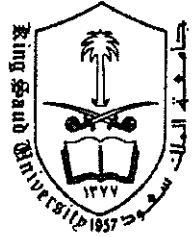




Geographical Studies
RESEARCH PAPERS IN GEOGRAPHY

14



Rawdhat As-Sabalah

(A Study in Biogeography and Environment Protection)

Abdulatif H. Al-Nafie

1427 A.H.

2006 A.D.

REFEREED PERIODICAL PUBLISHED BY THE SAUDI GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY
KING SAUD UNIVERSITY - RIYADH
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

ردمك: ٩-٦-٩٧٢٥-٩٩٦٠

Rawdhat As Sabalah
(A Study in Biogeography and Environment Protection)
Abdulatif H. Al-Nafie

Abstract

Rawdhat As Sabalah is one of the largest & most famous of Najd Plateau rawdhats. It extends in Az Zulfi Governorate about 10 km to the East of Az Zulfi city. The wild plant species number in Rawdhat As Sabalah amounts to approximately 163 species belonging to 121 genres affiliating to 38 groups. 102 plant species or about (62.2%) of the total species in Rawdhat As Sabalah can be classified as annual plants while the number of the perennial plants amounts to 61 species i.e. 37.4 of the rawdhah's plants. The topography and soil characteristics in Rawdhat As Sabalah differ from one place to another, which mainly affects the habitat's characteristics and its micro environments. Therefore, in such habitats and micro environments there are plant habitats where the natural conditions essential for their growth and flourishing. This distribution of the plant habitats and the abundance of their species are closely correlated to the local topography, which affects the availability of moisture and the soil characteristics especially its depth and texture that differ from one site to another. There are plant communities which grow and flourish in sandy soils and others which neither grow nor flourish except in the alluvial or muddy soils. The most important communities that can be identified in Rawdhat As Sabalah which occupy vast areas of land are: *Haloxylon salicornicum*, *Calotropis procera*, *Ziiphus nummularia*, *Lycium shawii* and *Pulicaria undulata*

Since hundred of years, Rawdhat As Sabalah represents an important life source for Az Zulfi inhabitants, as they used to go there for grazing their animals and cultivate its fertile land with wheat and barely without irrigation (Rain-fed agriculture) and to enjoy the beauty of its nature. The adverse effect of those beneficiaries of this rawdhah has clearly emerged and it gradually increases with the advent of modern

transport and agriculture machinery and their usage on a large scale in the rawdhah. These activities represent the main cause which has led to the deterioration of the plant cover and the decrease of the desired and palatable species in it. Notwithstanding the great efforts exerted and being still exerted as well as the attempts being made by the Ministry of Agriculture at present, there is still bad need for further efforts and scientific studies for maintaining the plant cover in the rawdhah, stop its deterioration and develop it. There is no doubt that this requires great collaborative efforts each in his/her specialty field to be made.