INTRODUCTION

Taxonomy had been a branch of plant science long neglected in India. Although it is the foundation on which the scientist researches on all other branches of science involving plants are built and is the source of the fundamental information for the optimum utilization of the natural plant resources of the country. It has never found due consideration or support. The recent global interest in biodiversity conservation intellectual property rights, etc., is slowly resulting in a realization of its importance. The Tarai landscape of North-eastern Uttar Pradesh (U.P) constitutes a mosaic of human habitation, cultivation, natural and semi-natural vegetation comprising grasslands and forests. Most of the natural forests have been replaced by plantation of commercially important trees and Agriculture. The areas free from human habitation continue to provide microhabitats for an array of native flora. A number of wild plants including those which occupy human-dominated landscape have been in use for various purposes since antiquity. High human density and resultant pressure on plant resources and habitates have pushed many species towards rarity and local extinction. Maintaining patches of natural vegetation within the human dominated landscape is the only way to conserve native flora (Pimm et al. 1995). Therefore, landscape level analysis of vegetation becomes vital for assessing the availability of plant resources, patterns of species diversity, and identification of botanical hot spots (Rosenzweig 1999).

Analysis of terrestrial vegetation in India was initiated sometimes during 1960. S. Misra (1968) revised various methods for the analysis of vegetation and Meher-Homji (1973) analysed several information about forests. Ramakrishnan (1992) compiled most of the studies on the vegetation of agro-ecosystems and natural
communities of north-eastern India. Despite these attempts, landscape level analysis of vegetation, especially from the Tarai region of U.P are particularly lacking. A few foristic and community level studies are, however, available from the region (Gupta & Shukla 1991; Pandey & Shukla 1999, 2003, 2005; Tripathi & Shukla 2007; Srivastava 1976).

A systematic study of plants in India started from the middle of 18 th century with zealous efforts of many botanists. J.L. Stewart (1869) dealt with botanical and vernacular names and uses of economically important trees, shrubs and herbs. With the revival of Botanical Survey of India in 1954, much emphasis has been laid on an intensive study of local floras with a view together precise information of the identity, distribution, ecological association, Phenology, economic uses and local names of Indian Plants. Santapau (1958) suggested that “Our Universities can do excellent work in the selected areas in the neighbourhood of their head quarters. In a relatively small area it is possible to keep cost down to a minimum since travelling expanses eat up much of the funds assigned to botanical exploration.” Similar suggestions and recommendations were also made at summer school in taxonomy held at Kodai Kanal in 1962 and Rao (1970), Subramanyam and Sreemadhaven (1970) and Maheshwari (1975) in the silver jubilee volume of “Botanica.”


The need of working out the local floras has become all the more essential because a large number of additional and exotic species have been described from different parts of the country since the publication of earlier floras. A complete up to
date revision is required as some plants are already reported and certain plants have been introduced during this period. Therefore, there is need of a complete exploration of the area for fruitful utilization. Therefore, the present work is undertaken on the floristic study of the newly carved out district Siddharthnagar (U.P). The district consists of part of Basti district and a part of Gorakhpur. At present it is included in Basti Commissionary.