SACRED PLANTS USED IN YAGYA (HAVAN) IN SABARKANTHA DISTRICT (NORTH GUJARAT)

D. N. Parmar and N. K. Patel
Department of Biology,
Sheth M.N. Science College, Patan - 384 265.
taxonomy. naren@gmail.com, http://plantethnobotany.ning.com

The Sanskrit word Yagya(Havan) means to do fire sacrifice. Yagya is in fact a combination of rituals recommended by Vedic Scriptures. A daily Havan is a ritual started in ancient Vedas to instill the strength of dedication for the common good of all. This is done by repeatedly reciting Vedic hymns that express self-enlightenment and selflessness. A Havan is mandatory for a householder who desires worldly gains and spiritual uplift. Here are listed 09 angiospermic plant species used by the Brahmin in the Satyanarayan Havan in the Sabarkantha district.

The Sabarkantha district derives its name from the Sabarmati River that separates Sabarkantha from the neighbouring districts. The district lies between 73° 39' East (Longitude) and 23° 30' North (Latitude). Total area of the district is 7390 sq. km. Havan in the Sabarkantha district is performed on various auspicious occasions to seek blessings of the Gods. Various plants and plant products, which are being used by humans for day to day needs, are used in Havan. In other word the burning of mixture of various aromatic herbs in the fire accompanied by invocation and offering to the Gods is known as Havan. Many ‘Chants’ (Sanskrit Shlokas or hymns) are also based on the plants. In addition many plants are worshipped at the time of Havan according to the occasion. All plants are not used in same Havan. In folklore and practice Havan is also performed on various occasions. In the study, special attention has been paid to the nine plant species used in the Satyanarayan Havan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

During the study of sacred groves and sacred plants in the Sabarkantha district, we have travelled in the various villages of the district and collection of angiosperm plants taxa used in the Satyanarayan Havan. Good number of the trips were arranged for the purpose and consulted numbers of the Brahmins who are experts of the Havan rituals. The collected plants were brought to the laboratory, identified up to species level where ever it was possible and then dried with customary method and mounted on herbarium sheet and labeled. The information data on sacred uses were collected through the dialogue and with local Brahmins and knowledgeable people of the villages. Each plant has been enumerated on the basis of classification of Bentham and Hooker system.

Inventory of Angiospermic Plant specie used in Havan plants:

(1) Scientific Name: Calotropis gigantia (Linn.). Vernacular Name: SAFED AKADO
Family: Asclepiadaceae. Parts used in Havan: Leaves, flowers.

(2) Scientific Name: Calotropis procera (Ait.). Vernacular Name: AKADO
Family: Asclepiadaceae. Parts used: Flowers, twig.

(3) Scientific Name: Mangifera indica Linn. Vernacular Name: AMBO
Family: Anacardiaceae. Parts used: Leaves, flowers, fruits and twigs.

Scientific Name: *Musa paradisiaca* Linn. Vernacular Name: KELA

Family: Musaceae. Parts used as Sacred: Leaves, fruits and even whole plant.

Scientific Name: *Cynodon dactylon* (Linn.) Pers. Vernacular Name: DARBH

Family: Poaceae. Parts used: whole plant

Scientific Name: *Ocimum sanctum* Linn. Vernacular Name: TULSI

Family: Lamiaceae. Parts used: Whole plant, leaves.

Scientific Name: *Areca catechu* Linn. Vernacular Name: SOPARI

Family: Palmaceae. Parts used: The nuts of this plant are used in many religious ceremonies. Besides, they are offered to Lord Vishnu in Satyanarayana katha.

Scientific Name: *Santalum album* Linn. Vernacular Name: CHANDAN

Family: Santalaceae. Parts used: Wood

Scientific Name: *Prosopis cineraria* (Linn.) Druce. Vernacular Name: KHIJADO

Family: Fabaceae. Parts used: Leaves, wood and whole tree.

RESULTS and DISCUSSIONS

The system of Yagya has been in practice since Vedic Era. Yajurveda is has the “Hymns” and methods and the prayers used pray Gods and seek their blessings and favours. Yajurveda\(^2\) says:

\[
\text{vk;q;ZKs.k dYirk¡ izk.kks ;Ksu dYirk¡ p{kq;ZKs.k dYirk¿{ks=k¡ ;Ksu dYirk¡ okX;sK.k dYirk¡ euks ;Ks.k dYirk¡ T;ksfr;ZKs.k dYirk¡ Lo;ZKs.k dYirk¡ i"Ba ;Ks.k dYirk¡ }\]

\*(Y.V.18:29)*

"May we live long by Yagya, may we may sight through Yagya. May we hear and speak Yagya. Our mind should be healthy by the effect of Yagya. Our soul may be happy by Yagya. May Brahma be pleased by our Yagya. May we get light though Yagya. May we get salvation by Yagya. May we get backed by Yagya, May Yagya bless us to do Yagya.

lot ;KE;a txr~A Kolikapuran 32:8, means: The world is full of Yagya:

In Geeta\(^3\), Lord Krishna says: \(;Ks.k nek;thofur ;Ks.k firjzi\)

"The expertise in your (spiritual, right) Karma is Yagya"

It means producing right karma for a right time is Yagya. As per vedic scripture\(^4\) it is believed that Yagya is the energy by which the universe moves. Everything is in the hands of God and he is driven by Yagya"

\(\text{nekehuk} \ iztkK \ loez ;\text{Kekhuk} p\text{nokh}AA\) VishnuDhamottarapuran 162.11

"The gods live by Yagya, the forefathers lived by Yagya, The folk lives under Gods and the Gods are (again)
driven by Yagya” It means, by doing Yagya one can achieve whatever he wants, (so long it is not a sin). It means by doing Yagya one can achieve whatever he wants,(so long it is not a sin)

The specific ritual under a Yagya has its own fruits:-

By Yagya, one gets enlightenment, one destroys his sins by hawan (fire sacrifice). One fulfils his desires by japa (chanting of hymns) and one gets salvation by living with truth”

In a dialogue between Lord Indra and a doer of Yagya, Indra says:

"Giye me Havi (the material of fire sacrifice), thereafter I will give you the fruits (results). Just put the Havi before me first and see how can't I give you the results (of your Yagya)" It means, do Yagya, and do Yagya first before you get afraid of the result. Indra says, "If you give me Havi, I will definitely give you your happiness and well-being In return."

The nutritious, odoriferous, sweet and medicinal substances, offered in the fire pot, immediately evolve an excellent Havan gas that is healthful, anti-biotic, energetic and pleasing. The fresh and good air then comes, purifying the house both physically and chemically. It is a common experience that ghee (purified butter) freezes earlier than water does. The hot Havan gas carrying rarefied ghee, rises up in the atmosphere where the water vapours are in abundance. The ghee gets frozen, becomes heavier, and moves back to the earth along with clouds of water. Thus the Havan gas helps a lot in bringing the rains down. The rains come to the earth through the Havan gas in addition to that falling naturally, is inferred a result of Havan.

REFERENCES