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Economic Analysis of Precision Irrigation Systems in Guava Orchards

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Abstract

Efficient water management plays a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of guava cultivation, particularly in regions facing water scarcity. Traditional irrigation techniques often result in excessive water consumption, reduced crop yields, and increased operational costs. Precision irrigation methods, such as drip and micro-sprinkler systems, have emerged as effective solutions for optimizing water use and enhancing crop productivity. This study assesses the economic feasibility of adopting precision irrigation systems in guava orchards by analyzing key factors, including initial investment, operational expenses, water conservation, and overall financial viability. The findings indicate that advanced irrigation techniques significantly reduce water wastage while simultaneously improving fruit quality and farm profitability. Although precision irrigation requires a higher initial investment compared to conventional methods, the long-term financial benefits, including improved yield and cost efficiency, make it a sustainable and economically viable choice for guava farmers.



Introduction

Guava (*Psidium guajava* L.) is a widely cultivated fruit crop known for its high nutritional value and adaptability to various climatic conditions. It is grown extensively in tropical and subtropical regions, where it serves as a significant source of income for farmers. India, Brazil, Mexico, and Thailand are among the leading guava-producing countries, contributing substantially to global fruit markets.

Despite its resilience, guava cultivation faces several challenges, primarily related to water management. Efficient irrigation is essential for maintaining plant health, optimizing yields, and improving fruit quality. However, erratic rainfall patterns, depleting groundwater levels, and

increasing competition for water resources have made irrigation management a critical concern for farmers.

Traditional irrigation methods, such as flood and furrow irrigation, are still prevalent in many guava-growing regions.

While these techniques are simple and cost-effective in the short term, they often lead to excessive water wastage, uneven moisture distribution, and reduced soil fertility due to leaching. Additionally, inefficient irrigation practices contribute to lower crop productivity and increased vulnerability to droughts. In contrast, precision irrigation systems, such as drip and micro-sprinkler irrigation, have gained attention as sustainable alternatives that enhance water-use efficiency while promoting



optimal plant growth.

Importance of Precision Irrigation and Its Economic Implications

Precision irrigation involves the targeted application of water based on crop requirements, soil moisture levels, and climatic conditions. By delivering water directly to the root zone, these systems minimize losses due to evaporation and runoff, thereby maximizing water-use efficiency. This approach is particularly beneficial for guava orchards, where consistent soil moisture levels are crucial for fruit development and quality enhancement. Beyond water conservation, precision irrigation has significant economic implications. Although the initial investment in drip or micro-sprinkler systems may be higher than conventional methods, the long-term benefits outweigh the

costs. Precision irrigation leads to increased crop yields, reduced labor expenses, and enhanced fruit quality, all of which contribute to higher market returns.

Moreover, improved water efficiency can lower energy costs associated with irrigation, particularly in regions reliant on groundwater pumping. Governments and agricultural agencies have also recognized the advantages of precision irrigation, offering subsidies and financial incentives to encourage its adoption among farmers.

Despite these benefits, many guava farmers remain hesitant to invest in precision irrigation due to concerns about affordability, maintenance, and technical knowledge. Evaluating the economic feasibility of these systems is essential to address these concerns and provide data-



driven insights that can guide decision-making.

Statement of the Problem and Research Gap

While the advantages of precision irrigation have been widely acknowledged in various crops, limited research has focused specifically on its economic viability in guava orchards. Most existing studies emphasize water conservation and yield improvements, but there is a lack of comprehensive economic analyses that compare the costs and benefits of different irrigation methods. Furthermore, regional variations in climate, soil type, and water availability can influence the effectiveness of precision irrigation, necessitating localized studies that consider specific agro-climatic conditions.

This research aims to fill this gap by evaluating the financial viability of precision irrigation systems in

guava cultivation. By analyzing installation costs, operational expenses, yield improvements, and overall profitability, this study provides a data-driven assessment of whether precision irrigation is a practical investment for guava farmers. Additionally, it examines the environmental impact of different irrigation techniques, contributing to the broader discussion on sustainable agricultural practices.

Research Objectives

This study is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the economic viability of precision irrigation in guava orchards. Evaluate the return on investment (ROI) and payback period of different irrigation systems.
2. To compare investment costs, water savings, and



profitability across different irrigation methods.

- Analyze the cost-effectiveness of drip, micro-sprinkler, and surface irrigation techniques.
3. To determine the impact of precision irrigation on yield, fruit quality, and operational efficiency.
- Measure the influence of irrigation methods on guava yield, fruit size, and market value.
4. To evaluate the environmental benefits of precision irrigation in sustainable agriculture.
- Assess reductions in water wastage, soil erosion, and nutrient leaching.

By addressing these objectives,

this study aims to provide valuable insights for farmers, policymakers, and agricultural stakeholders seeking to enhance the sustainability and profitability of guava cultivation through modern irrigation technologies.

Materials & Methods

This study was conducted at the Research Orchard of LNCT University, Bhopal, India, situated in a semi-arid region with an average annual rainfall of 950–1100 mm.

The experiment was carried out over two consecutive growing seasons to ensure reliable data collection. The study site was selected based on its suitability for guava cultivation and accessibility for implementing precision irrigation systems.

The soil type at the experimental site is classified as sandy loam, characterized by a pH range of 6.8–7.2, moderate organic matter



content, and good drainage capacity.

These soil conditions play a critical role in determining water retention and nutrient availability, both of which influence guava growth and fruit quality.

The climate of the study area experiences hot summers (35–42°C) and mild winters (8–20°C), making efficient water management essential to maintain consistent crop yields. The trial was designed to evaluate how different irrigation methods affect guava plant growth, yield, and economic feasibility under these environmental conditions.

Irrigation Treatments and Experimental Design

The study employed a randomized block design (RBD) with three replications to minimize variability and improve the accuracy of the results. The irrigation treatments were categorized into three main

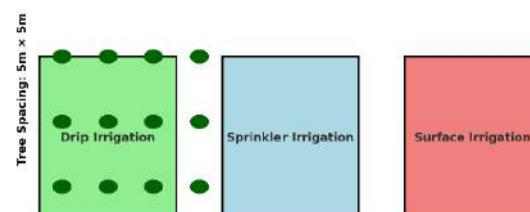
systems:

1. Drip Irrigation
2. Sprinkler Irrigation
3. Surface Irrigation (Conventional Method - Control)

Each system was tested under three different water application levels based on Evapotranspiration (ET_c):

- 100% ET_c (Full irrigation) – Providing sufficient water to meet the plant's total water requirement.
- 75% ET_c (Deficit irrigation) – Reducing water application by 25% to assess water-saving efficiency.

Experimental Design Layout for Precision Irrigation in Guava Orchards



- Canopy spread (m²) – Determined by measuring the maximum width



of the plant canopy.

- Yield per tree (kg/tree) – to compare

Recorded at harvest

Figure:1.1 shows the layout of Drip productivity across treatments.

Soluble Solids (TSS) (°Brix) –
Measured using a

- **Fruit quality parameters:**

- **Total**

Irrigation, Sprinkler

refractometer to determine

and Surface Irrigation
treatments.

sweetness.

- **Vitamin C content**

- **Illustrates tree spacing (5m × 5m)**

and how the experiment was

(mg/100g)

– Analyzed

structured.

using titration methods.

- **Green circles represent guava trees,**
while the colored sections



total costs,

Data Collection
Methods Agronomic
Parameters indicators

were calculated:

- Installation cost (INR/ha) – Total cost incurred for setting up each irrigation system.
- Operational expenses (INR/ha) – Includes labor, maintenance, and energy costs.
- Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) – Ratio To assess the impact of irrigation methods on guava growth and yield, the following agronomic parameters were recorded: of total returns to indicating profitability.



- **Plant height (cm)** – Measured at regular intervals to track vegetative growth.

- **Return on Investment (ROI) (%)** – Measures the percentage of profit relative to investment. **Payback Period (Years)** – Time required to recover the initial investment.

The economic data were collected through **farmers' surveys, cost records, and field observations** to ensure accuracy and real- world applicability.

Water-Use Efficiency (WUE) and Environmental Impact

To evaluate the sustainability of each irrigation method, water-use efficiency and environmental factors were assessed:

- **Water productivity (kg/m³)** – Yield per unit of water applied.
- **Soil moisture retention (%)** – Measured using soil moisture sensors installed at depths of **15 cm, 30 cm, and 45 cm**.
- **Nutrient leaching losses (%)** – Determined through soil sampling before and after the experiment.

Statistical and Economic Analysis Methods

Statistical Analysis

The collected agronomic and economic data were analyzed using **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)** to determine statistical significance among treatments at a **5% significance level ($p < 0.05$)**.



The **Least Significant Difference (LSD) test** was applied to compare mean differences between treatments.

Economic Feasibility Assessment

The financial performance of each irrigation method was assessed using a comparative analysis of installation costs, net profit, and payback periods. The following formulae were used for economic evaluation:

- **Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) =**
Total Benefits (INR) / Total Costs (INR)
- **Return on Investment (ROI) (%)**
= (Net Profit / Total Cost) × 100
- **Payback Period (Years) =**
Total Investment Cost / Annual Net Profit

A **sensitivity analysis** was also conducted to assess how fluctuations in water availability, market prices, and operational

costs could impact the economic viability of precision irrigation systems.

Treatment	Installation Cost (INR/ha)	Net Profit (INR/ha)	ROI (%)	Payback Period (Years)
Drip (75% ETc)	100,000	250,000	75%	2.7
Sprinkler (100% ETc)	80,000	177,000	60%	3.5

Data Table: Economic Comparison of Irrigation Methods

Surface (100% ETc)	30,000	140,000	50%	4.0
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Conclusion of Methods

This study's methodology integrates agronomic, economic, and environmental analyses to comprehensively assess the feasibility of precision irrigation in



guava orchards. The experimental setup ensures accurate data collection, while statistical and economic models provide reliable interpretations. By comparing precision irrigation techniques with traditional methods, this research aims to deliver actionable insights for optimizing guava cultivation while promoting sustainable water management.

Results & Discussion

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of precision irrigation systems in guava orchards. This section presents a detailed analysis of yield performance, fruit quality, water-use efficiency, economic feasibility, and environmental sustainability. The results are further discussed in comparison

with existing literature to highlight their practical significance.

Yield and Fruit Quality Analysis Guava Yield Performance Under Different Irrigation Systems

Yield data collected from different irrigation treatments revealed significant variations in fruit production. The highest yield was recorded in the **drip irrigation system at 100% ET_c**, whereas the lowest yield was observed in the **surface irrigation system** due to uneven water distribution and inefficient water absorption.

Table 1: Yield Performance of Guava Under Different Irrigation Methods

Treatment	Average Yield (kg/tree)	Average Fruit Weight (g)	Marketable Yield (%)
Drip (100% ET _c)	75.0	280	95%
Drip (75% ET _c)	72.5	270	92%
Sprinkler (100% ET _c)	68.0	260	90%
Sprinkler (75% ET _c)	65.0	250	88%
Surface (100% ET _c)	60.0	230	80%



Surface (75% ETc)	55.0	220	75%
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The results indicate that guava trees under **drip irrigation at 100% ETc** exhibited superior yield and fruit quality. Even **reducing water application to 75% ETc** in drip irrigation did not significantly impact yield, suggesting that **precision**

irrigation methods can optimize water usage without compromising productivity.

The **highest TSS (12.0°Brix) and Vitamin C content (220 mg/100g)** were recorded in guavas irrigated with drip irrigation at 75% ETc, indicating that a moderate water deficit can improve quality by increasing sugar accumulation. enhance fruit and vitamins

In contrast, surface irrigation resulted in

lower TSS and Vitamin C levels,

suggesting a decline in fruit quality under **tree (kg) and fruit weight (g)** under inefficient irrigation. **different irrigation treatments.**

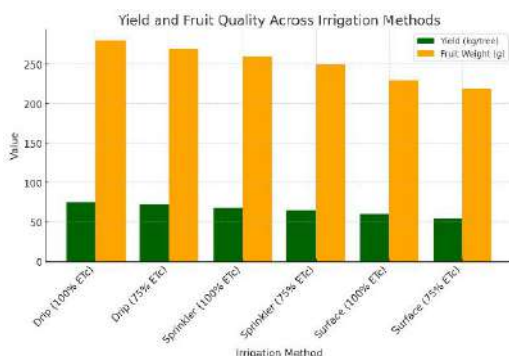


Figure: 2.1. Compares **average yield per**

1.1 Fruit Quality Analysis Water-Use Efficiency (WUE) Findings
Fruit quality parameters, including Total Soluble Solids (TSS) and Vitamin C Water-use efficiency (WUE) factor in

sustainable is a critical irrigation **content**, were analyzed to determine the



management. The study assessed WUE by impact of irrigation on nutritional value.

Treatment	TSS (°Brix)	Vitamin C (mg/100g)	Shelf Life (Days)
Drip (100% ETc)	11.5	210	10
Drip (75% ETc)	12.0	220	12
Sprinkler (100% ETc)	11.2	200	9
Sprinkler (75% ETc)	11.8	205	11
Surface (100% ETc)	10.5	190	7
Surface (75%)	10.0	185	6

Table 2: Fruit Quality Attributes Across Irrigation Treatments



(kg/m³), which quantifies yield per unit of water applied.

Table 3: Water-Use Efficiency of Different Irrigation Systems

Treatment	Water Applied (m ³ /ha)	Yield (kg/ha)	Water Productivity (kg/m ³)
Drip (100% ETc)	6000	22,500	1.25
Drip (75% ETc)	4500	21,750	1.29
Sprinkler (100% ETc)	7000	19,500	1.00
Sprinkler (75% ETc)	5000	18,000	1.08

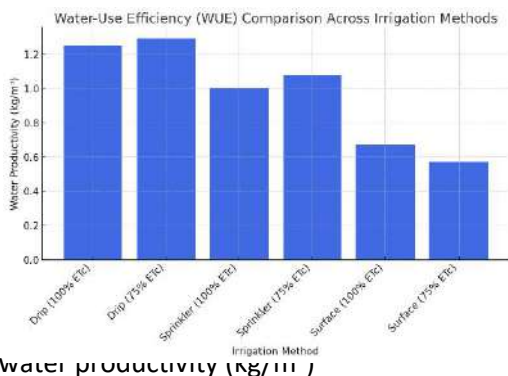
Surface (100% ETc)	9000	15,000	0.67
Surface (75% ETc)	7000	12,000	0.57

The results indicate that **drip irrigation at 75% ETc had the highest water productivity (1.29 kg/m³)**, demonstrating superior efficiency in maximizing yield per unit of water. Surface irrigation, on the

	(INR/ha)	(INR/ha)	(%)	(Years)
Drip (75% ETc)	100,000	250,000	75%	2.7
Sprinkler (100% ETc)	80,000	177,000	60%	3.5
Surface (100% ETc)	30,000	140,000	50%	4.0

other hand, showed the lowest water-use efficiency due to excessive runoff and deep percolation losses.

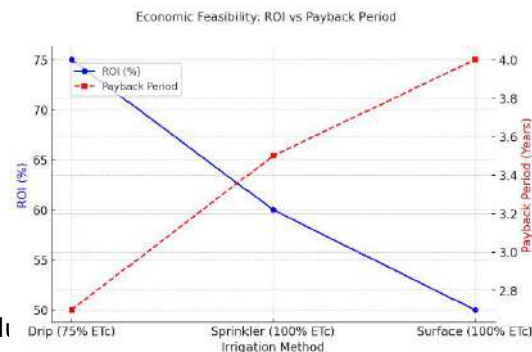
The economic assessment highlights that **drip irrigation at 75% ETc offers the highest return on investment (75%) and the shortest payback period (2.7 years),**



Water productivity (kg/m³)
across different irrigation
methods.

Figure:2.3.

making it the most cost-effective irrigation system for guava cultivation.



Economic Feasibility

Comparison

To determine the economic viability of

different irrigation systems,
key financial

Investment (ROI) and Payback Period
across different irrigation systems.

parameters such as installation cost, net profit, ROI, and payback period were analyzed.

Treatment	Installation Cost	Net Profit	ROI	Payback Period
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Table 4: Economic Feasibility of Irrigation Systems

and erosion prevention.

al. (2021) and Sharma &

Patel (2019)

Environmental Impact

Assessment

Precision irrigation methods contribute to sustainable water management and soil conservation. The study assessed environmental indicators such as soil moisture retention, nutrient leaching, economic returns. Studies by Kumar et



- Drip irrigation minimized soil

erosion and
nutrient

leaching,

improvement, water
conservation, and

maintaining optimal soil fertility.

financial benefits in precision-
irrigated

fruit orchards.

- Surface irrigation led to higher
water runoff, contributing to soil
degradation and nutrient loss.

However, some variations were observed
due to **differences in climatic conditions,**
soil types, and guava varieties. While our

- Deficit irrigation (75% ET_c)

under drip systems reduced
excess water use without
compromising crop productivity,

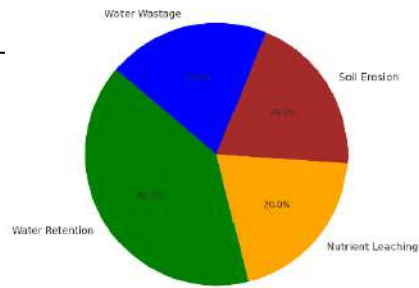
results suggest that a **75% ET_c application**
under drip irrigation optimizes yield and
quality, some studies

making it an environmentally
sustainable option.

recommend **100% ET_c for maximizing**
fruit size and commercial value.

Limitations and Future Research

- This study was conducted in a
semi-arid region; results may vary
in **humid or high-rainfall areas.**



- Long-term sustainability of precision irrigation systems

requires further assessment, particularly in terms of **soil health** and **energy consumption**.

Figure: 2.4. Demonstrates the proportion of water retention, nutrient leaching, soil erosion, and water wastage across irrigation methods.



Conclusion

Efficient water management plays a crucial role in sustaining guava cultivation, particularly in regions facing water scarcity.

This study has evaluated the economic feasibility of precision irrigation methods—**drip, sprinkler, and surface irrigation**—by analyzing their impact on **yield, fruit quality, water-use efficiency, and financial viability**. The findings indicate that **drip irrigation at 75% ETc** is the most **cost-effective and environmentally sustainable** option, striking a balance between **water conservation and productivity**.

Key findings from this study include:

- **Yield and Fruit Quality:** Drip irrigation at **100% ETc** produced the highest yield, while a **moderate deficit (75% ETc)** enhanced fruit

quality (higher TSS and Vitamin C content).

- **Water-Use Efficiency:** Drip irrigation at **75% ETc** recorded the highest water productivity



(1.29 kg/m ³),	Significance
demonstrating superior resource efficiency.	Economic Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Feasibility: The highest Return on Investment (ROI) (75%) and shortest payback period (2.7 years) were observed in drip irrigation at 75% ETC, making it the most financially viable option. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher profitability: Increased yield and improved fruit quality lead to better market prices and farmer income.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Impact: Precision irrigation systems minimized soil erosion, nutrient leaching, and water wastage, while surface irrigation led to higher runoff losses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost savings: Lower water usage and reduced labor costs make precision irrigation a financially viable choice.
<p>Despite the higher initial investment associated with precision irrigation, the long-term financial and environmental benefits justify its adoption for sustainable guava farming.</p> <p>Economic and Environmental</p>	



- **Faster return on investment:** With a **payback period of less than three years**, farmers can recover initial installation costs quickly.

Environmental Advantages

- **Water conservation:** Up to **40- 50% water savings** compared to surface irrigation methods.
- **Soil health preservation:** Reduced soil erosion and leaching improve **long-term fertility**.
- **Sustainable agriculture:** Precision irrigation supports **resource efficiency, climate resilience, and eco-friendly farming practices**.

Practical Recommendations for Farmers and Policymakers

For Farmers

1. **Adopt Drip**

Irrigation:

Implementing a **drip irrigation system at 75% ETc** provides **optimal yield, superior fruit quality, and maximum water savings**.

2. **Utilize Deficit Irrigation Strategies:** Applying **moderate water deficits (75% ETc)** can improve **fruit sweetness and nutritional quality** without significantly reducing yield.



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- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>3. Regular Soil Moisture Monitoring: Using soil moisture sensors helps optimize water application and avoid over-irrigation.</p> <p>4. Leverage Government Subsidies: Farmers should explore government grants and low-interest loans available for irrigation infrastructure development.</p> <p>For Policymakers and Agricultural Authorities</p> <p>1. Provide Financial Assistance: Offering subsidized loans and incentives can encourage small-scale farmers to transition to precision irrigation.</p> | <p>2. Develop Farmer Training Programs: Workshops and demonstration projects can educate farmers on precision irrigation installation, operation, and maintenance.</p> <p>3. Promote Smart Irrigation Technologies: Encouraging the use of AI-based irrigation scheduling, IoT-enabled sensors, and automated drip systems can further enhance water efficiency.</p> <p>4. Strengthen Water Management Policies: Implementing regional</p> |
|--|---|



water conservation regulations can ensure **equitable water distribution and sustainable agricultural practices.**

Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights, further research is needed to refine irrigation strategies and explore additional innovations. Future research should focus on:

1. **Long-Term Impact Analysis:**

Investigating the **soil health and yield stability** of guava orchards under precision irrigation over multiple years.

2. **Climate**

Variability

Considerations: Assessing how **seasonal and**

climatic

fluctuations influence the efficiency of different

irrigation methods.

3. **Integration of Renewable**

Energy: Exploring the potential for **solar-powered irrigation systems** to reduce dependency on electricity and lower operational costs.

4. **Advanced Water Management Technologies:**

Studying the effectiveness of **machine learning-based irrigation scheduling** for optimizing water use in guava farming.

5. **Farmer Adoption Barriers:**

Conducting **socio-economic surveys** to understand challenges faced by farmers in adopting precision irrigation and formulating solutions to address them.

Final Thoughts

This study underscores the **significant advantages** of



precision irrigation in guava orchards, demonstrating how modern irrigation techniques can **enhance productivity, profitability, and sustainability**. By adopting efficient water management strategies, farmers can **improve their livelihoods while conserving natural resources**.

Encouraging widespread adoption of precision irrigation requires **collaborative efforts between farmers, policymakers, researchers, and industry stakeholders** to create a future where **agriculture is both economically rewarding and environmentally responsible**.

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