



ETHNO-RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF SACRED PLANTS OF DISTRICT GHAZIABAD (U.P.), INDIA

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Abstract

The observation of powerful natural forces, such as storms, floods, earthquakes, landslides, volcanoes, fire, heat and cold, greatly impressed the expanding mind of man. The inexplicable things of life are still termed “acts of God” and “mysterious dispensations of Providence.” So in the present study is the compilation, analysis and documentation of information on the sacred plants of district Ghaziabad (U.P.), India. A total of 103 species belonging to 95 genera and 54 families have been recorded. These species are distributed within different life forms viz. herbs (52.4%), shrubs (17.5%) trees (25.2%) and climbers (4.9%). Angiosperms is the dominant group with maximum number of sacred plants, while, Pteridophytes (01 spp.) and Gymnosperms are represented by (02 spp.). The sacred plants and parts of plants utilized thereof are categorized on the basis of their socio-cultural perspective. Traditionally various parts of plants such as leaves (29 spp.), stem/branches (16 spp.), flowers (11 spp.), seeds/grains (22 spp.), fruits (15 spp.), bark (03 spp.), roots/rhizome (03 spp.), stigma (01 spp.), flower bud (01 spp.) and whole plants (10 spp.), are used in different religious ceremonies and social rites. Apart from sacred value, the study also contributed to the ethno-medicinal uses of such plants in the study area. There is a myth related to the sacred plants, if a plant is used for pooja, the same plant can be used as elixir of health. Sacred plants being integral part of biodiversity need proper attention in terms of conservation and sustainable utilization for the present and future use. So, the development of an appropriate strategy for conservation and sustainable utilization of sacred plants is suggested.

Key words : Sacred plants, religion, ethno -medicinal uses, Ghaziabad.

Introduction

Plant worship is an age old tradition dating back to ancient Indian times, it has been used for many purposes, such as healing, self empowerment, love spells and protection. Each plant has its own special properties and strengths. Thus, objects of worship were altogether suggestive; they consisted of the things of nature which were close at hand and Sacred plants play a key role in human spirituality, religion and culture and are an integral part of biodiversity. The evidence of their importance is available in ancient literature and religious scriptures of all faiths. Their long association with holy scriptures give them a status of sacred plants or Divine Botany. Many traditional social rites, religious ceremonies and festivals are associated with specific plants. Total sacred plant taxa documented from newly carved out District Ghaziabad (U.P.) of India are 103, comprising 103 species belonging to 95 genera and 54 families. Among 103 species plants like *Araucaria heterophylla* Lam. On

Christmas day, *Vitis vinifera* L., *Punica granatum* L and *Lawsonia inermis* L. find mention in Holy Quran; *Musa paradisiaca* L., *Curcuma longa* L. and *Cynodon dactylon* L. are mentioned in Vedas and Puranas. These plants have been categorized into 7 main categories on the basis of socio-cultural perspective e.g. *Datura innoxia* Mill., *Tagetes erecta* L., *Ocimum sanctum* L., *Rosa macrophylla* Lindl., *Calendula officinalis* L., *Salvia moorcroftiana* Wall., *Vitis vinifera* L., *Robinia pseudoacacia* L., *Juglans regia* L., *Cynodon dactylon* L., *Cucumis sativus* L. and *Musa paradisiaca* L. are used for Pooja purposes; *Capsicum annum* Linn., *Vigna mungo* (Linn.) Hepper., *Citrus limon* L., *Brassica campestris* L., *Berberis lyceum* Royle. and *Verbascum thapsus* L. are employed to protect from an evil eye; *Ajuga bracteosa* Wall.ex Benth., *Betula utilis* Don., *Adiantum capillus veneris* L., *Rorippa nausturtium aquaticum* L., *Hordeum vulgare* L. and *Zea mays* L. are used as ingredient in Dhoop and Havansamagries;

Crocus sativus L., *Cannabis sativus* L., *Nicotiana tabacum* L., *Papaver somniferum* L., *Taraxacum officinale* Hall. and *Lens culinaris* Medic. are used in religious rituals; *Lawsonia inermis* L., *Curcuma longa* L., *Triticum aestivum* L., *Lathyrus humilis* Fisch. ex Spreng., *Pinus wallichiana* Jackson, *Mentha longifolia* L., *Foeniculum vulgare* and *Oryza sativa* L. are involved in marriage ceremonies and culinary purposes; *Amaranthus caudatus* L., *Ocimum basilicum* L., *Setaria glauca* L., *Phoenix dactylifera* L., *Punica granatum* L., *Coriandrum sativum* L. and *Pisum sativum* L. are used during Fasts and Rozas; *Helianthus annuus* L., *Artemisia maritima* L., *Platanus orientalis* L., *Ficus palmata* Forrsk., *Morus alba* L. and *Trigonella foenum-graecum* L. are regarded auspicious species of sacred plants and *Opuntia vulgaris* Mill., *Ricinus communis* L., *Euphorbia helioscopia* L. and *Iris kashmeriana* Baker. represents inauspicious species of plants. There is a myth related to the sacred plants, if a plant is used for pooja, the same plant can be used as elixir of health. Apart from sacred value these plants possess some ethnomedicinal value also. In these few plant species like *Capsicum annum* Linn., *Vigna mungo* (Linn.) Hepper., *Citrus limon* L. are used by people to counteract harmful omens like evil eye and witch craft. All such plants have been included under sacred plants. Various workers have contributed to the studies on sacred plants. So far sacred plants of Ghaziabad are concerned, only here and there but no authentic report of any prophetic plant and the district till now is virgin in terms of studies on sacred plants, hence the present work is an effort to compile, analyse and document the information on the sacred plants of district Ghaziabad. Detailed data on the sacred plants and their religious significance is given in table 1.

Materials and Methods

The present study is based on the review of literature and primary information collected from the district. During the field survey, old knowledgeable people, priests, pujaris, Molvees, Brahmins, Vaid, Hakeems representing different areas and religious communities of District Ghaziabad were interviewed and information regarding sacred value of species and their ethno-medicinal significance was collected. The sample specimen of the sacred species were collected and identified with the help of various Floras, keys, research papers and available literature. Botanical names, family names, local names, parts venerated and sacred value of the plants were stressed upon. Nomenclature has been updated in accordance with ICBN (Vienna code, 2006).

Enumeration

The plants are arranged alphabetically, each by its botanical name, followed by name of the family, local names and Plant part used. The folk uses are described. With details of part(s) used and specific notes on the Sacred Virtues of plants.

To do Budh powerful, Vishnu ji should be worshipped, Tikka or Tilak (a mark made on the forehead on auspicious occasions) should be of white sandal wood standing in East side by Index finger, Sindoor (Vermilion) standing in North side by Middle finger, *Crocus sativus* Linn. (Kesar), Kastoori and Gorochan standing in West side by Ring finger and people who equally believe in all religion can do all Tilak by its Thumb.

Results

In the Nature, all living things are considered sacred in a way. But there are certain plants that have a significant importance in Religions. Some of these plants have a lot of medicinal values and that's why they were given religious important so that people would save them and take care of them. Others have gained importance because of being linked to a god or goddess. A total of 103 species belonging to 95 genera and 54 families have been recorded. These species were distributed within different life forms e.g. herbs (52.4% Spp.), Shrubs (17.5% spp.), Trees (25.2% spp.), Climbers (4.9% spp.) Pie chart I: Showing percentage representation of sacred life forms.

Among 54 families, Fabaceae and Poaceae marks the 1st rank with maximum species (10 spp.), Asteraceae and Moraceae IInd rank with species (06 spp.), Lamiaceae IIIrd with species (05 spp.), Euphorbiaceae IVth and Brassicaceae, Palmae, Solanaceae Vth with species (03 spp.), while families like Amaranthaceae, Apiaceae, Iridaceae, Liliaceae, Pedaliaceae, Rubiaceae, Rutaceae, and Zingiberaceae with minimum species (02 spp.). Thirty seven families are being represented by only one genera and one species each.

Various plant parts such as whole plant (10 spp.), leaves (12 spp.), stem/branches (2 spp.), flowers (6 spp.), seeds/grains (16 spp.), fruits (8 spp.), bark (1 spp.), roots /rhizome (2 spp.) and stigma (1 spp.) are used in various religious ceremonies and social rites. Among the enumerated plant species two species, *Berberis lyceum* Royle and *Iris kashmeriana* Baker. are venerated for two specific plant parts.

Discussion

The plants were first feared and then worshiped

Table 1 : Sacred plants and their ethno-medicinal significance in district Ghaziabad.

S.no.	Botanical name	Family	Local Name	Parts used	Sacred virtue
1.	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A. Juss.	Meliaceae	Neem	Branch Twig	After delivery, Small Pox and Death . Twig stuck on Doorway to safe from germs, give positive energy. Abode of Bharava
2.	<i>Araucaria heterophylla</i> Lam.	Araucariaceae	Christmas tree	Plant Branch	Used on Christmas Day Worship
3.	<i>Arachis hypogea</i> Linn.	Papilionaceae	Ground nut	Peanut	Used on Lohri festival as Prasad
4.	<i>Artemisia maritima</i> L.	Asteraceae	Muin/Seski/Tethwaan	Leaves.	Symbol auspicious and Purity.
5.	<i>Anthocephalus kadamba</i> (Roxb.) Miq.	Rubiaceae	Kadamb	Branch Wood	Clan, Symbol auspicious and Purity in marriages.
6.	<i>Amaranthus caudatus</i> L.	Amaranthaceae	Seval	Seeds.	Food in Ekadashi, Shivratri and Navratra fasts.
7.	<i>Areca catechu</i> Linn.	Palmae	Betel nut	Supari	Symbol auspicious in marriages ceremony .
8.	<i>Adiantum capillusveneris</i> L.	Adiantaceae	Gaotheer	Leaves.	Dhoopsamagri in Temples regarded auspicious and symbol of purity.
9.	<i>Allium sativum</i> Linn.	Liliaceae	Garlic/Lahsun	Clove	Hanged in the home to ward off evil spirits and effects against vampires.
10.	<i>Aloe barbadensis</i> Mill.	Liliaceae	Ghee kuanr	Leaves	Lord Shiva pooja on Shivratri
11.	<i>Ajugabracteosa</i> Wall. Ex Benth.	Lamiaceae	Batien	Leaves.	Constituent of Commercial Dhoop.
12.	<i>Achyranthus aspera</i> Linn.	Amaranthaceae	Aandhijhada	Plant root	Ward off Incantation
13.	<i>Bambusa wamin</i> Camus.	Poaceae	Buddha belly Bamboo	Plant	Symbol auspicious, Purity and prosperity.
14.	<i>Bambusa arundinacea</i> (Ritz.) Willd.	Poaceae	Bamboo	Plant	Symbol auspicious on Marriage ceremony.
15.	<i>Betulautilis</i> Don.	Betulaceae	Bhurzaj/Bhozpattar	Bark and stem.	HavanKund, PoojaSamagries
16.	<i>Berberislycium</i> Royle.	Berberidaceae	Khumbalya	Roots, leaves & fruit.	Keeps evil spirits away.
17.	<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i> Linn.	Nyctaginaceae	Biskhapra	Stem	Garland in Jaundice and Anaemia disease
18.	<i>Brassica nigra</i> Koch.	Brassicaceae	Kali Sarson	Seeds and oil	Shani pooja on Saturday
19.	<i>Brassica campestris</i> L.	Brassicaceae	Saryaan/Sarsoon	Seeds.	To counter witchcraft.
20.	<i>Butea monosperma</i> Taub.	Papilionaceae	Dhaak/Plash	Leaves	On auspicious occasions food serving Pattal.
21.	<i>Catendula officinalis</i> L.	Asteraceae	Hameshbahar	Flower & leaves.	LakshmiPooja and Hanuman Pooja.
22.	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i> R. Br.	Asclepiadaceae	Safed Aak	Plant	Used in Ganesh pooja.
23.	<i>Cannabis sativa</i> L.	Cannabaceae	Bhang/Bhaang	Leaves & inflorescence.	Favorite smoke of lord Shiva, used in Holi as drink.

Table 1 continued....

Table 1 continued....

24.	<i>Capsicum annum</i> L.	Solanaceae	Mirch/ March	Fruit.	Ward off bad spirits.
25.	<i>Chenopodium album</i> Linn.	Chenopodiaceae	Bathua	Seeds, leaves & plant.	Used in Navratra fasts as Kheer. Plant in Sakrat pooja.
26.	<i>Citrus limon</i> L.	Rutaceae	Nimbu	Fruit.	Ward off evil spirits.
27.	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> Linn.	Papilionaceae	Aprajita	Plant	Ward off enemy and opponent.
	<i>Cocos nucifera</i> Linn.	Palmae	Coconut	Narial	Pooja Navratra, Chhat Kalash Sthapna.
	<i>Coix lacynosa-jobi</i> Linn.	Poaceae	Vaijayanti, Tear grass, job's tear	Seed	A belief that bearer of Vaijayanti wreath never loses anything in life, used for Jap of Lord Krishna, Vishnu and Rama.
28.	<i>Commiphora roxburghii</i> (Arn.) Engl.	Burseraceae	Gugal	Bark/Gum	To attain or accomplish Goddess Chamunda and Havan samagri.
29.	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i> L.	Apiaceae	Daianwal/Dhaniya	Leaves & fruit.	Tahar offered in Masjids & Ziyarats besides used in ritual ceremonies.
30.	<i>Crocus sativus</i> L.	Iridaceae	Kesar	Stigma & Petals.	Yadgand ceremony, Bhayadhooj and KesarKehwa preparation.
31.	<i>Cucumis sativus</i> L.	Curbitaceae	Khira	Fruit.	Nagpanchmi Pooja.
32.	<i>Cucurbita maxima</i> Duch.ex Poir.	Cucurbitaceae	Kashiphal/Sitaphal	Fruit	Used in Pooja, if the children not aliving, fruit float or run off in Ganges, not to eat ever.
33.	<i>Curcuma longa</i> L.	Zingiberaceae	Ledar	Rhizome.	Bhutna ceremony, Tikka ceremony, ceremonial sacrifices.
34.	<i>Cynodondactylon</i> L.	Poaceae	Drub/Dhub	Leaves.	Abode of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.
35.	<i>Daturainnoxia</i> Mill.	Solanaceae	Dhatura	Seeds.	Sacred to Lord Shiva.
36.	<i>Desmostachya bipinnata</i> Stapf.	Poaceae	Kusha/Daab	Plant	Used for making asan to Meditation.
37.	<i>Dichrostachys cinerea</i> Wt. & Arn.	Mimosaceae	Shami	Plant	Used in Shani pooja.
38.	<i>Dioscorea esculenta</i> (Lour.) Burkill.	Dioscoreaceae	White yam	Tuber	Used in Chhat poojan.
39.	<i>Dracaena sandersii</i> Hort.	Agavaceae	Fangshui bamboo	Plant	Symbol auspicious, Purity and prosperity.
40.	<i>Drypetes roxburghii</i> (Wall.) Hurus.	Euphorbiaceae	Putrajeeva	Seed	Rosaries and Necklaces to keep children healthy and ward off evil spirits.
41.	<i>Elaeocarpus ganitrus</i> Roxb.	Elaeocarpaceae	Rudraksh	Seed	Used in rosaries by Lord Shiva's Devotee.
42.	<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> Maten	Zingiberaceae	Chhoti elaichi	Fruit/Seed	Auspicious to welcome someone
43.	<i>Emblca officinalis</i> Gaertn.	Euphorbiaceae	Amla	Fruit/Twig	Used in Shivratri pooja and twig on Kartik Ekadashi pooja.
44.	<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i> L.	Euphorbiaceae	Dudhi/ Dudhrail	Stem.	Symbol of bitter calamity.
	<i>Fagopyrum esculentum</i> Moench.	Polygonaceae	Kuttu	Floor	Kuttu floor food in fast of Navratra.

Table 1 continued....

Table 1 continued....

45.	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i> Linn.	Moraceae	Bar/Vat	Leaves	On auspicious occasions food serving Patal and pooja on Interlunar & Plenilunar
46.	<i>Ficus carica</i> Linn.	Moraceae	Fig/Anjeer	Fruit	Used on auspicious occasion of eid feast.
47.	<i>Ficus krishnae</i> C.DC.	Moraceae	Krishna Vat	Leaves	Pooja on Janamastmi
48.	<i>Ficus palmata</i> Forssk..	Moraceae	Fogkul	Fruit.	Referred in Holy Quran.
49.	<i>Ficus racemosa</i> Linn.	Moraceae	Gular	Wood	Used for Sacrificial fires.
	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> Linn.	Moraceae	Peepal	Plant	Abode of Lord Shiva, Nagdevta, both gods & evil souls side in it, worship of it has a tendency to overcome all Planetary afflictions.
50.	<i>Foeniculumvulgare</i> Mill.	Apiaceae	Badyaam/ Saunf	Seeds.	Used in Jenav (Yagnopavit) Ceremony, Havan & Pooja.
	<i>Gossypium herbaceum</i> Linn.	Malvaceae	Bari	Cotton/kalava	Used in auspicious ceremonies wick and kalava.
51.	<i>Helianthus annus</i> Linn.	Asteraceae	Sunflower	Inflorescence.	Sacred image of Suraj Devta.
52.	<i>Hibiscus rosa sinensis</i> Linn	Malvaceae	Gurhal	Ganesh Flower	Sacred image of Ganesh Devta and daily offer or consecrate flower to Hanuman ji to finish tension, Durga for life calamities.
53.	<i>Hordeumvulgare</i> L.	Poaceae	Jau/Jan	Grains.	Ceremonial sacrifice Dushehra and Holi.
54.	<i>Iris kashmeriana</i> Baker.	Iridaceae	Kabarposh/Soosan	Flowers.	Symbol of death and eternal sleep.
55.	<i>Juglansregia</i> L.	Juglandaceae	Dun	Bark & Nuts	Used in Shiv-Ratri festival as Prasad.
	<i>Lagenaria siceraria</i> (Molina.) Standley	Cucurbitaceae	Lauki	Fruit	Used in incantation with kalava and Vermilion.
56.	<i>Lathyrushumilus</i> Fisch. Ex. Spring	Fabaceae	Biladdi	Seeds.	Offered in feast on the name of god (Bhandaras) & to Agni Devta
57.	<i>Lawsonia inermis</i> L.	Lythraceae	Maanz	Leaves.	Used in Mehndi Ceremony in Marriages
58.	<i>Lens culinaris</i> Medic.	Fabaceae	Masardal	Seeds.	Offered in regional occasion & ceremonies
59.	<i>Mangifera indica</i> Linn.	Anacardiaceae	Aam/Mango	Leaves, Wood	On auspicious occasions often employ leaves in marriage ceremonies and decorate Gateways, wood in Havan as fuel.
60.	<i>Menthalongifolia</i> L.	Lamiaceae	Podena	Leaves.	Sacred bath before yatras
61.	<i>Michelia champaka</i> Linn.	Magnoliaceae	Champa	Flower	Used in Shivratri poojan.
62.	<i>Mitragyna parviflora</i> Korth.	Rubiaceae	Kam/Kaim	Wood	Clan, Symbol auspicious and Purity in marriages.
63.	<i>Morus alba</i> L.	Moraceae	Toot/ Shahtoot	Fruit.	Auspicious and meant for Pyre ignition in Hindu.

Table 1 continued....

Table 1 continued....

64.	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> L.	Musaceae	Kela	Fruit/Leaf	Abode of Goddess Durga, used in Vishnu ji Pooja on Thursday, leaf pattal.
65.	<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> Gaertn.	Nelumbonaceae	Kamal	Leaf	Saraswati poojan on Basantpanchmi, Food serving Pattal and kamal kakri garland when marriage not possible.
66.	<i>Nicotianatabacum</i> L.	Solanaceae	Tamboog	Leaves.	Shivites use it in Chillum
67.	<i>Nigella sativa</i> Linn.	Ranunculaceae	Kalonji	Seed	Used on auspicious occasion of eid feast.
68.	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> Linn.	Lamiaceae	Tulsi	Leaves/Stem.	Most sacred associated to Lord Krishna and Lord Vishnu, rosaries for pooja.
69.	<i>Ocimumbasilicum</i> Linn.	Lamiaceae	Jangli Tulsi	Seeds.	Used in Iteeyari during Ramadaan
70.	<i>Opuntia vulgaris</i> L.	Cactaceae	Kolakar/ Cactus	Stem.	Keeps the evil sprits away, symbol of desertness
71.	<i>Oryza sativa</i> L.	Poaceae	Tamaal/ Daineya	Grains.	Emblem of wealth and fortune.
72.	<i>Papavers omniferum</i> L.	Papaveraceae	Khashkhash	Exudate from capsule.	Sacred to God of Sleep and Lord of Death.
73.	<i>Phaseolus mungo</i> Linn.	Papilionaceae	Urd	Daal	Used in Shani pooja
	<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i> Linn.	Palmae	Pind khajoor	Fruit	Used on auspicious occasion of eid.
74.	<i>Pinus Wallichiana</i> Jakson	Pinaceae	Yaarkuj	Resin.	Decoration in marriage ceremonies.
75.	<i>Piper betle</i> Linn.	Piperaceae	Paan	Leaf	Used in marriage ceremony.
76.	<i>Pisumsativum</i> L.	Fabaceae	Matar	Seeds.	Marriage ceremonies.
77.	<i>Platanusorientalis</i> L.	Platanaceae	Chinar/ Boonkuj	Leaves & wood.	Sacred to religious places.
78.	<i>Polyalthia longifolia</i> (Somner)Thw.	Annonaceae	Devdaru	Leaves	On auspicious occasions often employ leaves in marriage ceremonies and decorate Gateways.
	<i>Pothos aureus</i> Hort.	Araceae	Money plant	Plant	Abode of pleasure and prosperity, uninterrupted flow of income.
79.	<i>Pterocarpus santalinus</i> Linn. f.	Papilionaceae	Lal Chandan/Kino gum	Wood	Ward off evil sprits , bad dreams, no sign of nightmare and used for Tilak.
80.	<i>Punicagranatum</i> L.	Punicaceae	Anaar/ Daan.	Fruit & rind.	Referred in Holy Quran, offered in temples.
81.	<i>Rosa macrophylla</i> Lindl.	Rosaceae	Wangulab	Flowers.	Offered in temples.
82.	<i>Robiniapseudoacacia</i> L.	Fabaceae	Kikkar	Leaves & wood	Decorative purposes in Marriages.

Table 1 continued....

Table 1 continued....

83.	<i>RorippaNausturtiumaquaticum</i> L.	Brassicaceae	Nagbubbar	Leaves.	Pure ingredient of Dhoopsamagri, used in temples.
84.	<i>Ruta graveolens</i> Linn.	Rutaceae	Rue	Twig	Used to repelling bad spirits and put in room corner no sign of nightmare.
85.	<i>Ricinuscommunis</i> Linn.	Euphorbiaceae	Daldakul	Inflorescence & seeds.	Ward off evil spirits away and stem used for Holi fixation on Basantpanchmi.
86.	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i> Linn.	Poaceae	Ganna	Stem	Used on Dussehra occasion.
87.	<i>Salvia moorcroftiana</i> Wall.	Lamiaceae	Shrematus	Leaves.	Ganesh Pooja and Lakshmi Pooja.
88.	<i>Santalum album</i> Linn.	Santalaceae	Safed Chandan	Wood	Wood put below the head during Sleep time and used for Tilak .
89.	<i>Sesamum indicum</i> Linn.	Pedaliaceae	Till	Seed	Used on Lohri festival as Prasad
90.	<i>Sesamum mulayanum</i> Nair.	Pedaliaceae	Kala till	Seed	Shani pooja and meant for pyre ignition in cremation ground.
91.	<i>Setariaglauca</i> L.	Poaceae	Shoul	Seeds.	Consumed in fasts.
92.	<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i> (Linn.) Merr. & Perry.	Myrtaceae	Clove	Dried flower buds	Used on auspicious occasions and in pooja.
93.	<i>Tagetuserecta</i> L.	Asteraceae	Guttaposh.	Flowers.	Poojas,Marriages and religious ceremonies.
94.	<i>Taraxacumofficinale</i> Hall.	Asteraceae	Handh.	Leaves.	Used in offerings and ceremonies
95.	<i>Tecomella undulata</i> (Smith.) Seem.	Bignoniaceae	Roheda / Rohitka.	Plant	Curing children's skin diseases by festoon the clothes of its young ones.
96.	<i>Trapa natans</i> Linn.	Trapaceae	Singhara/Waternut	Fruit	Used in Ahoi Pooja and Navratra fast.
97.	<i>Triticumaestivum</i> L.	Poaceae	Gehun	Grain.	Jenav ceremony
98.	<i>TrigonellaFoenumgraecum</i> L.	Fabaceae	Maithe	Seeds.	Offered to Goddess Kali as Bhaint
99.	<i>Urticadioica</i> L.	Urticaceae	Soai	Leaves.	Ceremonial sacrifices and social rites
100.	<i>Vernonia cinerea</i> Less.	Asteraceae	Sahdevi	Plant	Ward off evil spirits.
101.	<i>Vigna mungo</i> (Linn.) Hepper	Fabaceae	Mahandal	Seeds.	Keeps magic and incantations away
102.	<i>Vitis vinifera</i> L.	Vitaceae	Daach/ Angoor	Fruit.	Offered as Bhoghphal
103.	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i> L.	Scrophulariaceae	Wantamoq/Poushud	Leaves & Flowers	Keeps an evil eye away
104.	<i>Zea mays</i> L.	Poaceae	Makkai/ Shilli	Grains.	Sacred to Indra and Kama Devita.

Table 2 : Sacred plants and their ethno-medicinal significance in District Ghaziabad (Days Worship and Fast).

S.no.	Days&Food	God/Goddess	Plant	Part	Prasad
1.	Sunday, Food with curd and Fruit.	Sun	<i>Cicer arietinum</i> Linn.. <i>Heliantus annus</i> Linn. <i>Hibiscus rosa sinensis</i> Linn. <i>Pterocarpus santalinus</i> Linn. f. <i>Saccharum officinarum</i> Linn	Sunflower ,put flower gulhar, gud in water & give to Sun.	Gud or Besan laddoo.
2.	Monday/Food of sweet rice, milk and fruit Food cooked in Ghee	Lord Shiva Devi Lakshmi (red flower}	<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> Maton. <i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> Gaertn. <i>Rosa indica</i> Linn. <i>Nerium indicum</i> Mill. <i>Hibiscus rosa sinensis</i> Linn.	Chhoti elaichi seed Red flower & Lotus seed Wreath	Boondi laddoo Food cooked in Ghee
3.	Tuesday/Sweet bread, milk.	Hanuman (Chaula) deshi Ghee or Chameli oil.	<i>Cicer arietinum</i> Linn. <i>Curcuma longa</i> Linn. <i>Ficus religiosa</i> Linn. <i>Hibiscus rosa sinensis</i> Linn.	Basan, Wreath of Tulsi or Peepal leaf.	Peda or (Guldana)
4.	Wednesday/Food with curd, Modak, milk and Fruit.	Kali Ma (Finish diseases) Ganesh	<i>Phaseolus mungo</i> Linn. <i>Phaseolus radiatus</i> Linn. <i>Cajanus cajan</i> Millsp <i>Hibiscus rosa sinensis</i> Linn <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> Pers. <i>Calotropis gigantea</i> R. Br.	Daal urd, moong & arher. Gurhal flower Doorva plant root	Boondi Laddoo. Boondi Laddoo or Modak
5.	Thursday/ Sweet Besan bread. Khichdi.	Vishnu (Yellow clothes) Loi to Cow with gram, gud, Turmeric. Sai baba	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> Linn. <i>Cicer arietinum</i> Linn. <i>Curcuma longa</i> Linn. <i>Triticum aestivum</i> Linn. <i>Cicer arietinum</i> Linn. <i>Cocos nucifera</i> Linn. <i>Spinacea oleracea</i> Linn. <i>Vitis vinifera</i> Linn.	Fruit, Kela not to eat, only pooja Chana	Gram pulse, gud, munakka Khichdi & Sweet. Besan laddoo.
6.	Friday/Fried potato with lahari salt and green chili or black paper.	Santoshi ma Devi durga (Khatai not to eat)	<i>Cicer arietinum</i> Linn. <i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> Gaertn. <i>Saccharum officinarum</i> Linn. <i>Cicer arietinum</i> Linn. <i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> Gaertn. <i>Saccharum officinarum</i> Linn.	Lotus flower Lotus flower	Gud Chana Mava Katli
7.	Saturday/Black rasgulla and urd daal khichdi.	Shani (Black clothes, iron)	<i>Brassica nigra</i> Koch.. <i>Curcuma longa</i> Linn. <i>Ficus religiosa</i> Linn. <i>Phaseolus mungo</i> Linn. <i>Sesamum mulayanum</i> Nair	Gud, Kala till, Oil, Urd daal	Black rasgulla, Urd pulse Khichdi

because of the intoxicating liquors which were derived there from. Primitive man believed that intoxication rendered one divine. There was supposed to be something unusual and sacred about such an experience. Even in modern times alcohol is known as "spirits." All early marriages were held under the trees, and when women desired children, they would sometimes be found out in the forest affectionately embracing a sturdy oak. Many plants and trees were venerated because of their real or fancied medicinal powers. The savage believed that all chemical effects were due to the direct activity of supernatural forces. From the time immemorial, plants have been the focus of religious life for many people in the world. Plants are praised and honored by people because of their close association with a deity e.g. *Ocimum sanctum* Linn. with Lord Krishna, *Coix lacymajobi* Linn. A belief that bearer of Vajrayanti wreath 26" bead 108 + 1, never loses anything in life. Widely used for Jap (Prayer) of Lord Krishna, Vishnu and Rama. *Mimusops elengi* Linn, Bakul, Maulsari in Vrindavan Lord Krishna is said to have played his flute under *Bakul* trees attracting young women and the milkmaids used to get attracted towards the sound of the flute. Even today, Bakul flowers are offered during the worship of Lord Krishna. The ancient poet Kalidasa mentioned the Bakul tree in his creation Meghdoot. *Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn. Lotus, Kamal. The Lotus is considered a symbol of devotion, purity and innocence. It is the seat of Goddess Lakshmi, Goddess Saraswati, Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma. *Ficus religiosa* Linn. with Gautam Buddha. It is also called the Sacred Fig or the Bodhi Tree. It was a peepal tree under which Buddha had meditated and gained enlightenment. It is considered the king of the trees in Hinduism and is obviously very important in Buddhism too and wood of Peepal tree is used for Havana ceremony to calm down the effects of malefic Jupiter. closely linked with the Planet Jupiter, Peepal tree worship turns a strong Jupiter in to an auspicious one and a weak Jupiter in to a stronger one. It is also, astrologically believed that if a person has manglik dosh, marrying a Peepal Tree, removes the dosh and a person can marry a non-manglik person. In Banana too astrologically believed that if a person has manglik dosh, marrying a Banana Tree removes the dosh and a person can marry a non-manglik person. Banana Tree is a very pious tree and symbolizes Lord Vishnu. People worship the tree on Thursdays to get the benefits of Jupiter. Roots of Banana Tree are tied with yellow thread are worn. Banana as a fruit is offered to Lord Vishnu and Lakshmi for good Married Life and good Financial condition and happiness of family. Leaves of Banana tree are used in many auspicious and used

religiously in many Hindu festivals. *Butea monosperma* Taub. with Lord Brahma etc. Some plants gained religious importance due to their efficacious use in religious ceremonies, rituals, festivals, poojas e.g. *Cynodon dactylon* L., *Lawsonia inermis* L., *Mangifera indica* Linn., *Acorus calamus* Linn., *Tagetes erecta* L. and others, while certain plants are sacred because of their close association with particular locations like temples e.g. *Catharanthus roseus* (Linn.) G. Don. and *Helianthus annuus* Linn. Few plants are associated with constellations (Nakshatras) and planets (Grahah) e.g. *Calotropis gigantea* R. Br. is associated with Sun. Many plants which are sacred to the area are also revered in others part of the India e.g. *Ocimum sanctum* Linn. a type of basil considered sacred by Hindus, is grown in front and in the vicinity of houses and worshipped, similar practice is observed all over India, *Lawsonia inermis* L. and *Curcuma longa* L. are used in marriage ceremonies by all communities and religion (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, & Christian) of the area, a very similar practice has been observed by various workers in India. *Coriandrum sativum* L., *Capsicum annum* L., *Calendula officinalis* L., *Chenopodium album* L., *Citrus limon* L., *Curcuma longa* L., *Cannabis sativa* L., *Euphorbia helioscopia* L. It is said that the death body must be transported in green bamboo up to the cremate places where it has to be burned with fuel wood.

The present work also reveals the importance of the sacred plants for ethno-medicinal aspects. There is a myth related to the sacred plants, if a plant is used for pooja, the same plant can be used as elixir of health e.g. concoction prepared from the leaves of *Artemisia maritima* L. relieves the children from intestinal worms, it is regarded symbol of purity and auspiciousness. Sap of *Berberis lyceum* Royle. cures scalp diseases, owing to sacred value, it is known to ward off evil spirits; *Papaver somniferum* L. reduces problem of micturation in children, is sacred to God of sleep and Lord of Death; *Betula utilis* Don., which cures fractures is used in Poojas and Havankundsamagries. Thus, sacred plants being integral part of biodiversity, also have got natural healing properties so these plants can also be utilized medicinally. An appropriate strategy for the conservation and sustainable utilization of sacred plants needs to be developed because such a study is likely to open new areas of research in the field of medicine, pharmacology, economic botany and conservation biology.

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