

THE SACRED GROVE COMPLEX: DIVERSITY IN ETHNO-MEDICINAL TOURISM

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The Sacred grove Complex is a cultural heritage of the Kandha of Kandhamal, Orissa. This is a place locally distinguished as "SALA", comprises with tribal deities and varieties of plants including medicinal plants. These plants are preserved inside the groves as specimen mostly used for diseases of human being as well as for animals. Each grove consists of cluster of trees, remaining in a circular state and varies according to their nature and type. The Kandha mean their Groves as a mirror to their culture. They have a family type of ties with their Gods and Goddess resides in the Sacred Grove. The trees provide them all types of amenities relating to food, clothing, shelter, medicine; animal feeds as well as brings happiness and wellbeing for them. The main objective of the study intends to highlight about 1) the Sacred Grove Complex of Kandh tribe for Medicinal Tourism purposes, 2) to acquaint people with medicinal plants preserved by the tribes in the Sacred Grove for different therapeutic uses, 3) to ensure commercial viability of such Sacred Grove complex to enrich tribal economy. This paper is the outcome of an intensive field survey in the villages of Kandh tribe of Kandhamal, with the help of questionnaires and Focused Group discussion methods. The whole intention is to prepare documents of medicines preserved in Sacred Groves by the tribes and to bring a general awareness of medicinal plant preservation among the people as well as among the medical personnel's. The attempt may augment such a beautiful tribal cultural heritage among the tourists of such interest and to plan about Ethno-Medicinal Tourism.