

Study of some sacred plants of Nashik District

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Abstract: Study of sacred plants of Nashik district was carried out during January 2020 to December 2020. Total 25 plant species belonging to 23 genera and 23 families were recorded. Some of these plants have medicinal properties. Few of these plants are mentioned in Atharvaveda as medicinal plants.

Keywords: Sacred, medicinal, plants.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nashik is District of Maharashtra state. Nashik is the third largest city of Maharashtra after Mumbai & Pune. Nashik lies in the northern part of Maharashtra state at 700 m (2,300 ft) from the mean sea level . The land area of the city is about 259.13 km² (100.05 sq mi). Nashik District is located between 18.33 degree and 20.53 degree North latitude and between 73.16 degree and 75.16 degree East Longitude. It is bounded by Dhule district to the north, Jalgaon district to the east, Aurangabad district to the southeast, Ahmadnagar district to the south, Thane district to the southwest, Valsad and Navsari districts of Gujarat to the west, and The Dang district to the northwest.

In India various festivals and rituals are celebrated throughout the year. In these festivals various plants and their parts are used. Some of these plants have medicinal properties and some are used for various purposes. Plants of religious importance are reported by Jain [1], Gupta [2], Schultes and Hofmann [3], Chaudhari and Pal [4], Manoj Merat [5], M.V Patil and D.A Patil [6] and Shubhangi Pawar and D.A Patil [7]. Attempt was carried to study the sacred plants of Nasik district.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The information of sacred plants is obtained from standard books, scientific articles and research papers. The plants were identified by using flora Nashik district by Lakshminarasimhan and Sharma [8].

III. RESULTS

In this study 25 plants are recorded. All these plants are of religious importance, belonging to 23 Families. Seven plants have medicinal properties out of which six plants have been mentioned in Atharvveda as medicinal plants.

List of sacred plants from Nashik District			
Sr. No.	Plant Name	Family	Uses
1	<i>Achyranthus aspera</i> L. – (Aghada)	Amaranthaceae	i)It is one of the 21 leaves used in Hartalika Pooja.
2	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> L. Cor. - (Bael)	Rutaceae	i)It is considered as one of the sacred trees of Hindus. ii) The fruit pulp is used to cure amoebiosis. iii)Leaves are used to worship Lord Shiva.
3	<i>Azadiracta indica</i> A. Juss. – (Kadunimb)	Meliaceae	i) The leaves are used to decorate“Gudi”,in “Gudhipadwa”festival. ii)The leaves are used as Prasad in “Gudhpadwa”festival.
4	<i>Bauhinia variegata</i> L. – (Apta)	Caesalpinaceae	i)Leaves are given to relatives and friends on the occasion of “Dashara.”
5	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam). Taub. – (Palas)	Fabaceae	i) Colour is obtained from flower which is used at the time of “Rangpanchami”. ii) Plant has healing property. iii) Gum is used as an astringent.

6	<i>Calotropis procera</i> (Ait.) R. Br. – (Rui)	Asclepiaceae	i) Flowers and leaves are offered to God Hanuman and Suryaputra Shanidev.
7	<i>Cicer arietinum</i> L. – (Harbhara)	Fabaceae	i) Green seeds (Harbhara) are eaten on the occasion of Makarsankranti.
8	<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L. (Naral)	Arecaceae	i) Coconut is used in many religious ceremonies. ii) Coconut is distributed as Prasad.
9	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i> L. – (Dhane)	Apiaceae	i) Seeds are distributed as ‘Prasad’ on the occasion of Ramnavami.
10	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L.) Pers. – (Harali)	Poaceae	i) The young leaves are offered to Lord Ganesha. ii) The whole plant is used as medicine. iii) It is cooling agent and haemostatic.
11	<i>Emblica officinalis</i> Gaerth. – (Aavala)	Euphorbiaceae	i) The fruits are used in ‘Tulsi Vivah and Awala Navami.’ ii) Aavala used in ‘Chyavanprash and Trifala churn.’
12	<i>Feronia elephantum</i> Cor. – (Kawath)	Rutaceae	i) Fruits are offered to Lord Shiva on Mahashivratri.
13	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i> L. – (Vad)	Moraceae	i) Tree is worshiped by ladies on “Vat Pourniama”. ii) Tree is generally said to be the humble abode of Lord Krishna. iii) It is a national tree of our country. ii) Ficus is major insecticidal tree.
14	<i>Ficus glomerata</i> L. – (Audumbar)	Moraceae	i) Tree is worshiped by Hindu people. ii) Tree is said to be the abode of Lord Dattatray.
15	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> L. – (Pimpal)	Moraceae	i) The tree is considered as most sacred and worshipped every morning after completion of bath. ii) Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment under this tree.
16	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i> L. – (Jaswand)	Malvaceae	i) The flower is used to offer Lord Ganesha and used in garland. ii) Hair oil is obtained from flowers. iii) The flowers are used in daily Pooja.
17	<i>Mangifera indica</i> L. – (Amba)	Anacardiaceae	i) The leaves and fruits of the mango tree are used in many religious ceremonies. ii) The leaves are hung by a string express the auspiciousness of any occasions.
18	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> L. (Kela)	Musaceae	i) Leaves hanged near the entrance to mark an auspicious occasion. ii) Leaves are used as plates to give Prasad. iii) The fruit of banana is offered in religious ceremonies to God and Goddess.
19	<i>Neolamarckia cadamba</i> (Roxb.) Bosser (Kadamba)	Rubiaceae	i) A tree associated with Lord Krishna. ii) It has scented orange flowers, used in perfumes.
20	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> L. – (Tulas)	Lamiaceae	i) It is the most sacred plant of the Hindus; it is planted in the Tulasi Vrindavan and worshiped daily. ii) The leaves are offered to Lord ‘Vishnu’. iii) Leaves are added in ‘Satyanarayan Prasad’. iv) Yogis wear tulsi beads to purify their mind, body and soul. vi) The small herb of <i>Ocimum</i> recommended for the treatment of bronchitis.
21.	<i>Ricinus communis</i> L. –	Euphorbiaceae	i) The stem of this plant is used in Holi festival along with sugar cane. ii) The leaves are used to reduce the inflammation and to cure internal

	(Erand)		injury. iii) The Erandel oil is given as laxative.
22	<i>Santalum album</i> L. (Chandan)	Santalaceae	i) It is considered to be a sacred tree. ii) The fragrant wood of the tree is made into a paste, which is used in worshipping Lord Vishnu and Shiva.
23	<i>Sesamum indicum</i> L. – (Til)	Pedaliaceae	i) The seeds are used to make ‘Laddu’ along with jaggery in ‘Makar-sankranti’ festival. ii) Oil obtained from seed is used to reduce muscular pain. ii) Oil is obtained from seeds used in cooking.
24	<i>Zingiber officinalis</i> Roscoe. – (Aale)	Zingiberaceae	i) The dried aale is called ‘Suntha’ used as Prasad on the occasion of ‘Krishna Janmashtami.’ ii) Suntha is used to cure cough and cold.
25	<i>Zizyphus maurutiana</i> Lamk. – (Bor)	Rhamnaceae	i) The twigs are used in wedding ceremonies. ii) The fruits are also used in ‘Lut’ programme of small children. iii) The fruits are eaten on Makarsankranti. iv) Dried fruits are used in recepies.
(Names given in the bracket indicate their local names)			

IV. CONCLUSION

This study was carried out in Nashik district. In this study total 25 plants are recorded as religiously important. These are confirmed by using standard literature. Out of 25 plants 9 are religious as well as medicinal. E.g. *Aegle*, *Butea*, *Cynadon*, *Emblica*, *Ficus*, *Ocimum*, *Ricinus*, *Sesamum* and *Zingiber*. 6 plants *Aegle*, *Butea*, *Cynadon* and *Ficus* (Audumber, Pimpal, Vad) out of nine are mentioned in Atharvveda as medicinal plants. Lord Buddha attained and enlightenment under Peepal tree in Bodhgaya, Bihar and the tree is also called as Bodhi tree. The leaves of *Achyranthus*, *Ocimum* and *Aegle* are offered to God during Pooja. The fruits of *Emblica*, *Mangifera*, *Banana*, *Cicer*, *Zizyphus* *Coconut* and *Ficus* are used for various purposes. The flowers of *Butea* are used in colour making. Hair oil is obtained from flowers of Hibiscus. Oil obtained from the leaves of *Ricinus* and used as laxative. The fruits of *Aegle*, *Zizyphus*, *Emblica* and *Feronia* also have medicinal properties. Leaves of Banana used as plate to give Prasad. Paste of scented wood of Sandalwood is used to worshipping Lord Vishnu and Shiva.

The study on sacred plants used for various worships show their importance in human life. The religious activities act as conserving tool for biodiversity. So, it is necessary to preserve and promote aesthetic values to conserve biodiversity and nature, which will surely play a role in betterment of human beings.

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