

Floristic study of Kaprada's hilly forest in South Gujarat

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SUMMARY

Floristic studies help us to assess the plant wealth and its potentiality of any given area. Floristic studies also help us to understand the basic aspects of biology such as speciation, isolation, endemism and evolution. Flora of any area is not fixed up. It changes from time to time. Various ecological factors, mostly biotic, change the floristic components. The total number of species may be changed; dominant species may be replaced with other species; the floristic composition, *i.e.*, family: genus: species ratio may be changed. Kaprada hilly forest is selected for the floristic studies. Whole area is rich in plant diversity. Our aim was to survey the area on basis of plant diversity. The area was previously explored only by Reddy (1987). After 1987 there is no information as to what is the present status and flora of the area. A total of 839 angiosperms belonging to 508 genera and 123 families have been collected from the region.

Key Words : Floristic study, Flora of Kaprada, Ethnobotanical study

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Valsad district in South Gujarat is situated in heavy rainfall zone so it is having good biodiversity. This district is having five taluka- Valsad, Pardi, Dharampur, Kaprada and Umbergaon. Kaprada taluka which is separated from Dharampur taluka in 1997 is not so far studied. The taluka of Kaprada is separated from Dharampur on 15th October, 1997.

Kaprada taluka is situated on 20.43' – 20.13' North latitude and 73.42' – 73.01' East longitude. Its North boundary is shared with Dharampur taluka, North-West boundary with Pardi taluka while East and South East boundary with Maharashtra State and South-West boundary with Silvassa and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Its geographical area is 936.62 Sq. km. and forest area is about 476.58 Sq. kms. according to State government of Gujarat which is 50 per cent of the geographical area. It shows how the area is rich by plant diversity. Kaprada taluka is having Par, Kolak and Damanganga rivers to keep it green whole the

year.

Kaprada is divided into two zones – the Talat and the Dungar. Towards the east this taluka has a region where the land bears much dissected and poorer appearance. Deeply furrowed streams and river zigzagging through the low hills are a common sight. The hills and slopes are covered with forest, once dense but a good deal depleted now due to indiscriminate felling. The region is shaped like a plateau has quite a few high hills with lofty peaks. This “Dungar” region is the home to Koknas and the Warlis – two schedule tribes inhabiting majority of the taluka. The taluka belongs to the Sahyadri hills stretching southwards making the land scape to be dominated by a chain of flat topped hills. Due to basaltic formation the soils are red loam and black soil, which are heterogamous in colour. On piedmont slopes the soils, red in colour, have shallow sollum depth. Soil fertility in general is not a constraint.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study area has been thoroughly surveyed in all seasons to procure maximum collections and their variants. The fieldwork consisted of collection of plant specimens for herbarium, observation on the habit, habitat, phenology and distribution. The herbarium specimens were processed with