Slope Aspects and Elevation Influenced Herbaceous Diversity and Soil Characteristics in Tropical Forests of Indian Desert

ABSTRACT

Aim: Understanding the interactive effects of aspects and elevation on soil properties and vegetation diversity in hill forest of desert environment is essential for devising strategies to restore such degraded hills.

Place and duration: Observations were recorded during September to October 2017 and 2018 in a hilly forest area in the Tharp Desert of Rajasthan, India.

Methodology: Three-hundred-twenty plots of 1 m² (clustered at sixty-four positions based on eight slope aspects and eight elevations) were studied for herbaceous diversity, and soil properties by sorting vegetation to species level, and soil sampling in each plot. Community population (P), height, soil water content (SWC), pH, and organic carbon (SOC) were measured and species-richness (R), Shannon-Weiner diversity (H’), dominance (D), and evenness (J’) were calculated.

Results: Out of 174 species from 34 families and 122 genera, 163 species showed IVI < 5. The dominant family was Phocaea. Soil pH, SWC, SOC, P, and height were greater in 2017, whereas R, H’ and J’ were greater in 2018. Soil pH, height and D were lowest in the northeast and highest (1.04-1.54-fold) in the west to the southeast. SOC, SWC, R and J’ were 1.16-2.35-fold greater in the northeast than the south aspect. P, height and H’ showed a reverse trend with a 1.15-1.53-fold variation. SOC, height, R, and H’ increased by 1.30-2.35-fold with increase in elevation from <230 m to >600 m, whereas D and pH showed a decreasing trend. The highest values of SWC, P and J’ were in 800-900 m, 700-800 m and 600-700 m respectively. Though varied with aspects, <230 m area was dominated by xeric species, middle by Aristida adscensionis and higher ones by Apluda mutica/Heteropogon contortus.

Conclusion: Altitude had a stronger impact on all variables except SWC, which was influenced strongly by aspects making southern slopes drier than the northern slopes and influenced species structure and composition. Such areas require effective conservation, but aspect and elevation should be given due importance in devising restoration strategies for efficient management of biodiversity and mitigating climate change.

Keywords: Arid zone; herbaceous vegetation; isolated hills; soil organic carbon; soil water; species dominance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Topography shows significant impacts on the abundance, distribution, and diversity of vegetation in mountainous regions by influencing micro-climate, vegetation establishment, water movement, nutrient distributions, and soil erosion [1, 2]. Elevation along with aspect and slope determines the microclimate and thus large-scale spatial distribution and patterns of vegetation dynamics [3, 4].
Each mountain face shows contrasting characteristics with respect to insolation, light intensity, soil moisture, soil pH, humidity, etc.[5]. The north-facing slope retains moisture and are more cold and humid than the south-facing slope in northern hemisphere thereby offer a better habitat for regeneration and growth of diverse vegetation [6,7]. Elevation is another factor influencing temperature, evapotranspiration, humidity, wind speed, rainfall [8, 9] and species richness [10], whereas north and south aspects have been observed as main ecological drivers in altitudinal species richness [7].

Global patterns of species ranges and richness are the product of many interacting factors such as environmental conditions, competition, geographical setting, and evolutionary development [11,12]. For instance, vegetation in arid regions adapt by changing structural characteristics like fleshy leaf, assimilating shoots, lots of epidermal hairs, thick cuticle, etc., to improve their water use efficiency in the existing environment [13]. Favourable climatic conditions particularly high precipitation promotes species richness and belowground biomass, which shows a consistent positive effect on soil water, organic carbon storage and pH [14]. SOC acts as medium of sorption to hold water and improve soil aggregation and nutrient cycling [15]. Increased nutrient availability also influences seed germination, seedling establishment and species dominance along an altitudinal gradient [16, 17, 18]. SOC also helps improve water availability leading to higher species richness in contrast to the effects of increased nutrient availability [19]. Soil pH influences trace element mobility and nitrogen cycling [20]. Therefore spatial variation in slope aspect, elevation and soil characteristics appear determinant of vegetation pattern, species distribution and ecosystem processes. It would be more imperative to study the environment-vegetation relationships in arid environment particularly in Thar Desert [21].

The Thar Desert covers about 200,000 km² areas bordering irrigated Indus plain to the west, the Punjab plain in north and northeast, the Aravalli range in southeast, and the Rann of Kutch in the south [22]. Archean gneiss, Proterozoic sedimentary rocks and more-recent alluvium are geographical features [23]. The surface consists of aeolian sand accumulated over the past 1.8 million years. The soils consist of desert soils, red desertic, sierozems, the red and yellow soils in the foothills, the saline soils of the depressions, and the lithosols (shallow weathered soils) and soft loose soils (regosols) in the hills [22]. Because of varying topographical features like saline depressions, sand dunes, sandy plains and rock outcrops, gravelly pediments and isolated hills this region harbours a variety of flora and fauna [24, 25, 26]. Most of the isolated hills are surrounded by sandy ravines developed by wind and water erosion in the region [27]. These hills support a wide variety of flora ranging from desertic in foothills to deciduous flora of Aravalli on hillslopes and top [24]. However, increasing pressure of livestock grazing coupled with climatic harshness leads to depletion of flora and requires effective management strategies to restore such degraded hills. There is lack of knowledge and understanding of how the slope aspect and elevation interacts to influence soil characteristics and vegetation composition in such mountainous area of Thar Desert. Thus, determining relationship between topography, vegetation and soils is essential factor for devising a restoration plan [28].

Therefore, objectives of this study were: (i) to study vegetation composition and diversity in different physiographic positions of Siwana-complex area; (ii) to estimate soil pH, water storage and organic carbon in different elevation and aspects; and (iii) to find out the relationship between diversity indices and soil factors for help in devising restoration strategies.
2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Study site
The study was conducted in Haldeshwar Mahadevji hill forest of Siwana complex area of Barmer district (Thar Desert) in western Rajasthan. This forest block is situated between 25° 32'N to 25° 36' N Latitude and 72° 17'E to 72° 24' E Longitude covering over 5000 ha area. Elevation varies from 230 to 950 meter above mean sea level (amsl) and comes under high altitude hot desert region surrounded by seasonal rivers system and sandy plain to sandy ravenous area (Fig. 1).

Annual rainfall of Siwana tehsil during 2009-2018 was 243.4 mm. In this, year 2013 received highest rain of 752 mm, whereas the lowest was 172 mm in 2018 (Fig. 1). In the year 2017, a total 622 mm rain was received in 25 days. Annual mean minimum and maximum temperature of Siwana were 23.7 °C and 34.15 °C respectively. Average relative humidity was 30.5-36.4% and wind speed was 10.8-15.8 k/hr. Windblown soils deposited on the hill tops are also visible in patches. Soil of the area is slightly alkaline in reaction and low in soil organic carbon (0.40-0.76%) and nitrogen (0.12-0.16%).

2.2 Experimental design and observation recording
Total area was divided into eight slope aspects and 8 elevation categories. The slope aspects were North (N), Northeast (NE), East (E), Southeast (SE), South (S), Southwest (SW), West (W) and Northwest (NW). Eight elevation positions were <230m, 230-300m, 300-400m, 400-500m, 500-600m, 600-700m, 700-800m and 800-900 m amsl. The slope aspect was measured clockwise.
starting from North (0°). The compass direction facing the slope was the slope aspect and flat terrain with no slope was considered no aspect. Elevations were measured in meters (m) amsl. The geographical coordinates (latitude and longitude) and the elevation were recorded with the help of Geographic Information System (GPS). Per cent slope was calculated by dividing the difference between the elevations of two points (rise) by the distance between them (run) multiplied by 100. Sixty-four sites were identified based on the slope aspect and elevation (8 × 8). At each site, five sapling plots (cluster sampling) of 1 m × 1 m size were laid out as the replicates. In which one plot was in the centre and the other four were at each corner of the central plot with a distance of 45 m from centre of the central plot to centre of the other plots. Vegetation study was conducted after the monsoon period, i.e. during September to October months of 2017 and again in 2018. This is the time when the chances of availability of herbaceous species are highest in the region. Herbaceous vegetation was studied in 320 plots (8 aspects × 8 elevations × 5 sampling plots) following standard method [29]. The above-ground vegetation from 1-m² area quadrates were chipped just above the surface and sorted to species. All the herbaceous vegetation were identified as per taxonomic classification using local and regional flora of Jodhpur and Rajasthan [24, 26]. These species were counted manually and categorized into several number of species and their population. The phytosociological analysis included diversity variables like species richness (R), Shannon-Wiener diversity index (H'), species evenness (J'), and Simpson's diversity index (D) were calculated following standard procedures [30, 31, 32, 33]. Height and diameter were recorded for 5 representative plants of each species using a measuring tape and vernier caliper. The importance value index was calculated as the sum of relative frequency, relative density, and relative dominance [34]. The height of the herbaceous vegetation in a sampling plot was calculated using equation $H = \sum n_i h_i / N$. Here H is the height of the herbaceous vegetation, $n_i$ is the population of units species, $h_i$ is the average height of units species and N is the population of all species in the sampling plot [35].

2.3 Laboratory analysis of soil
Soil samples were collected in 0-30 cm (or available depth) soil layer during vegetation study in 2017 and again in 2018. Soil samples were packed thoroughly in polythene bags to avoid moisture losses and brought to the laboratory for further analysis. Air-dried soil samples were ground and passed through a 2 mm sieve and used for soil pH and soil organic carbon (SOC) estimation. Soil pH was determined in 1:2 soils: water suspension using pH (Deluxe pH meter-101) [36]. Per-cent soil organic carbon (SOC) was determined by the wet digestion method of Walkley and Black [37]. Per-cent soil water content (SWC) was determined gravimetrically after oven drying the samples at 105 °C for a constant weight.

2.4 Statistical analysis
All data were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS statistical package version 17.0 for Windows. Since the data on SWC, SOC, pH, vegetation height, and different diversity variables were recorded repeatedly for two years, i.e. 2017 and 2018, these data were analyzed using Repeated Measure ANOVA (RAMNOVA). Year was Tests of Within-Subjects Effects, whereas slope aspects and elevations were Tests of Between-Subjects Effects. Duncan Multiple Range Tests (DMRT) were applied to group different variables into homogeneous subsets based on slope aspect and elevation at $P<0.05$ levels. Pearson correlation was also employed to obtain a correlation between different soil and vegetation variables and elevations.
Regression analyses were also done to find out relationships among different diversity variables and soil parameters.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Phytosociology

A total of 174 herbaceous species from 122 genera and 34 families were identified indicating a significant number of species in the area. The most dominant family was Poaceae (49 species) followed by Asteraceae (17 species) and Fabaceae (15 species) as reported in the existing literature on Thar Desert [24]. About 85% of study sites were dominated by grass species. The most dominant species were *Apluda mutica*, *Aristida adscensionis* and *Oropetium thomaeum* showing >10 IVI and *Heteropogon contortus*, *Dichanthium annulatum*, *Lepidagathis trinervis*, *Tephrocea purpurea*, *Actinopteris radiata*, *Borreria pusila*, *Brachiaria panicuca* and *Cenchrus ciliaris* with IVI of 5-10. Rest species were <5 IVI values requiring appropriate conservation measures (Annexure 1). Frequently observed species were in order: *A. adscensionis* > *B. panicuca* > *M. jacquemontii* > *A. mutica* > *D. annulatum* > *C. ciliaris* > *H. contortus*, etc. The most dominant species was *O. thomaeum* in NE, E (600-700 m also), SE and NW, *D. verticillata* > *P. paniculata* > *C. benghalensis* in N and W, *Panicum turgidum* in S, and *C. arenarius* in SW in <230 m elevation. This indicates the availability of more xeric species in S and SW aspects in foothills (<230 m elevation). In middle altitude, *A. adscensionis* is dominated in 230-600 m range in NW, N, E, and SE, 230-300 m in SW and 230-700 m in S and W aspects. *L. trinervis* dominated in NE aspect in 230-400 m, *Urginea indica/Zornia gibosa* in N and *D. scindicum* in SE in 600-700 m elevation and *B. pusilla* in W aspect in 700-800 m elevation (Annexure 2). The rest of the elevation and aspects were dominated by *A. mutica/H. contortus*. Such differences in the dominance of different species in different locations/positions was because of variation edaphic and environmental condition like soil pH, SWC, SOC, and soil nutrient influenced by slope aspects and elevation, which showed a high degree of impact on the species composition particularly in N and W aspects in the northern hemisphere [38, 39].

3.2 Temporal effects

Repeated Measure ANOVA showed significant (P < 0.01) variations in all soil and vegetation parameters between years of data recording, i.e. 2017 and 2018. Soil water content (SWC), pH, SOC, population density, vegetation height, and D were highest in 2017 as compared to 2018, whereas R, H', and J' were highest in 2018. Though less in concentration, SOC was relatively greater in the present study as compared to the reported values of 0.12-0.43% in forests and 0.04-0.49% in agricultural lands [40, 41]. Greater rainfall in 2017 enhanced SWC by 17% as compared to that in 2018 and promoted vegetation population, height, and D as observed earlier [35, 42]. It was also supported by a positive correlation (r=0.144, P < 0.01) between SWC and vegetation height. However, lesser SWC and SOC in 2018 was the impact of species-richness, H', and J', particularly of grass species. For instance, topsoils in plots containing grasses (or species-rich) have been observed drier as compared to legumes in the long-term Jena experiment [43]. Significant (P < 0.01) interactions of year × aspect for all, year × elevation for population density, R and H', and years × aspect × elevation for SWC, population density, R, H', D and J' showed the combined effects of these factors on soil and vegetation diversity variables.
3.3 Effects of slope aspects
We observed significant vegetation differences between slope aspects in species composition, vegetative structure, and biodiversity pattern. All variables like slope gradient, SWC, pH, SOC, population density, vegetation height, and diversity variables (R, H', D and J') varied significantly (*P*<0.01) due to slope aspects (Table 3). Northeast aspect exhibited highest values of SWC and SOC (2.35-fold and 1.90-fold than in South aspect) as well as J', and lowest values of soil pH indicating their favorable effects on species evenness. An increase in SOC enhanced the water holding capacity of the soil showing a conducive environment promoting species richness in north-facing slopes [44]. Soil pH ranged between 7.17 in NE and 7.46 in the west and was related inversely to SWC and SOC. However, the highest population, height, and D in southern slopes (SE and S) and their lowest values in NE were similar to the observations of Louhaichi et al., [45]. Because of maximum population and dominance of grass species in order: *A. adscensionis* > *A. mutica* > *Panicum turgidum* > *O. thomaeum* > *C. martini* > *D. scindicum* > *Dichanthium annulatum* in southern slopes, efficiently utilized soil water and SOC (via decomposition and nutrient release) resulting in the lowest values of SWC and SOC in these aspects. Earlier reports also indicated the dominance of the family Poaceae, Fabaceae, and Asteraceae in the Indian desert [24, 46]. The greatest slope gradient and soil pH with low SWC and SOC in the south aspect was due to greater exposure to solar radiation and salt concentration. However, greater vegetation height in this aspect appeared related with vegetation characteristics, i.e. high altitude grasses. It was also shown by negative and positive correlations (*P*<0.01) of slope gradient with soil pH and vegetation height. The highest values of H', R and J' in northern slopes (N and NE) was because of high SWC, SOC, low population density and less evapo-transpiration [47,48, 49]. The study of Pandita et al., [38] also showed that NE and NW faces are rich in terms of the herbaceous than pure north slopes. Thin and scattered vegetation along with weaker soil development with higher erosion rates in south facing sunny slope supported drought and radiation-resistant vegetation like grasses [50] and hence low in diversity and SOC [51].

3.4 Effects of elevation
All soil and vegetation variables differed significantly (*P*< 0.05) due to elevation. Soil pH and species dominance were highest (*P*< 0.01) in <230m elevation and decreased by 0.66 units and 32% respectively in elevation range 800-900m (Table 3). This elevation range showed the lowest slope gradient, SOC, vegetation height, species richness, and H' dominated by *A. adscensionis* as observed in other xeric environments including Thar Desert [52, 53]. Vegetation of more xeric characteristics was also recorded on low elevations S-facing slopes as compared to N-facing slopes on high elevations [52]. It was also shown by a negative correlation between soil pH and SOC, which increased to the highest values of 0.71% (2.29-fold) in 800-900 m elevation [54]. The highest SOC and SWC at high elevation areas was because of reduced temperature and improvement in climatic condition, vegetation status, and soils conditions as compared to those in foothill areas [55, 56]. However, lowest values of soil pH at high altitude was because of washing out of salts and their accumulation in foothill area resulting in high pH in <230 m elevation [57, 58]. The highest H' and J' in middle-top elevation (600-700 m), R and vegetation population in 700-800-m and vegetation height in 800-900-m were because of species characteristics particularly high altitude tall grasses (*A. mutica*, *C. martini*, *H. contortus*, etc.) supported by the highest concentration of SOC and SWC [59, 60]. An earlier study [61] also
indicated an increase in the mean coverage of grasses with elevation. Regression analyses also showed a linear increased in diversity ($R^2 = 0.083$, $F_{1/318} = 28.655$, $P< 0.01$) and species richness ($R^2 = 0.356$, $F_{1/318} = 175.97$, $P< 0.01$) with increase in elevation (Fig. 2). However, vegetation height showed an increasing trend with elevation by a power relationship ($R^2 = 0.275$, $F_{1/318} = 120.848$, $P< 0.01$). SOC increased linearly with vegetation height ($R^2 = 0.114$, $F_{1/318} = 40.715$, $P<0.01$) and species dominance a similar to the observation recorded earlier [42]. Many studies showed similar trend between elevation and $H'$ and $R$, which were observed low in lower altitude and increased with an increase in elevation [63, 63].

Soil properties and vegetation diversity were partly under the influence of elevation. Soil pH decreased linearly with an increase in altitudinal species richness ($R^2 = 0.238$, $F_{1/318} = 99.242$, $P<0.01$), though the correlation was stronger with species richness in the north than in the other aspects [64]. Likewise, north-facing slopes appeared connected with higher vegetation coverage, height, and $H'$ than the south-facing slopes at high altitude [50, 65]. Because of more moisture and less livestock grazing at higher elevations, vegetation cover and diversity was significantly higher than in lower altitude area [28, 66]. Thus altitude appeared dominant factor affecting $R$ and $H'$. The slope aspect indirectly affected $R$ and $H'$ by creating a dry or moist environment (variation in SWC) and altering the rate of litter production and decomposition.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

Both slope aspects and elevation influenced soil characteristics and herbaceous diversity, but the impact of altitude was stronger than the aspect except for soil water. Results of this study indicated the dominance of grass species in herbaceous vegetation, where SWC and SOC had beneficial effects on vegetation growth and development particularly in the NE aspect. Low available SWC in the south-facing slopes affected height growth particularly in lower altitude areas that support xeric vegetation. Increased elevation had a significant positive impact on soil fertility and SWC, which promoted species rich vegetation at high altitudes as compared to xeric species in foothills. However, out of 174 species, 163 species showed an importance value index <5. Conclusively, high elevations in north-facing slopes are more favorable for regeneration and conservation. Selecting low elevation south-facing slopes areas require additional inputs of soil resources like water and nutrients. Our recommendations will be to conserve this area to avoid species extinction and adopt soil and water conservation and protection measures from overgrazing and overexploitation of vegetation and using suitable species in restoring degraded hills particularly in southern aspects of the foothill areas.

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Fig. 2. Relationships among different topographical features, diversity indices and soil parameters. (a) Species richness, (b) Species diversity and (c) plant height with elevation, (d) slope (%) vs. plant height, (e) soil organic carbon vs. height and (f) species richness vs. soil pH.

A: $y = 0.0119x + 7.1039$  
$R^2 = 0.3587$

B: $y = 0.0006x + 1.4148$  
$R^2 = 0.0807$

C: $y = 2.781x^{0.4029}$  
$R^2 = 0.2149$

D: $y = 24.07e^{0.0087x}$  
$R^2 = 0.2303$

E: $y = 40.509x^{0.2618}$  
$R^2 = 0.1131$

F: $y = -0.0294x + 7.7183$  
$R^2 = 0.1375$
Table 1. Effect of years of data recording on soil and vegetation variables in a hill forest area of Indian Desert. Values are mean±1SE of 320 replicates.

| Variable         | Year 2017 | Year 2018 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|
|                  | SWC (%)   | pH        | SOC (%) | Population (nos m⁻²) | Height (cm) | R | H' | D | J' |
| Slope (%)        | 36.83±0.03 | -         | -       | 202.02±6.86 | 41.44±0.89  | 12.79±0.25 | 0.32±0.01 | 0.66±0.01 |   |
| SWC (%)          | 2.01±0.06  | 1.75±0.06 | 54.31±2 | 173.15±5.64 | 29.93±0.78  | 19.38±0.89 | 0.28±0.01 | 0.69±0.01 |   |
| pH               | 7.38±0.02  | 7.28±0.02 | 37.95±2 | 209.32±2   | 3.44±0.02   | 7.34±0.19  | 1.75±0.01 | 1.52±0.01 |   |
| SOC (%)          | 0.54±0.02  | 0.51±0.02 | 7.49±2  | 25.50±2    | 1.53±0.05   | 5.17±0.05  | 1.48±0.01 | 1.53±0.01 |   |
| Population       | 0.239**    | -         | -       | 0.323**    | -           | -           | -       | -     |   |
| Height           | 0.345**    | -         | -       | 0.345**    | -           | -           | -       | -     |   |
| R                | 0.393**    | -         | -       | 0.393**    | -           | -           | -       | -     |   |
| H'               | 0.915**    | -         | -       | 0.915**    | -           | -           | -       | -     |   |
| D                | 0.915**    | -         | -       | 0.915**    | -           | -           | -       | -     |   |
| J'               | 0.915**    | -         | -       | 0.915**    | -           | -           | -       | -     |   |

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

| Year | Y × A | Y × E | Y × A × E |
|------|-------|-------|-----------|
| 2017 | -     | -     | -         |
| 2018 | -     | -     | -         |

Tests of Between-Subject Effects

| Year | A × E |
|------|-------|
| 2017 | 15.33** |
| 2018 | 101.45** |

SWC: Soil Water Content; SOC: Soil Organic Carbon; PD: Population Density; H: Vegetation Height, R: Species Richness, H': Shannon-Wiener Diversity Index, D: Simpson Dominance, J': Evenness Index, Degree of freedom: year 1, year × aspect (A) 7, year × elevation (E) 7, year × aspect × elevation 49, aspect 7, elevation 7, aspect × elevation 49. Similar alphabets as superscript in a row indicate not-significant (P > 0.05) difference.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient (r) showing relationships between different physiographic, soil parameters, diversity and growth variables of Haldeshwar forest area in Barmer, Rajasthan (n=320).

| Variable | Aspect | Elevation | Population | Height | SWC (%) | pH | SOC (%) |
|----------|--------|-----------|------------|--------|---------|----|---------|
| Slope (%)| ns     | 0.252**   | ns         | 0.345**| ns      | ns | ns      |
| SWC (%)  | -      | 0.369**   | 0.144**    | 0.098**| 0.144** | ns | 0.351** |
| pH       | -      | -0.553**  | -0.162**   | -0.316**| -0.157**| ns | -       |
| SOC (%)  | -0.188 | 0.338**   | 0.209**    | 0.122**| ns      | ns | 0.519** |
| Population| 0.342**| 0.242**   | 0.332**    | -0.137**| 0.194** | -0.372**| ns      |
| Height   | 0.336**| 0.242**   | -          | -0.275**| 0.310** | -0.408**| 0.144** |
| Richness | 0.520**| 0.332**   | ns         | 0.699** | -0.508**| 0.257** | 0.098** |
| Diversity| 0.239**| -0.137**  | -0.275**   | 0.699** | -0.942**| 0.829** | ns      |
| Dominance| -0.139 | 0.194**   | 0.310**    | -0.508**| -0.942**| -0.505**| ns      |
| Evenness | ns     | -0.423**  | -0.412**   | 0.246** | 0.843** | -0.915**| ns      |

Table includes values for SWC (%), pH, SOC (%), Population, Height, Richness, Diversity, Dominance, and Evenness for the years 2017 and 2018, with correlation coefficients indicating the strength and direction of the relationship. NS: non-significant, *P<0.05 and **P<0.01
Table 3. Effect of slope aspects on soil physicochemical properties and vegetation diversity in a hilly forest area of Indian Desert. Values are mean±1SE of 16 replications.

| Variable† | N (0°) | NE (45°) | E (90°) | SE (135°) | S (180°) | SW (225°) | W (270°) | NW (315°) | Mean |
|-----------|--------|----------|---------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|------|
| Slope (%) | 36.55±3.42b | 43.30±3.23cd | 29.21±3.70b | 39.13±3.69bc | 46.72±3.70a | 34.94±3.28b | 30.00±2.84a | 34.79±3.00b | 36.83±1.22 |
| SWC (%) | 2.27±0.09a | 2.82±0.13c | 1.91±0.11c | 1.20±0.06a | 1.20±0.08a | 1.59±0.13b | 2.04±0.10c | 2.01±0.09d | 1.88±0.04 |
| pH | 7.20±0.04a | 7.17±0.04c | 7.44±0.04c | 7.38±0.04bc | 7.39±0.05bc | 7.24±0.05c | 7.46±0.04c | 7.34±0.03b | 7.33±0.01 |
| SOC (%) | 0.57±0.03d | 0.76±0.05e | 0.53±0.03ed | 0.43±0.02ab | 0.40±0.02a | 0.47±0.03bc | 0.48±0.02cd | 0.56±0.02d | 0.53±0.01 |
| P (nos m⁻²) | 202.66±14.04cd | 140.36±10.53a | 194.06±13.26cd | 215.26±16.44cd | 208.78±12.16d | 200.74±9.17cd | 171.44±12.4abc | 167.44±9.94ab | 187.59±4.47 |
| Height (cm) | 36.35±2.00abc | 33.21±1.63c | 38.34±1.98bc | 34.23±1.40ab | 40.45±1.89a | 34.01±1.39abc | 34.17±1.82ab | 34.74±1.99ab | 35.69±0.63 |
| R | 14.69±0.69d | 12.54±0.52bc | 13.00±0.41abc | 12.13±0.48b | 14.09±0.51ad | 14.09±0.44bcd | 13.49±0.65bc | 12.15±0.55a | 13.27±0.19 |
| H′ | 1.71±0.07ab | 1.82±0.04bc | 1.64±0.05a | 1.62±0.06a | 1.69±0.06b | 1.87±0.05a | 1.72±0.06ab | 1.62±0.06a | 1.71±0.02 |
| D | 0.32±0.02b | 0.24±0.01a | 0.32±0.02b | 0.33±0.02b | 0.31±0.02b | 0.25±0.01a | 0.30±0.02b | 0.32±0.02b | 0.30±0.01 |
| J′ | 0.65±0.02a | 0.74±0.01c | 0.64±0.02a | 0.65±0.02a | 0.72±0.01bc | 0.68±0.02ab | 0.66±0.02a | 0.68±0.01 |

†As in table 1.

Table 4. Effect of elevation on soil physicochemical properties and vegetation diversity in a hilly forest area of Indian Desert. Values are mean±1SE of 16 replications.

| Variable† | <230 | 230-300 | 300-400 | 400-500 | 500-600 | 600-700 | 700-800 | 800-900 | Mean |
|-----------|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|------|
| Slope (%) | 2.54±0.32a | 39.95±2.98cd | 47.28±2.44a | 44.84±2.23a | 52.73±2.49d | 28.59±3.06b | 41.81±2.35a | 36.91±3.59e | 36.83±1.22 |
| SWC (%) | 1.55±0.13a | 1.62±0.12b | 1.51±0.08a | 1.44±0.07a | 1.76±0.10c | 2.17±0.11b | 2.12±0.09a | 2.86±0.14e | 1.88±0.04 |
| pH | 7.73±0.05a | 7.46±0.03d | 7.50±0.03d | 7.34±0.04a | 7.26±0.03bc | 7.19±0.04b | 7.07±0.03a | 7.07±0.03a | 1.33±0.01 |
| SOC (%) | 0.31±0.03a | 0.53±0.04bc | 0.44±0.02b | 0.49±0.02b | 0.56±0.02d | 0.56±0.03cd | 0.60±0.03c | 0.71±0.04a | 0.53±0.01 |
| P (nos m⁻²) | 156.34±10.17a | 147.11±11.11a | 147.64±9.43a | 168.06±9.98b | 177.79±10.87a | 179.54±8.76a | 263.2±17.56b | 261.03±13.24ab | 187.59±4.47 |
| Height (cm) | 19.16±1.07a | 32.95±1.52b | 38.21±1.63c | 38.84±1.57c | 39.32±1.55c | 32.84±1.84b | 39.14±1.52b | 45.05±1.98d | 35.69±0.63 |
| R | 9.19±0.42a | 10.95±0.31b | 11.73±0.44a | 11.56±0.42b | 13.39±0.40a | 16.13±0.52d | 17.69±0.55c | 15.54±0.53d | 13.27±0.19 |
| H′ | 1.52±0.07b | 1.60±0.05ab | 1.61±0.05a | 1.55±0.05bc | 1.77±0.04b | 1.98±0.06d | 1.97±0.05a | 1.70±0.06ab | 1.71±0.02 |
| D | 0.34±0.03b | 0.32±0.02a | 0.32±0.02a | 0.33±0.02b | 0.27±0.01c | 0.24±0.02a | 0.23±0.01bc | 0.32±0.02ab | 0.30±0.01 |
| J′ | 0.70±0.02a | 0.68±0.02bc | 0.67±0.02abc | 0.65±0.02ab | 0.69±0.01bc | 0.71±0.02c | 0.69±0.01bc | 0.62±0.02a | 0.68±0.01 |

†As in table 1.
Annexure 1. Herbaceous species, their habits and importance value index (IVI) across years, aspects and elevations in Siwana hills forest area of Barmer, Rajasthan, India.

| SNo. | Name of species                          | Habit            | Family name    | IVI  |
|------|-----------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------|
| 1    | Abelmoschus moschatus (L.) Medic.       | Herb             | Malvaceae      | 0.41 |
| 2    | Acalypha ciliata Forsk.                 | Herb             | Euphorbiaceae  | 0.86 |
| 3    | Acanthospermum hispidum DC.             | Herb             | Asteraceae     | 1.76 |
| 4    | Achyrocthis aspera L.                   | Herb             | Amaranthaceae  | 2.20 |
| 5    | Acrocline racemosa (B.Heyne ex Roem. & Schult.) Ohwi. | Grass  | Poaceae        | 1.13 |
| 6    | Actiniopteris radiata (J. König ex Sw.) Link. | Small fern  | Pteridaceae    | 5.32 |
| 7    | Adiantum lunulatum Burm. f.             | Small fern       | Pteridaceae    | 3.11 |
| 8    | Alternanthera paronychioides St. Hils., Voy. | Decumbent herb  | Amaranthaceae  | 0.17 |
| 9    | Alysicarpus monilifer (L.) DC.          | Herb             | Fabaceae       | 0.51 |
| 10   | Alysicarpus rugosus (Wild. DC.)         | Prostrate herb   | Fabaceae       | 0.34 |
| 11   | Amaranthus viridis L.                   | Herb             | Amaranthaceae  | 0.32 |
| 12   | Andrographis echioides (L.) Nees.       | Herb             | Acanthaceae    | 1.26 |
| 13   | Anisochilus carnosus (L. f.) Wall.      | Herb             | Lamiaceae      | 0.57 |
| 14   | Anisomeles indica (L.) Kuntze           | Herb             | Lamiaceae      | 0.42 |
| 15   | Apluda mutica L.                        | Grass            | Poaceae        | 22.86|
| 16   | Aristida adsensionis Linn.              | Grass            | Poaceae        | 22.06|
| 17   | Aristida fasciculata Trin. & Rupr.      | Grass            | Poaceae        | 0.55 |
| 18   | Aristida mutabilis Trin. & Rupr.        | Grass            | Poaceae        | 0.60 |
| 19   | Artemisia scoparia Waldst. & Kit.       | Grass            | Poaceae        | 0.16 |
| 20   | Arthraxon lanceolatus (Roxb.) Hochst.   | Grass            | Poaceae        | 1.77 |
| 21   | Arthraxon lancifolius (Trin.) Hochst.   | Grass            | Poaceae        | 1.25 |
| 22   | Bidens pilosa L.                        | Herb             | Asteraceae     | 1.60 |
| 23   | Blainvillea acmella (L.) Philipson      | Herb             | Asteraceae     | 2.91 |
| 24   | Blepharis maderaspatensis (L.) Forsk.    | Procardent herb  | Acanthaceae    | 1.03 |
| 25   | Blumea mollis (D. Don) Merr.            | Herb             | Asteraceae     | 0.32 |
| 26   | Blumea virens DC.                       | Herb             | Asteraceae     | 0.39 |
| 27   | Boerhavia diffusa L.                    | Prostrate herb   | Nyctaginaceae  | 1.67 |
| 28   | Boerhavia erecta L.                     | Herb             | Nyctaginaceae  | 2.81 |
| 29   | Borneria pusilla (Wall.) DC.             | Herb             | Rubiaceae      | 5.46 |
| 30   | Brachybiaria ramosa (L.) Stapf.         | Grass            | Poaceae        | 5.58 |
| 31   | Cardiospermum halicacabum L.            | Climbing vine    | Sapindaceae    | 1.19 |
| 32   | Catharanthus pusillus (Murr.) G. Don.    | Herb             | Apocynaceae    | 0.18 |
| 33   | Celosia argentea L.                     | Glabrous herb    | Amaranthaceae  | 1.11 |
| 34   | Chenopodium ambrosioides (L.) Phil.     | Grass            | Poaceae        | 0.24 |
| 35   | Chenopodium ciliatissimum L.             | Grass            | Poaceae        | 0.33 |
| 36   | Chenopodium pennisetiformis Hochst. & Steud. | Grass  | Poaceae        | 1.00 |
| 37   | Cenchrus ciliaris DC.                   | Herb             | Poaceae        | 0.75 |
| 38   | Cereus bulbosus Roxb. var. lusit. (Grah.) Hook. | Twiner herb  | Apocynaceae    | 0.48 |
| 39   | Chamaecrista absus (L.) H.S. Irwin &    | Herb             | Caesalpiniaceae| 0.80 |
| 40   | Chamaecrista pumila (Lamk.) K. Larsen.  | Herb             | Caesalpiniaceae| 1.74 |
| 41   | Chloris barbata Sw.                     | Grass            | Poaceae        | 0.53 |
| 42   | Chloris dolichostachya Lagasca.          | Grass            | Poaceae        | 0.91 |
| 43   | Citrullus colocynthis (L.) Schrad.      | Trailing vine    | Cucurbitaceae  | 0.33 |
| 44   | Cleome gracilis Edgew.                  | Herb             | Capparaceae    | 0.54 |
| 45   | Cleome viscosa L.                       | Herb             | Capparaceae    | 1.43 |
| 46   | Citrullus annua J. Graham -             | Herb             | Fabaceae       | 0.57 |
| 47   | Cucumis grandis (L.) Voigt              | Climber          | Cucurbitaceae  | 0.16 |
| 48   | Commelina benghalensis L.               | Herb             | Commelinaceae  | 0.77 |
| No. | Scientific Name                        | Type                | Family         | Height  |
|-----|--------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------|
| 49  | Commelina erecta L.                  | Decumbent herb      | Commelinaeae   | 2.93    |
| 50  | Commelina forskoalli Vahl.           | Prostrate herb      | Commelinaeae   | 0.20    |
| 51  | Commencarpus heimleri (Heimerl.) Cufod. | Decumbent understub | Nyctaginaceae | 1.06    |
| 52  | Corallorcarpus epigaeus (Rottl.) C.B.Clark | Climbing Herb    | Molluginaceae  | 0.16    |
| 53  | Corbichonia decumbens (Forssk.) Exell | Procumbent herb    | Molluginaceae  | 0.90    |
| 54  | Corchorus aestuans L.                | Herb                | Tiliaceae      | 0.85    |
| 55  | Corchorus depressus (L.) Stocks      | Prostrate herb      | Tiliaceae      | 0.34    |
| 56  | Corchorus trilens L.                 | Herb                | Tiliaceae      | 0.68    |
| 57  | Crinum pratense                      | Herb                | Amaryllidaceae | 1.89    |
| 58  | Crotalaria mysorensis Roth           | Tall herb           | Fabaceae       | 0.65    |
| 59  | Cucumis maderaspatanus L.            | Climbing Herb       | Cucurbitaceae  | 1.99    |
| 60  | Cyanotis fasciculata (B.Heyne ex Roth) Schult. & Schult.f. | Glabrous Herb    | Commelinaeae   | 0.88    |
| 61  | Cymbopogon jwarancusa (Jones) Schult. | Tall herb           | Poaceae        | 1.58    |
| 62  | Cymodo decyton (L.) Pers.            | Tall herb           | Poaceae        | 0.71    |
| 63  | Cyperus rotundus L.                  | Perennial herb      | Cyperaceae     | 1.14    |
| 64  | Cyperus difformis L.                 | Perennial herb      | Cyperaceae     | 0.17    |
| 65  | Cyperus rotundus L.                  | Perennial herb      | Cyperaceae     | 1.16    |
| 66  | Dactyloctenium aegyptium (L.) Willd. | Grass               | Poaceae        | 1.58    |
| 67  | Dactyloctenium scindingum Boiss.     | Grass               | Poaceae        | 2.36    |
| 68  | Desmodium triflorum (L.) DC.         | Prostrate herb      | Papilionaceae  | 0.98    |
| 69  | Dichanthium annulatum (Forsk.) Stapf. | Grass               | Poaceae        | 7.02    |
| 70  | Dichanthium foveolatum (Delile) Roberty | Grass               | Poaceae        | 1.30    |
| 71  | Dicliptera verticillata (Forssk.) C. Christensen | Herb               | Acanthaceae    | 1.07    |
| 72  | Dicoma tomentosa Cass.               | Herb                | Asteraceae     | 0.56    |
| 73  | Digitaria ciliaris (Linn.) R.Br.     | Grass               | Poaceae        | 0.95    |
| 74  | Digitaria minor Host.                | Grass               | Poaceae        | 1.98    |
| 75  | Eragrostis tenella (Linn.) P Beauv.  | Grass               | Poaceae        | 0.93    |
| 76  | Eragrostis tremula (Lam.) Hochst. ex Steud. | Grass               | Poaceae        | 0.55    |
| 77  | Euphorbia granulata Forssk.          | Prostrate herb      | Euphorbiaceae  | 0.32    |
| 78  | Euphorbia hirta L.                   | Herb                | Euphorbiaceae  | 0.88    |
| 79  | Euphorbia indica Lam.                | Herb                | Euphorbiaceae  | 0.50    |
| 80  | Evolvulus alsinoides var. alsinoides (L.) L. | Herb               | Convolvulaceae | 3.04    |
| 81  | Evolvulus alsinoides var. alsinoides (L.) L. | Herb               | Convolvulaceae | 3.04    |
| 82  | Galactia tenuiflora (Wild.) Wight & Arn. | Climbing herb    | Fabaceae       | 0.53    |
| 83  | Glauca lotoides L.                   | Prostrate herb      | Molluginaceae  | 0.16    |
| 84  | Glossocordia bosvallea (L.f) DC      | Herb                | Acanthaceae    | 1.08    |
| 85  | Heliotropium marifolium Retz.        | Herb                | Boraginaceae   | 1.08    |
| 86  | Heteropogon contortus (L.) P Beauv. Ex Roem. & Schult | Grass               | Poaceae        | 7.58    |
| 87  | Hibiscus micranthus L.f.             | Subshrub            | Malvaceae      | 1.40    |
| 88  | Hibiscus palmatus Forsk.             | Herb                | Malvaceae      | 0.16    |
| No. | Species Name                  | Description                  | Family       | Scientific Name                                |
|-----|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 100 | Indigofera cordifolia Heyne ex Roth. | Herb                         | Fabaceae     | Indigofera cordifolia Heyne ex Roth.          |
| 101 | Indigofera hochstetteri Baker | Spreading herb                | Fabaceae     | Indigofera hochstetteri Baker                |
| 102 | Indigofera linifolia (L.f.)Retz. | Prostrate herb                | Fabaceae     | Indigofera linifolia (L.f.)Retz.             |
| 103 | Indigofera linnaei Ali        | Prostrate herb                | Fabaceae     | Indigofera linnaei Ali                       |
| 104 | Ipomoea dichrom Hochst. ex Choisy. | Climbing Herb.               | Convolvulaceae | Ipomoea dichrom Hochst. ex Choisy.          |
| 105 | Ipomoea eriocarpa R. Br.      | Twining herb                  | Convolvulaceae | Ipomoea eriocarpa R. Br.                     |
| 106 | Ipomoea indica (Burm. f.) Merr. | Vine herb                    | Convolvulaceae | Ipomoea indica (Burm. f.) Merr.             |
| 107 | Ipomoea nil (L.) Roth         | Annual herb vine              | Convolvulaceae | Ipomoea nil (L.) Roth                        |
| 108 | Ipomoea pes-tigris L.         | Twining herb                  | Convolvulaceae | Ipomoea pes-tigris L.                        |
| 109 | Ipomoea sindica Stapf.        | Twining herb                  | Convolvulaceae | Ipomoea sindica Stapf.                       |
| 110 | Justicia simplex D. Don      | Herb                         | Acanthaceae  | Justicia simplex D. Don                     |
| 111 | Justicia heterocarpa T.Anderson | Herb                      | Acanthaceae  | Justicia heterocarpa T.Anderson             |
| 112 | Kickxia ramosissima (Wall.) Janchen | Prostrate herb              | Scrophulariaceae | Kickxia ramosissima (Wall.) Janchen         |
| 113 | Launaea procumbens           | Decumbent herb                | Asteraceae   | Launaea procumbens                         |
| 114 | Lavandula bipinnata (Roth) Kuntze | Slender herb                | Lamiaceae    | Lavandula bipinnata (Roth) Kuntze          |
| 115 | Lepidagathis cristata willd. | Decumbent herb                | Acanthaceae  | Lepidagathis cristata willd.                |
| 116 | Lepidagathis trinervis Wall. ex. Ness | Suffruticose herb | Acanthaceae  | Lepidagathis trinervis Wall. ex. Ness       |
| 117 | Leptothrium senegalense (Kunth) Clayton | Grass                   | Poaceae      | Leptothrium senegalense (Kunth) Clayton     |
| 118 | Leucas aspera (Willd.) Link   | Herb                         | Lamiaceae    | Leucas aspera (Willd.) Link                 |
| 119 | Leucas urticaefolia (Vahl) R. Br. | Herb                      | Lamiaceae    | Leucas urticaefolia (Vahl) R. Br.           |
| 120 | Lindenbergia indica (L.) Vatke | Herb                         | Orobanchaceae | Lindenbergia indica (L.) Vatke              |
| 121 | Linum myosorense Heyne ex Benth. | Herb                       | Linaceae     | Linum myosorense Heyne ex Benth.            |
| 122 | Macrotyloma uniflorum Lam.    | Twinning herb                | Fabaceae     | Macrotyloma uniflorum Lam.                  |
| 123 | Melanocenchris jacquemontii Jaub. & Spach | Grass              | Poaceae      | Melanocenchris jacquemontii Jaub. & Spach   |
| 124 | Mollugo nudicaulis Lam.       | Herb                         | Molluginaceae | Mollugo nudicaulis Lam.                     |
| 125 | Monardica dioica Roxb. ex Willd. | Climbing herb              | Cucurbitaceae | Monardica dioica Roxb. ex Willd.            |
| 126 | Nepeta bombiensi Dalzell      | Herb                         | Lamiaceae    | Nepeta bombiensi Dalzell                    |
| 127 | Notosusus brachyta Wall. ex. Ness | Saffruticose herb | Acanthaceae  | Notosusus brachyta Wall. ex. Ness           |
| 128 | Ocimum canum Sims             | Herb                         | Lamiaceae    | Ocimum canum Sims                           |
| 129 | Oligochaeta ramosa (Roxb.) Wagenitz. | Herb                      | Asteraceae   | Oligochaeta ramosa (Roxb.) Wagenitz.        |
| 130 | Oropetium roxburghianum (Steud.) S.M.Phillips | Grass       | Poaceae      | Oropetium roxburghianum (Steud.) S.M.Phillips |
| 131 | Oropetium thomaeum (L. f.) Trin. | Herb                      | Poaceae      | Oropetium thomaeum (L. f.) Trin.            |
| 132 | Panicum turgidum Forsk.       | Grass                        | Poaceae      | Panicum turgidum Forsk.                     |
| 133 | Pedalium murex Linn           | Herb                         | Pedaliaceae  | Pedalium murex Linn                         |
| 134 | Pennisetum orientale L.C. Rich. | Grass                      | Poaceae      | Pennisetum orientale L.C. Rich.             |
| 135 | Pentanema indicum (L.) Ling   | Herb                         | Asteraceae   | Pentanema indicum (L.) Ling                 |
| 136 | Peristyphne Paniculata (Forsk.) Brummitt | Herb | Labiatae | Peristyphne Paniculata (Forsk.) Brummitt    |
| 137 | Pteritis indica (L.) Kuntze   | Grass                        | Poaceae      | Pteritis indica (L.) Kuntze                 |
| 138 | Phyllanthus amarus Schum. & Thonn. | Herb                      | Euphorbiaceae | Phyllanthus amarus Schum. & Thonn.           |
| 139 | Physallisminima L.            | Herb                         | Solanaceae   | Physallisminima L.                          |
| 140 | Polygala chalcerotia DC.      | Herb                         | Polygalaceae | Polygala chalcerotia DC.                    |
| 141 | Polygala irregularis Boiss.   | Herb                         | Polygalaceae | Polygala irregularis Boiss.                 |
| 142 | Portulaca oleracea L.         | Herb                         | Portulaceae  | Portulaca oleracea L.                       |
| 143 | Portulaca pilosa L.           | Herb                         | Portulaceae  | Portulaca pilosa L.                         |
| 144 | Portulaca taberosa Roxb.      | Herb                         | Portulaceae  | Portulaca taberosa Roxb.                    |
| 145 | Pulicaria wichiana D. C. Clarke. | Herb                      | Asteraceae   | Pulicaria wichiana D. C. Clarke.            |
| 146 | Papaya lapacea (L.) Juss      | Subshrub                     | Amaranthaceae | Papaya lapacea (L.) Juss                    |
| 147 | Rhinocrisia minima (Camb.) Barker | Prostrate                | Fabaceae     | Rhinocrisia minima (Camb.) Barker            |
| 148 | Sclerocarpus africanaus Jacq. | Herb                         | Asteraceae   | Sclerocarpus africanaus Jacq.               |
| 149 | Sehima nervosum (Rottler) Stapf. | Grass                  | Poaceae      | Sehima nervosum (Rottler) Stapf.            |
| 150 | Senecio hewrensis Hook. F.    | Herb                         | Asteraceae   | Senecio hewrensis Hook. F.                  |
| 151 | Sesamum indicum L.            | Herb                         | Pedaliaceae  | Sesamum indicum L.                          |
| 152 | Setaria geniculata P.Beaup.   | Grass                        | Poaceae      | Setaria geniculata P.Beaup.                 |
| Item | Common Name                  | Family         | Scientific Name                  |
|------|------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| 153  | Sida cordata (Brun. F.) Bross | Herb           | Malvaceae                        |
| 154  | Sida cordifolia L.           | Herb           | Malvaceae                        |
| 155  | Sorghum halepense (L.) Pers. | Grass          | Poaceae                          |
| 156  | Sporobolus coronandianus (Retz.) Kunth | Grass | Poaceae |
| 157  | Sporobolus diander (Retz.) P.Beauv. | Grass | Poaceae |
| 158  | Striga angustifolia (D. Don) C.J. Saldanha | Herb | Orobancheae |
| 159  | Striga gesnerioides (Wild.) Vatke. | Herb | Orobancheae |
| 160  | Tephrosia purpurea (Linn.) Pers. | SuffrUCose herb | Fabaceae |
| 161  | Tephrosia strigosa (Dalzell) Santapau & Maheshw | Herb | Fabaceae |
| 162  | Tephrosia uniflora Pers. ssp. petrosa (Blatt. & Hall.) J.B. Gillett & Ali | Herb | Papilionaceae |
| 163  | Tetrapogon tenellus (Koen. ex Roxb.) Chiov. | Grass | Poaceae |
| 164  | Tragia roxburghii Panigrahi | Grass | Poaceae |
| 165  | Tribulus terrestris L. Prostrate herb | Zygophyllaceae |
| 166  | Trichodesma sedgewickianum Banerjee | Herb | Boraginaceae |
| 167  | Tridax procumbens L. Procumbent herb | Astraceae |
| 168  | Triumfetta rhomboidea Jacq. | Woody Herb | Tiliaceae |
| 169  | Urginea indica (Roxb.) Kunth Perennial herb | Asparagaceae |
| 170  | Vernonia cinerea (L.) Less. Herb | Asteraeae |
| 171  | Vigna mungo (L.) Hepper Climbing herb | Fabaceae |
| 172  | Vigna trilobata (L.)Verd. Twiner herb | Papilionaceae |
| 173  | Waltheria indica L. Subshrub | Sterculiaceae |
| 174  | Zornea gibbosa Span Herb | Fabaceae |
Annexure 2. Topographical position and most and least dominant species in Siwana hills forest areas of Barmer, Rajasthan, India.

| SNo. | Topographical position | Dominant species | Least dominant species |
|------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
|      | Aspect |
|      | Elevation | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 |
| 1    | E       | <230 | O. thomaeum | O. thomaeum | E. granulata | A. viridis |
| 2    | E       | 230-300 | T. purpurea | A. adscensionis | P. erioptera | P. erioptera |
| 3    | E       | 300-400 | T. purpurea | A. adscensionis | T. terrestris | C. pumila |
| 4    | E       | 400-500 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | T. strigosa | T. strigosa |
| 5    | E       | 500-600 | A. adscensionis | A. mutica | B. erecta | A. echinoides |
| 6    | E       | 600-700 | O. thomaeum | B. pusilla | P. lapoeae | T. strigosa |
| 7    | E       | 700-800 | A. mutica | A. mutica | T. uniflora | A. aspera |
| 8    | E       | 800-900 | A. mutica | A. mutica | B. madraspatensis | S. africanus |
| 9    | N       | <230 | D. verticillata | P. paniculata | A. aspera | C. halicacabum |
| 10   | N       | 230-300 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | V. trilobata | C. halicacabum |
| 11   | N       | 300-400 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | C. pumila | P. erioptera |
| 12   | N       | 400-500 | E. bifaria | A. adscensionis | Corchorus aescuans | J. simplex |
| 13   | N       | 500-600 | E. bifaria | A. adscensionis | S. heverensis | T. sedgwickianum |
| 14   | N       | 600-700 | U. indica | Z. gibbosa | U. indica | T. uniflora |
| 15   | N       | 700-800 | H. contortus | A. mutica | T. strigosa | M. uniflora |
| 16   | N       | 800-900 | A. mutica | A. mutica | B. erecta | D. patulas |
| 17   | NE      | <230 | O. thomaeum | O. thomaeum | S. cordifolia | A. aspera |
| 18   | NE      | 230-300 | L. trinervis | L. trinervis | A. aspera | P. erioptera |
| 19   | NE      | 300-400 | L. trinervis | L. trinervis | I. eriocarpa | E. indica |
| 20   | NE      | 400-500 | A. mutica | A. mutica | C. madrasptanas | T. strigosa |
| 21   | NE      | 500-600 | A. mutica | A. mutica | A. aspera | C. halicacabum |
| 22   | NE      | 600-700 | A. mutica | A. mutica | H. marifolium | Euphorbia indica |
| 23   | NE      | 700-800 | A. mutica | A. mutica | L. bipinnata | P. amanus |
| 24   | NE      | 800-900 | A. mutica | A. mutica | P. amanus | C. mysorensis |
| 25   | NW      | <230 | O. thomaeum | O. thomaeum | C. mysorensis | C. pumila |
| 26   | NW      | 230-300 | T. verticillata | A. adscensionis | C. halicacabum | C. madrasptanas |
| 27   | NW      | 300-400 | A. adscensionis | L. trinervis | D. penata | H. marifolium |
| 28   | NW      | 400-500 | C. rilatis | D. penata | I. simplex | T. strigosa |
| 29   | NW      | 500-600 | A. adscensionis | D. penata | B. diffusa | C. pumila |
| 30   | NW      | 600-700 | H. contortus | B. pusilla | P. erioptera | A. rugosus |
| 31   | NW      | 700-800 | H. contortus | D. foveolatum | L. aspera | D. trifolium |
| 32   | NW      | 800-900 | H. contortus | A. mutica | C. aescuans | P. amanus |
| 33   | S       | <230 | P. turgidum | P. turgidum | A. hispidum | T. purpurea |
| 34   | S       | 230-300 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | E. tremula | H. contotus |
| 35   | S       | 300-400 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | C. pumila | P. erioptera |
| 36   | S       | 400-500 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | C. erecta | H. marifolium |
| 37   | S       | 500-600 | A. adscensionis | D. amalathum | I. eriocarpa | B. pusilla |
| 38   | S       | 600-700 | A. adscensionis | B. ramosa | B. pilosa | H. micranthus |
| 39   | S       | 700-800 | C. martinii | A. mutica | C. viscosa | C. halicacabum |
| 40   | S       | 800-900 | A. mutica | A. mutica | C. tridentis | Sida cordata |
| 41   | SE      | <230 | O. thomaeum | O. thomaeum | D. verticillata | I. linnaei |
| 42   | SE      | 230-300 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | C. boissieri | P. paniculata |
| 43   | SE      | 300-400 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | C. madraspatanas | T. sedgwickianum |
| 44   | SE      | 400-500 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | V. trilobata | T. purpurea |
| 45   | SE      | 500-600 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | P. erioptera | J. simplex |
| 46   | SE      | 600-700 | D. scindicum | O. thomaeum | J. simplex | J. simplex |
| 47   | SE      | 700-800 | A. mutica | A. mutica | V. cinerarea | V. cinerarea |
| 48   | SE      | 800-900 | A. mutica | A. mutica | S. heverensis | P. erioptera |
| SW | 230-300 | C. arenarius | C. arenarius | C. tridens | B. diffusa |
| SW | 300-400 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | E. hirta | D. bicornis |
| SW | 400-500 | A. mutica | A. mutica | R. minima | C. pumila |
| SW | 500-600 | A. mutica | A. adscensionis | C. decumbens | R. minima |
| SW | 600-700 | A. mutica | A. mutica | S. angustifolia | B. diffusa |
| SW | 700-800 | A. mutica | A. mutica | B. diffusa | T. strigosa |
| SW | 800-900 | A. mutica | A. mutica | I. dichroa | B. maderaspatensis |
| W | <230 | D. verticillata | C. benghalensis | R. minima | E. granulata |
| W | 230-300 | A. adscensionis | O. thomaeum | D. aegyptium | M. jacquemontii |
| W | 300-400 | L. trinervis | C. ciliaris | I. nill | E. persicus |
| W | 400-500 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | T. uniflora | T. terrestris |
| W | 500-600 | A. adscensionis | A. radiata | T. rhomboidea | P. paniculata |
| W | 600-700 | A. adscensionis | A. adscensionis | C. pumila | R. minima |
| W | 700-800 | B. pusilla | B. pusilla | B. maderaspatensis | E. hirta |
| W | 800-900 | A. mutica | A. mutica | P. erioptera | C. aestuans |

E: East, N: North, NE: North-East, NW: North-West, S: South, SE: South-East, SW: South-West, W: West