Ethnobotanical study of Sacred groves of Poshina forest of Sabarkantha district, North Gujarat

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SUMMARY
The concept of biodiversity has been known to man ever since he began to observe minutely the living being around him. As we are losing our biological diversity and the delicate balance of ecosystem, the need to initiate conservation of biodiversity is greater than ever before. Sacred groves are a group of trees or a patch of vegetation protected by the local people through cultural and religious practices evolved to minimize destruction. Their plant wealth and conservation potential were impressive enough to acknowledge them as “mini biosphere reserve”. Poshina is an adivasi belt, popularly known as ‘Poshina Patti’. Poshina is a village of Khedbrahma tehsil of Sabarkantha district, North Gujarat. In the present paper seven sacred groves namely Piplawali Mata sacred grove, Shankar Mahadev sacred grove, Kal Bhairav sacred grove, Shankar mahadev-Gormata sacred grove, Shitala mata sacred grove, Sundha Mata sacred grove and Ghatawala Mahadev sacred grove, located in the Poshina forest have been studied. Information about the groves were collected from villagers, local people and local caretakers of the groves. Plant species growing near the sacred groves are considered as sacred plants which have either religious value or therapeutic value or both.

Key words : Sacred groves, Sacred plants, Poshina