

Floral composition of mangrove of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (India) with special references to natural hybrids of Genus *Rhizophora*

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Abstract

A recent survey of mangroves in Andaman and Nicobar islands was carried out by the authors in 21 selected sites. Total 42 mangrove species (17 major mangrove species, 10 minor mangrove species and 15 mangrove associates) were recorded including one new record of *Sonneratia ovata* Back from Havelock Island based on Tomlinson classification. Nine previously recorded species namely *Ceriops decandra*, *Aegialitis rotundifolia*, *Kandelia candel*, *Agalialia cuculata*, *Bruguiera sexangula*, *Cynometra ramiflora*, *Cerbera manghas* and *Brownlowia tersa* are not encountered during the present survey. During the survey some interesting observations were recorded in the natural hybrids of genus *Rhizophora* and their parents. Two forms of *Rhizophora* hybrids with respect to style length, number of stamens and leaf size were recorded from Havelock Island. In addition to that series of intermediate forms between *R. mucronata* and *R. stylosa* with respect to style length and two forms of *R. apiculata*, style with red tip and style with normal tip, were also recorded from Havelock Island. These observations have not been reported earlier. Although, the two forms of hybrids showed the characters of two known *Rhizophora* hybrids, *R. x lamarckii* (hybrid between *R. apiculata* and *R. stylosa*) and *R. x annamalayana* (hybrid between *R. apiculata* and *R. mucronata*) respectively, they showed some variation also. It appears that variations among the hybrids are the result of hybridization between series of intermediate forms between *R. stylosa* and *R. mucronata* and two forms of *R. apiculata*. However further taxonomical and molecular analysis are needed to confirm it. All indentified species were described with their key characters, illustration and distribution in Andaman and Nicobar islands

Keywords

diversity, *Rhizophora*, hybrid