

# NON-TIMBER PRODUCTS OF MAMANDUR FOREST OF TIRUPATI, CUDDAPAH – NALLAMALAI HOTSPOT IN EASTERN GHATS, INDIA

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## SUMMARY

The Mamandur forest situated between Chittoor and Cuddapah districts consists of high degree of phytodiversity along with some highly valuable endemic and endangered species. The area receives water from Thumbura Thirtham of Tirumala Forest. Forest is deciduous type but evergreen plants are mixed together. The forest covered with epiphytes and climbers; and lower group plants like algae, bryophytes, pteridophytes are plenty in water logging areas. The forest is a source of non wood forest products (NWFP) like fibre, fuel wood, gum, resin, vegetable dyes, oil., honey, medicinal plants, bamboo products etc. A large numbers of edible fruits with varietal variation are available in this forest. Highly economic value *Pterocarpus santalinus* is growing luxuriantly in this area. Hedge of elephants are crossing this forest when they are passing from Kuppam to Nallamalai forest areas. The forest is providing food, shelter to wild animals like deer, cats, dogs, birds and leopards to maintain the ecosystem stability and they are providing sustainable environments. Department of forestry of Andhra Pradesh is taking steps to protect this area and improving bio-diversity, by developing check dams and plantations and preventing forest fire along with digging water ditches to the animals and birds in summer.

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Natural resources play an important role in the economic growth and development of the region. Sustainable utilization of the natural resources is needed to meet the demands of future generations. Plants have tremendous potential to become a renewable source of high quality raw materials for industry as well as providing a wealth of genetic diversity which can be lead to the discovery of new things (Bartle, 1997). Sacred grove is a track of virgin forest, harbouring rich bio-diversity and provided a good deal of ecological and genetic services by protecting and conserving the primitive cultivators and other wild flora and fauna. Besides these, sacred groves play an important role in maintaining the micro-climate of the region. Conservation of groves located in different ecological units helps in the conserved water, soil and nutrient, and facilitates the regeneration of plant species (Khumbongmayam *et al.*, 2005). However, these natural resources are not only limited but some of them are also non-renewable. The important ecological and economic keystone species are naturally conserved in this area. With the increasing human population, there is an increasing pressure on the natural resources, as a result of which they are getting depleted at a faster rate. Over exploitation and mismanagement practices are also causing threat to natural resources and biological diversity. The forests are the important source of genetic diversity through which some of the basic requirements of food, fuel, fodder and shelter are realized. A number of plants have been

disappearing every day unknowing their potentialities. Domestication of any wild species of plant by bringing into cultivation is not an easy task. The potentially useful plants of Mamandur are poorly known. Therefore, identification of under-utilized plant resources is primary important. Hence, in the present paper an attempt has been made to list the plant resources available in this forest and utilized by the local people especially by tribals.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Intensive field works in different seasons were carried out in Mamandur with the help of forest department in such a way to cover the different development stages of plant species like vegetative, flowering and fruiting. Preliminary identification of plants was made with the help of Flora of the presidency of Madras (Gamble and Fischer, 1916; 1920). During the field work, the specimens collected for the preparation of herbarium were processed in accordance with the methodology adopted by Jain and Rao (1977). The Herbaria were preserved in the Department of Botany, S. V. University, Tirupati.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pieces of vegetation existing at present as consequence of religious refugia offered to them are called sacred groves. In Andhra Pradesh about 800 sacred groves have been enumerated so far (Bhandary and Chandrasekhar, 2003). Sacred grove in Mamandur is dedicated to God Brahma. The local villagers and tribal