

A comparative study of the floristic composition of some selected humid zone dry patinas in Knuckles range, Sri Lanka

A short-term study was carried out to provide a qualitative and quantitative description of the humid zone dry patinas in the Knuckles range in Matale district. The floristic composition of these selected patinas namely Pitawala patina, Manigala patina and Lahumana patina were studied by using standard quadrates. The species found in these patinas were identified with the help of the National Herbarium records. Information on species abundance was obtained by using the quadrate data. The floristic distinctiveness of these three patinas was further tested by Sorensens' similarity quotient (SQ %), calculated for plant species.

The species records were obtained from a total of 120 quadrates from Pitawala, 100 quadrates from Manigala and 20 quadrates from Lahumana. Fifty-six (56) plant species were found in Pitawala patina while thirty-four (34) were from Manigala patina. The

least number of species recorded was twenty-eight (28) in Lahumana patina. Therefore Pitawala patina has the highest species diversity out of three patinas. According to the SQ%, Pitawala and Manigala Patanas are floristically more similar to each other than Lahumana patana. *Ischaemum barbatum* is the dominant plant species in Pitawala and Manigala patinas while *Cymbopogon confertiflorus* and *Cymbopogon caesius* are dominant in Lahumana patana. Lahumana patana is not a true patana land and it is always disturbed by repeated firing by man. These patinas are used by the farmers to graze their cattle during cultivating season. However, this region is unique for its higher value of floral diversity. Therefore, proper conservation activities should be taken to protect these valuable ecosystems with the help of the local people in the area.