



Electronic Journal of Plant Breeding

Research Article

Breeding potential of crosses derived from genetically divergent parents differing for yield and its attributes in cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp]

H. R. Shwetha¹, N. Marappa^{1*}, V. Ramachandra¹, Veeresh Angadi¹, Keerthi Anna Gowda Patil¹, S. Ramesh¹, Anita Peter² and D. L. Savithramma¹

Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, College of Agriculture, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Department of Plant Biotechnology, College of Agriculture, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

*E-Mail: nmaars@gmail.com

Abstract

Handling of segregating populations arising from a large number of crosses in Plant Breeding is a challenging and vital task. Identification of potential of the particular cross will aid in the selection of superior segregants. In the present study, four crosses derived from parents contrasting for seed yield and most of its attributing traits was assessed by comparing the 11 quantitative traits, mean values, phenotypic coefficient of variation, standardized range and frequency of transgressive segregants in F_2 and F_3 generations in cowpea. Based on *per se* mean value, variances, standardized range and frequency of transgressive segregants in F_2 and F_3 generations derived from four crosses, PL-2 × NBC-39 was predicted to have better breeding potential followed by PL-5 × EC-402104 in terms of chances of isolating desirable recombinants in advanced generations. Increasing trend in mean values, variances, and frequency of transgressive segregants for most of the traits from F_2 to F_3 generations derived PL-2 × NBC-39 and PL-5 × EC-402104 supported the conclusion, although a decreasing trend was observed for standardized range in all four crosses. Identification of 10 best F_3 plants in PL-2 × NBC-39 indicated the utility of mean values, variances, standardized range and frequency of transgressive segregants in predicting the performance of a cross to maximize the frequency of superior segregants in advanced generations.

Key words: PCV, GCV, Transgressive segregation, Cowpea, *Vigna unguiculata*

INTRODUCTION

Cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp] is one of the important protein rich pulse crops that originated in Africa, although West Africa and India are considered to be the centres of diversity (Simmonds, 1976). It is a diploid species with chromosome number $2n=2x=22$ and its seeds are rich in dietary protein (22 to 27%). Cowpea is a multi-utility crop because of its use as vegetable, pulse, fodder, cover crop, green manure and as an atmospheric nitrogen fixer (Babariya *et. al.*, 2016; Manju Devi and Jaymani, 2018). Cowpea is a versatile, drought hardy, herbaceous, warm

season annual legume that has a wide range of growth habits and hence fits into a variety of cropping systems (Patel *et al.*, 2013). Despite its multiple uses, versatile and hardy nature, the area and production of cowpea have not witnessed any dramatic increase over the years. Also, it qualifies as an increasingly important consumer preferred healthy food in traditional diets because of its low fat, high fibre, and dietary protein. Hence, efforts have to be directed for its genetic improvement and to ensure higher yield from a limited areas. Genetic variability is

a basic requirement for any crop improvement. The exploitation of naturally existing genetic variability can serve as a short-term strategy for cultivar development in cowpea. Whereas, genetic variability created through hybridization gives greater scope to select desirable recombinants in later generations. Cowpea being a predominantly self-pollinated crop, plant breeders performs a large number of crosses to combine desirable traits distributed in a large number of parents. Hence, plant breeders often encounter the problem of handling large segregating populations derived from large number of crosses. Predicting the performance of a cross (in terms of recovery of superior recombinants in advanced generations) and early elimination of poor crosses, while forwarding few promising crosses to further generations overcomes the constraints of time, human resource and land (Dudley, 1984; Melchinger, 1987; Krishnappa *et al.*, 2009; Suresh *et al.*, 2017; Bernardo, 2020). With this idea, a study was carried out to assess the breeding potential of four crosses and to identify promising crosses that are likely to recover superior recombinants in advanced generations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The basic experimental material for the study consisted of F_2 and F_3 generations derived from the following four crosses *viz.*, Pant Lobia-5 (PL-5) \times IC-27749, Pant Lobia-2 (PL-2) \times EC-402104, Pant Lobia-2 (PL-2) \times NBC-39 and Pant Lobia-5 (PL-5) \times EC-402104 along with their five parents and four checks (AV-6, IT-38956-1, KBC-2 and C-152). The four sets of parents contrasting for seed yield and its attributing traits were crossed to obtain four F_1 s [(PL-5 \times IC-27749), (PL-2 \times EC-402104), (PL-2 \times NBC-39) and (PL-5 \times EC-402104)] during *kharif*, 2016 (Keerthi, 2017). The four F_1 s and their parents were selfed and seeds were collected separately. The four F_2 populations (with a minimum of 200 plants in each F_2) derived from the four crosses were evaluated in contiguous blocks at Main Research Station, Hebbal during summer, 2017. Each entry in each block was planted in a single row of 3 m length following a spacing of 0.15 m between plants and 0.45 m between rows. The 26, 27, 28 and 34 F_3 families derived from 26, 27, 28 and 34 randomly selected F_2 plants in the four crosses along with four checks were evaluated in augmented design during *rabi*, 2017 at the experimental plots of the Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, College of Agriculture, UAS, GKVK, Bengaluru. Each F_3 progeny was sown in a single row of 3 m length following a spacing of 0.15 m between plants and 0.45 m between rows. Data was recorded on all the F_2 plants, 10 randomly selected plants in each of the checks and parents and on 20 randomly selected plants in each of the F_3 progenies for eleven quantitative traits. The mean value of parents and checks in two replications were computed. Analysis of variance of F_3 progenies derived from all the four crosses was done using the method prescribed for augmented design. The mean values of 20 plants in each F_3 progeny were adjusted

to account for the block effect. The values of the individual F_2 plants and adjusted mean values of F_3 progeny plants were used to compute mean, standardized range (SR), phenotypic coefficient of variation (PCV) and frequency of transgressive segregants. The mean, PCV, standardized range and frequency of transgressive segregants were used as the criteria to assess breeding potential of crosses (Roy, 2000). The crosses which had high mean value, PCV, standardized range and frequency of transgressive segregants in F_2 and F_3 generations were predicted to have better breeding potential compared to the other crosses in terms of recovery of superior recombinants in advanced generations (Suresh *et al.*, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Though a breeder performs a large number of crosses, practically it is possible to forward and handle only a few crosses due to constraints in time, land, and human resource. This demands the use of a suitable method to predict the performance of a cross. Comparison of mean value, PCV, standardized range and frequency of transgressive segregants in the early segregating generations derived from crosses, serves as a useful method to assess the relative breeding potential of the crosses to isolate superior segregants (Anilkumar *et al.*, 2021). In this study the mean value, PCV, standardized range and frequency of transgressive segregants of four crosses for 11 traits were assessed and compared in F_2 and F_3 generations derived from four crosses.

In parents, the mean value of yield attributing traits such as clusters per plant, pods per cluster, pods per plant, seeds per pod, pod yield per plant and seed yield per plant were high in the female parents PL-2 and PL-5 (**Table 1**). Among the female parents, mean value of most of the traits was found to be high in PL-2, while among male parents *viz.*, EC-402104, IC-27749 and NBC-39, the mean values were higher for NBC-39 (**Table 1**). Thus, the crosses with PL-2 and NBC-39 as parents *viz.*, PL-2 \times NBC-39 and PL-2 \times EC-402104 are likely to be more potent and productive. In the F_2 generation, mean value for branches per plant, clusters per plant, pod length, pods per plant, seeds per pod, pod yield per plant and seed yield per plant were higher in PL-2 \times NBC-39. In addition to this, average plant height, pod length, clusters per plant and seeds per pod were lower in PL-2 \times EC-402104, compared to other three crosses (**Table 2**). In F_3 generation, pod length, pods per plant, pod yield per plant and seed yield per plant were higher in PL-2 \times NBC-39. Seeds per pod were high in PL-2 \times NBC-39 and PL-5 \times EC-402104. Pod length was high in PL-2 \times EC-402104, whereas, plant height and branches per plant were comparable among the F_3 generations of four crosses. Altogether, there was a general increase in trend of mean values from F_2 to F_3 for plant height, clusters per plant, pods per cluster, pod length, seeds per pod, pod yield per plant and seed yield per plant in all the

Table 1. Estimates of mean values of eleven traits in parents of the four crosses of cowpea

| Characters | Pant Lobia-5 | Pant Lobia-2 | IC-27749 | EC-402104 | NBC-39 |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Days to first flowering | 51 ± 0.52 | 51 ± 0.55 | 52 ± 0.61 | 45 ± 0.53 | 44 ± 0.38 |
| Plant height (cm) | 35.5 ± 0.78 | 37.5 ± 0.98 | 43.5 ± 0.51 | 45.7 ± 0.75 | 46.5 ± 0.37 |
| Branches per plant | 5.5 ± 0.11 | 4.5 ± 0.12 | 6.5 ± 0.11 | 6.5 ± 0.09 | 6 ± 0.09 |
| Clusters per plant | 15 ± 0.77 | 14.5 ± 0.63 | 13 ± 0.55 | 12.5 ± 0.37 | 13 ± 0.32 |
| Pods per cluster | 1.75 ± 0.04 | 1.75 ± 0.04 | 1.5 ± 0.03 | 1.5 ± 0.04 | 1.5 ± 0.03 |
| Pod length (cm) | 17.5 ± 0.24 | 18 ± 0.12 | 17.5 ± 0.15 | 16.5 ± 0.11 | 18 ± 0.22 |
| Pods per plant | 28 ± 1.57 | 29 ± 1.23 | 27 ± 0.62 | 22 ± 1.13 | 24 ± 1.22 |
| Seeds per pod | 12.5 ± 0.34 | 13.5 ± 0.08 | 11.5 ± 0.25 | 11 ± 0.18 | 12 ± 0.13 |
| Pod yield per plant (g) | 51.3 ± 2.49 | 53.3 ± 2.3 | 47.4 ± 1.91 | 47.3 ± 2.59 | 49.7 ± 2.16 |
| Seed yield per plant (g) | 31.1 ± 1.31 | 32.7 ± 1.03 | 23.9 ± 1.06 | 22.7 ± 1.46 | 23.1 ± 1.49 |
| Test weight (g) | 12.3 ± 0.04 | 12.22 ± 0.07 | 11.7 ± 0.08 | 12.01 ± 0.08 | 11.9 ± 0.05 |

Table 2. Estimates of mean values of quantitative traits in F_2 and F_3 generations of four crosses of cowpea

| Characters | PL-5 × IC-27749 | | PL-2 × EC-402104 | | PL-2 × NBC-39 | | PL-5 × EC-402104 | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | F_2 | F_3 | F_2 | F_3 | F_2 | F_3 | F_2 | F_3 |
| Days to first flowering | 47.32 ± 1.50 | 46.52 ± 1.19 | 46.84 ± 1.80 | 47.49 ± 1.19 | 46.53 ± 1.50 | 49.36 ± 1.19 | 47.41 ± 1.50 | 48.09 ± 1.19 |
| Plant height (cm) | 37.47 ± 0.54 | 42.65 ± 0.25 | 33.39 ± 0.39 | 41.41 ± 2.51 | 36.29 ± 2.90 | 41.93 ± 2.51 | 35.00 ± 2.90 | 42.49 ± 2.51 |
| Branches per plant | 05.19 ± 0.11 | 04.49 ± 0.03 | 05.30 ± 0.13 | 04.47 ± 0.30 | 05.68 ± 0.10 | 04.49 ± 0.30 | 05.14 ± 0.08 | 04.27 ± 0.30 |
| Clusters per plant | 10.93 ± 0.29 | 13.21 ± 0.76 | 10.37 ± 0.27 | 13.48 ± 0.76 | 12.49 ± 0.31 | 14.45 ± 0.76 | 11.67 ± 0.32 | 14.47 ± 0.76 |
| Pods per cluster | 01.56 ± 0.03 | 01.86 ± 0.24 | 01.58 ± 0.03 | 02.00 ± 0.23 | 01.60 ± 0.02 | 01.83 ± 0.24 | 01.68 ± 0.03 | 01.84 ± 0.24 |
| Pod length (cm) | 18.62 ± 0.16 | 24.36 ± 1.46 | 16.21 ± 1.60 | 27.76 ± 1.46 | 20.22 ± 1.60 | 26.30 ± 1.46 | 18.61 ± 1.50 | 25.97 ± 1.46 |
| Pods per plant | 17.14 ± 0.59 | 16.96 ± 0.47 | 18.49 ± 0.30 | 16.38 ± 0.47 | 18.99 ± 0.40 | 17.23 ± 0.48 | 17.62 ± 0.40 | 16.61 ± 0.48 |
| Seeds per pod | 12.08 ± 0.15 | 12.44 ± 0.58 | 10.95 ± 0.11 | 11.18 ± 0.58 | 12.16 ± 0.16 | 11.27 ± 0.58 | 11.20 ± 0.13 | 11.95 ± 0.58 |
| Pod yield per plant (g) | 32.52 ± 2.50 | 40.09 ± 2.81 | 33.98 ± 2.30 | 42.01 ± 2.82 | 40.16 ± 2.50 | 46.97 ± 2.82 | 34.93 ± 2.70 | 41.74 ± 2.82 |
| Seed yield per plant (g) | 23.67 ± 1.70 | 23.15 ± 1.55 | 22.93 ± 1.50 | 24.79 ± 1.55 | 24.80 ± 1.70 | 27.11 ± 1.55 | 23.88 ± 1.70 | 25.87 ± 1.55 |
| Test weight (g) | 12.60 ± 0.30 | 12.39 ± 0.27 | 12.37 ± 0.30 | 12.40 ± 0.27 | 12.71 ± 0.30 | 12.32 ± 0.27 | 12.18 ± 0.30 | 12.04 ± 0.27 |

four crosses (**Table 2**). In F_2 , the PCV for eight traits such as, days to first flowering, branches per plant, pods per cluster, pod length, seeds per pod, pod yield per plant and seed yield per plant were high in $PL-2 \times NBC-39$ followed by $PL-5 \times EC-402104$. In F_3 generation, the high PCV values for nine traits such as days to first flowering, plant height, branches per plant, clusters per plant, pods per cluster, pod length, pods per plant, pod yield per plant and seed yield per plant were observed in cross $PL-2 \times NBC-39$ followed by $PL-5 \times EC-402104$ (**Table 3**). An increasing trend in PCV from F_2 to F_3 for eight traits such as days to first flowering, plant height, clusters per plant, pods per cluster, pod length, pods per plant, pod yield and seed yield per plant were observed in $PL-2 \times NBC-39$ (**Table 3**). Whereas a decreasing trend from F_2 to F_3 was noticed for all traits except for days to first flowering and pod length in $PL-5 \times IC-27749$ and branches per plant, pods per cluster, pod length and pods per plant in $PL-2 \times$

$EC-402104$. A decreasing trend in PCV for all traits except branches per plant and pod length was noticed in $PL-5 \times EC-402104$. In F_2 generation, the standardised range for plant height, secondary branches per plant, clusters per plant, pod length and pods per plant were high in $PL-2 \times NBC-39$ than in other three crosses. But standardised range for days to first flowering was high in $PL-5 \times EC-402104$ and for seeds per pod and test weight it was high in $PL-2 \times EC-402104$ (**Table 4**). In F_3 generation, the standardised range for plant height, pod length, seeds per pod and seed yield per plant were higher in $PL-2 \times NBC-39$ than other three crosses. But for clusters per plant, pods per plant and pod yield per plant the standardised range was higher in $PL-5 \times IC-27749$. For days to first flowering and branches per plant, standardised range was high in $PL-2 \times EC-402104$, and for pods per cluster and for test weight it was high in $PL-5 \times EC-402104$. The frequency of segregants that

Table 3. Estimates of PCV of quantitative traits in F_2 and F_3 generations of four crosses of cowpea (Per cent)

| Characters | PL-5 × IC-27749 | | PL-2 × EC-402104 | | PL-2 × NBC-39 | | PL-5 × EC-402104 | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------|------------------|-------|---------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| | F_2 | F_3 | F_2 | F_3 | F_2 | F_3 | F_2 | F_3 |
| Days to first flowering | 04.29 | 04.68 | 05.18 | 05.04 | 05.57 | 05.68 | 05.36 | 04.28 |
| Plant height | 14.63 | 13.40 | 20.01 | 16.08 | 17.74 | 18.33 | 16.36 | 10.09 |
| Branches per plant | 20.53 | 15.95 | 24.35 | 26.13 | 29.50 | 26.93 | 13.76 | 16.97 |
| Clusters per plant | 26.30 | 20.60 | 23.55 | 18.81 | 28.49 | 28.83 | 30.01 | 25.42 |
| Pods per cluster | 22.67 | 13.41 | 21.17 | 24.25 | 23.15 | 29.85 | 21.75 | 13.66 |
| Pod length | 12.12 | 17.49 | 12.61 | 17.89 | 16.24 | 23.49 | 09.51 | 18.61 |
| Pods per plant | 34.08 | 22.74 | 33.20 | 35.34 | 34.92 | 35.71 | 35.74 | 23.03 |
| Seeds per pod | 12.06 | 04.57 | 13.05 | 12.60 | 14.67 | 10.20 | 13.76 | 06.52 |
| Pod yield per plant | 36.51 | 20.71 | 36.73 | 23.05 | 50.44 | 52.17 | 37.82 | 25.36 |
| Seed yield per plant | 38.60 | 14.57 | 37.44 | 28.49 | 39.67 | 39.72 | 34.84 | 22.22 |
| Test weight | 08.44 | 01.84 | 05.53 | 02.32 | 08.14 | 2.17 | 05.82 | 02.82 |

Table 4. Estimates of standardised range of quantitative traits in F_2 and F_3 generations of four crosses of cowpea

| Characters | PL-5 × IC-27749 | | PL-2 × EC-402104 | | PL-2 × NBC-39 | | PL-5 × EC-402104 | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| | Standardized Range | | Standardized Range | | Standardized Range | | Standardized Range | |
| | F_2 | F_3 | F_2 | F_3 | F_2 | F_3 | F_2 | F_3 |
| Days to first flowering | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0.29 | 0.23 | 0.23 | 0.24 | 0.27 |
| Plant height (cm) | 1.06 | 0.35 | 1.31 | 0.29 | 1.14 | 0.49 | 0.94 | 0.47 |
| Branches per plant | 1.35 | 0.56 | 1.6 | 0.72 | 2.45 | 0.55 | 1.36 | 0.58 |
| Clusters per plant | 1.83 | 1.02 | 2.32 | 0.82 | 3.37 | 0.76 | 2.67 | 0.62 |
| Pods per cluster | 0.96 | 0.36 | 0.94 | 0.35 | 0.95 | 0.43 | 0.93 | 0.56 |
| Pod length (cm) | 0.84 | 0.16 | 0.84 | 0.34 | 1.12 | 0.38 | 0.91 | 0.15 |
| Pods per plant | 2.8 | 1.15 | 2.59 | 0.91 | 3.45 | 0.98 | 2.94 | 1 |
| Seeds per pod | 1.16 | 0.11 | 1.55 | 0.49 | 1.06 | 0.68 | 1.12 | 0.37 |
| Pod yield per plant (g) | 3.36 | 1.26 | 2.79 | 1.11 | 3.52 | 1.1 | 3.08 | 1.16 |
| Seed yield per plant(g) | 3.21 | 0.94 | 2.84 | 1.1 | 3.23 | 1.1 | 3.09 | 1.06 |
| Test weight (g) | 0.16 | 0.06 | 0.72 | 0.16 | 0.42 | 0.12 | 0.3 | 0.23 |

surpassed the higher scoring parent for branches per plant, clusters per plant, pods per plant, pod yield per plant, seed yield per plant and test weight were higher in F_2 derived from PL-2 × NBC-39. For plant height and seeds per pod, the frequency of segregants surpassing the higher performing parent were high in PL-5 × IC-27749, while for pod length, it was high in PL-5 × EC-402104. In F_3 generation, the frequency of segregants that transgressed higher scoring parent for branches per plant, pods per cluster, pods per plant, seeds per pod, pod yield per plant, seed yield per plant and test weight were high in PL-5 × IC-27749 (**Table 5**). While, for days to first flowering, clusters per plant and pod length the frequency was high in PL-5 × EC-402104. But the

frequency of transgressive segregants that surpassed the lower performing parent for most of the traits were high in F_2 and F_3 generations derived from PL-2 × EC-402104 and PL-5 × EC-402104 than other two crosses (**Table 5**). In addition to this, the frequency of transgressive segregants surpassing superior parent was showing an increasing trend from F_2 to F_3 for days to first flowering, clusters per plant, plant height, pods per plant, seeds per pod, pod yield per plant, seed yield per plant and test weight across all the four crosses.

Based on *per se* performance, F_2 and F_3 generations for seed and pod yield per plant and most of its attributing traits were higher in PL-2 × NBC-39 followed by

Table 5. Estimates of frequency (%) of transgressive segregants for quantitative traits in F_2 and F_3 generations of four crosses of cowpea

| Characters | Progeny | PL-5 × IC-27749 | | PL-2 × EC-402104 | | PL-2 × NBC-39 | | PL-5 × EC-402104 | |
|-------------------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | > High parent | < Low parent | > High parent | < Low parent | > High parent | < Low parent | > High parent | < Low parent |
| Days to first flowering | F_2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 56.09 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 31.35 |
| | F_3 | 10 | 22.12 | 14.26 | 23.7 | 25.36 | 10.18 | 29.85 | 30.29 |
| Plant height | F_2 | 18.81 | 22.28 | 2.27 | 50.14 | 4.33 | 49.46 | 0.4 | 49.6 |
| | F_3 | 17.31 | 5 | 12.78 | 20.56 | 2.5 | 12.32 | 8.38 | 3.53 |
| Branches per plant | F_2 | 6.44 | 32.67 | 11.05 | 20.68 | 11.19 | 10.47 | 3.57 | 33.73 |
| | F_3 | 0.58 | 68.46 | 0.37 | 35 | 1 | 31.25 | 0.15 | 42.5 |
| Clusters per plant | F_2 | 6.93 | 33.66 | 11.9 | 48.44 | 12.83 | 26.71 | 10.71 | 29.76 |
| | F_3 | 26.92 | 19.42 | 29.44 | 19.81 | 33.04 | 15.36 | 36.91 | 11.76 |
| Pods per cluster | F_2 | 0 | 32.67 | 0 | 33.43 | 0 | 29 | 0 | 30.56 |
| | F_3 | 0.38 | 14.04 | 0.37 | 2.59 | 4 | 12 | 0 | 11.62 |
| Pod length | F_2 | 22.77 | 27.23 | 3.97 | 56.94 | 27.44 | 29.6 | 57.94 | 2.78 |
| | F_3 | 1.73 | 38.65 | 1.11 | 25.56 | 1.96 | 34.11 | 8.24 | 2.94 |
| Pods per plant | F_2 | 3.47 | 40.59 | 8.78 | 26.06 | 10.47 | 31.05 | 8.33 | 17.46 |
| | F_3 | 23.08 | 21.92 | 38.15 | 12.04 | 38.39 | 17.14 | 31.03 | 16.32 |
| Seeds per pod | F_2 | 12.38 | 11.39 | 2.55 | 22.1 | 5.54 | 24.55 | 2.78 | 18.65 |
| | F_3 | 2.58 | 3.27 | 0.56 | 32.59 | 8.66 | 44.64 | 4.85 | 8.68 |
| Pod yield per plant | F_2 | 2.97 | 67.82 | 5.38 | 58.36 | 15.08 | 46.83 | 6.14 | 54.15 |
| | F_3 | 16.35 | 48.08 | 22.04 | 42.04 | 31.32 | 34.85 | 23.21 | 40.89 |
| Seed yield per plant | F_2 | 12.87 | 31.19 | 10.2 | 28.33 | 30.89 | 24.6 | 18.41 | 20.58 |
| | F_3 | 10.19 | 32.5 | 19.07 | 19.63 | 31.35 | 20.36 | 28.68 | 18.38 |
| Test weight | F_2 | 7.92 | 0 | 17.85 | 6.8 | 18.61 | 1.59 | 6.5 | 6.86 |
| | F_3 | 12.69 | 0 | 18.15 | 0 | 23.73 | 1.07 | 15.29 | 0.59 |

Table 6. Estimates of means of ten best plants identified in F_3 population derived from PL-2 × NBC-39 in cowpea

| Pedigree of the F_3 plants | Days to first flowering | Plant height (cm) | Branches per plant | Clusters per plant | Pods per cluster | Pod length (cm) | Pods per plant | Seeds per pod | Pod yield per plant (g) | Seed yield per plant (g) | Test weight (g) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| PL-2NBC-127-18 | 48.00 | 42.00 | 5.00 | 20.00 | 1.50 | 16.2 | 52.0 | 10.2 | 72.30 | 42.70 | 12.32 |
| PL-2NBC-284-1 | 48.00 | 45.00 | 5.00 | 18.00 | 1.50 | 16.2 | 54.0 | 09.2 | 65.90 | 41.60 | 12.42 |
| PL-2NBC-41-9 | 51.00 | 36.00 | 6.00 | 17.00 | 1.75 | 15.7 | 40.0 | 09.6 | 64.50 | 41.40 | 12.39 |
| PL-2NBC-25-15 | 48.00 | 44.00 | 5.00 | 18.00 | 1.50 | 16.8 | 36.0 | 10.1 | 63.19 | 41.10 | 12.12 |
| PL-2NBC-25-8 | 47.00 | 36.00 | 4.00 | 19.00 | 1.50 | 16.7 | 33.0 | 13.3 | 59.51 | 41.07 | 12.10 |
| PL-2NBC-195-7 | 47.00 | 39.00 | 5.00 | 16.00 | 1.50 | 16.5 | 36.0 | 11.3 | 63.17 | 40.23 | 12.22 |
| PL-2NBC-153-5 | 52.00 | 39.00 | 6.00 | 18.00 | 2.50 | 17.4 | 32.0 | 12.6 | 58.20 | 39.40 | 12.15 |
| PL-2NBC-17-8 | 45.00 | 37.00 | 4.00 | 17.00 | 1.50 | 17.5 | 32.0 | 11.1 | 59.10 | 39.20 | 12.19 |
| PL-2NBC-299-2 | 55.00 | 37.00 | 5.00 | 16.00 | 1.50 | 16.4 | 31.0 | 10.4 | 57.66 | 38.80 | 12.21 |
| PL-2NBC-17-9 | 50.00 | 41.00 | 4.00 | 16.00 | 2.00 | 16.1 | 29.0 | 09.9 | 57.04 | 37.60 | 12.19 |
| Checks | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AV-6 | 42.30 | 51.60 | 5.20 | 11.20 | 2.30 | 17.5 | 26.7 | 12.9 | 51.69 | 33.30 | 12.38 |
| KBC-2 | 46.60 | 49.50 | 4.80 | 14.20 | 1.90 | 16.8 | 19.6 | 10.8 | 42.46 | 29.26 | 12.12 |
| SEm \pm | 00.41 | 00.38 | 0.09 | 00.33 | 0.03 | 0.15 | 0.63 | 0.13 | 01.91 | 01.07 | 00.05 |
| CD @ P=0.05 | 02.51 | 02.41 | 1.16 | 02.24 | 0.68 | 1.49 | 3.11 | 1.44 | 05.42 | 04.05 | 00.85 |

PL-5 × EC-402104. And, there was a general increasing trend of means from F_2 to F_3 for all the 11 traits in all the four crosses. The results of estimates of PCV for most of the traits revealed a high magnitude in F_2 and F_3 generations of PL-2 × NBC-39 followed by PL-5 × EC-402104 suggesting that, cross PL-2 × NBC-39 has a considerably high variation for traits followed by PL-5 × EC-402104 in comparison with other two crosses and hence, providing a scope to practice selection to recover desirable genotypes in the later segregating generations of these crosses. Also, an increasing trend in PCV was observed for more than half of the traits from F_2 to F_3 generation in these two crosses. Similar methods were also used by earlier researchers to predict breeding potential of crosses in finger millet (Krishnappa et al., 2009) and dolichos bean (Suresh et al., 2017). The higher *per se* estimates of standardised range and high frequency of segregants surpassing the higher scoring parent for seed yield and most of its attributing traits in F_2 and F_3 generations derived from PL-2 × NBC-39 followed by PL-5 × EC-402104 suggested the possibility of recovering desirable extreme phenotypes in later generations.

From the comparison of mean values, PCV, standardized range and frequency of transgressive segregants among four crosses in F_2 and F_3 generations, it could be opined that cross PL-2 × NBC-39 was predicted to possess high breeding potential in terms of recovery of desirable recombinants in advanced generations, followed by PL-5 × EC-402104, compared to other two crosses. Identification of 10 best F_3 plants that surpassed the checks AV-6 and KBC-2 for seed and pod yield per plant and most of the other yield contributing traits in the F_3 progenies derived from PL-2 × NBC-39 supported the opinion that was drawn regarding the better breeding potential of PL-2 × NBC-39 (Table 6). Identification of these 10 best F_3 plants also supported the utility of traits mean values, variances, standardized range and frequency of transgressive segregants in predicting the breeding potential of any cross.

REFERENCES

Anilkumar, C., Mohan Rao, A. and Ramesh, S. 2021. Breeding potential of crosses derived from parents differing in fruiting habit traits in chilli (*Capsicum annuum* L.). *Genet Resour Crop Evol.*, **68**: 45–50. [\[Cross Ref\]](#)

Babariya, C. A., Dhaduk, L.K., Sapovadiya, M. H. Vavdiya, P. A. and Mungra, K. S. 2016. Combining ability studies for seed yield and contributing characters of F1 and F2 generations in cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp.]. *Electronic Journal of Plant Breeding*, **7**(3): 649-656. [\[Cross Ref\]](#)

Bernardo, R. 2020. Breeding for quantitative traits in plants, 3rdedn. Stemma Press, Woodbury, Minnesota.

Dudley, J. W. 1984. A method of identifying lines for use in improving parents of a single cross. *Crop Sci.*, **24**:355–357. [\[Cross Ref\]](#)

Keerthi, A. P. 2017. Combining ability for grain zinc, iron and protein contents and pod yield and its component traits in cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp.]. *M.Sc. (Agri) Thesis*, Univ. Agric. Sci., Bengaluru.

Krishnappa, M., Ramesh, S., Chandraprakash, J., Jayaramegowda, Bharathi and Dayal, D. D. 2009. Breeding potential of selected crosses for genetic improvement of finger millet. *J. SAT Agricultural Research*, **7**:1-6.

Manju Devi, S. and Jayamani, P. 2018. Genetic variability, heritability, genetic advance studies in cowpea germplasm [*Vigna unguiculata* (L.) Walp.]. *Electronic Journal of Plant Breeding*, **9**(2), 476-481. [\[Cross Ref\]](#)

Melchinger, A. E. 1987. Expectation of means and variances of testcrosses produced from F_2 and backcross individuals and their selfed progenies. *Heredity*, **59**:105–115. [\[Cross Ref\]](#)

Patel, H., Patel, J. B., Sharma, S. C. and Achary, A. S. 2013. Genetics of seed yield and its components in cowpea [*Vigna unguiculata* L. Walp.]. *Trends in Biosci.*, **6**(5): 631-636.

Roy, D. 2000. Plant Breeding-Analysis and exploitation of genetic variation. Narosa, Publishing House, New Delhi, India.

Simmonds, N. W. 1976. Evolution of crop plants (book), published by Longman Group Ltd.

Suresh, Shivakumar, M. S., Chandrakant, Ramesh, S. and Keerthi, C. M. 2017. Breeding potential of crosses in Dolichos bean (*Lablab purpureus* L. Sweet var *lignosus*). *Environ. Ecol.*, **35** (1): 33-38.