

Original Research Article

MOLECULAR DIVERSITY ANALYSIS AND DNA FINGERPRINTING OF *RABI* SORGHUM VARIETIES

Abstract

Genetic diversity was assessed of 2 popular varieties and 5 promising lines of *rabi* sorghum by using 11 SSR markers. The marker Xiabt312 reported 100% polymorphism rate followed by Xtxp15 (85.70%) and mSbCIR300 (85.71%). The polymorphism information content (PIC) ranged from 0.25 to 0.87 with a mean of 0.67 indicating higher diversity in the studied material. Clustering analysis based on the genetic dissimilarity grouped the 7 lines into 2 major and 4 sub clusters and grouping was in good agreement with pedigree. Cluster II was the largest cluster with 4 genotypes followed by cluster I with 3 genotypes. The *rabi* sorghum genotypes viz., M35-1, RSV-1876 and RSLG-2422 were placed in cluster I and Phule Anuradha, RSV-2371, RSV-1910 and RSV-1988 placed in cluster II. Clustering based on SSR molecular profile of the genotypes shows distinct variability among the genotypes under this study. These selected markers have great potential in DNA fingerprinting in sorghum which in future could be integrated with DUS data descriptors for effective cultivar identification and differentiation.

Key words: *Sorghum*, *Molecular diversity*, *DNA fingerprinting*, *SSR markers*, *Genotypes*

INTRODUCTION

Sorghum [*Sorghum bicolor* (L.)] is a genus with many species and subspecies, and there are several types of sorghum, including grain sorghum, grass sorghum (for pasture and hay) and sweet sorghum (for syrups). Sorghum has the high nutritional values and is grown as dietary staple food for more than 500 million people in 30 different countries (Joshi *et al.* 2020). Genetic diversity analysis of sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench; $2n = 2x = 20$) germplasm is fundamental for breeding and conservation strategies. Genetic advancement during selection depends on the availability of genotypes possessing favourable alleles for desired traits, which relies on the available genetic diversity. Phenotyping based on enlisted DUS (Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability) traits is a pre-requisite for varieties to be registered under PPV&FR Act, 2001. Most of these traits are quantitative in inheritance and environmentally influenced. Often, there is a risk of categorising genetically different cultivars as similar or *vice-versa* owing to subjective assessment (Santhy and Meshram, 2015).

The genetic diversity analysis represents the diversity of germplasm accessions which could be helpful of broadening the base of breeding program (Joshi *et al.* 2020). Genetic diversity analysis can be carried out using phenotypic or molecular markers. DNA-based molecular markers are more efficient to analyse a greater number of genotypes (Reif *et al.* 2003). Furthermore, molecular markers detect the presence of favourable alleles among germplasm and allow estimation of genetic diversity more reliably and efficiently than

phenotypic markers, which are subject to genotype by environment interaction. Summarily, the molecular marker technology aids conventional breeding in various aspects, such as to (1) assess of genetic diversity and establish heterotic patterns, (2) screen for useful genes, (3) accelerate backcross breeding programs *via* selection of gene(s) of interest and (4) identify and protect commercial cultivars through fingerprinting (Xiao *et al.* 1996). Several DNA-based marker systems have been successfully used to assess genetic diversity in sorghum (Nguni *et al.* 2011). Molecular markers especially SSR are most efficient source of diversity studies in crop species (Shehzad *et al.* 2009). SSR markers combined with morphological traits may effectively be used for designing breeding strategy and management of biodiversity and conservation of *Maldandi* genetic resources (Rakshit *et al.* 2012). The sorghum genome sequence project identified 71 SSRs in the genome (Paterson *et al.* 2009). The availability of this large number of SSR markers provides a more cost-effective and rapid method for DNA profiling (Smith *et al.* 1997).

Among the various marker systems presently available, microsatellite or simple sequence repeat (SSR) markers have become more valuable and reliable tool for genetic diversity analysis of crop varieties (Tyagi *et al.* 2014) owing to their reproducibility, co-dominant inheritance, genome-wide presence, robustness, higher polymorphism and analytical simplicity. Molecular data generated from SSR markers has also been utilized for QTL mapping, DNA fingerprinting and genetic purity testing (Ahmed *et al.* 2013; Ashraf *et al.* 2016). Therefore, the present study was planned to assess the molecular diversity available among the promising *rabi* sorghum genotypes by using set of SSR markers. This study intended to probe the appliance of the molecular marker in the context of DUS tests to disclose unique variety-specific fingerprints. This varietal fingerprint could be used for various varietal purity test programs of closely related sorghum cultivars and submission of fingerprint data for the crop variety registration.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Seven sorghum genotypes included in this study were selected on the basis of grain and fodder yield performance and tolerant to abiotic and biotic stresses. Two of them are released varieties and 5 are promising genotypes. These lines have been evaluated in stress nurseries under the Sorghum Improvement Project, Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth Rahuri over the past few years, and their reactions (susceptibility/resistance) to various biotic and abiotic stresses are known. The details of the genotypes are given in Table 1.

DNA extraction

Fifty seeds of each genotype were grown in small plastic pots and were watered till the length of the seedlings was around 10 to 15 cm. Genomic DNA from each of the genotypes was extracted using Cetyltrimethyl ammonium bromide (CTAB) procedure (Gadakh *et al.*, 2020). The DNA quantity of each sample was estimated and DNA concentrations were normalized at 2.5 ng/ μ l. The DNA quality of each sample was evaluated by running 5 μ l of DNA on a 0.8 % agarose gel.

PCR and SSR assay

The parameters set for PCR amplification conditions were followed as described by Gadakh *et al.* (2020) and the PCR assay was carried out at the State Level Biotechnology Centre, M.P.K.V., Rahuri. Eleven reported SSR primers were used for genotyping the

sevensorghum genotypes. PCR conditions were optimized for each of the 11 SSR markers and PCR reactions were set up in 25 µl volumes. Each PCR reaction contained µl (50 ng/i l) of template DNA, 2.5 µl of 10X PCR buffer, 3.3 µl of 15 mM MgCl₂, 1 µl of 10 mM dNTPs, 1 µl (10 picomol) of each primer, 0.5µl Taq DNA polymerase (1 U/µl), and 13.7µl of sterile distilled water. DNA amplification was performed in a thermal cycler (Eppendorf Master cycler, USA) by using the following thermal cycler condition: initial denaturation step at 94°C for 5 min (1 cycle), followed by 35 cycles each at 94°C for 1 min (denaturation), 61°C for 1 min (annealing), 72°C for 1 min (extension), followed by one final extension at 72°C for 10 min. The amplified PCR product run on agarose gel electrophoresis using 1.5% agarose gel in 1 X TBE buffer for 3 hours at 80 V. The agarose gel stained with ethidium bromide (EtBr) to check PCR product quality. The gel were photographed under gel documentation system (Alpha InfoTech Corporation, USA)

Cluster analyses

Data was scored for computer analysis on the basis of the presence or absence of the PCR products. If a product was present in a genotype, it was designated as ‘1’ and if absent; it was designated as ‘0’. The data were maintained in the spread sheet format for further analysis. The polymorphism percentage was calculated as per the method suggested by Blair *et al.* (1999).

Polymorphism information content (PIC) = $2P_i(1-P_i)$

Where, P_i = frequency of occurrence of polymorphic bands in different primers

$$\text{Polymorphism (\%)} = \frac{X - Y}{X} \times 100$$

Where X= Total number of bands

Y= Number of Monomorphic band

The data generated by RAPD were analyzed with the software NTSYSpc version 2.02.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SSR marker analysis

The genetic variability among the *rabi* sorghum genotypes and lines was analyzed using SSR molecular markers. In this study 11 SSR primers were screened (Table 2). Assessment of genetic diversity among the sorghum varieties is important to know the diverse parents for sorghum improvement. All the *7rabi* sorghum varieties were profiled for DNA polymorphism using 11 SSR markers sourced from sorghum marker database. Previous reports on genetic diversity analysis among Indian *rabi* sorghum varieties are largely using D² analysis (Kumar *et al.* 2010 and Ahalawat *et al.* 2018). Present study design to estimate molecular diversity in *rabi* sorghum lines with SSR marker.

Among the 11 SSR markers 10 markers were polymorphic (Table 3) with the average percent polymorphism of 74.68%. The marker Xiabt312 and Sb5-206 reported 100% polymorphism followed by Xtxp15 (85.70%) and mSbCIR300 (85.71%). The banding pattern of polymorphic marker Xtxp15 and Xiabt437 were shown in Fig. 1 and 2 respectively. *Sorghum bicolor* derived SSRs have proven to be an efficient source of markers for genetic diversity studies (Dillon *et al.* 2005). Gangurde *et al.* 2017 reported that total number of

polymorphic markers was 16 out of 144 and the percentage of polymorphism is 11.11%. It indicates that the hybrid produced by the parents AKR-504-A, 30-A, AKMS-30B is closely related to the parents and the parents and hybrid CSH-35 are closely related to each other.

The markers Xsnp109 had higher PIC ($r^2=0.87^{**}$) followed by Sb5-206 (0.82) and Xtxp15 (0.81). The PIC values ranged from 0.25 (Xtxp278) to 0.087 (Xsnp109) with a mean of 0.67 (Table 3). Afolayan *et al.* 2019 studied genetic diversity among the sorghum germplasm was low with an average polymorphism information content value of 0.24. Analysis of molecular variation revealed 6% variation among germplasm and 94% within germplasm. Lower PIC value may be the result of closely related genotypes and higher PIC values might be the result of diverse genotypes in sorghum (Gangurde *et al.* 2017). PIC values depend on many factors such as breeding behaviour of the species, genetic diversity in the collection, size of the collection, sensitivity of genotyping method and location of primers in the genome used for study (Kalivas *et al.* 2011; Singh *et al.* 2013). A low allele detection and low PIC value was observed even when a high resolution metaphor agarose/PAGE gel was employed for separating the amplicon (Bertini *et al.* 2006). Kshirsagar *et al.* (2020) reported polymorphic information content (PIC) ranged between 0.41 to 0.63 with the average PIC value was found 0.53 where 0.41 PIC value indicated presence of three alleles per locus. When the study material was diverse such as wild accessions and hybrids, the PIC values can be more than 0.80 as observed by Zhang *et al.* (2013). PIC provides an estimate of the discriminatory power of loci by the number of alleles expressed and the relative frequencies of those alleles.

The NTSYSpc programme was used to calculate Jaccard's similarity coefficient. The genetic dissimilarity between *rabi* sorghum lines given in Table 4. Phule Anuradha showed maximum genetic variation to RSV-2422 (0.846) followed by RSV-1988 (0.767) and RSV-2371 (0.550). The genetic dissimilarity between lines ranges between 0.310 and 0.846 (Table 4). Sorghum lines RSV-1910 and RSV-1988 exhibited less variation. The genetic variation among five Guinea-race sorghum accessions (Dje *et al.* 2000), revealed an observed average expected gene diversity of 0.22 which was much lesser than the gene diversity obtained in the current study (0.6) using 20 sorghum accessions originated from Marathwada region of Maharashtra, India. High PIC value observed in the present study may be the result of the higher diversity available in the study material which consisted of released varieties and promising lines of different pedigree. Madhusudhana *et al.* (2012) studied genetic diversity in 31 sorghum parents using 413 sorghum simple sequence repeats (SSR) markers. The polymorphism information content (PIC), a measure of gene diversity, varied from 0 to 0.92 with an average of 0.53 and was significantly correlated with number of alleles. Ganapathy *et al.* (2012) demonstrated the utility of SSR markers in classifying the hybrid parental lines of sorghum based on fertility reaction and will serve as an effective tool for classifying parental lines based on heterotic groups.

Cluster analysis

The neighbourhood joining cluster analysis was carried out for 7 varieties which put them into 2 distinct clusters (Fig. 3). Cluster II was the largest cluster with 4 lines followed by cluster I with 3 lines. The *Maldandi* blood varieties viz., M35-1, RSV-1910 and RSV-1876

were placed distinctly from all the other lines. Clustering based on SSR molecular profile of the varieties match with the pedigree or source of the varieties. These agreements between varietal pedigree and molecular clustering give perfect diversity at molecular level. Madhusudhana *et al.* (2012) reported that, clustering analysis based on the genetic dissimilarity grouped the 31 parents into eight clusters and grouping was in good agreement with pedigree, race and geographic origin. Ganapathy *et al.* (2012) identified diverse set of parental lines (maintainers and restorers) based on Jaccard's similarity values will serve as effective candidates for hybrid development. SSR markers combined with morphological traits may effectively be used for designing breeding strategy and management of biodiversity and conservation of genetic resources (Rakshit *et al.* 2012).

Afolayan *et al.* (2019) revealed that dendrogram clustering of three groups which indicate variations within the germplasm. The presence of private alleles and genetic variation within the germplasm indicates that the accessions are valuable resources for future breeding programs.

DNA fingerprinting of *rabi* Sorghum varieties

One of the most important applications of molecular fingerprinting is to identify a marker or set of markers which can differentiate a particular genotype from the remaining genotypes. To decide an appropriate DNA fingerprint for the sorghum varieties, the ability of fingerprint to discriminate the given set of genotypes was assessed through probability of identical match by chance (Choudhury *et al.* 2001). The primers of (Xtxp278 and Xiabt312) produced maximum variation among the *rabi* sorghum lines as its PIC value is maximum among all the primers under study. Sb5-206 and mSbCIR300 is widely distributed in the sorghum genome as it produced 7 alleles maximum among all the primers. The SSR marker Xtxp270 is uniformly distributed in all lines as it produces the DNA fragments. Some SSR markers are specific to cultivars for cultivar identification which is the primary motto of DNA fingerprinting. SSR markers used for DNA fingerprinting are given in Table 3. Molecular marker technique has proved very sensitive for fingerprinting/ characterization in sugarcane (Gadakh *et al.* 2017). Gangurde *et al.* 2017 reported that for identification of hybrid CSH-35 the Xcup02, Msbcir240, Msbcir 246 were produces a unique band (200bp) which is absent in parents. Santhiya *et al.* 2020 reported that the SSR markers Xtxp024, Xtxp231, Xtxp075 produced unique alleles in CO 32 whereas Xtxp354 produced unique alleles in K12. The SSR marker Xtxp003, Xtxp201 produced unique alleles in CSV 33 MF which could serve as valid genotype-specific SSR markers in varietal purity test program. In this study, when analysis was performed with a minimal set of 11 markers, the fingerprint (Fig. 1 and 2) was able to differentiate all 7 genotypes.

CONCLUSION

The varietal-specific SSR marker will supplement the DUS test and could play a major role in varietal identification, thus resolving disputes during the seed certification process. The polymorphic markers identified in the present study will be of immense utility in *rabi* sorghum improvement. The DNA fingerprint developed for popular sorghum varieties of India will be helpful for unambiguous identification of sorghum varieties and their protection against unauthorized exploitation.

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Table 1. Name and source of varieties of *rabi* Sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench) employed in the study

| Sr. No. | Genotypes | Pedigree | Features |
|---------|----------------|--|--|
| 1 | M35-1 | Selection from local Maldandi population | Drought tolerant, widely adopted variety, straw glume colour, pearly white grain colour |
| 2 | Phule Anuradha | RSLG-559 X RSLG-1175 | Early drought tolerant variety, recommended for shallow soil cultivation |
| 3 | RSLG-2422 | (SPV-1830 X RSLG-2332) X SPV-1830 | High grain yield, shoot fly resistant |
| 4 | RSV-1876 | RSV-768 X MSV-16 | Charcoal rot tolerant, non lodging, shoot fly resistant, bolder grain |
| 5 | RSV-1910 | RSV-769 X MSV-16 | Early, drought tolerant, shoot fly resistant, tolerance to foliar diseases, straw glume colour |
| 6 | RSV-2371 | Karnataka local X AKSV-15 | Non lodging, shoot fly tolerant, charcoal rot resistant, Suitable for mechanical harvesting |
| 7 | RSV-1988 | RSV-1003 X RSV-458 | Early, shoot fly tolerant, charcoal rot resistant, straw glume colour, pearly white grain |

Table 2. SSR Marker sequences detailused for molecular diversity analysis

| S N | SSR Marker | F - Primer | R - Primer |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Xtxp210 | CGCTTTTCTGAAAATATTAAGGAC | GATGAGCGATGGAGGAGAG |
| 2 | Xtxp270 | AGCAAGAAGAAGGCAAGAAGAAGG | GCGAAATTATTTTCAAATGGAGTTG A |
| 3 | Xsnp41 | GCAGCGCTTCAATAGGTTCC | TCGGCACAACAGAGCTTGAC |
| 4 | Xsnp109 | ATGCAGTTGCTACTGAGCTCCG | AAACCAAACCGAACGAACTGC |

| | | | |
|----|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 5 | Xiabt437 | ACCACTACCTGGGGTCTGTG | GAAATTCATGAACCCCAACG |
| 6 | Xiabt178 | CATGTCGTTGGTGGAGTACG | GAGACTAGGCGTCACGGAAC |
| 7 | Xiabt312 | GCCAAGTCCATGGTCAAGATG | CGTCAAAGCATAAAGCACCA |
| 8 | Xtxp15 | CACAAACACTAGTGCCTTATC | CATAGACACCTAGGCCATC |
| 9 | Xtxp278 | GGGTTTCAACTCTAGCTACCGAACT TCCT | ATGCCTCATCATCATGGTTCGTTTTG CTT |
| 10 | mSbCIR300 | TTGAGAGCGGCGAGGTAA | AAAAGCCCAAGTCTCAGTGCTA |
| 11 | Sb5-206 | ATTCATCATCCTCATCCTCGTAGAA | AAAAACCAACCCGACCCACTC |

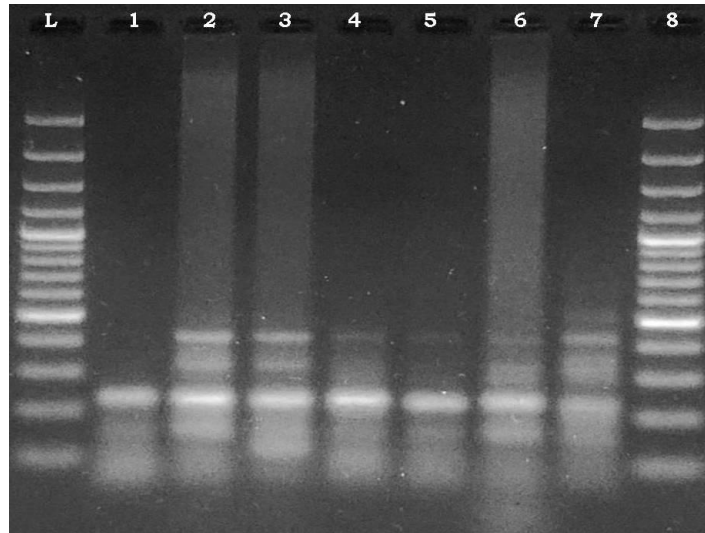
Table 3: Analysis details of SSR marker polymorphism used for study

| Sr. No. | Primer Name | Total Fragment | Polymorphic fragment | Monomorphic fragments | Polymorphism rate % | PIC Value |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Xtxp210 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 66.67 | 0.6400 |
| 2 | Xtxp270 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0.00 | 0.6667 |
| 3 | Xsnp41 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 66.67 | 0.5562 |
| 4 | Xsnp109 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 66.67 | 0.8740 |
| 5 | Xiabt437 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 75.00 | 0.7250 |
| 6 | Xiabt178 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 75.00 | 0.5029 |
| 7 | Xiabt312 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 100.00 | 0.7880 |
| 8 | Xtxp15 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 85.71 | 0.8091 |
| 9 | Xtxp278 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 100.00 | 0.2449 |
| 10 | mSbCIR300 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 85.71 | 0.7469 |
| 11 | Sb5-206 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 100.00 | 0.8210 |
| Total | | 45 | 33 | 12 | - | - |
| Mean | | 4.1 | 3 | 1.09 | 74.68 | 0.67043 |

Table 4. Genetic dissimilarity among *rabisorghum* varieties as revealed by SSR markers

| | M35-1 | Phule Anuradha | RSLG-2422 | RSV-1876 | RSV-1910 | RSV-2371 | RSV-1988 |
|----------------|-------|----------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| M35-1 | 1.000 | | | | | | |
| Phule Anuradha | 0.389 | 1.000 | | | | | |
| RSLG-2422 | 0.389 | 0.846 | 1.000 | | | | |
| RSV-1876 | 0.545 | 0.400 | 0.436 | 1.000 | | | |
| RSV-1910 | 0.611 | 0.342 | 0.342 | 0.458 | 1.000 | | |
| RSV-2371 | 0.429 | 0.550 | 0.550 | 0.438 | 0.519 | 1.000 | |
| RSV-1988 | 0.317 | 0.767 | 0.689 | 0.333 | 0.310 | 0.535 | 1.000 |

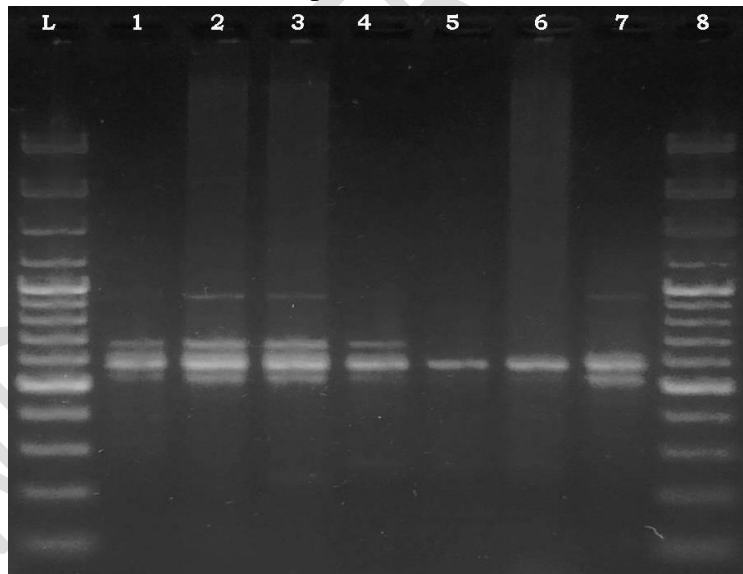
Fig. 1. Molecular profile of sorghum varieties as revealed by SSR marker Xtxp15 (L - 100bp DNA ladder; Number 1 to 7 corresponds to varieties as listed in Table 1)



Where L-100 bp DNA ladder

- | | |
|-------------------|------------|
| 1. M 35-1 | 5.RSV 1910 |
| 2. Phule Anuradha | 6.RSV 2371 |
| 3. RSLG 2422 | 7.RSV 1988 |
| 4. RSV 1876 | |

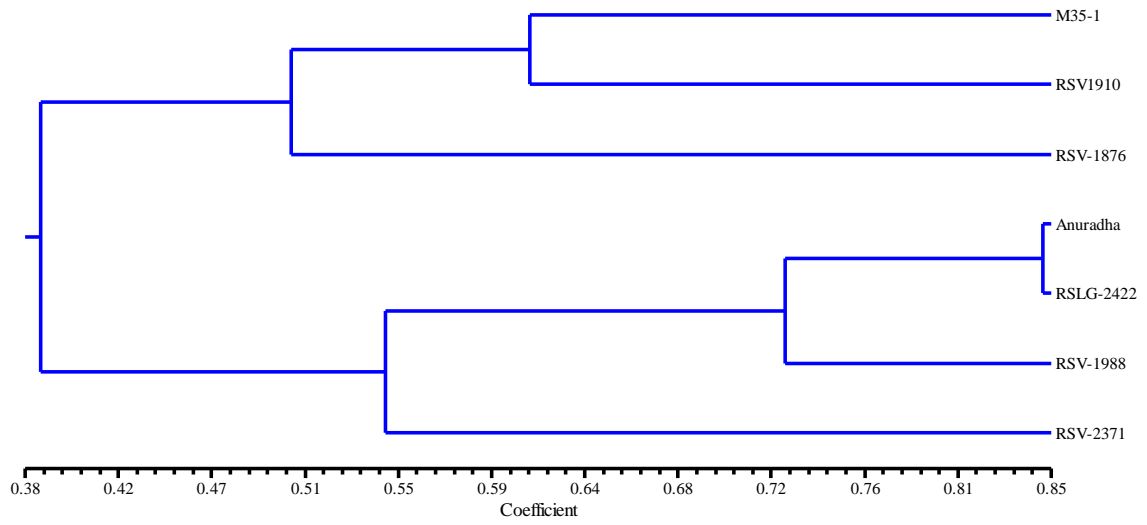
Fig. 2. Molecular profile of sorghum varieties as revealed by SSR marker Xiabt437 (L - 100bp DNA ladder; Number 1 to 7 corresponds to varieties as listed in Table 1)



Where L-100 bp DNA ladder

- | | |
|-------------------|------------|
| 1. M 35-1 | 5.RSV 1910 |
| 2. Phule Anuradha | 6.RSV 2371 |
| 3. RSLG 2422 | 7.RSV 1988 |
| 4. RSV 1876 | |

Fig. 3. Diagrammatic presentation of DNA fingerprints of 7 sorghum varieties using 11 SSR markers



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