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Marker assisted introgression and validation of resistance genes *Bph20* and *Bph21* for brown plant hopper (*Nilaparvata lugens* sta1) into a popular rice variety of CO51

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Abstract

Rice production needs to be doubled by 2050 because rice is the stable food for half of the world's population. Rice productivity is greatly affected by various biotic stresses. Among biotic stresses the brown plant hopper is one of the most serious constraints and devastating insect pest of rice in most rice growing areas of the world which causes significant yield loss in rice production. Developing resistance in host plant is important and it is the most effective method to control brown plant hopper damage. The host plant resistance can be developed through pyramiding of more than one gene in a single plant, because the single gene resistance can be suddenly broken by the emergence of new BPH biotypes. In order to develop improved version in a popular rice variety of CO51 against BPH resistance. The advanced early generation BC₁F₃ (BILs) mapping population lines were developed by cross between CO51 and donor IR71033-121-15B. The SSR markers namely RM16556 and RM3331 were employed for foreground selection of *Bph20* and *Bph21* resistance genes respectively. The homozygous positive *Bph20* and *Bph21* pyramided lines were used for screening against Brown plant hopper, the phenotypic screening work was carried out under glass house condition. The BILs 12-35-6-3, 12-35-7-16 and 12-35-13-1 were recorded with moderate resistance to BPH.

Keywords: Gene pyramiding, Rice, CO51, BPH resistance genes, *Bph20*, *Bph21*

Introduction

Rice is an important cereal food crop in the Asia-pacific region of the world. More than 52% of world rice production is affected by various biotic stresses, in which 21% of rice production lost due to insect pest damage (Brookes and Barfoot, 2003) [6]. Insect pests are major problem in Rice production system, BPH is one of the most serious and devastating pest of rice. Brown plant hopper *Nilaparvata lugens* Sta1 sucks the sap from phloem of the plants and causes hopper burn (Watanabe and Kitagawa, 2000) [32]; and more infestation results in the lodging of the crops with yield loss upto 10-70%. BPH acts as a vector system for carrying viruses like grassy stunt virus and ragged stunt virus results in the further yield loss in rice production (Brar *et al.*, 2009; Cha *et al.*, 2008) [5, 7]. Less infestations by the BPH causes reduction in plant height, vigour, number of productive tillers and grain filling. Likewise severe infestations by the BPH causes "hopper burn" symptoms which includes death of the plants and complete drying.

The BPH biotypes are widely present in South and Southeast Asia. The biotype 4 is the most devastating biotype present in South Asia, and it is widely occur over the Indian subcontinent (Heinrichs, 1985) [10]. The resistant varieties against BPH has been developed by using some of the identified effective BPH resistance genes (Suh *et al.*, 2011) [30]. However some of the resistant varieties which are harboring single BPH resistance gene were prone to rapidly broken down within a short period of time due to the rapid adaptation of BPH or emergence of new biotypes (Jena and Kim, 2010) [16]. For BPH management in rice ecosystem several methods have been followed which includes both chemical and biological control measures (Normile, 2008) [23]. But compare to conventional chemical control measure, developing host plant resistance by BPH resistance genes has been considered as the most effective and economical approach for controlling the BPH (Matsumura *et al.*, 2009) [22].

The identification of BPH resistance germplasm resources from various varieties and Introgressing such BPH resistance genes into a elite rice cultivar has emerged as important component in breeding programs (Pathak *et al.*, 1969; Alam and Cohen, 1998a) [24, 1].

Pyramiding multiple resistance genes is a sustainable and eco-friendly strategy to develop durable resistant varieties against BPH. Molecular marker assisted selection is used as an efficient and rapid method for introgression and pyramiding BPH resistance genes (Qiu *et al.*, 2010) [26]. So far 34 BPH-resistance loci have been identified from indica and wild rice (Hu *et al.*, 2018; Kumar *et al.*, 2018) [13, 20]. Out of 33, 22 QTLs or genes were fine mapped (Jairin *et al.*, 2007; Rahman *et al.*, 2009) [15, 28]; and remaining genes were identified and isolated by map based cloning (Du *et al.*, 2009) [9]. Most of the identified genes are reported as dominant and few were recessive genes such as *bph4*, *bph5*, *bph7*, *bph8*, *bph19*, *bph25* and *bph29*. Apart from this some previous research paper reported that, *Bph13* was present on chromosome 2, *Bph11*, *Bph13*, *Bph14*, and *Bph19* genes were present on chromosome 3, *Bph12*, *Bph15*, *Bph17*, and *Bph20* genes were present on chromosome 4 (Rahman *et al.*, 2009) [28]. *bph4* genes were present on chromosome 6 (Kawaguchi *et al.*, 2001) [19]. *Bph6* was located on chromosome 11 (Jena *et al.*, 2002) [17]. *Bph1*, *bph2*, *Bph9*, *Bph10*, *Bph18*, and *Bph21* genes were located on chromosome 12 (Jena *et al.*, 2006; Sharma *et al.*, 2004) [18, 29]. *Bph33* and *Bph34* genes provides resistance for BPH (Hu *et al.*, 2018; Kumar *et al.*, 2018) [13, 20].

The previous research demonstrated that the varieties were developed with *Bph3* resistant gene have been used in cultivation for over 30 years in the Phillipines, they still shows resistance effect against BPH (Penalver Cruz *et al.*, 2011) [25]. Myint and his coworkers found that BPH resistance level of NILs harboring resistance genes *Bph25* and *Bph26* was significantly higher than either *Bph25*-NILs or *Bph26*-NILs (Myint *et al.*, 2012) [21]. An additive effect was observed after introgression of three dominant BPH resistance genes such as *Bph14*, *Bph15* and *Bph18* into elite indica rice variety 93-11 than the double gene lines or monogenic lines (Hu *et al.*, 2013) [12].

The identification of two BPH resistance genes such as *Bph20* and *Bph21* which are present on the Chromosome 4 and Chromosome 12 respectively from the wild species of *O. minuta* (2n=48, BBCC genome) belongs to a *O. officinalis* complex used as resistant sources for BPH. IR71033-121-15B is a cross derivative line between *O. sativa* and *O. minuta* carries the *Bph20* and *Bph21* resistance genes, and it has shown higher resistance to biotypes of BPH. The present study was carried out to evaluate advanced early generation BC₁F₃ (BILs) lines harboring *Bph20* and *Bph21* resistance genes in the background of popular elite cultivar CO51 for BPH resistance.

Materials and Methods

The elite popular rice cultivar CO51 has high yield potential and fine rice grain type, which is suitable for cultivation during all rice seasons in Tamil Nadu was used as the recurrent parent. The CO51 was crossed with the donor IR71033-121-15B which harbors the resistance genes *Bph20* and *Bph21*. The BC₁F₁ mapping population was developed with the help of marker assisted backcross breeding (MABB) approach in Department of Plant Biotechnology, TNAU Coimbatore. The foreground selection was carried out in BC₁F₁ to identify the positive plants with heterozygous loci by using tightly linked SSR markers namely RM16556 and RM3331 for *Bph20* and *Bph21* genes respectively. The identified positive plants were selfed and advanced to BC₁F₂ and BC₁F₃ generation. Foreground selection was carried out for all the plants to identify the positive plants with homozygous loci for the *Bph20* and *Bph21*. The BC₁F₃

homozygous positive plants for double gene and single gene were selected and utilized for evaluation of BPH resistance along with recurrent parent CO51, donor parent IR71033-121-15B, resistant check PTB33 and susceptible check Taichung native1 (TN1).

Genomic DNA was extracted from all the plants by using modified cetyl trimethyl ammonium bromide protocol (Ausubel F.M. 1994) [3]. DNA was measured by using Nanodrop ND-1000 spectrophotometer (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Wilmington, DE, USA). PCR was carried out in 15 µl reactions containing 50-100 ng of DNA template, 8.0 µl of sterile water, 1.5 µl of Assay buffer (10 X), 0.50 µl of 2.5 mM dNTPs, 0.20 µl (3 U/µl) of *Taq* DNA polymerase and 1.00 µl each of 10 µM forward primer and reverse primer. PCR amplification was done with a profile of 35 cycles at 94 °C for 5 min initial denaturation, 94 °C for 1 min denaturation, 50 °C/55 °C for 1 min annealing, 72 °C for 1 min extension, 72 °C for 10 min final extension and 4 °C for hold. The PCR products were resolved by 3.5% agarose gel electrophoresis in 1X TBE buffer and bands were observed after Ethidium Bromide staining and documented using a gel documentation system (BIO-RAD, USA) and banding pattern were scored.

Brown plant hopper used for bioassays were collected from paddy fields and maintained on the TN1 (Susceptible cultivar) in the greenhouse of Entomology at Department of Rice, TNAU Coimbatore. The bioassay experiment was conducted at relative humidity of 70-80% and the ambient temperature of 28-30 °C by standard seed box screening technique proposed at IRRI (Heinrichs 1985) [10]. The seeds were presoaked in water one day prior for sowing and soaked seeds were sown in rows along with the recurrent parent CO51, donor parent IR71033-121-15B, resistant check PTB33, few other rice genotypes, which includes Improved White Ponni (IWP) and CBMAS14065 (a RIL of IWP x APO) and susceptible check TN1 (Taichung native 1) in the seed box of size 60x45x10 cm, 10-15 seedlings were maintained per rows. Seven to ten days old seedlings were infested with the BPH at the rate of 15-20 per seedlings, one week after infestation ‘‘hopperburn’’ symptoms were appeared and observed on the seedlings. When more than 90% of the susceptible check TN1 shows drying and wilting symptoms, the seedlings were individually scored based on the scoring system of International Rice Research Institute (IRRI, 1996) [14]. (Fig.4) and (Table-1).

Table 1: IRRI Standard evaluation system for BPH resistance

Scale	Damage	Resistance level
0	No damage	Immune
1	Very slight damage	Highly resistant
3	First and second leaves of most plants partially yellowing	Resistant
5	Pronounced yellowing and stunting or about 10 to 25% of the plants severely stunted or dying	Moderately resistant
7	More than half of the plants dead	Moderately susceptible
9	All plants dead	Susceptible

Results and Discussion

Introgression of *Bph20* and *Bph21* into a elite popular rice cultivar CO51

CO51 is a short duration (110-115 days), high yielding and fine grain rice variety. It is one of the most widely cultivated elite rice variety in Tamil Nadu and 14 other states in India. Even though it is popular rice but it is moderately resistant to BPH. In order to enhance BPH resistance in CO51 variety.

Backcross inbred lines (BILs) were developed for BPH resistance using the recurrent parent CO51 and the donor parent IR71033-121-15B. Breeding scheme was shown in (Fig.1)

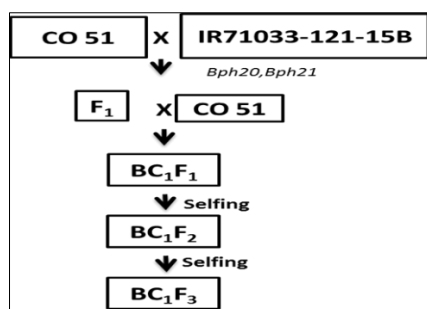


Fig 1: Marker assisted backcross breeding scheme for development of Backcross inbred lines (BILs) of CO 51 x IR71033-121-15B

Foreground Selection for screening of *Bph20* and *Bph21* resistance genes in advanced backcrossed population

For fore ground selection, 13 linked SSR markers were used to identify *Bph20* resistance gene such as RM16547, RM16548, RM16550, RM16553, RM16554, RM16555, RM16556, RM16557, RM16558, RM16560, RM16562, RM16563 and RM16564 from which RM16556 is found polymorphic between the recurrent and donor parents and used as foreground marker for further identification of positive plants for *Bph20* resistance gene. Likewise for *Bph21* resistance gene four linked SSR markers such as RM244, RM3331, RM2854 and RM6615 were used, out of these four markers RM3331 is able to clearly differentiate the CO51 from the donor IR71033-121-15B allele, which is further utilized for the identification of positive plants for *Bph21* resistance genes for all the generation. Primer sequence of the markers used in the study is given in (Table- 2).

Table 2: SSR markers primer sequence used in the study

S. No	Resistance Genes	SSR markers	Forward Primer	Reverse Primer
1.	<i>Bph20</i>	RM16556	TTGGACCAGGAGATCAATGAAGG	GTGCGCACACTCTTCTATGTGC
2.	<i>Bph21</i>	RM3331	CCTCCTCCATGAGCTAATGC	AGGAGGAGCGGATTTCTCTC

In BC₁F₁ population, four and three plants were heterozygous for *Bph20* and *Bph21* resistance gene alone respectively. Only three plants were found to be positive with both *Bph20* and *Bph21* resistance genes (Fig.2). From which, single plant was forwarded to BC₁F₃ generation through selfing. The

foreground selection results in BC₁F₃ population showed that forty nine and thirty two plants were found to be homozygous for *Bph20* and *Bph21* resistance gene alone respectively. Totally thirty two plants were found to be homozygous for both *Bph20* and *Bph21* resistance genes (Fig.3 and Fig.4).

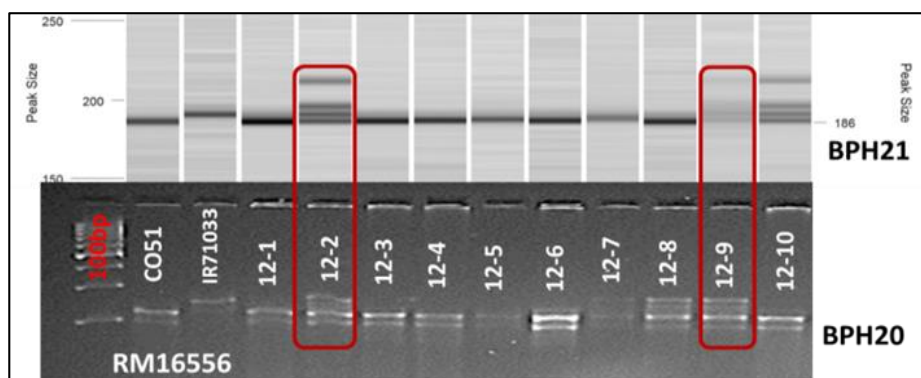


Fig 2: Foreground selection of BC₁F₁ plants of CO51 x IR71033-121-15B for *Bph20* and *Bph21* by using RM16556 and RM3331 markers respectively

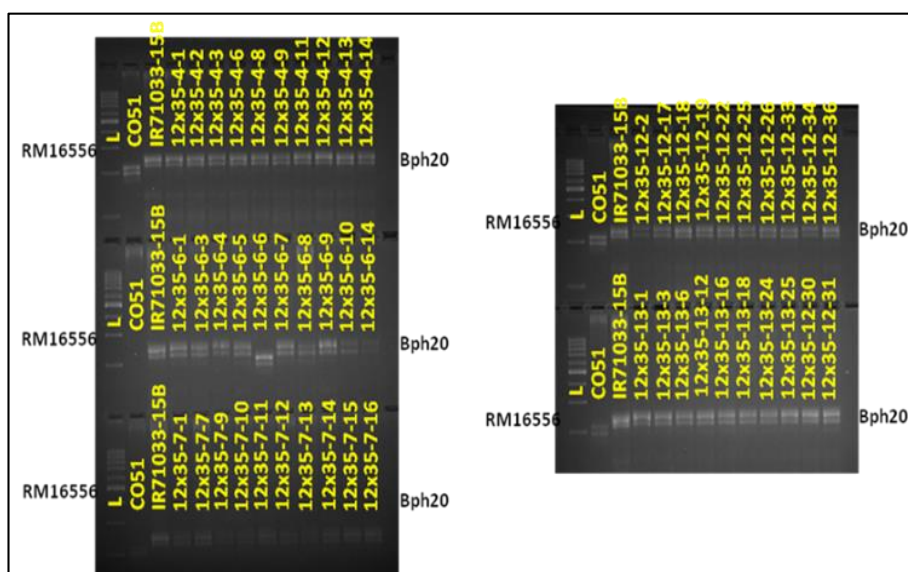


Fig 3: Foreground selection of BC₁F₃ plants of CO51 x IR71033-121-15B for *Bph20* by using RM16556 marker

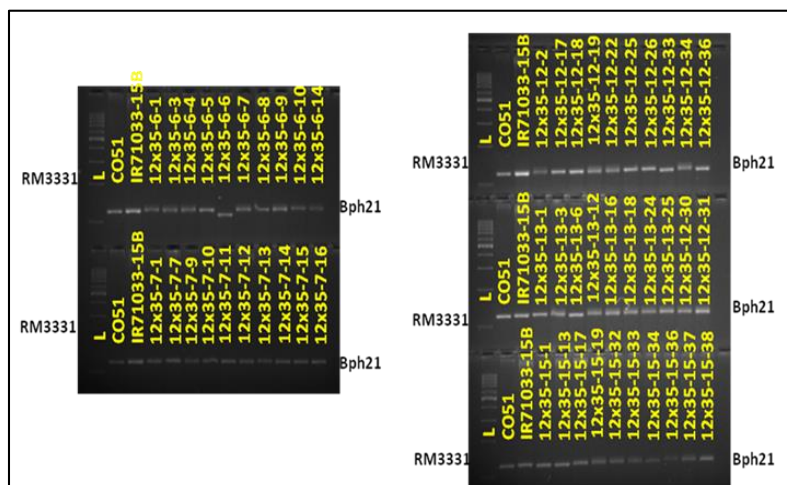


Fig 4: Foreground selection of BC₁F₃ plants of CO51 x IR71033-121-15B for *Bph21* by using RM3331 marker

Evaluation of Backcross inbred lines (BILs) for BPH resistance through Standard Seed box Screening Technique (SSST)

Backcross inbred lines (BILs) of CO51 harbouring two BPH resistant gene combinations *Bph20* and *Bph21* were used for bioassay study responses against brown plant hopper (BPH), *Nilaparvata lugens* (Sta 1) along with the recipient parent CO51, donor IR71033-121-15B, resistant check (PTB 33) and susceptible check (TN 1). The donor parent IR71033-121-15B and BILs # 12-35-6-3, 12-35-7-16 and 12-35-13-1 (containing both *Bph20* and *Bph21*) were shown to be moderately resistant (SES score, 5) to BPH. Resistant check PTB33 was shown to exhibit a resistant reaction of resistance with a SES score of 3 and susceptible check, TN 1 was found to be highly susceptible (HS) with a score of 9 (Fig.5) (Table-3).

The resistant varieties with single gene may easily breakdown of BPH resistance (Cohen *et al.*, 1997; Alam and Cohen 1998b) [8, 2]. Therefore with the help of new and effective BPH resistance genes, pyramiding two or more BPH resistance genes can able to develop durable resistance rice varieties. The double gene pyramided lines with *Bph6* and *Bph12* resistance genes have shown additive effect against BPH, compared with introgression of single gene either with *Bph6* or *Bph12* alone (Qiu *et al.*, 2012) [27]. Likewise pyramiding of *Bph14* and *Bph15* resistance genes introgressed lines have shown enhanced or increased resistance than single

introgression lines either with *Bph14* or *Bph15* resistance gene alone (Hu *et al.*, 2012) [11]. The different test entries/cultivar with specific resistance genes are known for resistance to BPH, but it had shown diverse reaction to Coimbatore (India) biotype of brown plant hopper (Thamarai and soundararajan, 2017) [31]. For example the entries such as Rathuheenathi and PTB-33 carries *Bph3* gene had shown resistant reaction in seed box screening technique. The donor parent IR71033-121-15B used in the present study was shown as moderate resistant reaction to *Nilaparvata lugens* Stal population of Andhra Pradesh (Bhanu *et al.*, 2014) [4]. In our present study we pyramided two BPH resistance genes (*Bph20* and *Bph21*) into a popular rice variety CO51 by using marker assisted backcross breeding (MABB) approach. The double gene pyramided lines with BPH resistance genes (*Bph20* and *Bph21*) have shown significant improvement in resistance for brown plant hopper in the bioassay study. BILs # 12-35-6-3, 12-35-7-16 and 12-35-13-1 (containing both *Bph20* and *Bph21*) were recorded as moderate resistant (MR) reaction (SES score, 5) to BPH, will give durable resistance than the CO51 (recurrent parent) for Coimbatore biotypes BPH. The development of BPH resistance line into a different rice cultivar or variety can be used as promising alternative sources for BPH resistance in breeding durable resistant varieties.

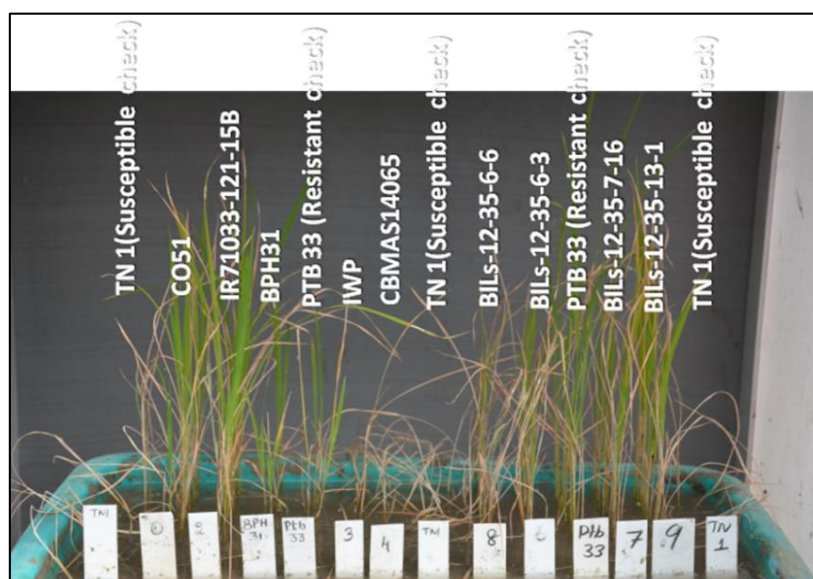


Fig 5: BPH bioassay screening of rice genotypes including with BILs

Table 3: Responses of rice genotypes including NILs against *N. lugens*

S. No	Genotypes	Score	IRRI Scale
1.	12-35-6-6 (Negative for both <i>Bph20</i> & <i>Bph21</i>)	7	MS
2.	12-35-6-3 (Positive for both <i>Bph20</i> & <i>Bph21</i>)	5	MR
3.	12-35-7-16 (Positive for both <i>Bph20</i> & <i>Bph21</i>)	5	MR
4.	12-35-13-1 (Positive for both <i>Bph20</i> & <i>Bph21</i>)	5	MR
5.	Improved White Ponni (IWP)	9	S
6.	CBMAS14065 (a RIL of IWPxAPO)	9	S
7.	BPH31	5	MR
8.	CO 51 (Recurrent Parent)	7	MS
9.	IR71033-121-15B (Donor Parent)	5	MR
10.	PTB 33(Resistant check)	3	R
10.	Taichung Native 1(TN1)	9	S

S: Susceptible; MS: Moderately Susceptible; R: Resistant; MR: Moderately Resistant

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