

Theme 3: Biodiversity – Terrestrial, Aquatic

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URBAN TREE DIVERSITY OF KARWAR, KARNATAKA

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Urban trees serve many useful functions such as climate change mitigation by carbon sequestration, air quality improvement by air pollution abatement, biodiversity conservation, source of ecosystem goods and service to urban inhabitants. They also have aesthetic, socio-religious and recreational value in urban context. In spite of the importance, they have not received much scientific attention. This paper investigates the diversity and density of tree species growing both within the built environment as well as road-side avenues in the seaside town of Karwar which is the administrative headquarters of Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. The total area of the town is 27.15 m² and population is 62,973. The tree flora of Karwar comprises of about 100 species in which about 70% are wild indigenous species. The other 30% involves exotic and cultivated species. The top five dominant species are *Mangifera indica* (wild mango, 20.016% of total tree population), *Polyalthia longifolia* (False Ashoka, 12.544%), *Peltophorum pterocarpum* (Yellow flame tree, 6.763%), *Samania saman* (Rain tree, 5.072%) and *Artocarpus heterophyllus* (Jackfruit, 5.045%). The tree diversity represents a good assemblage of different utility categories such as wild and cultivated fruit yielding trees, shade and ornamental trees, sacred and religious trees, etc. Besides the high proportion of old trees of wild mango and jackfruit, presence of other wild fruit yielding trees like *Artocarpus incisus* and *Spondias pinnata*, large sized sacred trees such as *Ficus religiosa* and *F. benghalensis*, rare medicinal species such as *Garcinia indica*, *Saraca asoca*, *Terminalia bellirica*, etc., are some of the notable features of the urban tree flora of Karwar.