CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

General Note:- Andhra Pradesh is the largest state in south India and ranks fifth in both area and population among the Indian states. Andhra Pradesh formed on 1st, November 1956 under the States' reorganisation scheme.

Andhra Pradesh has the unique distinction of having an illustrious historical background. The state comprises of two political entities Andhra which was a part of erstwhile composite Madras state in British India and Telangana, a part of the Nizam's dominions in former Hyderabad state. The only territorial change that took place after the formation of the state was in 1960 when a major part of Tiruttani taluk was given away to Madras under Pataskar Award. A few villages in Tiruvallur taluk were merged in Andhra. Net loss of area was about 205 sq. kms.

The importance of the symbiotic existence of men with other animal and plant life is being increasingly recognised particularly in the context of growing environmental awareness. All innovations, developments and advances in the field of science and technology aim at shaking the life on this planet comfortable and worth living for man.

One million years ago when first man came to exist on this planet forests were plentiful and animal life bountiful and they required to be cleared for Man's safety and
existence, and the construction of dwellings and cultivation
benefits of man. Man who has evolved himself from 'Nature'
over ages, as the most sensible and articulate member of life
on this planet; has not cared for nature in recent years.
Nature has been destroyed through the Man's progress and
development and raped literally stripping the mother earth
of its "sylvan-greenary" (forests) posing today a serious
threat to the very survival; existence and continuity of
humanity on this planet. The position today is that human
population is large and resources are limited and the life
supporting systems of the earth are threatened with irrevo-
cable damage. Thus conservation of nature has came to be
understood as the rational use of the environment to provide
a high quality of living for mankind.

Reasons for undertaking the present work and its importance:

India is endowed fortunately with a rich variety
of trees, shrubs and herbs and their parts, flowers and fruits,
leaves, gums, resins, seeds, barks, roots, tubers etc., which
are useful for human welfare. From times immemorial plants
and their parts are used for curing a variety of diseases in
native medicine. This practice and knowledge of use of
different plants and their parts of medicinal value has been
evolved into Ayurveda medicine in Northern India, Siddhavaidya
in Southern India. Even in Homeopathy and Allopathic preparations,
plant parts and their extractives are extensively used as
ingredients in a variety of pharmaceutical preparations.

An important prerequisite for proper utilization of raw materials of the country is the survey of its natural resources and the preparation of an inventory. The importance of survey of plant resources had been emphasized by Jain (1978) who says "after independence our planners realised that in an agricultural country like India where the flora is so varied and rich, a proper consensus of the flora of the country and its evaluation for economic exploitation is very important. It is necessary that we should have full knowledge regarding the occurrence, frequency, distribution and phenology of various plants for their proper utilization.

Andhra Pradesh is enriched with diversity of vegetational resources but lacks a comprehensive and programmed approach towards its survey and exploitation except Gamble's flora of Madras presidency (1915-1935), which is only available reference for the floristic data of the state. As the vegetational resources are gradually depleting due to various reasons and also due to ecological catastrophes, it is an imperative need to prepare a comprehensive list of the existing flora of Andhra Pradesh.

Most of the selected families of the present investigation encompasses tender and herbaceous plants. So there is every possibility that some of the plants which may
often go unnoticed and remain unexplored. Most of these
are ethnomedicinal plants for tribals in interior forests.

In addition to the above, the herbarium collections
of the presently taken families were found to be less
exhaustive at MH (Coimbatore) CAL (Calcutta), DD (Dehradun)
BLAT (Bombay) when compare to the other families owing to
their inconspicuous nature.

Hence there is an urgent need to trace out the
identity and occurrence of the inconspicuous flora for a
proper assessment of plant wealth of the state and its
utilisation. In the present study the families Nyctaginaceae,
Amaranthaceae, Chenopodiaceae and Polygonaceae have been
enumerated.