Sacred Groves

Why in News?

Recently, the Supreme Court directed the Union Government to formulate the policies to manage the sacred groves in Rajasthan.

- **Sacred Groves** – It is an ***area of natural vegetation*** preserved through local taboos and sanctions that entail spiritual and ecological values.
- It is also known as *Sacred Woods or Sacred Forests*.
- **Distribution** – Found *all over India*, especially in states like Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu.

State	Name
Assam	Than or Madaico
Chhattisgarh	Matagudi, Devgudi or Sarana
Himachal Pradesh	Dev Van
Jharkhand	Jaherthan or Sarana
Karnataka	Devarakaadu or Kans
Kerala	Kaavu
Maharashtra	Devrai or Devgudi
Manipur	Umang Lai
Meghalaya	Law Kyntang or Law Niam
Odisha	Jahera or Thakuramma
Rajasthan	Orans
Tamil Nadu	Kovilkaadu
Uttarakhand	Bugyal or Dev Van
West Bengal	Garamthan or Jahiristhan

- **Location** – Typically located near temples and considered the abode of the local deities.
- **Classification**:
  - **Traditional Sacred Groves** – It is where the village deity resides, represented by an elementary symbol.
  - **Temple Sacred Groves** – A grove is created around a temple and conserved.
- **Significance** – It is an integral part of the *cultural and religious heritage* of the country to Indian Hindu indigenous communities.
- It is a refuge for various plant and animal species.

***Dev Bhoomi**, also known as the "Land of Gods" is part of the 133 sacred groves*

at the foothills of the Himalayas in Uttarakhand.



- Sacred groves in Uttarakhand are unique because they aren't usual forests but alpine meadows.
- They are the *secret wizards of conservation*.

In India, over 1 million sacred forests and 100,000 to 150,000 sacred groves exist.

- **Strategy for Conservation** – Identification of the core and buffer zone of the sacred groves.
- Decision regarding the species of religious importance to be planted in both core and buffer zones.
- Inventorisation of sacred groves and collection of vital information.
- Consent of the local people, community elders and priests regarding the works to be carried out.

References

1. The Indian Express| Sacred Groves
2. IUCN| Sacred Groves

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering