



Study of Religious Aspects and Herbal Potential of Some Plants of Bilaspur Distt (H.P) Associated with Deities

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ABSTRACT

Plants play an important role in the life cycle of the rural people of Bilaspur district. They are helpful to the rural communities to meet their daily requirements such as food, fodder, fiber, shelter, ornamental, medicinal and used in various religious ceremonies and also associated with various deities and their worshipping. Every region has its own sacred plants. The sacred plants have an important place in the Indian mythology and thus these plants play an important role in the life of rural people of study region from birth to death in every ceremony. Bilaspur district is the beautiful district of Himachal Pradesh. This district is also known for famous temples such as Baba Nahar Singh temple, Naina Devi temple, Rishi Markandey temple and Rukmani kund and temple etc. The plants grown in temple courtyard of these temples show that these plants are sacred and have their religious importance and their association with deities. Instead of religious importance, this study attempts to highlight the herbal potential or medicinal importance of some plants of Bilaspur district which are worshipped to appease various deities. The traditional knowledge about the herbal potential of local plants of study area is used by rural communities for primary health care and for treatment of various diseases. This traditional knowledge about religious and medicinal aspects forms the basis of conservation of plants resources for rural community.

Key words: Deities, Folk remedies, Traditional knowledge, Ritual and rites, Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh.

INTRODUCTION

Himachal Pradesh is a beautiful state with a diverse culture and traditions. This state is located between 30°22'40" to 33° 12'40" north latitude and 75°45'55" to 79°04'20" east longitudes. The total area of this state is 55673 Km² with the mountain ranging from 350 to 6975 meter and average rainfall is 152 cm.. A total of 13082 sq Km area which is covered under thick forest which provide shelters to 1200 species of birds, 359 species of animals and more than 3400 plant species (Sharma *et. al*, 2009). Himachal Pradesh is not merely physical land mass but a vibrant and spiritually charged mass of land known as "Dev Bhoomi"-land of God. It is land where all the components of nature are worshipped. (Kumar *et.al*, 2020)

Geographically, Himachal Pradesh ranges from plains of Shivalik to high mountain Himalayas. Within the change in its altitude its culture and tradition also changes. The clean forest of this state is not only increase its natural beauty but also conserve the culture and traditions. Some plants of these forest are considered

sacred and used in various kinds of religious ceremonies of Hindus from birth to death. There are no ceremonies of Hindus which cannot be completed without the help of tree.

Himachal Pradesh is also well known for medicinal plants hot spots in the western Himalaya that are rich in diversity of medicinal flora. The traditional healers and old villager people of this state have a good faith and a sound knowledge related to medicinal uses of plants around them. The use of local plants in the form of folk remedies is also becomes helpful in alleviating different diseases or health problems (Kaur *et.al*, 2011) Bilaspur district is the beautiful district which is famous for religious temples such as Baba Nahar Singh Temple, Naina Devi temple etc. and also famous for its manmade lake known as “ Gobind Sagar lake’ which occur on Satluj river .This lake act as a good reservoir of water for the Bhakra and Nangal Dam .The road bridge on this lake is Kandroul which is the second highest bridge in Asia. This district has an area of 1.167 sq km. This district is full of hilly regions which are situated in the Shivalik range of lower Himalayas.The hills of this district due to favourable climatic conditions act as a good repository of herbal plants. The rural people of this district has good faith and knowledge on the on powers of medicinal uses of local plants for the treatment of various health problems in the form folk herbal remedies. The rural people of bilaspur district also use the plants and their products or parts such as flower ,fruits, wood and leaves in the worships of various deities and various kinds of rituals worships and religious ceremonies such as birth ceremony, marriage, Havan and death rite etc.

Baba Nahar singh is the famous God or Dev which is worshipped by people of this district as Sidh dev .This God is also is also known as 'Peepal wala Dev' and 'Pahadiya Dev'. The rural people of this district believed that Peepal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) is abode of this God .So ,people of this district worship this tree as symbol or sign of this God. The people also consider this tree as worshipping place of Baba Nahar Singh. Bargadh(*Ficus benghalensis*) tree is also associated with worshipping place of God Baba Nahar Singh temple, Naina Devi temple is the famous temple of Bilaspur district. The people of this district worship the Goddess Naina Devi as "Kul Devi "for fulfilling the wishes of their family. So, they use various plants products or their parts in the worship of this Goddess such as Seeds fruit, and flowers which are used in “Katha” and Havan during worship of this Goddess and other local dieties. The local peoples of the bilaspur district has great faith on God and Goddesses of temples of bilaspur district regarding to fulfilling their wishes. Therefore , they consider the local plants which are associated with local dieties or related with worship of Gods during religious ceremonies sacred and protect them from cutting. In this way local people of this district also play important role in the conservation of local plants in the form of *insitu* mode of conservation in sacred groove. Many researches or work has done regarding to the medicinal and religious importance of some plants which are as follows:

Sharma Sen(1989) has highlighted the role of plants in Indian puranas -an ethnobotanical investigation. Warman(1999) described the medicinal, commercial, religious and ornamental properties of various tress of India . Sood *et.al* (2005) brings the compendium in which 468 plants spread over 133 families and 340 genera are listed .He described the religious rites and religious belief related to the particular plant in the book sacred and magico- religious plants of india. Sharma and Seth (2020) has focused on the role of rural women in the conservation of plant resources and it's management in district Mandi, Himachal Pradesh etc. So there are many kinds of researches which has done related to medicinal and religious importance of local plants in various parts of Himachal Pradesh but little work is done regarding to this aspect in Bilaspur district .Thus this paper mainly focuses on the religious and medicinal aspect of 43 plants of 26 families of study region.

METHODOLOGY

During this research work, several ethnobotanical survey were conducted during 2019-2020 in different areas of Bilaspur district such as Bilaspur town ,Dadhool, Jandutta, Ghumarwin, Naina Devi ,Kotdhar,

Rishikesh and Swarghat etc. During these survey plants specimens were collected in the flowering and fruiting stage. The collected plant specimen were dried pressed and mounted on the herbarium sheets and preserved and stored in the Department of the Botany in Govt degree college Sujampur Tihra, district Hamirpur, (H.P). The information regarding to the religious and medicinal importance of local plant in the study area were collected through personal contact face to face interaction with rural people specially old villagers or local voids or Purohits and Saints of study region. The collected information were recorded or documented in the form this work in the paper.

Field data was compared with various literatures of ethnobotany such as Sood et.al(2005) and Kumar and Choyal (2013)etc. The identification of collected specimens were done by using various kind of floras written by researchers such as Flora of FRI, Flora of Simlensis and H.J Chowdhery and B.M.Wadhawa flora of Himchal Pradesh etc which are available at the library of university of Horticulture and forestry Nauni, Solan and Himachal Pradesh University.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The ethno botanical investigation revealed the importance of religious and medicinal aspects of 43 plant species belonging to 26 families which are as follows:

Table 1

S. No	Botanical Name	Family	Local Name	Part Used	Medicinal Uses	Other Uses
1	<i>Acacia catechu</i> (L.F) Willd	Fabaceae	khair	Bark,(heartwood) flowers, root and twig	“Katha” obtained from its heartwood is used for curing spongy gums, mouth ulcers and throat diseases. The paste of dried root is applied on joint of bones for one week in case of Rheumatism. The mixture of flower tops is given in case of Gonorrhoea. Decoction of bark (boiled bark in cup of water) is taken in case of throat infection and cough	Twigs of this plant are used in various kind of traditional rituals such as “Havan”
2	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> (L) Corr.Serr	Rutaceae	Bil,bilpatri	Roots, leaves, fruits	Dried root powder is useful for seminal weakness, swelling, fever and gastric irritability in infants. Root bark is used in the palpitation of heart and stomach pain. Ripe fruit is prescribed as good remedy for burning sensation of soles and feet. Fruit juice is act as tonic and good for heart, brain and dyspepsia.	Leaves of this plant known as “Bilpatri” which is offered to “Lord Shiva” during “Shivratri” festival. “108” leaves of this plant are offered to appease Lord Shiva during worship. This plant is worshiped during “Durga pooja”. The leaves of this plant is also used in Death rituals
3	<i>Asparagus adscendens</i> Roxb.	Liliaceae	Sahans bain, Sansfan, Satwari	Roots, twigs Whole plant	Poultices of roots, twigs and leaves are applied on stomach to cure menorrhagia. The mixture of its root with “Gur” (jaggery) is given to animal for stomach disorder. Powder of dried root is taken thrice a day	The plant is considered sacred and worshipped during marriage ceremonies. Roots of this plant are considered immortal i.e. never destroyed. So, this plant twig and roots are worshipped during marriage for long and happy life of

					for week to cure urinary troubles	couple as long life of roots .Plant twigs are worshipped as a token of invitation by maternal family of bride or bridegroom.
4	<i>Bambusa nutans</i> Wall.	Poaceae	Bans, Ban j	Stem, leaves and whole plant	Decoction of leaves is taken one time daily for 1-3 weeks which is considered good incase of hernia.	The Culm (Stem) of this plant is used for performing religious rituals at the time of marriages of various kind of ceremonies. The “Toran” which is made from the Culm of this tree is used for performing various kind of ceremonies by bridegroom and bride such as “Birdian”- It is a ceremonies of giving clothes to families of bridegroom and bride by their maternal family and also gifts and stitched clothes are given to bride and bridegroom to wear under this toran . Badhu parvesh is also occurring under this toran. The winnowing pan (Chajja) made from the Culm of bamboo is utilized by bridegroom during their departure from parents in marriage. During this ceremony this pan which is full of Khillan (made from rice and sugar) is used by bridegroom and by throwing khillan, she proceeds to their in laws family to lead a happy and prosperous life. This pan is also used to keep newly born child in it at the occasion of naming ceremony with a belief that child will lead a long and healthy life. The stem is also used for making "Ved" for Lagan and Panigrah ,Sat fere and other ceremonies in marriage. The wood or stem of this plant is used for making “Arthi” for carrying dead body for final rites. After funeral , the remains of bones are collected by the forceps made by bamboo strips.
5	<i>Bauhinia vahlii</i> Wright & Arnot.	Fabaceae	Torya	Leaves	2-3 grams of dried powder of leaves is taken with water to check dysentery.	Leaves are used for making meal plates (Pattals) and bowl (Duna) which is used in all religious ceremonies from birth to death.
6	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.) Taub.	Fabaceae	Palah, Plash	Bark , Leaves , Flowers , Resin , Twigs	Bark powder is useful in case of bleeding piles. Leaves and flowers extract is used in case of cough , cold and fever and menstrual disorder. Decoction	Twigs and wood of this plant are used in “Havan” and other religious ceremonies. The wood is also used in the death rituals. It is due to the belief that by using the

				and Stem wood	of flowers is taken three times a day for the treatment of jaundice. Decoction of the leaves is used to cure amenorrhea. Amulet of flowers tied on the stomach for relief from pain.	wood in death rite , the soul of dead person find a sacred place . Flowers and wood is also used in the worship of Goddess – “Saraswati”- Devi of Vidya and in the worship of Lord “Buddha”. It is believed that “Queen Mahamaya –The mother of “Gautam Buddha” seized a branch of this tree during birth of her son “Gautam Buddha” . In hoi festival the leaves of this plant worshipped .The leaves of this plant are trifoliolate. They are incretion of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh.
7	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i> Atit.	Asclepedaceae	Aak	Flower , Leaves ,Wood Root and Whole plant	Powdered flowers are used in cough, cold, asthma and digestive problems. Powdered roots are used in dysentery. Latex is applied on swelling. Extract of root and leaves is used in case of rheumatism	The whole plant is considered sacred and used in the worship of Surya Graha and used in Havan in the worship
8	<i>Cannabis sativa</i> Linn.	Cannabaceae	Bhang, Vijaya	Seed and leaves	The warm seed oil is massaged on the affected parts in case of arthritis .Poultices of leaves is applied in case insect bite.	Leaves are used for making “Pakorras” and Kotah (hallucinogenic drink) during Shivratri .It is believed that Lord Shiva is fond of this drink. Leaves are used for offering on “Lignum” for worshipping Lord Shiva
9	<i>Cicer arietinum</i> Linn.	Fabaceae	Chollae	Seed	The boiled seed in water with salt known as “soup” which is used in case of cold. The crushed seed powered is used as face pack in case of pimples in skin.	Crushed powder of seed known as “Basin” which is used for making face pack known as “Butna” in combination for the bride and bridegroom at the time of marriage. A handful of overnight soaked seeds of gram are given in “Doona” to each woman who are attending the ladies “Sangeet” at the time of marriage.
10	<i>Citrus pseudolimon</i> Tan.	Rutaceae	Galgal, Khatta	Fruit and leaves	The fruit is recommended for cough and cold. Leaves are used for scouring teeth.	Fruit is used in worship in the local festival ”Shairya” and also used for magico- religious purposes
11	<i>Cucurbita hispida</i> Thumb.	Cucurbitaceae	Dhuda, petha	Fruit and leaves	Fruit is used as vegetables for expelling worms .The roasted seeds are fed to the cattle incase of diarrhea	Fruit is religious and used in worshipping at the time of performing house warming ceremony. A dish which is known as “Meetha” prepared by it’s fruit with sugar is common dish in all religious and other ceremonies of Himachali. Leaves are offered to appease “Lord Shiva”
12	<i>Curcuma longa</i> L.	Zingiberaceae	Haldi	Rhizome	Powder of rhizome mixed with milk daily twice in a day which is given to the patients to	Powder of rhizome known as “Haldi”is used to make worship symbol on the forehead

					strengthen the body and to cure the internal injuries after accident. Dried powdered of its rhizome along with honey is used in case of dried cough. Rhizome powder with water is taken orally in case of stomach pain and indigestion.	“Tilak” and to decorate the worship place known as “Havan kund”. Haldi is the main gradient of “Butna” which is used on the face and body of bride and bridegroom in the marriage ceremony. Turmeric plays an important role from birth to death in the life of human beings in Indian culture. Rhizome powder (Haldi) which is also used on the occasion of marriage for inviting relatives. For this purpose, the rice grain which are yellow coloured with turmeric are sent to relatives for invitation.
13	<i>Datura innoxia</i> Mill.	Solanaceae	Dhatura	Flower, Fruit and Leaves	Smoke of brunt dried leaves is inhaled to cure asthma, cough and cold. Seed poultices are mixed with mustered oil is applied externally for rheumatic pain.	Flowers are offered to appease Lord Shiva
14	<i>Emblica officinalis</i> Gaertn.	Phyllanthaceae/Euphorbiaceae	Ambla	Fruit, Twig and Wood	Fruit is one of the major constituents of “Triphala churan” which is used in case of indigestion and in case of constipation. Fruit is considered good and useful in case of leucorrhoea, menorrhagia and discharge of blood from uterus. Paste of the mixture of its dry fruit powder and leaves of “Henna” is applied as dye to blackens hair and also good for their growth. One tea spoon of its fruit taken with honey for one week to cure cough and to increase appetite.	Twigs of the plant considered sacred and worshipped on “Panchbhikhma” (Religious day of Hindu). Small pieces of its wood along with sandal wood (<i>Santalum album</i> Linn.) which is offered by one and all at the last rite funeral as token of departed soul.
15	<i>Euphorbia royleana</i> Boiss.	Euphorbiaceae	Chhuein, Chaparcho	Phylloclade, Latex and Stem	Latex is applied for suppuration of boils. Few drops of latex is applied on the proximal end of infected tail of cattle to check infection. Part of crushed stem is used as antiseptic.	Phylloclade is planted during the boys birth ceremony.
16	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i> Linn.	Moraceae	Bad, Bargad	Leaves, Roots, Latex, and Whole plant	Root powder is used in the treatment of syphilis, dysentery and inflammation of liver. Latex is used in case of piles and nose problems. Oil smeared heated leaves are applied externally for suppuration of under arm boils (kachhali). Paste of leaves is applied for healing open wounds.	This tree is considered sacred as symbolic of “Trinity” - Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. The roots of this plant believed to be abode of Lord Brahma, trunk of lord Vishnu and branches of lord Shankar. This plant is worshipped during all religious ceremonies. This tree is considered as wish fulfilling tree (kalpa Vriksha) in Hindu scriptures. This tree is also

						worshipped by ladies as token of “Sati Savitri” who brought of her husband to life by worship of this tree. The wood is used for performing “Havans” during religious ceremonies.
17	<i>Ficus glomerata</i> Roxb.	Moraceae	Umarya	Leaves, Stem wood and Whole plant	Paste of leaves is applied for healing open wounds.	Plant is considered sacred and worshipped . Stem wood is used for performing “Havans” during religious ceremonies .
18	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> Linn.	Moraceae	Peepal	Leaves, Roots, Stem Wood and Whole	Dried powdered of roots are used in the treatment of scabies, ringworm, leprosy, gonorrhoea, inflammation, wounds, ulcers , diarrhea, dysentery, cholera, cough and hemorrhages.	Whole plant is considered sacred and worshipped in all religious ceremonies. Wood of this plant is used in performing “Havan”. Leaves of this plant are used in worship of Rishies and abode of Goddess ‘Bhavani’ and this tree is as tree of fertility. This tree is worshipped by followers of Lord Buddha because it is believed that Gautam Buddha get enlightenment under this tree.
19	<i>Ficus roxburghii</i> Wall.	Moraceae	Trayamle	Leaves and stem	Fresh stem latex is prescribed in case of leucorrhoea.	Leaves are used to make plates called “Pattal” which are used in making meal during different religious ceremonies.
20	<i>Gloriosa superba</i> L.	Liliaceae	Nagrudi	Flower, Leaves and Roots	Root paste is act as an antidote to snake bite. The root powder is given in case of fever due to rheumatism. The extract prepared from leaves is used for killing lice in hairs.	Flowers of this plant are offered to appease Lord Ganesha.
21	<i>Gossypium hirsutum</i> L.	Malvaceae	Kapah	Inflorose nce, Root and Seed	Seed of this plant is fed with oil cakes to cattle for lactation. Powder of Root bark is used to stimulate the secretion of milk. Paste prepared from dried crushed seed with water is used in swelling, ulcers of female organs and in case of urinary problems.	Inflorose nce of this plant yield cotton fibers which are used as wicks for lamps or worshipping “Jyoti”. Cotton fibers are used in making sacred threads "Maulis" for religious purposes.
22	<i>Hibiscus rosa sinensis</i> L.	Malvaceae	China rose ,Shoe flower, Bada gulal	Flowers	The paste of its flower is applied on the boil.	The devotee of “Durga” offers the flowers in their worship.
23	<i>Holarrhena antidysenterica</i> Wall. ex. D.C.	Apocynaceae	Inderjau	Bark, Leaves, Twigs and Seeds	Bark powder and paste is used in case of rheumatism. Bark powder is also useful in case of piles and amoebic dysentery. Halva of it’s seed is consumed to check excessive bleeding in irregular menstrual cycle.	Leaves are used in performing “Sharaadh”(Religious ceremony for remembering departed souls. Twigs are used in all religious activities.
24	<i>Hordeum</i>	Poaceae	Jau	Seeds	Dried powder of seeds are	Seeds are used as one the

	<i>vulgare</i> L.			and seedlings of whole plant	mixed with water and sugar is taken orally thrice in a day for one month for the treatment of Jaundice and hepatitis.	important constituent of materials used in “Havan” during religious ceremonies. Its seedlings are kept on the occasion of “Navratri” festival Worship for prosperity and happiness.
25	<i>Juglan regia</i> L.	Juglandaceae	Akhrot, Khord	Bark, Fruit and Leaves	Leaves are used for scouring teeth. Leaves powder is used in the treatment of leucorrhoea. The decoction of bark is used to check mammary secretions. It is also used to check menorrhagia.	The brunt powered fruit added in the preparation of local dish “Mahani” or “Khatta” which are served specially to guest, who are attending the marriage and other religious ceremonies.
26	<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i> (L) Pers.	Lythraceae	Harsingar	Flower and Whole plant	Decoction of whole plant material is given three times a day to cure back pain.	Flowers are specially used to appease “Lord Shiva”.
27	<i>Lawsonia inermis</i> Linn.	Lythraceae	Mehandi	Leaves	Root decoction is used in case of abortion. Gargle of the decoction of leaves is considered good for gum diseases. The leaves paste is also used to check burning sensation.	Paste of leaves is applied on the hands and young bride and bridegroom in marriage ceremony.
28	<i>Mirabilis jalapa</i> Linn.	Nyctaginaceae	Gulal, Shivkali	Flowers and Roots	Paste of roots is given to the cattle orally for cooling effect against sunstroke.	Flowers are used for offering to deities specially to appease Lord Shiva.
29	<i>Mucuna pruriens</i> (L) DC	Fabaceae/Papilionaceae	Dryagul, Gazelbel	Stem and Seeds	Seeds are taken in halva for vigor after delivery. 20-30 ml decoctions of seed are prescribed three times daily till cure for impotency.	Stem are used in traditional religious activities.
30	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> L.	Musaceae	Kela	Fruit, Leaves and Whole plant	One fruit is taken daily to check dysentery. Fruit of this plant is act as natural remedy for menorrhagia. Paste of two fruit of this plant along with sugar and Elaichi is given to cure burning due to acidity.	Plant is considered sacred and it’s leaves are used in all religious ceremonies like marriage, “Grih parvesh” (House warming ceremony) and death rituals. Fruit is offered to appease Lord “Satya narayana”
31	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> Linn.	Lamiaceae	Tulsi	Leaves	Mixture of three gram infusion of leaves along with 5 gram honey and 3 gram ginger is taken twice a day for asthma, cough and fever. Leaves are one of the main constituents of holy water and believed to possess curative properties. Decoction of inflorescence is good for cough. Chewing of leaves is good to arrest the foul smell.	The plant is considered sacred and worshipped during “Panch-bhikam festival”. Leaves of this plant are used in worship of Goddess Mangla gauri, Lord Ganesha and Navratri puja. The dead body is placed before this plant prior to its last rites.
32	<i>Oryza sativa</i> L.	Poaceae	Dhaan	Seed and whole plant	Water is poured over ash of burnt whole plant material in the basket and sieved water is used by local people as herbal	Whole plant material with seeds is worshipped during festival “Shairya” for happiness and prosperity. Crushed seed flour is

					shampoo in case of various hair treatments.	used for making local dish “Chiladu or Ankilan (Chalerian) which are eaten with milk and sugar on the occasion of religious ceremonies and festival such as Diwali, Lohri and during marriage ceremonies. During marriage ceremony, this dish is considered sacred and is eaten by bridegroom as a “Mahouk” before going to bride house.
33	<i>Punica granatum</i> L.	Punicaceae	Daadu , Daadan	Fruit , Seed and Whole plant	Seeds are used to stop dysentery and nose bleeding. Fruit is good for hyper acidity, anemia and fatigue. One tea spoon of powered fruit rind is taken with honey for several days to cure cough.	Plant is considered sacred and worshipped by newly married couple for their long and happy married life.
34	<i>Raphanus sativus</i> Linn.	Brassicaceae	Mooli	Root , Fleshy part (Fruit) and Leaves	Fleshy part of fruit of this plant is edible and it’s juice is good for the treatment of piles. Root of this plant is also considered diuretic ,good for piles jaundice and gastro-intestinal problems. Juice of fresh leaves is used to check jaundice and constipation.	Fleshy part (Fruit) of this plant which is locally known as “Mooli” which is worshipped on the “Hoi” festivals for long life of children.
35	<i>Rosa indica</i> L.	Rosaceae	Gulab	Flowers	Water of rose flower is used for bathing and used in face for making the skin soft and get rid of pimples. Flowers and petals with sugar is used in the preparation of “Gulkand” which is good for providing energy and good for health.	Flowers are offered to appease deities.
36	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i> L.	Poaceae	Ganna , Kamandi	Stem	Juice of it’s stem is known as “Cane juice” which is considered good for jaundice and used as refrigerant and refreshing.	Stem of this plant is used in preparations of “Gur” “Shakkar” and “Sugar” which is used in the preparation of “Prashadam” in worshipping of deities. Gur (jaggery) prepared from stem or cholle (seeds of Cicer arietinum), when roasted is used as “Bhog” to appease Goddess “Santoshi Mata”. Whole plant is considered sacred and worshipped on “Hoi”(a holy day when mother do fast for good health and life of their son)
37	<i>Santalum album</i> L.	Santalaceae	Safed chandan	Stem wood	Decoction of powered wood along with milk is taken internally in case of menstrual problem. Sandal wood oil is used for treating gonorrhoea, excessive sweating and fever. Powder of sandal wood is	The stem wood of Chandan is used in the pyre (Death rituals) due to the belief that soul of a person finds a place in the heaven. An emulsion formed by rubbing a piece of its wood on the stone with water is used for applying “Tilak”

					mixed with stem powder of Guljaya plant (<i>Tinospora cardifolia</i>) in the form of paste which is applied externally in case of allergic rashes. A tea spoonful of Amla and wood powder of this plant along with warm water is used in case of nausea and vomiting.	on forehead , idols of God and Goddesses . Tilak of it's wood on the forehead of a person keep the mind of a person fresh and also protect the person from evil eyes. Wood is also used in "Havan". Flowers and leaves are offered to appease Lord Shiva.
38	<i>Saraca indica</i> Linn.	Fabaceae	Sita , Ashok	Bark and Whole plant	Bark is used in case of uterine affections and in case of menorrhagia, leucorrhoea and chest pain.	The plant is considered sacred as abode of God and Goddesses. The tree is planted in the houses believing it as a symbol of wealth and religious faith. Flowers are used to appease the "God Kamdeva" – God of love. Leaves are used in "Durga pooja". In Ramayana it is mentioned that "Sita" was abducted by "Ravana" to Ashok vatika in Lanka. This tree is considered to symbolize female chastity as she remains chaste throughout the period of her imprisonment in the groove of Ashoka tree in Lanka. So as a token of the Chastity, the women considered this plant sacred and used to worship this plant.
39	<i>Sesamum orientale</i> Linn.	Pedaliaceae	Til	Leaves and seeds	Seed oil is applied externally for Rheumatic pain and also for cooking purposes. Paste of leaves is applied externally for painful swelling. Seed oil is massaged for past delivery pain	Seed is considered sacred and used in performing various religious ceremonies and also constitute an important component of "Havan". The seeds are also offered in "Pitriarpna" on the occasion of "Saradha" ceremony , an adequate amount of black seed of this plant known as 'Til' and piece of gold is offered to God for external peace and rest to the departed soul in heaven. Seeds are also used in various rituals of marriage ceremony.
40	<i>Solanum tuberosum</i> Linn.	Solanaceae	Aloo	Tuber	The paste of tuber is applied on the face to remove the dark circles .	Boiled tuber with salt is also eaten on the religious fast as "Falwahar" . Boiled potato tuber with wheat flour and sugar are offered to "Sidha" – local deities and is used as sacred offering to "Brahmin" on religious day.
41	<i>Tabernaemontana divaricata</i> (Linn.)R.Br. exRoem & Schult.	Apocynaceae	Tagar	Flower	5ml decoction of flowers is prescribed three times in day for antihelminthic.	Flowers are offered to deities.

42	<i>Tagetes erecta</i> Linn.	Asteraceae	Gutak-phool	.Flowers	25 ml decoction of leaves with sugar is used to cure cold.	Flowers are offered to various deities.
43	<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i> Mill.	Rhamnaceae	Baer	Fruit, Stem branch and Root	Polutices of root is applied to the affected parts in case of internal injuries.	Fruit is also considered sacred and offered to appease Lord Shiva on day of "Mahashivratri". The branch of tree is also used by bridegroom to touch it to the "Toran" before entering the bride house at the time of marriage in Brahmin and Rajputs .

CONCLUSION

The popular use of plant based therapy or folk herbal remedies among the rural people of Bilaspur district reflect their great faith and interest in traditional medicine. This shows that even in this modern and technological era, people also has good faith on plant based folk remedies for the treatment of local health problems. Due to good faith on deities, the people use various plants or their products in various religious ceremonies and in the worship of various dieties. They considered some plants such *Ficus religiosa*, *Aegle marmelos*, *Musa paradisiaca* are sacred due to faith that these tree are abode of deities.

They protect these plants from cutting. So this is considered as the best and safest method of conservation of local plants diversity. Due to over exploitation, some medicinal herbs are destroying day by day due to greed of earning money by human beings. Thus, to the prevention of over exploitation of these herbal plants for obtaining drug, it is necessary to cultivate the herbal plants in area from where the herbal plants has destroyed for obtaining the raw material for preparation of drug in various pharmaceutical industries. It is also necessary to document the traditional knowledge about the religious and medical of local plant for the benefit of future generation.

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