Theme 3: Biodiversity – Terrestrial, Aquatic

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RIPARIAN FLORA OF ATHIKKADAVU, COIMBATORE DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

K. Jisha, Honey John A and V.S. Ramachandran

Taxonomy & Floristic Lab, Dept. of Botany
Bharathiar University, Coimbatore - 641 046.

Riparian vegetation is to provide a number of ecological functions, such as controlling sediment and nutrient inputs to water bodies, regulating temperature of waste bodies, inputting fine and coarse organic debris for maintaining aquatic biodiversity, and maintaining terrestrial biodiversity. In the present study an attempt was made to collect and document the Riparian flora of Athikkadavu and it has resulted in the collection of 95 species from 90 genera and 50 families. -The analysis of the flora reveals that the most common trees –are *Hopea ponga* (Dennst.), *Mangifera indica* L., *Pongamia -pinnata* (L.) Pierre, *Terminalia arjuna* DC. W &A., *Madhuca neriifolia* (Moon) H.J.Lam., *Diospyros malabarica* (Desr.) Kosteletsky., *Salix tetrasperma* Roxb., and *Crataeva religiosa*. Wild relatives of cultivated plants like *Syzygium cumini* (L.) Skeels, *Solanum torvum* Sw., *Vanilla walkeriae* Wight, *Eleusine indica* (L.) and *Paspalum conjugatum* Berg are also recorded. Medicinal plants -like *Centella asiatica* (L.), *Homonia riaparia* Lour., *Mimosa pudica* L. and *Solanum nigrum* L.and Ornamental plants -like *Cretaeva religiosa* Forst. f., *Asclepias curassavica* L., *Brugmansia suaveolens* (Willd.) Bercht. & Presl., *Cymbidium aloifolium* (L.) Sw., *Diplazium esculantum* (Retz.) Swartz. were also selected for the study -. The productivity of riparian vegetation is much higher than that of terrestrial - ones. The economically important plants are exploited only by the indigenous community. Their indigenous knowledge can be utilized in identifying the other potential useful plants. Hence, it is suggested that the studies on the Riparian flora has to be undertaken in other Riparian zones, in order to get more useful information about the role and status in conserving our natural biodiversity.