



Socio-Religious Importance of Weeds in Shrirampur Tahsil of Ahmednagar District (MS), India.

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ABSTRACT

The present paper mainly focuses on the information of weed species and their socio-religious importance in Shrirampur Tahsil. An extensive ethnobotanical exploration was carried out in rural area of Shrirampur Tahsil during 2019-2020. The study area was systematically surveyed, main goal behind this extensive exploration was to identify and to document different weed species used by local tribals as well as common rural people in different festivals, social and religious ceremonies, marriages and to worship god and goddesses. Shrirampur Tahsil has not given enough attention as far as socio-religious studies of weeds are concerned. Hence present studies have been undertaken. Total 41 weed species belongs to 37 genera and 21 families of Socio-Religious Importance are recorded.

Keywords: Socio-religious, Weeds, Shrirampur, Maharashtra.

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INTRODUCTION

History of Shrirampur goes back to Daimabad culture, which is a deserted village an archeological site of Indus valley civilization on the left bank of the Pravara river a tributary of the Godavari river in Shrirampur tahsil, twigs of fibrous plants and many other plant remains are also found at this excavation site. Though Shrirampur does not have a significant forest cover but agriculture is well developed in this area. Plain region of the tahsil is rich in deep black soil, almost all the area is well irrigated because of water provided through Bhandardara dam. Most of the population is actively engaged in agriculture and as it is well watered region weeds and their eradication is a serious problem. Weeds are plants other than crop sown or a plant that grows so luxuriantly or plentifully that it chokes all other plants that possess more valuable properties [3], Weeds can be defined as "A useless, undesirable and often very insightly plant wild growth, usually found in land which has been cultivated, or in areas developed by man for specific purpose other than cultivation (Thomas 1956), most of the definitions of weeds emphasizes on negative and harmful aspects of weeds, but weeds have positive and bright side too. Many weeds are utilized for food, fodder, medicine and in various social and religious functions and festivals; various different weeds are edible and a good source of food for tribals and are nutritious too. Utilization of weeds in proposed study area is very significant for social and religious functions like marriages, child birth and religious festivals and to worship god and goddesses. Weeds are eaten as wild vegetables during upvas (fasting during specific religious festivals in Hindu religion). People make use of plant parts such as, stem, roots, twigs, peduncle, flowers, fruits, seeds and whole plant for social and religious rituals and customs. There is intimate relationship between human being and weeds, since time immemorial conservation of natural resources has been an integral aspect of many indigenous communities all over the world [13]. In every human society worship is performed with traditional rituals for well being. Many tribal communities preserve this tradition through folklore and worship their deities right from the occasion of birth to mourning death (Thapa C.B. 2015). Conservation is very important aspect behind socio-religious use of plants, and so human ancestors are wise enough in integrating this together. Tribes like Bhilla, Pardhi and other communities like Chitrakathies & Kaikadi make use of weeds for various customs and rituals. People from Kaikadi community make very beautiful baskets and crafts by using Kavalivel (*Cryptostagi grandiflora* (Roxb) R.Br.) which is a common weed of follow land. These baskets are specifically used for a ritual in Durga Pooja called as Jogwa. This practice of making baskets is very skillful and these people are expert in it. Survey and documentation of country's or communities' natural resources is an important prerequisite for proper utilization of its raw material. Full knowledge of various

plants is necessary so as to change proper utilization [5]. Tribals are expert in identification and proper processing and utilization of weeds and are aware about their socio-religious significance.

Many researchers have done notable work in botanical exploration of this region and studied plant and weed diversity, such as Hooker [9], Cook [6], Shrike [14], Pradhan & Singh [12], Auti *et.al.* [2], Mulay [10], Aher [1], though there is no specific report on socio-religious aspect of weeds, so present report is one of its kind, and present survey and documentation is done to explore weed diversity in this context.

GEOGRAPHY AND ECOLOGY OF STUDY AREA

Shrirampur Tahsil is one of the very important Tahsil of Ahmednagar district Maharashtra (India). Total area of the Tahsil is about 569.87 sq.km and area under agriculture is about 507.87 sq.km (89.03%). Tahsil in all consists of around 54 villages. The study area lies between 19°36'53.64"N to 74°4.32"E. The latitude of shrirampur is 19.6202 and the longitude is 74.654655. The climate of the study area is hot in summer and generally dry during major part of the year except during the monsoon season. The winter season commences from November and ends in mid of February. It is followed by summer during months of March to May. The average temperature is ranging between 20 to 40° C (68 to 108° F). The study area experiences the monsoon season from month of June to September. The study area is at 541 m (1,775 ft) above mean sea level. The air is dry during summer season on an average it is about 18 to 20%, while it increases during southwest monsoon period on an average it is between 65% to 85%.

In many parts of Tahsil soil is deep black, while rest of the parts consists of medium black soil, coarse shallow soil, and reddish soil. Godavari is the major river flowing through the Tahsil. The River Pravara is a tributary of the river Godavari. The soil present near the banks of these rivers is deep black soil.

People: - In Shrirampur Tahsil Bhill, Koli, and Pardhi are major tribal groups found, however Chitrakathi and Kaikadi are other communities residing in Tahsil. Agriculture, Fish capturing and basket making are their occupations. Majority of their houses are huts made up of soil and wood and roof is made up of dried sugarcane and Typha leaves.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The proposed study was done by collecting a systematic data during 2019-2020. The data illustrated (Table-1) here is based on the interviews of local elderly people, Vaidu, bhagat village headman, tribals such as Bhill, Pardhi, Koli, information is also gathered by taking interviews of people from communities such as Chitrakathi, Kaikadi, and Vadari. Villagers, spiritual leaders and teachers were also interviewed for gathering truthful information about social and religious use of weeds. A questionnaire was prepared for the purpose of interview. Collections of the weeds were done from different places of the tahsil and are preserved by using a standard technique [8]. The collected weed specimens were preserved in herbarium and were identified taxonomically with the help of available standard literature [12], Cook [7], Singh *et.al* [16], Cook [6], V.N Naik [11]. Flora of Maharashtra Dicotyledons Vol-I, Singh and Kartikeyan [15]. Flora of Maharashtra Dicotyledons Vol-II by Singh *et.al* [16].

TABLE NO: 1 Weeds and their Socio-Religious use

Sr.No	Botanical Name	Vernacular name	Family	Habit	Plant part used	Occasion
1.	<i>Acacia nilotica</i> (L) wild	Babhul	Mimosaceae	Tree	Tender leaves and pods	Rushipanchami
2.	<i>Achyranthus aspera</i> L.	Aghada	Amaranthaceae	Herb	Leaves	Rushipanchami, Nagpanchami
3.	<i>Antiplex hortensis</i> L.	Chandan-batwa	Chinopodiaceae	Herb	Delicate leaves, stem	Rushipanchami
4.	<i>Amaranthus tricolor</i> L.	Lalmath	Amaranthaceae	Herb	Delicate leaves, stem	Pitru paksha
5.	<i>Amaranthus viridis</i> L.	Tandulja	Amaranthaceae	Herb	Leaves, stem	Rushipanchami
6.	<i>Argyrea nervosa</i> (Burm.f) Bojer	Samudra-vel, vidara	Convolvulaceae	Climber	Leaves, stem	Rushipanchami, Marriage
7.	<i>Barleria prionitis</i> L.	Kate koranti	Acanthaceae	Shrub	Flowers	Durgapooja
8.	<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i> L.	Ghetuli	Nyctaginaceae	Herb	Leaves, stem	Rushipanchami
9.	<i>Boerhavia erecta</i> L.	Punarnava	Nyctaginaceae	Herb	Leaves, stem	Rushipanchami
10.	<i>Bryonia laciniata</i> L.	Shivlingi	Cucurbitaceae	Climber	Fruits and seeds	Shivpooja
11.	<i>Calatropis procera</i> (Ait) R.Br	Pandhari rui	Asclepiadaceae	Shrub	Leaves, flowers	Hanuman pooja
12.	<i>Capparis decidua</i>	Kiral	Capparaceae	Straggling	Thick stem.	Installation of local

Jondhale and Giri

	(Forssk) Edgew.			shrub	whole plant	deitics
13.	<i>Cardiospermum helicacabum</i> L.	Kapalphodi	Sapindaceae	Twining herb	Leaves, seeds	Rushipanchami
14	<i>Cassia auriculata</i> L.	Tarwad	Fabaceae	Shrub	Flower and branches	Durgapooja, Dashkriyavidhi
15.	<i>Cassia tora</i> L.	Takla	Fabaceae	Herb	Tender leaves	Rushipanchami
16.	<i>Chinopodium album</i> L.	chill	Chenopodiaceae	Herb	Tender leaves	Rushipanchami
17.	<i>Clematis triloba</i> Heyene	Marvel	Ranunculaceae	Climber	Whole plant	Marriage
18.	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> L.	Gokarn	Fabaceae	Twining herb	Flower	Shivpooja
19.	<i>Cocculus hirsutus</i> L.	Vasanvel	Menispermaceae	Climbing shrub	Whole plant	Marriage
20.	<i>Cryptostegia grandiflora</i> (Roxb) R.Br.	Kavali vel	Apocynaceae	Climbing shrub	Stem and branches	A small basket is made from branches for Durgapooja
21.	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> L.	Harali	Poaceae	Herb	Whole plant	Ganeshpooja Rushipanchami ,Marriage
22.	<i>Datura innoxia</i> Mill	Dhotra	Solanaceae	Herb	Flower	Shivpooja Hartalika
23.	<i>Desmostachya bipinnata</i> L.	Dhab	Poaceae	Herb	Whole plant	Pitruapaksha pinddan
24.	<i>Digera muriculata</i> (L).Mert	Kunjircha	Amaranthaceae	Herb	Whole plant	Rushipanchami
25.	<i>Eclipta alba</i> L.	Kalamaka	Asteraceae	Herb	Whole plant	Pinddan
26.	<i>Launaea procumbens</i> (Roxb.)	Pathri	Asteraceae	Herb	Whole plant leaves	Rushipanchami
27.	<i>Leucus aspera</i> (Wild). Link	Shankroba	Lamiaceae	Herb	Flower	Shivpooja
28.	<i>Merremia dissecta</i> (Jacq) Hallier f	Sapvel	Convolvulaceae	Climber	Seeds	Nagpooja
29.	<i>Mimosa pudica</i> L.	Lajalu	Mimosaceae	Herb	Roots and flowers	Durgapooja
30.	<i>Momordica balsaminal</i> L.	Rankarle	Cucurbitaceae	Climber	Fruits	Shivpooja
31.	<i>Pergularia daemia</i> (Forssk) chiov	Utaranicha vel	Asclepiadaceae	Climber	Leaves	To protect from evil forces
32.	<i>Peristrophe bicululata</i> (Retz).Nees	Kusmada	Acanthaceae	Shrub	Flowers	Nagpooja
33.	<i>Portulaca oleraceae</i> L.	Ghol	Portulacaceae	Herb	Whole plant	Rushipanchami
34.	<i>Portulaca quadrifida</i> L.	Chighal	Portulacaceae	Herb	Whole plant	Rushipanchami
35.	<i>Pupalia lappacea</i> (L) Juss	Adai	Amaranthaceae	Shrub	Flowers	Nagpooja
36.	<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i> L.	Bhuiringni	Solanaceae	Herb	Flowers	Durgapooja
37.	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i> L.	Sarata	Zygophyllaceae	Herb	Leaves	Rushipanchami
38.	<i>Tridax procumbens</i> L.	Tantani	Asteraceae	Herb	Flowers	Durgapooja
39.	<i>Typha angustifolia</i> L.	Pankanis	Typhaceae	Aquatic shrub	Whole plant	Marriage
40.	<i>Vernonia cinerea</i> (L.) Less	Sahadevi	Asteraceae	Herb	Whole plant	Plant is burned and ash is applied on forehead and is considered holy.
41.	<i>Wattakaka volubilis</i> (L.F.) Staf	Harandodi	Asclepidaceae	Climbing shrub	Flowers	Rushipanchami

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From the above ethno botanical exploration 41 weed species belonging 37 genera and 21 different families of monocot (3) and dicot (18) of Angiosperms have been recorded in Shrirampur tahsil which are

used in different festivals and Social and religious ceremonies and to worship god and goddesses. The relevant description of each species and its use in festivals and social and religious function is given in detail. The list of weed species is alphabetically prepared along with their botanical name, vernacular name, family, habit, Part used and occasion for which it is used and documented in table no.1.

CONCLUSION

From the above survey and documentation it can be concluded that 41 weed species enumerated and documented which are used by tribes and common village peoples of shrirampur tahsil in various rituals, customs, festivals and marriage ceremony and to worship god & goddesses.

However mining, industrialization, construction and excavation of foundation soil and over use of weedicides have greatly affected diversity and population of weeds. *Wattakaka volubilis* (L.F) Staf commonly known as Harandodi in this region which is a common weed and its population is greatly reduced because of mining, constructions and use of weedicides and there is need to conserve it as it is used as medicinal plant and flowers are eaten as wild vegetable by tribals. Kaikadi community people of this region make very beautiful crafts and baskets which are significant in 'Durgapooja', from branches of weed *Cryptostegia grandiflora* (Roxb) R.Br commonly known as kavalivel. These people are expert in this skill and perhaps it's their last generation who know their skill and there is great need to conserve this. It is concluded that the present study may be helpful and useful to mankind as it would unwise to let go of this skillful experienced rich traditional wisdom as socioreligious aspects of weeds binds people close to nature which is available and accessible.

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