



Indopiptadenia oudhensis : A plant of Sohelwa Wildlife Forest Division, Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh

Gurmeet Singh

Sub-Divisional Officer Balrampur, Sohelwa Wild Life Division, Balrampur

Email : gurmeetsingh@satyam.net.in; gurmeetvashist@gmail.com

Indopiptadenia oudhensis (Brandis) Brenan, a middle sized tree plant of family Mimosaceae standing at the verge of extinction as notified by the Central Government, in consultation with the Govt. of Uttar Pradesh vide its notification no. S.O.998 E, dated 15-04-2009 and has prohibited and regulated its collection in order to conserve the species. It is found naturally in the Sohelwa Wildlife Forest Division, Balrampur.

Geography

Geographically, the forests of Sohelwa Wildlife Forest Division are situated in between 27° 30' 1" N to 27° 55' 42" N and 81° 55' 36" E to 82° 48' 33" E.

The forests area is distributed in three adjoining districts of Balrampur, Shrawasti and Gonda covering an area of 51273.80 hact. stands in Balrampur district. and 17052.10 hact. area lies in the Shrawasti district. A separate area of 621.82 hact., which is mostly devoid of any old vegetation, is in Gonda district known as Parvati Argaa Bird Sanctuary. The Sohelwa forests are bordered by the Nepal forests and hills in the north. Balrampur district is surrounded by Siddhartha Nagar district in the east; Gonda district in the west and Basti district in the south. Actually these forests are in the form of a strip of 5-8 km in width running all along the Nepal border upto a length of 120 km.

Configuration of the ground

The forests are situated between the altitudes of 120 mtr and 200 mtr. above the mean sea level. These are traversed from north to south at frequent intervals by the nullahs with high embankments; having beds which are bouldry in the north, sandy in the south with gravel in the middle parts. Nullahs are mostly dry in the summer.

Geology, rock and soil

Forests of Sohelwa stands on old Gangetic alluvium. Soils are generally low lying, single grained and sandy loam in texture.

Indopiptadenia oudhensis - the plant

I learnt about the plant *Indopiptadenia oudhensis* (commonly known as Gainti, Hathipaula) and the rapid depletion of the lovely species from the planet earth's flora in the recent years from various meetings, seminars and from the friends and well wishers, who are seriously concerned about the tree. I got the plant identified with the help of a few grass root level workers and persons from the Bio-diversity Board, Uttar Pradesh at the junction point of Barahawa Range (Compartment Nandmahra 1), Tulsipur Range (Compartment Bhainsasur 1) and the neighboring country Nepal near Siriya Naka on 24-07-2009.

It is a medium sized tree with drooping branchlets. Tree has rough dark brown bark with woody scales. Main stem has many large node like structures. Leaves are bi-pinnate with long stalks. Pods are 15 cm to 22 cm in length and 2 cm in width; flat, reddish; with 17 seeds in it. Flowering takes place in February-March and the fruiting is seen in April-May. Young branches have pricks or thorns on them. Ten old middle sized trees found in the Compartment Bhainsasur 1, Tulsipur Range at the following given positions :

Trees- <i>Indopiptadenia oudhensis</i>	G P S Location
1st Tree	27° 42' 63" N 82° 23' 46" E
2nd Tree	27° 42' 58" N 82° 23' 48" E
3rd To 10th (8 Trees)	27° 42' 52" N 82° 23' 51" E



a



b



c



d

Fig.: a and b – Leaves and pods of *Indopiptadenia oudhensis*; c and d – Stem and natural habitat of *Indopiptadenia oudhensis*.

In the last week of July 2009, young seedlings (140) were taken from the nullah bed to save, protect and conserve the species. These were kept in polybags in the nursery bed. A number of 24 plants died. The growth is slow in the nursery in the first year in normal conditions. Plants were given to the seriously interested institutions and departments to learn about the plant and further research studies.

Sporadic presence of the plant has also been reported from the compartment number 3 and 6 of Bhainsasur, but is yet to be confirmed.

It is suggested that collective efforts of the foresters and scientists should be made in order to save the plant species from becoming extinct.

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