

ABSTRACT

The species Bubalus bubalis has a rather rare cytogenetic status as it includes two cytotypes differing in their habitat. The River type ($2n=50$) which prefers clear water for wallowing is found in India and adjacent regions. In contrast, the Swamp type ($2n=48$) which wallows in muddy water is indigenous to South East Asia and China.

The indigenous buffalo of Sri Lanka is an exception in that it is reported to have a chromosomal constitution of $2n=50$ although it resembles swamp type in appearance and behaviour. This project was initiated to study the chromosomal constitution of indigenous domestic buffaloes of Sri Lanka, from a wide geographical distribution of the country.

For chromosome analysis, jugular blood was aseptically collected into heparinized vacutainers. Lymphocytes were cultured using the microculture techniques.

Samples analysed to date, showed a diploid chromosome number of 50. The observations made during this study suggest that the indigenous domestic buffalo in Sri Lanka belongs to the river type. In Sri Lanka, when buffaloes were extensively used for draught during paddy cultivation, the animal may have lost its dairy characteristics and acquired swamp habits. However, before any authoritative statement be made on taxonomy of 'Lanka' buffalo, the cytogenetic status of wild buffaloes needs to be investigated.