

Socio-Ecological Impacts of Invasive Plant Species in Ethiopia: A Review Paper

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Received May 27, 2019; Accepted June 03, 2019; Published March 24, 2020

ABSTRACT

Ethiopia has diverse vegetation ecosystems and home to large number of flora, fauna and microbial species. These provide suitable ecosystem services for environmental and diverse economic outcomes. However, there are threats to socioeconomic and biodiversity by invasive alien plant species (IPS). They cause threats to biodiversity, economic and health problems in Ethiopia. This paper addresses the ecological impacts of IPS on biodiversity in the major types of ecosystems, examine the impacts on socio-economic; discuss mitigation measures of the IPS in Ethiopia. Some of these species include *Prosopis juliflora*, *Parthenium hysterophorus*, *Eichhornia crassipes*, *Lantana camara* and *Acacia* species, which are the major threats to biodiversity losses. Water bodies, wetlands, disturbed vegetation types (e.g. *Acacia-Commiphora* vegetation type), agro-ecosystems, road sides, urban green areas, range lands are under threat of IPS nowadays in the country. Results revealed that under *P. juliflora* thicket for instance, 96% of woody species were constituted by *P. juliflora* than the overall 3.9% of woody native plant species. Moreover, it was also found that number of cattle, sheep, goats and camels were reduced by 56.2%, 25.2%, 19.2% and 48.6%, respectively after the invasion of *P. juliflora* in South Afar region. To minimize and control such invasions, different strategies are being applied such as eradication by utilization of *P. juliflora* in Afar region for example, and mechanical control of *P. hysterophorus* in different parts of the country. For use of sustainable ecosystem services, strategies such as integrated management strategies, participation of all stockholders and multidisciplinary research approaches within and across countries should be designed to reverse the situations.

Keywords: Biodiversity, Ecosystem, Ethiopia, Impact, Invasive, Plants, Socio-economic

INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia has great geographic diversity, and macro and micro-climatic variability. However, there are threats its biodiversity through habitat conversion, invasive species, and unsustainable utilization of resources of biodiversity [1]. In addition they cause for the deterioration and reduction of livelihood options of the communities in the invaded areas. Alien plant species are plant taxa occurrence in a given area results from their introduction (intentionally or accidentally) by human activity out of their ecosystems or ranges whereas invasive plants are alien plants that recruit reproductive offspring, often in very large numbers, spread rapidly whereas alien species [2]. **Figure 1** shows those mesquites (*Prosopis juliflora*), parthenium weed (*P. hysterophorus*), water hyacinth (*E. crassipes*), *L. camara*, *Parkinsonia aculeate*, *Acacia* species and *Cryptostegia grandiflora* are identified as IPS in Ethiopia [3]. This paper addresses the ecological impacts of IPS on biodiversity in the major types

of ecosystems, and discusses the reasons why IPS in Ethiopia constitute a threat to socioeconomic and biodiversity, examine the impacts on socio-economic, discuss its use and suggest mitigation measures of the IPS in Ethiopia.

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Citation: Shiferaw W, Bekele T, Demissew S & Aynekulu E. (2020) Socio-Ecological Impacts of Invasive Plant Species in Ethiopia: A Review Paper. J Agric Forest Meteorol Res, 3(2): 282-286.

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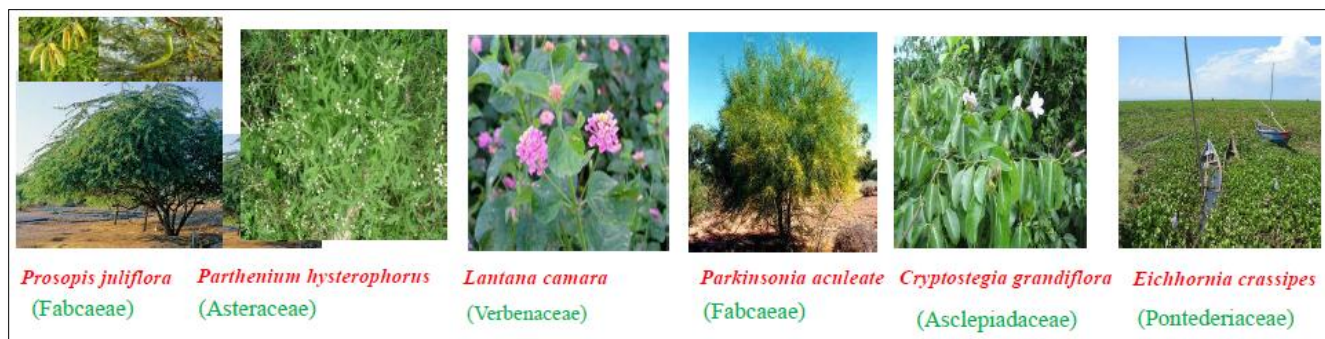


Figure 1. Showing the most serious invasive alien plants in Ethiopia.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

To compile this paper, books, research papers, manuals, reports and proceedings were reviewed and used.

RESULTS

Livestock holdings of pastoralists and agro pastoralists were declined in arid and semi-arid lowlands of Afar region due to invasion *P. juliflora*. The *P. juliflora* thickets in Afar Region in Ethiopia had impacts not only the pastoral

livelihoods but also restrict easy movement of human beings and its livestock through blocking roads [4]. Findings by Shiferaw et al. [5] revealed that invasion of *P. juliflora* had showed significant negative effects on native trees ($F=211$, $P<0.0001$) and the higher number of trees 1203 (96.1%) under *P. juliflora* canopy was contributed by *P. juliflora* than 49 (3.9%) of native trees (**Figure 2**).

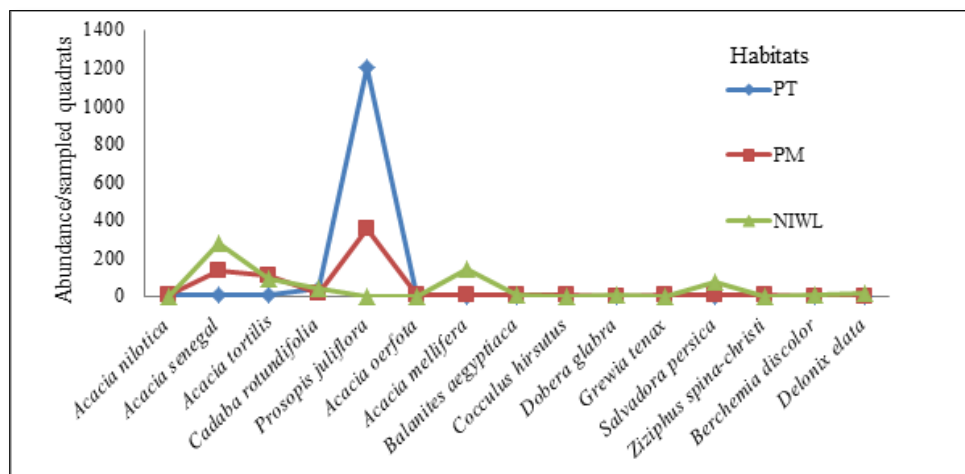


Figure 2. Abundances of woody species in PT (*P. juliflora* thicket), PM (*P. juliflora* mixed with native species) and NIWL (non-invaded wood lands) habitats, southern Afar wood land.

Findings of Shiferaw et al. [4] also showed that only in 2017/18 cropping season post invasion of *P. juliflora* in South Afar region were reduced number of cattle, sheep,

goats and camels by 56.2%, 25.2%, 19.2% and 48.6%, respectively (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Status of the livestock status before and after *P. juliflora* invasion in South Afar region.

Livestock	Number before invasion of <i>P. juliflora</i>	Number after invasion of <i>P. juliflora</i>	Number	%
Cattle	362	158	204	56.2
Sheep	377	282	95	25.2
Goats	412	332	80	19.4
Camels	214	110	104	48.6

Source: Wakshum Shiferaw Gameda

Invasive plant species are threatening biodiversity in Ethiopia and elsewhere in the world (**Table 2**). *P. juliflora*, *P. hysterophorus* and *E. crassipes* are the three most aggressive invasive species in Ethiopia. They are invaders that will have the largest impacts that directly modify ecosystems (**Table 3**). They are invaders however, the

potential irreversibility of the damage of invasion and the indecision of the costs they may incur stand out as challenges to their management [6] (**Table 4**). *P. juliflora* is among alien plant invasions which have major impacts on ecosystem service values and the livelihoods [7].

Table 2. Identified and prioritised invasive alien species in Ethiopia [8].

Scientific names	Common names	Scientific names	Common names
<i>E. crassipes</i>	Water hyacinth	<i>P. juliflora</i>	Mesquite, Prosopis, Woyanezaf (Amh)
<i>L. camara</i>	Lantana, Wefkolo (Amh)	<i>P. hysterophorus</i>	Parthenium, Congress weed, White top, Feremsisa (Orm)
<i>P. hysterophorus</i>	Parthenium, Congress weed, White top, Feremsisa (Orm)	Striga species	Striga
<i>P. juliflora</i>	Mesquite, Prosopis, Woyanezaf (Amh)	<i>E. crassipes</i>	Water hyacinth
Striga species	Striga	<i>L. camara</i>	Lantana, Wefkolo (Amh)
Acacia species*	Fullsa (Orm)	Acacia species*	Fullsa (Orm)
Orobanch species	Orobanch , Atequrit (Amh)	-	-
<i>Cuscuta campestris</i>	Cuscusta	-	-
<i>A. mexicana</i>	Argemone, Nech Lebash (Amh)	-	-
<i>Verbesina encelioides</i>	Verbesina	-	-
Opuntia species	Opuntia, Qulqual (Amh)	-	-

* Probably a native species like *A. drepanolobium*, Orm=Afaan Oromo, Amh=Amharic

Table 3. Distribution of IAPS across regions in Ethiopia.

Oromia	Somali	Afar	Tigray	Amhara	South	Gambela
<i>P. hysterophorus</i>	<i>P. hysterophorus</i>	<i>P. juliflora</i>	Striga species	Striga species	<i>E. crassipes</i>	<i>E. crassipes</i>
<i>P. juliflora</i>	<i>L. camara</i>	<i>P. hysterophorus</i>	Orobanch species	Orobanch species	<i>P. juliflora</i>	-
Striga species	<i>P. juliflora</i>	Acacia species	<i>P. hysterophorus</i>	<i>P. hysterophorus</i>	<i>A. mexicana</i>	-
<i>L. camara</i>	-	-	Opuntia species	Opuntia species	<i>P. hysterophorus</i>	-
<i>E. crassipes</i>	-	-	<i>P. juliflora</i>	<i>P. juliflora</i>	-	-
Orobanch species	-	-	-	<i>E. crassipes</i>	-	-
Acacia species	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Argemone mexicana</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Mimosa pigra</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>M. diplotricha</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
Opuntia species	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 4. Invasiveness and ecosystem effect status of top twenty IAPS in Ethiopia [9].

Species	Ecosystems highly affected*	Distribution status
<i>P. hysterophorus</i>	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	High
<i>P. juliflora</i>	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	Moderate
<i>Opuntia ficus indica</i>	3,4,5,6,	Moderate
<i>O. stricta</i>	3,4,5,6,	Moderate
<i>M. diplotricha</i>	1,2,3,4,5,6,8	Moderate
<i>M. pigra</i>	3,4,7	Low
<i>Cryptostegia grandiflora</i>	2,3,4,7,8	Low
<i>L. camara</i>	1,2,3,4,5,6,8	High
<i>A. drepanolobium</i>	1,3,4	Moderate
<i>A. saligna</i>	2,3,4,5,	Low
<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>	2,4,5,6	Low
<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>	1,2,3,4,5,6	Moderate
<i>Argemone ochroleuca</i>	1,2,3,4,5,6	High
<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>	1,2,3,4,5,6	High
<i>X. spinosum</i>	1,2,3,4,5,6	Moderate
<i>Psidium guajava</i>	8	Low
<i>Senna didymobotrya</i>	1,2,3,4,5,6,8	High
<i>S. occidentalis</i>	2,4,5	Moderate
<i>Calotropis procera</i>	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	Moderate
<i>Ricinus communis</i>	2,4,5,6	Moderate

1=Cultivated land; 2=Roadside; 3=Grazing areas; 4=Non-cultivated land; 5=Rural villages; 6=Urban areas; 7=Riverside; 8=Forest areas

CONCLUSION

Invasive alien species are found in all taxon or organisms and exist all over the world in all ecosystems. Invasive alien species are colonizing the native ecosystems; have either positive or negative consequences on socio-economic and the ecosystem services. Among the best control measures are prevention of seed dispersal, integrated management strategies and management by utilization.

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