

Topic: Euphorbiaceae

B.Sc. Botany Hons. II

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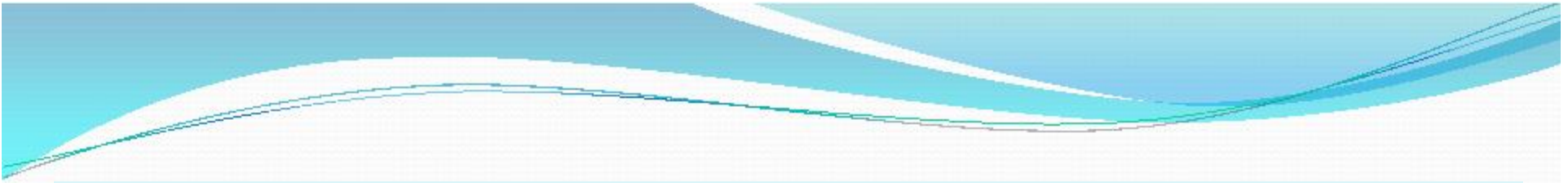
L.N. Mithila University, Darbhanga

Euphorbiaceae

Floral characters

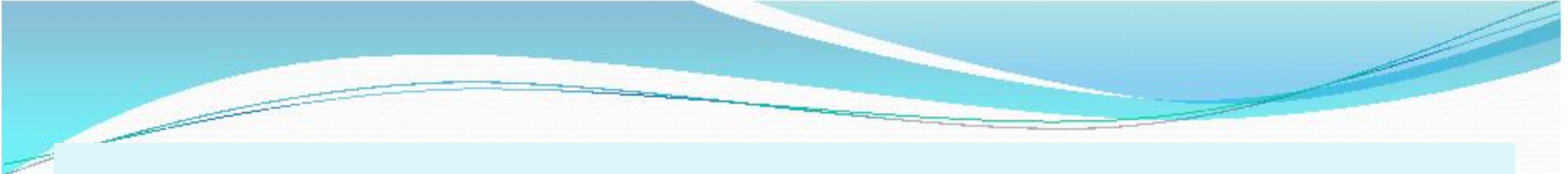
Inflorescence: Inflorescence is complex and highly variable. In *Phyllanthus*, the flowers are solitary or auxiliary. In *Croton*, the inflorescence is panicle. In *Acalypha*, it is catkin and in *Jatropha* the flowers are arranged in terminal cymose clusters.

The first branching is usually racemose and the subsequent branchings are cymose. The partial inflorescence is a cyathium which appears as a single flower. Each cyathium is surrounded by an involucre of four or five connate bracts and between these large coloured glands a petaloid appendage is present (*Splendens*).



In the middle of cyathium, there is a single female flower represented by a tricarpellary gynoecium. In the axil of each bract a number of male flowers are arranged in scorpioid cymes. The oldest flower is nearest to the centre and thus the maturation is centrifugal.

In *Euphorbia* both male and female flowers are naked, whereas in *anthostema* both have a tubular perianth. In the remaining genera of this tribe, male flowers are naked and female flowers have rudimentary perianth.



Flower: The flowers are unisexual, bracteates, actinomorphic, regular, pentamerous or trimerous (Phyllanthus), monochlamydeous and hypogynous. The flowers are rarely perigynous as in *Bridelia*.

In *Croton* the corolla is distinct in the male flowers whereas it is inconspicuous or absent in the female flowers. Flowers are often apetalous.

In *Jatropha* both calyx and corolla are present with five members each. The petals may be united or free.

In *Ricinus* male flowers have five sepals and the female flowers have only three sepals.

