International Journal of Engineering& Scientific Research

Vol.10 Issue 01, January 2022

ISSN: 2347-6532 Impact Factor: 6.660

Journal Homepage: http://www.ijmra.us, Email: editorijmie@gmail.com

Double-Blind Peer Reviewed Refereed Open Access International Journal - Included in the International Serial Directories Indexed & Listed at: Ulrich's Periodicals Directory ©, U.S.A., Open J-Gage as well as in Cabell's Directories of Publishing Opportunities, U.S.A

Floristics of a Riverine Ecosystem along Siwaliks, Dehradun India

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Abstract

Riverine flora of importants rivulets 'Kheeree Rau', 'Semal Rau', 'Pathar Rau', 'Mohan Rau of river Hindon have been worked out. The study is restricted to 50 m from either side of the Rau. A total of 193 plant species belonging to 153 genera and 54 families are recorded from the study area. Herbs appear to be dominant with 135 (69.9%) species followed by shrubs 38 (19.7%) species and 14 (7.3%) tree species and 06 (3.1%) climber species. The biological spectrum reveals that the vegetation of the area is thero-phanerophytic. Therophytes represent the highest (50.3%) lifeforms followed by Phenerophytes (29.0%) and Hemicryptophytes (8.3%). The highest percentage of therophytes in the area may be due to low soil cover, low moisture owing to sandy soil and favourable period (rainy season) for the growth of annuals.

Keywords: Riverine, Raus, Biological Spectrum, Life-form

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Introduction

The most important natural and renewable resource for the human welfare are forests. They serve as an ecological unit influencing environment. Floristics of an area form the vegetation which is successively occupied in the form of plant community / communities. The floristics of an area is greatly influenced by soil as substrata. Anderson *et* al. (1991) have reported that the seed bank of any species is affected by the soil properties. Floristics helps us to understand the study of life-forms and ecological patterns in spatial variability (Farina, 1998). Singh (2002) have reported that diversity as such is essential for human survival and wellbeing alongwith the ecosystem function and stability.

Riverine areas are most diverse plant habitats due to their exposure to various direct and indirect pressures. Riverine forests of Africa support a rich diversity of flora and fauna (Hughes, 1988). The herb layer in the riverine forests serves as an important component of forest vegetation as it influences the micro-climate, affect tree seedling establishment and provide wildlife browsing. The riverine area in the present study show scattered patches of mixed-vegetation dominated by grasses. Dobhal *et* al. (2010) have reported diverse vegetation compositions in Tons river due to different micro-climatic and biotic features.

The floristics and change in its composition is a sensitive indicator of environment. Raunkiaer (1934) reported that 'Biological Spectrum' reflects its phyto-climatic conditions but in case of disturbance, it affects biotic operations (Pandeya, 1952). Attempts to study biological spectrum of various ecosystems in Uttarakhand were made (Rajwar and Gupta, 1984; Ghildiyal and Srivastava, 1990; Shahid and Joshi, 2015). However, in riverine ecosystems Prakriti *et* al. (2010) and Singh and Joshi (2014) have reported it from Song and Tons rivers respectively.

Study Site

The present study is carried out in Shivalik Range of Mohand Forest Block of Shivalik Forest Division, Saharanpur. The Shivaliks that form the southernmost part of Himalaya, form a long chain of narrow and low hills about 700-1320 m running almost parallel to Himalayas. The slopes in the study site are steep and rugged in the upper position but lower down they have quite easy gradients. There are many rivulets also known as 'Rau' traversing through the forest range and ultimately join river in Saharanpur. Among the rivulets 'Kheeree Rau', 'Semal Rau', 'Pathar Rau', 'Mohan Rau' are prominent. These rivulets are narrow when at Shivalik mountain but gradually become wider as they flow downwards. The study area is situated on the right side of Dehradun-Saharanpur road at the distance of nearly 19 km from Dehradun. The Kheeree Rau flows in the centre of Semal Rau and Pathar Rau. Scattered trees are found on either side of these rivulets.

Methodology

The study area was thoroughly investigated seasonally to cover all landscape features and landforms of all the three Raus. The plant specimens were collected from all the sites as per Jain and Rao (1977). Plant species were identified with the help of National Herbaria of BSI (BSD) and FRI (DD) located in Dehradun. Information of habit, habitat,

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flowering and fruiting period and organ of perennation was recorded by using Raunkiaer's classification (Muller-Dombois and Ellenberg, 1967).

Result and Discussion

The consistent increase in biotic activities in forest areas has resulted in over-exploitation of natural resources. This has resulted in imbalance of the delicate equilibrium that exists between living organisms and their environment. Biodiversity is essential for the ecosystem function and stability as well as human survival (Singh, 2002). Conservation of biological diversity is the essential step—for—understanding and managing the disturbance regimes of a landscape (Spies and Turner, 1999).

Riverine ecosystems are open to human interference and serve as areas for invasion and establishment of different plant species. In present study area, the availability of water for a brief period of 2-3 months in the forms of flooding and thereby sedimentation, influences the vegetation and its development. The floral diversity of the area has recorded 193 Angiosperms (144 dicots and 49 monocots) (Table 1) belonging to 54 families. Dicots contributed a total of 74.6% (Fig. 1). Among the plant growth forms herbs with 135 species emerged as dominant vegetation group followed by shrubs (38 species), trees (14 species) and climbers (06 species) (Fig.2). The maximum number of plant species belong to family Poaceae with 35 species followed by Fabaceae with 23 species. (Fig.3).

Life forms indicate environment of the area especially climatic conditions. The life form classes reflect vertical stratification of various layers. Rao (1968) reported that the stratification indicates the plant response to the unfabvourable seasons for growth. The life form of the study area shows that therophytes emerged with highest percentage (50.3%) followed by phanerophytes (29%), hemicryptophyte (8.3%) and Chaemaphytes and Cryptophytes (each with 6.2%)(Fig.4).

The percentage of theropytes reported in the present study appear to be much higher in comparison to Raunikiaer (1934). Similarly the phanerophye and hemocryptophytes reported in the study were lower to Raunikiaer (1934). The value of cryptophytes appeared to be similar to Raunkiaer's life forms (Fig.4). A comparison of riverine biological spectra from Uttarakhand (Table 3) indicates that in Song riverine area and Tons riverine area the life-form percentage indicates Thero-phanerophytic climate similar to present study.

Raunkiaer (1934) have reported dominance of phanerophytes in tropical vegetation. In the present study it is second dominant life-form that have adopted to the conditions of riverine ecosystem. Similar findings are reported by Dobhal *et* al. (2010) and Singh and Joshi (2014). The higher percentage of therophytes can be attributed to either dry sandy condition for most part of the year (Dadhich, 1982; Dobhal *et* al., 2010 and Singh and Joshi, 2014)(Table 3) or due to biotic pressures (Dayama, 1987; Ghildiyal and Srivastava, 1990).

Acknowledgement

The first author is thankful to Principal and Head, Department of Botany, D.A.V.P.G. College, Dehradun for providing necessary facilities to carry out the study.

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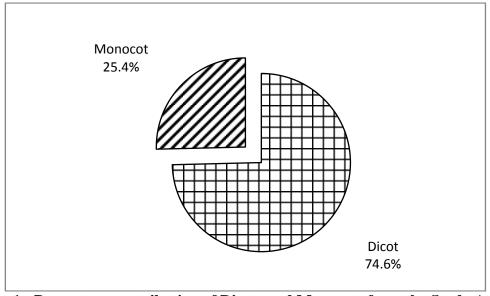


Fig. 1: Percentage contribution of Dicots and Monocots from the Study Area

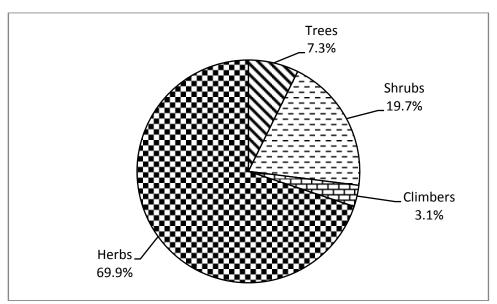


Fig. 2: Percentage contribution of various growth forms from the Study Area

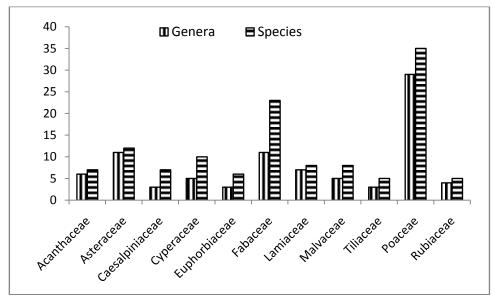


Fig. 3: Dominant Families of the Study Area

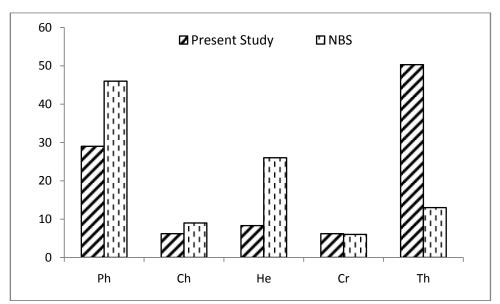


Fig. 4: Comparison of Life-forms of Present Study Site with Raunkiaer's Life-form

Table 1 : Diversity of Taxa of the Study Site

Plant Groups	Family		Genera		Species	
	No.	%	No. %		No.	%
Dicot	47	87	108	70.6	153	79
Monocot	07	13	45	29.4	54	21
Total	54		153		193	

Table 2 : Taxa at Species level from the Study Site

	2. Taxa at species level from the Study	Growth	Life	
Family	Plant Species	Form	Form	
Acanthaceae	Barleria cristata L.	Shrub	Th	
Acanthaceae	Dicliptera bupleburoides Nees	Herb	Th	
Acanthaceae	Justica simplex D.Don	Herb	Th	
Acanthaceae	Lepidagathis incurva BuchHam. ex D.Don	Herb	He	
Acanthaceae	Lepidagathis cuspidata Nees	Herb	Не	
Acanthaceae	Peristrophe bicalyculata (Retz.)Nees	Herb	Th	
Acanthaceae	Rungia pectinata Clarke	Herb	Th	
Amaranthaceae	Achyranthes aspera L.	Herb	Th	
Amaranthaceae	Aerva sanguinolenta (L.)Bl.	Shrub	Ph	
Amaranthaceae	Amaranthus viridis L.	Herb	Th	
Apiacae	Bupleurum falcatum L.	Herb	Th	
Apocynacece	Carissa spinarum L.	Shrub	Ph	
Araceae	Arisaema tortuosum(Wall.)Schott.	Herb	Cr	
Araceae	Plesmonium margaritiferum (Roxb.)Schott.	Herb	Cr	
Araliaceae	Hydrocotyle asiatica L.	Herb	Не	
Arecaceae	Phoenix humilis Royle	Tree	Ph	
Aspargaceae	Asparagus adsendens Roxb.	Shrub	Ph	
Asteraceae	Ageratum conyzoides L.	Herb	Th	
Asteraceae	Bidens biternata (Lour.) Merr.& Sherff.	Herb	Th	
Asteraceae	Bidens pilosa L.	Herb	Th	
Asteraceae	Blainvillea acmella (L.) Philipson	Herb	Th	
Asteraceae	Blumeopsis flava (DC.) Gagnep.	Herb	Th	
Asteraceae	Conyza stricta Willd.	herb	Th	
Asteraceae	Eclipta prostrata L.	Herb	Th	
Asteraceae	Emilia sonchifolia (L.)DC.	Herb	Ph	
Asteraceae	Inula cappa (BuchHam. ex D.Don)DC.	Shrub	Th	
Asteraceae	Sonchus oleraceous L.	Herb	Th	
Asteraceae	Tridax procumbens L.	Herb	Th	
Asteraceae	Xanthium strumarium L.	herb	Th	
Begoniaceae	Begonia picta Smith	Herb	Th	
Boraginaceae	Cordia dichotoma Forst.f.	Tree	Ph	
Boraginaceae	Cynoglossum lanceolatum Forsk.	Herb	Th	
Boraginaceae	Trichodesma indicum (L.)R.Br.	Herb	Th	
Brassicaceae	Arabidopsis thaliana (L.) Heynh.	Herb	Th	
Cactaceae	Opuntia dillenii Haw.	Shurb	Ph	
Caesalpiniaceae	Bauhinia vahlii W. & A.	Climber	Ph	
Caesalpiniaceae	Bauhinia variegata L.	Tree	Ph	
Caesalpiniaceae	Cassia occidentalis L.	Shrub	Th	

Caesalpiniaceae	Cassia pumila Lamk.	Herb	Ph
Caesalpiniaceae	Cassia obtusiloba L.	Shrub	Ph
Cannabaceae	Trema politoria Planch.	Tree	Th
Caryophyllaceae	Arenaria serpyllifolia L.	Herb	Th
Caryophyllaceae	Stellaria cerastoide L.	Herb	Th
Commelinaceae	Cyanotis vaga (Lour.)Schult. f.	Herb	Th
Commelinaceae	Murdannia nudiflora (L.)Bruckn.	Herb	Th
Convolvulaceae	Ipomoea pestigridis L.	Climber	Ph
Convolvulaceae	Porana paniculata Roxb.	Shrub	Ph
Cucurbitaceae	Diplocyclos palmatus (L.)Jeffrey	Climber	Cr
Cyperaceae	Bulbostylis barbata (Rottb.) Clarke	Herb	Cr
Cyperaceae	Cyperus paniceus (Rotta) Boeck.	Herb	Cr
Cyperaceae	Cyperus pangorei Rottb.	Herb	Cr
Cyperaceae	Cyperus sanguinolentus Vahl	Herb	Cr
Cyperaceae	Cyperus brevifolius (Rottb.) Hassk.	Herb	Th
Cyperaceae	Cyperus rotundus L.	Herb	Th
Cyperaceae	Eriophorum comosum (Wall.)Wall. ex Nees	Herb	Th
Cyperaceae	Fimbristylis dichotoma (L.) Vahl	Herb	Cr
Cyperaceae	Cyperus pumilus L.	Herb	Th
Cyperaceae	Carex condensata Nees	Herb	Ph
Dioscoreaceae	Dioscorea bulbifera L.	Herb	Ph
Dipterocarpaceae	Shorea robusta Gaertn.f.	Tree	Th
Euphorbiaceae	Euphorbia hirta L.	Herb	Th
Euphorbiaceae	Euphorbia geniculata Orteg.	Herb	Th
Euphorbiaceae	Euphorbia hypericifolia L.	Herb	Ph
Euphorbiaceae	Mallotus philippensis MuellArg.	Tree	Th
Euphorbiaceae	Phyllanthus debilis Klein ex Willd.	Herb	Th
Euphorbiaceae	Phyllanthus simplex Retz.	Herb	Ch
Fabaceae	Alysicarpus bupleurifolius (L.)DC.	Herb	Ch
Fabaceae	Alysicarpus ferrugineus Hochst.& Steud.	Herb	Ch
Fabaceae	Alysicarpus vaginalis(L.)DC.	Herb	Ph
Fabaceae	Cajanus scarabaeoides (L.) Thouars	Climber	Ph
Caesalpiniaceae	Cassia fistula L.	Tree	Ph
Caesalpiniaceae	Cassia laevigata Willd.	Herb	Ph
Fabaceae	Crotalaria alata BuchHam.ex D.Don	Herb	Ph
Fabaceae	Crotalaria medicaginea Lamk.	Herb	Th
Fabaceae	Crotalaria calycina Schrank.	Herb	Th
Fabaceae	Crotalaria albida Heyne ex Roth	Herb	Ch
Fabaceae	Crotalaria juncea L.	Herb	Ch
Fabaceae	Crotoalaria pallida Aiton	Herb	Th
Fabaceae	Crotalaria prostrata Roxb.	Herb	Th

Fabaceae	Desmodium pulchellum (L.)Benth.	Shrub	Ph	
Fabaceae	Desmodium triflorum (L.)DC.	Herb		
Fabaceae	Desmodium heterocarpon DC.	Shrub	Th	
Fabaceae	Desmodium velutinum (Willd.)DC.	Shrub	Ph	
Fabaceae	Indigofera linifolia (L.f.)Retz.	Shrub	Th	
Fabaceae	Lathyrus aphaca L.	Herb	Ph	
Fabaceae	Ougeinia delbergioides Benth.	Tree	Th	
Fabaceae	Sesabania sesban (L.)Merr.	Tree	Ph	
Fabaceae	Vicia hirsuta (L.)Gray	Climber	Ph	
Fabaceae	Vicia sativa L.	Climber	Th	
Fabaceae	Uraria picta (Jacq.)Desv.	Shrub	Th	
Fabaceae	Zornia gibbosa Span.	Herb	Th	
Gentianaceae	Canscora decussata (Roxb.) Schult. & Schult.	Herb	Ph	
Gentianaceae	Gentiana aprica Decne	Herb	Ch	
Geraniaceae	Geranium ocellatum Cambess.	Herb	Th	
Lamiaceae	Ajuga macrosperma Wall.	Herb	Не	
Lamiaceae	Anisomelis indica (L.)O.Kuntze	Herb	Th	
Lamiaceae	Caryopteris wallichiana Schau.	Shrub	Th	
Lamiaceae	Clerodendrum viscosum Vent	Shrub	Ph	
Lamiaceae	Leucas cephalotes (Roth.)Spreng.	Herb	Ph	
Lamiaceae	Nepeta graciliflora Benth.	Herb	Th	
Lamiaceae	Nepeta hindostana (Roth.)Haines	Herb	Th	
Lamiaceae	Callicarpa macrophylla Vahl	Shrub	Th	
Linaceae	Reinwardtia indica Dumort.	Shrub	Ph	
Linderniaceae	Lindernia crustacea (L.)F.Muell.	Herb	Ch	
Linderniaceae	Torenia cordiflora Roxb.	Herb	Ph	
Lythraceae	Woodfordia fruiticosa (L.)Kurz.	Shrub	Ch	
Malvaceae	Helicteres isora L.	Shrub	Th	
Malvaceae	Kediya calycina Roxb.	Tree	Ph	
Malvaceae	Malvastrum tricuspidatum (R.Br.)A.Gray	Sub Shrub	Ph	
Malvaceae	Sida cordifolia L.	Sub Shrub	Ph	
Malvaceae	Sida orientalis Cav.	Sub Shrub	Ph	
Malvaceae	Sida cordata (Burm.f.)Borss.	Sub Shrub	Ph	
Malvaceae	Sterculia villosa Roxb. ex Smith	Tree	Ph	
Malvaceae	Urena lagopus DC.	Shrub	Ph	
Menispermaceae	Cissampelos pareira L.	Climber	Ph	
Moraceae	Ficus auriculata Lour.	Tree	Th	
Myrtaceae	Syziguim cumini (L.)Skeels	Tree	Ph	
Nyctaginaceae	Boerhaavia diffusa L.	Herb	Ph	
Onagraceae	Epilobium hirsutum L.	Herb	Ph	
Orchidacae	Habenaria marginata Coleb.	Herb	Ph	

Orobanchaceae	Centranthera nepalensis D.Don	Herb	Ph
Orobanchaceae	Lindenbergia indica (L.)O.Kuntze	Herb	Th
Orobanchaceae	Striga asiatica (L.) O.Kuntze	Herb	Th
Orobanchaceae	Striga angustifolia Lour.	Herb	Cr
Phyllanthaceae	Phyllanthus urinaria L.	Herb	Cr
Plantaginaceae	Mesopates orontium L	Herb	Th
Plantaginaceae	Limnophila indica (L.)Druce	Herb	Th
Plantaginaceae	Veronica persica Poir.	Shrub	Ch
Poaceae	Alloteropsis angustata Stapf.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Apluda mutica L.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Arundinella nepalensis Trin.	Herb	Не
Poaceae	Arundinella bengalensis (Spreng.)Druce	Herb	Ph
Poaceae	Arthraxon lancifolium (Trin.)Hochst	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Capillipedinum assimile (Steud.) A.Camus	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Chrysopogon serrulatus Trin.	Herb	Не
Poaceae	Cymbopogon flexuosus (Nees ex Steud.)Wats.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Cymbopogon martinii (Roxb.) Wats.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Cyrtococcum accrescens (Trin.)Stapf	Herb	Ch
Poaceae	Digitaria longifolia (Retz.)Pers.	Herb	Ph
Poaceae	Digitaria sanguinalis (L.)Scop.	Herb	Ch
Poaceae	Digitaria ciliaris (Retz.) Koeler	Herb	Cr
Poaceae	Eleusine indica (L.)Gaertn.	Herb	Cr
Poaceae	Eragrostiella nardoides (Trin.)Bor.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Eragrostis unioloides (Retz.)Nees ex Steud.	Herb	Не
Poaceae	Eragrostis tenella (L.)P.Beauv.	Herb	Не
Poaceae	Tripidium revennae (L.) H.Scholz	Herb	Не
Poaceae	Erianthus filifolius Nees ex Steud.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Hetropogon contortus (L.)P.Beauv.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Imperata cylindrica (L.)P.Beauv.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Neyraudia arundinacea Hook.f.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Oplismenus compositus (L.)P.Beauv.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Oplismenus burmannii (Retz.)P.Beauv.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Panicum patens Hochst.ex Steud.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Paspalum scrobiculatum Hook.f.	Herb	Не
Poaceae	Saccharum spontaneum L.	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Setaria glauca B.Beauv.	Herb	Не
Poaceae	Sorghum halepense (L.)Pers.	Herb	Не
Poaceae	Themeda quadrivalvis (L.)O.Kuntze	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Thysanolaena maxima (Roxb.)O.Kuntze	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Chrysopogon zizanioides (L.)Nash	Herb	Th
Poaceae	Bothriochloa pertusa (L.) A.Camus	Herb	Th

Poaceae	Cynodon dactylon (L.) Pers.	Herb	Не
Poaceae	Desmostachya bipinnata (L) Stapf	Herb	Th
Polygalaceae	Polygala chinensis L.	Herb	Th
Polygalaceae	Polygala furcata Royle	Herb	Th
Polygonacae	Polygonum barbatum L.	Herb	Th
Polygonacae	Polygonum flaccidum Roxb.	Herb	Не
Polygonacae	Polygonum plebejum R.Br.	Herb	Th
Polygonceace	Rumex hastatus D.Don	Herb	Th
Portulacacae	Portulaca oleracea L.	Herb	Th
Primulaceae	Anagallis arvensis L.	Herb	Th
Primulaceae	Androsace trifolia Adams	Herb	Ch
Primulaceae	Maesa indica (Roxb.)A.DC.	Shrub	Не
Ranunculaceae	Clematis gouriana Roxb. ex DC	Climber	Ch
Rhamnaceae	Helinus lanceolatus Brand.	Shrub	Ch
Rhamnaceae	Zizyphus mauritiana Lam.	Shrub	Th
Rhamnaceae	Zizyphus nummularia (Burm.f.)Wight&Arn.	Shrub	Ph
Rubiaceae	Borreria stricta G.F.W.May	Herb	Ph
Rubiaceae	Spermadictyon suaveolus Roxb.	Shrub	Ph
Rubiaceae	Oldenlandia nudicaulis Roth.	Herb	Ph
Rubiaceae	Oldenlandia corymbosa Hook.f.	Herb	Ph
Rubiaceae	Pavetta indica L.	Shrub	Th
Rutaceae	Murraya koenigii (L.)Spreng.	Shurb	Ph
Scrophulariceae	Mazus rugosus Lour.	Herb	Th
Solanaceae	Solanum surratense Burm.f.	Herb	Th
Tiliaceae	Corchorus aestuans L.	Herb	Ph
Tiliaceae	Corchorus tridens L.	Herb	Ph
Tiliaceae	Grewia glabra Bl.	Tree	Th
Tiliaceae	Triumfetta pilosa Roth	Herb	Th
Tiliaceae	Triumfetta rhomboidea Jacq.	Shrub	Th
Verbenaceae	Colebrookea oppositifolia Smith	Shrub	Ph
Verbenaceae	Lantana camara L.	Shrub	Ph
Vitaceae	Leea aspera Edgew.	Shrub	Ph

Table 3 : Biological Spectrum of Various Riverine Areas in Uttarakhand and Raunkiaer's Normal Biological Structure

River	No. of	Life-form Classes				Phyto-	C	
	Species	Ph	Ch	Не	Cr	Th	climate	Source
Song	341	29.33	7.33	4.68	5.87	52.79	Th-Ph	Dobhal <i>et</i> al. (2010)
Tons	341	37.00	7.05	2.42	4.63	48.90	Th-Ph	Singh & Joshi (2014)
Kheree, Son, Semal Rau	193	29.00	6.20	8.30	6.20	50.30	Th-Ph	Present Study