

## **Ancient Practices for Water and Forest Conservation followed by Women in Lesser Himalayan Region of Nainital, Uttarakhand, India**

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### **Abstract**

*An attempt has been made to document the traditional practices followed by women of lesser Himalayan region for the management of water and forest. The area selected for the study was Oakhalkanda and Dhari blocks of district Nainital, Uttarakhand. A sample of 150 respondents from eight villages was interviewed regarding their folk beliefs and traditional practices followed for water and forest conservation. It was observed that the women in the region managed the water and forest resources through folk beliefs like Ganga Dusshera, Basant Panchmi, Kumbh Vivah, Naula Pujan, and throwing coin in river for water management and Sacred groves, Bat savitri, Tulsi pooja, Harela, Cheer bandhana, Phool dei, Mango leaves, Khatarua Sawan ke somvar, and Lut for forest management. Also they had ancient views on water and forest management. The traditional practices like devoting forest to the Gods and Goddesses, ceremonies like Maiti movement, Vriksha Abhishek Divas, and Tiladi Divas were prevalent in the area and found to be very effective in conserving forest. The ancient knowledge seems to be the excellent and most effective way in protecting water and forest in lesser Himalayan region.*