

**RESPONSES OF SOME VEGETABLE CROPS TO
TOXIC HEAVY METALS**

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I have the pleasure of forwarding the thesis entitled “**RESPONSES OF SOME VEGETABLE CROPS TO TOXIC HEAVY METALS**” by **Ms. Baby Sharma Kafle** for the fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Botany. The thesis is based on original research work carried out under my supervision and has not been submitted for a degree to any other university.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis has been done by myself, and has not been submitted, elsewhere for the award of any degree. All sources of information have been specially acknowledged by reference to the authors or institutions.

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ABSTRACT

Some common green vegetables (*Brassica juncea*, *Brassica rapa*, *Lactuca sativa*, *Lepidium sativum* and *Daucas carota*) of Kathmandu valley have been investigated for the morphological changes after growing on different concentrations of heavy metals (CdCl_2 , CuCl_2 , $\text{Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ and ZnCl_2). Morphological parameters such as root length (RL), shoot length (SL), fresh weight (FW), dry weight (DW), dry weight % and leaf size (leaf area/length) have been examined in potted plants grown on soil, artificially contaminated with heavy metal. Bioaccumulations of non-supplied micronutrients (Cu, Fe, Mn and Zn) after treatment with heavy metals were also observed in these vegetables. On the basis of FW of whole plant (matured), threshold concentration for Cd in *B. juncea*, *B. rapa*, *L. sativum*, *L. sativa* and *D. carota* were ascertained to be as 2.75, 0.25, 3.22, 1.25 and 1.0 mg kg^{-1} DW, respectively; for Cu were 18, 17.75, 14.75, 17.25 and 10.75 mg kg^{-1} DW; for Pb to be 46.5, 34.5, 52.7, 81.0 and 31.5 mg kg^{-1} DW; and for Zn were 173.5, 192, 172.5, 93.0, and 55.5 mg kg^{-1} , respectively. Among the studied vegetables, *D. carota* showed lowest accumulation of all heavy metals in roots and shoots. Highest accumulation of Cd was observed in the shoot of *L. sativum*; Pb in the root of *B. rapa*, Cu in both root and shoot of *B. juncea* and Zn in the shoot of *B. rapa*. Reduction in FW, SL and RL in *B. rapa*, *L. sativa* and *D. carota* have been recorded as symptoms of Cd toxicity; and reduction in FW and RL in *B. juncea*, *B. rapa* and *L. sativa* as symptom of Cu-toxicity. Similarly, reduction in FW in *B. rapa*, *L. sativum* and RL in *B. rapa*, *D. carota* have been observed as Pb-toxicity, reduction in FW and RL in *B. juncea* and *B. rapa*, and SL in *B. rapa*, *L. sativum* and *L. sativa* as symptoms of Zn- toxicity.

Impact of different concentrations of CdCl_2 , CuCl_2 , $\text{Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ and ZnCl_2 on chlorophylls after the increased uptake of Cd, Cu, Pb and Zn in *B. juncea*, *B. rapa*, *L. sativa*, *L. sativum* and *D. carota* were studied. Significant loss of Chl-a, Chl-b and total chlorophyll were observed in *B. juncea* and *L. sativum* with depletion of Cu, Zn and/or Mn after increased Cd uptake. Significant loss in total-chl after increased Cu uptake was observed in *B. juncea* and *D. carota* with depletion of essential Zn, Fe (in *B. juncea*) and or Mn (in *D. carota*). Total chlorophyll increased significantly in *B. juncea* up to 500 $\text{mg Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \text{ kg}^{-1}$ soil treatment but it decreased insignificantly in *D. carota* only at 1000 mg kg^{-1} soil treatment. There was moderate increased in

Fe accumulation in all vegetables (except *L. sativum*) when grown on $\text{Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ treated soil; but Zn, Cu and Mn depleted in *D. carota* grown on $\text{Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ treatments. Insignificant change in chlorophyll was observed in Zn-treated vegetables. Present studies suggest that depletion of essential micronutrients like Zn and Fe; or Zn and Cu; or Fe and Mn in the plant body after heavy metal accumulation may be one of the causes for chlorophyll loss.

Evaluation of heavy metal in soil and vegetables grown from agricultural fields of Kathmandu valley was conducted in the present study. Highest accumulations of Cd (2 mg kg^{-1}), Cu (65.5 mg kg^{-1}) and Pb (46.75 mg kg^{-1}) from Shankhamul; Ni (29.25 mg kg^{-1}) from Nakhu; Co (15.25 mg kg^{-1}) and Mn (675 mg kg^{-1}) from Balkhu; Cr (73.75 mg kg^{-1}) from Banasthali, Zn (162 mg kg^{-1}) and Fe (75636 mg kg^{-1}) from Khusibun were recorded in soils of agricultural fields. On the basis of mean values, highest accumulation of Cu, Co and Zn were recorded in spinach and Pb in red radish; Ni, Cr and Fe were recorded in broad leaf mustard and Mn in cress leaf. Concentration of non –essential but toxic metal like Pb was higher than the normal plant value ($0.1\text{-}10 \text{ mg kg}^{-1}$) in all the vegetables (except potato) collected from different sampling sites. Potato accumulated fewer amounts of heavy metals among the others.

As vegetables are one of the importance dietary items, it is cultivated widely in Kathmandu valley. The daily intake of heavy metals (Cd, Cu, Co, Cr, Fe, Mn, Ni, Pb and Zn) via vegetables was estimated in the present study. Intake estimation was based on vegetables availability data and analysis of vegetables contaminants. The mean daily intake of potentially toxic metals ranged about 33.4 % (for Cd), 40.38 % (for Ni) and 251.6 % (for Pb) of the provisional tolerable daily intakes (PTDI) for adults. Vegetables were found to contribute significantly to the recommended daily intake of essential elements such as Cr (97.4-24.35 %), Cu (15.45-7.7 %), Fe (41 %), Mn (65.71-26.28 %), and Zn (21.23 %).

To understand the phytoextraction of heavy metals from heavy metal contaminated soil, 18 different vegetable were grown on soil artificially contaminated with $300 \text{ mg CuCl}_2 \text{ kg}^{-1}$, $500 \text{ mg Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \text{ kg}^{-1}$, $800 \text{ mg ZnCl}_2 \text{ kg}^{-1}$ or their mixed metal (1600 mg kg^{-1}). From the single metal contaminated soil, lowest Cu accumulation was

recorded in *B. juncea* and highest in *V. faba*; lowest Pb accumulation was recorded in *S. tuberosum*, and highest in *A. fistulosum*; and lowest Zn accumulation was recorded in *A. fistulosum* and *S. tuberosum* and highest in *V. faba*. From mixed metal soil treatments, lowest accumulation of Cu, Pb and Zn was recorded in *B. juncea*, *B. caulorapa* and *A. fistulosum*, respectively, and highest accumulation of Cu and Pb in *S. oleracea* (Desi), and Zn in *S. oleracea* (Patane) was recorded.

Remedial measures using cow dung and lime at different treatments showed that Cu and Pb accumulation in vegetables are higher in lime treatments than in 20 % cow dung treatments. Zinc accumulation increased in *B. rapa* and *L. sativum* in both cow dung and lime than in control. Among the tested vegetables for remedial measures, accumulation of Cu, Pb and Zn from mixed metal treatment was highest in *L. sativum* (treated with lime 9 g for Cu and Pb, and 20 % cow dung for Zn).

Morphological changes such as FW, DW, SL and RL (except RL in *B. rapa*) increased significantly (P 0.01) in all vegetables in Zn and cow dung treated soil, but not significant changes were observed with lime treatment. FW and DW increased only in *L. sativum* grown in 3 g lime treatment, whereas DW % increased significantly in *B. rapa* of both the doses of lime. Immobilization of Cu, Pb and Zn in both single and mixed metal treatments was found to be high in cow dung amended soil. But in single metal salts such as CuCl_2 or $\text{Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ and lime treated soil, the concentration of Cu and Pb retained in the soil was lower than in control, indicating their free mobility in the plants. From this it can be ascertained that 20 % cow dung treatment is suitable for immobilization of supplied metals than lime treatment.

LIST OF TABLES

Table No	Title	Page
1.	Background, normal and critical concentrations (mg kg^{-1}) of heavy metals in soil and plant tissues.	3
2.	Permissible limit of heavy metals for human consumption.	5
3.	Sampling sites and vegetables collected for monitoring heavy metals in Kathmandu valley.	35
4.	List of vegetable crops investigated for phytoextraction of heavy metals	38
5.	Cadmium concentrations in shoots and roots of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CdCl_2 .	41
6.	Chi-square value obtained from Kruskal-Wallis test for morphological parameters of vegetables grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CdCl_2 .	44
7.	Dry weight (%) of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CdCl_2 .	44
8.	Copper concentrations in shoots and roots of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CuCl_2 .	46
9.	Chi-square value obtained from Kruskal-Wallis test for morphological parameters of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CuCl_2 .	49
10.	Dry weight (%) of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CuCl_2 .	49
11.	Lead concentrations in shoots and roots of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of $\text{Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2$.	50
12.	Chi-square value obtained from Kruskal-Wallis test for morphological parameters of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of $\text{Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2$.	52

13. Dry weight (%) of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of $\text{Pb}(\text{NO}_3)_2$.	53
14. Zinc concentrations in shoots and roots of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of ZnCl_2 .	54
15. Chi-square value obtained from Kruskal-Wallis test for morphological parameters of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of ZnCl_2 .	57
16. Dry weight (%) of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of ZnCl_2 .	57
17. Cd, Cu, Pb and Zn concentrations in shoots and roots of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of mixed metals.	59
18. Chi-square value obtained from Kruskal-Wallis test for morphological parameters of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of mixed heavy metals.	61
19. Dry weight (%) of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of mixed heavy metals.	62
20. Chlorophyll a/b ratio in leaves of vegetables grown on soil treated with different concentrations of single heavy metals.	63
21. Changes in micronutrients in vegetable leaves after uptake of excess heavy metals	70
22. Some of soil parameters in the soil samples collected from vegetable crops growing fields	72
23. Concentrations of heavy metals in the soil samples collected from different agricultural fields.	73
24. Correlation Coefficient (r) values among the soils heavy metals and the soil properties.	74
25. Concentrations of heavy metals (Cd, Co, Cr, Cu and Fe) in shoots and roots of vegetable crops collected from different biotops in Kathmandu valley.	77
26. Concentrations of heavy metals (Mn, Ni, Pb and Zn) in shoot and root of vegetable crops collected from different biotops in Kathmandu valley.	78

27.	Results of Correlation Coefficient (r) obtained between the soil heavy metals and their respective accumulation in vegetable parts collected from the same sampling sites.	80
28.	Heavy metal concentrations in edible parts of the vegetables from the agricultural fields of Kathmandu valley.	82
29.	Daily intakes ^a of potentially toxic heavy metals via fresh vegetables (range and mean values in µg/day).	83
30.	Daily intakes ^a of essential trace elements via fresh vegetables (range and mean values in µg/day).	84
31.	Root/shoot ratio in vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different heavy metals and cow dung or lime.	100
32.	pH of soil in soil treated with heavy metals and cow dung or lime.	101

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures. No	Title	Page
1.	Sampling sites in Kathmandu Valley for monitoring heavy metals in soil and vegetables	34
2.	Fresh weight, dry weight, root length and shoot length in young and matured vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CdCl ₂ .	42
3.	Leaf area/ leaf length of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CdCl ₂ .	43
4.	Micronutrients (Cu, Fe, Mn and Zn) accumulation in shoots and roots of <i>Brassica juncea</i> , <i>Brassica rapa</i> , <i>Lactuca sativa</i> , <i>Lepidium sativum</i> and <i>Daucus carota</i> grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CdCl ₂ .	43
5.	Fresh weight, dry weight, root length and shoot length in young and matured vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CuCl ₂ .	47
6.	Leaf area/ leaf length of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CuCl ₂ .	48
7.	Micronutrients (Fe, Mn and Zn) accumulation in shoots and roots of <i>Brassica juncea</i> , <i>Brassica rapa</i> , <i>Lactuca sativa</i> , <i>Lepidium sativum</i> and <i>Daucus carota</i> grown on soil treated with different concentrations of CuCl ₂ .	48
8.	Fresh weight, dry weight, root length and shoot length in young and matured vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of Pb(NO ₃) ₂ .	51
9.	Leaf area/length of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of Pb(NO ₃) ₂ .	52
10.	Micronutrients (Cu, Fe, Mn and Zn) accumulation in shoots and roots of <i>Brassica juncea</i> , <i>Brassica rapa</i> , <i>Lactuca sativa</i> , <i>Lepidium sativum</i> and <i>Daucus carota</i> grown on soil treated with different concentrations of Pb(NO ₃) ₂ .	53
11.	Fresh weight, dry weight, root length and shoot length in young and matured vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of ZnCl ₂ .	55
12.	Leaf area/length of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of ZnCl ₂ .	56

13. Micronutrients (Cu, Fe and Mn) accumulation in shoots and roots of *Brassica juncea*, *Brassica rapa*, *Lactuca sativa*, *Lepidium sativum* and *Daucus carota* grown on soil treated with different concentrations of ZnCl₂. 56
14. Morphological changes in *D. carota* grown on soil treated with different concentrations of heavy metals. 58
15. Fresh weight, dry weight, root length and shoot length in matured *Brassica juncea*, *Brassica rapa*, *Lactuca sativa* and *Lepidium sativum* grown on soil treated with different concentrations of mixed heavy metals. 60
16. Leaf area/length of vegetable crops grown on soil treated with different concentrations of mixed metals (CdCl₂ + CuCl₂ + Pb(NO₃)₂ + ZnCl₂). 60
17. Fe and Mn accumulation in shoot and root of *Brassica juncea*, *Brassica rapa*, *Lactuca sativa* and *Lepidium sativum* grown on soil treated with mixed heavy metals (CdCl₂ + CuCl₂ + Pb(NO₃)₂ + ZnCl₂). 61
18. Chlorophylls (mg g⁻¹) and Cd concentrations (mg kg⁻¹) in vegetable leaves after growing on soil treated with different concentrations of CdCl₂. 64
19. Chlorophylls (mg g⁻¹) and Cu concentration (mg kg⁻¹) in vegetable leaves after growing on soil treated with different concentrations of CuCl₂. 66
20. Chlorophylls (mg g⁻¹) and Pb concentrations (mg kg⁻¹) in vegetable leaves after growing on soil treated with different concentrations of Pb(NO₃)₂. 67
21. Chlorophylls (mg g⁻¹) and Zn concentrations (mg kg⁻¹) in vegetable leaves after growing on soil treated with different concentrations of ZnCl₂. 68
22. Chlorophylls (mg g⁻¹) in different vegetables leaves after growing on soil treated with different concentrations of mixed metals. 69
23. Phytoextraction of Cu by different vegetable crops grown on soil treated with CuCl₂. 87
24. Phytoextraction of Pb by different vegetable crops grown on soil treated with Pb(NO₃)₂. 87
25. Phytoextraction of Zn by different vegetable crops grown on soil treated with ZnCl₂. 88
26. Phytoextraction of Cu, Pb and Zn by different vegetables grown on soil treated with mixed metals. 88

27. Accumulation of Cu in vegetables grown on soil treated with CuCl ₂ and cow dung or lime at different rates.	90
28. Accumulation of Pb in vegetables grown on soil treated with Pb(NO ₃) ₂ and cow dung or lime at different rates.	90
29. Accumulation of Zn in vegetables grown on soil treated with ZnCl ₂ and cow dung or lime at different rates.	91
30. Accumulation of Cu (Fig. A), Pb (Fig. B) and Zn (Fig. C) in vegetable crops grown on soil treated with mixed metals (CuCl ₂ + Pb(NO ₃) ₂ +ZnCl ₂) and cow dung or lime.	91-92
31. Morphological changes in <i>B. juncea</i> grown on CuCl ₂ or Pb(NO ₃) ₂ treated soil mixed with different quantities of cow dung or lime.	94
32. Fresh weight, dry weight, root length and shoot length in vegetable crops grown on soil treated with CuCl ₂ and different quantities of cow dung or lime.	95
33. Fresh weight, dry weight, root length and shoot length in vegetable crops grown on soil treated with Pb(NO ₃) ₂ and different quantities of cow dung or lime.	96
34. Morphological changes in <i>B. juncea</i> grown on soil treated with ZnCl ₂ or mixed metals treated with different quantities of cow-dung or lime	97
35. Fresh weight, dry weight, root length and shoot length in vegetable crops grown on soil treated with ZnCl ₂ and different quantities of cow dung or lime.	98
36. Fresh weight, dry weight, root length and shoot length in vegetable crops grown on soil treated with mixed metals (CuCl ₂ + (PbNO ₃) ₂ + ZnCl ₂) and different quantities of cow-dung or lime.	99
37. Concentration of Cu, Pb and Zn in soil treated with single or mixed metals and different quantities of cow dung or lime.	102

ABBREVIATIONS

CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDC	Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention
Chl-a	Chlorophyll a
Chl-b	Chlorophyll b
ctrl	control
DoAMDD	Department of Agricultural Marketing Development Directorate
DW	Dry weight
DW (%)	Dry weight percent
Ed	Edition
Ed's	Editors
e.g.	for example
et. al.	and others
fig, figs	Figure (s)
FW	Fresh weight
g	gram
h	hour
HMG	His Majesty's Government
i.e.	that is
kg	kilogram
mg	milligrams
no, nos,	number (s)
p., pp.,	page (s)
PTDI	Provisional Tolerable Daily Intakes
RDI	Recommended Daily Intake
RL	Root length
SL	Shoot length
t	tones
Total Chl	Total Chlorophyll
US	United States
US EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
WHO	World Health Organization

CONTENTS

Approval letter	i
Declaration certificate	ii
Acknowledgments	iii-iv
List of Tables	v-vii
Lists of Figures	viii-x
Abbreviations	xi
Abstract	xii-iv
Contents	xv
1. INTRODUCTION	1-14
1.1 Heavy Metals	1
1.1.1 Sources of Heavy Metals	1
1.1.2 Soil as a Sink of Toxic Metal	2
1.1.3 Negative Impact of Heavy Metals on Human Health	4
1.1.4 Negative Impact of Heavy Metals on Plants	6
1.2 Uptake of Heavy Metals	6
1.3 Impact of Heavy Metal on Chlorophyll	7
1.4 Monitoring Heavy Metals in Soil and Vegetable Crops	8
1.4.1 Monitoring Heavy Metals in Kathmandu	8
1.5 Dietary Intake of Heavy Metals	9
1.6 Phytoremediation	10
1.7 Justification	11
1.8 Objectives	14
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	15-28
3. MATERIALS AND METHODS	29-39
3. 1 Uptake of Heavy Metals and Morphological Parameters	29
3. 1.1 Soil Preparation and Metal Treatment	29

3.1.2	Vegetable Seed Selection and Experimental Design	30
3.1.3	Sample Preparation for Metal Analysis and Soil pH	30
3.1.4	Digestion and Metal Analysis	30
3.1.5	Statistical Analysis	31
3.2	Chlorophyll Content	31
3.2.1	Chlorophyll Extraction	31
3.2.2	Statistical Analysis	32
3.3	Monitoring of Vegetables and Soil Samples	32
3.3.1	Study Area	32
3.3.2	Soil and Vegetables Samples	33
3.3.3	Soil Parameters	33
3.3.4	Analysis of Heavy Metals	35
3.3.5	Statistical Analysis	36
3.4	Dietary Intake of Heavy Metal via Vegetables	36
3.4.1	Estimation of Heavy Metal Intake	36
3.5	Phytoremediation	37
3.5.1	Soil Preparation	37
3.5.2	Phytoextraction	37
3.5.3	Remedial Measures	39
3.5.4	Statistical Analysis	39
4.	RESULTS	40-102
4.1.	Uptake of Heavy Metals and Impact on Morphology	40
4.1.1	Cadmium	40
4.1.2	Copper	45
4.1.3	Lead	49
4.1.4	Zinc	54
4.1.5	Uptake of Cd, Cu, Pb and Zn from Mixed Metal Treatments	58
4.2	Impact of Heavy Metals on the Chlorophyll Content	62
4.2.1.	Cadmium	63
4.2.2	Copper	65

4.2.3. Lead	65
4.2.4. Zinc	69
4.2.5. Mixed metal treatments	69
4.3 Monitoring of Heavy Metals in Soil and Vegetables	71
4.3.1 Soil Parameters and Soil Heavy Metals	71
4.3.2 Heavy Metal Accumulation in Vegetables	74
4.4 Estimation of Heavy Metal in Dietary Intake	81
4. 4.1 Accumulation of Heavy Metals in Edible Portions	81
4. 4. 2 Estimation of Dietary Intakes of Heavy Metals	81
4.5. Phytoremediation	85
4.5.1. Phytoextraction	85
4.5.2. Remedial Measures using Cow dung and Lime	89
4.5.3 Morphological Parameters	93
4.5.4 Soil pH in Cow dung and Lime Amended Soil	101
4.5.5. Immobilization of Supplied Heavy Metals	101
5. DISCUSSION	103-117
5.1. Uptake and Morphology	103
5.2. Heavy Metal and Chlorophyll	106
5.3. Monitoring Heavy Metals in Soil and Vegetables	109
5.4. Dietary Intake of heavy metals through vegetables	113
5.5. Phytoremediation	115
5.5.1 Phytoextraction	115
5.5.2 Remedial measures	116
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	118-120
7. SUMMARY	121-127
8. REFERENCES	128-152

Appendix

Published papers based on the present study