

FLORASTIC DIVERSITY OF SACRED GROVE OF NANDED DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA.

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ABSTRACT

Sacred groves are most important reservoirs of biodiversity which are present unique species of plants and animals. In India sacred forests are one of the traditional, informal conservation concepts of plants and animals. In other words sacred groves are small pockets of vegetations which is conserved from so many years under religious ground. It is a natural plant museum and paradise for plant taxonomist. In the present study the floristic diversity of Sacred grove called as Kedarnath or Kedarguda which is located in Hadgaon taluka of Nanded district from Marathwada region of Maharashtra state have been reported.

Key Words: Biodiversity, Conservation, Sacred grove, Parasitic Plants.

Introduction:

Sacred groves are natural landscape or in other words sacred groves are patches of climax vegetation of nature preserved on religious ground. India has a long tradition of nature conservation and sacred groves are the one of the best examples of this unique tradition which conserves the natural resources. Now a days due to population explosion we have facing number of critical problems in the context of recent deforestation and natural resources use, the sacred groves offer a very good model of conservation of all kinds of habits of plants i.e. - Herbs, Shrubs, Trees, Climbers, Parasites, Epiphytes etc in this way all kinds of habitats of plants is observed in the sacred grove and thus they are very excellent example of conservation of biodiversity of nature.

Sacred grove also abodes special group of plants such as rare, endemic and endangered species (Nair et al. 1997). A number of human societies in Europe, America, Australia, Africa, and Asia have long conservation sections of their natural environment as sacred groves (Hughes & Chandran 1988). In maharashtra the inventory of sacred groves brought out by Gadgil and Vartak (1980). It is opened that these sacred groves are only remnants of the original forest maintained under various climax conditions in many parts of Maharashtra. The floristic inventory of 11 selected sacred groves of Maharashtra was reported by Godbole. (Godbole et al. 1998). It is very difficult to give the exact number of sacred groves in India (Malhotra 1998).

In the present review, it is observed that there has been no continuity of work in the last two decades or so nor there is any substantial work available on the sacred groves of Maharashtra except some floristic work. There is also a need to undertake survey work and prepare inventories on the fauna of every sacred grove in India. It is also appear that there are several small sacred groves being lost even before they are located and recorded because of some big construction projects.

In Marathi language the sacred groves are called as Devari. The sacred grove has been named as Kedarguda or Kedarnath. The Hemadpanthi temple; probably constructed out of carved large stones (Shila) as there was no cement material. A traditional Guru Shishya Paramara is followed and governed by a trust. The trust has an agriculture land of 07 acres donated long back in the history. In this sacred grove the mode of plantation is natural and hence except few trees artificially planted outside. The original flora is settled and represented climex vegetation which is on back side of the temple. No wood or even a small stick is allowed to be carried by the local villagers because they firmly believe that if he taken any plant material from this grove at midnight it will change into a snake. In the present study the only one known sacred grove of Marathwada region of Maharashtra State called as Kedarguda or Kedarnath which is located in the Hadgoan taluka of Nanded district which is 60 Kms away from the district place is studied.

Materials and Methods:

The sacred grove has been visited thrice in a year to see the flora in rainy season winter and summer season for two years i.e. – 2016 -2018. The plants were photographed. The data collection was done as per the norms given in manual of ethnobotany (Jain 1995). The specimens were identified with the help of Flora of Marathwada (Naik 1988) and Flora of Maharashtra (Almida 1996). During visit about 42 plant specimens of different families were collected (Table No. 1) among them certain important medicinal herbs and the trees at large are growing for centuries and few of them are grown vigorously in girth and height. The Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna* (Roxb.) Wt. & Am. Combretaceae) tree has reached the girth of 15 feet and is a similar case for Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica* L. Fabaceae). Beside this there are number of old huge trees in the vicinity such as *Ficus amplissima* J.E. Sm. (Moraceae) *Mitragyna parviflora* (Roxb.) Korth (Rubiaceae). *Tectona grandis* L.f. (Verbenaceae) *Terminalia belerica* (Gaertn.) Roxb. (Combretaceae) etc. also grows vigorously.

Table No. 1 List of Plants Collected from Sacred Grove Kedarguda.

S. No.	Name of the Plant	Family	Habit	Local Name
1.	<i>Abrus precatorius</i> L.	Fabaceae	Twiner	Gunj
2.	<i>Amorphophallus sylvaticus</i> (Roxb.) Kunth.	Araceae	Herb	Jangli suran
3.	<i>Anogeissus latifolia</i> (Roxb.ex.DC) Wall ex. Guill and Perro	Combretaceae	Tree	Dhawanda
4.	<i>Bauhinia racemosa</i> Lamk.	Caesalpinaceae	Tree	Apta / Knchan
5.	<i>Biophytum sensitivum</i> (L.) DC.	Oxalidaceae	Herb	Lajalu
6.	<i>Cassia tora</i> L.	Caesalpinaceae	Herb	Tarota
7.	<i>Catunaregam spinosa</i> (Thumb.) Tirvengadam	Rubiaceae	Shrub	Gelphal
8.	<i>Chorchorus olitorius</i> L.	Liliaceae	Herb	-----
9.	<i>Cissus repens</i> Lamk.	Vitaceae	Climber	Ambet Wel
10.	<i>Cissus quadrangularis</i> L.	Vitaceae	Climber	Kand Wel
11.	<i>Cocculus villosus</i> DC.	Menispermaceae	Climber	Patalgaudi
12.	<i>Crotolaria medicaginea</i> Lamk.	Fabaceae	Herb	-----

13.	<i>Desmodium gangeticum</i> (L.) DC.	Fabaceae	Herb	Salwan
14.	<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i> L.	Dioscoreaceae	Climber	Dukkarkand
15.	<i>Euphorbia prunifolia</i> Jacq. Hort. Schoenbr.	Euphorbiaceae	Herb	Hekal
16.	<i>Evolvulus alsinoides</i> L.	Convolvulaceae	Herb	Vishnukranta
17.	<i>Ficus amplissima</i> J.E.Sm.	Moraceae	Tree	Pimpri
18.	<i>Grantelbua urens</i> (Heyne ex. Roth.) Bremek. Mat. Mon. Strob.	Acanthaceae	Herb	-----
19.	<i>Grangea maderaspatana</i> (L.) Poir	Asteraceae	Herb	Machipatra
20.	<i>Heliicteres isora</i> L.	Sterculiaceae	Tree	Muradsheng
21.	<i>Indigofera cordifolia</i> Heyne.ex.Roth	Fabaceae	Herb	-----
22.	<i>Indigofera trita</i> L.	Fabaceae	Herb	-----
23.	<i>Ipomoea alba</i> L.	Convolvulaceae	Twiner	-----
24.	<i>Justicia glauca</i> Rottl.	Acanthaceae	Herb	-----
25.	<i>Lantana camera</i> Auct.	Verbinaceae	Shrub	Ghaneri
26.	<i>Leucas cephalotes</i> (Roth.) Spreng.	Lamiaceae	Shrub	Deepmal
27.	<i>Mitragyna parvifolia</i> (Roxb.)Korth	Rubiaceae	Tree	Kalam
28.	<i>Pergularia deemia</i> (Forsk.) Cholv.	Asclepiadaceae	Climber	UtranWel
29.	<i>Santalum album</i> L.	Santallaceae	Tree	Chandan
30.	<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i> L.f.	Anacardiaceae	Tree	Biba
31.	<i>Mangifera indica</i> L.	Anacardiaceae	Tree	Amba
32.	<i>Azadairchta indica</i> Juss.	Meliaceae	Tree	Limb
33.	<i>Tectona grandis</i> L.f.	Verbenaceae	Tree	Sagwan
34.	<i>Butea monosperma</i> L.	Fabaceae	Tree	Palas
35.	<i>Tamarindus indica</i> L.	Fabaceae	Tree	Chinch
36.	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> (Roxb.) Wt.& Am.	Combretaceae	Tree	Arjun
37.	<i>Terminalia belerica</i> (Gaertn.) Roxb.	Combretaceae	Tree	Behda
38.	<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	Combretaceae	Tree	Hirda
39.	<i>Trichodesma zeylanicum</i> (Burn.f.)R.Br.	Boraginaceae	Herb	-----
40.	<i>Triumpheta rotundifolia</i> Link.	Tiliaceae	Herb	-----
41.	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i> L.	Asteraceae	Herb	Landga
42.	<i>Tridax procumbens</i> L.	Asteraceae	Herb	Zakham Jodi

Conclusion:

The role of sacred grove in conservation of biodiversity is unquestionable, however it is expected that ethnobotanist in the area should take a lead in the discovery of such type sacred groves. Species in these groves perform key functional role not only in the biodiversity but also the local human community's value for cultural and religious reason. This sacred groves act as a species pool of forest birds and have a key role in the recolonization of many species of birds so there is a need to study the fauna.

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