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A BIRDS EYE VIEW OF SACRED GROVES IN SOUTH –EAST REGION OF RAJASTHAN

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ABSTRACT

In India, religious values have been saving our forests and environment. Many communities have self-imposed rules and regulations regarding logging and hunting for conservation of Nature. They earmark certain patches of land, great refuge for native biodiversity in the name of the local forest deity. The presiding deity is local Hindu gods although some based on Islamic and Buddhist origins, or folk religions. Due to community-supported initiative the flora and fauna of the area survives and thrives. These Patches of Forest are known as Sacred Groves and considered as “Sacred Natural Sites”. These are the relic forest patches preserved in the name of religion and culture. They extend throughout the world from Asia, Africa, and Europe to America. In India Sacred Groves are present from North-east Himalayan region, Western & Eastern Ghats, Coastal region, Central Indian Plateau and Western desert of Rajasthan. An attempt has been made to unveil the sacred groves in south-east region of Rajasthan in the present study.

INTRODUCTION

Sacred Groves are considered as “Sacred Natural Sites” (IUCN) (Gadgil and Vartak, 1976a). These are the relic forest patches preserved in the name of religion & culture. They extend from Asia, Africa, and Europe to America mostly in Africa and Asia (Gadgil *et al.*, 1976). In India, Groves are present from North-east Himalayan region, Western & Eastern Ghats, Coastal region, Central Indian Plateau and Western desert (Jha *et al.*, 1998).

Indian sacred groves have pre-Vedic origin. They are associated with indigenous/tribal communities who believe in divinity of nature and natural resources. The present thrust is on ecosystem functioning, ecological services and biodiversity conservation importance (Joshi, 1995; Deep and Samar, 1995a). There are more than a lakh such sacred groves in the country, have different names in different states, such as Devrai, Devban, Devbhumi, Gumpu etc. In Rajasthan, they are called Oran. Oran is derived from the Sanskrit word aranya, meaning forest. They are patches of jungle preserved in the name of local deities or sai. It is often believed that during shifting cultivation a part of the forest is left undisturbed. Here all the species found in the area are protected. These areas might have developed as sacred groves (Gadgil & Vartak, 1976). Such sacred groves often protect watersheds and water sources. There is a popular theory that sacred groves that protect a water source might have originated because of the people's belief that a deity located near the grove yields water for agriculture. In a state like Rajasthan, where water is scarce for farming, animal husbandry and drinking purposes, it seems a reasonable factor. Forests in hills reduce the runoff and help in ground water recharge. The water thus becomes available in the ‘Bawdi’ (step-well) or ‘Kund’ (pool) located within the sacred grove during the lean months. Water also brings minerals and fertilizers in rich quantities. It is then logical that such resources are protected and conserved by the people. People might have institutionalized these arrangements during the course of time by attaching sacred value to it, to make collective management easy and long-lasting. Sacred groves are the result of a complex ethno-scientific thinking of the local communities (Pandey *et al.*, 1996). People do not cut wood for personal use and only dead and fallen trees are removed for use. The area under an Oran can vary from a few square meters to several hundred hectares.

According to forest Department Oran are the protected parts of forest by indigenous people usually having a local deity to worship. These orans are generally spread in minimum 5 hectare to 1500 hectare of

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land and 200 trees per hectare should be the density of forest to classify them under sacred Groves. But due to shrinking forest cover Orans spread in less than 5 hectare is also considered Sacred Groves in work plan of forest Department.

A unique aspect of Oran management is the presence of a mahatma, Baba or priest with a socio-cultural role. The mahatma like a watchman resides in the Oran and keeps watch over the forest and its inhabitants, in exchange for basic provisions from the community. He has been instrumental in fostering a reverence for nature and protecting the groves. People do not harm sacred groves mainly because of socio-religious traditions and fear of the unknown, believing that those who cut or use an axe in a sacred grove may be harmed by the presiding deity. These beliefs might have strongly influenced conservation of sacred groves.

Sacred groves in Aravallis and Vindhya can be classified into three major groups:

- In the first group are groves located near the village and close to a water source. Such groves are present at the top of small hillocks at Aravallis in the Vindhyan tract of Kota, Bundi, Baran and Jhalawar where people worship Bheruji, Bawsi and Mataji. Ramgarh Mataji, Bijasan Mataji, Sagas ji maharaj are example of this type of Sacred grove which were studied in this research programme.
- The second group of groves is dedicated to Lord Mahadeo. Vegetation of the entire or part of watershed is often protected as groves. Large trees and water source are the main characteristics of these groves. Dhundhla Mahadev Bundi, Gaipernath in Kota, Jharne ke mahadev in Jhalawar are example of this type of Sacred Grove. Water sources developed as open and step wells (Bawdi) may be seen at sometimes both groups can also be found in the same village.
- The third type may be seen as a single tree. In Kota forest range several large trees of *Ficus benghalensis* are seen and due to the development of aerial roots these trees look like a grove. Devnarayan ki Jhopri is surrounded by *Azadirachta indica* trees and Sitabari in Baran is surrounded by *Mangifera indica* trees. The tradition of protecting Peepal, Gular and Bargad trees is also found. In Hadoti region some castes protect particular species of plants and this is known as their Dehari. People of particular caste do not cut their Dehari and protect it by worshipping.
- The Baug: Sacred Gardens The Baug is an ethno-garden planted near settlements for fruit, fodder, fuel wood, medicine and shade. They are the backbone of indigenous methods of drought prevention, acquisition of entitlements and food security. The biodiversity consists of utility trees such as *Mangifera indica*, *Madhuca latifolia*, *Feronia limonia*, *Syzygium cuminii*, *Tamarindus indica*, *Phoenix* etc. Such Baug are present in Kota (inside the Darrah Wildlife Sanctuary), Bundi, Baran and Jhalawar districts in Rajasthan. Sacred gardens are cultivated counterparts of sacred groves. Every garden has a sacred place dedicated to a village deity. Green felling is totally banned by the community, only dead and fallen wood is removed by the owner.
- Temple Forests: Temple forests are found in different countries including India, China, Nepal Thailand and Indonesia. Temple forests are managed and maintained to serve the temple which includes economic, ecological, social and religious functions. Dadh Devi temple in Kota Rajasthan, India, has a large temple forest owned by the Temple Trust, and a sacred grove.
- Sacred Corridors: Sacred Corridors are locally protected riverbanks by villagers in the name of Lord Shiva. Long stretches of Karai van or riparian forests are protected in several places along the river Chambal. In Kota Gaipernath and Garadia Mahadeo are Sacred corridors along the river Chambal attract hundreds of visitors during the annual religious fair dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- Another category of SGs includes those that are believed to be abodes of ancestral spirits. Often these groves are usually burial grounds. Such groves have been reported from a number of places in Hadoti. Nau Gaje Peer in Bandha (Ramganjmandi) and Peer Baba Ki Majar in Shergarh sanctuary are examples of Burial ground as Sacred Groves.

The Hindu tradition considers forests to be of three types - Tapovan, Mahavan and Sreevan. Tapovan are forests associated with penance (Tapas), and are inhabited by saints and rishis. Mahavan refers to the grand natural forests. Tapovan and Mahavan are considered to be a Raksha ("sanctuary") for flora and

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fauna as ordinary human beings are not allowed to enter these forests. Sreevan, which means, "forests of prosperity", consists of dense forests and groves. From the former, people would collect dry wood, leaves, forest produce and a limited amount of timber, though natural ecosystem would not be unnecessarily disturbed. Groves were considered as spaces of forests from where harvesting could be done. Sometimes, specific trees like mango trees could be planted and nurtured here as we saw this in Sitabari Temple forest. Groves were associated with religious rites, festivals and recreation. Typical recreational activities associated with these groves included annual Fairs and festivals celebrations. In the villages, Panchavati, or a cluster of five trees which represented the forests, were maintained. These trees represented the five elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space.

Planting and nurturing of trees has been a highly evolved practice in ancient India. Vrukshayurveda, the science of plant life and also a 10th-century treatise of that title on the subject ascribed to Surapala, dealt with various species of trees and their growth.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A survey for the study was conducted. Plants species were recorded, identified through various floras.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the present course of study in the south east region of Rajasthan following sacred groves were seen playing an important role in the conservation of trees mainly ethnomedicinal plants playing an important role in curing health ailments of the tribal people residing in that area.

Sacred groves Hadoti site:

Kota:

1. Sagas ji Maharaj , Jawahar Sagar kota:

This place is situated amidst dense forest at Latitude 25° 18' 7.274" N and Longitude 75° 82' 7.8876" E. A 350 years old temple of local deity of Bavji or Sagasji is property of Erstwhile Royal Family of Kota. Temple priest belong to Keer tribe and also known as Mallah who lives close to river banks. This place is example of great biodiversity as it has dense forest which falls under Jawahar Sagar Sanctuary . A Bhairon ji and Bavji Statue is also placed near the entrance for those who cannot walk in dense forest like females and children. A large pond and a step well (Bawari) is also seen inside the premises for drinking water .Bawri water is also said to have some magical healing power to cure critical diseases. Large trees of *Terminellia arjuna* , *Ficus bengalensis*, *Alangium salvifolium* , *Tamarindus indica* Linn. *Cordia dichotma* etc. make sunlight difficult to reach up to the ground.

2. Gaipernath Mahadev:

This place is situated on Rawatbhata Road and 24 km from Kota city at Latitude 25° 93' 75.58" N and Longitude 75° 34' 48.00" E. A beautiful waterfall and Shiva temple is approximately 300 steps down in a



Figure 1: Gaipernath Mahadev

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deep gorge where the natural water falls directly over the shiva-linga from 120 feet in the temple. This place was predominantly dominated by Bhil tribe and it is said that a Bhil guru made this temple. A dense forest of *Terminalia arjuna*, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, *Aegle marmelos* is also enriched with some ferns and its allies like *Adiantum capillusveneris*, *Adiantum incisum*, *Actinopteris radiata*, *Equisetum ramosissimum*, and *Marsilea minuta*. Due to high humidity and lack of direct sunlight in the gorge during monsoon provide optimum growth conditions for Pteridophytes in crevices of rock faces. Bhil is main tribe inhabiting in this area and they were the hunters and gatherers so were always exposed to the threats of reptiles so majority of medicinal plants (Ferns) are used as antidote are found in the area. *Aegle marmelos* is also auspicious and used in worshipping Lord Shiva is protected in this area (Fig 1)

3. Dadhdevi Temple:

This sacred grove is located in Ummedganj area which is 20km away from Kota at Latitude 25° 05' 00" N and Longitude 75° 55' 00" E. This temple and a holy Kund was built by Tanwar Rajputs of Kaithun in 10th century and also worshipped as family goddess of the erstwhile royal family of Kota. During navratra a great fair organized for 9 days where devotees from all castes come here to offer their prayers. Temple supports lofty trees of *Terminalia arjuna*, *Mitragyna parvifolia* (Kadam), *Diospyros melanoxylon* and *Syzygium cuminii* and only known natural habitat of *Pandanus odorifer* (Kevada) in Kota District.

4 Ghatoli Pahadi wale Balaji:

This temple is located on Chechat road at the Latitude 27° 21' 70.18" N and Longitude 75° 86' 79.20" E. A dense forest of *Diospyros melanoxylon*, *Holarrhena antidysentrica*, *Terminalia bellirica*, *Balanites roxburghii* and other trees surrounding this temple and people of Ghatoli village do not allow cutting of trees in this forest except for funeral and temple related activities.

5. Dev ji Jhopri:

The Gujar tribe of Hadoti has a unique practice of Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) plantation and worshipping it as 'Neem Narayan' or neem-god. A Gujar settlement normally starts near a water source, stream or river. Initially few huts are constructed, and Neem saplings are planted and a local deity called Devnarayan is brought in the temple. Devji Ki Jhopri near Kota is spread in 55 acres and due to River Chambal a dense forest is developed. Large trees of Neem and Imli are characteristic feature of this sacred grove where cutting of these trees is prohibited.

6. NauGaje Peer Mazar:

This is a sacred grove located in Bandha Village of Ramganj Mandi at the Latitude 24° 31' 95.35" N and Longitude 75° 53' 29.20" E. It is surrounded by dense forest of *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Holarrhena antidysentrica*, *Syzygium cuminii*, *Balanites roxburghii* etc (Fig 2).

7. Naharsinghi Mataji:

This sacred grove is located in Borabas range of forest near Kota at the Latitude 25° 02' 19" N and Longitude 75° 69' 50" E. This dense forest was once habitat of Tigers and Panthers with other wild animals known as Nahar and Singh in local dialect of Hadoti. Biodiversity of this place is very unique as some characteristic species of Western-Ghats Like *Millingtonia philippinensis* (Sindoor), *Boerhavia vahlii* along with local flora like *Ficus racemosa*, *Terminalia arjuna*, *Aegle marmelos*, *Vitex nirgundo* etc. (Fig 3).

8. Karneshwar Mahadeo:

Located in the outskirts of Kota, this is one of the finest examples of a grove located at the Latitude 25° 10' 10" N and Longitude 75° 85' 42" E on NH-12 Jhalawar road. A shiva temple with a small pond is surrounded by species of trees which include *Terminalia arjuna*, *Anogeissus pendula*, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, *Syzygium cuminii*, *Mangifera indica*, *Ficus religiosa*, *Ficus benghalensis*, *Ficus glomerata* etc. It supports at least 53 species of birds and several other species of animals. It has a water pool where several species of fish, water birds reside.

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Figure 2: NauGaje Peer Mazar :



Figure 3: Naharsinghi Mataji

BARAN:

1. Sita-bari:

This is a sacred grove protected by Saharia tribe inhabiting in this area. This is 120km from Kota and at the Latitude 25° 11' 10.45" N and Longitude 76° 53' 31.20" E in Kelwara tehsil of Baran district. According to mythological aspect this is the birth place of Lav-kush, twin sons of Lord Rama. These kunds along with the temple are situated in huge Mango garden which lies in the forest area. The place is also famous for annual Sahariya Fair held in summers. Huge trees of *Terminallia arjuna* and *Bombax ceiba* is characteristic feature of Sitabari protected by local inhabitants of the area.

2. Musen Mataji Atru:

Musen mataji or Ambika mata is 4 km far from Atru Tehsil is a temple in well known Oran (protected forest) located and this is also a protected forest patch by Sahariya tribe of the area at the Latitude 24° 81' 10.45" N and Longitude 76° 63' 31.20" E.

3. Tapasvi ji ki Bagichi:

This is also a protected area near Shahabad in Baran District 4 km from Shahabad town at the Latitude 25° 24' 73.66" N and Longitude 77° 15' 68.31" E. This area is an example of in situ conservation strategy employed by our forefathers associated with religious notions. A huge shiva idol and a Nandi were established by Solanki Rajput rulers of area in 16th century. A lushgreen area around the famous Shiva temple and a water body (Talav) which is surrounded by hills is a common feature like any other sacred groves but here some of the endangered and threatened species are conserved naturally. It is the only place in Hadoti region where *Commiphora mukul*, *Commiphora wightii* (critically endangered) both varieties of Guggal are present in natural habitat along with *Naringi crenulata* (endangered) *Boswellia serrata* (threatened) etc (Fig 4).

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Figure 4: Tapasvi ji ki Baghichi

4. Kapil Dhara:

This is a sacred grove near Nahargarh in Baran at the Latitude 25° 24' 59.76" N and Longitude 74° 95' 84.52" E . It is believed that here 'Kapil Muni' and four other sages worshipped and a Gomukh is present here with regular waterflow from its mouth throughout the year which fall into a kund. Thereafter villagers protected this forest as Tapobhumi. Many huge trees of *Albizia lebbek* , *Ficus bengalensis*, *Pongamia pinnata* etc. are conserved here.

5. Bhura ji kala ji ka sthaan (Taancha Gav):

This is a place devoted to local deity Bhuraji and Kalaji in an Oran of 10 bigha in Taancha gav near Chhipabarod at the Latitude 24° 62' 69.76" N and Longitude 76° 70' 74.52" E . This forest patch is completely protected by villagers of Taancha Gav.

6. Gogaji ka Sthaan:

This is located in Anta at the Latitude 25° 12' 79.76" N and Longitude 76° 31' 14.52" E . Goggaji is a Folk deity who is warrior hero of this region, venerated as a saint and snake god which is worshipped by all castes present in that region .Here a huge land of 600 hectare is covered with trees of *Syzygium cumini* (Jamun) known as 'Jamun ka Baag' . No one is allowed to cut trees in this 'Baag' and fruits are offered as Prasad to devotees who visit there.

7 Panchkui:

This is also located near Anta Chauraha and it belongs to Dhakad community of the area. Huge trees of Peepal are protected by Dhakad community and wood cannot be cut for any other purpose other than the purpose of funeral.

8. Mahadev ji ka Mandir and GhansBhairoo Ka Sathan:

This sacred grove is dedicated to lord Shiva and Rain God Gaans bhairo near Anta .A dense forest cover is protected by the indigenous people to save them from endemics. Total village is vacated and villagers stay at this sacred grove and then whole area is sanitized with burning Neem tree and other herbs along with Cow dung cakes .This fumigation is a protection tool to save villagers from endemics practiced in hindi Month of Chaitra (april) and known as 'Gav bahar Ki Rasoi'.

9. Ramgarh Mataji :

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This sacred grove seen on hills near Kishanganj in Baran has 750 steps to reach at the temple built in 16th century by Jhala Jalim singh a Rajput ruler of this area .Twin temples on hill known jointly as Ramgarh Mataji one is known as Kishnai Mataji and other one is temple of Annapurna devi. This is the Sahariya tribe dominated area as 65% of population of this area belongs to Sahariya tribe. Cartographic coordinates of this place is the Latitude 27° 25' 10.24'' N and Longitude 75° 17' 10.66'' E .This sacred grove is a good representative of flora which is dominated by *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Aegle marmelos*, *Syzygium cumini* ,*Albizia lebbek* ,*Acacia catechu*, etc.(Fig 5)



Figure 5: Ramgarh Mataji

1.Shergarh Peer ki Majar:

This Tomb of Muslim Saint Peer Baba is located at the Latitude 24° 52' 32.07" N and Longitude 76° 37' 39.88" E in Shergarh Sanctury .This is close to Atru Tehsil of Baran district in a protected forest area spread across 98 sq.Km.under forest Department .This is close to Parwan River and surrounded by lushgreen forest where people protect plants as a symbol of their religious practices .It is said that Peer Baba has some supernatural powers to protect this forest.

Shergarh Peer Baba Ki Majar.

BUNDI:

1 Bhimlat Mahadev:

This is close to State Highway 29 at the Latitude 25° 18' 79.76" N and Longitude 75° 81' 14.52" E . The Bhil and Meena community worship Lord Shiva in century old temple which is said to be built by one of the pandav brother Bheem. A dense forest, a water fall during Monsoon and a kund to store this water make this place panoramic. People here do not cut and protect dense forest of Dhokda i.e. *Anogeissus latifolia*.

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2.Dhundhleshwar Mahadev Bundi:

This Shiva Temple is located at the Latitude 25° 45' 21.76" N and Longitude 75° 48' 69.52" E in Satur and close to Narayanpura Dam on River Chandrabhaga. This is a sacred grove which belongs to Gurjar tribe of this area. It is mainly a forest area characterized by presence of shrubby species due to rock dominated area. *Acacia leucophloea*, *Capparis decidua*, *Sida cordifolia*, *Aristolochia indica* (threatened plant) *Adhathoda vasica*, *Helecteres isora*, *Cassia tora* are some other useful medicinal plants seen in this area.

3.Bhadkya Mataji Mandir:

This temple is dedicated to the local deity Bhadkya mata of Bhil Tribe with a waterfall present near it. Local flora along with many ethnomedicinally important herbs and shrubs are found. *Achyranthes aspera*, *Grewia latifolia*, *Celestrus paniculatus*, *Tribulus terrestris*, *Barleria prionitis*, *Solanum ferox* are major species found in the vicinity of this sacred grove.

5.Durwasa Nash Mahadev Mandir:

This temple is located in Datunda close to Bundi at Latitude 25° 26' 15" N and Longitude 75° 27' 52" E with rich green cover. This temple belongs to Gurjar caste and is seen worshipped by people of nearby villages. Forest area nearby is enriched with local flora *Phoenix sylvestris* (Roxb.), *Pithcellobium dulce*, *Ficus glomerata*, *Butea monosperma* etc.

JHALAWAR:

1.Pipadham Gagrion:

Pipadham is a popular sacred grove located at the Latitude 24° 62' 08" N and Longitude 76° 18' 57" E in Gagrion near Jhalawar. It is a small group of temples set across the ancient Gagrion Fort. Cutting of trees in the area is strictly restricted by followers of Pipaji. *Amorphophallus campanulatus* an important medicinal plant was found here in the present study carried out.

Jharan Mahadeo:

This sacred grove in Jhalawar is situated along the stream leading to a large tank that ensures round the year supply of water to the city of Jhalawar. Rare plants reported in this area include *Bambusa hamiltonii* and *Sclleichera oleosa*. It is also important because it is a de facto sanctum sanctorum of threatened plants, all of which have become extinct in the adjoining area outside the grove. It is also an indicator and benchmark of forests that might have existed in the region.

Plants worshipped and protected by particular castes:

In Kota forest region range several large trees of *Ficus benghalensis* which are more than 200 years old are worshipped as sacred groves. Due to the development of aerial roots these trees look like groves and cover large areas. The tradition of protecting Peepal, Gular and Bargad trees is also seen. In Hadoti region some castes protect particular species of plants and this is known as their Dehari. People of other caste do not cut their Dehari and protect it by worshipping these trees. A very famous and well known example of such protection is found in arid region of Rajasthan like Jodhpur and Pali where Bisnoi's protect trees of *Prosopis cineraria* (Khejri). Similar cases reported in South east Rajasthan are as follows:

Caste	Plant Species
Royal Family of Kota	Ashapala
Gulgama	Ber
Sagitara	Jowar
Solanki Rajput	Palash
Bagtariya	Haldi
Gurjar	Neem
Bagdi	Mango
Sakwadia	Mango
Sahariya	Mango
Taroliya	Banana, Kair

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Tulsi, Bargad, Goolar, Amla and Peepal are auspicious plants worshipped by all Hindu castes who takes all care for their conservation.

Uses of Sacred Groves:

It can be further divided in to two broad categories:

Traditional uses: One of the most important traditional uses of sacred groves was that it acted as a repository for various plants used as medicines in traditional system of treatment. Other uses involved a source of replenish able resources like fruits and honey. However, in most sacred groves it was taboo to hunt or cutting of wood. The vegetation cover helps reduce soil erosion and prevents desertification, best applied in Rajasthan. The groves are often associated with ponds and streams, and meet water requirements of local communities. They sometimes help in recharging aquifers as well. A large number of distinct local art forms and folk traditions are associated with the deities of sacred groves, and are an important cultural aspect closely associated with sacred traditions. Ritualistic dances and dramatizations based on the local deities that protect the groves Sacred groves also provide meeting places for the community to discuss socio-religious and economic issues and to resolve their personal grievances.

Modern uses: In modern times, sacred groves have become biodiversity hotspots, as various species seek refuge in the areas due to progressive habitat destruction, and hunting. Sacred groves often contain plant and animal species that have become extinct in neighboring areas. They therefore harbor great genetic diversity. Besides this, sacred groves in urban landscapes act as "lungs" to the city as well, providing much needed vegetation cover.

Threats to the Sacred Groves:

Threats to the groves includes urbanization, over-exploitation of resources (like overgrazing and excessive firewood collection), Mining, encroachment and other depletive and environmental destruction due to religious practices also play a key role in posing threats to sacred groves. Other threats to the sacred groves include invasion by invasive species, like the invasive weeds *Chromolaena odorata*, *Lantana camara* and *Prosopis juliflora*.. Unfortunately, these areas have not even been declared as forest lands, hence effective legislation is not applied in the case of offenders. Saranas are fairly degraded landscapes with over-mature *Shorea robusta* trees with hardly any regeneration because of open grazing, non-timber forest produce collection, and various other biotic pressures (Patnaik and Pandey1998). In many places, local folk deities have been, and continue to be, replaced with Hindu gods and goddesses.

CONCLUSION

The institution of SGs is very ancient in our country. Access to and interference with SGs has been culturally restricted and, thereby, reduced the human impact in terms of harvesting of natural resources. The consequence of such kind of restriction has been that SGs have evolved as important reservoirs of biodiversity The SGs have become changed habitats housing a variety of genetic pool. Ecologically valuable species like *Albizia lebbeck* and *Ficus glomerata*, which conserve high amount of nitrogen, phosphorous, magnesium and calcium in their leaves, are mainly found in SGs of southeast region of Rajasthan. In' orans of Western Rajasthan, the khejari (*Prosopis cineraria*) is a keystone species, similarly *Terminalia arjuna* ,*Ficus bengalensis* in orans of South –east Rajasthan inseparably linked to the survival of many other species, and occupies a special position in the Rajasthani culture was also seen in the present course of study.

Presently even as Government spent large amounts on protecting reserved forests and wildlife sanctuaries unsuccessfully, they are not able to provide the protection that existed in the ancient sacred groves, where indigenous communities took direct charge of their own environmental needs. To ensure the survival of such areas in its original condition we have to promote our traditional and indigenous system of conservation in the present scenario which is the need of hour.

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