

RESEARCH INTERESTS OF PARAMJIT SINGH, SCIENTIST-G AND DIRECTOR, BOTANICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (BSI) AND ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS IN BSI

For over three decades I am doing taxonomic research in Botanical Survey of India on various aspects of wild and naturalised plants including taxonomic revisions, ethnobotanical studies and conservation of live plants as well as historical material. As review of historical records is an essential part of taxonomic research, my interest is also in the Indian natural collections housed in different parts of the world. During travel throughout the country and sixteen countries of W Asia and Africa, I have noticed a steady decline in interest, both subject wise and financial grant wise in herbarium based basic plant taxonomic research. Even important historical collections are being neglected. These collections are an important source of information on distribution and phenology. My personal interest is in trying to correlate historical phonological changes in certain group of plants and if there is any correlation with the climate change. Another aspect of interest is in the grasses and bamboos of India, temperate flora and Indian medicinal and useful plants.

The Botanical Survey of India (BSI) was established in 1890 at Calcutta, with Sir George King (then Superintendent of the Royal Botanic Garden) as its first ex officio Director. The basic objective of the Survey at that time was to explore the plant resources and to identify the plant species with economic virtues. The survey had inherited a rich legacy of botanical activities and development left by the pioneering efforts of R. Kyd, W. Roxburgh, W. Griffith, N. Wallich, Buchanan-Hamilton, H. Falconer, J.F. Duthie, R. Strachey, J.E. Winterbottom, W. Moorcroft, J.F. Royle and others, who had contributed significantly towards the development of Royal Botanic Garden (now AJC Bose Indian Botanic Garden) and the Central National Herbarium. Almost simultaneously regional centres at Saharanpur (Northern region), Poona (Western region) and Madras (Southern region) were also established, with the establishment at Calcutta also covering the Eastern region. The survey, however, became almost quiescent between 1934 to 1954.

Realising the importance of plant resources, the reorganisation of the BSI was initiated in 1952 with Dr. E.K. Janaki Ammal appointed as Officer on Special Duty on 14th October 1952, to draw up plans for the same. On 29th March, 1954 the Government of India apprent]TJET EMC P MCIDatln3a al

The present activities of BSI include:

Documentation of plant diversity at national, regional, state, district and ecosystem level, Documentation of indigenous knowledge of plant resources

Maintaining national botanical collections and museum exhibits centrally at Central National Herbarium, Howrah and Indian Museum, Industrial Section, Kolkata and

■ Eleven Circle Offices located in different regions of India.

Cultivation, multiplication and conservation of threatened, endemic and economically important species, Pharmacognostic studies on species listed in Schedule VI of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1992; Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and Negative List of Export (PN-47),

of the history of the paintings and the artists involved the