#### **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# **Assessment of Genetic Diversity in Sesame (***Sesamum indicum* **L.) Genotypes, Using EST-Derived SSR Markers**

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Received: November 15, 2012 / Revised: December 26, 2012 / Accepted: March 11, 2013 Ⓒ Korean Society of Crop Science and Springer 2013

## **Abstract**

A total of 16,619 ESTs sequences (SSRs) of sesame (*Sesamum indicum* L.) were mined from Genbank. From sequences, 156 primer pairs were designed and characterized to determine the diversity among 49 sesame accessions. Twenty SSRs were found to be polymorphic and the number of alleles ranged from two to five per locus. The allele size varied from 101 to 399 bp. The average PIC value of the 20 SSR loci was 0.72 ranging from 0.49 (SEM-12-68) to 0.90 (SEM-12-27). Dendrogram analysis grouped the 49 genotypes into five separate clusters exhibiting a genetic similarity coefficient from 0.59 to 1.0. Hence, these EST-derived SSRs markers could be useful in assessing the diversity of sesame accessions and could also help in identifying diverse parents for sesame improvement programs.

**Key words:** diversity, ESTs, *Sesamum indicum* L., SSR markers

# **Introduction**

Sesame (*Sesamum indicum* L.), considered the queen of oil seeds because of its oil quality and the presence of antioxidants like sesamin and sesamolin. Sesame belongs to the *Pedaliaceae* family, containing 60 species organized into 16 genera (Ashri 1998). The genus Sesamum comprises of 36 species (Kobayashi 1981). *Sesamum indicum* L. is the most commonly cultivated species (Nayar and Mehra 1970). Occasionally, the wild sesame species like *S. angusti folium* and *S. radiatum* are cultivated in Africa. Recent reports on molecular phylogeny analyses confirm that *Sesamum indicum* L. and *Sesamum orientale* var. *malabaricum* are the most closely related species (Bedigian 2010). These results provide unassailable evidence of domestication of sesame.

Bedigian (1981) reported that the chromosome number of the *Sesamum indicum* L. was 26 (2n) and the wild forms share the same diploid chromosome number (Hiremath 2008). Diversity in the Indian sesame collection (3,129

Vijay Yepuri  $(\sqrt{\ })$ E-mail: vijayyepurister@gmail.com Tel: +91- 8886280999 / Fax: +9140-24012695 accessions) representing all eco-geographical regions, for a range of morphological and agronomic characters was studied by Bisht et al. in 1998. Sesame is generally considered a self-pollinated crop despite varying degrees of natural crosses ranging from less than 5 to over 50% (Pathirana 1994; Rheenen 1980).

India and China are world's largest sesame producers, followed by Myanmar, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Pakistan, and Paraguay. Among these, sesame India is the largest seasame growing country with 1.94 M ha accounting for about 25% of the global seasame cultivacted area. However, the yield of sesame  $(330.53 \text{ kg ha}^{-1})$  is considerably lower than the average world yield  $(442.73 \text{ kg} \text{ ha}^{-1})$ (FAO:http://faostat.fao.org/ 2009).

Genetic diversity in different crop species can be determined using morphological and agronomic characteristics, isozyme analysis, and molecular marker analysis (Liu et al.1997). However, the use of morphological and agronomic characteristics is associated with a strong influence from environmental factors and is therefore dependent on the conditions during cultivation. Molecular markers overcome this



limitation as they are not influenced by the environment. Recently, molecular marker technologies have become the encouraging method to identify plant genetic diversity. In sesame till date, the molecular markers like randomly amplified polymorphic (RAPD) (Adbellatef et al. 2008; Bhat et al. 1999; Ercan et al. 2004; Fazal Akbar et al. 2011; Kumar et al. 2009; Pham et al. 2011; Zhang et al. 2004), amplified fragment length polymorphism (AFLP) (Ali et al. 2007; Laurentin and Karlovsky 2006, 2007; Sun et al. 2007), intersimple sequence repeats (ISSR) (Kim et al. 2002; Parsaeian et al. 2011; Kumar et al. 2012), simple sequence repeat (SSR) (Dixit et al. 2005; Gebremichael et al. 2010; Kumar et al. 2012; Nweke et al. 2012; Spandana et al. 2012; ), and sequence-related amplified polymorphism (SRAP) (Li et al. 2007; Li and Quiros et al. 2001; Zhang et al. 2011) have been used to analyze the genetic variation analysis.

SSRs are powerful tool for the analysis of genetic diversity because they are often co-dominant, highly reproducible, most frequent, and reveal high allelic diversity. Sesame specific SSRs developed by hybridization method have been reported by Dixit et al. (2005), Jyothi et al. (2009), and Spandana et al. (2012). But only 146 numbers of genomic SSRs have been developed in sesame and only these have used in diversity analysis. Unfortunately, the de-novo development of SSRs is a costly and time-consuming endeavor (Squirrell et al. 2003; Zane et al. 2002). The rapid and inexpensive development of SSRs from expressed sequence tag (EST) databases has been shown to be a feasible option for obtaining high-quality nuclear markers (Bhat et al. 2005; Gupta et al. 2003). Characterization of the germplasm by using EST derived SSRs was reported by Bin et al. (2008) and Jyothi et al. (2009). Recently, EST-SSRs were developed by using sesame transcriptomes from different tissues of the plant. A total of 7,702 unigenes were converted into EST-SSRs by Wei et al. (2011). A total of 2,164 SSR primer pairs were identified in the 4,440 EST sequences (Zhang et al. 2012) with the objective of the generation of additional EST-SSRs and validation in a set of sesame genotypes.

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Plant material**

49 sesame genotypes were collected from diverse places of India. Approximately 25 seeds of each sesame accession were germinated in the greenhouse and leaves from 20-day-old sesame seedlings raised in a greenhouse were used for DNA isolation. The details of accessions are presented in Table 1.

#### **DNA extraction**

DNA extraction was carried out as per the protocol developed by Rao et al. (2010). DNA quality and concentration was measured using Nanodrop® ND-1000 spectrophotometer (Saveen Werner, Sweden).

**Table 1.** Accessions used for studying the properties of newly developed EST-SSRs

S.No	Genotype	State	Pedigree
1	CO1	Tamilnadu	(Tmv-3 X SI 1878) X SI 1878
2	CHANDANA	Andhrapradesh	T-85X 5107
3	GIYT2	Gujarat	ΝA
4	<b>GOURI</b>	Andhrapradesh	Selection from Kokkirapalli local A.P
5	GUJARATT3	Gujarat	ΝA
6	HIMA	Andhrapradesh	5039 X AT-1
$\overline{7}$	HT1	Haryana	ΝA
8	IC110315	ΝA	<b>NA</b>
9	IC199439	ΝA	<b>NA</b>
10	IC208179	ΝA	<b>NA</b>
11	IC208612	ΝA	ΝA
12	IC295957	ΝA	ΝA
13	KAS0697	ΝA	ΝA
14	KKS98049	NΑ	ΝA
15	MADHAVI	Andhrapradesh	Selection from local A.P
16	MKN2	ΝA	<b>NA</b>
17	MKN7	<b>ΝΑ</b>	<b>NA</b>
18	MKN22	ΝA	ΝA
19	JLT <sub>26</sub>	Maharastra	<b>NA</b>
20	NSKMS12	ΝA	ΝA
21	NSKMS20	ΝA	ΝA
22	NSKMS115	ΝA	ΝA
23	NSKMS126	ΝA	ΝA
24	NSKMS129	ΝA	ΝA
25	NSKMS260	ΝA	<b>NA</b>
26	NSKMS261	ΝA	ΝA
27	NSKMS267	ΝA	<b>NA</b>
28	OSC362002	Orissa	ΝA
29	PAIYUR11	Tamilnadu	ΝA
30	PBT <sub>11</sub>	NΑ	ΝA
31	PHULETIL	Maharastra	ΝA
32	RAJESHWARI	Andhrapradesh	Selection from 62-39 of Chhatarpur local
33	RT54	Rajasthan	(M.P)
34	SHEKAR	Uttarpradesh	ΝA
35	SWETHA	Andhrapradesh	<b>NA</b>
36	TC <sub>25</sub>	Rajasthan	E-8 X IS-13
37	TMV4	Tamil Nadu	ΝA
38	TMV6	Tamil Nadu	Selection From Sattur Variety.
39	TMV3	Tamil Nadu	
40	TKG22	Madhyapradesh	local X Malbar Wild
41	T13	Uttarpradesh	ΝA
42	T13B	Uttarpradesh	<b>NA</b>
43	UMA	Orissa	<b>NA</b>
44	VRI1	Tamilnadu	ΝA
45	VRISV1	Tamilnadu	<b>NA</b>
46	YLM17	Andhrapradesh	Selection from Kokkirapalli local A.P
47	YLM11	Andhrapradesh	Selection from Kokkirapalli local A.P
48	YLM66	Andhrapradesh	YLM 17 X P.S.201
49	S.mulayanum	ΝA	<b>NA</b>

#### **PCR and Electrophoresis**

DNA amplification was performed in a reaction volume of 10 μL containing 50 ng DNA template (2 μL), 1 x PCR reaction buffer (15 mM Tris-HCl) (1  $\mu$ L), 2 mM dNTPs (1  $\mu$ L), 1U Taq DNA polymerase (Jonaki, CCMB, Hyderabad), 10 μM of forward and reverse primers 0.5 μL and sterile distilled water (4.8 μL). PCR was carried out in a *Veriti*<sup>™</sup>, 96-*Well Thermal Cycler* (Applied Biosystems, CA, USA). The PCR conditions were 94°C for 5 min, followed by 94°C for 45 s, (Ta $\rm{°C}$ ) for 45 s, 72 $\rm{°C}$  for 1 min, then a final extension of 72°C for 10 min. The PCR products were fractionated on a 3% metaphor agarose (Lonza) gel for screening genotypes with 0.05 μg μL<sup>-1</sup> ethidium bromide. Samples were loaded with a reference 50 bp DNA ladder (NEB, U.S.A). Gels were electrophoresed at 120V. After separation, gels were documented using the Molecular Imager Gel Doc (BIO-RAD).

## **Development of SSR Markers for Sesame**

*Mining of ESTs database and primer design*

A total of 16,619 sesame EST sequences were used from the NCBI's Expressed Sequence Tags (ESTs) database. WebSat, web software for microsatellite marker development was used to screen each sequence for the presence of microsatellites (www. http://wsmartins.net/websat). A criterion for the minimum number of repeat motifs was six for di, tri, tetra, penta, and hexanucleotides. A total of 143 SSR containing primer sequences were obtained, these 143 sequences selected for designing the primer pairs. (Supplementary Table)

#### *Data scoring and analysis*

The SSRs band profiles were scored as '1' for 'presence' and '0' for the 'absence' of band for each locus across the 49 genotypes. The molecular size of each fragment was determined by comparing with the molecular size markers. Cluster analyses were done using NTSYSpc vers. 2.1 program (Rohlf 2000).

## **Results**

We performed mining for about 16,619 EST sequences; only 156 EST sequences were found to have SSR repeats with sufficient flanking regions for designing primers. Of the 156 primer pairs, a representative set of 50 which yielded clear scorable alleles were chosen for assessing genetic diversity analysis of 49 sesame accession (48 cultivated accessions, one wild). Of the 50 primers used, 20 were found to be polymorphic. The number of alleles per SSR marker ranged from 2 to 5 per locus with an average of 3.0. A wide range of fragment sizes was observed from 101 to 399 bp.

Genetic relationships between the 49 genotypes were assessed by UPGMA cluster analysis. Two major groups were identified at the similarity coefficient ranging from 0.79 to 1.00. Group I included 23 genotypes with a similarity coefficient of 0.86 to 1.00. Group I was further subdivided into four subgroups having varying degrees of similarity. Subgroup I included Co-1 and Giy-t-2 with a similarity coefficient of 0.88. In subgroup II, Gujarat-T-3, Hima, Chandana, and Gowri exhibited 100% genetic similarity. Subgroup III included 11 genotypes of which IC-208179, Kas-06197, and Madhavi showed 100% similarity. The remaining varieties showed 94 to 99% similarity among themselves. Subgroup IV included NSKMS-126, NSKMS-12, and JLT-26 showing 88% similarity. Group II included 22 genotypes divided into three subgroups with a similarity coefficient ranging from 81 to 100% genetic similarity. Subgroup III was the major cluster having 19 genotypes with a similarity coefficient ranging



**Fig. 2.** Frequency of repeat motifs in156 EST-SSR primers in sesame.



**Fig. 3.** Distribution of allele number.



**Fig. 4.** Distribution of PIC values.

from 0.87 to 1.00. Most of the cultivated varieties like Swetha, Rajeswari, TMV-3, and RT-54 fell into this group. The only one wild species used in the study *S. mulayanum* was derived as a single cluster in this group.

YLM-66 and NSKMS-261 branched out as separate clusters with a similarity coefficient of 0.75 and 0.71. A small group containing cultivars like NSKMS-267 and OSC-36- 2002 was found to be related to the rest of the varieties with a similarity coefficient of 0.59 (Fig. 1).

## **Discussion**

EST-SSR markers were used in this study to evaluate the levels of genetic variation among different sesame genotypes. The choice of the EST-derived SSR markers was motivated by the fact that there was a very limited number of SSR markers available in this crop for the study of diversity

**Fig. 1.** Dendrogram showing the phylogenetic relationship between 49 sesame accessions cultivars

analysis and to construct a linkage map in sesame. The present study was carried out to evaluate diversity of 49 sesame accessions collected from different geographical regions of India. The genetic relationships among accessions were determined by using SSR markers. Dixit et al. (2005) first analyzed the genetic diversity by using the SSR markers in sesame. Bhat et al. (1999) studied the genetic diversity of 36 germplasm using 24 RAPD primers and found that the genetic similarity coefficients were between 0.19 and 0.89. Zhang et al. (2010) analyzed the genetic diversity of sesame germplasm using sequence-related amplified polymorphism (SRAP) and EST-SSR markers and reported that the genetic distance of foreign accessions (0.23) was significantly higher than domestic accessions (0.16). The PIC value demonstrates the informativeness of each SSR marker. Values of PIC ranging from 0 to 1 and loci having PIC values closer to 1 are more desirable (Mateescu et al. 2005). The average PIC value for all the 20 SSR loci was 0.718, with a range of 0.49 (SEM-12-68) to 0.90 (SEM-12-27).

#### **Frequency and distribution of repeat motif types**

Five different types of repeat motifs were observed, at frequencies of 68.6% (dinucleotides), 25% (trinucleotides), 3.84% (tetranucleotides), 0.64% (pentanucleotides), and 1.28% (hexanucleotides). Dinucleotide repeats were the most frequent SSR motif type observed. Among the dinucleotide repeats, AG/CT (32.05%) was the most frequent motif in our dataset, as earlier reported by Wei et al. (2011), approximately 46.29% of AG/CT repeat motifs. However, TA/TG motifs were very rare (3.20%). Among the trinucleotide repeats, the TCT/AAC motif was common (5.76%) among the microsatellites, respectively. The combined data set of amplified bands obtained for all genotypes was analyzed using the UPGMA method. The resulting dendrogram showed that cultivars were divided into four groups at a genetic similarity of 0.59%. The group I was the largest consisting of 23 cultivars. The maximum genetic similarity (100%) was observed with Chadana, Gowri, Gujarathi-T-3, Hima, IC-208179, KAS-06197, and Madhavi, while the lowest genetic similarity of 88.3% was observed with MKN-2, NSKMS-112, and JLT-26. Tmv-6 and T-13 (B) formed Group–II with 100% genetic similarity and the lowest genetic similarity was observed in S. mulayanum (82.6%). The highest yielding variety YLM-66 (75.3%) formed Group III and was distinctly different from the other cultivars. YLM-66 is known for its characteristic brown-colored seed with 51% oil content. Group IV included the cultivar NSKMS -261. Among the 49 cultivars tested, the NSKMS-267 and OSC-36-2002 were distinct from all the captives indicating the maximum percentage of diversity. This might be because of the pedigree which needs to be further analyzed.

## **Acknowledgements**

The study was funded by National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP), New Delhi, India. The authors thank Dr. K.V. Bhat, NBPGR, New Delhi, for providing the sesame accessions used in the study and Dr. K.Yamini, IBT, ANGRAU for her valuable suggestions in the preparation of manuscript.

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## **Supplementary Table.** Properties of the isolated EST derived SSRs









