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Indigenous Knowledge for Biodiversity Conservation: Case Study of Abujh maria Tribe of Abujhmarh Biosphere Reserve, Madhya Pradesh



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Indigenous peoples with a historical continuity of resource-use practices often possess a broad knowledge base of the behaviour of complex ecological system in their own localities. This knowledge has accumulated through a long series of observations transmitted from generations to generations. Such "diachronic" observations can be of great value and complement the "synchronic" observations on which western science is based. Indigenous people are aware that biological diversity is a crucial factor in generating the ecological services and natural resources on which they depend. Some indigenous groups manipulate the local landscape to augment its heterogeneity, and some have been found to be motivated to restore biodiversity in degraded landscapes. Their practices for the conservation of biodiversity were grounded in a series of rules of thumb which are apparently arrived at through a trial and error process over a long historical time period. This implies that their knowledge base is indefinite and their implementation involves an intimate relationship with the belief system. Such knowledge is difficult for western science to understand. It is vital, however, that the value of the knowledge-practice-belief complex of indigenous peoples relating to conservation of biodiversity is fully recognized if ecosystem and biodiversity are to be managed sustainably. Conserving the knowledge would be most appropriately accomplished through promoting the community-based resource-management system of indigenous people.

In Madhya Pradesh, though there are many hot spots, however Abujhmarh of Bastar is most important because of the following reasons: (a) it is an unsurveyed and floristically unexplored region and (b) it is an area dominated by indigenous people mostly Abujhmaria tribes and (c) these tribals have good indigenous knowledge, which is being used for conservation and sustainable development.

The social, cultural, religious and environmental activities of the indigenous people of Abujh maria of Abujhmarh (Bastar) have helped in the preservation of the forests and sacred groves. The present paper analyses the indigenous knowledge of Abujh maria tribes in biodiversity conservation.

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New taxa described in the present volume

1. *Ischaemum pushpangadanii* Ravi, Mohanan et Kiranraj *sp. nov.* *Rheedea* 10(1): 49. 2000.
2. *Oberonia raoii* L.R. Shakya et R.P. Chaudhary *sp. nov.* *Rheedea* 10(1): 57. 2000.
3. *Chrysopogon castaneus* Veldkamp et Salunkhe *sp. nov.* *Rheedea* 10(1): 59. 2000.

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