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Studies on genetic variability, Heritability, Genetic advance, Correlation, and path coefficient analysis in rice (*Oryza sativa* L.)

Siddheshwar Ravsaheb Korake, Shiv Prakash Shrivastav* and Harmanpreet Kaur Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, School of Agriculture, Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar - Delhi, Grand Trunk Rd, Phagwara, Punjab 144001. **e-mail:* shiva.26060@lpu.co.in

ABSTRACT

Background: Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) is the most important staple food crop of the world. Rice is an essential source of nutrition for billions of people on the planet. there is immense need to development of high yielding coupled with quality, multiple resistance, and wider adaptive rice varieties to fulfill requirement and ensure food security. The yield is a complex trait that depends on various attributes. Therefore, the knowledge about genetic variability, Heritability and genetic advance and relationship of different attributes to yield is crucial for making efficient selection strategy.

Methods: The experiment was carried out to evaluate the genetic variability, heritability and genetic advance, correlation, and path coefficient analysis in rice. The experimental material was based on a line x tester set of 24 hybrids (F_1 's) developed by crossing 8 lines (females) with 3 testers (males). An attempt was made to make twenty-four cross combinations (F_1 's) during *Kharif* season 2022. The 24 F_1 's along with parents and two check varieties *i.e.* PR-26 and Pusa Basmati 1121 were evaluated at the Main Experimental Station of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India in Randomized Complete Block Design with three replications during *Kharif* 2023.

Result: The experimental result revealed highly significant variations for all traits except panicle length and the L/B ratio in parents and their crosses. For every trait under investigation, the phenotypic coefficient of variation (PCV) was greater than the genotypic coefficient of variation (GCV). The high estimates of phenotypic and genotypic coefficient of variation (> 20%) were estimated for panicle bearing tillers per plant (PCV=21.46%, GCV=20.93%), flag leaf area (PCV=21.39%, GCV=21.09%), grain yield per plant (PCV=20.57%, GCV=20.12%) in F₁'s. The estimates of heritability in broad sense $(h_{(bs)}^2)$ and genetic advance in percent of mean. High estimates of broad sense heritability (>75%) were recorded for the Days to 50% flowering, flag leaf area, panicle bearing tillers per plant, 1000-grain weight, spikelets per panicle, biological yield per plant, plant height, grains per panicle, grain yield per plant, spikelet fertility, harvest index in F_1 's crosses. The genetic advance in per cent of mean was found to be very high (>30%) for, flag leaf area (42.82%), panicle bearing tillers per plant (42.06%), biological yield per plant (35.01%), grain yield (40.54%) in F₁'s. The high estimates of genetic advance in per cent of mean (>20%) were recorded for spikelet per panicle (22.04%), grain per panicle (23.92%) 1000-grain weight (23.06%), in F₁'s crosses. The grain yield per plant exhibited highly significant and positive association at phenotypic level with L/B ratio (0.4187) followed by spikelets per panicle (0.4283), harvest index percent (0.5007), panicle bearing tillers per plant (0.5386), biological yield per plant (0.8685), in F_1 's.

Key words: Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.), genetic variability, heritability, genetic advance, correlation, and path coefficient analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) is the most important staple food crop of the world. Asia is the leader in rice production accounting for about 90% of the world's production. India has the largest area 46.38 million hectare constituting 28.26% of the land under rice in the world and rank second in total production 130.29 million tonnes next to China with an average productivity of 2809 Kg/hectare (DAC and FW, 2021-22). It is one of the major food crops of the developing world and forms the staple diet of about half of the world's population. More than 90 per cent of the world's rice is grown and consumed in Asia, known as the rice bowl of the world, where 60 per cent of the earth's people and two third of world's poor live (Khush and Virk, 2000). Asia is the leader in rice production accounting for about 90% of the world's production. About 75% of the world's supply is consumed by the people in Asian countries and thus, rice is of immense importance to food security of Asia. The demand for rice is expected to increase with continuous increase in global population.

The success of any breeding programme mainly depends on the quantum of genetic variability and the extent to which the desirable characters are heritable (Tiwari *et al.*, 2011). Heritability and genetic advance are the direct selection parameters, so correct knowledge of heritability and genetic advance is much more essential in formulation of selection strategy. Although the information on above aspects in rice is available. Therefore, further studies aimed at generating and comparing information on above aspects in rice, are warranted to facilitate the development of high yielding rice cultivars for above ecosystem.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The experiment was carried out at the Main Experimental Station of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. The experimental material was based on a line x tester set of 24 hybrids (F_1 's) developed by crossing 8 lines (females) with 3 testers (males). An attempt was made to make twenty-four cross combinations (F_1 's) during *Kharif* season 2022. The 24 F_1 's along with parents and two check verities *i.e.* PR-26 and Pusa Basmati 1121 were evaluated to find out the genetic variability, heritability, genetic advance effects, correlation, and path coefficient analysis of their various attributes on grain yield in Randomized Complete Block Design with three replications during *Kharif* 2023. The observations were recorded on thirteen different traits *i.e.* days to 50% flowering, flag leaf area (cm²), plant height (cm), panicle bearing tillers/plant, panicle length (cm), spikelets/panicle, grains/panicle, spikelet fertility (%), biological yield/plant (g), harvest index (%), L/B ratio, and grain yield/plant (g) in rice (*Oryza sativa* L).

Phenotypic (PCV), genotypic (GCV) and environmental (ECV) coefficients of variation for different characters were estimated by formulae suggested by Burton and de Vane (1953). The estimates of heritability in narrow sense (h2 (ns)) have been classified by Robinson (1966) into three categories viz., high (>30%), medium (10-30%) and low (<10%). Estimates of correlation and direct and indirect influences were made for each of the thirteen characters. We computed the basic correlations (r) between different features at the phenotypic (p) and genotypic (g) levels, as suggested by Searle (1961). We also carried out route coefficient analysis according to the guidelines provided by Dewey and Lu (1959). Furthermore, we estimated heritability in the narrow sense (h2 (ns)) using formulas by Johnson *et al.* (1955) and assessed genotypic and phenotypic coefficient of variations using techniques outlined by Singh and Chaudhary (1985) and Burton (1952). Lastly, we calculated genetic progress using methods from Allard (1960) and Johnson *et al.* (1955).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of variance

The analysis of variance for thirty-five genotypes of line × tester set comprising of twenty-four crosses and eleven parents is presented in Table 1. Highly significant variability was found for all the characters in studied materials. Similar finding has also been reported by earlier researchers (Jayasudha *et al.*, 2009; Rahimi *et al.*, 2010; Sanghera and Hussain 2012; Latha *et al.*, 2013; Kargbo *et al.*, 2019; Sarker *et al.*, 2020; and Kulsum *et al.*, 2022). The analysis of variance revealed that mean squares due to replication non-significant for all characters except flag leaf area, panicle length, and 1000 grain weight these were showed significant variances in F₁'s. Similar researchers have found result Dey (2010); Kamboj *et al.*, (2018); Zewdu (2020); and Abdalla *et al.*, (2021).

The analysis of variance revealed that mean squares due to treatments and parents were highly significant for all the characters except L/B ratio in treatments. Similar studies have reported in the results Devi *et al.*, (2017); Dhurai *et al.*, (2014); Umarani *et al.*, (2017); Devi *et al.*, (2016); Sahu *et al.*, (2017); Aditya and Bhartiya (2015); and Dodake *et al.*, (2022) and panicle length and L/B ratio in parents of hybrids. The analysis of variance revealed that mean squares due to parents (lines) were highly significant for all the characters except panicle length and L/B ratio in F_1 's. Earlier studies have found in similar result Ratna (2009); and Panchal *et al.*, (2019). It further revealed that mean squares due to parents (tester) were highly significant for all the characters except nonsignificant variances for panicle length, spikelet per panicle, spikelet fertility harvest index and L/B ratio in F_1 's.

The analysis of variance revealed that mean squares due to line *vs* tester were highly significant for all the characters except non-significant variances for spikelet fertility, L/B

ratio and grain yield per plant in F_1 's. Previous investigators have likewise documented comparable findings (Singh *et al.* 2019; and Sanghera and Hussain, 2012).

The analysis of variance revealed that mean squares due to parents *vs* crosses were highly significant for all the characters except significant variances for panicle length and L/B ratio in F_1 's. Similar result has been supported by earlier researchers (Rahimi *et al.*, 2010; Sanghera *et al.*, 2012; Bassuony *et al.*, 2021; and Mazal *et al.*, 2021).

The analysis of variance revealed that mean squares due to crosses were highly significant for all the characters except significant variance panicle length and non-significant L/B ratio in F_1 's. Similar outcomes have been noted by prior researchers as well (Sultana *et al.*, 2016; Kamboj *et al.*, 2018; Singh *et al.*, 2019; and Dodake *et al.*, 2022).

The analysis of variance revealed that mean squares due to lines effect were nonsignificant for all the characters except highly significant variance panicle bearing tiller per plant and significant variance biological yield per plant in F_1 's. This observation has been confirmed by previous studies (Dar *et al.*, 2014; Devi *et al.*, 2017; Mishra *et al.*, 2019; Yadav *et al.*, 2020; and Rahman 2020).

The variances due to testers effect were highly significant for flag leaf area, plant height and panicle bearing tillers per plant except significant variances for spikelet per panicle, biological yield per plant and grain yield per plant in F_1 's. Earlier researchers have reported analogous results (Kumar 2016; Prakash *et al.*, 2018; Marri 2020; and Shrivastav *et al.*, 2022).

The analysis of variance revealed that mean squares due to line \times testers interaction were highly significant for all the characters except non-significant variances for panicle length and L/B ratio in F₁'s. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by others (Devi *et al.*, 2017; Singh and Diw 2017; Panchal *et al.*, 2019; Singh *et al.*, 2019; and Abawa 2022).

Coefficients of variation

The phenotypic (PCV) and genotypic (GCV) coefficients of variation for the thirteen characters have been presented in Table 2. The magnitude of phenotypic coefficient of variation was higher than the corresponding genotypic coefficient of variation for all the traits. The high estimates of phenotypic and genotypic coefficient of variation (> 20%) were estimated for panicle bearing tillers per plant (PCV=21.46%, GCV=20.93%), flag leaf area (PCV=21.39%, GCV=21.09%), grain yield per plant (PCV=20.57%, GCV=20.12%) in F_1 's. Similar results have also been reported by earlier researcher (Khedikar *et al.*, 2003; Saxena *et al.*, 2005; Dhanwani *et al.*, 2013; Gyawali *et al.*, 2018; Hasan *et al.*, 2020; Chavan *et al.*, 2022). The moderate estimates (10-20%) of PCV and GCV were recorded for Spikelets per panicle (PCV=10.85%, GCV=10.78%), Grains per panicle (PCV=11.58%, GCV=11.73%), Biological yield per plant (PCV=17.58%,

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GCV=17.29 %), 1000-grain weight (PCV=12.18%, GCV=11.67%) in F_1 's. The moderate estimates of PCV and low estimates of GCV were recorded for harvest index (PCV=10.06%, GCV=9.71%) in F_1 's. The low estimates (<10%) PCV and GCV recorded for Days of 50% flowering (PCV=9.70%, GCV=9.58%) Plant height (PCV=9.22%, GCV=9.11%), Panicle length (PCV=7.85%, GCV=5.99%), Spikelet fertility (PCV=8.72%, GCV=8.49%) of F_1 's crosses.

Estimates of heritability and genetic advance

The estimates of heritability in broad sense $(h^2_{(bs)})$ and genetic advance in per cent of mean for thirteen characters have been depicted in Table 2. High estimates of broad sense heritability (>75%) were recorded for the Days to 50% flowering, flag leaf area, panicle bearing tillers per plant, 1000-grain weight, spikelets per panicle, biological yield per plant, plant height, grains per panicle, grain yield per plant, spikelet fertility, harvest index in F_1 's crosses. The moderate estimates of heritability (50-75%) were recorded for the Panicle length in F₁'s. The L/B ratio is the character showed low estimates of heritability (<50%) in F₁'s. Similar result has also been reported by earlier research (Sanghera and Hussain. 2012). The genetic advance in per cent of mean was found to be very high (>30%) for, flag leaf area (42.82%), panicle bearing tillers per plant (42.06%), biological yield per plant (35.01%), grain yield (40.54%) in F_1 's. Similar result has also been reported by earlier researchers (Prasad et al., 2017; and Kargbo et al., 2019). The high estimates of genetic advance in per cent of mean (>20%) were recorded for spikelet per panicle (22.04%), grain per panicle (23.92%) 1000-grain weight (23.06%), in F_1 's crosses. Moderate genetic advance in per cent of mean (10-20%) were noted for spikelet fertility (17.04%), Harvest index (19.29%) in F₁'s crosses. On the other hand, low estimates (<10%) were noted for days to 50% flowering (9.51%), panicle length (9.42%), L/B ratio (1.93) in F_1 's crosses.

Estimation Correlation coefficients

The estimates of simple correlation coefficients at phenotypic and genotypic levels computed between thirteen characters under study are presented in Table 3 (a and b). The phenotypic correlation coefficients and genotypic correlation coefficients for thirteen traits were analyzed in the F_1 's of twenty-four cross combinations and their eleven parents. Differences in magnitude as well as in direction were observed for different traits. However, both genotypic correlation coefficient and phenotypic correlation coefficient exhibited similar signs with few exceptions. In general, both positive and negative character associations were observed among different traits. Further, it was also observed that the estimates of genotypic correlation coefficient were higher than the corresponding phenotypic correlations. The grain yield per plant exhibited highly significant and positive association at phenotypic level with followed by L/B ratio (0.4187), spikelets per panicle (0.4283), harvest index percent (0.5007), panicle bearing tillers per plant (0.5386), biological yield per plant (0.8685), in F_1 's. Previous investigations have shown a same result Jyothi (2002); Madhubabu (2017); Behera *et al.*, (2020); Gulati *et al.*, (2023); and Kumari *et al.*, (2023).

The grain yield per plant was found to be positive and significantly associated with grains per panicle (0.3336) in F_1 's. The significantly and negatively associated with panicle length (-0.3550) in F_1 's.

CONCLUSION

The experiment on genetic variability, heritability, genetic advance, correlation, and path coefficient analysis in rice emphasizes that these factors play critical roles in traits selection and utilize further breeding program for rice improvement. The highly significant variations for all traits except panicle length and the L/B ratio in parents and their crosses. The high estimates of phenotypic and genotypic coefficient of variation (> 20%) were estimated for panicle bearing tillers per plant, flag leaf area, grain yield per plant in F_{1} 's. The high estimates of heritability in broad sense ($h_{(bs)}^2$) and genetic advance in percent of mean (>75% and >20% respectively) were reported in the flag leaf area, panicle bearing tillers per plant, 1000-grain weight, spikelets per panicle, biological yield per plant, grains per panicle, and grain yield per plant. The high heritability with high genetic advance indicating the character is given due to consideration in further breeding program and selection for traits could be practiced with due care to achieve desirable level of yield potential in rice. The grain yield per plant exhibited a highly significant and positive association at phenotypic level with L/B ratio followed by spikelets per panicle, harvest index percent, panicle bearing tillers per plant, and biological yield per plant in F_1 's. The grain yield per plant was found to be positive and significantly associated with grains per panicle in F1's. These features might be considered during selection to increase grain yield.

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Table 1: Analysis of variance for 13 characters of line × tester set of crosses (F1's) and their parents in rice.

Characters	Sources of variation												
	Replication s	Treatments	Parents	Parents (Line)	Parents (testers)	Line vs testers	Parents vs Crosses	Crosses	Lines Effect	Testers Effect	Lines × testers Effect	Error	
d.f.	2	34	11	7	2	1	1	23	7	2	14	68	
Days to 50% flowering	5.30	248.41**	463.88**	445.60**	643.11**	233.46**	977.72**	123.01**	189.17	198.93	79.09**	5.46	
Flag leaf area (cm ²)	15.78*	173.69**	261.84**	266.31**	362.52**	29.24*	232.19**	132.83**	135.48	685.67**	52.52**	4.96	
Plant height (cm)	3.66	244.84**	306.28**	236.57**	243.90**	918.96**	2385.03**	125.08**	36.36	1088.59**	31.79**	6.31	
Panicle bearing tillers/plant	1.85	20.04**	14.47**	7.47**	34.82**	22.72**	54.20**	20.98**	18.28**	149.98**	3.91**	0.99	
Panicle length (cm)	15.90*	9.33**	8.26	7.02	4.77	24.00*	23.15*	9.19*	13.29	5.61	7.64	4.63	
Spikelets/panicle	1.56	767.36**	659.57**	889.20**	30.51	310.25**	120.01**	842.37**	221.16	4044.17*	695.58**	10.69	
Grains/panicle	12.39	636.49**	566.52**	760.75**	91.11**	157.72**	140.96**	688.46**	503.53	2072.56	583.20**	12.96	
Spikelet fertility (%)	5.87	170.17**	92.31**	126.81**	15.69	4.04	180.73**	203.56**	267.30	77.83	189.66**	8.04	
Biological yield/plant (g)	18.10	299.48**	302.49**	330.07**	131.44**	451.52**	2758.50**	191.26**	293.23*	462.89*	101.47**	11.62	
Harvest index (%)	1.60	74.86**	38.00**	21.57**	14.80	199.43**	785.07**	60.00**	56.36	13.82	68.43**	5.97	
L/B ratio	0.06	0.30	0.22	0.27	0.07	0.24	2.40*	0.25	0.23	0.01	0.29	0.30	
1000 -grain weight (g)	6.73*	24.49**	31.21**	26.35**	53.90**	19.90**	36.49**	21.04**	13.49	63.52	18.75**	2.03	
Grain yield/plant (g)	7.56	122.10**	48.96**	56.09**	43.88**	9.18	2005.05**	72.03**	86.98	189.85*	47.72**	5.77	

*,** Significant at 5% and 1% probability levels, respectively

Table 2: Estimates of general mean, phenotypic (PCV) and genotypic (GCV) coefficient of variation, heritability in broad sense (h²_(bs)) and genetic advance in percent of mean for 13 characters in rice.

		Constant and the	Coefficient of v	ariation (%)	Heritability in broad	Genetic advance in per cent of mean	
S.N.	Characters	General mean ±SE	PCV	GCV	sense (%)		
		F1's	F1's	F1's	F1's	F1's	
1	Days to 50% flowering	92.29±SE1.37	9.70	9.58	98	9.51	
2	Flag leaf area (cm ²)	35.49±SE1.27	21.39	21.09	97	42.82	
3	Plant height (cm)	95.43±SE1.41	9.22	9.11	97	18.51	
4	Panicle bearing tillers/plant	11.84±SE0.56	21.46	20.93	95	42.06	
5	Panicle length (cm)	23.90±SE1.21	7.85	5.99	58	9.42	
6	Spikelets/panicle	145.10±SE1.85	10.85	10.78	99	22.04	
7	Grains/panicle	121.65±SE2.05	11.85	11.73	98	23.92	
8	Spikelet fertility (%)	84.10±SE1.65	8.72	8.49	95	17.04	
9	Biological yield/plant (g)	59.89±SE1.92	17.58	17.29	97	35.01	
10	Harvest index (%)	53.40±SE1.41	10.06	9.71	93	19.29	
11	L/B ratio	3.02±SE0.31	10.85	3.19	9	1.93	
12	1000 -grain weight (g)	23.37±SE0.80	12.18	11.67	92	23.06	
13	Grain yield/plant (g)	31.99±SE1.36	20.57	20.12	96	40.54	

Crosses	Days to 50% flowerin g	Flag leaf area (cm2)	Plant height (cm)	Panicle bearing tillers/pla nt	Panicle length (cm)	Spikelets/ panicle	Grains/pa nicle	Spikelet fertility (%)	Biological yield/plan t (g)	Harvest index (%)	L/B ratio	1000 - grain weight (g)	Grain yield/plan t (g)
Days to 50% flowering	1.0000	0.3026*	0.1535	-0.3052	0.1637	-0.1495	0.0812	0.2730	-0.1912	-0.0655	-0.1389	-0.0072	-0.1848
Flag leaf area (cm ²)		1.0000	-0.1713	-0.2397	-0.1572	-0.0821	0.0281	0.1228	0.2725	-0.1303	0.0435	0.3970*	0.1639
Plant height (cm)			1.0000	0.1218	0.0096	0.2861	0.4269**	0.2157	-0.0681	-0.3211*	-0.1411	-0.2436*	-0.2288
Panicle bearing tillers/plant				1.0000	-0.3772*	0.5981**	0.3799*	-0.2042	0.4644**	0.2559	0.1480	0.0236	0.5286**
Panicle length (cm)					1.0000	-0.2249	-0.0613	0.1574	-0.3840*	-0.1105	-0.0879	-0.1883	-0.3550*
Spikelets/panicle						1.0000	0.6681**	-0.3072*	0.4321**	0.1244	-0.0192	-0.0270	0.4283**
Grains/panicle							1.0000	0.5007**	0.2941	0.1466	0.1105	-0.0647	0.3336*
Spikelet fertility (%)								1.0000	-0.1074	0.0292	0.1612	-0.0574	-0.0623
Biological yield/plant (g)									1.0000	0.0142	0.3133*	0.1679	0.8685**
Harvest index (%)										1.0000	0.2873	0.1288	0.5007**
L/B ratio											1.0000	-0.1368	0.4187**
1000 -grain weight (g)												1.0000	0.1883
Grain yield/plant (g)													1.0000

Table 3(a): Estimates of phenotypic correlation coefficients (F1's) between 13 characters in rice.

*,** Significant at 5% and 1% probability levels, respectively

Crosses	Days to 50% flowering	Flag leaf area (cm2)	Plant height (cm)	Panicle bearing tillers/plan t	Panicle length (cm)	Spikelets/p anicle	Grains/pa nicle	Spikelet fertility (%)	Biological yield/plant (g)	Harvest index (%)	L/B ratio	1000 - grain weight (g)	Grain yield/plant (g)
Days to 50% flowering	1.0000	0.3129*	0.1584	-0.3078*	0.2144	-0.1544	0.0815	0.2834	-0.1991	-0.0612	-0.4046**	0.0029	-0.1902
Flag leaf area (cm ²)		1.0000	-0.1807	-0.2510	-0.2111	-0.0864	0.0276	0.1305	0.2876	-0.1266	0.1341	0.4111**	0.1808
Plant height (cm)			1.0000	0.1237	0.0010	0.2942	0.4393**	0.2242	-0.0711	-0.3369*	-0.4438**	-0.2703	-0.2375
Panicle bearing tillers/plant				1.0000	-0.5155**	0.6166**	0.3934*	-0.2136	0.4883**	0.2736	0.5364**	0.0170	0.5584**
Panicle length (cm)					1.0000	-0.3105	-0.0939	0.2124	-0.5480**	-0.1388	0.1718	-0.2507	-0.5023**
Spikelets/panicle						1.0000	0.6767**	-0.3029*	0.4424**	0.1341	-0.0280	-0.0265	0.4427**
Grains/panicle							1.0000	0.4950**	0.3000*	0.1502	0.4148**	-0.0720	0.3415*
Spikelet fertility (%)								1.0000	-0.1138	0.0201	0.5450**	-0.0669	-0.0713
Biological yield/plant (g)									1.0000	0.0125	1.3222*	0.1655	0.8718**
Harvest index (%)										1.0000	0.9940**	0.1377	0.4939**
L/B ratio											1.0000	-0.2970	1.6477**
1000 -grain weight (g)												1.0000	0.1901
Grain yield/plant (g)													1.0000

Table 3(b): Estimates of genotypic correlation coefficients (F1's) between 13 characters in rice.

*,** Significant at 5% and 1% probability levels, respectively.