

Mangroves of the Sundarbans, India

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The mangrove vegetation in India is restricted mainly to East Coast, West Coast and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Mangroves of the Sundarbans, one of the most unique ecosystems of the world, have developed in a complex geo-environmental setting in the lower-most part of the gigantic Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna delta region. It has great natural endowments in the form of land, water, vegetation and wildlife. The Sundarbans itself a wonderland having cosmic biodiversity webbed with numerous heritage linkages of human society. This biodiversity of Sundarbans to some extent is well protected under different schedules like Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve, Sundarbans National Park, few Sanctuaries, Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, World Heritage Site, Ramsar Site, etc. However, the building blocks of this portrait are the floral and faunal elements. For millions of years

mangroves established themselves in this area through their exceptionally well-developed dispersal, re-establishment and recruitment strategies. In this background, the book “Mangroves of the Sundarbans, India (with major Mangrove Associates and Saltmarsh Plants)-a pictorial guide” is a landmark footstep.

Understanding the interrelationships among these delicate entities requires serious scientific studies with a passionate outlook for the region and its people. The present book is an excellent pictorial guide. The concise description (diagnosis) of a particular species is followed by key feature(s) for easy identification. The IUCN red list status provided in the book would greatly help in developing strategies to save the threatened and endangered species. One of the most sparkling footprint of the book is the pollen transporter(s) of



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DEBABRATA MAITY, Assistant Professor, Centre of Advanced Study, Department of Botany, University of Calicut. He is well known Plant Taxonomist. He is credited with the prestigious K.C. Mehta Award (IKAT) and Anand Prasad Bhowmik Award (HSST). He was a member of IAD, IAS sponsored project. "A Strategic Road Map for Developing Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Species in Bharat". He published more than 130 research articles and authored 6 books. He discovered nearly 30 new taxa, one new genus, claimed more than 30 new distributional records and made more than 35 nomenclatural new combinations.

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MANASI MANDAL, Assistant Professor, Department of Botany, Sundarban Hazi Datta College, Patharakhali, South 24 Parganas, being her college situated inside the Sundarbans, she has developed a keen interest on Mangrove vegetation. She obtained her Ph.D. from Department of Botany, University of Kalyani. Her expertise is in the field of algal taxonomy, anatomy of higher plants and biodiversity. She published more than 20 research articles in different recognized journals and discovered two new algal species, claimed new distributional records of four taxa, made ten nomenclatural new combinations and recombination of *Trinaria* species.

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each species: bee, butterfly, moth, hornet, fly, ant, even bird, bat, water and air which will help readers to understand the pollination biology and population biology of the concerned species.

Mangrove species coupled with major mangrove associates, saltmarsh plants and dominant parasites make the book almost complete guide to the plants of Sundarbans. Besides the images of social behavior and unique physiography will help to understand the intricate relationship of forest and inhabitants. The siltation and recruitment strategies of seedlings of the mangroves and its associates with helpless degradation, force to rethink the planner or policy makers in a new way to protect the biodiversity in this unstable part of the Gangetic delta.

The idea of presenting photographs for each taxon makes the book user friendly. Professional expertise should have been sought for language and technical editing and finally attractive design to represent all the requirements in one page.

The photographs of different views of the forests are worth appreciating. Photographs of root system and barks are the additional information included in this book. The book is handy to carry it to the field. A key is also provided as a guide for the identification of families and their representative

members. The pictorial index at the beginning is user friendly. It is also an excellent idea to print the Latin plant names upright near the right-hand margin to facilitate the quick search for a particular species.

However, the main drawback of this book is not to cite some important previous works on Sundarbans of India, as 'Bibliography' or as Reference. Many species of Associates of Mangroves are also missing in this publication.

The authors deserve much appreciation for bringing out this nice volume, which would be useful to scholars, teachers, scientists, and foresters interested in the forests of the Sundarbans. The text and photographs are presented in such a lucid and attractive manner that, even common readers will welcome this publication. Profusely illustrated with photographs and environmental associations, the book comes as a boon to anybody interested in identifying mangrove species and getting authentic information on their salient features.

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