

## VANISHING *ACER CEASIMUM*: AN RARE TREE SPECIES OF NORTH WEST HIMALAYAS

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**Abstract:** India is recognized as one of the mega biodiversity centres and the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest repository of the earth's genetic wealth (Karihaloo, 2007). According to an estimate, as many as 5285 species of angiosperms belonging to 40 genera are endemic to the country (Annual Report, BSI 2001). A relatively recent report has raised the number of genera to 49 now (Irwin & Narasimhan, 2011). Western Ghats of India are known to possess the highest percentage of the endemic taxa; approximately 48% out of total of 4000 species existing here are said to be endemic (Gopalan & Henry, 2000). The Indian Himalayan Region is another important centre of endemism (Samant *et al.*, 1998); As mega biodiversity hotspot (Myers *et al.*, 2000), it covers approximately 18% of country's total geographical area (Anonymous, 1992) and comprises of about 10,000 plant species of which 3160 are endemic (Samant *et al.*, 1998). This region also supports 121 rare and endangered plant species (Nayar & Sastry, 1987; 1988; 1990). The dependence of humans and livestock on this plant diversity is well known phenomenon since time immemorial (Samant & Dhar, 1997).

**Keyword:** Biodiversity, *Acer ceasium*, Tree, Himalayas

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