***Original Research Article***

**Effect of Weather Parameters on Population Dynamics of Major Sucking Insect-Pests and Their Natural Enemies of Soybean [*Glycine max* (L) Merrill]**

**ABSTRACT**

A two-year field trial was conducted during Kharif seasons of 2021 and 2022 at the Experimental Research Farm of Department of Entomology, School of Agricultural Sciences, Nagaland University, Medziphema campus on soybean variety JS 335. During the course of study, three major sucking insect-pests namely, aphid (*Aphis glycines* Matsumura), whitefly (*Bemisia tabaci* Gennadius) and pod sucking bug (*Riptortus pedestris* Fabricius) were observed to be infesting at the various growth stages of the crop and one coccinellid predator(*Coccinella transversalis*) was found to prey on them. In both the seasons of investigation, the peak population of aphid (23.33 aphids/leaf in 2021 and 24.33 aphids/leaf in 2022), whitefly (23.67 whiteflies/leaf in 2021 and 21.67 whiteflies /leaf in 2022) and pod sucking bug (4.00 adults/mrl in 2021 and 4.33 adults/mrl in 2022) was observed on 35th, 33rd and 38th standard meteorological week (SMW), respectively. The predatory ladybird beetle (*Coccinella transversalis*) was found predating mainly on aphids and whiteflies. The population of ladybird beetle recorded was ranged from 0.22 to 1.75 beetles/mrl during kharif, 2021 and 0.16 to 1.83 beetles/mrl during kharif, 2022.

***Keywords:*** population, abiotic, peak, population, correlation, significant.

**INTRODUCTION**

Soybean [*Glycine max* (L.) Merrill] belonging to family Leguminaceae, sub-family Papilionaceae, is one of the important oilseed cash crops of India (Chauhan and Joshi, 2005). Soybean is considered as a pulse crop but due to its high oil content and greater response to applied nitrogen, now it is placed in oil seed category. Soybean has become an important oilseed crop in India in a very short period with approximately 10 million ha area under its cultivation (Kumari and Yadu, 2020). The luxuriant crop growth, soft and succulent foliage attracts many insects and provides unlimited source of food, space and shelter. It was reported that the crop is infested by over 275 types of insect pests on different parts of crop stage. Out of whole range in which a dozen number of insect pests are significant importance (Babu, 2010). Several sucking insect pests are found to attack on the different crop stages of soybean. Of which the important sucking pests include- whitefly (*Bemisia tabaci* Gennadius), aphids (*Aphis gossypii* Glover and *Aphis craccivora* Koch) and jassids (*Empoasca kerri* Prethi) (Patel *et al.*, 2019). Population density of insect pests fluctuates with changing weather conditions. As the cultivation of soybean has expanded around the world, crop becomes susceptible to different environmental and biotic stress which has increased the pest infestations. Such information is essential in developing integrated pest management systems with ecological and economical balance (Suyal *et al*., 2018). Seasonal incidence studies helps in planning need based application of insecticides as it clearly reveals the insect’s peak activity as well as insect free periods during crop growth. Therefore, knowledge of how insect pests respond to density dependent factors *viz*. weather, temperature, climate variation is of fundamental importance in understanding insect pest management (Channakeshava *et al.*, 2020). Keeping these facts in view, the present investigation was planned to study the effect of weather parameters on population dynamics of sucking insect-pests infesting soybean crop.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

An experiment was conducted during the two kharif seasons of 2021 and 2022 in the Experimental Farm of Department of Entomology, School of Agricultural Sciences, Nagaland University, Medziphema campus. The layout for the experimental study was Randomized Block Design (RBD) with three replications. To study the incidence of major sucking insect-pests infesting soybean, JS-335 was sown at a spacing of 45cm x 10cm in the ecological plots of size 4m x 3m. All the recommended agronomic practices were followed to grow the crop except measures for insect pest control. Observations were recorded from first week of August to second week of October during the two years. The data on the incidence of three number of sucking pests of soybean namely, aphids (*Aphis glycines*), whiteflies (*Bemisia tabaci*) and pod sucking bug (*Riptortus pedestris*) and one predator, coccinellid beetle (*Coccinella transversalis*) from each plot were taken at weekly intervals starting from 20 days after sowing (DAS) until the crop reached its maturity. For aphids and whiteflies, ten plants were randomly selected from each plot. From each plant, number of both the insects (nymphs and adults) were counted from three leaves each from top, middle and lower parts of the plant and mean number of insects per leaf was recorded (Suyal *et al.*, 2018). In case of pod sucking bugs and coccinellid beetles, the number of adults per metre row length (mrl) was recorded at three randomly selected places in a plot and mean was reported in numbers per metre. The mean insect population was pooled and expressed at weekly intervals by following suitable techniques for different insects and correlated with meteorological parameters. Average weekly meteorological data during the observation period, such as maximum and minimum temperature, relative humidity and rainfall were also recorded so as to study their correlation with the major sucking insect-pests.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

During the two years’ investigation, three major sucking insect- pests namely, aphids (*Aphis glycines*), whiteflies (*Bemisia tabaci*) and pod sucking bug (*Riptortus pedestris*) were found infesting at different growth stages of soybean crop and one coccinellid predator *i.e*. *Coccinella transversalis* was found devouring on aphids and whiteflies.

**Aphid, *Aphis glycines***

The first count of aphids was initiated on 31st SMW in both the years which showed a lowest mean population of 2.67 aphids/leaf and 2.00 aphids/leaf in 2021 and 2022 respectively, which reached its peak population during 35th SMW of 23.33 aphids/leaf and 24.33 aphids/leaf in 2021 and 2022 respectively. Similar findings are also reported by Kumar *et al*. (2011) who stated that infestation of aphid, *Aphis glycines* on soybean commenced from 30th SMW *i.e.* the third week of July and reached the peak level in the 36th SMW *i.e.* first week of September. Shylla (2018) also reported that aphid incidence in soybean was first noticed in the first week of August *i.e*. 31st SMW which was in accordance with the present finding. The correlation study of aphids with the abiotic factors during 2021 revealed a significant positive correlation with maximum temperature (r=0.638\*) at 5% level of significance. In the following year, it showed a significant negative correlation with minimum temperature (r=-0.784\*\*) at 1% level of significance. The present finding is in line with the work of Gehlot and Prajapat (2021) who reported that population of aphid on green gram had positive correlation with minimum and maximum temperature, minimum and maximum RH and negative correlation with rainfall.

**Whitefly, *Bemisia tabaci***

In both the experimental years, the first count of whitefly was initiated on 31st SMW (first week of August) with a mean population of 7.33 whiteflies/leaf in 2021 and 8.33 whiteflies /leaf in 2022 which increased from next week, thereby reaching its peak population of 23.67 whiteflies/leaf and 21.67 whiteflies /leaf in 2021 and 2022 respectively during 33rd SMW (third week of August). The present finding was in line with the work of Marabi *et al*. (2017) reported that whitefly infestation in kharif soybean started from 29th to 41st SMW. Brahman *et al*. (2018) reported that *Bemisia tabaci* first appeared on soybean in the first week of August in vegetative stage and persisted up to pod maturity stage of crop which is similar with the present finding. In the year 2021, the population of whiteflies was found to be significant and positively correlated with maximum temperature (r=0.635\*) at 5% level of significance. However, in the year 2022, it was significant and negatively correlated with minimum temperature (r=-0.672\*) at 5% level of significance, positively significant with rainfall (r=0.664\*). The present finding is in agreement with Marabi *et al*. (2017) who reported that population of whiteflies in kharif soybean had significant positive correlation with maximum temperature, while maximum and minimum relative humidity had non-significant and negative correlation with whitefly population.

**Pod sucking bug, *Riptortus pedestris***

The incidence of pod sucking bug during the two experimental years was observed during the pod filling stage i.e., 36th SMW (second week of September) which continued up to 40th SMW. The first incidence of adults in both the years started from 36th SMW with 1.00 adults/mrl and the population gradually increased in the next few weeks reaching its peak at 38th SMW (last week of September) in both the years with 4.00 adults/mrl and 4.33 adults/mrl in 2021 and 2022 respectively . The above finding is in line with the work of Jamir (2018) who also reported that pod bug in soybean started from last week of August until harvesting time. Shylla (2018) also reported that peak incidence of pod bug on soybean was observed during third week of September (37th SMW). The correlation of pod bugs with the abiotic factors during 2021 revealed a significant negative correlation with minimum temperature (r=-0.725\*), but non-significant correlation with maximum temperature, maximum and minimum relative humidity and rainfall. On the other hand, during the year 2022, it showed a non-significant correlation with all the abiotic factors. The finding was in accordance with Bhavasar and Kumar (2019) who reported that the population of pod bug showed significant negative correlation with minimum temperature, non-significant negative correlation with maximum temperature and rainfall, while it showed non-significant positive correlation with maximum relative humidity.

**Coccinellid beetle, *Coccinella transversalis***

During both the experimental years, predatory coccinellid beetles started their incidence from 31st SMW (first week of August) with a mean population of 0.33 and 0.22 beetles/mrl in 2021 and 2022 respectively, which increased gradually in the following weeks until it reached its maximum population of 1.75 and 1.83 beetles/mrl in 2021 and 2022 respectively, during 34th SMW (last week of August). The beetle population decreased afterwards until it completely disappeared from 39th SMW onwards. The present finding is similar with Yadav *et al*. (2015) who reported that the predatory beetle was recorded in soybean crop from 2nd week of August, reached its peak (2.4/mrl) during first week of September. Chunni Kumari *et al.* (2020) found that two species of coccinellid beetles in soybean crop commenced from second week of August to first week of October. The correlation of coccinellid beetles with the abiotic factors during 2021 revealed a significant positive correlation with minimum temperature (r=0.689\*) while it had a significant positive and negative correlation with rainfall (r=0.697\*) and minimum temperature (r=-0.699\*), respectively in 2022. The present finding is in line with Chaudhari *et al*. (2020) who reported that coccinellid predators were positively significant correlation (r = 0.676) with rainfall in soybean crop.

**Table 1: Population dynamics of major sucking insect-pests and natural enemies of soybean during August to October 2021 and 2022**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Standard Mean Week (SMW)*** | ***Aphids*** | ***Whiteflies*** | ***Pod sucking bug*** | ***Coccinellid beetle*** |
| ***2021*** | ***2022*** | ***2021*** | ***2022*** | ***2021*** | ***2022*** | ***2021*** | ***2022*** |
| 31st standard week | 2.67 | 2.00 | 7.33 | 8.33 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.33 | 0.22 |
| 32nd standard week | 11.67 | 13.67 | 19.67 | 18.33 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.36 | 0.46 |
| 33rd standard week | 12.33 | 15.67 | 23.67 | 21.67 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.66 | 1.59 |
| 34th standard week | 14.67 | 14.33 | 14.33 | 13.67 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.75 | 1.83 |
| 35th standard week  | 23.33 | 24.33 | 13.33 | 13.67 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1.53 | 1.66 |
| 36th standard week | 9.67 | 9.67 | 11.33 | 11.67 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.93 | 0.88 |
| 37th standard week | 5.67 | 8.33 | 9.33 | 11.00 | 2.00 | 2.33 | 0.48 | 0.51 |
| 38th standard week  | 4.67 | 5.67 | 10.67 | 10.00 | 4.00 | 4.33 | 0.22 | 0.16 |
| 39th standard week | 4.33 | 5.00 | 9.33 | 10.33 | 3.67 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 40th standard week | 3.67 | 3.33 | 6.67 | 8.67 | 3.33 | 3.67 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| ***SEm±*** | ***0.72*** | ***0.78*** | ***0.90*** | ***0.96*** | ***0.36*** | ***0.33*** | ***0.02*** | ***0.01*** |
| ***CD (P=0.05)*** | ***2.15*** | ***2.32*** | ***2.68*** | ***2.84*** | ***1.08*** | ***0.97*** | ***0.05*** | ***0.04*** |

**Table 2: Correlation coefficients (r) of major sucking insect-pests and natural enemies of soybean in relation to weather parameters recorded during August to October 2021**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Pests*** | ***Pearson’s correlation coefficient*** |
| ***Temperature (ºC)*** | ***Relative humidity (%)*** | ***Rainfall******(mm)*** |
| ***Max.*** | ***Min.*** | ***Max.*** | ***Min.*** |
| **Aphids** | 0.638\* | 0.529 | -0.238 | -0.059 | 0.520 |
| **Whiteflies** | 0.635\* | 0.463 | -0.207 | -0.133 | 0.489 |
| **Pod bugs** | -0.371 | -0.725\* | 0.405 | -0.085 | -0.126 |
| **Coccinellid beetle** | 0.441 | 0.689\* | -0.174 | 0.092 | 0.466 |

***Note:*** df = (10-2) = 8 r0.05 = 0.632 r0.01 = 0.765

\* = Significant at 5% level of significance

 Those values which do not assign any symbol are non-significant at 5% level of significance.

**Table 3: Correlation coefficient (r) of major sucking insect-pests and natural enemies of soybean in relation to weather parameters recorded during August to October 2022**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Pests*** | ***Pearson’s correlation coefficient*** |
| ***Temperature (ºC)*** | ***Relative humidity (%)*** | ***Rainfall******(mm)*** |
| ***Max.*** | ***Min.*** | ***Max.*** | ***Min.*** |
| **Aphids** | -0.493 | -0.784\*\* | 0.472 | 0.404 | 0.532 |
| **Whiteflies** | -0.499 | -0.672\* | 0.428 | 0.535 | 0.664\* |
| **Pod bugs** | -0.192 | 0.293 | -0.196 | -0.333 | -0.626 |
| **Coccinellid beetle** | -0.338 | -0.699\* | 0.482 | 0.483 | 0.697\* |

***Note:*** df = (10-2) = 8 r0.05 = 0.632 r0.01 = 0.765

\* = Significant at 5% level of significance

\*\* = Significant at 1% level of significance

 Those values which do not assign any symbol are non-significant at 5% level of significance

**CONCLUSION**

Investigation of the population dynamics of insect pests and their natural enemies is a key goal in pest management. Understanding population dynamics offers insights into the seasonal variations and peak activities of insect pests. Analyzing the relationship between insect pests and their populations also reveals how weather affects these pest populations. This information paves the way for creating effective management strategies aimed at controlling these pests. These findings will aid in developing a pest monitoring system and environmentally sustainable integrated pest management approaches.

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