

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**Bibliography on Post –Independence District Level Floristic Studies
of West Bengal, India**

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***Abstract:** The state of West Bengal has a magnificent floristic diversity and it has been explored by different scientist during the post –independence period. As a result, a number of district level floristic works were published. The present communication enlisted such 137 research articles, books and Ph.D. theses on floristic studies from different districts of West Bengal.*

***Key Words:** Bibliography, Floristic studies, West Bengal*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Flora is an inventory of plants of a particular area which is essential to evaluate the plant diversity and management of bio-resources' for sustainable use. It not only helps the students and field biologist to identify the plants, but also encourage the authority working on conservational aspect to protect threatened plants by proving necessary field data. That is why floristic studies have a special importance for the development of any state or country.

The state of West Bengal lies in India between 21°45' to 27° 16' N latitude and 85° 55' to 89° 56' E longitude, covering an area of 87, 676 Sq km which is about 2.70% of the total land area of the country. Actually, the state of West Bengal was formed on 15th August 1947 by partition of erstwhile Bengal Province with 14 districts. The former princely state Koch Bihar joined West Bengal as a district on 26th January 1950. The district Purulia was added to West Bengal in 1956 as per State Reorganization act. At present, there are 23 districts in West Bengal.

Before independence the flora of erstwhile Bengal province was explored by different botanists [1-5]. Prain [6] provided a comprehensive floristic account of Bengal Province but in his work, plants of Darjeeling hills were not included and plants of north Bengal were poorly represented. The state of West Bengal has a magnificent floral diversity ranging from the southern littoral mangrove forest of Sundarbans to luxuriant vegetation of the Terai-Duars region of the North Bengal culminating upwards into the temperate vegetation of the Darjeeling Himalayas coupled with the dry deciduous

vegetation of the Western districts. So many scientists had tried to explore different areas of West Bengal floristically. During post-independence era, a considerable initiative has been undertaken to make a comprehensive flora of the states. Botanical Survey of India in their district flora project explore several districts. Botany department of the different universities of the state as well as institutes were also engaged to explore the flora. In addition, scientists of foreign organizations [7-10] also made a great contribution to the floristic work of some parts of North Bengal through their own work. As a result, along with the state a number of district-level floristic works were also published. However, till now there is no such index through which students, common people, researchers and development planners can find such district level floristic works, to meet this lacuna the present work has been undertaken.

The study will help to understand what floristic work has been done at the district level of West Bengal and on the other hand will give an idea of what work is left, to be conducted in future.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present work is based on the survey of literature like relevant journals, books, reports, bulletins, newsletters, etc., to collect the necessary information. Websites of some taxonomic journals were searched to consult the back as well as current volumes. Sodhganga – a reservoir of Indian theses was also consulted to get the data regarding district level floristic works which were submitted in different universities of the state for doctoral degree. Interview of some resource persons were taken to know the status of floristic works of the state of West Bengal.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Floristic works which cover different districts of West Bengal are listed below. Districts are arranged alphabetically and newly formed districts are considered within the parent district as they do not have sufficient data. Districts like Dinajpur, Burdwan, Medinipur and 24-Parganas are considered here in broader sense.

Bankura

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Sanyal, M. N. 1974. A contribution to the sedges and grasses of Bankura district of West Bengal. *Bull Bo Soc Bengal* 28(1&2):7 5-78.

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Birbhum

Basak, R. K. 1968. A note on the distribution of some plants in Birbhum district, West Bengal. *Bull Bot Surv India* 10: 254-259.

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Guha, B. P. 1971. Grasses and sedges of Birbhum district. *Bull Bot Soc Bengal* 25(1-2): 5-18.

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Burdwan (East and West)

Banerjee, D. K. 1968. Grasses of Burdwan district, West Bengal. *Bull Bot Surv India* 10: 246-250

Bhattacharya, A & Mukherjee, A. 2005. A census of the plants in Orgam forest of Burdwan district, West Bengal. *Indian J Appl & Pure Biol* 20(2): 293-295.

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Darjeeling (including Kalimpong)

Basnet, D. B. 2004. Some common weed flora in forest plantation of Darjeeling hills of West Bengal. *Indian J Environ & Ecoplan* 8(2): 533-539.

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Jalpaiguri (including Alipurduar)

Banerjee, L. K. 1993. *Plant resources of Jaldapara Rhino Sanctuary*. Botanical Survey of India. Calcutta.

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Koch Bihar

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Kolkata

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Malda

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Medinipur (East and West including Jhargram)

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Murshidabad

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Nadia

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Purulia

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24-Parganas (North and South)

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The present study recorded 137 floristic works from different districts of West Bengal. It is noted that the districts of North Bengal due to their rich vegetation explored more than the South Bengal districts. The district of Darjeeling including Kalimpong is much explored which is evident from the number of publications (27) followed by Jalpaiguri (16) and Koch Bihar (14). Among the districts of South Bengal, the maximum publication noted from Birbhum and Burdwan district (11 in number). The districts of Hooghly, Nadia, Malda and Purulia are under explored as noticeable by a few publications. District flora of almost all districts of the state were completed but four district floras were published till date, viz. Bankura, Howrah, Murshidabad and West Dinajpur (presently Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur) and the rest remain unpublished as Ph.D. theses.

4. CONCLUSION

District level floristic work plays a very important role not only for compilation of state flora but also provides information about usable plant recourses and conservational aspects. The present study reveals that though a good number of district level floristic works were published but most of them are stray publications which cannot provide a comprehensive idea about the plant wealth of a particular district. Except for four districts most of the district floras remain unpublished. So, it is an

urgent need to publish the unpublished district floras after thorough revision as most of such works are more than two decades old and the floristic composition of an area is continuously changing. It is also noted there is a vast scope to work with the lower group of plants in district level as a very few works has been done in this regard.

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