Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES vii

ABSTRCT xiii

1 INTRODUCTION 1

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE 5

2.1 Drought stress impact on crops: 5

2.1.1 Plant water status: 5

2.1.2 Photosynthesis: 6

2.1.3 Stomatal conductance: 6

2.1.4 Oxidative Stress: 7

2.1.5 Osmotic stress: 8

2.1.6 Cell membrane injury and lipid peroxidation: 9

2.1.7 Pigment composition: 9

2.1.8 Soluble sugars: 10

2.1.9 Soluble proteins: 10

2.1.10 Germination and yield: 10

2.2 Improvement of drought tolerance: 11

2.2.1 Improvement of antioxidants: 11

2.2.2 Improvement of cell membrane stability: 11

2.2.3 Improvement of osmotic adjustment: 12

2.3 Seed priming: 13

2.3.1 Effects of seed priming on biochemical processes: 13

2.3.2 Hydro priming: 14

2.4 Improvement of drought tolerance by seed priming: 15

2.4.1 Use of plant hormones as priming agents: 16

2.4.2 Use of osmoprotectants as priming agents: 16
2.5 Use of chitosan as priming agent: 17
2.5.1 Effects on plant water status: 19
2.5.2 Effects on antioxidants:..... 19
2.5.3 Effects on cell membrane stability and lipid peroxidation: 19
2.5.4 Effects on pigments: 20
2.5.5 Effects on germination parameters: 20
2.5.6 Effects on yield and yield parameters:..... 20
2.6 Use of sodium nitroprusside as priming agent:..... 21
2.6.1 Effects on plant water status: 22
2.6.2 Effects on antioxidants:..... 23
2.6.3 Effects on cell membrane stability and lipid peroxidation: 23
2.6.4 Effects on osmoprotectants:..... 23
2.6.5 Effects on pigments: 24
2.6.6 Effects on germination:..... 24
2.6.7 Effects on yield and yield parameters:..... 24
2.7 Use of sodium silicate as priming agent: 25
2.7.1 Effects on plant water status: 25
2.7.2 Effect on antioxidants: 25
2.7.3 Effects on cell membrane stability and lipid peroxidation: 26
2.7.4 Effects on osmoprotectants:..... 26
2.7.5 Effects on pigments: 26
2.7.6 Effects on germination parameters: 27
2.7.7 Effects on yield and yield parameters:..... 27
3 MATERIALS AND METHODS..... 28

3.1 Experiment I: Effects of different priming treatments on wheat seed biochemistry. 28
3.1.1 Seed material: 28
3.1.2 Sample extraction and analysis 28
3.1.3 Biochemical analysis: 29
3.2 Experiment II: Improvement of osmotic stress tolerance in wheat by seed priming. 38
3.2.1 Seed germination test: 38
3.2.2 Seedling growth response and biochemical analysis: 39
3.2.3 Physiological parameters: 41
3.3 Experiment III: Improvement of drought tolerance in wheat by seed priming. 41
3.3.1 Flag leaf samples for analysis: 42
3.3.2 Biochemical analysis: 42
3.3.3 Physiological parameters: 46
3.3.4 Statistical Analysis: 47
4 RESULTS 48
4.1 Effects of different priming treatments on wheat seed biochemistry 48
4.1.1 Seed priming with chitosan 48
4.1.2 Seed priming with sodium nitroprusside (SNP) 49
4.1.3 Seed priming with sodium silicate 51
4.2 Experiment 2: improvement of osmotic stress tolerance in wheat by seed priming 68
4.2.1 Seed priming with chitosan: effects on seed germination, seedling growth and physio-biochemical responses. 68
4.2.2 Seed priming with sodium nitroprusside: effects on seed germination, seedling growth and physio-biochemical responses. 83

4.2.3 Seed priming with sodium silicate: effects on seed germination, seedling growth and physio-biochemical responses. 99

4.3 Experiment 3: Improvement of drought tolerance in wheat by seed priming.. 114

4.3.1 Seed priming with chitosan: Effects on biochemical, physiological and yield attributes. 114

4.3.2 Seed priming with SNP: Effects on biochemical, physiological and yield attributes. 129

4.3.3 Seed priming with Sodium Silicate: Effects on biochemical, physiological and yield attributes. 143

5 DISCUSSION 158

5.1 Conclusions 178

6 SUMMARY 180

LITERATURE CITED 183