

Palash- The Sacred Beauty of Uttar Pradesh

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Introduction:

Palash tree (*Butea monosperma*) belongs to the family - Fabaceae, is a mesmerizing medicinal plant with a huge range of applications. Palash is the common name and it is commonly found in a Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Western Indonesia and Myanmar. It grows very well on flood prone regions and barren lands too, grows on saline and alkaline soil, with uneven ash-colored branches and crooked trunk. It requires low maintenance, grows on tropical land. The flowers are loud bright orangish-red colored, can be spotted from distance which resembles burning of forests or fire emerging out of a forest, gaining the title “flame of the forest”.

Abstract:

A state in northern part of India that is rich in its culture, heritage, history and much more is none other than Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh has a vast variety of world heritage places - that ranges from state symbols, national emblem, state animal, bird, tree etc. that all signifies its traditional, cultural and national values and beliefs. The rich heritages ponder upon States's diverse culture and its connection from its roots from ancient stages.

Palash is not only state flower of Uttar Pradesh but of Jharkhand as well. These flowers are not only beautiful but also possess tremendous amount of traditional and ailments curing properties. The flower and tree both of this species are made the state honor to specifically spread knowledge for its extinction and protection against it.

Palash got its recognition in Uttar Pradesh-History behind it

In November 2000, after the separation of Uttarakhand and loosing up to 53,000 sq km and approx. 80 lakh people, now residing into newly formed state - Uttarakhand but also the state flower “Brahma Kamal”. It is said that the main purpose behind proposing any flower to be the state symbol is the one that has started extinction, holds a significant value

and gets all the extra attention from the department to maintain its dignity, existence and promote its conservation.

The Uttar Pradesh's Forest department was so much in delusion on choosing a new state flower as "Palash" was the state flower of other states as well which drew back the steps of the department. A meeting in September 2011 was held, the wildlife board of state has issued an agreement towards declaring "Palash - the state flower of Uttar Pradesh" but an official circulation was not released till then. The departmental notice had been released by the officials of the government later on.

If we compare Palash and Brahma Kamal then Brahma Kamal never got fit into the state flower criteria as it blooms once in a year, at 14,000 feet height. A state flower has to be at wide range of area and vice versa Brahma Kamal is the part of flora region of the Himalayan region, so it did not justify that title. So, from then onwards *Butea monosperma* is been the provincial flower of Uttar Pradesh - representing Republic of India respectively.



Fig.1 - Palash Tree Flower

Beauteous and Sacrilegious

The flowers of Palash have an amazing blossoming in onset of spring or late winter. It has five petals, two winged, a keel like structure that resembles beak of a curled parrot. In scorching summer this flower attracts many birds, as its colors attract the flying creatures. It is one of the most attractive and beautiful creation of nature that not only attracts birds but also humans. It is the beauty attention seeker. *Butea monosperma* plant is also called as

golden flame of the forest. It is called so because it bears eye catching and attractive yellow flowers too which has five petals that blooms to keel like beak. It can reach up to a height of 49 feet, 10-20cm long leaflets and 8-16cm long petiole. It grows in clusters and appears as if the tree has caught fire. The leaves fall off in winter and flowering emerges in the months of February and March.

The Palash tree has gained its place in rituals and religious iconography in our country and has also been the subject of poetry and songs from Punjab to Bengal. Palash, also called as tesu ke phool, dhak, Parrot plant, parasu, flame of the forest etc. It spreads a chrome in orangish red as if someone has took the paint brush and painted all in red, it mainly flourishes in spring that symbolizes life. In Uttar Pradesh, the herbal colours or 'gulals' (bright powdered colour) are made up of "Palash's" flower by the women of self-help groups (SWG) working under the State Rural Livelihood Mission of Uttar Pradesh. The herbal gulal costs a small amount of money—a great alternative to chemical colours in the market.

It also holds a great importance in Hinduism, according to mythology - rituals such as Yajyna are performed by using the stems of the Palash flower. Tree is also said to be a form of Agni - the God of fire and war, used to worship on the occasion of Shivratri and much more.



Fig. 2 blossoming on tree - Flame of the forest

Prevalence to the Society

Palash's every part is rich in health benefits.

- It has anti diabetic properties.

- It might cure diarrheal problems.
- It might possess stress releasing chemicals.
- It may help in hepatoprotective (liver protecting) actions.
- It could help in anticonvulsive (helpful in seizures) activity.
- Benefits in wound healing, anti-ulcer activities, bone protective property, anti-inflammatory activities etc.
- It may also be Chemo protective in nature also.
- Its flowers help with skin ailments.
- It's stem bark in treating dyspepsia, ulcers, sore throat and snakebite.
- It possesses antioxidant and antimicrobial nature and several much more benefits are yet to be discovered, also serious conditions are always advisory to be treated under consulting supervision as some part or chemicals could also react or doesn't suit to someone.

Conclusion

Palash is a superior gift our mother nature could gift us with. It is beyond our imagination for the wonderful magical powers it holds besides being tremendously beautiful at the same time. It holds a lot of tried and tested beneficiaries' properties according to Ayurveda, packed with in-numerous boons, the best way to gain it is to take it in the right measurements to sustain our well-being

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