

Ecosystem Services in Sacred Natural Sites (SNSs) of Uttarakhand: A Preliminary Survey

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ABSTRACT The present work was carried with the aim to document the Sacred Natural Sites in both Garhwal and Kumaon regions of Uttarakhand to access their major ecosystem services benefiting at both regional levels to local inhabitants and globally benefiting environment. The Sacred Natural Sites (SNS) included sacred forests, sacred groves, sacred bugyals and water bodies. A total of 130 SNS were found during the present study located in different areas of Uttarakhand. The surveyed SNS included 55 groves, 44 forests, 24 meadows/bugyals/Kharks and 6 water bodies. With respect to the range of ecosystem services offered by the SNS about 24 percent share goes to the cultural services and 32 percent each for supporting and provisioning services whereas 12 percent services are of regulatory in nature.