

Species Composition And Shoot Biomass Production In Parthenium Dominated Abandoned Fallowland.

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Abstract: The present study was conducted in J.P.University campus, Chapra, Bihar,India to record the species composition and production of shoot biomass of *Parthenium hysterophorus* L. invaded vegetation development in abandoned cropland. A total number of 13 herbaceous species were recorded. In addition to *Parthenium* other herbaceous plant species were *Dicanthium annulatum*, *Oxalis corniculata*, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Dactyloctenium aegyptium*, *Tridax procumbens*, *Cyperus rotundus*, *Digitaria setigera*, *Phyllanthus niruri*, *Eleusine indica*, *Evolvulus sinoides*, *Croton sparsiflorus* and *Alysicarpus monolifer*. Phytosociological characteristics such as – frequency, density, abundance, live shoot biomass, relative frequency, relative density and relative dominance were determined quantitatively and qualitatively. In this study *Parthenium* was the most dominant species having highest IVI values (106.29). The co-dominant species was *Dicanthium annulatum* (IVI= 45.68). Species richness, equitability and diversity values are lower than the values reported for tropical grassland vegetation of India. Shoot- biomass values were higher than the Indian grasslands. Thus, *Parthenium* showed aggressiveness and dominance in the newly developed vegetation. *Parthenium* is affecting the normal process of succession on abandoned agricultural land by decreasing the species richness and plant diversity. Thus eradication of *Parthenium* is essential to accelerate the normal process of vegetation development and shoot biomass produced by *Parthenium* may be utilized in other beneficial purposes.

Keywords: Abandoned agricultural land, Dominant species, *Parthenium*, Species Composition, Vegetation.

I. Introduction

Parthenium hysterophorus L. is an annual herbaceous prolific weed belonging to Asteraceae family. *Parthenium* came to India under US PL – 480 scheme and invaded all parts of India [23]. [45] for the first time reported its existence in India. *Parthenium* is a native weed of Mexico and has been widely distributed to the different countries such as Australia, India, China, Kenya, Ethiopia, Nepal etc. through contaminated grains and farm machineries [30]. It has been widely distributed and created problems in countries like Kenya, Taiwan, India, west Indies, Nepal etc. [43]; [41]; [61]; [47]; [7]; [13]. This weed has achieved major status in India and Australia in last some decades [35]; [16]; [31]; [24]; [7]. [15] has reported about two million hectares of land in India has been invaded by *Parthenium*. The presence of *Parthenium* has the drastic effect on the agricultural crops and also causes health hazards in human beings and affects ecosystem and biodiversity [1]; [35]; [29]. *Parthenium* is an aggressive colonizer, production of large amount of seeds; shows allelopathic effects; induces changes in the physical, chemical and biological properties of soil; replaces palatable grasses in rangelands and its manual removal is difficult [57]; [39]; [61]; [36]; [37]; [4]; [5]; [53]; [55]; [6]; [7]; [62]; [27]; [2]; [3]; [63]; [38]. [57] have showed that *Parthenium* was the most major problem in rangeland and cropland in the Eastern Ethiopia. *Parthenium* fastly grows and is comfortable on alkaline to neutral clay soils [10]. [34] have reported that the spread of seeds and their ability to remain viable in the soil for many years pose one of the most complex problems for control and this fact makes eradication difficult for many seed producing *Parthenium*.

In the human beings it causes various types of allergies particularly through pollen grains like contact dermatitis, hay fever, asthma and bronchitis [35]; [64]. [54] have mentioned that pesticides like atrazine, 2,4-D metribuzin, paraquat, trifluralin and diphenamid do not show any effect. *Parthenium* secretes certain allelochemicals such as: phenolic acids, caffeic acid, vanillic acid, ferulic acid, chlorogenic acid, para-coumaric acid, para-hydroxy benzoic acid [21]; [11], and other important chemicals such as pseudoguaionolides, parthenin, anhydroparthenin, ambrosin, cronopilin and damsine which have adverse effect on the growth of plants which grow in its vicinity. [25] reported that secondary metabolites are released through volatilization, leaching, root exudation and decomposition of plant residues in the soil. [14] have reported two life cycles in one year in *Parthenium* from March to June and from July to November in North-Western Indian Himalayas (H.P.). They produce enormous number of seeds which are very small in size and also light in weight and can survive as seed bank in soil for years. *Parthenium* is an annual plant with a deep tap-root and an erect much-branched stem. It usually grows 1-2 m. tall. Mature stems are greenish and longitudinally grooved, covered with small stiff

hairs(trichomes). Leaves are simple, pale green, lobed, sessile, irregularly dissected. The number of leaves per plant is 6 to 55. The flowers are arranged in capitulum, creamy white in colour, borne in profusion at the tips of the stem. Small flower heads are arranged in clusters and its colour changes to light brown, when seeds are mature. Flowering can occur at any time of the year, but is most common during the rainy season. Each flower contains five seeds, which are wedge-shaped, black, 2mm long with thin white scales.

Parthenium commonly called as congress grass or carrot weed, feverfew, ragweed Parthenium and white top. In India, it is locally known as Gajar Ghans. It contains special characters such as: high germination ability, large seed production capacities, high survival rate, extreme adaptability in different habitats, easy dispersal of seeds, high allelopathic impact and completes life-cycles within four weeks [49]; [50]; [51].

In Bihar particularly at Chapra no ecological study on Parthenium invaded vegetation has been done. It is invading fallowland, cropland, wasteland, roadsides etc. on large scale. Nine years ago in about 240 ha of cropland, J.P. University campus Chapra was established. In abandoned cropland of this University campus natural herbaceous vegetation development started. But at the same time invasion of *P. hysterophorus* occupied the whole area. Thus the natural process of plant succession was badly affected by invasion of *P. hysterophorus*. The whole area is occupied by this aggressive exotic species. The main aim of this study was to analyse the species composition and shoot biomass estimation of Parthenium in the abandoned cropland. To know the formation of plant community associated with Parthenium is essential. How much shoot biomass is produced by Parthenium that can be useful in other purposes. Therefore, the present study was conducted in abandoned cropland to know the effect of Parthenium on species composition of early vegetation developed in fallowland and level of production of shoot biomass by Parthenium which can be used in other beneficial purposes.

II. Materials and methods

The species composition and shoot biomass estimation study was conducted in J.P. University Chapra campus in the month of September, 2015. The university campus was established about nine years ago in about 240 ha land where earlier cropping was done. In this fallowland herbaceous vegetation has developed but the invasive species Parthenium has invaded the campus on large scale. The study site is situated between 25° 36' - 26° 15' N latitude and 84° 25' - 85° 15' E longitude. The climate is hot and dry. Annual rainfall normally varies from 66 to 126 cm in rainy season. The maximum and minimum temperature ranges from 6°C to 45°C. The relative humidity ranges from 39 to 90 per cent in the months of May and December, respectively. Sampling was done for the study of vegetation invaded by Parthenium. Randomly ten quadrates of 50 X 50 cm² sizes were placed in the vegetation. All herbaceous plants at the soil surface were harvested. Harvested samples of each quadrate were kept in separate polyethylene bags. Samples were brought to the laboratory and samples of each quadrate were separated species wise and their numbers were counted. We took fresh weight through the electronic balance and were oven-dried at 80°C for 24 hrs. and again dry weight was taken.

The following quantitative and qualitative analyses of plants were done: frequency, density, abundance, relative frequency, relative density, relative dominance, importance value index, species richness, species diversity and equitability.

Frequency, density and abundance were calculated following the formulae proposed by [8] as given below:

$$\text{Frequency (\%)} = \frac{\text{Total no. of quadrates in which species occurred}}{\text{Total no. of quadrates studied}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Density} = \frac{\text{Total no. of individuals of species}}{\text{Total no. of quadrates studied}}$$

$$\text{Abundance} = \frac{\text{Total no. of individuals of the species}}{\text{Total no. of quadrates in which species occurred}}$$

Relative frequency, relative density and relative dominance were determined following the formula of [42] as given below:

$$\text{Relative frequency (\%)} = \frac{\text{No. of occurrence of the species}}{\text{No. of occurrence of all species}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Relative density (\%)} = \frac{\text{No. of individuals of the species}}{\text{Total no. of individuals of all species}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Relative dominance (\%)} = \frac{\text{Total shoot biomass of the species}}{\text{Total shoot biomass of all species}} \times 100$$

The Importance Value Index (IVI) was the sum of the relative frequency (RF), relative density (RD) and relative dominance (RDo) [9], [42].

Species richness was calculated following the formula [32]:

$$\frac{S - 1}{\ln N}$$

Where, S = Total no. of species in the given stand or sample,
N = Total shoot biomass of all the species in that sample.

Species diversity was calculated following the formula as [48]:

$$H = \sum_{i=1}^S (N_i / N) \log_2 (N_i / N)$$

Where, N_i was the total shoot biomass of individuals of species, i and N was the total shoot biomass of all species in that site.

Equitability (EC) was calculated following the formula [32]:

$$EC = \frac{S}{\ln n_i - \ln n_s}$$

Where, S is the total no. of species in the site; and n_i and n_s , the shoot biomass values of most and least important species, respectively.

III. Results

There was a very high infestation of *P. hysterophorus* in the present study site. A total number of 13 plant species were recorded, in which *P. hysterophorus* is the most dominant species. Other species were *Dicanthium annulatum*, *Oxalis corniculata*, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Dactyloctenium aegyptium*, *Tridax procumbens*, *Cyperus rotundus*, *Digitaria setigera*, *Phyllanthus niruri*, *Eleusine indica*, *Evolvulus sinoides*, *Croton sparsiflorus* and *Alysicarpus monolifer*.

Frequency -: The frequency value for *Parthenium* was 100%. The frequency values of other species ranged from 10 to 100%. It was minimum (10%) for *C. sparsiflorus* and *A. monolifer* where as it was maximum (100%) for *O. corniculata*.

Density -: The density value for *Parthenium* was 188.4 m^{-2} . The density values of other species ranged from 0.4 to 402.4 m^{-2} . The minimum value (0.4 m^{-2}) was recorded for *C. sparsiflorus* and maximum value was 402.4 m^{-2} for *D. annulatum*.

Abundance -: The abundance value for *Parthenium* was 188.4. The abundance values of other species ranged from 4 to 447.11. The minimum value 4 was recorded for *C. sparsiflorus* and maximum value was (447.11) for *D. annulatum*.

Live Shoot Biomass -: The live shoot biomass value for *Parthenium* was 3205.32 gm^{-2} . The biomass values for other species ranged from 1 to 330.72 gm^{-2} . It was minimum 1 gm^{-2} for *A. monolifer* where as the maximum value was 330.72 gm^{-2} for *D. annulatum*.

Relative frequency -: The value for relative frequency of *Parthenium* was 14.70%. The relative frequency values of other species ranged from 1.47 to 14.70%. The minimum value 1.47% was recorded for *C. sparsiflorus* and *A. monolifer* where as maximum value was 14.70% for *O. corniculata*.

Relative Density -: The relative density value for *Parthenium* was 11.31%. The relative density of other species ranged from 0.02 to 24.17%. The lowest value 0.02% was recorded for *C. sparsiflorus* and highest value was 24.17% for *D. annulatum*.

Relative Dominance -: The relative dominance value for *Parthenium* was 80.28%. The relative dominance values of other species ranged from 0.2 to 8.28%. The minimum value 0.2% was recorded for *C. sparsiflorus* and *A. monolifer* where as the maximum value 8.28% was recorded for *D. annulatum*.

Importance Value Index -: The IVI value for *Parthenium* was 106.29. The IVI value of co-dominant species *D. annulatum* was 45.68. Thus the community developed after nine years of abandonment of cropland infested with *Parthenium* was *Parthenium hysterophorus* - *Dicanthium annulatum* Community.

The species richness, species diversity and equitability values were recorded, respectively as 1.45, 0.19 and 1.61 for the study sites.

Table 1. Species composition and shoot biomass attributes of Parthenium invaded fallowland after nine years of abandonment.

Name of Species	Frequency (%)	Density (m ⁻²)	Abundance	Live Shoot Biomass (gm ⁻²)	RF (%)	RD (%)	RDo (%)	IVI
<i>Partheniumhysterophorus</i>	100	188.4	188.4	3205.32	14.70	11.31	80.28	106.29
<i>Dicanthiumannulatum</i>	90	402.4	447.11	330.72	13.23	24.17	8.28	45.68
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i>	100	354.8	354.8	107.6	14.70	21.31	2.69	38.7
<i>Cynodondactylon</i>	90	279.2	310.22	127.92	13.23	16.77	3.20	33.2
<i>Dactylocteniumaegyptium</i>	60	142.8	238	67.24	8.82	8.57	1.68	19.07
<i>Tridaxprocumbens</i>	80	78.8	98.5	54.28	11.7	4.73	1.35	17.84
<i>Cyperusrotandus</i>	30	110.8	369.33	11.12	4.41	6.65	0.27	11.33
<i>Digitariasetigera</i>	20	72.4	362	62.44	2.94	4.34	1.56	8.84
<i>Phyllanthusniruri</i>	40	22.4	56	9.48	5.88	1.37	0.23	7.48
<i>Eleusineindica</i>	30	1.6	5.33	2.00	4.41	0.09	0.05	4.55
<i>Evolvulusalsinoides</i>	20	10	50	12	2.94	0.60	0.30	3.84
<i>Croton sparsiflorus</i>	10	0.4	4	1.12	1.47	0.02	0.02	1.53
<i>Alysicarpusmonolifer</i>	10	0.8	8	1.00	1.47	0.04	0.02	1.51
Total	680	1664.8	2491.69	3992.24	99.98	99.94	99.93	299.86

Table 2. Certain selected characteristics of Partheniuminvaded fallowlandsafter nine years of abandonment.

Species richness	Species diversity	Equitability
1.45	0.196	1.61

IV. Discussion

This study revealed that the frequency of Parthenium in invaded sites in University campus was 100% . [28]have studied the distribution and effect of Parthenium in Mehari sub-watershed of Rajouri forest range of Jammu&Kashmir. They have reported highest frequency (92%) for Partheniumhaving relative frequency of 36.54% followed by Cannabissativa(25.23%) and rest of the other species having less than 12.15%. However, in the present study frequency for other species it ranged from 10 to 100%. The relative frequency value was only 14.70% for Parthenium and for other species it ranged from 1.47 to 14.70% in the present study. These values are lower than the values reported by [28]. [33]has studied the effect of P . hysterothorus on plant diversity at Shakti Nagar in Banda district of U.P. . He has reported highest frequency of 98% for Parthenium and rest of the other species showed 10 – 64% frequency, having the highest relative frequency of 29% followed by Apludomutica (19.16%) and rest of the other species having less than 6% relative frequency.[22]has studied the ecological and socioeconomic impacts of P.hysterothorusinvasion in two urban areas in Nepal. He has reported 100% frequency for P.hysterothorus, Euphorbia hirta, Imperatacylindricaland Trifoliumrepens in Partheniuminvaded site and 0 to 62% for rest of the other species at Hetaudasite, whereas the highest frequency (100%) at Bharatpur area for Partheniuminvaded site was for only P.hysterothorusand rest of the other species showed 0 to 94% frequency. [46]havestudied thedistribution status and the impact of Partheniumweed at Gedeo zone (Southern Ethiopia). They have reported highest frequency and relative frequency 140% and 100% for Partheniumand forother species these values ranged from 50 to 135% and 35.7 to 96.4% , respectively. [44]have studied the prevalence of invasive Parthenium weed in district Hafizabad, Pakistan and have mentioned frequency and relative frequency of Parthenium 51% and 2.45% , respectively. Frequency and relative frequency of other species ranged from 5 to 79% and 0.24 to 3.80% ,respectively.

The density value in the present study for Parthenium was recorded 188.4m⁻² and for other species it ranged from 0.4 to 402.4 m⁻². The relative density was only 11.31% for Partheniumand for other species it was 0.02 to 24.17% . Density value for Partheniumin the present study was higher but relative density was lower than reported by [33]. Mishra has reported the highest density of 52 m⁻² for Parthenium and rest of the other species showed 0.1 to 38 m⁻²density , having highest relative density of 47.97 % for Parthenium and rest of the other species showed 0.09 to 35.05% relative density. [56]have reported that the density value for Partheniumstudied in the five sites changes in different grasslands of Karnal, Haryana in relation to sodicity levels of the soil. The highest density of 436 m⁻² for Cynodondactylon in site 1 and for other species it ranged from 0 to 207 m⁻². Density values for Parthenium in Nepal at Bharatpur and Hetauda sites were 48 and 298 m⁻², respectively reported by [22]. There was significant differences in the density of Parthenium. Density values for Parthenium in Bharatpur area, Nepal ranged from 19 to 69 m⁻²[22]; in Kathmandu valley 11 to 47 m⁻²[20]; 55 m⁻²in eastern Ethiopia [58]; 1.5 to 38 m⁻²in grassland of Central Nepal [59]; and 0.55 m⁻²

infallowlands [61]. [19] have studied the invasion of noxious alien weed *P. hysterophorus* in grazing lands of Lahore, Pakistan. They have reported that highest density and relative density 16.8% and 15.59% for *Parthenium*. Rest of the other species these values ranged from 0.02 to 7.8% and 0.018 to 7.236, respectively. [44] have mentioned that density and relative density values for *Parthenium* in Pakistan at Hafizabad district was 1.55 and 3.31% and for other species these values ranged from 0.10 to 2.46 and 0.12 to 4.75%, respectively. [28] have reported that the highest relative density values for *Parthenium* in Mehari sub-watershed site was 62.75% and for other species ranged from 0.61 to 14.51%. Kumar et al. have reported the highest relative abundance was 36.54% for *Parthenium* and for rest of other species it ranged from 0.274 to 25.23%. [17] have studied the impact of *Parthenium* species diversity in GamoGofa, Ethiopia. They have showed that the IVI values for *Parthenium* ranged from 58.4 to 100.9. [28] have mentioned the highest IVI values for *Parthenium* was 129.56 and for rest of other species ranged from 0.730 to 0.472. [18] have showed that *Parthenium* was highly dominant species with very high IVI in the area studied by them. [26] also confirmed that importance value data (IVI) showed the superiority of *Parthenium* at all the locations studied. [27] said that the high IVI of the weed in general is attributed to its competitive ability, allelopathy and strong adaptive and reproductive potential. Species richness values in Nepal at Bharatpur and Hetauda sites were 9 and 9, respectively reported by [22] whereas these values ranged from 29 to 40 [46]. However, in the present study it was 1.61 only. [17] have showed that the species diversity values for *Parthenium* invaded area ranged from 1.15 to 1.73 and species dominance values ranged from 0.24 to 0.50. [46] have reported that the species diversity values for *Parthenium* ranged from 1.6 to 3.41. In the present study shoot biomass value of *Parthenium* was 3205.32 gm⁻² and for other species 1 to 330.72 gm⁻². In tropical grasslands of India the maximum and minimum values for shoot biomass ranged from 76 to 3296 and 0 to 871 gm⁻² [52]. Thus except for *Parthenium* the total shoot biomass of other species was 786.92 gm⁻² which is less than the values reported for Indian grasslands. Thus in the present study the total live shoot biomass values was 3992.24 gm⁻² out of which *Parthenium* contributed 80.28%. [16] has reported that *P. hysterophorus* reduces pasture productivity by 90%. Dwindling effect of *P. hysterophorus* on grass biomass of grasslands of Queensland, Australia has also been reported by [12]. [60] have concluded that *Parthenium* invasion causes changes in above ground vegetation and below ground soil nutrient contents, disturbing the grassland ecosystem in Nepal. Thus *Parthenium* is affecting the levels of biodiversity, plant productivity, species composition and normal course of plant succession. *Parthenium* exhibits the ability to invade and adapt to new habitats and reduces the number of indigenous plants and biodiversity in India [40]. In the present study species richness in *Parthenium* invaded site was 1.45. However in *Parthenium* non-invaded site species richness values have been reported from 1.64 to 2.73 from Chapra (Kumari and Jha. communicated). Thus invasion of *Parthenium* decreased species richness and species diversity which affects the normal course of primary plant succession fallowland.

V. Conclusion

Species composition and shoot biomass study of herbaceous vegetation developed after nine years of abandonment of cropland invaded by *P. hysterophorus* L. indicated that the aggressive species *Parthenium* has dominated the vegetation having highest IVI value. In the present study *Parthenium* showed higher frequency, relative frequency and IVI values compared to other studies [28],[33] but lower values for relative density and abundance compared to other studies [33]. *Parthenium* affected the species richness, diversity and equitability of the plant species. Thus, eradication of *Parthenium* is essential.

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