

RESEARCH PAPER:

A contribution to the flora of selected wetlands in Kachchh district of Gujarat

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SUMMARY

Kachchh district covers an area of 45625 sq.km. and falls in the arid tract. In spite of being arid, the district covers maximum area under wetlands. The present study discussed only baseline status of the vegetation in 11 selected wetlands. Total 56 plant species belonging to 46 genera and 28 families have been reported from the wetlands. Out of 56 plant species, 7 species belonged to algae while remaining 49 to angiosperms.

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Wetlands,
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Vegetation is the outcome of the habitat, environmental condition and existing biotic influences. Species diversity varies greatly through space and time in a given habitat and ecosystem (Robin and David, 2001). Aquatic vegetation is an important component for the healthy functioning of wetland ecosystem and for biological productivity. It also supports diverse organisms and thereby, provides livelihood options for dependent communities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Vegetation studies specific to wetlands of Gujarat are limited. Looking to the lack of information on wetland vegetation for Kachchh region, an attempt was made to understand the baseline status of vegetation in and around the 11 selected wetlands. In the present study, status of aquatic vegetation was discussed covering basic information on life form status and list of species recorded.

Since the project area falls under arid region, availability of both aquatic and terrestrial (land area bordering the wetland) vegetation was very sparse. The study was conducted between the year of 2007 and 2008.

Study area:

Kachchh, extending to a total area of 45,652 sq.km, falls in the arid tracts and

experiences tropical monsoon climate with average annual rainfall of 350 mm. Distribution of this meagre rainfall is erratic and variable. Average number of rainy days of the district is 13. Temperature ranges from 45^o C in the summer to 4.6^o C in winter. Kachchh is drought prone district as drought occurs every second or third year. In spite of being arid, Kachchh district covers maximum area under wetlands. Based on the distribution, the wetlands of Kachchh can be divided in to three major types; the central inland wetlands (man made), coastal wetlands in the southern and western regions and saline wetlands (Ranns-Banni) in the northern limit. Eleven sampling sites were selected from the Kachchh District (Table 1 and Fig. 1)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Aquatic vegetation has been grouped into three types which include purely aquatic macrophytes and algal group and other plants growing in water inundation area or shore line semi-aquatic type. Overall taxonomical status of aquatic vegetation showed that a total of 56 species belonging to 46 genera and 28 families. Among these species, submerged vegetation showed low species richness of only 8 species under 8 genera and 7 families. In the case of semi-aquatic vegetation, species richness was

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