



Significance and Ethno – Therapeutical Effects of Sacred Flora of Thiruvananthapuram District

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of human history, people have understood their need on plants, which are a true gift from God. Since ancient times, plants have frequently been linked to culture, and trees are associated with other qualities in addition to their religious significance. Trees and plants make up the majority of man's physical surroundings, and in Indian philosophy, plants are living things that are made up of the five main elements known as panchadhatu: fire, water, earth, sky, and air. According to the Puranas, planting trees will enable people to live better lives with the blessings of the gods. Plants and trees are also regarded as sacred objects, and planting them is a ceremony of worship. Examining the sociocultural and spiritual significance of plants is the goal of this essay. It focuses on how the understanding, usage, and management of these animals are influenced by religious rituals and beliefs. In Thiruvananthapuram, numerous plants of religious significance have been discovered preserved and protected. The conservation of plants has been significantly influenced by religious aspirations.



INTRODUCTION

The scientific study of a people's traditional knowledge and practices of plants and their uses in medicine, religion, and other fields is known as ethnobotany. In actuality, plants are a gift from God to humanity, and since the dawn of time, humans have recognized their dependence on them. Since ancient times, plants have frequently been connected to culture, and trees have been linked to many medical benefits in addition to their religious significance. In Christian culture, flowers were once associated with paganism and decay. According to Hinduism, all living beings are considered sacred in one way or another. At the same time, some plants are of special importance in Hinduism. These plants have religious significance as well as many medicinal values. The Qur'an mentions many wild plants that were used in folk medicine before and now. One of the best sources of information about the use of plants for medical purposes is the Qur'an, which has 28 chapters (Surahs) that provide specific plant names. Although plants have no religious significance, they can be used for a variety of medicinal purposes, and planting these trees can benefit us in many ways. In India, plants are revered in some capacity by all of the various religions. Extracts from *Azadirachta indica*, *Carica papaya*, *Hippophae rhamnoides*, and *Cissampelos pareira* were found to be efficacious and had a direct inhibitory impact on the dengue virus in addition to improving clinical symptoms. A clinical investigation with *C. papaya* revealed a higher platelet count and a quicker recovery. Many vector-borne illnesses, including malaria, have been treated with medicinal herbs. The current state of the pandemic is COVID-19. using products made from medicinal plants to treat or prevent COVID-19. Only 940 of the more than 1,800 plant species that have been found to exist in different forest formations are utilized by the local population for traditional medicinal purposes, and 300 of these species are exclusively utilized by the pharmaceutical industry (Indonesian Institute of Sciences 2014).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The following botanical gardens were visited as part of the current investigation. Spread across 40 acres in the private sector of Kerala, "the Gods own country," are some of the largest pioneer botanical gardens, including the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI) in Vazhuthampally Palode, the Athma Nilayam nursery garden in Cheruvarakonam, the Plant nursery garden in Pattom, and the Kuzhipallam Botanical Garden and Research Centre. Gather some of the Christian, Hindu, and Muslim sacred plants from here.

The Churches of Thiruvananthapuram District particularly Saint Mary's Cathedral Church, St Thomas Church Valiaveli, C.S.I Church Melariyode, St. Joseph's Church, Carmel Hill Monastery Church, C.S.I



Church Koovode, C.S.I Church Kariprakonam, C.S.I Church Elavanikkara, C.S.I Church Puthukunnu, Trivandrum Bible Fellowship Church, Church of God in India, Madre De Deus Church, St. Thomas Roman Catholic Latin Church, Holy Cross Church, St. Therese Of Lisieux Roman Catholic Church, Carmel Hill Monastery Roman Catholic Latin Church and other churches visited to collect the Christian Holy Plants.

The temples of Thiruvananthapuram District particularly Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Padiyanoor Devi Temple Veeranakavu, Amaravila Rameswaram Sri Mahadeva Temple, Neyyattinkara Sree Krishna Swami Temple, Sreevaraham Lakshmi Varaha Temple, Vellayami Devi Temple, Sasthamangalam Mahadevar Temple, Pazhavangadi Ganapathy Temple, Thuppanathu Kavvu, Mannanthala Anandavaleeswaram Temple, Karikkakom Chamundi Devi Temple, Attukal Temple, Aazhimala Siva Temple were visited to collect the Hindu Holy Plants.

The Mosques of Thiruvananthapuram District particularly Thirumala Muslim Mosque, Manacaud Valiyapalli Muslim Jama-ath, Pulippara Muslim Jamath Mosque, Palayam Juma Mosque, Alamcode Juma Masjid, Thampanoor Juma Masjid, Kaduvayil Juma Masjid, Kallambalam Juma Masjid, Beemapally Mosque, Salafi Juma Masjid, Attakulangara Juma Masjid, and other Mosques visited to collect the known Muslim Holy Plants and Muslim Priest Usthad from Balaramapuram Juma Masjid were interviewed to know the Muslim Holy Plants referred in Holy Quran.

Christian Holy book the Bible, Muslim Holy book Quran and Hindu texts like Vedas, Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata, Upanishad were referred. Internet source was also used to refer and identify some holy plants which are not available in the study sites selected.

Religious plants for dengue fever and Covid – 19 were referred from internet and interviewed Parasu Nadar Siddha practitioner and collect informations from Ayurvedic dispensaries and some other Vaidhyasalas.

Social gatherings organized by locals acquainted with prominent traditional health practitioners served as an opportunity to convey the survey's goals to the local populations during the holy plant survey in the chosen study pockets. A local multilingual interpreter provided assistance when engaging with indigenous populations whose native tongue differed from Malayalam. Finding people with empirical knowledge of medicinal plants and expertise using traditional medicinal herbs was given special attention. The poll was conducted using a personally administered method. The following information was sought using an open-ended, semi-structured questionnaire: (a) the local name; (b) the sections of plants utilized; (c) the preparation process; (d) the solvent or adjuvant employed; (e) the mode of application; and (f) gastrointestinal and other therapeutic purposes. Following survey completion, the



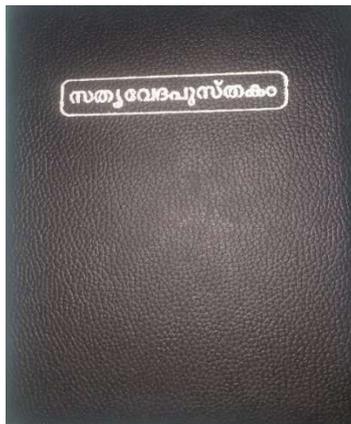
current investigation's supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. J. Lohidas of the Department of Botany, will be consulted over the scientific nomenclature of the plants.

The Bible and South Indian Church priests, as well as interviews with Roman Catholics and members of other churches, were cited as sources of the religious significance of Christian holy plants. Hindu writings such as the Vedas, Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata, Upanishad, and Temple Poojaries all refer to the religious significance of the Hindu holy plants. Myths and traditional believers were also interviewed. Elderly members of the Muslim community were interviewed, and references to the religious significance of Muslim holy plants were found in the Holy Quran and Usthad.

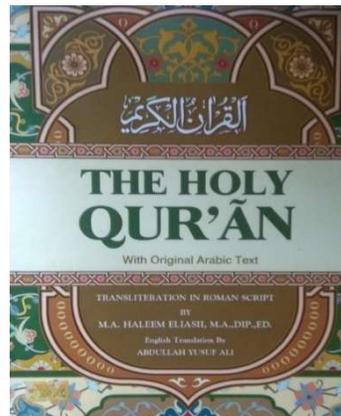
Traditional Sidha practitioners from Thiruvananthapuram district, people who are dealing with medicinal plants, traditional believers were interviewed to know the medicinal values of the holy plants collected in this study.

REFERRED BOOKS

Holy bible



Holy Quran



Hindu's books



**RESULT AND DISCUSSION****Table 1****Christian Holy Plants**

Sl. No	Botanical name	Common name	Biblical name	Family	Habit	Useful part
1.	<i>Acacia raddiana</i> L.	Biblical acacia	Acacia	Mimosaceae	Tree	Pods and seeds
2.	<i>Amygdalus communis</i> L.	Almond	Almond	Rosaceae	Tree	Fruit and seed
3.	<i>Aquilaria malaccensis</i> Lam.	Agarwood	Agar wood	Thymelaceae	Tree	Paste of agar
4.	<i>Artemisia absinthium</i> L.	Wormwood	Warm wood	Asteraceae	Perennial herb	Dried leaves
5.	<i>Cedrus libani</i> Loud.	Cedar of Lebanon	Cedar	Pinaceae	Tree	Wood
6.	<i>Cinnamomum inens</i> Reinw.	Cinnamom	Cinnamom	Lauraceae	Evergreen tree	Leaves and bark
7.	<i>Citrus medica</i> L.cv.	Lime	Citrus	Rutaceae	Small tree	Ripe fruit
8.	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i> L.	Coriander	Coriander	Apiaceae	Annual herb	Leaves and fruit
9.	<i>Cucumis melo</i> L.	Melon	Melon	Cucurbitaceae	Annual herb	Fruit
10.	<i>Cucumis sativus</i> L.	Cucumber	Cucumber	Cucurbitaceae	Annual herb, climber	Fruits and seeds
11.	<i>Cupressus</i>	Cypres	Cypres	Cupressaceae	Tall narrow	Fruit and bark



	<i>Sempervirens</i> L.				tree	
12.	<i>Ficus carica</i> L.	Figs	Figs	Moraceae	Tree	Dried fig
13.	<i>Gossypium herbaceum</i> L.	Cotton	Cotton	Malvaceae	Herb	Root flower and seed
14.	<i>Laurus nobilis</i> L.	Bay	Laurel	Lauraceae	Tree	Leaves and fruits
15.	<i>Lawsonia inermis</i> L.	Henna	Henna	Lythraceae	Perennial shrub	Leaves, branches and flowers
16.	<i>Loranthus acacia</i> L.	Acacia	Bush	Loranthaceae	Woody tree	Bark
17.	<i>Mentha arvensis</i> L.	Mint	Mint	Lamiaceae	Perennial Herb	Leaves, stem
18.	<i>Morus nigra</i> L.	Toot	Mulberry	Moraceae	A wild deciduous tree	Whole plant
19.	<i>Myrtus communis</i> L.	Myrtle	Myrtle	Myrtaceae	Evergreen shrub	Leaves and berries
20.	<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> Gaertn.	Lotus	Lotus	Nelumbonaceae	Aquatic perennial herb	Leaf, rhizome, seed and flower
21.	<i>Polyalthia longifolia</i> var.	Ashoka tree	Ashoka tree	Annonaceae	Tree	Leaves, flowers and seed



22.	<i>Punica granatum</i> L.	Pomegranate	Pomegrana te	Punicaceae	Small bush like tree	Fruit, bark, leaves.
23.	<i>Ricinus communis</i> L.	Arund, Harhanda	castor	Euphorbiacea e	Perennial herbaceous shrub	Leaves, seeds, oil.
24.	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i> L.	Sugarcane	Sugarcane	Poaceae	Perennial culms	Cane
25.	<i>Santalum album</i> L.	Red sandal wood	sandal wood	Sandalaceae	Timber, tree	Heartwood, fruits, leaves, root, bark, flowers.
26.	<i>Vicia faba</i> L.	Faba bean	Beans	Fabaceae	Annual herb, vine	Pods.
27.	<i>Vitis vinifera</i> L.cv.	Grape	Grapes	Vitaceae	Perennial vine	Fruit juice

Table 2**Hindu Holy Plants**

Sl. No	Botanical name	Common name	Sanskrit name	Family	Habit	Useful part
1.	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> Linn.	Bale	Bilva	Rutaceae	Deciduous tree	Fruit, seeds, leaves, bark and root.
2.	<i>Amaranthus spinosus</i> Linn.	Mullankeera	Rahadri	Amaranthace ae	Annual herb	Stem and fruits.
3.	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i> (Burnf.)	Bitter weed	Bhunimba	Acanthaceae	Annual herb	Whole plant
4.	<i>Areca catechu</i>	Supari	Phulari	Arecaceae	Monocot	Nut



	L.				tree	
5.	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A.Juss.	Neem	Nimba	Meliaceae	Tree	Whole plant
6.	<i>Barleria cristata</i> L.	Philippile violet	Saireyaka	Acanthaceae	Herb/ shrub	Seed
7.	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.)	Palas	Palasa	Fabaceae	Tree	Root, leaf, flower, seeds, oil and gum.
8.	<i>Calotropis procera</i> (Aiton)	Madar	Svaytaukum	Asclepiadaceae	A large shrub	Leaves, flowers and seed pods
9.	<i>Cannabis sativus</i> L.	Ganja	Vijaya, Jaya	Cannabaceae	Annual herb	Dried flower
10.	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> L.	Butterfly pea	Klitorie	Fabaceae	Deciduous perennial	Root, leaves and stem.
11.	<i>Cucumis sativus</i> L.	Cucumber	Trapushpa	Cucurbitaceae	Annual trailer or climber	Fruits and seeds
12.	<i>Curcuma Longa</i> L.	Haldi	Haridra	Zingiberaceae	Herbaceous perennial	Underground stem
13.	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L.)	Doob	Durva	Poaceae	Herb	Whole plant
14.	<i>Ficus carica</i> L.	Fig	Anjeer	Moraceae	Tree	Bark Milk, leaves
15.	<i>Ficus Benghalensis</i> L.	Bargad	Vata	Moraceae	Tree	Prop root
16.	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> L.	Peepal	Aswaththama	Moraceae	Tree	Whole part
17.	<i>Gossypium herbaceum</i> L.	Cotton	Fitan	Malvaceae	Herb or shrub	Root, Leaves and flowers.
18.	<i>Hierochloe odorata</i>	sacred grass	Senegal	Poaceae	Perennial	Leaves



Wahlb.

19.	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i> L.	Shoe flower	Japapushpa	Malvaceae	Perennial shrub	Leaf, flower and bark
20.	<i>Jasminum sambac</i> (L.)	Jasmine	Abhijita	Oleaceae	Perennial shrub	Leaf, flower and root.
21.	<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> Gaertn.	Lotus	Turkish Kamal	Nelumbonaceae	Aquatic perennial herb	Seed and fruit
22.	<i>Mangifera indica</i> L.	Mango	Amra	Anacardiaceae	Tree	Whole plant
23.	<i>Ocimum tenuiflorum</i> L.	Tulsi	Manjarika	Lamiaceae	Perennial herb /shrub	Leaves, flowers, seeds and root.
24.	<i>Piper nigrum</i> L.	Black pepper	Maricha	Piperaceae	Herb	Dried unripe fruit
25.	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> L.	Amla	Umrital Amal	Euphorbiaceae	Deciduous tree	Fruit, seed, leaves and root.
26.	<i>Rosaceae</i> L.	Red rose	Rosai	Rosaceae	Erect shrubs	Rose petal

Table 3**Muslim Holy Plants**

Sl. No	Botanical name	Common name	Arabic name	Family	Habit	Part used
1.	<i>Acorus calamus</i> L.	Sweet flag	Zareera	Acoraceae	Perennial herb	Root
2.	<i>Agaricus campestris</i> L	Mushroom	Esh El-Ghorab	Agaricaceae	Pasture and short	Whole part
3.	<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i> L.	Camphor tree	Kafoor	Lauraceae	Tree or shrub	Leaves and branches
4.	<i>Citrulus lanatus</i>	Water melon	Al Bataigh	Cucurbitaceae	Annual	Fruit and seeds.



	(Thunb.)				herb	
5.	<i>Citrus aurantifolia</i> L. (Christm.)	Lime	Laymun	Rutaceae	Tree	Fruit, juice, bark and seeds
6.	<i>Cucumis sativus</i> L.	Cucumber	Khiarun	Cucurbitaceae	Annual herb, Climber	Fruit and seed
7.	<i>Ficus carica</i> L.	Figs	Teen	Moraceae	Tree	Bark Milk, leaves
8.	<i>Lawsonia inermis</i> L.	Mehndi	Henna	Lythraceae	Perennial shrub	Leaves, branches and flowers
9.	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> L.	Banana	Talh	Musaceae	A perennial, tall, tree like herb	Root, stem, leaf, flower and fruit
10	<i>Ocimum basilicum</i> L.	Sweet basil	Rehan	Lamiaceae	Annual herb	Leaves and seeds
11	<i>Punica granatum</i> L.	Pomegranate	Rumman	Punicaceae	Shrub or small tree	Whole plant
12	<i>Vitis vinifera</i> .L.cv	Grapes	Inab	Vitaceae	Perennial vine	Fruit juice
13	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Roscoe.	Ginger	Zanjabil	Zingiberaceae	Perennial herb	Rhizome

Table 4**Holy Plants For Dengue Fever**

Sl. No	Botanical name	Common name	Local name	Family	Habit	Useful part
1.	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i>	Bitter weed	Kiriyaath	Acanthaceae	Annual herb	Whole plant



(Burnf.)

2.	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A.Juss.	Neem	Veppu	Meliaceae	Tree	Whole plant
3.	<i>Calotropis procera</i> (Aiton)	Madar	Sodom Apple	Asclepiadaceae	A large shrub	Leaves, flowers and seed pods
4.	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i> L.	Coriander	Kothumalli	Apiaceae	Annual herb	Leaves and fruits
5.	<i>Curcuma longa</i> L.	Haldi	Manjal	Zingiberaceae	Herbaceous perennial	Underground stem
6.	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> L.	Tulsi	Tulsi	Lamiaceae	Perennial herb / Shrub	Leaves, flowers, seeds and root
7.	<i>Punica granatum</i> L.	Pomegranate	Maathalam	Punicaceae	Small bush like tree	Fruit, bark, leaves
8.	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Roscoe.	Ginger	Inchi	Zingiberaceae	Perennial herb	Rhizome

Table 5**Holy Plants For Covid – 19**

Sl. No	Botanical name	Common name	Local name	Family	Habit	Useful part
1.	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A.Juss.	Neem	Veppu	Meliaceae	Tree	Whole plant
2.	<i>Curcuma longa</i> L.	Haldi	Manjal	Zingiberaceae	Herbaceous perennial	Underground stem



3.	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> L.	Tulsi	Tulsi	Lamiaceae	Perennial herb / Shrub	Leaves, flowers, seeds and root
4.	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Roscoe.	Ginger	Inchi	Zingiberaceae	Perennial herb	Rhizome

The goal of the current project is to investigate ethnobotanical facets of the interaction between humans and plants. And the scientific knowledge derived from these connections, which are customarily maintained in the framework of religious activities governed by many faiths, as well as the part played by sacred plants in a number of pandemic illnesses, such as Dengue fever and COVID-19. This study investigates the significance of natural elements, especially plants, among people of various religious affiliations in Kerala's Trivandrum district. Folk religion is heavily reliant on plants, which are also strongly linked to health practices and have an impact on natural resource management choices. From the chosen study locations in the Trivandrum district, plants regarded as sacred by Muslims, Hindus, and followers of Jesus Christ have been gathered. The informants of various criteria designs in the current study were asked about their religious beliefs and medical applications.

In this study 60 plants were identified as Christian holy plants. All the 60 plants are referred in the Holy Bible in different words of different chapters. But only 27 plants were identified from Thiruvananthapuram district. In this finding there are 9 Trees, 8 Herbs, 5 Shrubs 1 Climber, 3 Herbs / Shrubs and 2 vines. These plant parts of leaf, stem, root and the barks are used medicinally.

In this study 30 plants were identified as Hindu Holy Plants. All the 30 plants are referred in the Vedas and other Hindu text in different words of different chapters. But only 26 plants were identified from Thiruvananthapuram district. Among 26 Hindu holy plants there are 8 Trees, 7 Shrubs, 8 Herbs, 2 Climbers and 1 Aquatic herb. This study found that all the holy plants are connected with a particular God and people used to worship the plant overcome their difficulties. All plants which are referred as holy plants have very good medicinal properties and used to treat various human diseases.

In this study 36 plants were identified as Muslim Holy Plants. All the 36 plants are referred in the Holy Quran in different words in different chapters. But only 13 plants were identified from Thiruvananthapuram district. Among 13 Muslim holy plants there are 2 Trees, 5 Herbs, 1 Shrub, 1 Vine, 2 Shrubs or Trees and 1 Climber. Plants considered sacred by the followers of Islam as well as those included the Holy Quran have been enumerated amongst which *Phoenix sylvestris*, *Lawsonia*



inermis, *Punica granatum* and *Brassica nigra* deserve mention. But *Phoenix sylvestris* and *Brassica nigra* absent in Thiruvananthapuram district.

Found 33 plants from the internet for dengue fever. All 33 plants were mentioned on different sites. However, only 8 sacred plants were identified from Thiruvananthapuram district. Among 9 holy plants used for dengue fever there are 2 Trees, 5 Herbs, 1 Shrub, 1 Shrub or Herb.

9 plants for COVID-19 were found internet for this study. On several websites, all 9 plants were mentioned. Only four sacred plants from the Thiruvananthapuram district were identified, though. Three herbs and one tree are among the four sacred plants utilized for COVID-19. According to the study, the majority of respondents suggested using medicinal herbs to ward off COVID-19, and the use of these plants has increased during the pandemic.

HOLY PLANTS FOR DENGUE FEVER



Andrographis paniculata (Burnf.)



Azadirachta indica A. Juss.



Calotropis procera (Aiton)



Coriandrum sativum L.



Curcuma longa L.



Ocimum tenuiflorum L.





Punica granatum L.

Zingiber officinale Roscoe.

HOLY PLANTS FOR COVID – 19



Azadirachta indica A. Juss.



Curcuma longa L.



Ocimum tenuiflorum L



Zingiber officinale Roscoe.

CONCLUSION

Every community has beliefs that fall under the category of religion. The belief in supernatural power, which differs from society to civilization and is thought to be non-human or non-subject, results from the knowledge gap between people's beliefs and actions. Religious beliefs are interwoven with other facets of daily life in many cultures. According to the current study, the holy books of Christians (the Bible), Muslims (the Quran), Hindus (the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita), and other Hindus all make reference to significant medicinal herbs. They are used in different rituals and religious ceremonies by the Christian, Muslim and Hindu people. What all the plants referred in all the three religions have not



only religious significance but also medicinally important. Some important plants are referred in all the three religions. Christians, Muslims, and Hindus all share certain religious beliefs and practices. The majority of the plants mentioned in the Bible are also included in the Quran and Hindu sacred scriptures. Thus, it can be inferred that the sacred writings of the Bible, the Quran, and Hinduism place a high value on the preservation of medicinally significant plants. The majority of responders suggested using medicinal plants to prevent COVID-19, and their use has expanded during the pandemic. During the time of Covid- 19, Dengue fever people mostly used medicinal plants. Covid- 19 has been claimed to be preventable or treatable with medicinal plants. The relevant authorities ought to take this seriously. Through study and awareness campaigns, authorities should investigate the potential of these medicinal plants and manage the dissemination of false information.

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For their assistance in determining the local name, sacred value, and therapeutic significance of plants, the authors are grateful to the locals, villagers, practitioners of traditional medicine, priests of mosques, churches, and temples in Thiruvananthapuram.

COMPETING INTEREST

No competing interest

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