

ROLE OF FIGS IN RIPARIAN ECO-RESTORATION

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The genus *Ficus* L. (figs) one among the largest plant genera is considered as a key stone species as it plays significant role in sustaining the ecosystem. The fig plants are usually attracted by the nutritional fruits fruiting all the year around, being eaten by a wide range of birds and animals. Riparian forests are on among the unique ecosystem supporting diverse plant and animal communities. Riparian ecosystem could be considered as a keystone ecosystem. Figs could be one of the best plant groups considered for restoration of the riparian ecosystem. Many species of figs including *Ficus racemosa*, *Ficus tsjakela*, *Ficus drupacea* etc. are common along the riparian stretches of river. Mostly being large trees with high growth rate, these plants could be a suitable species for ecorestoration along the degraded riparian areas. As the plants follow a wide range of growth habitats including rheophytes, it is preferred over vast habitats. Planting figs will not only restore the riparian forests but will sustain a large number of birds and animals, thus will in turn maintain the entire ecosystem.

Key words: Ficus, ecorestoration.