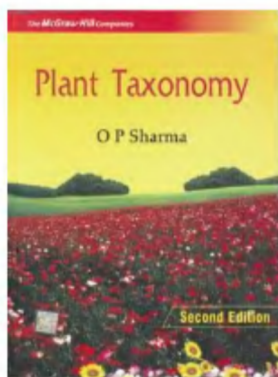


mendable job of threading all aspects of disasters and risks. Many diagrams could be more complete and better drawn. For example in figure 1.2, the word 'Europe' is missing; all the colour plates are put at one place instead of distributing them with the corresponding articles and the quality of most of the colour plates is not good. There is always a problem with the official governmental data and the reality. It is well known that the Gujarat earthquake of 26 January 2001 killed more than 20,000 people. However, a figure of 13,000 deaths appears on page 31. I find it difficult to accept that earthquake lethality potential of Delhi, India is less than 40,000 (figure 2.5).

India succeeded in setting up a most modern, state of art 'Tsunami and Storm Surge Warning Centre' in August 2007. It has been functioning very well and is appreciated by all. There should have been a mention of it. Several more similar comments could be made. In spite of these minor shortcomings, the book provides a good overview of the global challenges and local solutions to disaster management.

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Plant Taxonomy. O. P. Sharma. McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited, 7, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi 110 008. 2009. 2nd edn. 564 pp. Price not mentioned.

Taxonomy, the classificatory science is one of the earliest of all botanical disciplines. The branch which started as 'folk taxonomy' in the early 15th century has today become a synthetic discipline to which all modern disciplines of biology including molecular biology have much to offer to taxonomy. Yet, traditional and

modern taxonomists are reluctant to converge on most issues. While on one hand, traditional taxonomists are yet to complete their basic tasks of survey and inventORIZATION of floras, particularly in the tropics, a host of completely new responsibilities and challenges emerging from newer disciplines are to be shouldered by today's taxonomists, leaving them completely confused. The scenario of taxonomy in India (as elsewhere) is so dismal that virtually an extinction of the subject is feared. As traditional taxonomy is regarded as a monotonous, unfashionable, conservative discipline of no applied value, there are not many takers of the subject in universities creating an obvious shortage of taxonomists in the country. Most universities in India have failed to enthuse students to take up and pursue the subject. Among several reasons, lack of good trained teachers and lack of good textbooks on plant taxonomy to cater to the needs of Indian students with Indian plant examples are believed to be the main ones. Therefore, in this direction, the present publication under review is not only welcome but also timely.

In the second revised edition of the book under review, the author has aimed to cover all important topics of plant taxonomy so as to cater to the needs of graduate and undergraduate students of taxonomy in Indian universities. Commencing from the introductory chapter, there are 22 chapters covering all important aspects of taxonomy which reflect the global perspectives of these aspects, while at the same time catering to needs of the current syllabi of many universities. Some major issues covered in this book are history of plant taxonomy, various systems of plant classification, methods of plant collection for herbarium, herbarium preparation, methods of plant identification, naming, plant nomenclature including international codes of botanical nomenclature, some of the recent trends in taxonomy, the concept and function of herbarium, botanical gardens, art of phytography and description of some selected families of flowering plants. At the end of each chapter, the author provides a list of questions to test the understanding of the students and a few important references as 'suggested reading', wherein the author provides works of only foreign authors ignoring the important contributions of Indian authors. For example, nowhere does the author mention the work of Jain and Rao (1976), *A Handbook of Field and Her-*

barium Methods, which provides a comprehensive account of field and herbarium methods for students and beginners. Similarly, in the chapter on phytography (plant description), the classical work of Dutta (1964 with several editions; 1968, 70, 74), *Botany for Degree Students*, which has been serving the needs of students for decades in India is missing.

The chapter dealing with taxonomic structure provides a good discussion on the 'species concept' which should be useful to all students, teachers and researchers of taxonomy. Other noteworthy feature of this textbook is the discussion on some of the modern aspects of taxonomy such as molecular taxonomy, chemotaxonomy, numerical taxonomy and so on, which are normally avoided by other Indian textbooks on plant taxonomy.

Description of 89 families of flowering plants that occur in the Indian region forms the major portion of this book. Although routine procedure is followed in describing the various families, the author has rightly selected the common Indian genera and species for illustrations and descriptions. This greatly helps the students in locating and studying these species for their practical exercises. Discussion on affinities or systematic position of all these families greatly helps the students of botany in general and taxonomy in particular. The book is profusely illustrated and nicely printed. The overall get-up of the book is quite attractive, but the quality of the paper could have been better.

The price of the book is not mentioned. But as the book is meant for catering to the needs of undergraduate and graduate students, the price should be kept as low as possible.

In my opinion, the book is certainly a welcome contribution to plant taxonomy, a much neglected topic in India. The whole book makes a good reading and enhances the knowledge of all students and teachers of plant taxonomy. The author has done a commendable job of consolidating all available information on taxonomy at one place. The book is a must for all students and teachers of botany and for college libraries in all tropical countries.

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