

Preface to the Fifth Edition

In the present edition, the book has been thoroughly revised. Under Part One, sections on citation and authority, ICBN, systems of classification, taxonomic development in India as well as taxonomic evidence (palynology, cytology, phytochemistry, etc.) have been rewritten to bring them in line with current concept. Under Part Two, the sections on evolution of the inflorescence and origin of the angiosperms have been expanded. Under Parts Three and Four, the material on angiosperm systematics have been updated in view of the publication of Heywood's masterpiece *Flowering Plants of the World*. Moreover, bracketed key has been followed instead of the indented key; illustrative figures accompany the text and are not inserted at the end of the book.

In this major remodelling of the book, I have been helped by suggestions and kind comments from many teachers of the Indian subcontinent. It is my earnest hope that the present enlarged edition would continue to enjoy the patronage of teachers and students alike as before.

Author

Preface to the First Edition

The term systematic botany encompasses the domain not only of the higher plants, but also of the lower plants. Since it is not possible to treat adequately all the plant groups together in a single volume at present, this text is limited to a discussion of the angiosperms. The subject-matter has been divided into a number of parts—an arrangement which will find favour with the teachers and the taught alike. It is felt that the book will be of benefit to the students of the Degree (both Pass and Honours) in all the Universities of India and the neighbouring countries and may also be helpful to Postgraduate classes in Botany as well as to the study of Agriculture and allied subjects.

The author has taken into account seventy families of flowering plants prominent in India. He has not attempted to present any new system of plant classification, but has adhered closely to the outline of Bentham and Hooker. Although the term “natural order” is not used in modern botany books and is substituted by the term “family”, yet the former term has been retained and used as synonymous with the latter. The diagnostic or distinguishing characters of each family are few in number and are designated in italics in the section “General Features of the Family”. The information on the variety of floral structures for each particular family can be had from the sections marked “Range of Floral Structures in the Family” and “Divisions of the Family”, though it is mostly emphasised in the former section. In these two sections, the name changes in genera are given as far as possible. But such alterations are not to be generally seen in standard keys for genera, such as that of Prain whose voluminous work needs thorough revision in the light of the ICBN (International Code of Botanical Nomenclature). The systematic position and relationship of each family have been mainly dealt with from the view-points of the systems of Bentham and Hooker, Engler as well as Hutchinson in the section entitled “Position and Affinity of the Family”. Where the position of a family is in dispute, all facts and figures from different systems have been put forward. In the section “Number in and Distribution of the Family”, one can note an approximate estimate of the genera and species as calculated by Core. As to the number of Indian species on dicot families, the number has been taken from Chatterjee’s paper on endemism. The evidence for the number of monocot species from India is Hooker’s *Flora of British India*; this evidence was reluctantly utilised, as up-to-date data are not available. A list of most common plants has been given in alphabetical order under the section “Commonly Occurring Plants of the Family”; a brief description of each plant is included wherever possible. The section “Economic Aspects of the Family” bears description on economic side of each family with plants from India as well as other countries. Where the plant is not generally noticed in India, the native region of that plant is indicated in parenthesis after the scientific name. The Parts Two and Three of his treatise are concerned with the dicotyledons and monocotyledons respectively from the aforementioned angles. The other Parts will speak for themselves. In short, all efforts have been made to give a complete picture of the angiosperm systematics which appear dull and uninteresting to many students of botany these days.

Author