

## PREFACE

India is a mega biodiversity hot spot region and accounts for more than 7% of vascular plant species. The Pteridophytes belong to the group of vascular cryptogram comprising of fern and fern-allies, represented by 1100 species accounting to 10% of global diversity. Darjiling hills floristically rich account for 19% of the Indian Pteridophyte having 0.1% area of the country. After Mehra (1964) and Hara (1974) the enumeration has been undertaken to access the ecology with utilization of this alienated group in Darjiling Hills. The present work is an outcome of vigorous ground truth for a period of 5 years in different forest tract, villages and herbaria. Key to the families, genus and species with updated nomenclature, description, photographs and distribution has been provided. Ecological assessment has been carried out with detailed utilization of species by the common people.

This work is an attempt to generate interest among the botanist to work out further this alienated group of vascular cryptogram.

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