

**Theme 7: Lakes, rivers, estuaries: water quality, biotic resources, sustainable management**

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**DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION STATUS OF SEMECARPUS  
KATHLEKANENSIS (DASAPPA AND SWAMINATH), A CRITICALLY  
ENDANGERED FRESH WATER SWAMP SPECIES IN WESTERN GHATS**

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The state of Karnataka, Central Western Ghats, is abode of many plant and animal species, which have been reported to occur only in the state. It includes the newly described tree species *Semecarpus kathlekanensis* (Dasappa and Swaminath) occurring only in the Myristica swamps of Kathlekan region in North Canara district. Earlier, the tree was found in large numbers but has now been reduced to about 150 individuals due to indiscriminate felling and draining of swamps for cultivation. The species has been declared as 'Critically Endangered' as per the IUCN threat status. The species would go extinct if immediate measures are not taken. In this context efforts were made to recover the species from going extinct. In the present study, seeds were collected from wild and seedlings were raised in the nursery and introduced them in the similar habitats in new locations of reserve forest and sacred groves in Kodagu district. The plantlets responded favorably to transplanting in both the reintroduced sites by showing very less mortality percentage and restoration of this species into the wild is therefore possible. The demonstration plot of the species along with the seedlings of associated species occurring in its natural habitat has also been done in Forestry College Campus, Ponnampet (Kodagu) and, the growth and survival of the plantlets are being monitored from last three years. The initial success of the experiment could act as model for reintroduction as an effective tool for recovering such critically endangered plant species in Western Ghats.

**Keywords:** *Semecarpus kathlekanensis*, critically endangered, Myristica swamps