



e-ISSN: 2319-8753 | p-ISSN: 2320-6710

# IJIRSET

International Journal of Innovative Research in  
**SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY**

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

Volume 10, Issue 6, June 2021

**ISSN** INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA

**Impact Factor: 7.512**

9940 572 462

6381 907 438

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# Evaluation, Adaptability and Yield Performance of Open Pollinated Maize Varieties in Bindhyan Areas and Eastern UP

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**ABSTRACT:** High yielding maize varieties had contributed significant yield increase in the national maize production. High yielding varieties were established from series of activities on germplasm improvement. The products of maize germplasm improvement are classified into open pollinated variety and hybrid variety. In India, before the year of 2000 germplasm improvement were focused on open pollinated variety development, due to its low cost, and the seed can be produced easily, when commercial maize seed industries had not developed. During this period, several open pollinated varieties were released (i.e. Harapan, Arjuna, Kalingga, and Bisma) possessing high yield potential, mid-early maturity, resistance to downy mildew disease, and adaptive to various environments. The OP varieties during those period dominated farmers' maize planting area. In the last 10 years, hybrid varieties were developed by commercial maize seed industries, therefore, the use of open pollinated varieties were decreasing. Farmers shifted their interest to high yielding varieties. The OP varieties were less supported by government, and seed production subsystem was weakened. However for the less developed farming enterprises, open pollinated varieties are still needed, thus the seeds are distributed in sufficient quantities to the local seed growers. The flow of seeds from the foundation seed, stock seed, to the extension seed, however, is unreliable due to the uncertainty of the markets.

**Bindhyan Range**, broken range of hills forming the southern escarpment of the central upland of India. From Gujarat state on the west, it extends about 675 miles (1,086 km) across Madhya Pradesh state to abut on the Ganges (Ganga) River valley near Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. The mountains form the southern edge of the Malwa Plateau and then divide into two branches: the Kaimur Range, running north of the Son River into western Bihar state, and the southern branch, running between the upper reaches of the Son and Narmada rivers to meet the Satpura Range in the Maikala Range (or Amarkantak Plateau). The **Bindhyan Range**, at an elevation from 1,500 to 3,500 feet (450 to 1,100 metres), gives rise to the main southern tributaries of the Ganges-Yamuna system, including the Chambal, Betwa, Ken, and Tons rivers. Because of their horizontal sandstone structure, the mountains tend to be flat-topped and plateaulike. The 2nd-century-CE Greek geographer Ptolemy called them the Vindius. The range is regarded as marking the border between northern and peninsular India.

The present investigation shows the evaluation, adaptability and yield performance of open pollinated maize varieties in bindhyan areas and eastern UP

## I. INTRODUCTION

Maize (*Zea mays*, L.) is grown on approximately 140 million hectares (M ha) worldwide: 97 M ha in developing countries, 34 M ha in the high income countries, and 9 M ha in the Bindhyan areas of India. Maize is a staple food for several hundred million people in the developing world. The average inhabitant of eastern and southern India consumes 80 kg of maize each year. Annual per capita maize utilization averages 100 kg in East UP and more than 190 kg in the Northern India, largely as animal feed in both cases. Unfortunately, developing countries do not produce enough maize to meet their needs and must therefore import approximately 30 million tons of maize annually. Use of improved cultivars and management practices should help increase maize yields and reduce imports in developing countries.[1]

Improved OPVs (**Open Pollinated Varieties**) are easier to develop than hybrids, their seed production is simpler and relatively inexpensive, and subsistence farmers who grow them can save their own seed for planting the following



season, reducing their dependence on external sources. Since input requirements of OPVs and management practices used for them are similar to those for the landraces that poor farmers currently grow, adoption and farmer-to-farmer seed movement of OPVs are relatively easier. Perhaps this is why improved OPVs occupy more maize and landrace cultivars will help increase maize yields. In addition, increased use of seed of improved OPVs by farmers should encourage investments by private and public seed enterprises, resulting in the eventual adoption and use of hybrids in the Bindhyan areas. The procedures for the production of hybrid seed and maintenance of parental lines are well documented.

Since maize is an open-pollinated crop, it exhibits high genetic variability. Genetically diverse maize types are routinely crossed to develop maize populations (composites, gene pools, and advanced generations of varietal crosses, etc.) which are then improved through recurrent selection. A bulk from the improved population is often released as an improved OPV for cultivation. Unfortunately, many released OPVs are not sufficiently uniform in agronomic characteristics, which reduces their acceptance by farmers. This situation largely resulted from the somewhat looser definition of “variety” that prevailed until recently. More recently, however, a variety has come to be redefined as an assemblage of relatively uniform phenotypes that is different, relatively uniform, and stable. An OPV is “different” if it possesses traits that distinguish it from other known varieties and define its identity. It is relatively uniform and stable over time for important agronomic traits in its area of adaptation. If constituted by intermating 8-10 selected families or lines of similar maturity, plant and ear height, and other morphological traits, an OPV will be more uniform, more acceptable to farmers, and easier to maintain and produce seed for.[2,3]

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since outstanding families identified during a recurrent selection program are normally used in the formation of OPVs, development of OPVs is influenced by the recurrent selection scheme used to improve maize populations. The families used to form an OPV differ in their genetic complexity, depending on the population improvement method used. The inbreeding level of the population from which the families are selected, the number and type of families selected, and the procedure employed in intermating them to form an OPV have a direct effect on the level of inbreeding of the resulting OPV. Use of fewer families makes it easier to ensure that they are truly superior and similar in morphological traits. However, the fewer the families intermated, the greater the inbreeding depression. Regardless of the recurrent selection scheme employed, 8-10 superior families should be identified based on their performance in multilocation tests. Using their remnant seed, the selected families should be intermated by making plant-to-plant diallel crosses among them to form an OPV. Diallel crossing among 10 or fewer genotypes is easily accomplished, permits more complete recombination, and reduces inbreeding. In the crossing block, if a family looks different from other families during any stage of its growth and development, it can be discarded before or after pollination. Plants of other families fertilized with pollen from the undesirable family must also be discarded. Superior OPVs can also be developed by recombining elite inbred lines not derived from a population improvement program. In this case, it is desirable to select 8-10 lines with high general combining ability and intermate them as described before. Highyielding OPVs have also been developed by crossing among four or five single- or two or three double-cross hybrids. We recommend that the parents of the hybrids — that is, the inbred lines — be selected and used instead of the hybrids themselves to form an OPV. This is because general combining ability is more important in the performance of OPVs than specific combining ability (which plays a greater role in the performance of hybrids). The F1 seed should be advanced to F2 by hand-pollination using any of the following two procedures to provide enough seed for the evaluation and maintenance of the OPV and to reduce heterotic effects. Assuming that 10 families were used to form the OPV, there would be 45 two-parent crosses. A roughly equal number (three to five) of ears selected from each cross can be shelled individually and equal amounts of seed from each ear bulked. Each of the 45 cross-bulks can be planted separately, represented by about 20 plants. Plant-to-plant crosses can be made between cross-bulks using healthy and vigorous plants.[4,5] If a cross-bulk is found undesirable, all crosses involving either of its parents can be discarded. For each family involved in the formation of an OPV, select roughly equal numbers (10-15) of ears from crossing the family as female with all other families as male. Ears should be shelled individually and equal amounts of seed from each ear involved in each family-cross bulked to prepare separate family-bulks. Thus, if 10 families were involved, there would be 10 family-cross bulks. These bulks can be planted individually and plant-to-plant crosses should be made among them. Any bulks exhibiting undesirable attributes can be discarded at any stage of plant development. This procedure does not preclude the presence of a poor family in the OPV, as the family would have contributed its pollen to seed used to prepare other family bulks. In both procedures, 100-200 handpollinated ears are selected and an equal quantity of seed from each ear bulked to produce the F2 seed. Selection for uniformity at this stage will prove useful in the subsequent stages of seed



multiplication and varietal maintenance. From each ear, 50-75 seeds can be saved separately to serve as progenitors of breeder's seed for use during the maintenance and seed production of the variety. The first procedure for advancing F1 seed to F2 is superior to the second, as it is more effective in ensuring that only superior families are included in the OPV. Whichever procedure is used, at least two sets of seed should be prepared, in case one is lost by accident.[6,7]

## II. DISCUSSION

Evaluation and variety release systems vary by country. The evaluation system should facilitate rapid identification of OPVs superior to checks; release and seed certification regulations should facilitate efficient delivery of the OPVs to the farmers. Data from about 25 properly conducted trials at research stations and in farmers' fields, under farmers' own management and under improved management conditions, should be enough to determine the performance, stability, and suitability of an OPV. Simple agronomic trials conducted in farmers' fields can form the basis for agronomic recommendations to accompany the OPV. An OPV should be stable in the expression of its morphological traits and yield to be acceptable to farmers. When an OPV nears the release stage, it should be described for salient attributes in the area of its adaptation to guide its maintenance and seed certification in the future. It should possess some genetic feature(s) to distinguish it from other OPVs. Characters such as adaptation, maturity, plant height, ear height, stem pigmentation, tassel color, tassel size and configuration, leaf orientation, midrib color, silk color, ear shape, cob color, kernel color, kernel texture, kernel shape, and tolerance or resistance to pests and pathogens should be considered in varietal descriptions. When quantitative characters are used to describe an OPV, expected standard deviation from means should be given to indicate the acceptable variation within the variety (e.g.,  $\pm s$ ). For qualitative characters, the expected variation may be given in percentages (e.g.,  $\pm \%$ ). In this case, setting acceptable upper limits for the variation would be desirable (e.g., pink cobs 5%). Quantitative descriptors are of value in the maintenance of OPVs and production of breeder's seed. Qualitative traits are more useful during seed multiplication and certification. An important attribute of a good OPV is its uniformity. However, even though elite and relatively similar genotypes are recombined to produce it, an OPV will seldom be as uniform as a single-cross hybrid for most morphological traits. Therefore, certification standards for OPVs should be flexible, realistic, and appropriate for the conditions prevailing in a given country.[8,9]

## III. RESULTS

The maintenance and seed production of OPVs can be managed through three stages of seed multiplication: breeder's seed, foundation seed, and certified seed. The breeder's seed field should show the minimum variation for morphological traits; the certified seed field will have more variation; and the foundation seed field will be intermediate between the two. The certification standards should be established carefully for these seed categories to help guide quality control during multiplication but not impede seed production and distribution. An important consideration during maintenance and different phases of seed production of an OPV is the number of plants or ears to be used. This is particularly important during the production of breeder's seed and of the progenitors of breeder's seed. Two issues interact to determine the number: the number of plants or ears required to adequately represent an OPV and the quantity of seed required of a given phase to meet its future needs, without having to reproduce it too frequently. The number of plants or ears to represent an OPV depends on the genetic variability present within the OPV. Theoretical considerations and experiences and practices of national programs indicate that 100- 200 plants and ears would normally be sufficient to represent an OPV and provide adequate breeder's seed and seed of the progenitors of the breeder's seed for future maintenance and seed production.[10,11] However, both the number of ears selected and the number and size of rows planted with them can be adjusted, if greater quantities of seed are required for future use. It is recognized that some selection and inbreeding during these phases are inevitable but their effects should be minimized. Any selection during different phases of maintenance and seed production should focus on the identification of plants and ears that best represent the OPV. Breeder's seed is produced from breeder's seed itself and/or from the progenitors of breeder's seed. The responsibility for maintaining the purity of breeder's seed as long as the OPV is in production rests with the breeder. To maintain the highest level of purity, the breeder's seed plot should be small and manageable. To ensure that the OPV does not show excessive variation in succeeding generations, morphological traits of the plants and ears selected for breeder's seed should fall within  $\pm 0.7s$  (standard deviation) for quantitative traits. For qualitative traits, the acceptable range of variation can be  $\pm 3\%$ . When a released OPV is replaced by a superior one, maintenance of the old OPV is discontinued. Either of the two procedures may be used in the maintenance of the OPV and in production of its breeder's seed. Approximately 1,000 plants can be grown from the F2 seed bulk or from a balanced bulk of the ears saved as progenitors of breeder's seed and 400-500 plants that fit the phenotypic description of the

variety selected. Pollen from the selected plants can be bulked to pollinate these same plants. At harvest, 100- 200 ears, meeting the ear and kernel characteristics of the variety, are selected from the selected plants. A seed bulk of equal quantity from each ear is prepared to serve as breeder's seed. Approximately 50-75 seeds from each selected ear can be saved separately to serve as progenitors of breeder's seed for use during future varietal maintenance and seed production. If the demand for breeder's seed cannot be met by sampling the ears selected, seed can also be saved from other true-to-type ears produced on selected plants but not used as progenitors of breeder's seed. A representative sample from the selected ears as well as seed from other true-to-type handpollinated ears can be used for evaluation of the OPV. This is a simple and effective procedure for maintaining a variety and producing breeder's seed. It requires isolation and can be initiated with the seed of individually shelled 100-200 F<sub>2</sub> ears, saved as progenitors of the breeder's seed .[12]

Seed from these ears is planted as individual female rows (ear-rows) in a half-sib crossing block. The male rows are planted with a bulk made up by compositing equal quantities of seed from all ears. A planting system of 1 male : 2 or 3 females is used. All plants in the female rows are detasseled before they shed pollen. Up to 20-30% of the plants in the male rows that do not fit the description of the OPV can also be detasseled, depending upon the ratio of females to male used in planting. In this manner, better control can be exercised on the pollinator (male) rows. If detasseling is done carefully, the female rows will produce more seed of better quality. The male rows provide a good indication of environmental variation in the field. This facilitates selection among and within the female rows for those plants which conform to the varietal description. Prior to harvest, 4-8 plants in approximately 50% of the ear-rows that meet the varietal description for plant traits are selected and tagged. Two-to-four ears that best fit the ear and grain characteristics of the OPV are selected from the tagged plants in each family, to provide a total of 100-200 ears. Seed from these ears and other true-to-type ears can be used for breeder's seed, progenitors of breeder's seed, and for varietal evaluation, as described for the bulk pollination procedure.[13]

#### IV. CONCLUSION

To maintain genetic purity and avoid varietal deterioration, seed multiplication fields of OPVs should be adequately isolated. Isolations can be arranged by distance or by dates of sowing. A 300-meter separation from other maize fields flowering about the same time is considered adequate for breeder's seed and 200-meters for foundation seed, but the greater the distance, the better. Field experience, the differential maturities of materials, known trends of prevailing winds at flowering, and natural or artificial barriers should be considered in determining safe distances for isolation. Isolation by time of sowing allows planting an isolation block close to other isolation blocks or maize fields. Planting of the isolation block is done either sufficiently earlier or later than nearby maize plantings to ensure that stigma emergence and pollen-shed in one material is over before tassels in the nearby materials emerge. A combination of both, dates of sowing and distance, can also be used in planning isolations.

When several isolations need to be arranged in the same field, reliable information on number of days to pollen-shed of the materials is necessary. A time isolation can easily be inserted between two distance isolations with an adequate interval, so that their flowering does not coincide. Other Considerations in Planning Seed Production In addition to the proper maintenance and seed production of an OPV, other factors that influence timely provision of quality seed in adequate quantities to the farmers include maintenance of reserve stocks, choice of seed multiplication fields, and determination of quantity of seed to be produced. The need for saving and storing enough reserve seed to guard against losses from crop failures is well recognized in a seed production program. The reserve stocks help ensure continuity of a seed program. Sufficient reserve seed from the progenitors of breeder's seed, breeder's seed, and foundation seed should be kept under cold storage conditions for at least two generations. For certified seed, any surpluses can be stored for up to a year, under proper conditions. Maintenance of an OPV and production of its foundation seed should be done in its area of adaptation, where reproduction of all plants is possible. Rapid shifts in the genetic make-up and phenotypic characteristics of OPVs may occur if they are multiplied in areas outside their adaptation. This restriction is less important for certified seed, particularly if its production is only two generations away from the breeder's seed. The maintenance and seed production of different seed categories in their area of adaptation and under proper management also helps produce greater quantities of high quality seed. Adequate planning is necessary to avoid the possibilities of large shortages or surpluses in the supply of seed. The following factors help determine requirements of different seed categories:

- Potential requirement for certified seed (based on area to be planted with the OPV), which in turn determines the requirements for foundation and breeder's seed. [14]



- Mode of production of certified seed — seed generations needed to produce certified seed.
- Land requirements for the production of different categories of seed, based on their yield, considering male : female ratios and roging.
  - Seeding rate (usually lower than that used in commercial grain production) for production of breeder's, foundation, and certified seed.
- Seed replacement interval — one, two, or three years.

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