CHAPTER • I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Importance of Plant Wealth

Man has depended directly or indirectly on plant products in some way or other for his primary needs such as food, shelter and clothing ever since man's origin on the earth. The civilization of a country depends on the intimate relationship of man with plants.

India, being a vast country with a variety of climatic and geographic conditions abounds in plant wealth and almost every natural family in the globe is represented in the country. However, the information regarding such a great wealth is quite insufficient. It is therefore, of utmost importance to have an indepth knowledge of their occurrence, frequency and phenology for proper utilization.
We need to learn more about the plants which constitute basic need for our survival. Similarly, it is also necessary to know how to store and retrieve the vast amount of information about plants for man's use. For that we must know what plants are to be conserved. Hence, it has become necessary to study the plant wealth of a country if it is to be properly utilized.

I.2 Importance of Floras:

The necessity of regional floras has been well-emphasized by many leading botanists (Santapau, 1952a, 1952b; Janaki Ammal, 1954; Hutchinson, 1964; Stace, 1980). It is in the regional floras that such useful information like distributional details, associations and communities range regarding phenological data, ecological notes etc. can be precisely given. Such information can be profitably used in the upliftment of the rural people as well as in the improvement of the national economy by conserving rare and endangered species and assessing local pressure on plants.

Each country should have its own national floras. But such a flora is unthinkable unless we have sufficient information on regional and district floras as they are timely precursors to the national flora. It is a matter of satisfaction that Botanical Survey of India with its various regional circles along with other research institutes are doing their best to fulfill this national obligation. However, considering the vastness of our nation, universities in different parts of the country have no less a part in sharing the responsibility for achieving this mammoth task. In recent years, many botanists have paid due attention to
floristic surveys and this has resulted in the outcome of a series of Floras and many others are on their way.

I am fortunate enough to involve in the present study, sponsored by the Department of Environment under the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India through its national committee, Man and Biosphere (MAB). The 'Forest Flora of Nasik District' would provide materials to the Flora of Maharashtra State and subsequently will contribute to some extent, to our national Flora too.