ABSTRACT

Research Theme: Interactive key for identification of tree species

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The on going project “Biodiversity Informatics and co-Operation in Taxonomy for Interactive shared Knowledge base (BIOTIK)” is targeted to develop taxonomic and ecological knowledge base for tree species in the evergreen forests of the Western Ghats of India as well as Anamites mountains in Laos, in the form of CD-ROMs for personal computer platform and as an open source web-based (on-line) application. Within the frame of this project, particularly to the Western Ghats part, my responsibility is to aid the development of interactive key for identification of tree species using IDentification Assistée par Ordinateur (IADO) program.

For this work nearly 600 tree species have been considered. Database on character states for all the species are being prepared using existing herbarium in the botany laboratory, IFP and from freshly collected specimens in the field. Photographs depicting different character states for 420 tree species have been taken during the fieldwork. HTML pages for each species with photographs, botanical and ecological descriptions in four languages *viz* English, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil are under progress.

The result would primarily address the needs of stakeholders including forest departments that are involved in maintaining and preserving the diverse evergreen forests and the large scientific community working in tropical areas. This knowledge base will not only cater the needs of traditional taxonomists but also help in building the capacity of para-taxonomists.