

Plant Sources employed for observing Vedic festival “Ram Navami” the birthday of Lord Suryavanshi

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ABSTRACT

Diversity is the commitment for the recognition and appreciation of variety of individuals. The prefix ‘Bio’ when placed before the word ‘Diversity’ it becomes more significant and signifies the complex kind of variation that exist within and among organisms. The word ‘Bio-diversity’ being the combination of two words i.e. Bios and Diversitas deals with the degree of nature’s variety in the biosphere. The life supporting system “The Biodiversity is the individual and effective gift of nature. The plants itself described as “Perpetuate Life Acid Nature through Sacrifice” shows its extreme importance in each one of our life and the whole planet. The Hinduism or the word for Hindu Religion, “The Religion of Indian People” being one for its plethora of forms and belief. Ram Navami is one of Vedic festival among different festivals like Ratha Yatra, Dola Purnima, Raja and much more. Lord Rama is known to be the oldest deity worshipped in human form and Rama Navami is celebrated with full enthusiasm. Traditionally, Hindu people use a large number of plant and plant parts for worshipping the almighty and the same for Rama Navami occasion and the most commonly used plant being the *Mangifera indica*. The information about the importance of plants and use of its parts in Rama Navami is collected through some interactivity is collected through some well experienced senior people. The different plant species with their botanical name, local name, family, habitat, plant part usage and form of uses are presented. In this paper a total no. of 38 species under 36 genera and 27 families were recorded during study.

Keywords: *Mangifera indica*, Diversity, Biodiversity, Rama Navami, Hinduism, Worshipping

1. INTRODUCTION

The religion of Indian people or simply the Hinduism, the word for the Hindu religion of humanity. Its many sacred texts in Sanskrit and vernacular languages served as a vehicle for spreading the religious to other part of the world, though ritual and the visual and performing act also played a significant role in its transmission [1]. The name Hinduism is relatively new, but from hundreds of decades, Indians use

the term “Santana Dharma” to describe the Hindu religion. We all the human have little or more idea regarding the value of the plants for worshiping almighty and it is well described in different Vedas.

Traditionally I Hindu religion people use a large number of plants and plant parts and more than half of the plant are associated with religious functions, rituals and in many other occasions. As the plants are omnipresent all over the world, this has been given an important place to great Hindu culture [2-4].

As the seventh avatar of god Vishnu, Hindu god lord Rama is particularly important to the Vaishnavismtradition of Hinduism [1]. Rama Navami (Ram Navami, Ramanavami, Shri Rama Navami) is a Vedic festival that celebrates the birth of Rama on the ninth day of the Hindu month of caitra, which usually falls in the month of march or April. Rama is the first son of king Dasharatha and QueenKausalya of Ayodhya [5]. Rama Navami marks the birthday of Lord Rama as he appeared on this day in his all auspicious divine human avatar. On this day, individuals usually the devotes of the Vaishnava sect of Hinduism involved in reciting the Ramayana, offering pujas and performance havans at ram temples. The most important spiritual activity on this day, is the dedication of bhajan and bhakti songs to load Ramchandra. Thus, the paper present with main objective to highlight the use of plants and plant parts in Ram Navami for adoration of lord Rama in Odisha, India.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study on the documentation of the plant resources that are used in Rama Navami for adoration of Hindu God Lord Suryavanshi. The data were collected and the facts were recorded about the supremacy of various plants, its uses and involvement in various veneration activities of Lord Ramachandran. All the information’s were gathered through exchange of thoughts with some specialised persons like the priest who perform the ritual function and some other well informed experienced and sensible person involved in such activities Fig (1). The botanical name of the plants are documented and identified with the help of the “The Flora of Odisha and Hennies flora” [6-7]. Finally, the collected specimen was surrendered to the herbarium unit of the Department of Botany, Centurion University of Technology and Management, Odisha, India.



Figure1. Data collected through the survey and interaction with the priests.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The present study could identify to be documented as 37 plant species belongs to 27 families which have been associated with the customs and religious believes and are used in different temples of Lord Rama during the time of Rama Navami. The information regarding the utility of different plants and plant parts were collected by interacting with priest and religious headmen. Data was collected by survey, interviews and roundtable among local priest in their local language. Most of the species used were trees 58%, followed by shrubs 13%, grasses 11%, herbs 10% and climbers 8% Fig (2). The main plant used is *Mangifera indica*. Different types of leaves are used for decoration and worshiped, flowers for garlands, fruits- seeds for preparing prasad and plant species for worshiping. The plant species of the present study are arranged alphabetically with their botanical name, local name, family, habitat, parts used and form of use are used in Table (1).

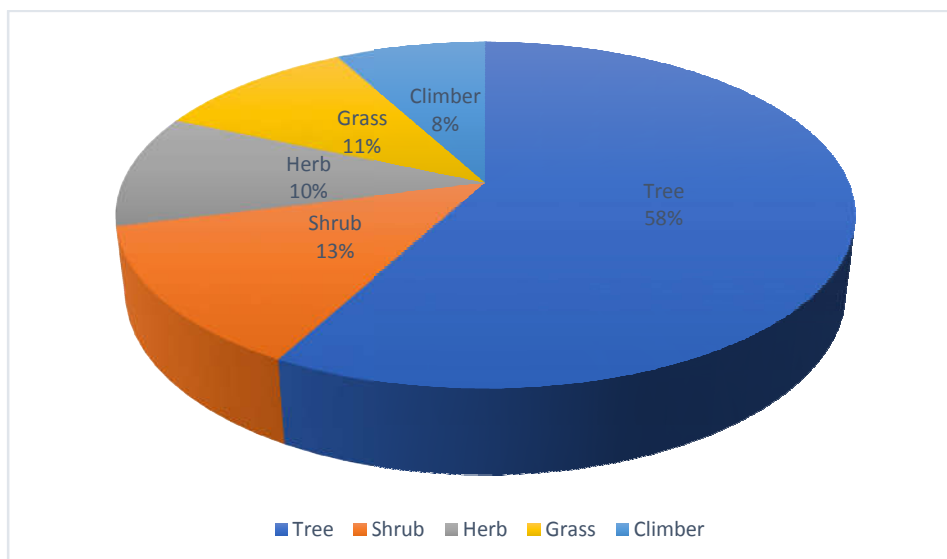


Figure 2. Distribution of the plant species according to Habits

Table (1): List of the plants and plants parts used in Ram Navami for worshipping

LEAVES						
Sl. no	Botanical name	Local name	Family	Habitat	Parts used	Form of use
1.	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> (L.) Corr	Bela	Rutaceae	Tree	Leaves	Worshipping
2.	<i>Cynodont dactylon</i> (L.) Pers.	Duba	Poaceae	Grass	Leaves	Worshipping
3.	<i>Desmostachya bipinnata</i> (L.) stapf	Kusa	Poaceae	Grass	Leaves	Worshipping
4.	<i>Mangifera indica</i> L.	Amba	Anacardiaceae	Tree	Leaves	Worshipping
5.	<i>Mimusops elengi</i> L.	Baula	Sapotaceae	Tree	Leaves	Worshipping
6.	<i>Musa sapientum</i> L.	Kadali	Musaceae	Tree	Leaves	Decoration
7.	<i>Osimum sanctum</i> L.	Tulsi	Lamiaceae	Herb	Leaves	Worshipping
8.	<i>Phoenia Sylvestris</i> (L.) Roxb.	Khajuri	Arecaceae	Tree	Leaves	Decoration
9.	<i>Piper betel</i> L.	Pana	Piperaceae	Climber	Leaves	Worshipping
10.	<i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> Lam.	Barakoli	Rhamnaceae	Tree	Leaves	Worshipping

FLOWERS						
1.	<i>Cascabela thevetia</i> L.	Kaniara	Apocynaceae	Shrub	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
2.	<i>Clethra ternatea</i> L.	Aparajeta	Fabaceae	Climber	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
3.	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i> L.	Mandara	Malvaceae	Shrub	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
4.	<i>Delonix regia</i> (Hook.) Raf.	Krushnachuda	Fabaceae	Shrub	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
5.	<i>Michelia champala</i> L.	Swarna Champa	Magnoliaceae	Tree	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
6.	<i>Nyctanthes arhour-tristis</i> L.	Gangaseoli	Oleaceae	Tree	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
7.	<i>Tabernaemontana divaricata</i> (L.) R.Br. ex Roem. & Schult.	Tagara	Apocynaceae	Small Tree, Shrub	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
8.	<i>Polianthes tuberosa</i> L.	Rajanigandha	Asparagaceae	Tree	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
9.	<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> Gaertn.	Padma	Nelumbonaceae	Herb	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
10.	<i>Nymphaea pubescens</i> Willd.	Dhalakain	Nymphaeaceae	Herb	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
11.	<i>Nymphaea nouchali</i> Burm.f.	Nilakain	Nymphaeaceae	Herb	Flower	Worshiping, garlanding
FRUITS						
1.	<i>Anacardium occidentale</i> L.	Kaju	Anacardiaceae	Tree	Fruits	Used in prasad
2.	<i>Annona squamosa</i> L.	Ata	Annonaceae	Tree	Fruits	Used in prasad
3.	<i>Citrus reticulata</i> Blanco	Kamala	Rutaceae	Tree	Fruits	Used in prasad
4.	<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L.	Nadia	Arecaceae	Tree	Fruits	Used in prasad

5.	<i>Musa sapintum</i> L.	Kadali	Musaceae	Tree	Fruits	Used in prasad
6.	<i>Phoenix Sylvestris</i> L.	Khajuri	Arecaceae	Tree	Fruits	Used in prasad
7.	<i>Psidium guajava</i> L.	Pijuli	Myrtaceae	Tree	Fruits	Used in prasad
8.	<i>Punica granatum</i> L.	Dalimba	Punicaceae	Tree	Fruits	Used in prasad
9.	<i>Pyrus malus</i> L.	Seu	Rosaceae	Tree	Fruits	Used in prasad
10.	<i>Vitis vinitera</i> L.	Angura	Vitaceae	Climber	Fruit	Used in prasad
SEEDS						
1.	<i>Areca catechu</i> L.	Gua	Arecaceae	Tree	Seeds	Worshiping
2.	<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> L.	Gujarati	Zingiberaceae	Tree	Seeds	Used in prasad
3.	<i>Oryza sativa</i> L.	Dhana	Poaceae	Grass	Seeds	Worshiping
4.	<i>Piper nigrum</i> L.	Golamaricha	Piperaceae	Shrub	Seeds	Used in prasad
5.	<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i> L.	Labanga	Myrtaceae	Tree	Seeds	Used in prasad
WOODS						
1.	<i>Mangifera indica</i> L.	Amba	Anacardiaceae	Tree	Wood	Worshiping
2.	<i>Santalum album</i> L.	Chandan	Santalaceae	Tree	Wood	Worshiping
3.	<i>Shora robusta</i> Gaertn.f.	Sala	Dipterocarpaceae	Tree	Wood	Worshiping
OTHERS						
1.	<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L.	Nadia	Arecaceae	Tree	Fibre	Worshiping
2.	<i>Saccarum officinarum</i> L.	Akhu	Poaceae	Grass	Stem	Worshiping
3.	<i>Shora robusta</i> Gaertn.f.	Sala	Dipterocarpaceae	Tree	Wax (Jhuna)	Worshiping

4. CONCLUSION

The work and the study based on the religious plants and plant parts used in the Vedic festivals Rama Navami adoration gives the description of importance of plants in human life. This investigation helps us to understand how community people engaged themselves in conserving nature's most valuable gift, "The plants and the forest" to check their inherent socio culture and religious activities. This work of preserving and utilising plant species in the name of socio-culture and religion has significance in today's crisis of biodiversity care and feeding.

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