

Heterogeneity of Navagraha Plants of Bakkala Garden of Sirsi, Uttara Kannada District, Karnataka

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Abstract:

Navagraha is nine heavenly bodies and deities that influence human life on earth according to Hinduism and Hindu astrology. Navagraha's garden of nine planets is represented by the plants which have the forces of nine planets. These plants and trees of the nine planets are planted in a particular direction to get the benefit of the nine planets and then it is called the Navagraha Vatika. Navagraha Vatika is very important and a source of energy if planted anywhere. This vatika is used to get the power of navagraha as these plants represent different planets i.e. different celestial forces. In the ancient literature, there is a reference to sacred grooves such as Nakshatra Vana, Panchavati Vana, Nandana Vana, Ashok Vana, Brinda Vana, Santana Vana, Raasi Vana, and Navagraha Vana^{4,1}. The present work describes the status of Navagraha Vana of Bakkala, Sirsi, Uttara Kannada District. The Bakkala botanical garden is known for medicinal plant diversity including the Navagraha Vatika. The references which have been made in ancient literature about the Navagraha species grown at Bakkala reveal their importance to the present generation and are discussed in the paper. The medicinal values of nine plants having the forces of nine planets are also emphasized in the paper.

This is an ideal place for many Naati Vaidyas and research scholars for their studies as well as the exchange of knowledge. The plants of this place have one or other medicinal applications and should be conserved for future generations.

Keywords: Vatica, planet, medicinal values, conservation.

INTRODUCTION

Bio-diversity conservation necessitates knowledge of the diversity of plants, animals, and their distributional status. The Western Ghats in India is one of the 25 richest mega biodiversity hot spots in the World. In spite of adverse human impact, they still support a good number of endemic flora and fauna. Our forefathers have mentioned in Vedas and Upanishads about the dependence of men on trees, forests, and their dumb denizens. Therefore, they showed love and affection, and reverence to nature and developed and practiced a sense of mutually beneficial partnership with nature⁴.

It is the responsibility of every one of us to protect nature, believing in the say of Mahatma Gandhi that "Nature has enough for every man's need but not for his greed". In recent years in the subject of Biology, a lot of importance is given to topics like plants and animal diversity, their depletion, and conservation in particular. This has led Governments to start many programs and projects in response to NGO's agitations and movements. The Bakkala medicinal plant garden has been established in the year 1985 by the Karnataka State Forest Department is one among them. In the present paper, navagraha plants are listed and their medicinal importance with nine planets' forces is highlighted.

OBJECTIVES

- Bring about awareness among the society about the significance of medicinal plant diversity including the Navagraha plant and the need to conserve it.
- Educate the students on environmental and ecology topics, thereby sensitizing them towards biodiversity conservation.
- Equip the teaching community and the students to monitor plant diversity and document field observations through field studies.
- To give wide publicity about the medicinal plant garden for the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

During our survey, elderly people and forest department officials were interviewed. The plant samples were collected and the herbarium was prepared and cross-examined with reference books available. Photographs of the plant specimen were taken for identification and identified with the assistance of taxonomic botanists.

STUDY AREA

Bakkal is a village around 18 km from Sirsi town on the Sirsi-Sonda Swarnavalli route via Hulekal of Uttara Kannada District of Karnataka. After 2km from Hulekal, there is a left deviation that leads to this temple. Bakkala (a corrupted form of Bakula) is a historic place believed to exist from Ramayana times. This place finds a mention in Satyanatheshwara Purana along with Yana. It is believed that when Hanuman was carrying Sanjeevini hill to Lanka, parts of Sanjeevini plants fell there^{2,3}. This place is known for medicinal plants and a botanical garden comprising these is being maintained here.

DISCUSSION

Earlier the Bakkala garden was a funeral place which is now completely transformed into a medicinal plant garden. The medicinal plant development programme was embarked upon in the year 1985 by the sincere effort of the late Shri Aravinda Hegde, R.F.O. Sirsi, Shri Praveenchandra Pande D.F.O. Sirsi and Shri Yallappa Reddy, Chief Conservator of Forest, Bangalore. The garden is now being maintained by Shri Ratnakar N. Naik, Forest Department, Hulekal Region, Sirsi. The climate is humid and pleasant throughout the year. The campus mainly has the lateritic type of soil. The site of 65 acres is selected for raising the medicinal plants. The medicinal plants including the navagraha plants were procured from various local nurseries and some from other states also. In recent years Dr.N.D.Bhat, Prof. M.M. Hegde, Bakkal, Shri R.S.Hegde, Bairumbe and Shri Shankar Hegde, Chappadamane, Vanalli are contributing significantly by adding some rare species to the garden.

A shade house for Ferns, Orchids, Shiva Panchayata Vana, Navagraha Vana, Rashi Vana, Kadamba Vana, Nakshatra Vana, Ashokavana, Kanva Vana, etc. are constructed. The result is an eye-catching garden for the Bakkala Village which is more instructive and informative. It has been attracting many academicians, research scholars, students, teachers, and the public at large.

Bakkala medicinal plant garden includes more than 600 plants including navagraha plants. Rare species such as *Saraca asoka* which is highly endangered are also conserved.

Navagrah Vatika is a very important source of energy if planted anywhere. As these plants represent different planets i.e. represent different celestial forces so this vatika is used to get the power of navagraha. These have the following benefits^{1,3}.

- ✚ Navagraha Vatika or garden is used to get the power of Navagraha.
- ✚ It protects the vastu from the malefic effects of nine planets.
- ✚ It energizes the vastu where the plants are planted.
- ✚ It gives the person Healthy and Wealthy life.
- ✚ It protects from various Diseases.
- ✚ Navagraha Vatika gives a new look to the Vastu.
- ✚ If planted heartily in auspicious times and in good directions then it attracts the power of divine energies and removes Vastu Dosha.

The Navagraha plants are grown in their proper directions in the following ways³.

- ✓ **Swetharka or Calotropis gigantean (Ekke)**: Represent Sun or Surya and planted at the middle or center.
- ✓ **Palash or Butea Monosperma (Muttugala)**: Represent Moon or Chandra or Soma planted in the southeast direction.
- ✓ **Kadhira or Nalla sandra or Acacia catechu(Khaira)**: Represent Mars or Mangal and planted in the south Direction.
- ✓ **Apamarg or Achyranthus aspera (Uttarane)**: Represent Mercury or Budha and planted in North Direction.
- ✓ **Peepal or Ashwaththa or Ficus religiosa** : Represent Guru or Jupiter and planted in the North - East Direction.

- ✓ **Anjeer or Fig or *Ficus racemosa* / *Ficus glomerata* (Atti):** Represent Venus or Shukra and planted at East Direction.
- ✓ **Sami or Khari or *Acacia ferruginea* / *Prosopis cenneraria*;** Represent Saturn or Shani and planted in West Direction.
- ✓ **Durva or *Cynodon dactylon*:** Represent Rahu or Dragon's Head and planted in South West Direction.
- ✓ **Darbha or *Saccharum spontaneum* / *Imperata Cylindrica* or **Thatch Grass:** Represent Ketu or Dragon's Tail and planted in North West Direction.**

The same procedure is followed in structuring the Navagraha garden at Bakkal. This kind of Navagraha Vatica can be established anywhere in our surroundings. Nowadays this type of garden is very common in hotels, industrial areas, bungalows, farmhouses, and on the terrace of houses. It will not increase the beauty of our Vastu but also increase the energy of our vastu. Just one tree with flowers and fruits makes the forest and environment fragrant and heavenly, like a good son to a family.

VIEW OF BAKKAL GARDEN WITH A FEW SELECTED NAVAGRAHA SPECIES



Fig. 1: Garden entrance point at the Bakkal Village.



Fig.2: A shade house for ferns and orchids



Fig.3: Navagraha Vana



Fig.4: *Butea monosperma*



Fig.5: *Calotropis giga*

CONCLUSION

According to a study conducted during the month of Feb. 2017, it has been revealed that medicinal plant diversity including the Navagraha plant and its abundance has considerably increased and is well preserved as compared to earlier studies. This is an ideal place for many **Naati Vaidyas** and research scholars for their studies as well as the exchange of knowledge. The plants of this place have one or other medicinal applications and should be conserved for the future generation.

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The author is thankful to Shri Ramakant Narayan Naik, Forest Department, Hulekal Region, Sirsi, and the people of Bakkal village of Sirsi for their assistance during our survey. The author is also thankful to all the forest officials of Sirsi, and the Principal of the College for their help.

Table showing the Navagraha plants and their medicinal values.

Botanical Name	Family	Medicinal values
Calotropis gigantea	Apocynaceae	Leprosy, Syphilis, Dysentery, Elephantiasis, Abortion, Epilepsy, Convolutions, Paralysis, Asthma, Ear-ache, Skin diseases.
Butea Monosperma	Fabaceae	Plants kill misquote, used to prepare traditional holi color.
Acacia catechu	Fabaceae	Astringent, Bactericide, Refrigerant, Stimulant, Masticator, Expectorant, Antifungal activity, Birth control, Swelling in the liver, Blood clotting, Leukemia, Asthma, Bronchitis and cough, dysentery, diarrhea, The bark cures, anemia, ulcers, gum issues. Treats the problem of leprosy, Swelling in the spleen, Skin disorders, Constipation, and Pain in the chest. Diabetes.
Achyranthus aspera	Amaranthaceae	Abortifacient activity. Gynecology; abortion, induction of labor, Piles, pneumonia, bites of poisonous snakes and reptiles, etc.
Ficus religiosa	Moraceae	Used in traditional medicine for about 50 types of disorders including asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, gastric problems, inflammation disorders, etc.
Ficus glomerata	Moraceae	Wound healing, skin diseases, Kidney stone treatment.
Acacia ferruginea	Leguminosae	Malaria, dental diseases, Dysentery, Stomach ache, External bleeding, Diarrhea, Dry mouth, Epilepsy, Eye diseases, Liver tonic, Blood purifier, and antioxidant.
Cynodon dactylon	Poaceae	Burning sensation, Dysentery, Diarrhea, Epilepsy, Leprosy Piles, Skin diseases, Menstrual complications, ulcers, and wounds.
Saccharum spontaneum	Poaceae	According to Ayurveda, roots are sweet, astringent, emollient, refrigerant, diuretic, lithotriptic, purgative, tonic, aphrodisiac and useful in the treatment of dyspepsia, burning sensation, piles, sexual weakness, gynecological troubles, respiratory troubles, etc.

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