

# “Survey of Some Sacred and Medicinal Plants from Malegaon Tehsil of Nashik District, Maharashtra”

Yogesh C Shastri & Pravin D Nikam

P.G. Department of Botany, M.S.G. College, Malegaon Camp, Dist. Nashik, 423105, M.S

**Abstract:** Biodiversity is an important gift of nature that provides all basic requirements for human existence. Since time immemorial plants have played an important role in human existence and civilization. It has been observed that large number of plants being used for the worshipping of gods and goddesses as well as for socio-religious functions and medicinal purposes which serve as a useful tool for conservation of plants.

Present work examined how plant parts are used by the local peoples of the area for worships to various gods, goddesses, customs and traditions related with various ceremonies. The religious activities serving as conserving tool for biodiversity. So, it is necessary to preserve and promote aesthetic values to conserve biodiversity and nature, which will surely play an important role in betterment of human beings. During the survey 32 plants belonging to 20 families have been recorded.

These plants are used for religious as well as medicinal purpose viz. *Achyranthes*, *Aegle*, *Annona*, *Azadiracta*, *Bambusa*, *Bauhinia*, *Butea*, *Calotropis*, *Datura*, *Emblica*, *Ficus*, *Musa*, *Ocimum*, *Ricinus*, *Santalum*, *Sesamum* and *Zingiber*. People of the study area are highly religious. These beliefs are not only showing the human relation with plant diversity, but also help in the conservation of species.

**Keywords:** Sacred, Medicinal, Plants, Malegaon.

## INTRODUCTION

The human culture, customs, ethos, religious rites, legends and myths, folk tales and folk songs, food, as well as medicinal practices are deeply associated and influenced by the plants, (Badoni and Badoni, 2001). Indian culture has cosmic believes for all happenings in their life, including sickness and suffering, besides also have a close association and respect for many plants for religious activities. (Ranta and Pirta, 2007).

Hindu religion and culture firmly preached that all constituents of our ambient nature are part and creation of supreme power itself. The God has bestowed some specific power to certain plants and animals and even rivers, mountains and places, which play an important role in prosperous human life. Hindu scriptures tell us that a wide range of plants like *Ficus religiosa*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Ocimum sanctum*, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Ricinus communis* have divine qualities, hence used in a number of religious activities and rituals from marriage, baptism to health care systems, (Robinson and Cush, 1997).

Peoples are very much concerned about the use of plants for each and every occasion from birth to funeral ceremony. But, despite of having such traditional ceremony literatures regarding this Hindu beliefs and worship is insignificant and proper scientific study in this area is very poor. Thus, the present attempts to emphasis on the use of plants in some common Hindu traditional worships and medicines. These plant species are regularly used by the local people in various religious activities and traditional healing system. The traditional worship practices show the symbiotic relation of human beings and nature. Various plant parts like leaves, flower, fruit, bark and twigs are offered to Gods. Almost all the tribal communities consider some plants as holy in origin and essential in religious functions.

## MATERIAL & METHODS

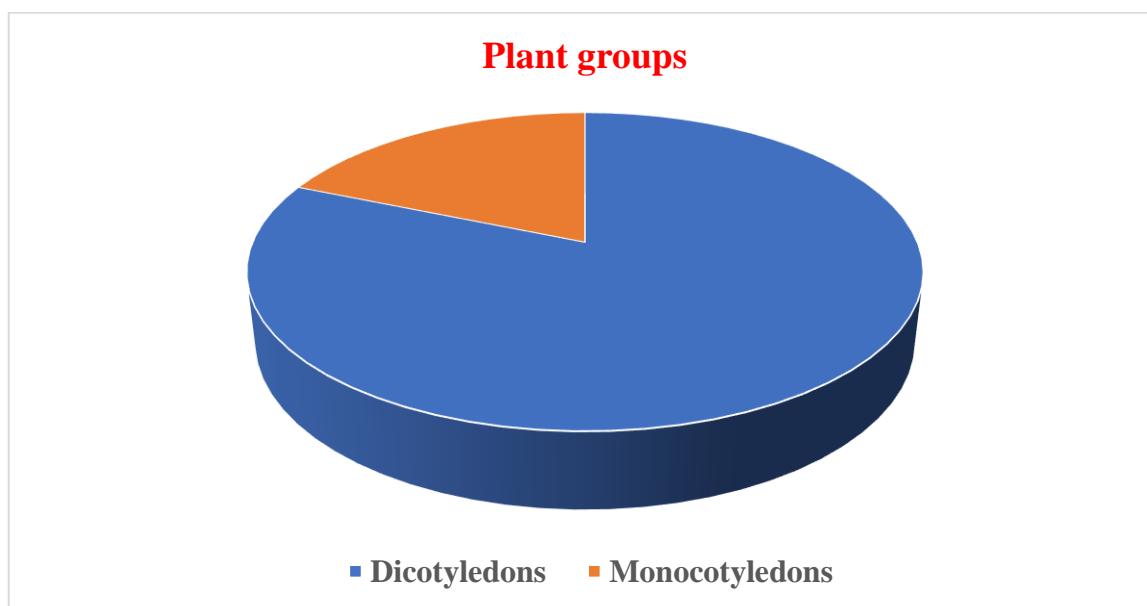
Present investigations have been carried out in Malegaon tehsil of Nashik district (Maharashtra). Malegoan in basically monsoon region situated at confluence of Girna & Mausam rivers, at elevation of 438 metres (1437feet) with 18.42°N & 77.53°E latitudes & longitudes respectively. Extensive plant exploration was conducted from September 2021 to February 2022 six months (2021-2022) to find out the important plants in the religion, culture and health care system of local people. Communication with local expertise, tribal peoples, old peoples, poojari's revealed the data on religious and medicinal significance of the plant species. The collected plants were identified with the help of standard literature and flora of Nashik district by Laxminarasimhan and Sharma.

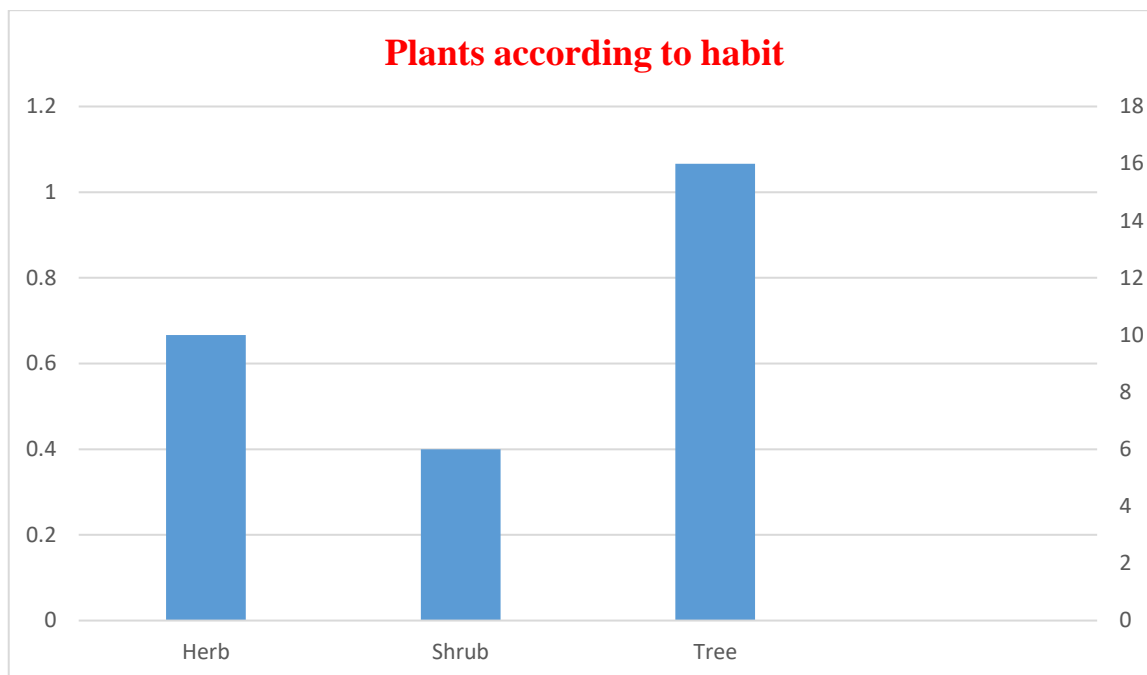
## ENUMERATION OF PLANT SPECIES

Sr. No.	Scientific Name	Local Name	Family	Habit	Religious/ Medicinal Use
1	<i>Achyranthes aspera</i> L.	Aghada	Amaranthaceae	Shrub	1) Leaves are used in "Hartalika Pooja". 2) The roots and stems are used in "Rishipanchami".
2	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> (L.)	Bel	Rutaceae	Tree	1) It is considered as one of the sacred plant of Hindu. 2) Leaves are offered to Lord Shiva. 3) The fruit pulp is used to cure amoebiasis.
3	<i>Annona squamosa</i> L.	Sitaphal	Annonaceae	Tree	1) Leaves are used as a Patri in the worship of lord Ganesh. 2) Fruits and leaves are used to worship Goddess Laxmi. 3) Control BP, Prevents stroke, Reduce cholesterol and lowers the risk of Arthritis.
4	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A.Juss.	Neem	Meliaceae	Tree	1) The leaves are used to decorate "Gudhi" in "Gudhipadwa". 2) Neem leaf is used for leprosy, eye disorders, intestinal worms, cardiovascular and gum disease.
5	<i>Bambusa vulgaris</i> Schrad. Ex J.C.Wendl.	Bamboo	Gramineae	Tree	1) The tree is sacred for its association with Lord Krishna, his Bansuri is actually made of bamboo.
6	<i>Bauhinia racemosa</i> Lam.	Apata/Sonpatti	Fabaceae	Tree	1) Leaves are given to relatives and friends in "Dashehara" festival.
7	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.) Taub.	Palas	Fabaceae	Tree	1) Colour is obtained from flowers which is used at the time of "Rangpanchami". 2) Gum is used as an Astringent
8	<i>Calotropis procera</i> Aiton.	Rui	Asclepiadaceae	Shrub	1) Flowers and leaves are offered to God Hanuman on the occasion of Hanuman jayanti. 2) Flowers and leaves are offered to God Suryaputra Shanidev. 3) The leaves are valuable as an antidote for snake bite, rheumatism and body pain.
9	<i>Cicer arietinum</i> L.	Harbhara	Fabaceae	Herb	1) Harbhara are eaten during "Makar sankranti".
10	<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L.	Naral	Arecaceae	Tree	1) Fruits are used for all worship. 2) Coconut is distributed as Prasad 3) Hair oil is obtained from fruit 4) Coconut water can be a good replacer of synthetic electrolyte.
11	<i>Cyamopsis tetragonoloba</i> (L.) Taub.	Gawar	Fabaceae	Herb	1) Pods are used as vegetable during pitrupaksha.
12	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L.) Pers.	Harali	Poaceae	Herb	1) Leaves are known as "Durwa" are offered to Lord Ganesh in "Ganpati Pujan". 2) It is cooling agent and haemostatic. 3) Paste of leaves apply over fresh wounds and ulcers to control bleeding

					and quicken the process of healing.
13	<i>Datura stramonium</i> L.	Dhotra	Solanaceae	Herb	1) Flowers and fruits are offered to Lord Shiva. 2)
14	<i>Emblica officinalis</i> L.	Awala	Euphorbiaceae	Tree	1) The Fruits are used in “Tulsi vivah”. 2) Aawalah is used in making Chawanprash and Triphala Churna.
15	<i>Feronia elephantum</i> L.	Kawath	Rutaceae	Tree	1) Fruits are offered to Lord Shiva on Mahashivaratri.
16	<i>Ficus benghalensis</i> L.	Vad	Moraceae	Tree	1) Tree worship by the ladies on Vat pournima.
17	<i>Ficus racemose</i> L.	Audumbar	Moraceae	Tree	1) Tree is worshiped by Hindu people. 2) Tree said to be the abode of Lord Dattatray.
18	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> L.	Pimpal	Moraceae	Tree	1) Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment under this tree. 2) Tree is worship by tribals by offering Jaggery, Coconut etc. and lighten lamp to escape from “Munjoba”.
19	<i>Gossypium herbaceum</i> L.	Cotton	Malvaceae	Shrub	1) Cotton is used to make vati which is used to lighten Diva during the worshipping of God and Goddess.
20	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinansis</i> L.	Jaswand	Malvaceae	Shrub	1) The flowers are offered Lord Ganesha. 2) The flowers are used in daily Pooja. 3) Hair oil is obtained from flowers.
21	<i>Mangifera indica</i> L.	Amba	Anacardiaceae	Tree	1) Leaves are used in religious ceremonies, mandap and marriages. 2) Leaves are tied in thread and hang on doors as a “Toran” on the occasion of Bail Pola, Diwali.
22	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> L.	Keli	Musaceae	Shrub	1) Leaves are used as plates to give Prasad. 2) Fruit are offered to God and Goddess in religious functions.
23	<i>Nyctanthes arbor-tristis</i> L.	Parijatak	Oleaceae	Shrub	1) The flowers are offered to Lord Shiva.
24	<i>Oscimum sanctum</i> L.	Tulas	Lamiaceae	Herb	1) It is the most sacred plant of the Hindus; it is planted in the Tulsi vrindavan and worshiped daily. 2) The leaves are keep on “Satyanarayan Prasad”. 3) Used in treatment of headache, cough and constipation.
25	<i>Ricinus communis</i> L.	Erand	Euphorbiaceae	Tree	1) The stems are used on the occasion of Holi festival along with sugarcane. 2) Erandel oil is used as purgative.
26	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i> L.	Uss/Ganna	Poaceae	Herb	1) Stem and leaves are used in Holi festival. 2) Small pieces of sugar cane are used along with grains during Makar sankranti. 3) Hair oil is obtained from flowers.

27	<i>Solanum melongena</i> L.	Vange	Solanaceae	Herb	1) Fruits are used as vegetable in Champa-shashthi. 2) Fruits are used as vegetable during Makar sankranti.
28	<i>Santalum album</i> L.	Chandan	Santalaceae	Tree	1) It is considered as a sacred tree. 2) The fragrant wood of the tree is made into a paste, which is used in worshipping Lord “Vishnu and Shiva”. 3) Sandalwood oil is used as an antiseptic and astringent and for the treatment of headache.
29	<i>Sesamum indicum</i> L.	Til	Pedaliaceae	Herb	1) The seeds are used to make ‘Laddu’ along with jagey in ‘Makarsankranti’ festival. 2) Til mixed with water are used for bathing at the time of Makarsankranti. 3)Til oil is used for massage.
30	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i> L.	Methi	Fabaceae	Herb	1) It is used as vegetable during Pitrupaksha.
31	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Roscoe.	Adrak/Ale	Zingiberaceae	Herb	1) The dried aale is called ‘Suntha’ used as Prasad on the occasion of ‘Krishna Janmashtami.’ 2) Dried adrak ie. Suntha is used to cure cough and cold.
32	<i>Zizyphus mauritiana</i> Lam.	Bor	Rhamnaceae	Tree	1) The fruits are eaten on Makarsankranti. 2) Fruits are used in Laxmipoojan during Diwali.





### RESULT & DISCUSSION

The present investigations carried in Malegaon tehsil revealed 32 plant species belonging from 30 genera & 20 families. These plants are being used in different medicine, ceremonies, festivals and socio-religious customs. The dominant families of sacred interest are Fabaceae (5 species), Moraceae (3 species), Poaceae (3 species). 26 Plants belong to class dicotyledons and 06 plants sps. belong to class monocot. 10 plants are herbs, 06 are shrubs and 16 are trees.

In Hindu tradition, it has been believed that different gods and goddesses have some specific characters and they love different plants depending upon their colour, fragrance etc. (Sharma and Devi, 2015). Sacred plants have been conserved by the people on the basis of their habit, need, category and availability Poudel, (2009). Plants like *Ficus benghalensis*, *F. religiosa*, *Oscimum sanctum*, *Calotropis procera*, *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*, *Nyctanthes arbortristis*, *Cocos nucifera* are highly respected and planted in the public places like temple or even in the public area. Coconut water can be a good replacer of synthetic electrolyte. The twigs of *Mangifera indica* plant with 5-7 leaves are kept in 'kalash' with water and used for all worship (Aher S. K., 2017). The leaves of *Aegel marmelos* are dedicated to lord Shiva on the occasion of Mahashivratri and other religious occasion.

Flowers of *Calotropis procera* are offered to god Shanidev. Leaves of *Calotropis procera* used to cure rheumatism and body pain. The fruits of *Cocos nucifera* are offered to please Gods and Goddess on the occasion of many holy functions and festivals. Coconut water can be a good replacer of synthetic electrolyte. *Oscimum sanctum* is worshipped and cultivated in the Hindu homes. Seeds of *sesamum indicum* (Til) are mixed with water and used for bathing at the time of Makarsankranti. Musa species is very important plant and all parts of the plant are widely used in all Hindu worship. The leaves of *calotropis procera*, *Annona squamosa* and *Mangifera indica* are used as Patri in the worship of Shanidev, Navratri utsav, Ganpati Pujan, Hartalika Pooja and all religious programmes respectively.

### CONCLUSION

The religious activities act as conserving tool for biodiversity. So, it is necessary to preserve and promote aesthetic and medicinal values to conserve biodiversity and nature, which will surely play a role in betterment of human beings. During present investigation it was observed that the religious activity boost up the mental health of the local people of study area. A number of sacred plants are found in every household in the study area and are used in religious activities as well as health care.

### REFERENCES

1. Aher, S.K. (2017): Study of some sacred plants of Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra, International Journal of current research 9(10): pp 59706-59709.
2. Almeida M. R. (1996-2009) Flora of Maharashtra. Vol. I - V Orient Press, Mumbai.



3. Badoni, A. and Badoni, K. (2001): Ethnobotanical Heritage. In Khandari OP, etc. Garhwal Himalaya: Nature, culture and society. Trans Media Srinagar (Garhwal). pp 125-147.
4. Laxminarasimhan, P. and Sharma, B.D. (1991): Flora of Nashik District, BSI, Calcutta, pp 644.
5. Merat, Manoj M. (2002): Plants religious importance of Buldhana District of Maharashtra state, Geobios, vol.29(1): pp 61-62.
6. Pawar, N.B. (2020): Socio-religious plants from western parts of Nashik District (Maharashtra) IJRAR. 7(1): pp 938-942.
7. Poudel, J.M. (2009): Cultural understanding of Non-Timber forest products among the Bahuan. Community people of eastern Nepal. Occasional paper in sociology and Anthropology 11: pp 126-147.
8. Ratna, R.S. and Pitra R.S. (2007): Socio-ecology and Religious Affiliations in three Himalayan village. Implications for mental health. Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology 33(1): pp 23-30.
9. Robinson, C and Cush, D. (1997): The Sacred Cow Hinduism and ecology. Journal of Beliefs and values, 18(1): pp 25-37.
10. Sharma, J and Devi, A. (2015): Study on traditional worshipping plants in Hindu religion from Nalbari and Sanitpur district of Assam. International Journal of scientific Research and publications 5(5): pp 1-5.
11. Sharma, V and Joshi, B.D. (2010): Role of sacred plants in Religion and Health care system of local people of Almora district of Uttarakhand state (India). Academic Arena. 2(6): pp 19-22.
12. Shastri, Y.C. (2021): Study of some sacred plants of Nashik District. IARJSET 8(2): 170-172.