FLORAL DIVERSITY OF SITAKUNDA BOTANICAL GARDEN AND ECO-PARK IN CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT: The study enumerates the floral diversity of Sitakunda Botanical Garden and Eco-park through extensive field data collection following transect method during July 2013 to May 2014. A total of 332 vascular plant species belonging to 266 genera and 93 families including cultivated, natural and plantations were recorded from this Eco-park. Among the recorded plants, 324 species belongs to angiosperm and the remaining 8 species were gymnosperm. Trees constitute the major category (140 species) of the plant community followed by herbs (90 species), shrubs (66 species), climbers (25 species), ferns (9 species), and epiphytes (2 species). Poaceae is the largest family represented by 21 species belonging to 11 genera in Liliopsida (monocots), while in Magnoliopsida (dicots), Euphorbiaceae is the largest family represented by 18 species under 17 genera. The survey has confirmed the occurrence of 29 rare and threatened plant species in the park area along with a good number of exotic species. It is observed that currently plant diversity of this Eco-park is in great threat due to illicit felling, fuel wood collection and intentional fire hazards by the local people. Frequent fire occurrences by the local people caused major damage to the herbaceous vegetation of the park during last few years. Protection of biodiversity of this garden is essential to conserve the native plant species of this historically and ecologically important forest area.

Keywords: *Floral diversity; Sitakunda; Botanical Garden; Eco-park; Bangladesh; Conservation*

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