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Documentation of Trees Used for Preparation of Harmonic and Household Tools by Kolhathi Tribal People of Aundh Sansthan, Satara District, Maharashtra, India

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Abstract
The Kolhathi tribe of Aundh Sansthan in Satara District, Maharashtra, holds a remarkable legacy of traditional knowledge in using local trees for crafting harmonic and household tools. This study records the tree species employed by the Kolhathi people, along with the plant parts and processes involved in tool-making. Beyond their practical use, these tools carry cultural and ecological significance, symbolizing the community's harmony with nature. Through ethnobotanical surveys and field visits, the research highlights how this indigenous wisdom fosters sustainability and reflects a lifestyle rooted in respect for biodiversity. Preserving such knowledge is crucial not only for cultural continuity but also for environmental conservation.

Keywords: Kolhathi Tribe, Aundh Sansthan, Satara District, Ethnobotany, Traditional Tools, Household Tools, Harmonic Tools, Tree Species, Indigenous Knowledge, Sustainable Practices.

Introduction

The Kolhathi tribal community of Aundh Sansthan, in Satara District of Maharashtra, is deeply connected with the forests surrounding their settlements. Known for their craftsmanship, the Kolhathi people produce household and harmonic tools such as utensils and musical instruments using carefully selected tree species. These practices, inherited through generations, reveal both artistry and ecological awareness. For them, forests are more than a resource they are living partners that sustain cultural traditions and daily life. The biodiversity of Aundh plays a key role in shaping these practices, ensuring that tools are created in a sustainable manner. By documenting the tree species used, the plant parts harvested, and the preparation techniques, this study emphasizes the vital role of indigenous knowledge in conserving forests. Aundh Sansthan itself is historically significant, once serving as a princely state. Today it is known for its cultural landmarks such as the Aundh Museum and the revered Yamai Devi Temple. Its landscape, rich in flora and fauna, continues to support local communities like the Kolhathi. Geographically, Aundh is located at approximately 17.5030° N latitude and 74.3705° E longitude.

Materials and Methods

Fieldwork was conducted in Kolhathi tribes. Data were collected through interviews with artisans and elders, alongside participatory observations of tool-making processes. A total of 15 tree species were recorded. For each, the plant parts used (wood, bark, roots, leaves), the preparation process, and the type of tools crafted were documented. Botanical specimens were also collected for accurate identification and classification.

Results and Discussion

The Kolhathi tribe primarily depends on species such as *Tectona grandis* (Teak), *Butea monosperma* (Flame of the Forest), *Shorea robusta* (Sal), and *Acacia nilotica* (Indian Acacia). Each species is chosen for its unique properties-resonance, hardness, flexibility, or durability-making them suitable for specific tools.

- **Wood Tools:** *Tectona grandis* is valued for musical instruments like drums, flutes, and stringed instruments due to its fine grain and resonance.
- **Bark and Roots:** The bark of *Butea monosperma* provides strong rope and strings, while the roots of *Shorea robusta* are carved into sturdy tool handles.
- **Leaves:** *Acacia nilotica* leaves are multifunctional, used for basket lining and wrapping food.

This knowledge demonstrates not only craftsmanship but also ecological wisdom. The Kolhathi ensure resources are harvested renewably, maintaining forest health while meeting cultural and household needs.

Table 1: Tree Species Used by Kolhathi Tribe in Tool-Making

S. No.	Botanical Name (with Author)	Family	Local Name (Marathi)	Parts Used	Purpose/Tools Made
1	*Tectona grandis* L.f.	Lamiaceae	Sagwan/Teak	Wood	Musical instruments (drums, flutes, string instruments)
2	*Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Taub.	Fabaceae	Palas	Bark, Wood	Rope, strings, small implements
3	*Shorea robusta* Gaertn. f.	Dipterocarpaceae	Sal	Roots, Wood	Handles of tools, construction
4	*Acacia nilotica* (L.) Delile	Fabaceae	Babhul	Leaves, Wood	Basket lining, food wraps, tool handles
5	*Azadirachta indica* A. Juss.	Meliaceae	Neem	Wood, Twigs	Implements, pest-resistant containers
6	*Mangifera indica* L.	Anacardiaceae	Amba/Mango	Wood	Mortars, pestles, utensils
7	*Dalbergia sissoo* Roxb. ex DC.	Fabaceae	Shisam/Sissoo	Wood	Agricultural tools, furniture
8	*Terminalia arjuna* (Roxb. ex DC.) Wight & Arn.	Combretaceae	Arjun	Wood, Bark	Utensils, handles, medicinal rope
9	*Ficus benghalensis* L.	Moraceae	Vad/Banyan	Aerial roots, Wood	Rope, sacred tools, structures
10	*Ficus religiosa* L.	Moraceae	Pipal	Wood, Leaves	Ritual tools, leaf plates
11	*Syzygium cumini* (L.) Skeels	Myrtaceae	Jambhul/Jamun	Wood	Implements, tool handles
12	*Bombax ceiba* L.	Malvaceae	Sawar	Wood, Fiber	Light tools, padding
13	*Ziziphus jujuba* Mill.	Rhamnaceae	Bor/Ber	Wood	Small implements
14	*Artocarpus heterophyllus* Lam.	Moraceae	Phanas/Jackfruit	Wood	Musical instruments, furniture
15	*Albizia lebbeck* (L.) Benth.	Fabaceae	Shirish	Wood, Bark	Implements, rope, lightweight tools

Conclusion

The Kolhathi tribe of Aundh Sansthan reflects how traditional knowledge and sustainable practices can coexist. Their tools are not only practical but also cultural expressions, rooted in respect for biodiversity. Protecting this knowledge, along with the forests that sustain it, is vital for cultural heritage and ecological balance. Future conservation efforts must focus on safeguarding both the tree species and the practices associated with them, ensuring they are passed on to coming generations.

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