

Chapter-4

Macrophytes and Their Ethnic Uses: An Overview

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ABSTRACT

Almost all the water bodies are rich in bio resources for human sustenance. Generally Macrophytes harboring these water bodies play an important role in the ecosystem services and have ethnic values. Macrophytes serves as primary producers and provide shelters to aquatic organisms. Macrophytes can be loosely defined as all forms of macroscopic aquatic vegetation visible by naked eye. This is in contrast to microphytes, i.e., microscopic forms of aquatic plants, such as planktonic and periphytic algae. The macrophytes include taxonomically very diverse representatives: macroalgae (e.g., Chara and Nitella), mosses, liverworts (e.g., Sphagnum and Riccia), and vascular plants. Vascular plants includes Pteridophyta and Angiosperm . Although Macrophyte has a huge potential as bio resources but still it has been regarded as menace in the wetland. It causes eutrophication in water bodies which reduces the productivity of water bodies. Traditionally local inhabitants were utilizing the Macrophyte in their daily activities including it as medicine . However Less literature and sporadic reports were available which is generally may due to the above said reason. Therefore in the present study an attempt has been made to prepare a checklist of Macrophytes which have ethnic and economic values.

Key words: Macrophytes, bio resources, wetlands, ethnic, economic

INTRODUCTION

Aquatic macrophytes, often also called hydrophytes, are key components of aquatic and wetland ecosystems. As primary producers, they are at the base of herbivorous and detritivores food chains, providing food to invertebrates, fish and birds, and organic carbon for bacteria. Their stems, roots and leaves serve as a substrate for periphyton, and a shelter for numerous invertebrates and different stages of fish, amphibians and reptiles. Good knowledge of the functions of aquatic macrophytes in wetlands and shallow lake ecosystems is critical for understanding the basic ecosystem processes. It is also important for numerous applied issues such as wetland restoration, wastewater treatment, and management of invasive species. Macrophytes can be loosely defined as all forms of macroscopic aquatic vegetation visible by naked eye. This is in contrast to microphytes, i.e., microscopic forms of aquatic plants, such as planktonic and periphytic algae. The macrophytes include taxonomically very diverse representatives: macroalgae (e.g., Chara and Nitella), mosses and liverworts (e.g., Sphagnum and Riccia), and vascular plants. Vascular plants represent the largest group of macrophytes. Macrophytes though seems to be a nuisance in the wetland but