

**FLORISTIC COMPOSITION OF PLACES OF RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN DEOGHAR,
JHARKHAND INDIA****MOUSUMI BANERJEE^{1a} AND AMBARISH MUKHERJEE^b**^{ab}CAS Department of Botany, Burdwan University, Burdwan, West Bengal, India**ABSTRACT**

Considering revelation of the man, plant and environment relationships sustained traditionally in different religious places as an important perspective in ethically strategizing plant-based optimization of environment, the present study site was undertaken in Deoghar, a place of immense religious significance as a Hindu pilgrimage. As a prerequisite to fulfillment of such an objective a taxonomic census of vascular plants was performed to determine diversity in species composing the community. The overall number of vascular plant species was recorded to be 188; species ratio of dicots, monocots and pteridophytes being 43: 3: 1. Family: genus: species ratio (on total basis) was found to be 1:3.16:3.48. At specific, generic and family levels, dicots scored higher prevalence percentages over monocots. The value of Coefficient of Generic Diversity (90.96) and high number of families with a low species quota indicate habitat heterogeneity contributing towards stability of the existing vegetation.

KEYWORDS : Man, Plant and Environment Relationship, Deoghar, Taxonomic Census, Vascular Plants.

Study of floristic composition of a place, whether natural or man-made, at periodic intervals proves essential in assessment of biodiversity in spatial and temporal scales since many of the constituent species perceive various degrees of threats of extinction. In view of this, the present authors prioritized identification and documentation of vascular plants in such areas where there is a perpetual man-plant relationship prevailing over the years for religious fulfillment and spiritual accomplishment. The present work also considers taxonomic documentation of plants sustained in the custody of the religious organizations like Sri Satsang Anukul Thakur Ashrama for their religious concern, aesthetic, nutritional and medicinal values. The present work is a part of the research

programme undertaken on study of man-plant-environment interrelationships in selected sacred places.

Study Site

Deoghar, the main city of Deoghar District of Jharkhand State (Figs. 1a & b), is located at 24.48°N and 86.7°E with an average elevation of 254 meters (833 feet). Deoghar is also familiar as "Baidyanath Dham" or "Baba Dham". It is a very important pilgrimage hub for Hindus for the Vaidyanath Temple which is one of the twelve Shiva Jyotirlingams and one of the 51 Shakti Peethas in India. In view of this the place is considered as the abode ('ghar') of the Gods and Goddesses ('deva').

The place has a very charming set-up with undulations, water courses and a number of small hills in the



Figure 1a and 1b : Maps Showing Location of Study Site India

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