PREFACE

Honey is the sweetest natural food offered by the Mother Nature and the only one that can bring with it the aroma of flowers, through its infinite diversity. It is a unique product of plant-animal interaction and its formation fascinating. Secretion of nectar by flower, collection of nectar by bees and transformation of nectar into honey—a complex, continuous, cumulative process.

Even though most plants in an ecosystem produce nectar and pollen, all of them do not contribute to the honey resource. From the vegetation, the bees identify plants for nectar and pollen and collect them for the sustenance of their colonial life. Moreover, these resource preferences are distinct in natural and domesticated habitats.

Investigations in this discipline impart information on sources and quality of honey, important honey yielding flora of the region and the significance of bee foraging in honey production, which in turn has a bearing on apiary development and honey industry. It may be noted that bee foraging of both individual plants and those composing a specific vegetational unit or ecosystem are essential pre requisites to formulate strategies in honey production and bee management. It is with this aim, the present study has been initiated.

Studies on the resources utilized by the honeybees for colonial sustenance and honey production based on pollen grains as resource index, revealed that, of all the flowering plants occurring in the study area, only about 84 species provide resources for honeybees and out of them only 31 contribute as key resources. Of these key species some are utilized as pollen source, some as nectar source and a few provide both. Emphasis has also been given to the sustainable utilization of honey as a non-wood forest product, tribal economy and management of potential resources for beekeeping industry.