

Theme 3: Biodiversity – Terrestrial, Aquatic

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A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON THE RIPARIAN FLORA OF THE RIVER KALLAR, COIMBATORE DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

M. Sudha, C. Udhayavanai and V.S. Ramachandran

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

The riparian forests are critical transition zones of the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem. In the absence of human alteration, riparian - plant communities support numerous functions including bank stabilization through root strength and sediment deposition on flood plains. It act as wildlife habitat and increase biodiversity. The present study evaluates 69 species under 57genera belonging to 29 families. The most dominant families – were Asteraceae (13%), Solanaceae (13%), Poaceae (9%), Amaranthaceae (7%), and Euphorbiaceae (7%) - of which - there - were 41 herbs, 13 shrubs, 4 climbers/ –twiners and 8 trees. The dicots – comprised 59 species and 10 species represented the monocots -. The plants –were grouped under different headings based on the utility point of view-(a) Medicinal plants; *Solanum nigrum*, *Mimosa pudica*, *Ficus recemosa* , *Calotropis gigantea*, *Daemia extensa* and *Eclipta prostrata*, (b)Edible plants; *Lycopersicum esculentum*, *Physalis minima*, *Centella asiatica*, *Alternanthera sessilis* and *Alternanthera tenella*, (c)Wild relatives of cultivated plants; *Solanum villosum* , *Mangifera indica*, *Eleusine indica*, *Ficus hispida* and *Solanum americanum* , (d)- Ornamental -plants like *Solanum seaforthianum*, *Brugmansia suaveolens*, *Aritemisia nilagirica* , *Asclepias curassavica* and *Lantana camera*. It is inferred that the majority of the plants - happened to be of invasive nature. These plants – are carried by the water - bodies from upper-reaches of Nilgiri Hills to the plains of Coimbatore district.