

Himachal Pradesh is the largest state in the Indian Himalayan Region with diverse biodiversity and climate varying from tropic (Shiwalik Region) to semi arctic conditions prevailing in the Spiti and Pangi Valley. The State is situated between 30°22'40" to 33°12'40" N latitudes and 75°45'55" to 79°04'20" E longitudes, covering an area of 55,673 km² in the North-Western Himalaya with beautiful landscapes, lush green forests, bubbling streams, emerald meadows, enchanting lakes, eternal snows, ethnic communities and colorful people. It is bounded by Tibet in the east, Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Uttaranchal in the southeast. Haryana in the south and Punjab in the west. The total geographical area is 55,673 km² which is 1.7% of the country's area and 10.54% of the Himalaya landmass, 66.52% is under forests. Out of the total forest area, 26.37% area is under tree cover. It supports 30 Wildlife Sanctuaries; 02 National Parks (Pin Valley NP and Great Himalayan NP) and 3 conservation reserves. Recently the Great Himalayan National Park was inscribed into the UNESCO World Heritage List during the session of the 38th World Heritage Committee in Doha, the State of Qatar, on 23rd June 2014.

The State is represented by tropical, temperate, sub-alpine and alpine vegetation. It harbors one of the richest diversity of mountain landscapes with altitude ranging from 350 msl at boundary along Punjab plains to 6816 msl at Reo-Purgial in the Zaskar range of Kinnaur district. The altitude increases from west to east and south to north. The general landscape presents an intricate mosaic of mountain ranges, hills and valleys. The State can be divided into three main topographic regions i.e. (i) Shiwaliks, (ii) Lesser Himalaya and (iii) Greater Himalaya. The climate of Himachal Pradesh varies from semi-tropic to semi-artic from place to place depending upon to the altitude of the region. There State is divided into four agro climate zones viz Shivalik Hill Zone, Mid Hill Zone, High Hill Zone and Cold Dry Zone. Varied physiographic and climatic factors have given arise to diverse natural eco systems namely, forests, grassland and pastures, rivers, lakes and wetlands, glaciers etc. which are the store house of the rich biodiversity.

BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity or biological diversity is the variety, variability and the processes, within and between all micro-organisms, plants and animals both wild and domesticated and the ecological systems which they co-exist and inhabit. It starts with genes and manifests itself as organisms, species, populations and communities which lead to the formation of ecosystem, landscape and ultimately biosphere. Biodiversity manifests at three levels:

- **Genetic Diversity:** diversity of genes within a species. There is a genetic variability among the populations and the individuals of the same species.
- **Species Diversity:** diversity among species in an ecosystem.
- **Ecosystem diversity:** diversity at a higher level of organization, the ecosystem level

STATUS OF BIODIVERSITY IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Himachal Pradesh is bestowed with distinctive floral and faunal biodiversity having aesthetic, Cultural, commercial and genetic values. It is a mountainous state and have vast repository of flora and fauna having profuse variation in intra and inter-species levels. Variable treasures of the

biological resources are because of its varied topography, geological formation, altitudinal ranges and climatic conditions. The range of biodiversity elements represented in the State varies from sub-tropical region to that of temperate, dry temperate and alpine region. 95 percent of the floral and faunal species available in the State are endemic and 5 percent of the other species existing are of exotic nature.