



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Kaas Plateau

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Why is in news? Sediments decode climate and environmental changes on Kaas Plateau around 8664 years BP

A new study of the sediments from a seasonal lake in the Kaas Plateau in the Satara district of Maharashtra has indicated a major shift in the Indian Summer Monsoons towards dry and stressed conditions with low rainfall during the Early-Mid-Holocene, around 8664 years BP.

Sediment profile **dating back to 8000 years** which helped decode climatic signatures indicated a relatively reduced rainfall and weak southwest monsoon during the late Holocene (around 2827 years BP).

The observations from the study revealed that the seasonal lake is probably a **product of an erosional localized shallow depression on a pediment** (rock debris) developed over the crust.

As noted by UNESCO, the present "Flower Wonder" is located on a lake that dates back to the **Early-Mid-Holocene period**, which means it is an ancient lake that has been preserved over a long time.

The signatures of diatoms, mites, thecamoebians, and sediment characteristics provided better resolutions regarding the hydrological processes and modification of the seasonal lake.

Kaas Plateau:

Kaas Plateau, nestled **in the Western Ghats** is about 140 km from Pune, was **included in the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site in 2012**.

It is also known as **Kaas Pathar in Marathi**, its name is **derived from the Kaasa tree**, botanically known as *Elaeocarpus glandulosus* (rudraksha family).

It is **designated as a biodiversity hotspot**, the Kaas Plateau comes to life with various seasonal flowers forming a floral carpet over the entire lateritic crust during August and September.

More than 450 species of flowers, orchids and even carnivorous plants such as *Drosera Indica* are found in Kaas.

Control measures have been implemented by the forest authorities to handle the pressure of nature lovers visiting the Kaas Plateau.

Spread over 1000 acres, the ecosystem of the plateau is very fragile, the layer of soil over the volcanic rocks is at times just a few cm thick, and many of the plant species endemic to this area are already in the endangered list.

It has an altitude of 1200 metres and is approximately 10 square kilometres in area.

The region is known for 850 species of flowering plants.

The region is **made of volcanic rocks**.

It is known as the "**Valley of Flowers**" as 150 species of flowers grow here.

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Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040
Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

Vajrai waterfall, one of India's largest waterfall is located here.

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