

Foreword

The present book is a welcome addition to the existing information available on these unique halophytes called mangroves. According to scientists they are botanical amphibians of seashore occupying a zone of desiccating heat, choking mud and salt levels lethal for ordinary plants. Thought to have originated in Southeast Asia, mangroves are found around the world but mostly within 30 degrees of the equator. A few have however adapted to temperate climates and one has even been reported from New Zealand, an account of which appears in this volume as well. Mangroves have ultra-filtration system to keep salts out and elaborate roots for respiration in water logged substrates. Many mangroves can be recognized by their prop roots that make them appear to be standing on stilts above water. Mangroves may have the highest net productivity of carbon of any natural ecosystem.

Mangroves serve as a buffer between land and sea and hence are protection against erosion and may even reduce the hazards of tsunamis and cyclones. They harbor a variety of life forms like fish, amphibians, reptiles, and birds are a good source of timber, fuel, fodder, tannins, honey, etc. Despite their importance, mangroves are constantly under threat worldwide. They are being sacrificed for civic facilities like house building, roads and hotels and are often additionally subjected to pollution and disruption of their sensitive water and salt balance. This book has highlighted some of these problems and suggested ways and means to deal with them. The main focus is on Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Iran, China, New Zealand and Bangladesh where large populations of mangroves are declining and the degraded condition of what remains, needs attention. The book contains 20 chapters covering topics like present status and distribution of mangroves, threats to the ecosystem due to deforestation and over exploitation of resources, effect of climate change and related adaptations, management options and challenges to reaching the goal. The authors and the editors of this book have done a commendable job in covering the diverse aspects of mangrove ecology and restoration.

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Mangrove Ecosystems of Asia

Status, Challenges and Management Strategies

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