

Trees in Indian Mythology

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ABSTRACT

Trees have been very important in Indian Mythology. Their significance and intimate association with people has been reflected in written and oral traditions of India. Oriental religious Hindusim, Budhisim, Jainism, have provided trees a special place. Indegenous communities have also revolt trees. The present study deals with the value, beliefs, and place of trees in Indian mythology. We are describing 63 trees species which belongs to 35 families.

Keywords: Hindusium, Indus Valley Civilization, Puranas, Astrology, Bhuddism

1. INTRODUCTION

Providing innumerable benefits trees are the highest and noblest production of the plant kingdom. In Indian culture trees have been regarded with special reverence. The ancient Indian civilization was primarily dependent upon and intimately associated with forests and flora. During the Vedic times the ordinary term as found in Rigveda and later Samhitas for flora was "Vriksas" for trees and 'Ausadhi' for plants having medicinal value. The Indian 'Shastras' and 'Panchang', too mention several ways of doing so, one of them being offering prayers to various trees.

2. TREES IN DIFFERENT AGES

The ancient Indian world tree Asvattha is interesting, because it's upside down with roots in the heavens and branches covering the earth. Asvattha was considered to be the actual living universe and one aspect of Brahman, the world spirit. The gods were thought to be the branches. As a "tree of life," Asvattha produced soma, a drink that granted immortality. Fruits and seeds of every kind came from Asvattha. Providers of shade and bearers of fruit, trees have long been associated with life and fertility. Evergreen trees, which remain green all year, became symbols of undying life. Deciduous trees, which lose their leaves in the winter and produce new ones in the spring, symbolized renewal, rebirth after death, or immortality. The tree of life, with sacred animals feeding on fruit-bearing branches, is a common image in the art of the ancient Near East. The tree was associated with palaces and kingship because the king was seen as the link between the earthly and divine realms. Through him, the gods blessed the earth with fertility. Some Ancient Indian tree deities, such as Puliyaivalaiyamman, the Tamil deity of the tamarind tree, or Kadambariyamman, associated with the Kadamba tree were seen as manifestations of a goddess who offers her blessings by giving fruits in abundance. The present paper deals with the value, beliefs and place of trees in Indian mythology over different periods of History.

2.1. Indus Valley Period

In India, tree worshipping became quite common in the third or fourth millennium B.C., when there was a highly evolved Harappan culture. Among the seals of Mohenjodaro also, one seal depicted a stylish Pipal (*Ficus religiosa*) tree with two heads of unicorns emerging from its stem. Painted pottery of the Indus valley often included Palms and Pipal trees.

2.2. Vedic Period

Tree worshipping occupied a very important place during the Vedic period also. The following Rigvedic hymn illustrates the importance of trees during that period:

May plants, the waters and the sky preserve us, and
Woods and mountains with their trees for trees....
May the swift wanderer, Lord of refreshments, list
Our songs, who speeds through cloudy haven. And
May the water, bright, like castles, hear us. As they
Blow onward from the clover mountain.
(Rig-Veda 5.41, 11-12)

In Rigveda a prayer is offered for the growth of Vanaspati:

Vanaspati mount up with a hundred branches that
We may mount with a thousand, thou whom the
Sharpened hatchet has brought for great
auspiciousness (Rig-Veda 3.8.11)

Vedic seers offered prayer to god for the purpose of making plants and herbs sweet and invigorating:

May the plants and herbs be sweet (i.e. efficacious for all) may the
Heavens, the waters and the mid regions be all sweet (i.e. healthful
and invigorating) for us. May the producer of grains and vegetables
Be sweet (i.e. friendly and helpful) for us. Let us follow him (act
According to his wishes and convinces) being free from disease
And trouble of any sort. (Rig-Veda 4.57.3)

2.3. Puranic Literature

There is no agreement among the scholars about the antiquity and time of origin of the Puranas. According to Pusalker (1955) Puranas occupy an intermediate position, between the Vedic age and the period of classical literature. The Aryans who were careful observers of plants, studied the flora keenly with the intention of finding out the improper utility. All the Puranas were not written in the same century. Further there are varied opinions on the

Table 1

Constellations Sacred tree and deities

Constellations	Sacred tree	Deities
Aswini (Horse's head or face)	<i>Stychnos-nux-vomica</i> (Kuchla)	Ashwini
Bharni (Triangle)	<i>Emblica officinalis</i> (Aohka)	Yam
Kritika (The axe)	<i>Ficus glomerata</i> (Gular)	Agni
Rohini (Alderbaran or charlot)	<i>Eugenia jambolana</i> (Jamun)	Bramha
Mrigsira (The onion or antelope's head)	<i>Acacia catchu</i> (Khair)	Chandra
Aridra (Betalguse)	<i>Vepris bilocularis</i> (Krishnaguru)	Shiv
Punarvesa (Pollex or potter's wheel)	<i>Bambusa arundinaceae</i> (Bans)	Aditi
Pushya (The Chameleon)	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> (Pipal)	Guru
Ashlesha (Hydra or Serpent)	<i>Mesua ferrca</i> (Nagkesar)	Sarp
Makha (Regulus or palnguin)	<i>Ficus benghalensis</i> (Bargad)	Pitter
Pubba or purba phalguni Man's eye	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Palsh)	Bhag
Uttara Phulguni humans syes	<i>Elaeodendron glaucum</i>	Ayarma
Hasta (Hand)	<i>Jasminum auriculatum</i> (Juai)	Surya
Chiti or chitra	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> (Bel)	Tawasta
Swati	<i>Terminelia arjuna</i> (Arjun)	Vayu
Visakhe	<i>Mesua ferrea</i> (Nageshor)	Indragni
Anooradha	<i>Mesua ferrea</i> (Nageshor)	Mitra
Jyestha	<i>Solmalia malabarica, Bombex ceiba</i> (Semal)	Indra
Moola	<i>Canarium strictum, vateria indica</i> (Raldhup)	Jal
Poorvasadha	<i>Calamus sps</i>	Jal
Uttarashada	<i>Artocarpus heterophyllus</i> (Kathal)	Vishwa deva
Sravana	<i>Calotropis gigantean</i> (Madar)	Vishnu
Dhanishta	<i>Prosopis spicigera</i> (Shami)	Vasu
Saibhisha	<i>Anthocephalus chinensis</i> (Kadamb)	Varun
Poorva bhadrapada	<i>Mangifera indica</i> (Aam)	Ajaik/ajakapad
Uttara bhadrapada	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> (Neem)	Abibudhanya
Revati	<i>Madhuca longifolia</i> (Mahua)	Pusha

classifications of the Puranas Sensharma (1989) followed vasumatis rendition of seven Puranas. In this book also same Puranas are followed so far as sacred plants during puranic periods are concerned. The seven Puranas are Vamana Purana, Vayu Purana, Kunrma Purana, Matsya Purana, Brahmavaivarta Purana, Agni varta, Brahma Purana, spaining from 200 A D to the 13th century AD.

According to Kurma Purana Brahma has created trees (Vrksa) and herbs (Virudha), and monocarpus plants (Osadhi) have originated from the dermal pores of Brahma. There are categorized references to the names of sacred plants in this Purana having sacred origin like Iksu (*Saccharum officinarum*), Dhanya (*Oryza sativa*), Nispava (Pulses), Kumkuma (*Carthamus tinctorius* or *Crocus sativus*), Kusumbha (*Schleichera trijuga*) Ajaji (*Carum carvi*) Goksira and Vikara. It also mentions the descriptions of same Vratas and various plant materials to be used for such Vratas.

Agni Purana gives the names of plants and plant material to be used in some religious rituals. It states that the following flowers have universal usage in worship mallika (*Jasminum sombac*), Ashoka (*Saraca asoca*), Kamala (*Nelumbium speciosum*), Kumda (*Jasminum pubescens*), Tagara (*Tabernaemonatana coronaria*), Vuna kumkuma (*Carthamus tinctorius* or *Crocus sativus*) and Sindhuvara. Brahma Purana considers that one who circumoustulates a Vata tree (*Ficus benghalensis*) can get Rid of one's all sins as the God Hari rests on this tree. It also lists a number of plants and plant parts used in religious ceremonies like Sradha.

In vamana purana the origin of plants and plant groups are traced to different Gods. According to the Purana the plants are sacred in origin. A few examples are : the plant Padma (*Nelumbo nucifera*) has originated from the naval region of Prajapati, Dhattura (*Datura metel*) from the heart of Mahesvara Palasa (*Butea frondosa*) from right side of Yama's body, Sami (*Prosopis spicigera*) from Katyayana, Vilva (*Aegle marmelos*) the palm of Lakshmi, Durva (*Cynodon dactylon*) the back of vasuki etc. and that each plant is dear to its respective progenitor God. According to this Purana all those flowers which are rich in color and have fragrance are good for religious uses.

Brahmavaivarta Purana considers the plants as holy because Brahma created innumerable plants through meditative contemplation. According to this Purana same virtues and certain celestial abodes can be achieved by offering same flowers, leaves on some specific months and dates to some specific gods.

2.4. Buddhist Literature

Trees or the fruit they bore also came to be associated with wisdom, knowledge, or hidden secrets. This meaning may have come from the symbolic connection between trees and worlds above and below human experience. The tree is a symbol of wisdom in stories about the life of Buddha, who was said to have gained spiritual enlightenment while sitting under a Bodhi tree, a type of fig.

2.5. Hindu Astrology

Astrologers claim that celestial bodies influence body functions and certain ailments and disease are a result of evil influence of these bodies (Raman, 1963). Gogate and Mittal (1983) have given names of plants associated with the respective constellation and the respective deity is given in Table 1. Astrologers have also claimed that plants and celestial bodies have some definite co-relationship. Use of roots of certain trees as talisman is also indicated to seek benevolent effect there from (Rajandekar, 1873). Some astrologers suggests use of plant in the sacrificial fires or use of water extracts for adding in the bath. Various planets are supposed to influence different organs of the human body. In order to overcome such ailments, different plants are suggested for usage. Such plants are associated with the planets and have medicinal properties to cure the diseases. Similarly the 8 Planets with the sun at the centre is also worshipped by the Hindus. These plants are worshipped by specific types of the leaves and flowers. The plants in Table 1 are associated with the respective planets (Anonymous, 1988).

3. RELIGEO-CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES

In many Vratas observed by Hindu females such as Durvastami, Asokastami and Madanotsapa trees are worshipped. The most important occasion of tree worship is during Durga puja along with Goddess Durga nine branches with nine leaves (Such as *Mangifera* sps, *Saraca* sps, *Cynodon* sps, *Ficus* sps, and *Aegle marmelos*) are worshipped with the chanting of mantras. In a number of regions of India, certain trees are still worshipped as deities by the tribal's of pre-australoid stock. Certain plants, flowers and leaves are offered daily in the worship of God. It is believed that Indian fig (*Ficus benghalensis*) tree on the eastern side of the House, Peepal (*Ficus religiosa*) in the south, coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) in the east or north-east is always auspicious. Mango (*Mangifera indica*) tree is auspicious at every place and if situated on the east, give wealth. Important trees in Indian religeo-cultural traditions and sacred beliefs associated with them have been listed in Table 2.

4. SACRED GROOVES: SOCIO RELIGIOUS CONSERVATION OF TREES

Sacred trees remain common in India. They are found in villages, in the countryside and the heart of some temples (e.g. Jain temples). Plants is the only medium which connects the living and nonliving things in the environment. Every religion accepts the importance of trees. Hence worship of trees was in existence from the ancient times. India is country of sacred deities, lakes, animals and plants. Sacred grove is a patch of vegetation, ranging in extent from a few trees to forty hectares' or more which is left undisturbed because of its association with a deity. Sacred groves are the ancient natural sanctuaries where all forms of living creatures were afforded protection through the grace of some deity (Vartak and Godgil 1973, 1981, Godgil and Vartak 1975, 1976, and 1981). Sacred groves have been integral part of tribal and indigenous groups of India. In Tamil Nadu, every famous temple considers one tree as sacred and that tree is specially taken care of. Such trees are known as "Sthal Vriksh". This faith has contributed a lot in conservation of that specific species. In Jharkhand tribal communities are recognized by "Gotra", which are often in the name of some trees. Community belonging to that "Gotra" specifically worships that tree and they conserve that tree. In North East, the concept of Sacred Grooves is popular and this has helped in protection of biodiversity, at least in small patch of forest. It is therefore urgent to scientifically study descriptions of plants in ancient mythological literature and encourage people to conserve them.

5. CONCLUSION

Starting from the Hindus Valley civilization to the present age the place of trees in cultural and social life has been of immense importance in India. The scriptures, Vedic, Puranic, Buddhist and Jains, are full of references of the significance of trees. In fact a no of sacred beliefs pertaining to trees can be identified in Indian mythology. This signifies reverence to the benefits provided by the trees to human beings and helped in conservation of many important species.

Table 2

Trees and sacred beliefs associated with them in Indian mythology

Botanical Name	Common Name	Family Name	Sacred Beliefs
<i>Acacia nilotica</i> L	Babul	Mimosaceae	Bundelkhand girls decorate the spicy green branches of babul acts colorful flowers at the time of the festival called mammalian. They offer various fruits to the tree for the fulfillment of their wishes (Agrawal, 1981).
<i>Aderenthera pavonina</i> L	Rakta kanchan	Mimosaceae	The red paste (commonly known as pilak) made by rubbing the wood upon a Meciot stone Sacred is used by hindus for making marks as forehead after bathing (Pandey, 1989)
<i>Adina cordifolia</i> (Roxb) Hook	Karam	Rubiaceae	In Purulia district of West Bengal the tree is associated with worship (Jain and De, 1966). According to (Lancaster, 1965) its flowers are used in worship.
<i>Aegle marmelos</i> L	Bael	Rutaceae	The leaves are offered to Lord Ganapati on Shree Sankastha, Chaturthee Vrata, Styanarayna on Shree Satyanarayan Vrata and Marga Shirsha Shree Mahalakshmi Vrata, Gauri Vrata, Lord Vishnu on Shree Ananatamanatha Vrata, Lord samba on Shree Shanti pradasha Vrata and other Vratas (Anonymous, 1988).
<i>Albizia lebbeck</i> Benth	Sirish	Mimosaceae	The tree is sacred specially to Buddhist (Lancaster, 1965)
<i>Anthocephalus chinenses</i> Roxb	Kadamb	Rubiaceae	The flowers are sacred and offered to Lord Ganesh and Ganpati Vrata (Anonymous, 1988).
<i>Artocarpus heterophyllus</i> Lam	Kathal	Moraceae	It is one of the plants mentioned in the Ramayana especially while describing Ashoka Vana (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A.Juss	Neem	Meliaceae	The plant is associated with the constellation Uttara Bhadrpada whose presiding diety is Abibudhanya (Gogatte and Mittal, 1983)
<i>Bauhinia purpurea</i> L	Khairwal	Caesalpiniaceae	The leaves and flowers are offer to the Lord Nirashanarka Vrata to propitiate the sun God and Goddess Saraswati on Shree MahaSaraswati Vrata (Anonymus, 1988).
<i>Bauhinia racemosa</i> Lam	Ashta, Jhinjeri	Caesalpiniaceae	Plant is sacred to hindus , worshiped on the Dashera festival (Watt, 1885)
<i>Bauhinia variegata</i> L	Kachnar	Caesalpiniaceae	The flowers are offered to Lord Vishnu on Vaikunth Chaturdasi Vrata (Anonymus, 1988).
<i>Bomba ceiba</i> L	Simul	Bombaceae	The tree is consider sacred and its mentioned is made in Rigveda and later in Samhita (Sensharma, 1989)
<i>Boswellia serrata</i> Roxb	Salai	Burseraceae	The gum called loban, guggal or salai is used in worship (Lancaster, 1965)
<i>Butea monosperma</i> Lam	Palas	Fabaceae	According to Vamana Purana the plant has originated from the right side of Yama's body (Sensarma, 1989).The leaves are offered to the Lord Vishnu on Shree Narasinha jayanti Varata (Anonymous, 1988).
<i>Calophyllum inophyllum</i> L	Sultanchampa	Ciusiaceae	The leaves or flowers are offered to the Lord Vishnu on Narasinha jayanti Vrata and Goddess Saraswati on Shree mahaSaraswati Vrata (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Cassia fistula</i>	Amaltas	Caesalpiniaceae	The floweres are used in religious ceremonies by Hindus (Gamble, 1922).
<i>Cinnamomum tamala</i> Nees and Eber	Tejpata	Lauraceae	The flowers are offered to the Lord Samba on Shree Shanipradasha Vrata (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Dalbergia sissoo</i> Roxb	Shisham	Fabaceae	The tree is planted by the Hindus being viewed by them as sacred (Watt, 1890)
<i>Diospyros melanoxylon</i> Roxb	Tendu	Ebenaceae	The black wood of this tree, in place of sandal wood ,is ground into a paste and smeared over the face and body after worshipping the Gods (Pandey, 1989)
<i>Erythrina variegata</i> L	Dadap	Fabaceae	The flowers are recommended for worshipping Lord Mahadeva and Lord Vishnu according to Yamana Purana and Brahma vaivarata Purana (Sensarma, 1989)
<i>Ficus benghalensis</i> L	Bargad	Moraceae	Hindu mythology says that Brahma was transformed into this tree (Pandey, 1989)
<i>Ficus racemosa</i> L	Dumar	Moraceae	The plant is considered sacred and the leaves aree offered to the God Vishnu on Shree Narasinha jayanti Varata (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Ficus religiosa</i>	Pipal	Moraceae	Regarding the peepal tree the Taittiriya Upnished1,10: says "I am the originator of the world tree" (English translations of the original slokas: Pandey, 1989)
<i>Ficus virens</i> Aitons	Pakar	Moraceae	According to Vayu purana this tree is considered sacred for religious purposes (Lancaster, 1965, Sansarma, 1989)
<i>Gardenia latifolia</i> Ait	Papra	Rubiaceae	The flowers are offered in puja (Lancaster, 1965)
<i>Juniperus polycarpus</i>	Dhup	Cupressaceae	In Buddhist regions of the Himalayas the junipers is regarded sacred (Watt, 1890)

<i>Madhuca indica</i> L	Mahua	Sapotaceae	This plant is associated with the star Revati one of the stars in the almanac; and the presiding deity is Pusha (Gogate and Mittal, 1983)
<i>Mallotus philippensis</i> (Lam)	Kamala	Euphorbiaceae	Flowers are offered during mangala gowri puja (Lancaster, 1965)
<i>Mangifera indica</i> L	Aam	Anacardiaceae	The flower is involved in Shakuntalam as one of the five arrows of Kamdeva (Watt, 1891). The twigs are used for sacred fire (Watt 1885, Chaudhuri and Pal 1981, Pandey, 1989)
<i>Melia azedarach</i> L	Bakain	Meliaceae	The flowers are used in worship (Lancaster, 1965)
<i>Michelia champaca</i> L	Champa	Magnoliaceae	Vamana Purana suggests use of these flowers for worshipping Vishnu (Sensarma, 1989). The leaves are offered to Lord Shiva and Gowri on Nityasomavara Vrata and Vishnu on Vaikunta Chaturdhashi Vrata (Anonymous, 1988).
<i>Mimusops elengi</i> L	Bakul	Sapotaceae	According to Vamana Purana the flowers are used in worshipping Lord Vishnu (Sensarma, 1989). The tree is sacred to Shiva (Watt, 1885).
<i>Nyctanthes arbortristis</i> L	Harsinghar	Nyctanthaceae	The flowers are offered to the Lord Ganapati; Satyanarayana, Samba and swarna Gowri when performing their respective Vratas (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Oroxylum indicum</i> L	Sonapatta	Bignoniaceae	The winged seeds are strung as ornaments for the idols in Temples (Watt, 1885)
<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> L	Amla	Euphorbiaceae	The leaves are offered to the Lord on Shree Satyanarayana Vrata, Samba, on Shree Shanipradosh Vrata and Shiva and Gwori on Nitya somavara Vrata (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Pinus roxburghii</i> Sarg	Chir	Pinaceae	According to Vayu Purana the plant is considered for religious purposes (Sensarma, 1989)
<i>Plumeria acuminata</i> Ait	Golainchi	Apocynaceae	The tree is considered sacred to Kamadeva, the god of love; it is considered inauspicious to cut it (Maneka Gandhi and Yasmin Singh, 1989)
<i>Polyalthia longifolia</i>	Debdari ashoka	Annonaceae	The tree is held in great value by hindus and planted near temples by them (Watt, 1892; Pandey, 1989)
<i>Prosopis cineraria</i> L	Shami	Mimosaceae	During Dushera the worship is confined to shami puja which is nothing but worship of the sacred shami tree (Shah, 1964)
<i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i> Roxb	Bijasal	Fabaceae	The tree is worshipped by Bhums of Purulia district in west Bengal (Jain and De, 1966)
<i>Saraca asoca</i> Roxb	Ashoka	Caesalpiniaceae	Vaman Purana suggests use of these flowers for worshipping Lord Vishnu (Sensarma, 1989)
<i>Schleichera oleosa</i> Lour	Kusum	Sapindaceae	According to Matsya purana the plant has originated from Lord Vishnu and thus considered as sacred (Sensarma, 1989)
<i>Sesbania grandiflora</i> L	Agasthi	Fabaceae	The flowers are sacred to Shiva (Watt, 1893).
<i>Shorea robusta</i> Gaertn	Sal	Dipterocarpaceae	Sal tree is worshipped by childless couples for offspring (Menka Gandhi and Yasmin Singh 1989)
<i>Spondias pinnata</i> L	Amra	Anacardiaceae	The fruits are used in worship (Lancaster, 1965)
<i>Strychnos nux-vomica</i> L	Kuchla	Loganiaceae	According to the astrologers the plant is associated with Aswini constellation whose presiding deity is Ashwini (Gogate and Mittal, 1983)
<i>Symplocos paniculata</i> Thumb	Lodh	Symplocaceae	According to astrologer the plant when used in water baths will have the benevolent effects of the planet the ketu (Gogate and Mittal, 1983)
<i>Syzygium cumini</i> L	Jamun	Myrtaceae	According to astrologers the plant is associated with the Rohini constellation whose presiding deity is Bharma (Gogate and Mittal, 1983)
<i>Tamarindus indica</i> L	Imli	Caesalpiniaceae	In certain localities the tree is considered to be haunted by spirits and is worshipped on a day called amla agisras (Watt, 1983)
<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>	Arjun	Comberataceae	The leaves or flowers are offered to Lord Ganpati on Sidhi Vinayaka Vrata, Sankastha Chaturthi Vrata and Vishnu on Shree Anantpadmanabha Vrata (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz	Harra	Comberataceae	It has also received the names of Pranada or life giver sudha or nectar bhishakpriya or physician's favorite (Pandey, 1989)
<i>Thespesia populnea</i> L	Paraspipal	Malvaceae	The leaves are used by Hindus in religious ceremonies (Pandey, 1989)
<i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> Lam	Ber	Rhamnaceae	The leaves are offered to Lord on Satyanarayan Vrata and Ganpati on Shree Siddhi Vinayaka Vrata (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i>	Joba	Malvaceae	Vamana Purana suggests the use of these flowers for worshipping Vishnu (Sensarma, 1989)

<i>Lowsonia inermis</i>	Mehndi	Lythraceae	The leaves provide a dye for the hands and feet of Hindu ladies while the saffron colored beard of Muslim identifies him as one who has visited Mecca (Lancaster, 1965)
<i>Nerium indicum</i>	Kaner	Apocynaceae	The fragrant flowers are offered to Lord Shiva by Hindus (Watt, 1891). The leaves or flowers are used in most of vrats (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Punica granatum</i> L	Anar	Punicaceae	The plant is considered sacred and the leaves or flowers are offered to Lord Ganpati, Lord Satyanarayana and Lord Samba on Shree Sankastha Chaturthi Vrata, Shree Satyanarana Vrata and Nityasomavara Vrata respectively (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Vitex negundo</i> L	Nirgundi	Verbenaceae	The leaves are offered to Lord Shiva and Gowri on Nityasomwara Vrata (Anonymous, 1988)
<i>Areca catechu</i> L	Supari	Arecaceae	The nut is used in many religious ceremonies. It is offered to Lord Vishnu on Shree Satyanarayana Vrata (Pandey, 1989) and Vrats
<i>Borassus flabellifer</i> L	Tar	Arecaceae	It is frequently seen on Buddhist sculptures (Watt, 1885)
<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L	Nariyal	Arecaceae	Coconut is worshipped as Saraswati the Goddess of learning (Choudhuri and Pal 1981)
<i>Bambusa bambos</i> L	Kantabans	Bambusaceae	The Bambos is frequently represented upon Buddhist sculpture (Watt 1885). The clum is installed in the ground and flag hoisted on it during Magh Purnima at the palace where Holi is to set on five the tribals of Banswara (Singh and Pandey, 1982)

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Trees have got very important place in socio-religious life of India since time immemorial. Vedic literature and later Sanskrit literatures have large number of references proving wisdom of our forefathers. Outcome of present work clearly indicate that 27 trees are directly related to Hindu religion. The actual number may be many more. Apart from that a large number of trees are associated with our social rituals and special occasions. This aspect of our traditional knowledge is of great importance as it can be utilized to formulate conservation strategy for these trees. The religious and social sentiments attached with the trees can be utilized for involving mass population for conservation of arboreal diversity.

FUTURE ISSUE

As future extension of present work, study should be conducted to explore importance of trees in other cultural sections of society as well. The authors are documenting rituals and information's of tribal population of India who have quite diverse culture.

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