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BOTANISING THE WILD LIFE SANCTUARY OF MYSORE DISTRICT IN KARNATAKA

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After the re-organisation of Botanical Survey of India in 1954, much valuable work has been done and a wealth of information has been collected through explorations and floristic studies.

The establishment of National Parks and Sanctuaries has focused the need for a multidisciplinary approach in studying the flora and fauna and their interdependance. Presently there is urgent need for discovering and catalouging the species of fauna and flora which are rare/threatened/endangered with the possibility of extinction and conserving them in suitable areas.

Study of the composition and pattern of behaviour and the needs of wild animals in National Parks and Sanctuaries has given much valuable data on the necessity of protecting the vegetation of these areas for the survival of the animals. Species of plants which form the sources of animal forage and shelter are to be protected from poachers and other intruders, disturbing the vegetation if the animals themselves are to be conserved. Information on the distribution of the various plant species in such areas are to be gathered by intensive plant explorations. This is an essential pre-requisite for any multidisciplinary conservation programme.

Floristic surveys have been made in Bandipur Wild Life Sanctuary (11° 20′—11° 40′ N and 76°20′—76° 32′ E) in Karnataka during 1964-65 to have a thorough knowledge of the floristic wealth of the area and nature of vegetation. Bandipur is an important sanctuary rich in both flora and fauna. The floristic survey conducted here resulted in the collection of about 550 species of plants. The area is a dry deciduous forest dominated by plants like *Anogeissus latifolia* Wall. ex Bedd., *Cassia fistula* L., *Dolichandrone arcuata* Clarke, *Emblica officinalis* Gaertn., *Terminalia bellirica* Roxb. etc. *Clerodendrum serratum* Moon, *Crotalaria verrucosa* L., *Eriolaena quinqueloculoris* Wight etc., are the common shrubs. The chief climbers found are *Cryptolepis buchananii* R. & S., *Jasminum malabaricum* Wight, *Thunbergia laevis* Nees etc. Parasites like *Dendrophthoe flacata* (Linn. f.) Etting., *Viscum angulatum* Heyne ex DC. and *V. ramosissimum* Wall., are very common throughout the forest on deciduous trees. Naithani (Bull. Bot. Surv. Ind. 8 : 252-263. 1966) gives a detailed account on the vegetation and flora of this area.

The most common animals of this sanctuary that depend upon plants are Chital (*Axis axis*), the elephant (*Elephos maximus*), the Sambhar (*Cervus unicolor*) and the Gaur (*Bos ganurus*) in addition to smaller mammals and other animals. The forage preferences of these animals are different. Aggressive and dangerous animals in the area to some extent keep away the agencies doing much harm to the flora. The excreta of the animals act as a valuable manure for the plants growing within the area. Animals and plants which co-exist have a delicate ecological balance between them,

Sanctuaries and National Parks should have a good herbarium available within their area. This along with good photographs and drawings of interesting species will be of great help to the interested scientists for further work as well as to the visitors. Conservation of rare and endangered species of the flora and fauna can be attempted by establishing more Sanctuaries and National Parks.