

Vegetation Changes along Altitudinal Gradients in Human Disturbed Forests of Uttara Kannada, Central Western Ghats

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ABSTRACT This study was carried out along the altitudinal gradients of Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka, representing different agro-climatic zones – coast, hilly and plains. 10 different sectors were selected for the study. Transect based survey resulted in documenting a total of 134 species of trees and 146 species of shrubs. It was found that the sectors 6, 7 and 8, lying in the Western Ghats section, were having semi-evergreen to evergreen forests and had the highest species diversity, percentage evergreen and percentage endemism. The sectors 9 and 10 in eastern plains harbour dry deciduous forests dominated by teak. The coastal sectors have more moist deciduous forests affected by human disturbances except for a patch of sacred grove in sector 1. However, the regeneration of evergreens, especially in the Ghat section areas, can be considered as a good sign for the return of evergreen forests and need to be austere protected.