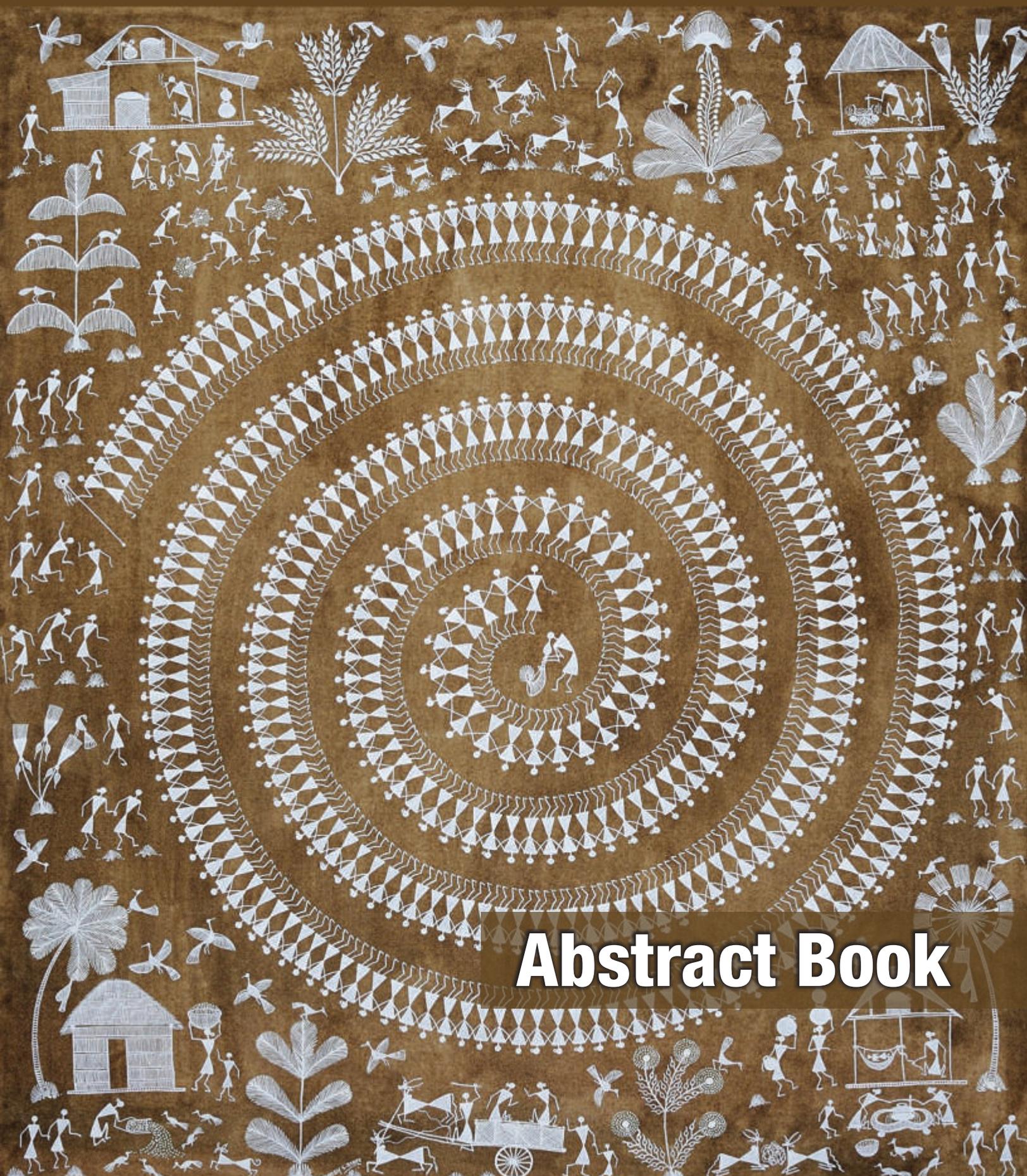


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Studies on Flatfishes of India as a Step Towards Conservation of Resources

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Landing of flatfishes has been on the decline especially along the southwest coast of India. The major species contributing to the fishery is *Cynoglossus macrostomus*. The present study was undertaken to study the flatfish diversity of India and document the possibilities of finding out new species to be protected if any as well to examine the possibility of any ornamental and cultivable species. Results indicate the presence of 63 species of flatfishes in 8 families and 26 genera from south India including the islands of Andaman and Nicobar. The most speciose family was Soleidae with 9 genera and 17 species, followed by Bothidae with 9 genera and 14 species and Cynoglossidae with 2 genera and 13 species. The disappearance of the halibut *Psettodes erumei* from the fishery calls for stringent conservation measures as well as conservation mariculture. The Malabar sole, *Cynoglossus macrostomus*, endemic to Malabar Coast from Mulki to Quilon on the southwest coast of India has also shown considerable decline during the last five years; these features call for strict measures to continuously monitor the resource and its stock position. The hydrography of the Indian Ocean and the interconnecting patterns of water bodies in it could be the reason for maximum common diversity of flatfishes within the region. Appropriate conservation strategies for the flatfishes available in the Indian waters is integral to any approach in preserving biodiversity since greater species diversity ensures natural sustainability for all life forms.

Keywords: Bothids, Conservation, Flatfish, *Psettodes*