NEWS AND NOTICES

BOTANICAL SURVEY OF INDIA OPENS A NEW CIRCLE IN HYDERABAD

The Botanical Survey of India (BSI) with Central Head Quarters at Kolkata has so far established 9 regional Circles Southern Circle, Coimbatore, 1955; Central Circle, Allahabad, 1955; Eastern Circle, Shillong, 1956; Western Circle, Pune, 1956; Northern Circle, Dehradun, 1956; Andaman & Nicobar Circle, Port Blair, 1972; Arid Zone Circle, Jodhpur, 1972; Sikkim Himalayan Circle, Gangtok, 1979 and Arunachal Pradesh Circle, Itanagar, 1977. The Central Head Quarters has four important offices – Central National Herbarium (CNH, 1795), Indian Botanic Garden (IBG, 1787) and Central Botanical Laboratory (CBL, 1954) situated in Howrah and an Industrial Section of the Indian Museum (ISIM, 1887) in Kolkata.

The Survey's coordination with various other institutions, entrepreneurs and public at large is often constrained by far distantly located circles. It has also sensed the much-desired expansion by establishing few more circles to broaden BSI base and for greater decentralization of field exploration and surveys. The faster documentation of the floral resources is rather a more compelling need since the country is party to various international commitments concerning to biodiversity inventorying and conservation. This is one obviously felt constraint even in completion of national flora. Realizing the need, the Jaipur workshop (1996) resolved to enhance the capacity building in taxonomy with a mission to inventory, monitor, conserve and utilize national bio-resources, to establish effective links with other institutes and leadership in taxonomy at regional and global levels. Few circles have been proposed in various geographical regions to expedite exploration surveys and one such is the Deccan Circle envisaged exclusively for Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, but for almost 2 and $^{1}/_{2}$ decades, no new circle got opened, not withstanding the need experienced from time to time. Both Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, under the jurisdiction of the Southern Circle and the Central National Herbarium respectively, are rather far-flung from the respective jurisdictional stations. There has been an appeal since 1980 to set up a new circle at Hyderabad to bring in operational comfort in exploration of both Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. Many proposals/representations from various quarters sought for such an establishment. Much correspondence has taken place and even the Program Advisory Committee of BSI (PAC) grasped the need for such an establishment to ease the burden of existing circles. In the middle of May, 2005, in one of the AICOPTAX review meetings, the Joint Secretary, MoEF, Mrs. Veena Upadhyaya announced Ministry's approval to start the much awaited new circle in Hyderabad. Further, to accelerate the process, she wrote a letter to the Principal Secretary (Environment, Forest, Science and Technology) to the Andhra Pradesh Government, Shri. P. Chatterjee, for suitable premises preferably under the control of State Government to start the approved new Circle office. The Director, Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata, Dr. M. Sanjappa has made an official visit during November 2005, met Shri. P. Chatterjee and appraised him of the locational advantage (the place being a hub of scientific activity both by Governmental and Non Governmental organisations) and relevance of the

proposed new Circle in Hyderabad. Shri. P. Chatterjee has assured him all possible assistance in the opening of the new Circle. He requested Dr. Sanjappa to meet Shri. S.K. Sinha, Member Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB), Hyderabad, as there exists some additional space in their office premises. Dr. Sanjappa met Shri. Sinha and inspected the premises offered by APPCB. Finally, it was agreed that the APPCB shall lease out a part of sparable accommodation to the newly proposed Deccan Circle. The Circle was formerly started with the occupation of the premises on 27th December 2005 and Dr. P. Venu of the Southern Circle was redeployed as Joint Director in charge to the newly established Circle. The Circle got formally inaugurated on 6th January 2006 by Prof. H.Y. Mohanram, Chairman, Program Advisory and Monitoring Committee (BSI & ZSI) in presence of the Director, BSI and ex-officials of MoEF and BSI.

The newly started Circle will concentrate on mandatory assignments of inventorying of the flora of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. Further, it shall survey under explored and unexplored areas, which are so far neglected for remoteness, inaccessibility and other reasons.. It also proposes to build a Botanic Garden once it acquires a land of its own with an objective to rehabilitate threatened species of the area, particularly plants from the Eastern Ghats since major stretch of it falls in the jurisdiction of Deccan Circle. In due course, the circle intends to impart training in herbarium methodology. To take advantage of the past explorations it will build and maintain a herbarium by gathering all the herbarium material concerning to Andhra Pradesh and Orissa from its regional Circles as well from various universities and research departments The newly established Deccan Circle will emulate the existing regional circles in rendering services and seek help in developing partnership with other institutions working at molecular level to realize and establish relationships among difficult taxa so that the conclusions drawn from the traditional taxonomy are reviewed and augmented. Bar-coding has been proved to be of great use in delimitation of the taxa besides its auxiliary potential applications such as in knowing the country of origin, biopiracy and patenting issues concerning bioresources. The Survey plans to -pursue work on these lines at national level.