

### **D-43 Distribution of Family: Dipteroarpaceae in Knuckles and Randenigala area**

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The Knuckles and Randenigala protected areas, situated within the Central Province, possess a floristically rich habitat consisting of more than 1/3 of the island's flora.

Dipterocarpaceae is one of the dominant plant families of the tropical rain forests in the Indo-Malaysian region. In Sri Lanka, 7 genera and 45 species

have been recorded and all are endemic except *Vatica chinensis*. The purpose of this study was to find the pattern of distribution of Dipterocarpaceae in the Knuckles and Randenigala areas.

Extensive field surveys were carried out throughout the area. Site descriptions and taxonomic details of species were recorded.

Specimens were collected and identified and a herbarium survey was carried out at the National Herbarium, Peradeniya to find the previous collections of the study area.

*Stemonoporus affinis*, *Shorea dyeri*, *Dipterocarpus zeylanicus* were recorded at Knuckles region while *Stemonoporus acuminatus* form (a), *Shorea dyeri* and *Dipterocarpus zeylanicus* were encountered at Randenigala northern area. Both *Stemonoporus* species are confined to the study area. All the sites were located in the southern slopes of hills, considered as wet areas, facing the south-west monsoon. *Stemonoporus affinis* was encountered from 4 distinct locations in the montane region and *Shorea dyeri* and *Dipterocarpus zeylanicus* were recorded at Madulkelle and Midcar Estate in Knuckles. *Stemonoporus acuminatus* occurs inside the Victoria-Randenigala-Rantambe sanctuary, which has been recorded near Kaluntenna, only after about 100 years. Only one giant individual of *Shorea dyeri* and a few individuals of *Dipterocarpus zeylanicus* were recorded in a small remnant forest patch at Bopana in the Randenigala area.

Presence of 3 genera and 4 species of Dipterocarpaceae in Knuckles and Randenigala area makes it of high scientific value though conventionally the importance of Dipterocarps of the area is overlooked. All the species were found in remnant forest patches implying the significance of conservation and study of such sensitive micro habitats.

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