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**IDENTITY AND UTILITY OF PLANTS FOR HEALTHCARE AND SOCIO-
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THIRUVARUR DISTRICT, TAMILNADU**

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ABSTRACT

Thiruvapur district, one of the district in Tamil Nadu famous for its religious culture, traditions and well-defined as “*Deiveega Bhoomi*” (Land of gods). People of this district are highly religious and variety of rituals related to God, Goddess worships are performed in various ways round the year by the local people in whom plants are considered as sacred and have definite roles and importance. Hence a preliminary survey was carried out to document the role of sacred plants in religion and healthcare knowledge of people of Thiruvapur District of Tamil Nadu in India. It was observed that 41 plant species have high utility and importance in various religious activities as well as traditional healing system. These beliefs not only show the human involvement with plant diversity, but also help in conserving these species.

Keywords: Sacred Plants, Culture, Religious Rituals, Healthcare, Conservation,

INTRODUCTION

Indian culture has enormous believes for all happenings of life including sufferings, sickness and happiness which also have close relationship and respect for many animals and plants in religious events [1]. The medicinal practices, religious rites, culture, customs,

moral spirit, traditional stories, myths, folk tales, folk songs and food of man are intensely related and influenced by the plants [2]. In India, Tamil people practiced nature worship and the two practices such as *Yaagam (Velvi)* and *Pali* formed part of their worship. *Yaagam (Velvi)* that is done for universal prosperity. *Pali* is a religious rite in which an object is offered to divinity in order to establish, maintain or restore a right relationship of man to the sacred order. *Yaagam* and *Pali* are rituals in the course of which something is forfeited or destroyed, in order to establish relations between a source of spiritual strength and the one who is in need of such a source of spiritual strength. In India, Tamil people during the *Sangam* period sincerely believed and hoped that by making the religious practice *Yaagam* would give them whatever they wished and considered as gateway to heaven. *Yaagam* is performed at *Yaagasala* in the temples. *Yaagam* in the form of animals and flowers were made. *Pali* which formed part of the religious life, is a term used in Tamil literary which means sacrifice. The term *Pali* covers all kinds of offerings such as flowers known as *Pooppali* or *Malarppali*, human known as *Aanmaikadam* and *Uirppali* [3]. The other religious ceremonies such as *homa* and *pooja*, performed according to the procedures in

Vedas, Upanishads etc., to get the benefit in the form of healthiness, wealthiness and environmental balance for the individual or family members. The common *homas* are *Agnihotra*, *Ayush homa*, *Ganapathi homa*, *Navagraha homa*, *Puthrabhakya homa*, *Shanthi homa*, etc. *Agnihotra* is a simple form of *homa* which involves lighting fire in a small rectangular homakunda using bricks or plantain stem using direct cow dung cakes and ghee offerings to the fire with whisper of mantras at sunrise and sunset [4]. *Hawanas* are modified forms of *agnihotra* and offering *Dravyas* include milk, milk products, cakes made of grain and cereal powder, boiled rice and *Samidha* (dried plant twigs) with chanting of mantras [5].

Hindu religion and culture firmly preached that the five natural elements (*Pancha bhoodas*) such as space, air, fire, water and earth which are inevitable to the progress of the humanity very indispensable in day-to-day life of mankind. The god bestowed some specific powers to certain plants (e.g. *Tulsi*) animals (e.g. Cow), rivers (e.g. Ganges), mountains (e.g. Himalayas), spring or energy source (*Teertha*) and holy places (e.g. Rameshwaram) which play an important role in prosperous life of human. The significance and economic value of plants in human life were discussed time to time by many

researchers. But the religious aspects of plants has not been received any attention and not much explored so far for the wealth of human prosperity. Hence, in the present study, an attempt was made to record the plants and their relationships with religious, cultural activity, importance and divine medicine utilized by the people of Tiruvarur district in Tamil Nadu and to find out ways and means to preserve and conserve these plant diversity treasures.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was carried out in various temples of the villages in Tiruvarur District of Tamil Nadu during the year 2009-2010 to document the utilization of plants in the religion, culture and health care systems of local people. The information regarding the uses of plants in the religious, cultural activities from the local people and traditional healing system from the traditional herbal healers were collected and documented. All the ethno medicinal plants used were collected and identified with the help of Floras [6 -11]. The Herbarium specimens were prepared by following the method of [12]. All the Herbarium specimens were deposited at the herbarium of Department of Botany, Thiru.Vi. Ka. Govt Arts College, Thiruvarur, Tamil Nadu.

RESULTS

In the present study, totally 41 plant species belonging to 35 genera and 33 families were recorded which were associated with culture, religious belief, medicinal uses. All these species were considered as sacred plants used regularly by the local people in various religious cultural rituals and also used for the treatment of various human diseases in traditional medicine. These Sacred plants were enumerated and arranged in alphabetical order with botanical name, family, vernacular (*Tamil*) names, religious usages, part(s) used and diseases cured (**Table 1**).

DISCUSSION

The worshipping of tree is a custom found in Indian Culture and it is an off-shoot of respect for life and the fertility of the earth [13]. Tree worship is continuing as an element of village or neighborhood life [14]. In the present study, the sacred plants such as *Aegle marmelos*, *Aerva lanata*, *Atrocarpus integrifolia*, *Azadirachta indica*, were considered as *Sthalaviriksha* associated with gods and goddesses of various temples. In Sanskrit, *Vriksha* means tree and several *Vrikshas* were mentioned in Indian scripture, which shows close association with plants. *Kalpa vriksha* which means tree fulfilling all human desires. In Tamil Nadu temples, there are number of shrines with the name of

Sthalavriksha. Indian cadaba (*Cadaba indica*, *Veezhi chedi*) at Thiruveezhimizhalai, Goose berry (*Phyllanthus emblica*, *Nelli*) at Thirunellikaval, Jasmine (*Jasminum auriculatum*, *Mullai*) at Thirumullaivasal, the Palmyrah (*Borassus flabellifer*, *Panai*) at Thiruppanaiyur, Blinding Tree (*Excoecaria agallocha*, *Thillai*) at Chidambaram and Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*, *Maruthamaram*) at Maruthamalai.

Hindu scriptures tells us that a wide range of plants such as *Azadirachta indica*, *Crateva adansonii*, *Couroupita guianensis*, *Curcuma longa*, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Ficus religiosa*, and *Ocimum tenuiflorum* have divine qualities used in number of religious ceremonies and rituals from marriage, baptism to healthcare systems [15]. In the present study, the sacred plants such as *Azadirachta indica*, *Abrus precatorius*, *Actinopterys radiata*, *Aerva lanata*, *Benincasa cerifera*, *Borassus flabellifer*, *Capsicum frutescens*, *Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*, and *Santalum album* have been used traditionally to keep away evil spirits. When houses are being built, *Saambal Poosanikai* (Ash gourd) is kept suspended in front of the house to scare away and prevent the evil spirits from entering the house under construction. *Karakams* are performed to rid of their (evil spirits) presence in the streets. Certain plants are associated with *Vasthu*

sasthra are believed to be auspicious or inauspicious near dwellings or a particular locations. *Dracaena sanderiana* a *Vasthu* plant is believed to bring good luck and fortune for persons who has. This plant is common occurrence in houses and shops. These sacred plants with spiritual or supernatural phenomena are Indian/oriental thought. *Pipal* is auspicious in west of the house but inauspicious in east and *Nee* is believed to keep ill luck away, so it is planted near dwellings [16]. Similarly, The relationship between man and plant based on faith, belief spiritual aspects such as *Datura*, *Cannabis* and *Papaver* believed to establish communication with spirits, *Pipal* plant believed to have originated from body of Vishnu, *Alstonia scholaris* believed to be abodes of spirits and souls of the dead. Local people in the study area considered the sacred plant, *Calotropis gigantea* as associated with Surya (Sun) planet and Shrivana constellation and used during Vinayaga, Anjaneya Poojas and *Pongal* (farmer's thanks giving day) festivals as concurred with the previous report [16].

Another type of plants are Celestial plants, which are believed to be associated with constellations (*Nakshatras*) and planets (*Grahas*) Eg. *Calotropis gigantea* with Surya planet, *Prosopis spicigera* with Saturn,

Strychnos nuxvomica with Ashwini star. Sun, stars and planets emits energy which influence not only human but also plants [16]. Ceremonial (plants of religious and cultural importance) plants are associated with blessings, age-rites and witchcraft. *Aerva lanata*, *Mangifera indica* plants are inserted on the roofs of their houses during the festival seasons as indicators of festival seasons and celebrations. *Cissus quadrangularis*, *Curcuma longa* and *Tarenna asiatica* are used for marriages and festivals and worship [17].

In most of the Hindu houses in the study area, the traditional usages on plants such as planting of sacred basil in courtyard, applying sandalwood paste on forehead, applying turmeric paste and rice as a *tilagam* or *pottu* on the forehead, tying twigs of mango in a string and placing it at the main door of the house, breaking of coconuts, burning of incense and camphor before the deities and offering betel leaves and nuts to visitors is very common. The same sort of traditional uses also practiced in.

During the recent years, *Yaagam* and *Pali* have become very popular around the world due to the therapeutic efficacy of it.

Several previous reports revealed that *Agnihotra* fumes along with *Mantras* reduces the aerial microbial flora and the bio-

energetic system of *Staphylococci* [18]. Analysis of *Agnihotra* showed that it has the potentiality to heal the wounds and scabies [19]. Treatment with *Agnihotra* improves germination of rice [20]. Grape seeds and also quality of grape raisins [21]. Several studies on efficacy of *Agnihotra* on mind and body [22], microbial content of atmosphere [23], radioactivity [24], recovery of drug addict [25] and treatment of alcoholism [4] have been reported. Even during 20th century, Tamil Nadu witnessed performance of various *Yaagams* which were performed for the purpose of rains and World peace. This reveals the deep rooted belief of people in the efficacy of *Yaagams* and *Palis* (sacrifices). Rural Tamil Nadu still witnesses large scale *Palis* of animals during village festivals.

Symbolically the bunch of neem leaves are kept in front of houses having confinement women and epidemic diseased persons [3]. Tamarind tree is considered as an injurious plant as to make sickly man worse. Seeing red flowers was considered inauspicious [3]. To get relief from dog bite one has to consume the leaf of the 'nayurvi' plant with gingely oil. In Rajasthan, it is associated with the farmer's traditional method of weather forecasting. The association of plants with folk songs was by [26]. The use of plants in

symbolic and superstitious activities of the Naga tribe in Manipur [27].

The Muslims of Northern Israel use some sacred plants in cemeteries of graveyards to repel the evil spirits, as their good odor and divine medicinal qualities [28]. The rhizomes of *Nardostachys jatamansi* are generally used as incense mostly in the temples in high Himalayas due to the believe that the smoke drives away the evil spirits and attract Godly powers. The Katambu (*Eugenia racemosa*) tree and flowers were most sacred to Lord Muruga. Kaantal (*Gloriosa superba*) Venkai (*Pterocarpus*) and Vetchi (Red *Ixora*), Konrai(*Cassia fistula*) and Ashoka (*Saraca indica*) are other flowers associated with the worship of Muruga [29].

Tiruvarur district is a part of Granary of Tamil Nadu, which has both *Marutham* and *Neithal* regions. Paddy, Sugarcane, fruit trees, cotton, gingelly, pulses and grams are cultivated in *Marutham* region. Fishing is natural and major occupation in *Neithal* region. Marine resource is main source for the life of fisher folk or the *Meenavar* community. The people belonging to Hindu, Muslim and Christian religion are living with communal harmony and worshipping different plants during festivals. In particular, sacred plants seen in Hindu temples are worshipping as *sthalaviriksha* which have

close association with specific God viz. *Aegle marmelos*, *Aerva lanata*, *Artocarpus integrifolia*, *Borassus flabellifer*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, *Cadaba fruticosa*, *Calophyllum inophyllum*, *Ficus religiosa*, *Crateva adansonii* *Phyllanthus emblica*, *Prosopis cineraria*, *Santalum album*, *Stereospermum chelonoides*, and *Terminalia arjuna*. The tender leaves of Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) tree are used for *Kurutholai* festival celebrated by Christians during the month of April. *Pandanus amaryllifolius* (Edible Pandanus) is a sacred plant found in the garden of Mosques. The Muslim people uses its fragrant leaves in cooking, to flavor dishes of ghee rice, cakes, jellies etc or tied in a bundle and cooked with food.

The traditional culture and religion of human beings have deep faith in the nature and its components in every walk of life. The sacred plants also have special therapeutic properties bestowed and gifted by the God. The sacred plants and their medicinal importance with special reference to Indian context [30]. In Uttarkant state, the Rajis and Shauka tribes depend on the spirit possessed person and some sacred plants for curing diseases [31] while the people of Almora district used the sacred plants for mental and physical health [12]. In Northern Peru, more than 200 species of medicinal plants are being

used in the cultural and religious activities of local people of for the treatment of psychosomatic diseases [32]. The greater religious movement play as a protective factor in high risk sexual behavior, which promote safe sex [33].

In the study area, the temple authority maintained the *Nandavanas* which means herbal gardens in the temple premises with number of sacred plants.

All these sacred plants are medicinally valuable which have curative properties to give mental as well as body relief for visiting illnensed pilgrims and also aesthetic value to the temple.

CONCLUSION

Thus, from the present study it is concluded that the religious activities having close relationship with plants boost up the mental health of local people of Tiruvarur district and many of the sacred plants found in the household and temples were used for various religious cultural activities as well as for health care. These sacred plants are even worshiped by the local people for getting the blessing of health and wealth by positive powers of nature. Hence the religious ceremonies, rites act as a protective factor or device for the conservation of sacred plants. So it is the duty of present generation to preserve and promote these aesthetic treasures

to conserve biodiversity and nature, which will surely play a part in progression of human beings.

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Table 1: List of plants utilized for Healthcare and Socio-cultural activities in Thiruvavur District, Tamilnadu

S. No.	Botanical Name with Family & Local Name	Religious uses	Medicinal uses
1	<i>Abrus precatorius</i> L. Fabaceae, <i>Kundumani</i>	i) Ash of burnt leaves mixed with coconut oil is applied on the forehead to keep off evil spirits.	i) 25-50g of roots mixed with 3 peppers is made into a paste and is taken thrice a day for 7 consecutive days for the treatment of white discharge. Sexual contact should be avoided during the treatment period. ii) 10-20g of leaves mixed with coconut oil is made into a paste and is applied externally for skin itching and wounds. iii) Leaf paste made from one handful of leaves is taken along with goat's milk on empty stomach thrice a day for 3-5 days for the treatment of chest pain.
2	<i>Actinopterys radiata</i> (Sw.) Link. Actiniopteridaceae, <i>Kalpanai</i>	i) Whole plant used to ward off evil spirits. ii) Keeping this plant in house alleviate the family problems.	i) Whole plant used to blood pressure, rheumatism and tuberculosis.
3	<i>Achyranthes aspera</i> L. Amaranthaceae, <i>Naayuruvi</i>	i) Twigs used as <i>samidha</i> in <i>yaagam</i> .	i) Extract of boiled leaves used for internal piles. ii) Roots used as tooth brush for dental clean and pain. iii) Stem powder used as tooth powder.
4	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> (L.) Correa Rutaceae, <i>Vilvam</i>	i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Sri Kasi Viswanathar temple. ii) Leaves and flowers are offered to God for <i>Pooja</i> .	i) 25 g of root powder is boiled in water and filtered decoction is taken thrice a day for 7 days to cure fever. ii) Half of ripe fruit is taken twice a day for 3-4 days to cure constipation and dyspepsia.
5	<i>Aerva lanata</i> (L.) Juss. Amaranthaceae, <i>Poolaiippoo</i>	i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of <i>Gurusthala</i> temple. ii) Twigs with neem and <i>Cassia auriculata</i> twigs inserted (Kaappu kattal) in front and corners of the houses during <i>Pongal</i> festival (Farmers thanks giving day) which is used spiritually for healing. iii) Dried roots stuffed talisman used to keep off evil spirits.	i) Fresh leaf paste mixed with coconut oil is applied externally on wounds to kill worms. ii) 5-10ml of decoction of leaves and tender shoots is consumed on empty stomach for removing kidney stones. iii) Root paste is applied externally for bleeding piles.

6	<i>Artocarpus heterophyllus</i> Lam., Moraceae, <i>Palaa</i>	i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Sri Pushpavanathan temple. ii) Leaves are auspicious to decorate the <i>kalasam</i> .	i) A handful leaves are boiled in water and the filtered decoction is taken 3 times a day for 7 days to cure dysentery.
7	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> (L.) A.Juss. Meliaceae, <i>Vembu</i>	i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Mariamman temple. ii) Keeping the bunches of twigs in front of the houses to keep away evil spirits and as a sign of epidemic disease and child birth. iii) Leaves collected were offered to Goddess for <i>Pooja</i> iv) Leafy twigs were used to spray cow's holy urine (<i>Komium</i>) as germicide and pesticide inside the house during <i>Homa</i> , v) Keeping of tender leaves believed to act as shield for children and pregnant women to keep away the evil spirits.	i) Leaf decoction is taken orally on empty stomach for as health tonic and leaf paste mixed with coconut oil (<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L. Areaceae) is applied externally for skin related diseases. ii) Stem is chewed directly for immediate relief of tooth ache.
8	<i>Bambusa arundinacea</i> (Retz.) Willd Poaceae, <i>Moongil</i>	i) Stems and spliced stems used for making <i>Pandal</i> and arches for decorations. ii) Young stems used to make funeral cot for last rites of man.	i) Fresh young leaves are chewed and eaten for poisonous insect bites. The treatment was stopped after sensing the spicy taste of pepper. ii) Leaf decoction is given to females after delivery to relieve uterus pain. iii) Leaves are given to cattle after delivery to relieve uterus pains. iv) Spliced stem used for bone setting of human and animals.
9	<i>Bauhinia purpurea</i> L. Caesalpinaceae, <i>Thiruvaatchi (or) Mandhaarai</i>	i) <i>Sthalavriksha</i> of Sri Brammathareswarar temple. ii) Flowers used for <i>Pooja</i> .	i) One handful of root bark is made into paste along with gingili oil (<i>Sesamum orientale</i> L. Pedaliaceae) is applied on joints to cure joint pains. ii) 10 g of stem bark is boiled in water and the filtered decoction is taken 3 times a day for 7 days to cure diarrhea and dysentery
10	<i>Bauhinia racemosa</i> Lam. Caesalpinaceae, <i>Aatthi, Kaattaatthi</i>	i) <i>Sthalavriksha</i> of Nainavaratheshvar temple. ii) Flowers used for <i>Pooja</i> .	i) Stem bark used for diarrhea and dysentery. ii) Leaf decoction were used for headache and malarial fever.
11	<i>Benincasa hispida</i> (Thunb) Cogn. Cucurbitaceae, <i>Saambal poosani</i>	i). Flowers placed over rangoli to get prosperity and for <i>Peedai Parikaaram</i> . ii) Fruits were used to hanging in front of the newly	i) To expel the intestine tapeworms, take seed paste in empty stomach made from 25 g of seeds. After 3 hrs take 2 teaspoonful of Castor oil. ii) Fruits are used for white discharge, reduce body heat,

		constructed houses for <i>Thristy parikaaram</i> and to get away any evil spirits.	ulcer, stomach ulcer and kidney problems.
12	<i>Borassus flabellifer</i> L. Areceaceae, <i>Panai</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Sri Sevukarayasamy temple. ii) To put an end to evil spirits, suffered individual's bunch of hairs nailed on this tree to drive way it from the individual. iii) Dried leaves used to celebrate <i>Sokka paanai</i> (Bonfire) burning during <i>Karthigai Dheepam</i> festival .to ward off evil spirits and for prosperity, iv) Bunches of fruits are tied (<i>Thongukulai</i>) at entrance during local festivals of temples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Fleshy seed coat is applied on the face to remove pimples and also for softening of skin. ii) The edible endosperm is taken orally to cure body heat related problems and stomach ulcer. iii) Fermented juice tapped from the inflorescence is given for reducing body heat, stomach ulcers.
13	<i>Cadaba fruticosa</i> (L.) Druce Capparaceae <i>Vizhuthi, Veezhichedi</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Thiruveezhi Nathar temple. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) 10-20g of leaves mixed with coconut oil is made into a paste and is applied externally for knee joint pain. ii) 2-5g of leaf powder mixed with goat's milk is taken 3 times a day for 15 days to control blood sugar.
14	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i> (L.) R. Br. Asclepiadaceae, <i>Yerukku</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Leaves and flower used in <i>Vinayaga, Aanjneya</i> pooja and <i>Pongal</i> (farmer thanks giving day) festival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) 20-25g of flowers mixed with one or two pieces of <i>Kirambu (Syzygium aromaticum, Myrtaceae)</i> is made into a paste along with coconut oil is applied externally thrice a day on joints for the treatment of joint pains. ii) Leaf paste is applied externally along with coconut oil to cure skin itching. iii) Fresh root is chewed for the immediate relief of tooth ache. iv) The leaves are tied around wounds made by thorns.
	<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i> L. Sapindaceae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Entire climber plant used during <i>Pongal</i> festival. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) One handful of leaves mixed with 5 peppers is made into a paste and is taken thrice a day for 3-5days for the treat

15	<i>Mudakkatran</i>		<p>ment of severe stomach pain during menstruation period for women and body pain in general.</p> <p>ii) One handful of leaves made into a paste mixed with goat's milk is taken orally on empty stomach for the treatment of constipation.</p> <p>iii) Fresh leaf juice is applied on the ears for quick relief of ear pain</p> <p>iv) Root decoction along with goat's milk is taken orally for haemorrhoids.</p>
16	<i>Calophyllum inophyllum</i> L. Clusiaceae, <i>Punnai</i>	i) <i>Sthalavriksha</i> of SriMathapuriswarasamy temple.	i) Seeds used for skin diseases.
17	<i>Capsicum frutescens</i> L Solanaceae, <i>Milagaai</i>	i) The smoke of dried fruits (red chilies) is inhaled to ward off the <i>evil spirits</i> . (<i>Thristy</i>)	i) Leaves are used to treat boils. -
18	<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L. Arecaceae <i>Thennai</i>	<p>i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of SriVellimalainathasamy temple.</p> <p>ii) Tender leaves are used as sign of well wishes, pleasure and victory during <i>Kurutholai</i> Sunday festival .</p> <p>iii) Leaves are used for all sort of ceremonies from birth to death.</p> <p>iv. Breaking of coconut into pieces (<i>Soorai thaengaai</i>) is a religious custom to begin any activity for success and to remove bad spirits (<i>thristy</i>)</p> <p>v. Bunches of Coconut flowers and fruits are tied (<i>Thongukulai</i>) at entrance during local fetivals of temples</p>	i) Tender fruit endosperm promote growth of children and reduce body heat.

		vi. Dried fruits are offered for <i>Yaaga</i> and <i>Homa</i> . vii. Mature coconut was broken into two equal pieces and worshipped to God for prosperity	
19	<i>Couroupita guianensis</i> Aubl Lecythidaceae, <i>Naagalingam</i>	i) <i>Sacred tree</i> growing in temple gardens.	i) Bark powder used for stupefying Fishes
20	<i>Crateva adansonii</i> DC. Capparaceae, <i>Maavilingam</i>	i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Rathna Pureeswarar temple.	i) One handful of leaves made into a paste along with a cup of boiled rice water is given to the cattle during the period of pregnancy for easy delivery.
21	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L.) Pers. Poaceae, <i>Arugampul</i>	i) Stem top with 3-5 leaves used in <i>Vinayaga</i> , <i>Siva</i> and <i>Durga poojas</i> and in other sacred rituals. ii) Plants used in <i>pooja</i> .	i) Equal quantity each of leaf paste of <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> and <i>Catharanthus roseus</i> mixed with coconut oil is applied for leprosy ii) One handful of rhizome along with garlic, ginger, pepper is boiled with water and the filtered decoction is given twice a day for 7 days for chronic fever. iii) The juice of the whole plant is used to reduce body heat and to lower the blood pressure. iv) Infusion of plant stops bleeding in piles.
22	<i>Dracaena sanderiana</i> Hort.Sand. Dracaenaceae, <i>Athirstamoongil</i>	i) To bring good luck and fortune	-
23	<i>Erythrina stricta</i> Roxb. Fabaceae, <i>Mulmurungai</i>	i) Trifoliate Leaf represent the three Hindu Gods (Trimurthi) of <i>Bramah</i> , <i>Vishnu</i> , and <i>Siva</i> .	i) Bark powder used for itch, fever, rheumatism, burning sensation, asthma, and leprosy. ii) Leaves used as green and are ground with rice to make roasted <i>dosa</i> and <i>adai</i> ; this is consumed against cold and cough. iii) Leaf decoction is taken on empty stomach to relieve cold, asthma and other respiratory problems.

24	<i>Ficus benghalensis</i> L. Moraceae Aalam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i>. of Vinayaga temples. ii) Women doing <i>pradakshinas</i> and worshiping this tree for longevity of their husbands and fulfillment of their wishes and attain the heaven. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Stem bark decoction is taken 3 times a day for 1 week to cure diarrhea and dysentery. ii) Milky latex is applied externally to heal foot cracks. iii) Infusion of bark considered tonic and astringent used in diabetes. iv) Tender roots for Seminal weakness
25	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> L. Moraceae Arasu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i>. of Vinayaga temple. ii) Male offspring is entreated, if pious woman move around its trunk 108 times. iii) Its location on the south of house is auspicious. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Milky latex is applied externally to cure healing of foot cracks, on blood clotted site till it cures. ii) 20-50 g of root bark is made into a powder and one teaspoonful of powder is mixed with little amount of coconut oil is applied externally on the blood clotted site to cure blood clotting.
26	<i>Mangifera indica</i> L. Anacardiaceae Maa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Tying leafy twigs in a string on doors in every auspicious occasion to attract more powers of nature. ii) Twigs are used as <i>samidha</i> & as offering to sacred fire (<i>Homa kunda</i>). iii) Its planting on the east of house is auspicious and gives wealth. iv) Leaf used to spray holy water and to make <i>Kalasha</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) White kernel of seed is taken along with goat's milk and honey for diarrhea. ii) Gum collected from stem bark mixed with neem oil is applied externally to cure foot crack.
27	<i>Michelia champaca</i> L. Magnoliaceae Shenbagam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Sri Rajagopalam temple. ii) Flowers are offered to Lord Perumal and used to make garlands. 	-
28	<i>Mimusops elengi</i> L. Sapotaceae Mahizham poo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Sri Bakthavachala Perumal temple. ii) Flowers and fruits are offered to Lord Perumal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) 5-10g of root bark powder mixed with milk and honey is taken at night time for deep sleep.
29	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> L. Musaceae. Vaazhai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Plant with pseudo stem used from birth to death ceremonies. ii) Leaf base used to make flower arches to adorn god / goddess during festivals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Fresh Fruit is taken for easy digestion. ii) Watery sap collected from the stem is given immediately to the patient and the patient made to lie on banana leaf with out sleep to arrest the poisonous effect of snake venom

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) Plant with its bunch of fruits and inflorescence signifies life of plenty and fertility, hence used in entrances of houses on auspicious occasions. iv) Fruits also used for auspicious and inauspicious ceremonies. v) Young cut plants are used during <i>Ayuda pooja</i>. 	<p>after bite.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) Flowers and fruits are crushed and made into a paste with dry ginger (<i>Zingiber officinale</i>), pepper (<i>Piper nigrum</i>), black myrobalan (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>), nutmeg (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>) are mixed with feeds and given orally to cattle for all forms of severe diarrhea.
30	<p><i>Nymphaea nouchali</i> Burm.f. Nymphaeaceae <i>Alli</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Flowers are offered to deities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Rhizome is for diarrhea and dysentery. ii) Flowers are cardio tonic. iii) Seeds are taken for cooling, gastrointestinal disorders and jaundice.
31	<p><i>Nyctanthes arbor-trsitis</i> L. Nyctanthaceae <i>Pavazha malli</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) <i>Sthala vriksh</i> of Sri Kalarmulainathar temple. ii) Flowers and leaves are used as offerings for <i>Pooja</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Leaf juice remedy for intestinal worms.
32	<p><i>Ocimum tenuiflorum</i> L. Lamiaceae <i>Nallathulasi,</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Living plant wards off evil spirits, protects from misfortune and sanctifies and guides to heaven all who cultivate it. ii) Leaves used in funeral rites of Hindus. iii) Twigs with inflorescence are offered to Lord Perumal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Fresh leaf paste is applied externally on the face for the treatment of black patch below the eye.
33	<p><i>Oryza sativa</i> L. Poaceae <i>Nellu</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Its husked seeds (<i>Nel</i>) are used in various sacred rituals and worship. ii) It is also used for mark of auspicious (<i>Pottu</i>) on forehead with turmeric or sandal wood paste as blessing of fertility. iii) Rice paste is used to decorate (<i>Kolam</i>) the place of worship. iv) Husked seeds (<i>Nel</i>) are offered to poor people during auspicious occasions as <i>Dravya danam</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Rice water nourishing drink.
34	<p><i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> L. Euphorbiaceae, <i>Nellikai</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Nelli Vananadasamy temple. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) One handful of leaves is made into a paste and mixed with coconut oil (<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L. Arecaceae) is applied on the infected portions for scabies and skin itching. ii) One handful of leaves made into paste is mixed with goat's milk is taken on empty stomach for 7-10 days for the treatment of jaundice. Food without salt, oil is recommended
35		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Murugan and Agneeswarar 	-

	<i>Prosopis cineraria</i> (L.)Druce Mimosaceae, Vanni	temples. ii) To fulfill the vow of getting a child, yellow cloth cradles are tied in the branches of this tree by child-less women.	
36	<i>Santalum album</i> L. Santalaceae, Sandhanam	i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Vanchinathaswamy temple. ii) It keeps away evil spirits at bay. iii) Sandal wood paste used during auspicious occasions and placed as <i>pottu</i> on the forehead. iv) Wood used to make idols, garlands and rosaries.	i) 20-50 g of wood paste is applied on the face during night and the face washed in the morning to cure pimples. ii) Also applied externally on the whole body for softening of body, iii) Applied on the head to reduce body heat.
37	<i>Sesamum indicum</i> L. Pedaliaceae, Yellu	i) Black sesame seeds are mixed with grains of rice and offered (<i>tarpanam</i>) to the manes. ii) White sesame seeds mixed with rice are offered to the gods (<i>tarpanam</i>). iii) Sesame oil is used to pacify the malefic effect of Lord <i>Shani</i> (Saturn) iv) Sesame seeds represent a symbol of immortality.	i) Fruit paste is applied on the affected portion of wounds.
38	<i>Stereospermum chelonoides</i> (L.f.)DC. Bignoniaceae, Paathiri	i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Thyagaraja temple.	i) Flowers pounded with honey is taken for Hiccough.
39	<i>Syzygium cumini</i> (L.)Skeels Myrtaceae, Naaval	i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Sabdharisheeswarar temple. ii) Sacred Plant for Lord <i>Krishna</i> .	i) 5gm Stem bark powder in goat's milk is taken on empty stomach for diarrhea. ii) 5gm Leaf paste and seed paste mixed with goat's milk is taken on empty stomach for diabetes.
40	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> (Roxb. ex DC.)Wight & Arn. Combretaceae Vellamarudu, Maruthamaram	i) <i>Sthala vriksha</i> of Sri Ruthra Kodeeswarar temple.	i) 2-4g of fruit powder is mixed with goat's milk and honey for diabetes. ii) Leaf decoction is given internally for fever. iii) Stem bark powder mixed with coconut oil is applied externally for inflammations, skin diseases.
41	<i>Zingiber officinalis</i> Roscoe Zingiberaceae, Injhi	i) Whole plant is used for worship along with Sugar cane during <i>Pongal</i> festival.	i) Rhizome decoction is taken for indigestion problem and any other stomach disorders. ii) Rhizome paste mixed with 1-2 peppers, asafoetida (<i>Ferula asafetida</i>) is administered orally to cattle as a cure for gastric problems.