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Traditional and medicinal secrets of Bhatukamma: The floral festival of Telangana

K. Sudheer Kumar*, N. Ravindra, S. Seetaram Swamy

Department of Pharmacognosy, MAK College of Pharmacy, Moinabad Main Road, Hyderabad - 500075, Telangana, India.

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ABSTRACT: Bathukamma is the State Festival of Telangana. Government of Telangana state has declared the Bathukamma Festival as Telangana state festival. "Bathukamma is a beautiful festival celebrated with happiness. It represents the cultural spirit of Telangana. There are also many scientific reasons behind it. Bathukamma is celebrated for nine days during Durga Navratri. It starts on the day of Mahalaya Amavasya and the 9-day festivities culminate on "Saddula Bathukamma" or "Pedda Bathukamma" festival on Ashwayuja Ashtami, popularly known as Durgashtami which is two days before Dussehra. The flower stack, arranged with seasonal flowers, has many medicinal values. It is a floral festival in which everyday various colored flowers are arranged row after row in a brass plate, called as Bathukamma, placed in front of Diety and daily worshipped for a week.

Corresponding author*

Mr. K. Sudheer Kumar
MAK College of Pharmacy,
Moinabad Main Road, Hyderabad - 500075,
Telangana, India.
Mail ID. sudheer.y2k8@gmail.com
Tel No. +91 9014485137

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INTRODUCTIONS:

Bathukamma is a floral festival celebrated in Telangana state in India during Dusshera, has scientific support due to the medicinal values of flowers used. Bathukamma is a beautiful colourful flowers arranged in the shape of temple gopuram, and the flowers used in preparing Bathukamma has its unique medicinal values. The flowers used in Bathukamma have a great quality of purifying water and such flowers when immersed in abundance into the pond have the effect of cleansing the water and making the environment much better. Flowers and leaves used for preparing idols of Bathukamma help in preventing water-borne diseases as they possess various medicinal properties. Bathukamma is a unique

tribute to nature, which starts with colourful flowers and culminates in a water body. This festival celebrates the inherent relationship between earth, water and the human beings. During the entire preceding week, women make 'boddemma' (a deity of Gowri – mother Durga – made with earthly mud) along with Bathukamma and immerse it in the pond [1].

This helps reinforce the ponds and helps it retain more water. The festival heralds the beauty of nature, its biodiversity, and its importance as a mother for our survival. It is a signs of reverence and harbinger for sustainability and resilience. It proclaims indomitable spirit of womenfolk and also the ecological spirit of the agrarian people in preserving the natural resources in a festive way. The flowers used for making Bathukamma are unique seasonal flowers, most of them with medicinal value. Bathukamma festival celebrations on each day, beginning from Pethara Amavasya till the Saddula Bathukamma (Grand Finale of Bathukamma festival) are listed below [2].

Day 1: Engili pula Bathukamma- The first day of the festival falls on Mahalaya Amavasya, also known as Pethara Amavasya in Telangana region.

Food offering/Naivedyam: Nuvvulu (Sesame seeds) with biyyampindi (rice flour) or nookalu (coarsely ground wet rice).

Day 2: Atkula Bathukamma: The second day is called Atkula bathukamma, falls on the Padyami (first day) of Ashwayuja masam. Food offering/Naivedyam: Sappidi pappu (Bland boiled lentils), bellam (jaggery), and atkulu (flattened parboiled rice).

Day 3: Muddapappu Bathukamma: The third day of Bathukamma falls on Vidiya/second day of Ashwayuja masam. Food offering/Naivedyam: muddapappu (softened boiled lentils), milk and bellam (jaggery).

Day 4: Nanabiyyam Bathukamma: The fourth day falls on thidiya/third day of Ashwayuja masam. Food offering/Naivedyam: nananesina biyyam (wet rice), milk, and bellam (jaggery).

Day 5: Atla Bathukamma: The fifth day falls on the chathurdi/fourth day of Ashwayuja masam. Food offering/Naivedyam: uppidi pindi atlu (pan cakes made from wheatlets), or Dosa.

Day 6: Aligina Bathukamma: The sixth day falls on the panchami/fifth day of Ashwayuja masam. No food offering is made.

Day 7: Vepakayala Bathukamma: The seventh day falls on the sashti/sixth day of Ashwayuja masam. Food

offering/Naivedyam: rice flour shaped into the fruits of neem tree is deepfried.

Day 8: Vennamuddala Bathukamma: The eight day falls on sapthami/seventh day of Ashwayuja masam.

Food offering/Naivedyam: nuvvulu (sesame), Venna (Butter) or ghee (clarified butter), and bellam (jaggery).

Day 9: Saddula Bathukamma: The ninth day of bathukamma is celebrated on ashtami/eight day of Ashwayuja masam, and coincides with Durgashtami.

Final Day of Bathukamma festival is Saddhula Bathukamma. The Bathukammas prepared in big sizes than regular days in order to immersed them in water (Bathukamma Nimajjanam). It falls on Durga Ashtami day and in some instances it falls on Mahanavami day [3].

MEDICINAL IMPORTANCE OF FLOWERS USED IN BATHUKAMMA FESTIVAL [3-6]:

Celosia: Celosia argentea, belongs to family Amaranthaceae. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Gunugu, Hindi: safaid murga and English: silver cock's comb. It is a common weed throughout India and used in traditional medicine for Diarrhoea, dysentery, abdominal pain. Celosia has medicinal properties: Antibacterial, Anti-inflammatory, Anti-diabetic, Wound Healing, Antioxidant, Leaves of celosia, Bruised and applied as poultice, are used for treating of infected sores.

Senna: Cassia auriculata of family Caesalpinaceae. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Tangedu, Hindi Bhuikhakhasa and English: Senna. Shows Antibacterial properties its roots, flowers, flower buds, barks are used to treat various diseases. Cassia are used to treat fevers, diabetes, diseases related to urinary system and constipation, Cassia treat eye diseases-problems, rheumatism, gonorrhoea and gout. It is mainly used as a blood purifier, laxative- for relieving constipation.

Marigold: Calendula officinalis of family Asteraceae. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Kunda, Banthi, Hindi: Genda and English: Marigold. Marigold is a potent antiseptic herb. Several of the active chemical constituents found in the herb are fungicidal or mycotic toxins - especially the resins, Marigold Flower is used to treat wounds, conjunctivitis, cuts, bruises, burns, athlete's foot, acne, yeast infections, bee stings, diaper rashes etc.

Mexican marigold: *Tagetes erecta* of family *Asteraceae*. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Rekka, Bantichettu, Hindi: Jhenduphool, English: Mexican marigold. Used in ulcers, laxation, eye diseases, Kidney troubles, muscular pain, Rheumatism, Bronchitis etc. It

also exhibits antibacterial activity. The whole herb is anthelmintic, aromatic, digestive, diuretic, emmenagogue, sedative and stomachic.

Chrysanthemum: Chrysanthemum indicum of family Asteraceae. Telugu: Chamanthi Puvvu, Hindi: guladaudee and English: mums or chrysanths. Chrysanthemum is used to treat chest pain (angina), high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, fever, cold, headache, dizziness, and swelling. Chrysanthemum can help the body fight off a range of infections including streptococcal and staphylococcal infections.

Mirabilis four o'clock flower: Mirabilis jalapa of family Nyctaginaceae. Telugu: Chandrakantha Rudraksha Puvvu, Hindi: Gul abbas Gulbakshi and English: Beauty-of-the-night, Marvel of Chandrakantha Flower is used to treat wounds, dropsy, abscesses. It also reduce inflammation and used in wound healing. Used Purgative, diuretic and for wound healing purposes. The leaf juice is used to treat wounds.

Hibiscus: *Hibisus rosasinensis* of family *Malvaceae*. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Mandara Puvvu, Hindi: Gurhal and English: China Rose, Chinese hibiscus. Hibiscus flower extracts have been long used in skin care treatment. Hibiscus contains high levels of vitamin C, which is a potent antioxidant. This flower also has anti-inflammatory properties that help in preventing acne.

Rose: Rosa of family *Rosaceae*. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Gulabi Puvvu, Hindi: Gulab and English: Rose. Diuretic and laxative. Infusions of dried **rose** petals are used for headaches. Steam inhalation of a decoction of **rose** petals, lavender, and hops help induce sleep. Used in cosmetics. Rose water is an effective astringent that reduces swelling of capillaries beneath the skin.

Nerium: Nerium oleander of family *Apocynaceae*. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Ganneru, Hindi: kaner and English: oleander. Nerium is used for heart conditions, asthma, epilepsy, cancer, painful menstrual periods, leprosy, malaria, ringworm, indigestion, and venereal disease; and to cause abortions. Ganneru is used to treat ulcers, ringworm, abscesses, hemorrhoids and leprosy.

Butterfly Gardenia: *Tabernaemontana divaricata* of family *Apocynaceae*. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Nandi Vardhanam, Hindi:Chandini and English: Crape jasmine. Plants have been used in folk medicine for the treatment of high blood pressure, pain and inflammation,

healing wounds. CNS, cardiovascular, gonadotropic, anti-tumour, antiinfectious and anti-oxidative activity.

Sedge: *Rhychospora wightiana* of family *Cyperaceae*. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Gaddi puvvu and English: Sedge. Gaddi Poolu is used in herbal medicine. It is used to treat dyspepsia, bronchitis, all nervous complaints, Vertigoes, headaches, infections etc.

Pumpkin Flower: Cucurbita pepo of family Cucurbitaceae. Its vernacular names are Telugu: budadegummadi, budide-gummadi, Hindi: Safed kaddu and English: Pumpkin, Field pumpkin. Used as an antiinflammatory, antiviral, analgesic urinary disorders, anti-ulcer, antidiabetic and antioxidant Traditional medicine, particularly Ayurvedic systems.

Globe amaranth: Gomphrena globosa of family Amaranthaceae. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Gaddi Puvvu, Hindi: Gul-e-Makhmal and English: Bachelor's buttons, Globe amaranth. Used to treat bronchitis, cough, dysentery, tuberculosis, asthma etc.

Ipomoea: Jacquemontia pentanthos of family Convolvulaceae. Its vernacular names are Telugu: katla puvvu, English: Morning Glory Skyblue Clustervine. *Ipomoea* for their content of medical and psychoactive compounds, mainly alkaloids. Some species are renowned for their properties in folk medicine and herbalism. Katla is a valuable medicinal plant having anticancer, antidiabetic, anti-inflammatory properties.

Firecraker: Crossandra infundibuliformis of family Acanthaceae. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Kanakambaralu, Hindi: priyadarsha and English: Firecraker. Leaves are good antioxidant; flower is anti microbial, anti bacterial it is also anti fungal. Flower extract used in various conditions like fever, headache, aperitif, pain etc.

Indian Lotus: Nelumbo nucifera of family Nelumbonaceae. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Tamara, Hindi: Kamal and English: Lotus. Tamara is used to treat Diarrhoea, Blood sugar, cholesterol, Inflammation, Nutrition, Acne prevention, Menstrual cycle, Cough, Cancer, fever, sweating, bleeding disorders, nose bleed, hematuria liver, kidney problems, parasitic infestations.

Ridge Gourd – **Luffa:** *Luffa aegyptiaca* of family *Cucurbitaceae*. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Beera Puvvu, Hindi: Torai and English: Ridge Guard. Luffa. Ridge Gourd is used to treat colds, nasal swelling, sinus, muscle pains, chest pain. Detoxifies skin, It is also used



Fig 1. Picture of various flowers having medicinal value used in Bathukamma festival.

for nasal swelling and sinus problems, for arthritis pain, muscle pain and chest pain, helps in restoring absent menstrual periods. Nursing mothers use it to increase milk flow. **Jasmine:** *Jasminum fluminense* of family *Oleaceae*. Its vernacular names are Mallipuvvu is an Ayurvedic medicinal plant, it is used to treat wounds, skin diseases, ulcers of the oral cavity, gingivitis, headache, erectile dysfunction and eye diseases, jasmine has been used as an aphrodisiac and as a means to increase immunity and fight fever. It has also been regarded as a means to treat conjunctivitis.

Button Pom: *Chrysanthemum.* Its vernacular names are Telugu: Chitti Chamanthi and English: Button Pom. Used as Anti microbial and insecticide. Chitti Chamanthi is used to treat chest pain (angina), high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, fever, cold, headache, dizziness, swelling, prostate cancer.

Morning glory: *Ipomoea hederifolia* of family *Convolvulaceae*. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Chitti Chamanthi and English: Button Pom. Kashirathnam has various pharmacological properties such as diuretic, anthelmintic, blood purifier, deobstruent, laxative, carminative and anti-inflammatory. It is used to treat abdominal diseases, fevers, headache and bronchitis.

Lily Puvvu: Polianthes tuberosa of family Asparagaceae. Its vernacular names are Telugu: Nelasampengi Puvvu, Hindi: Rajnigandha and English: Lily Flower. The flowers are considered diuretic and emetic. The dried and powered bulbs are used as a remedy for gonorrhoea. Lilly is an aromatic flowers plant and are used in oranmental purpose, it is used to treat antigonorrhoea, diuretic, emetic and for curing rashes.

CONCLUSION:

Traditional knowledge especially on the medicinal uses of plants has provided many important drugs of modern day. Even today this area holds much more hidden treasure as almost 80% of the human population in developing countries is dependent on plant resources for healthcare. The primary objective of this article is to summarize information on traditional and medicinal secrets of flowers uses in Bhatukamma the floral festival of Telangana. This information may helps to identifying research gaps and suggesting perspectives for future research.

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