant variations in different traits of calli: size of callus, days to calli induction and colour of callus (see Table 1). Size of calli ranged between 1.6 mm to 0.983 mm (Table 1). The largest size (1.6 mm) of callus was observed in Pelletier C media supplemented with 0.5 mg L⁻¹2,4-D and 1 mg L⁻¹NAA (Fig.2d) and the

smallest size (0.983 mm) of callus was found in the media supplemented in 0.5 mg L⁻¹2,4-D; 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA and 0.5 mg L⁻¹BAP.

Days required for induction of visible callus ranged from 32 days to 24 days for different treatment combinations (Table 1). The Pellieter C media supplemented with 0.5 mg L⁻¹2,4-D and 1 mg L⁻¹NAA took the least days (24) for callus induction. The media supplemented with 0.5 mg L⁻¹2,4-D; 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA and 0.5 mg L⁻¹BAP took maximum days (32) for callus induction (Table 1).

The greenish callus (3) was seen in Pellieter C media supplemented with 0.5 mg L⁻¹2,4-D + 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA. The media supplemented with 0.5 mg L⁻¹2,4-D + 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA + 0.5 mg L⁻¹BAP produced yellowish callus (2) and also with 0.5 mg L⁻¹2,4-D + 1 mg L⁻¹NAA produced whitish callus (1).

2.4. Formation of somatic embryos (green tissues) on calli

Effect of treatment combinations for percentage of somatic embryo formation was significant. The composition of Pellieter D media supplemented with 0.5 mg L⁻¹BAP and 0.5 mg L⁻¹1 NAA induced the highest percentage (75.6) of somatic embryo and media with 1.0 mg L⁻¹ BAP and 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA induced the lowest percentage (43.6) of somatic embryo (Fig.5).

The Pellieter D media containing 0.5 mg L⁻¹BAP and 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA took minimum days (82) for somatic embryogenesis while 1.0 mg L⁻¹BAP and 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA took maximum days (90.7) for somatic embryogenesis (Fig.5).

For days to somatic embryogenesis the interaction Agrani+BINA Sarisha-7 x Pellieter D media supplemented with 0.5 mg L⁻¹ BAP and 0.5 mg L⁻¹ NAA took minimum days (81) whereas Agrani+BINA Sarisha-7 x Pellieter D media supplemented with 1.0 mg L⁻¹BAP and 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA took maximum days (95). The interactions Agrani+BINA Sarisha-8 x Pellieter D media + 0.5 mg L⁻¹BAP and 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA took the minimum days (84) for somatic embryogenesis whereas 1.0 mg L⁻¹BAP and 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA took maximum days (86.5) (Fig. 6).

3. Discussion

Apparently Agrani was more vigorous than BINA Sarisha-7 and BINA Sarisha-8 at the seedling stage. The size of the protoplasts was proportionate to the vigorous growth of seedlings even

though seedling vigour was not scored. In the present study, PEG 400 (100%) was used to increase the rate of protoplasts fusion (Fig. 2b). Whereas, previous studies documented the use of PEG 30, 40 and 50% of PEG 8000, 6000 and 1540 MW respectively for protoplasts fusion [7,8,9]. The higher concentration of PEG with low molecular weight increases the rate of protoplast fusion [10].

Both micro calli and visible calli produced at a comparatively higher concentration of NAA and low concentration of BAP. Zhang *et al.* [11] used only 0.2 ppm BAP and reported similar results. BAP helps increase division of the fused cells of protoplasts in dark condition [11]. Kaur *et al.* [12] suggested that prolonged dark period is essential for the stability of protoplasts and hence for the formation of micro calli.

A lower dose of BAP induced higher percentage of somatic embryos and also decreased the total days required for the formation of somatic embryos from protoplast derived calli of Agrani + BINA Sarisha-7 and Agrani + BINA Sarisha-8. The similar results was reported by Wang *et al.* [13] suggested that lower concentration of BAP helps to increase the number of somatic embryo and decrease the days to somatic embryogenesis. Primard *et al.* [14] documented similar findings and mentioned that embryogenesis is accelerated under lower concentration of BAP. As reported in Jiang *et al.* [15] a combination of lower concentration of BAP and NAA has similar effect on somatic embryogenesis.

4. Conclusions

A comparatively higher dose of NAA induced larger micro-calli and subsequently induced larger calli compared to a lower dose of NAA. On the other hand a lower dose of BAP induced higher percentage of somatic embryos. The results are supplementary in developing an efficient and complete somatic hybridization protocol for Brassica species.

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Table 1 Effects of media combination on size of calli, days to calli and colour of visible callus induced *in vitro* from fused protoplast of *Brassica* species

Pelletier B media+ 2,4-D+ NAA +BAP mg L ⁻¹	Size of callus	Days to callus induction	Colour of callus
0.5 + 0.5	1.0 b	30.1 a	3.0 a
0.5+ 1.0	1.60 a	24.5 b	1.1 c
0.5 + 0.5+0.5	0.983 b	32.8 a	2.0 b
LSD _{0.01}	0.367	5.7	1.0
Level of significance	Significant at 1% level of probability		
CV%	10.52	7.62	9.86

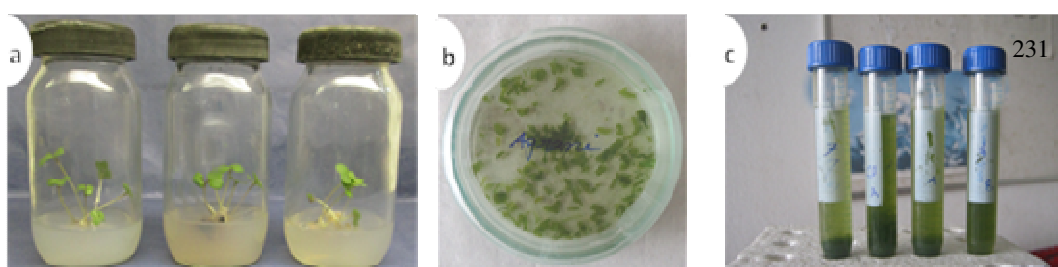


Fig. 1: a) Raising of seedlings in Pelletier A media., b) Plasmolisation of cutting leaves with 5% sorbitol containing 0.05 M CaCl₂.2H₂O for 1 hour., c) Protoplasts were pelleted by centrifugation (1000 rpm, 5 min.) and the supernatant was discarded.

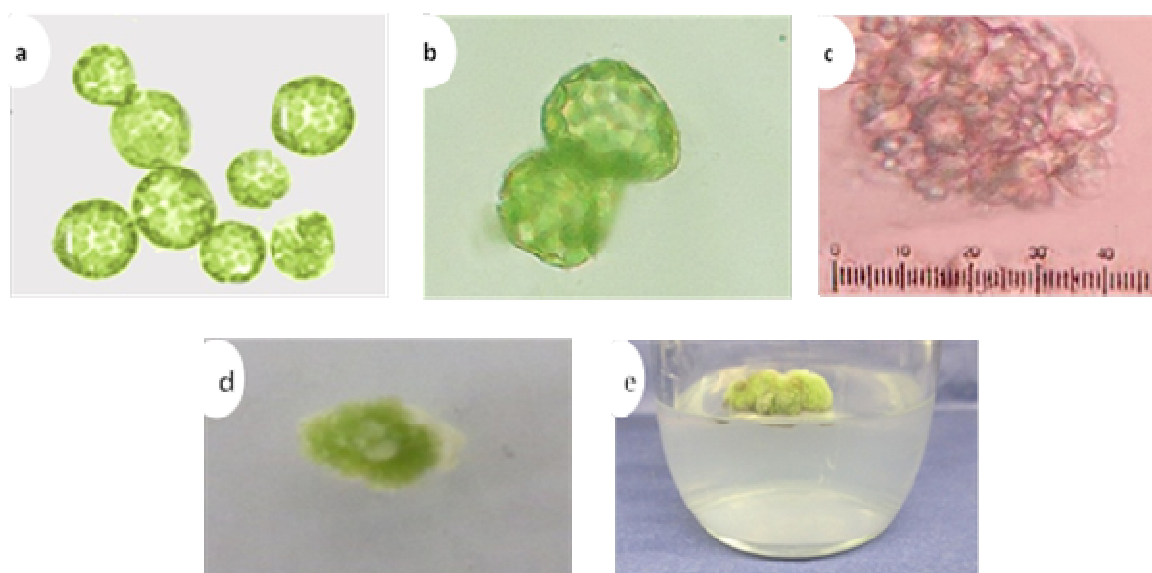


Fig. 2: Isolated protoplasts Agrani + BINA Sarisha-7 (400x), **b)** Fused protoplasts Agrani + BINA Sarisha-7., **c)** Size of micro calli on 15 days after protoplasts fusion., **d)** Calli from fused protoplast in Pellierter C media + 2.5 mg L^{-1} NAA and 0.5 mg L^{-1} 2,4-D (8x), **e)** Somatic embryo formation from fused protoplast derived callus of Agrani+BINA Sarisha-7 in Pellierter D media supplemented with 0.5 mg L^{-1} BAP and 0.5 mg L^{-1} NAA after 82 days of callus.

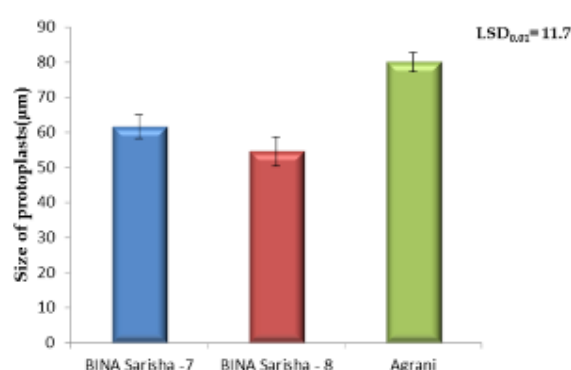


Fig. 3: Bar graph showing the size of protoplasts of different *Brassica* varieties. Vertical bars indicating standard error of mean. LSD pointing out least significant differences between size of protoplast at 1% level of significance.

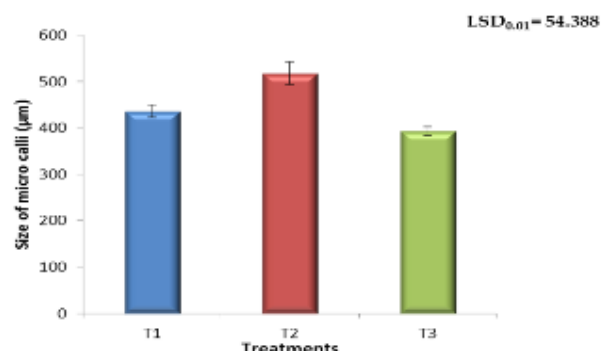


Fig. 4: Bar graph showing the size of micro-calli on 15 days after protoplasts fusion in Pellierter B media supplemented with different hormone combinations T1= 0.5 mg L^{-1} NAA and 0.5 mg L^{-1} 2,4-D, T2= 1 mg L^{-1} NAA and 0.5 mg L^{-1} 2,4-D and T3= 0.5 mg L^{-1} NAA; 0.5 mg L^{-1} 2,4-D and 0.5 mg L^{-1} BAP. Vertical bars indicating standard error of mean.

LSD pointing out least significant differences between treatments at 1% level of significance.

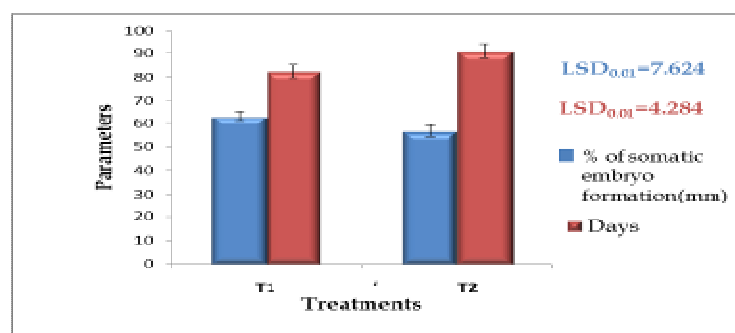


Fig. 5: Bar graph showing the percentage of somatic embryogenesis and days to somatic embryo formation from two different treatments: Pellieter D media contained 0.5 mg L⁻¹ BAP + 0.5 mg L⁻¹ (T1) and 1.0 mg L⁻¹BAP + 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA (T2). Vertical bars indicating standard error of mean. LSD pointing out least significant differences between treatments 1% level of significance.

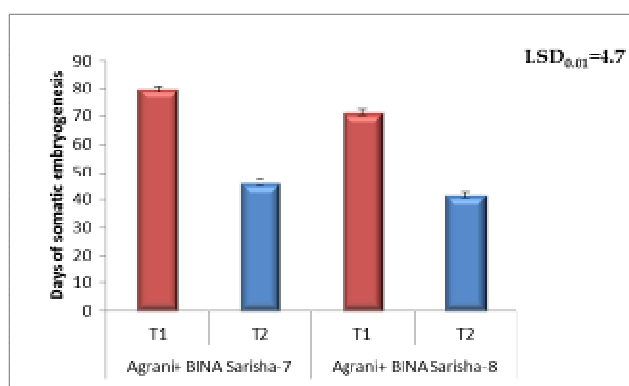


Fig. 6: Days to somatic embryo formation for two different fusion combinations (Agrani + BINA Sarisha7 and Agrani+ BINA sarisha8) in Pellieter D media supplemented with two different hormones of T1= 0.5 mg L⁻¹BAP + 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA and T2= 1 mg L⁻¹ BAP and 0.5 mg L⁻¹NAA. Vertical bars indicating standard error of mean. LSD indicates least significant difference between treatments at 1% level of significance.