Chapter 2

PRESENT ATTEMPT
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For any student of botany pollination ecology is a subject of great value in understanding plant's life cycle. Though much of the literature appears to be available on plant pollinator interactions and pollinator attractants, considering the vast number of flowering plants, this information is in fact extremely insufficient. While going through the literature we find that most of the work has been done in Western countries. Tropics offer us tremendous biodiversity of plants and insects. Emphasis on pollination biology in the tropics is justified for at least three principal reasons. 1) Tropical communities display an unparalleled richness in plant-pollinator interactions and the role of such interactions in the evolution of biota and ecology and communities is far more important in the tropics than elsewhere. 2) Tropics are experiencing high rates of deforestation. Effective strategies to conserve biodiversity in the long run would require basic information about key plant-pollinator interactions. 3) Seed and fruit production of crops, including tree crops for timber and non-timber products, must be enhanced to meet the needs of rapidly burgeoning populations in the tropics. Keeping this in view International Symposium on Pollination in Tropics was held during 8-13 August, 1993 at Bangalore.

Only few attempts have been made in India regarding the studies in pollination ecology. Scanty information on Indian plants is available regarding the anatomy of nectaries and composition of nectars. The present study was undertaken to study the nectaries and nectars of mainly the locally available plants. Some of the plants studied are ornamentals grown in gardens while some were collected from wild. Some plants had large flowers and ample nectar while some had small flowers with a tiny drop of nectar. It was a matter of great patience to
collect the nectar from small flowers in sufficient quantity. I used to go to the
field with chromatographic paper and directly from flower the fresh nectar was
loaded on paper. For plants like *Striga* it required nearly 250-300 flowers to have
sufficient quantity necessary for analysis. Some of my results differ from the
earlier reports. The reason must be that I used only fresh nectar.

As I started doing reference work, it was realised that flower visitors
also need to be critically recorded. However my limitations did not permit me to
be on constant vigilance in the field to record pollinators. Wherever possible,
visitors were noted. Here 126 members of the local flora have been studied. Many
more remain to be studied by future students.