



PLANT DIVERSITY IN SACRED GROVES OF JABALPUR FOREST DIVISION (MADHYA PRADESH)

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ABSTRACT: Sacred Groves are the one form of nature worship which is considered as “Sacred Natural Sites”. These nature worship localities are places providing protection to biodiversity of forest dedicated to deities and ancestral spirits of tribal and forest dwellers. The present study has been carried out from 2013-2016 in 7 forest ranges of Jabalpur forest division to assess the plant diversity in existing sacred groves. As a result total 336 plant species representing 265 genera and 107 families are recorded from 105 sacred groves. Out of which 107 are trees, 60 shrubs, 98 herbs, 26 climbers, 25 grasses, 4 parasites, 2 epiphyte, 5 bryophytes and 10 are aquatic plants. During the study 28 RET species has also been recorded from these sacred groves.

Keywords: Sacred grove, plant diversity, biodiversity, RET species.

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Sacred groves are forest fragments of varying sizes, protected on the name of local god and

goddess. Hunting and logging are strictly prohibited within these patches. Indian sacred groves have pre-vedic origin. Most of them are associated with indigenous and tribal communities who mostly believe in divinity of nature and natural resources. According to Sukumaran and Jeeva (2008) sacred grove is a land with particular type of tree grown, and protected through religious and cultural practices evolved to minimize destruction by the local communities.

Jabalpur Forest Division of Madhya Pradesh is lies between the latitudes 22° 37" N to 22° 50" N and longitudes of 79° 20"E to 80° 34" E. According to Indian State of Forest Report (ISFR, 2015) the total forest area of the Jabalpur forest division is 117000 ha out of which very dense forest, moderate dense forest, open forest and scrub forest areas are 3600 ha, 51400 ha, 62000 ha and 15400 ha respectively. According to Working Plan of Jabalpur, Forest Division, M. P. Forest Department (Sinha, 2005-06 to 2014-15) the forest division is divided into seven forest ranges namely Panagar (7328.75 ha), Kundam (16810.83 ha), Sihora (9593.79 ha), Jabalpur (3330.71 ha), Patan (3144.84 ha), Sahpura (11669.69 ha) and Bargi (11498.23 ha). These seven ranges are having 81 beats and 345 compartments.

Champion and Seth, 1968 classified the forest area of Jabalpur forest division under classes:- 5AC1b - Southern tropical dry deciduous teak forests and 5AC3 - Southern tropical dry deciduous mixed forests.

METHODOLOGY

Piolet and detailed field surveyes of existing sacred groves in Jabalpur forest Division of Madhya Pradesh were carried out from 2013 to 2016. Each sacred grove has been visited individually for inventory of available plant species. All plant species recorded from 105 sacred groves have been identified with the help of Flora of British India, Hooker's (1872-1897); Flora of Tamil Nadu, Nair and Henry (1983); Flora of Bhopal, Oommachan (1977); Flora of Jabalpur, Oommachan and Shrivastava (1996); Supplement to the Flora of Madhya Pradesh, Khanna, Kumar, Dixit and Singh (2001); Flora of Madhya Pradesh Vol.-1, Verma, Balakrishan and Dixit (1993); Flora of Madhya Pradesh Vol. – 2, Mudgal, Khanna and Hajra (1997); and Flora of Madhya Pradesh Vol. – 3, Singh, Khanna, Mudgal and Dixit (2001). Identified plant species are systematically arranged family wise, genera and species wise, with their local name and respective habit.

RESULT AND DISSCUSSION

Total 105 sacred groves have been identified from seven ranges of Jabalpur forest division. As a result of present study total 336 plant species representing 265 genera and 107 families are recorded (Figure-1). out of