

# Nature Conservation in Tribals Mythological Beliefs and Taboos in Surguja (Ambikapur) Division of Chhattisgarh, India

## Abstract

Tribal folklore is rich in mythological beliefs and taboos. They believe that some gods and deities reside in forests. If they do not show mark of respect to them their full clan will be destroyed. So they conserve some species due to the beliefs attached resulting in some patches of forests being conserved. The paper presents some traditional beliefs and taboos of the tribal of Surguja division chhattisgarh fascinating nature conservation.

**Keywords:** Mythological, Surguja, Taboos, Tribal, Ethnobotany, Diversity.

## Introduction

Surguja division is located in the northern part of Chhattisgarh State of India. Borders of Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh States are adjoining to the district. This district has over extension between south-eastern parts of Vindhyachal-Baghelkh and region of peninsular India. It lies between 23° 37' 25" To 24° 6' 17" north latitude and 81° 34' 40" To 84° 4' 40" east longitude. 244.62 km long east to west and 167.37 broad norths to south, this land has as area of about 16359 Sq Km. First time in 2000, when the Chattisgarh state is partial from Madhya Pradesh, distribute the division of Surguja are Surguja, Jashpur and Korea district. The headquarter of Surguja is Ambikapur, and Korea district's headquarter is Baikunthpur. Now surguja division are distributes to three district. The name of districts are Surguja, Surajpur and Balrampur.

The district of inhabited by a large number of tribals, viz; Gond, Baiga, Muriya, Panika, Bharia, Kol, Agariya, Pahadi Konrawa, etc., who live in the remote forest areas and present a unique physical and ethnic diversity. Religious or mythological beliefs of people of people about supernatural or magical properties and powers and about certain events and object is known as magi co-religious beliefs, and a religious interdiction forbidden by custom or on moral or religious grounds is called taboo.

Due to many reasons the habitat of several resources may get destroyed or changed drastically. It leads off the loss of resources itself. To prevent the damaging habitat fast re-generative capacity is needed. So there is a great need to indulge in the doctrine of "Development through conservation" which will lead to development without causing any harm to the resources thus leading to conservation. Tribal beliefs and sentiments are attached with forests and hence they intend for its conservation. Tribal even have marked individual species and protect them. As yet some groups are named after the name of plant and they respect these plants much.

To as certain the less known or new uses, the literature sources and papers were published in different journals referred to were; (Banerjee 1980, Hajara 1990, Saxena 1986, Jain et. al 1963 Khan & Khan 2002, M.P. Singh et. al 2001).

## Observation

Alphabetically enumerated below are some plants, which are conserved by tribal of Surguja division (CG) along with reasons for their conservation. Local names and Families are in parenthesis.

**Aak: Madar; Calotropis procera, R. Br. (Asclepiadaceae)**

Flower of the plant are uses to pay floral tributes to Lord Shiva. Latex of the plant is used to wash Lord Shiva's head.

**Amerbel; Cuscuta reflexa, Robx. (Cuscutaceae)**

People belongings to the Agariya tribes worship iron as their God and worship iron tools. To pay homage to their God's and to save them from devils (Rusts) tie-up twining stems of plants on tools.

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**Bel; Aegle marmelos, Corr. (Rutaceae)**

Leaves are used to worship Gods. Only the fresh leaves, there are no cuts inside the leaf. Fruits are used to worship Lord Shiva. Their fruits are comparing the coconut fruits.

**Bhatkataiya; Solanum surattense, Burm. F. (Solanaceae)**

Flowers are used to boiling with the sarson oil and make cold syrup for children. Fruits are crushed by girls for safety of their family members whilst praying for them.

**Chheola; Butea monosperma, Lamk. (Fabaceae)**

Leaves of plants are used to worship and make crown of Lord Shiva's idol. Flowers are used to worship and pay floral tributes to departed soul. Flowers are boiling with water and make color is used to festival of Holi (Faagun).

**Dhatura; Dhatura metal, L. (Solanaceae)**

Fruits and seeds are used to worship Lord Shiva. Fruits paste is mixed with powder of dried seeds of plant and a little bit consumed as grace.

**Doob; Doobi; Cynodon dactylon, Pers. (Poaceae)**

Grass is used in all religious occasions for sprinkling water. It is believed to have its power to turn simple water in to holy water. It is also used to make everything devout by tying the culms on upper arm.

**Gular; Ficus racemosa L. (Moraceae)**

It is believed that the flowers, have the capacity to make anything, eternal.

**Mahua; Madhuca indica, J. Gmelin (Sapotaceae)**

Dried branch of the tree is used to dispelled bad spirits by erecting it in front of house. They tie a red flag at top of it. This mast is called "Hanuman-Khambh". The tribes are also used their flowers, fruits for drinking wine and eatable oil.

**Neem; Azadirachta indica A. Juss. (Meliaceae)**

This plant is a worship the all of tribals because the Goddess are already living in the tree. This plant is an abode of Goddess of small-pox. Dried leaves are burnt to kill mosquitoes. Fruits are used as insect killer in granary. Tribals conserve this tree for shade and medicinal use.

**Peepul; Ficus religiosa L. (Moraceae)**

It is believed that this tree is an abode of Gods and departed souls. Any harm to this plant results in a catastrophe to the area and the offending person.

**Pasai-Dhan; Oryza rufipogon Griff. (Poaceae)**

Grains are considered to be sacred. Grains are colored with Turmeric powder on women reasons and donated to Ojhas or Guniyas.

**Pili-Kaner; Caseabela thevetia L. (Apocynaceae)**

Flowers and fruits are offered to Lord Shiva in benison and bereavement.

**Shivlingi; Bryonia Laciniosa**

It is believed that their fruit seeds are an abode of Lord Shiva's "Linga" and departed souls. Their every seeds shape is Shiva's Linga. So this plant is fully faith of Hindus religious in very important in month of Kartika.

**Tulsi; Ocimum sanctum L. (Lamiaceae)**

Plant is considered as a sacred one and is planted in every Hindu based tribe's abode. It is believed that al God and Goddess visit those houses were this is in the courtyard.

## Discussion/Conclusion

Due to reasons specified for each plant, these species are not exploited commercially and even not at all community level of the tribals. Species are thus conserved. Adoptive evolution is reported in herbaceous one. Problem of environmental pollution leads to evolution of some ecotypes, which have adopted themselves to this pollution level. This clearly affects the value of a resource species. Many species are utilized by tribals in different magi co-religious (Mythological) ways but this does not affect their conservational aspects. Harvest may not be harmful but depends upon the method, time and amount of plants harvested. These of can be interpreted that regarding traditional methods of harvesting an identified resource is important for understanding the regeneration capacity and perpetuation possibility in species.

As tribal life is forest based hence these tribal people practice judicious use of plant resources and conserve many plant species. Although modern civilization has reached almost all tribal areas, yet they do not intend for computation but prefer to jungle lives that have inspired and sustained them through centuries.

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