Assessment of Genotypic Variability, Cause Effect and Interrelationship among Yield Components in Chickpea (*Cicer arietinum* L.)

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/IJPSS/2021/v33i1930600

(1) Dr. Ahmed Medhat Mohamed Al-Nagger, Cairo University, Egypt.

Reviewers:

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Complete Peer review History: [https://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/73333](https://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/73333)

Original Research Article

Received 26 June 2021
Accepted 06 September 2021
Published 10 September 2021

ABSTRACT

The present investigation consists of 26 genotypes of Chickpea including one check, which were grown in the Field Experimentation Centre of the Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, SHUATS, Prayagraj during Rabi 2020 following RBD with three replications. The data were recorded on 11 characters. Assessment of genetic variability, cause effect and interrelationship among yield components in chickpea. High significant variation was obtained for all characters studied. High GCV and PCV in chickpea germplasm were observed for Total no of pods per plant, number of effective pods per plant, biological yield, seed yield. High estimate of heritability coupled with high genetic advance as percent of mean was recorded for No. of primary branches, No. of secondary branches, Total no of pods per plant, No. of effective pods per plant, biological yield, Seed yield per plant, Harvest index, Seed index. High values for heritability indicates that it may be due to higher contribution of genotypic components. Traits exhibiting high heritability coupled with genetic advance as percent of mean suggest that the traits are governed by additive gene action, equal contribution of additive and non-additive gene action respectively. Correlation coefficient analysis revealed that seed yield per plant exhibited positive and significant association with Biological yield per plant, Harvest index and plant height at genotypic and phenotypic levels.

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Correlation coefficient analysis revealed that seed yield per plant exhibited positive and significant association with Biological yield per plant, Harvest index and plant height at genotypic and phenotypic levels. Path analysis revealed that characters plant height, number of primary branches, biological yield and harvest index have positive direct effect on seed yield per plant at genotypic and phenotypic level.

**Keywords:** Chickpea; genetic variability; correlation and path analysis

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Chickpea (*Cicer arietinum* L.) is an integral part of an Indian agriculture since time immemorial, because of only its intrinsic value in terms of high protein content, carbohydrates, minerals, nitrogen fixing ability and indispensability as alternative crop for crop diversification. Chickpea (*Cicer arietinum* L.) belongs to genus *Cicer* and tribe Viciaceae, sub-order Papilionaceae of order Leguminosae (Bentham and Hooker, 1870). Out of total 39 known species are distributed mainly in central and western asia, two are found to be cultivated in india, viz., *Cicer arietinum*(2n = 14) which is most widely cultivated and *Cicer soongaricum* (2n = 16) cultivated in western temperate and alpine regions (9000-15000 ft.in altitude) of the Himalaya.

In India, chickpea is grown on 10.76 million hectares area and production contributed 11.16 million tonnes with the productivity of 1037 kg/ha in 2019-20. In U.P., chickpea production was 626 thousand tonnes with average yield of 1114 kg/ha from an area of 562 thousand ha during the year 2019-20 [1,2]. Chickpea from the regional variety trails was found to be a rich source mineral micro nutrients of iron Fe, Zn, Ca, Mg, K, Cu and P. The main proteins found in chickpeas, similar to other legumes, are Albumins and globulins. Smaller amounts of glutelins and prolamines are also present.

Selection is the basis of crop improvement and without genetic variability it could not be possible, hence it is necessary to make improvement in production of this crop by evaluation of different germplasm lines of chickpea. The efficiency of selection depends on identification of desirable genotypes and to know the extent of genetic variability present in population for trait of interest at phenotypic level [3-5]. The observed variability could be partitioned into heritable (genetic) and non-heritable (non-genetic) components. Hence the variability partitioned into heritable and non-heritable components with suitable genetic parameters such as genotypic coefficient of variation (GCV), phenotypic coefficient of variation (PCV), heritability (h²) and genetic advance (GA). The genetic variability in assed higher for number of pods/plant in chickpea as reported by Malik et al. [6] and Gul et al.

In chickpea association of one or more characters influenced by a large number of genes is elaborated statistically by correlation coefficients. Genotypic correlation coefficient provides measure of genotypes conjugation between characters. The methods of partitioning the correlation into direct and indirect effects by path coefficients analysis was suggested by Wright (1921).

2. **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The present investigation comprised of 26 diverse genotypes of chickpea including check variety (Pusa 362) was carried out at Genetics and Plant Breeding Research Farm of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture Technology and Sciences, Naini, Prayagraj (U.P.) during Rabi 2020-21. The experiment was conducted in Randomized Block Design (RBD) with three replications. The genotypes were sown on raised bed on 24 December, 2020. The row to row and plant to plant distance was kept 30×10 cm² spacing.

In each replication and in each plot, five plants were randomly selected and tagged excluding border plants to minimize border effects. Except, days to flowering and days to maturity, all the 11 characters studied were recorded on five randomly selected plants per plot. For days to flowering and days to maturity, the observations were recorded from the whole plot. Weights for studied were recorded in grams, with the help of a physical balance.

3. **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The presence of genetic variability is beneficial to the evolutionary survival of a species. In any crop yield improvement can be brought about through plant breeding but necessary variability upon which selection is to be practiced must be
available in the genetic material of such crop. Therefore, before going to any crop improvement programme, a plant breeder must survey and assess the variability for a given agronomic or yield component characters which can be estimates through variance, coefficient of variability (GCV, PCV), heritability and genetic advance, genetic advance as percent of mean. Genotypic coefficient of variation (GCV) ranged from 1.02 for Days to 50% flowering to 32.156 for Seed yield per plant. High GCV (>20%) was recorded for Seed yield per plant (32.156). Moderate GCV (>10%) was recorded for No of secondary branches (15.992), No. of primary branches (15.631). Phenotypic coefficient of variation (PCV) ranged from 1.09 for Days to 50% flowering to 32.954 Seed yield per plant. High PCV (>20%) was recorded for Seed yield per plant (32.954), Moderate PCV (>10%) was recorded for No. of primary branches per plant (17.776). Heritability (%) in the broad sense ranged from 29% to 95.4%. High heritability (broad sense) (>60%) was recorded for characters Biological yield per plant (95.4). Genetic advance (Table 3) showed that it was highest for character Total no of pods per plant (10.758). study genetic advance as % of mean varied from 1.123% to 64.636%. High genetic advance as % of mean (>20%) was recorded for Seed yield per plant (64.636).

The yield related traits displaying positive and significant association with seed yield per plant suggested that seed yield can be improved through simultaneous selection for these traits. Selection is generally based on phenotypic expression of traits. Hence selection for traits exhibiting positive genotypic and positive phenotypic correlation would be major use in indirect selection of seed yield respectively. (Table 2) Seed yield per plant showed positive and highly significant correlation with Plant height (0.531**), Biological yield per plant (0.962**), Seed yield per plant (0.810**). (Table 3) Seed yield per plant showed positive and significant association with Plant height (0.281*), Biological yield per plant (0.916**) and Harvest index (0.688**).

The path coefficient analysis suggested by specified the effective measure of direct and indirect cause of association and also depicts the relative importance of each factor involved in contributing to the final product i.e., yield. In order to find out the cause and effect relationship between seed yield and its related characters, path analysis allow separating direct effect and indirect effects through other attributes by partitioning correlation (Table 4). At genotypic level, maximum positive direct effect was depicted by Days to 50% flowering (0.0476) followed by Days to maturity (0.0372), Plant height (0.0218), No. of primary branches (0.1005), Total no of pods per plant (0.6695), Biological yield(0.8329), Harvest index (0.3483). (Table 5) At phenotypic level, maximum positive direct effect was depicted by Plant height (0.0078) followed by No. of primary branches (0.0443), No. of effective pods per plant (0.0579), Biological yield per plant (0.7713), Harvest index (0.2846).

![Genotypical Path Diagram for Seed yield per plant (g)](image-url)

**Fig. 1. Genotypic path for yield contributing traits for chickpea**
Table 1. Estimation of components of variance and genetic parameters for 11 characters in chickpea genotype

| Sl. No. | Characters                          | GCV   | PCV   | $h^2$ (%) | GA (5%) | GA as % of mean (5%) |
|---------|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------|---------|----------------------|
| 1       | Days to 50% flowering              | 1.02  | 1.909 | 36.24     | 0.916   | 1.123                |
| 2       | Days to maturity                   | 1.696 | 3.173 | 28.6      | 2.266   | 1.867                |
| 3       | Plant height                       | 4.282 | 7.956 | 29        | 1.784   | 4.747                |
| 4       | Number of primary branches         | 15.631| 17.776| 77.3      | 0.657   | 28.314               |
| 5       | Number of secondary branches       | 15.992| 17.418| 84.3      | 1.154   | 30.248               |
| 6       | Total number of pods per plant     | 28.23 | 29.461| 91.8      | 10.758  | 55.724               |
| 7       | Number of effective pods per plant | 28.544| 29.565| 93.2      | 9.101   | 56.77                |
| 8       | Biological yield per plant         | 26.584| 27.217| 95.4      | 9.978   | 53.491               |
| 9       | Seed index                         | 12.093| 13.583| 79.3      | 4.747   | 30.248               |
| 10      | Harvest index                      | 10.914| 12.699| 73.9      | 9.389   | 19.321               |
| 11      | Seed yield per plant               | 32.156| 32.954| 95.2      | 6.051   | 64.636               |

\( V_g = \) Genotypic variance; \( V_p = \) Phenotypic variance; \( GCV = \) Genotypic coefficient of variation; \( PCV = \) Phenotypic coefficient of variation; \( h^2 \) (bs) = Heritability at broad sense; \( GA = \) Genetic advance; \( GAM = \) Genetic advance as percent mean.

Table 2. Genotypic correlation among the different traits in chickpea

| DF 50% | DM    | PH    | NPBP  | NSBP  | NEPP  | BYPP  | SI    | HI    | GYPP  |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| DF 50% | 1     | -0.924** | 0.512** | 0.2128 | -0.357** | -0.306** | -0.2271 | -0.0438 | -0.619** | -0.363** |
| DM     | 1     | -0.944** | -0.1842 | -0.299** | -0.260* | -0.431** | 0.519** | -0.548** | -0.602** |
| PH     | 1     | 0.0274 | 0.1489 | 0.555** | 0.485** | 0.269* | -0.346** | 0.855** | 0.531** |
| NPBP   | 1     | 0.520** | 0.0444 | -0.003 | -0.0464 | -0.0918 | -0.148 | -0.431** | 0.962** |
| NSBP   | 1     | 0.432** | 0.372** | 0.1539 | -0.415** | -0.1383 | 0.0927 | 0.256* | 0.0707 |
| NEPP   | 1     | 0.967** | -0.0461 | -0.378** | 0.283* | 0.0868 | 0.0707 | 0.1181 |
| BYPP   | 1     | 0.0008 | -0.320** | 0.597** | 0.962** |
| SI     | 1     | 0.0725 | 0.1181 |
| HI     | 1     | 0.810** |

\( DF 50% : \) Days to 50% flowering, \( DM : \) Days to maturity, \( PH : \) Plant height, \( NPBP : \) Number of primary branches per plant, \( NSBP : \) Number of secondary branches per plant, \( NPP : \) Number of pods per plant, \( NEPP : \) Number of effective pods per plant, \( BYPP : \) Biological yield per plant, \( SI : \) Seed index, \( HI : \) Harvest index, \( GYPP : \) Grain yield per plant.
Table 3. Phenotypic correlation among the different traits in chickpea

| Character | DF 50% | DM | PH | NPBP | NSBP | NPP | NEPP | BYPP | SI | HI | GYPP |
|-----------|--------|----|----|------|------|-----|------|------|----|----|------|
| DF 50%    | 1      | 0.2660 | -0.1744 | 0.1834 | 0.1136 | -0.1664 | -0.1177 | -0.0824 | -0.0428 | -0.3390 | -0.2261 |
| DM        | 1      | -0.3681 | -0.0155 | -0.0969 | -0.1815 | -0.0788 | -0.2282 | 0.2458 | -0.2044 | -0.3152 |
| PH        | 1      | -0.0342 | 0.107 | 0.2869 | 0.2357 | 0.1782 | -0.2364 | 0.3511 | 0.2812 |
| NPBP      | 1      | 0.4434*** | 0.019 | -0.0139 | -0.0239 | -0.0684 | -0.0961 | -0.0300 |
| NSBP      | 1      | 0.3686** | 0.3121** | 0.1303 | -0.3012** | -0.0652 | 0.0697 |
| NPP       | 1      | 0.8820*** | -0.0351 | -0.3006** | 0.2109 | 0.0574 |
| NEPP      | 1      | -0.004 | -0.2470* | 0.2121 | 0.0836 |
| BYPP      | 1      | 0.158 | 0.4814*** | 0.916** |
| SI        | 0.158 | 1 | 0.072 | 0.0967 |
| HI        | 1      | 0.688** |
| GYPP      | 1      | 0.8820*** | 0.3121 | -0.2357 | 0.2121 | 0.0836 |

**DF 50%**: Days to 50% flowering, **DM**: Days to maturity, **PH**: Plant height, **NPBP**: Number of primary branches per plant, **NSBP**: Number of secondary branches per plant, **NPP**: Number of pods per plant, **NEPP**: Number of effective pods per plant, **BYPP**: Biological yield per plant, **SI**: Seed index, **HI**: Harvest index, **GYPP**: Grain yield per plant.

Table 4. Direct and indirect effects of 11 traits on seed yield in chickpea at Genotypic level

| Character | DF 50% | DM | PH | NPBP | NSBP | NPP | NEPP | BYPP | SI | HI | GYPP |
|-----------|--------|----|----|------|------|-----|------|------|----|----|------|
| DF 50%    | 0.0476 | 0.044 | -0.0412 | 0.0244 | 0.0101 | -0.017 | -0.0146 | -0.0108 | -0.0021 | -0.0295 | -0.3626 |
| DM        | 0.0343 | 0.0372 | -0.0351 | -0.0068 | -0.0111 | -0.0096 | -0.0037 | -0.016 | 0.0193 | -0.0204 | -0.6023 |
| PH        | -0.0188 | -0.0206 | 0.0218 | -0.0006 | 0.0032 | 0.0121 | 0.0106 | 0.0059 | -0.0075 | 0.0186 | 0.5306 |
| NSBP      | 0.0515 | -0.0185 | -0.0028 | 0.1005 | 0.0523 | 0.0004 | -0.0003 | -0.0047 | -0.0092 | -0.0149 | -0.0245 |
| NPP       | -0.0244 | 0.0342 | -0.017 | -0.0595 | -0.1144 | -0.0495 | -0.0426 | -0.0176 | 0.0475 | 0.0158 | 0.0927 |
| NEPP      | -0.2388 | -0.1738 | 0.3718 | 0.003 | 0.2895 | 0.6695 | 0.6476 | -0.0309 | -0.2532 | 0.1712 | 0.0707 |
| BYPP      | 0.1893 | 0.0619 | -0.3001 | 0.0018 | -0.2302 | -0.598 | -0.6183 | 0.0005 | 0.1978 | -0.1748 | 0.0868 |
| SI        | -0.1892 | -0.3591 | 0.2244 | -0.0387 | 0.1282 | -0.0384 | -0.0006 | 0.8329 | 0.1324 | 0.4975 | 0.9622 |
| HI        | 0.0014 | -0.0166 | 0.0111 | 0.0029 | 0.0133 | 0.0121 | 0.0103 | -0.0051 | -0.032 | -0.0023 | 0.1181 |
| GYPP      | -0.3626 | -0.6023 | 0.5306 | -0.0245 | 0.0927 | 0.0707 | 0.0868 | 0.9622 | 0.1181 | 0.8096 | 1 |
| Partial R² | -0.0173 | -0.0224 | 0.0116 | -0.0025 | -0.0106 | 0.0473 | -0.0537 | 0.8015 | -0.0038 | 0.282 |

**DF 50%**: Days to 50% flowering, **DM**: Days to maturity, **PH**: Plant height, **NPBP**: Number of primary branches per plant, **NSBP**: Number of secondary branches per plant, **NPP**: Number of pods per plant, **NEPP**: Number of effective pods per plant, **BYPP**: Biological yield per plant, **SI**: Seed index, **HI**: Harvest index, **GYPP**: Grain yield per plant.
### Table 5. Direct and indirect effects of 11 traits on seed yield in chickpea at Phenotypic level

| Character | DF 50% | DM   | PH   | NPBP | NSBP | NPP  | NEPP | BYPP | SI   | HI   | GYPP |
|-----------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| DF 50%    | 0.0537 | -0.0143 | 0.0094 | -0.0099 | -0.0061 | 0.0089 | 0.0063 | 0.0044 | 0.0023 | 0.0182 | -0.2261 |
| DM        | -0.0163 | -0.0613 | 0.0226 | 0.001 | 0.0059 | 0.0111 | 0.0048 | 0.014 | -0.0151 | 0.0125 | -0.3153 |
| PH        | -0.0014 | -0.0029 | 0.0078 | -0.0003 | 0.0008 | 0.0022 | 0.0018 | 0.0014 | -0.0018 | 0.0027 | 0.2812 |
| NPBP      | 0.0081 | -0.0007 | -0.0015 | 0.0443 | 0.0197 | 0.0008 | -0.0006 | -0.0011 | -0.003 | -0.0043 | -0.03 |
| NSBP      | -0.0053 | 0.0045 | -0.005 | -0.0206 | -0.0464 | -0.0171 | -0.0145 | -0.006 | 0.014 | 0.003 | 0.0697 |
| NPP       | 0.0075 | 0.0082 | -0.0129 | -0.0009 | -0.0166 | -0.0451 | -0.0398 | 0.0016 | 0.0136 | -0.0095 | 0.0574 |
| NEPP      | -0.0068 | -0.0046 | 0.0137 | -0.0008 | 0.0181 | 0.0511 | 0.0579 | -0.0002 | -0.0143 | 0.0123 | 0.0836 |
| BYPP      | -0.0635 | -0.176 | 0.1375 | -0.0184 | 0.1005 | -0.0271 | -0.0031 | 0.7713 | 0.1219 | 0.3713 | 0.9158 |
| SI        | 0.0018 | -0.0102 | 0.0098 | 0.0028 | 0.0124 | 0.0124 | 0.0102 | -0.0065 | -0.0413 | -0.003 | 0.0967 |
| HI        | -0.0965 | -0.0582 | 0.0999 | -0.0273 | -0.0186 | 0.06 | 0.604 | 0.137 | 0.0205 | 0.2846 | 0.688 |
| GYPP      | -0.2261 | -0.3153 | 0.2812 | -0.03 | 0.0697 | 0.0574 | 0.0836 | 0.9158 | 0.0967 | 0.688 | 1 |
| Partial R²| 0.0122 | 0.0193 | 0.0022 | -0.0013 | -0.0032 | -0.0026 | 0.0048 | 0.7064 | -0.004 | 0.1958 |

DF 50% : Days to 50% flowering, DM : Days to maturity, PH : Plant height, NPBP : Number of primary branches per plant, NSBP : Number of secondary branches per plant, NPP : Number of pods per plant, NEPP : Number of effective pods per plant, BYPP : Biological yield per plant, SI : Seed index, HI : Harvest index, GYPP : Grain yield per plant.
4. CONCLUSION

In the studied traits, phenotypic variances of Days to 50% flowering and Seed yield per plant were greater than genotypic variances, and this indicated that these traits are more influenced by environmental effects. According to the results of the correlation analysis, Seed yield per plant was significantly and positively correlated to biological yield per plant, Plant height, Harvest index. Improving these traits may increase Seed yield per plant. Path analysis of Seed yield per plant indicated that Plant height, Number of primary branches, Biological yield per plant, Harvest index exerted the greatest direct effect. These traits had major contributions to Seed yield per plant, and hence can increase the success of breeding studies of chickpea.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
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