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Species diversity plays an important role in maintaining the health of ecosystem. Different types of plants grow in different habitats. Ecologically, the habitat of the studied plants is variable, such as hilly, sloppy, plains, etc. The climate of the area favours the growth of dry deciduous forests. The economy and livelihood of rural people depend to a large extent on the resources of the area.

Gum contains many medicinal and nutritional properties. It is a commonly used ingredient to prepare sweets such as 'Gond Ke Laddu' during winters in most homes in this region as it is considered an energy-giving source. Commonly used gum-yielding plants of Haroti region and their characteristics are described as follows:

1. **Acacia catechu** (L.f.) Willd.  
   Common name: Khair  
   Family: Mimosaceae  
   Systematic enumeration: Medium sized trees, bark dark grey and rough, Leaves 2-pinnate, Leaflets 10–30 pairs, sub sessile, spikes, Flowers pale yellow, Pods strap shaped, stalked, 5 to 10 seeded.  
   Fl. & Fr.: May – September  
   Occurrence: Common on the hill slopes and open forest in Haroti plateau, often becoming a dominant tree at certain places such as Barad area in the region.  
   Uses: Its gum is nutritious, edible, and medicinal.

2. **Acacia nilotica** (L.) Willd. ex Del  
   Common name: Babool  
   Family: Mimosaceae  
   Systematic enumeration: Moderate sized tree, bark rough, dark brown, Stipular spines in pairs, 2–7 cm. long, Leaves 2-pinnate, pinnae 4–9 pairs, Leaflets 7–20 pairs, linear, Flower...
yellow, Pods stalked, Seeds up to 15, blackish brown. Fl. & Fr.: August - March
Occurrence: Most common in wasteland and scrub forests in Haroti plateau. Uses: Its gum is easily available and collected by local people of area. It is generally used in preparation of various traditional dishes.

3. Anogeissus pendula Edgew.
Common name: Dhonkda
Family: Combretaceae
Systematic enumeration: Moderate sized, deciduous tree, gregarious, pendulous branches, Leaves ovate-lanceolate, young leaves silky, on maturity it turn in red colour, Flower dull yellow, calyx stalk, Fruits sub orbicular.
Fl. & Fr.: July - November
Occurrence: It is the dominant vegetation throughout the area, very common in mixed dry deciduous forest of region.
Uses: Very effective gum for pregnant women to rejuvenate energy and used commonly to remove weakness.

Common name: Salar
Family: Burseraceae
Fl. & Fr.: November - April
Occurrence: Common in dry deciduous forests of Aravalli hills. It covers top strata of the hills and slopes. Since last decade the density of this plant is decreasing in this area.
Uses: Gums is supposed to be healthy for brain and body.

5. Lannea coromandelica (Houtt.) Merrill
Common name: Gurjan
Family: Anacardiaceae
Systematic enumeration: Tall deciduous trees, ash- coloured bark, Leaves crowded at the end of the branches, Leaflets 5 – 11, obovate, glabrous Flowers minute sessile, panicles, yellow, tetramerous , Drupes smooth, ovoid, red .
Fl. & Fr.: February - July
Occurrence: Most common in deciduous forests of Aravalli hills, generally occurs at hilly or sloppy tracts of the area.
Uses: Gums are collected and sold in local market by tribal people. This gum is used in various food preparation.

Common name: Kadya
Family: Sterculiaceae
Systematic enumeration: Soft woody trees with slippery papery bark. Leaves palmate 5 lobed, crowded at the end of branches, Flowers olive – yellow, Fruits - follicles, oblong, woody, pubescent, Seeds 3-6, oblong, dark brown.
Fl. & Fr.: December - May
Occurrence: It covers mostly sloppy and valley area, found in tops of the hills and slopes of the many area of the plateau.
Uses: Most popular gum, local people earn money by selling the gum outside the district. It possess a lot of nutritious and medicinal properties.

Many forest areas are under the pressure of human interferences. Encroachment and deforestation have disturbed the habitat of many trees particularly the Acacia catechu, Acacia nilotica and Anogeissus pendula forest.

REFERENCES


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