



Research Paper

ADDITION TO THE SACRED GROVE OF INDIA

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Abstract

Sacred groves are the oldest existing form what are known as ancient Botanical garden and modern biodiversity hotspots. India has more 100,000 sacred groves. The present paper deals with the mythological perfection to the new sacred grove of Kharar, District Muzaffarnagar (UP) India.

Key words: Sacred grove, Kharar, Muzaffarnagar, UP.

INTRODUCTION

If thou prayest for celestium, the labour is in vain, for thy sire's regions are the terram deorum (the land of deities]

Kalidasa : *Kumar Sambhava Canto Vth*

The concept of sacred grove is primarily mythical and theological. Sacred groves are spiritually charged and holy places and India is a land with richest cultured heritage where sacred groves are in plenty. Experts believe that the total number of sacred groves in India could be more than 100,000 numbers [1- 2]. In modern times, sacred groves have become biodiversity hot spots and often contain plant and animal species that become threatened in neighboring areas. So they harbor great genetic diversity. Some legal deeds of Indian sacred groves and forest have been presented by several authors [3-8]. The present paper deals with mythical and theological approaches to the new sacred grove of Kharar, Muzaffarnagar (UP), India.

STUDY AREA

The above said sacred grove lies in the western part of Muzaffarnagar district of state U.P. This sacred grove lies between to latitude 29° 26' 13¹¹ N and longitude 77° 19' 32¹¹ E and covers an area of about 119.2 acres. This grove enjoys a subtropical climate and nonsucculent xerophytes like *Prosopis*, *Acacia*, *Zizyphus*, *Capparis* etc. In the adjoining areas this sacred grove is popularly known as JUDE. It is 18 K.M. away from national highway of Saharanpur and Delhi near Shamali, under Phugana police station and represents approximately thousands year's old relict vegetation in their climax state and a degraded pond of historical value.

HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGICAL APPROACH

The grove houses the historically famous Shiv temple which is approximately 5000 years old according to the villagers. The temple has stairs towards pond which are known to be built by ancestors of Lala Dhakni in 2016 Sam Vat according to their calendar. The temple has a saint (Prem Geri Baba ji) who is said to be 120 year's old and has been residing in this temple since last 80 years. The temple has a sacred grave of BABA VAN KHANDI. It has an ancient history and interesting tales. The whole grove has a tale spoken by the elder people of the village and is

considered sacred. There is a legend that after the war of Mahabharat, Duryodhan with his body burning with Anger came Kharar and shocked himself in the water of pond located the grove. Sometime afterword the five Pandavas accompanied by lord Krishna approached him; wherever the foot of lord Krishna touched the ground there was sprouted a Kadam tree, which in plenty can be seen still in this grove. The growth of Shami trees in plenty appear to testing that tree where the pandavas deposited their arms during inhabitanace incognita in the Virat Nagari. During that time this groove was established. So it has a great significance in the adjoining villages. Villagers say that in ancient time people never uses wood of this grove, as by doing so the person will be punished by god severely with diseases.

This grove has a deep well in the temple which is situated at the heart of grove. It is told that this is quite deep and has cool and sweet water; this well is as old as the temple. The grove has unique vegetation and the trees are at their climax state.

SACRED GROVES IN UTTAR PRADESH

Sacred groves are locally known as Dev Van or just Van in Uttar Pradesh. 32 sacred groves have been documented in the state [2] (table-1). I observed and visited this grove from 1987 to 2011. There is no documentary proof and deed of this grove except few deeds [9]. It is reported here for the first time from northern India. Thus number of sacred grove in Uttar Pradesh must be 33 after its discovery. This grove is managed by Village panchayat but it is under degradation and anthropological threat.

Table-1 List of Sacred Groves in Uttar Pradesh

Si.No	Name of the Grove	Location	Associated Deity	Status	Area in Acre
1	Samay Mai Ka Sthan	Murthi Range (Katarniya Ghat Div.)	Goddess	Reserve Forest	1.0
2	Mota Baba	Katarniya Ghat Range, Katarniya Ghat Div.	Shiv	Reserve Forest	2.5
3	Pataal Choochi	Katarniya Ghat Range, Katarniya Ghat Div.	Shiv	Reserve Forest	1.0
4	Chakia Maata	Chakia Range Bahraich F.D.	Goddess	Reserve Forest	1.0
5	Bauri Samay	Nanpara Bahraich F.D.	Goddess	Reserve Forest	1.0
6	Kapooore Baba	Nanpara Bahraich F.D.	Shiv	Reserve Forest	1.0
7	Soonta Baba	Rupaideeha Bahraich	Shiv	Reserve Forest	1.0
8	Samay Mai Ka Sthan	Bhinga Range, Shravasti F.D., Compt.35,40	Goddess	Reserve Forest	0.5
9	Van Satti Devi	Bhinga Range, Shravasti F.D., Compt.36	Goddess	Reserve Forest-do-	0.5
10	Samay Mai Ka Sthan	Shravasti Range (Tal Baghel)	Phoomati Mata	Reserve Forest	0.25
11	Jagpati Dham	Kakadari Range Shravasti F.D.	Shiv	Reserve Forest	2.50
12	Samay Mai Ka Sthan	Kuana Range (Gonda)	Goddess	Reserve Forest	3.0
13	Van Satti Devi	Kuana Range (Gonda)	Goddess	Reserve Forest	0.25
14	Van Satti Devi	Tikari Compt. 4 & Vested	Goddess	Reserve	1.0

		forest (Gonda)		Forest	
15	Van Satti Devi	Sohelwa Balrampur	Goddess	Reserve Forest	0.25
16	Samay Mai Ka Sthan	Sohelwa Balrampur	Goddess	Reserve Forest	1.0
17	Son Pathari	East Sohelwa (Balrampur)	Shiv	Reserve Forest	2.5
18	Vibhuti Nath	East Sohelwa (Balrampur)	Shiv	Reserve Forest	2.5
19	Van Satti Devi	Bhabhar (Sohelwa) Balrampur	Goddess	Reserve Forest	2.0
20	Karikot	Village Karikot, block Mehipurwa Bahraich	Goddess	Managed by Village Panchayat	5.0
21	Param Hans Kutti	Babaganj Nawabganj block Bahraich	Ram Janki	Managed by Society	17.5
22	Mangali Nath	Awadhes Gaon Nawabganj Bahraich	Shiv	Managed by Society	1.0
23	Mai Mata	Bahraich	Goddess	Managed by Society	2.5
24	Jangali Nath	Basthanwa Bahraich	Shiv	Managed by Society	5.0
25	Shivala bag	Nanpara Bahraich	Shiv	Personal Management by Chhaparia	10.0
26	Devi Patan	Tulsipur Balrampur	Goddess	Managed by Gorakh Nath Peeth	17.5
27	Sitadwar	Gilaula	Goddess	Managed by Society	2.5
28	Kali Temples	Bhinga shravasti	Goddess	Managed Personal (Raja Bhinga)	1.0
29	Akhand Param Dham	Sirsiya	Shiv	Managed Personal	1.0
30	Jhali Dham	Gonda (Khargupur)	Ram Janki	Managed by Sadguru Sadan Ashram Gonda	25.0
31	Prithavi Nath	Khargupur Gonda	Shiv	Managed by Distt. Authorities Gonda	12.5
32	Beriya Samaya	Khalilpur Bahraich	Goddess	Managed by Personal Raja Yadvendra vikram Singh	25.0

CONCLUSION

This Sacred grove contains 116 of angiosperms belonging to 43 families. Beside harbouring celestial medicinal plant species like *Morinda*, *Celastrus* *Bryonia* etc., the most dominant species which this grove houses are *Prosopis spicigera*, *Acacia leucocephloea*, *Crataeva religiosa*, *Adina cordifolia* etc [9]. Besides plantation of exotic *Prosopis juliiflora* in this grove has caused problems and threats to the several native species. In addition to this, seedlings of several dendroid plant species were poorly observed during the course of this study, which indicate threats for plants and hence grove. Perhaps these threats are due to over digging of soil around the patches of plant communities by anthropogenic activities. Since the dendroid flora show fine adaptability in the grove, so reduction of biotic pressure in the form of anthropogenic activities may conserve and preserve the botanical profile this grove [9].

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