



## Impact of sacred groves on the environment.

Minakshi Mahajan<sup>1</sup> and Rajendra Patil<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Fergusson College, Pune-4.<sup>2</sup>Amolakchand Mahavidyalaya Yawatmal.**Abstract:**

Sacred groves are the sources of habitat and conservation of flora, fauna and biological resources. They have great impact on the environment. Sacred groves are the ecosystem conserved through traditional belief in particular localities. They maintained the microclimate and regulate the low range of temperature. They maintain the groundwater level and act as a water reservoir. We have visited some of the sacred groves in Mulshi Taluka, Pune District. Biodiversity maintained in sacred groves have their role in maintaining ecological process in a balanced state essential for survival of living organisms.

**Keywords:** Sacred groves, environmental impact.

**Introduction**

Sacred groves are repositories of rare, endangered species in comparison to adjoining landscape elements. Bhagwat et. al.(2005), Khan et. al., (2008), Rao et. al., (2011).

Sacred groves are preserved on the basis of some religious belief/ Due to modernization, industrialization, political situations and developmental activities, the sacred groves are at the stage of threatening. (Nirpunage and Kulkarni (2010). To fulfill the increase in demand of local people, the priority should be given to indigenous plantation which can serve as a firewood, fodder, timber etc..

Sacred groves are the patches of forest which mainly are this source of germplasm conservation of medicinal plants, wild fruit plants, unusual vegetables and the related wild and cultivated plants, so these conserved plants grow in varied climatic conditions and they can be a source of material in breeding programme (Ghate Et. al. (1999).

Sacred groves conserve the biodiversity protected under sanctions and religious taboos (Conservation practice) which keep check on overexploitation. (Lebbie & Guries, (1995), Kulkarni (1992).

Flora of sacred groves creates suitable habitat and food for many other species on birds, insects, reptiles and mammals that is beneficial in controlling the population of organisms in the ecosystem. So sacred groves have their key role in homeostasis of ecosystem including agrosystem of the region (Nirpunge & Kulkarni (2010).

**Materials and Methods**

We have visited Pomgaon, Devghar, Mulapur, Shedani and Saltar sacred groves at Mulshi. Discussed about the culture, plants, animals and environment with the local village people. Sacred groves have their great impact on the environment.

**Result and Discussion:**

At Mulshi, all the sacred groves play a key role in maintaining environment. The vegetation of sacred groves prevents soil erosion and improves soil fertility. Increases water holding capacity of the soil. There are evidences of sacred groves and the surrounding climate. They have their great role in improving microclimate. The leaves of the trees are lush or dark green which permits maximum absorption of sunlight and transpired large amount of water and transport moisture back into the air. The vegetation of sacred groves has their effect on the soil and water affecting micro climate. Sacred groves have their influence in regulating the temperature of the soil; maintain the cool and moist micro climate which is helpful in regulating the low range of temperature in dry seasons. Extensively developed root systems of sacred groves absorb water from greater depth of soil and maintain the groundwater level. (Climate South Asia Network, July 5, 2017), Khurajam Jibankumar Singh, FLS. (2017).. Sacred grove have their role in environment conservation. Pandit P.K., (2000).

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Pomgaon (Waghjai)



Devghar (Waghjai devi)



Waghjai Sacred Grove ( Shedani gaon)



Mulapur (Waghjai)



Saltar