

Study on the use of Plants and Plant parts in Durga Puja for Worshipping of the Goddess Durga in Odisha, India

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Abstract- Biodiversity is a vital endowment of nature that gives every fundamental necessity to human presence. Plants have assumed a critical job in human development. Hinduism has been known as the oldest religion on the planet and prevailing in Indian subcontinent. Durga puja is the vast festival of Hindus, one of the prime festivals of Odisha and one of the most popular festivals of India, which is celebrated by worshipping Hindu goddess Durga. It is also known the Sharadiya Durga puja, Dussehra, Durgotsav etc. Traditionally Hindu people use a large number of plant species and plant parts for worshipping different gods and goddess. It has been observed that large number of plants is being used for worshipping of goddess Durga. The present paper analyzed different plant species and plant parts are used in Durga puja for worshipping of the goddess Durga in Odisha, India. The data about importance of plant species, uses of plants and plant parts, use in worship of goddess Durga were collected through the interaction with Priests and some knowledgeable old persons who are involved in Sharadiya Durga puja practices. The plant species with their botanical name, local name, family, habit, plant part use and form of use are recorded. A total of 102 species under 86 genera and 46 families were recorded during the study. Plant parts such as leaves like *Musa paradisiaca* L., *Aegle marmelos* (L.) Correa, *Sesbania sesban* (L.) Merr., *Piper betle* L. etc. are used for worshipping of goddess Durga ; flowers like *Clitoria ternatea* L., *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L., *Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn. etc. are used in the form of garland; bark of plants like *Ficus religiosa* L., *Ficus benghalensis* L., *Terminalia arjuna* (Roxb.) Wight & Arn. etc. are used in the form of paste; twig of plants like *Aegle marmelos* (L.) Correa, *Mangifera indica* L. etc. are used for worshipping of goddess Durga. Prasad is one of the most important elements of worship which is prepared with different varieties of fruits and cereals. Fruits like *Malus pumila* Mill., *Cocos nucifera* L., *Musa paradisiaca* L. etc. and cereal grains like *Oryza sativa* L., *Vigna radiate* (L.) R. Wilczek, *Vigna mungo* (L.) Hepper etc. are some important species utilized for the collection of Prasad. Truth be told, the Prasad are rich in supplements and considered exceptionally healthy.

Keywords: Aegle marmelos, Biodiversity, Durga puja, Hinduism, Worshipping

1. INTRODUCTION

The Hindu is one of the largest and oldest religions in the globe. The importance of plants for worshipping god and goddesses has been described in different Vedas. Traditionally Hindu people use a large number of plant species and plant parts for worshipping different gods and goddesses. This information has been transmitted from generation to generation. The Hindu religious populaces are very much concern about the use of plants for each and every occasions and festivals. The traditional festivals and occasions ceremony literatures regarding Hindu beliefs and worship is insignificant and proper scientific study in this area is very poor [1].