



PLANTS IN FOLKLORES OF RAJASTHAN AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Prof. Meenakshi Baghel
Botany department
Govt college Newai, Tonk
Rajasthan, India



ABSTRACT

The Indian state of Rajasthan, which may be found in the country's far northwestern corner, is home to a wide variety of traditional practices and cultures. The use of plants in Rajasthani folklore and mythology is one of the culture's more interesting facets, and it makes for some intriguing reading. This abstract offers a summary of the crucial role that plants play in the folklore of Rajasthan. It elucidates the cultural, medical, and symbolic value of these plants. Folklore in Rajasthan is intimately connected with the territory's dry environment. In this climate, there is a scarcity of water, and the battle for existence has led to a tight relationship between the people and the flora of the region. Rajasthan's folklore is deeply intertwined with this climate.

Keywords: Folklores, Plants,

INTRODUCTION

Rajasthan is a dynamic and historically rich state in the northwestern part of India. Within the folklore and cultural traditions of Rajasthan, plants play an important role. The inhabitants of Rajasthan have a strong connection to the dry environment and the natural resources that are necessary to their way of life. This relationship has left a deep imprint on the state's folklore. The folklore of the state serves as a reservoir for knowledge regarding the functions, importance, and symbolic meanings linked with a variety of plants. The myths, tales, rituals, and oral traditions that make up Rajasthan's folklore are woven together like a patchwork quilt over the course of several generations. Plants, both wild and cultivated, play a significant role in these narratives because they reflect an essential component of the people's interaction with the environment in which they live. This relationship to the world of plants is not only practical but also profoundly spiritual, since many plants are endowed with the importance of culture and religion. In the expansive region of Rajasthan, which encompasses the Thar Desert, the Aravalli Range, and the fertile plains, several plant species have gotten used to the severe weather conditions and have become an essential part of the lives of the people who live there. These plants are frequently honored for the medical powers,



nutritional worth, or symbolic meanings that they embody, and they make appearances in songs, tales, and rituals as a result.

Rajasthan's folklore is a reflection of the state's complex cultural and ethnic patchwork, with each group contributing its own distinctive point of view on the part that plants play in their customs and practices. The khejri tree, which is held in high regard by the Bishnoi community, as well as the employment of native herbs and shrubs in traditional medical methods, are just two examples of how the plants that feature prominently in Rajasthan's folklore attest to the cultural and ecological richness of the state. The people of Rajasthan have learnt to flourish in a hard climate by building a strong relationship with the flora that surrounds them, and this intricate interaction between plants and mythology is a monument to their resourcefulness and perseverance. Investigating the mythology around the plants of Rajasthan offers a fascinating look into the junction of human creativity, the natural world, and the cultural traditions of the region.

Khejri Tree (*Prosopis cineraria*):

The Khejri tree, which is known as the state tree of Rajasthan, is held in very high regard across the area. It is a representation of steadfastness and perseverance. It is said that a group of Rajput women were saved from a drought by the Khejri tree, which provided them with both a place to take refuge and food to eat. This story comes from folklore.

Peepal:

The peepal tree is held in high regard not just as a religious plant but also as a holy and fortunate tree. The term "wisdom" may be translated directly from the Sanskrit word "peepal." It has been used in particular to symbolize the four Vedas as well as religious scriptures that were written on palm leaves. There are a great deal of allegorical and figurative references to the peepal tree in the Hindu texts, which are the primary source of information for Indian customs and which are known as the Vedas.

Tulsi:

Tulsi, also known by its botanical name *Ocimum tenuiflorum*, is a tiny perennial plant that is a member of the Lamiaceae (mint) family. In India, the plant plays an important role in the country's religious and cultural traditions. It has been treasured for generations, both as a medical plant and as a tree that is renowned for providing spiritual nutrition and affording protection against evil and calamity. Both of these uses have contributed to its high regard. Almost every Hindu home in India has at least one tulsi plant growing in their backyards.

Banyan:

It is considered to be a sign of longevity, old knowledge, and continuity in Hinduism. In Jainism, it is a sign of pristineness. Ancient Buddhists accorded a great level of sanctity and reverence to the banyan tree. The current banyan tree at Gobardhan in Jaipur, Rajasthan, is the descendent of a banyan tree that was planted by Adi Sankara around 900 years ago. The



current banyan tree has a canopy that covers more than 50 acres. The banyan tree is revered as a holy symbol across India, particularly in the country's northern regions.

Bael:

In many parts of Asia, the Bael plant is revered for its spiritual properties. This plant is also sometimes referred to as the Bel, Vembu, or Valpippali. This entire plant, including its leaves and berries, is utilized in religious rituals. Some people have the superstitious idea that this plant may help make wishes come true. Some Hindus in the western portion of India worship this plant in the belief that it will provide them eternal life and excellent health. The fruit of this plant is used as a nutritious dietary supplement and is ingested by humans. It has been one of the components of several herbal medications that have been successful in treating a wide range of illnesses.

Ashoka:

In India, the Ashoka tree plays a significant role in a number of religious ceremonies. It is cultivated on the grounds of the temple, put to use in the construction of the garbha-griha, also known as the house of worship, and included into wedding rituals. In addition to being revered as a deity, the Ashoka tree is widely considered to be one of India's most important holy trees.

Mango:

The Mango tree, which is revered across India for its role in the country's spiritual and religious traditions, plays an integral role in a variety of Hindu ceremonies and celebrations. In addition to being cultivated for their edible fruits, mango trees also have an important spiritual role. In certain regions of India, farmers grow this tree on the boundary of their land because they believe that it will protect their home from evil eyes and other forms of misfortune. Children are given a mixture of mango leaves and twigs, milk or yoghurt, and sugar, right before their examinations or school-leaving certificates (SLC), in order to help them preserve their excellent scores and concentrate on their studies.

Neem:

When discussing trees that originated in India, the height, look, blossoms, fruit, and perfume are all characteristics that stand out immediately. The Neem tree, which may be found in the northern region of the subcontinent, is considered to be one of the most significant religious plants there is. The meaning of the word "Nim" is "to grow" or "to multiply." In Sanskrit, the tree is also referred to by the name Margosa. Neem is referred to as both a sacred plant and a source of very efficient herbal medicine for a wide range of conditions in the texts of the Hindu religion. Neem has been further proven as a viable therapy for a variety of diseases in today's modern environment. Neem has been used to cure a variety of disorders. Neem has been shown to have a variety of applications throughout history, including its usage as a topical treatment for acne and dandruff, as well as its use in ancient methods of pest management.



Lotus:

In India, the lotus flower is considered to be a sacred holy plant. Due to the elevated status of the plant, it was usually cultivated in separate ponds. Since the beginning of time, depictions of gods and goddesses in Hindu mythology have always included the lotus flower, which serves as a vital decoration. In Indian culture, the lotus, which is a flower that pollinates itself with water, is considered to be a sign of holiness and cleanliness. Both Buddhists and Hindus hold this plant in extremely high regard as a holy object.

Sandalwood:

The Hindu faith places a high importance on the sandalwood tree since it is considered to be a sacred plant. The Indian people hold this to be of the utmost sanctity since it is a representation of Krishna and Vishnu. In ancient times, the wood from the trees was frequently utilized in religious rituals as a tribute to many deities and gods. Sandalwood has been used in the creation of sculptures that may be found in monasteries and temples throughout India that are associated with Buddhism. It has been a component of the religious practice of the Indian people for thousands of years. When one has severed their ties to the outside world, they maintain a strong connection to their own soul, which in turn provides their soul with a place to call home. There are a number of religions that hold this plant in high regard.

Banana:

In India, the banana tree is one of the most cherished and important sacred plants. There is a myth that every banana tree is home to five gods, which is one of the beliefs related with this plant. This group of gods is referred to as "Pancha Ganapathi" in Hindu mythology. Bananas are sometimes referred to as "Pancha Ganapathi Poorna" for this very reason.

Coconut:

In India, people practice their religion by using the leaves, blossoms, and fruits of the coconut tree plant. "Great Gift" is what the Hindi word "Mahua" refers to when referring to the coconut palm. When they come upon this tree, it fills the hearts of Hindus with an overwhelming sense of joy. The coconut palm is often regarded as one of the most significant plant species in India. Coconut oil is one of the most widely used cooking oils in India as well as many other nations across the world. The mature flesh of the coconut fruit is required for the production of coconut oil. However, in India, the applications and advantages of coconut go much beyond that of a fruit that may be eaten and an oil used in cooking.

Henna

The art of using henna for ornamental reasons is widespread, particularly in the context of weddings and celebrations. It is traditionally used to decorate the hands and feet of ladies in elaborate patterns that stand for attractiveness and good fortune. These are only a few examples of the many different kinds of plants that are important in the culture and customs



of Rajasthan. The cultural and religious associations with these plants have a long history and are firmly ingrained in the beliefs of the people in this area.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the folklore of Rajasthan demonstrates a profound link between the people of the region and the plant life that is able to flourish in the dry environment. The resiliency, knowledge, and cultural significance of plants in the lives of the people who live in Rajasthan may be seen in the tales, beliefs, and rituals that they have passed down through the generations. It is possible to get significant insights into the cultural and biological legacy of Rajasthan by being familiar with the function that plants play in the region's local folklore.

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