

An Assessment of Angiosperm Diversity of Punnakayal Estuary, Tuticorin –A rich biodiversity Estuarine Ecosystem, Tamil Nadu, India

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Estuaries are coastal ecosystems which are commonly known to support unique flora and fauna. The Punnakayal estuary is a severely affected ecosystem due to developmental activities in the urban city of Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, India. Botanical explorations were conducted in and around Punnakayal estuary during 20011 to 2013 to document the diversity and distribution of angiosperms. A total of 307 species of angiosperms belonging to 68 families. The life form of the plant diversity in 178 herbs, 57 shrubs, 52 trees and 20 climbers were recorded. It is observed that the flora of Punnakayal estuary also harbours a high level of non-native species. Anthropogenic threats to the estuary and its flora are identified and conservation strategies are briefly discussed. This diversity amidst a rapidly expanding city has to be protected in order to enable the conservation agenda of urban areas.

KEY WORDS

Angiosperm diversity, Punnakayal estuary, Estuarine ecosystem, Tamilnadu