History of Gardens and Gardening: Analytical Essay

This section deals with comprehensive literature pertaining to the present research study, which will enable the researcher to collect the relevant data and subject to sound reasoning and meaningful interpretation. The literature review is rationale in identifying the research gap and also for framing appropriate objectives of research for the present context. This is the documentation of a comprehensive review of published and unpublished work from secondary sources of data in the area of specific interest to the researcher. In view of the above imperatives, various literatures have been reviewed and the highlights are presented as follows.Flowers have always symbolized as variety of human feelings and emotions. It has a very long historical background. From the ancient period flowers have been represented in ancient mural, painting and coins. Evidence of flowers dating back to the prehistoric period has been discovered through flower fossils. There are traces of the association of flowers with human during the paleolithic age. Fossils of woody magnolia-like plants dating back 93 million years are the first evidence of plant life. More recently, tiny herb-like flower fossils dating back 120 million years have been uncovered by Paleobotanists. So if we try to find out the historical back ground of floriculture, we have to look at the history of gardening which is as old as the civilization. The history of gardens and gardening has close relation with the culture of people, which includes their science, art and literature.

Some civilized countries namely Egypt, India, China, Rome etc. had their own style of gardens in the ancient period. After centuries the original style have been formed and reformed according to the thinking of the garden artists of the age. It is more impossible to pin-point the time with any degree of exactness when application of garden elements for the development of ornamental garden started. However, the whole history of ornamental gardening may be divided in the following periods:

1. Pre-Vedic period - 4000 B.C. and earlier
2. Vedic period - 4000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.
3. Post-Vedic period - 1000 B.C. to 1300 A.D.
4. Mughal period - 1300 A.D. to 1700 A.D.
5. British period - 1700 A.D. to 1947 A.D.
6. Modern period - 1947 A.D...

Pre-Vedic period:

Information about the ornamental gardening of this period is not available because of no books was written neither during pre-vedic period nor after this on the living civilization. But pre-vedic civilization of “Mohen-jo-daro” and “Harappa” are said to be Dravidian civilization. The first evidence of an ornamental plant, the Pipal (Ficusreliglosa), comes from a seal from “Mohen-jo-daro” dating about 3rd millennium B.C. Another seal from “Harappa” of the same period depicts a tree (Randhawa and Mukhopadhyay, 1986). It is interesting that the evidence the existence of gardens in ancient Egypt is archaeological. A number of paintings of different portions of plants on tombs have bought the sense of religion of Egyptians. They were placed flowers in basins or largemouth bowls. However, table arrangements were placed in a low basket and consisted of lotus which was very popular in Egyptian arrangements as it was a

sacred flower.

Vedic period:

In this period Vedas, Brahaman, Aryanak, Ramayana and Mahabharata reveal the perfection of ornamental gardening. As it is an ancient creative skill with imagination and advanced science that played a very important role in the course of human civilization and its social development. Evidence of flowers and gardens are found in ancient Sanskrit classes like the Rig Veda (C 3000-2000 BC), Ramayana (C 1200-1300BC) Mahabharata (prior to 4th century BC), Shudraka (100BC), Ashvagodha (C 100AD) (Narendra and Dadlani, 2013).

There was Temple Garden at Karnak dating from the region of TuthMosis II, about 1500 B.C. A Temple garden on a hill was built by Queen Hatsheput dating from 1505 B.C. to 1483 B.C. which was a terrace garden (Kadam, 2012).

Status and nature of gardening had mentioned in Ramayana of Valmiki and Tulsidas. At that period gardens were planted with flowers & fruit trees and lakes were full of lotuses in Ajodhya city. The garden of king Janak had ponds, rocks and different types of flowering plants like lotus and Ashoka wilderness of king Ravana is also described in Ramayana. There was famous tree named Kadamba associated with Lord Krishna and white and blue lotuses are also mentioned in the era of Mahabharata.

Post-Vedic period:

This period is full with a lot of information about plants, gardening etc. It is supposed that ‘BrihatSanhita’ was written between 1000-200 B.C. which refers about the cutting and grafting. Medical values of the plants were explained by Charak, Shusuruta and Nagarjuna during this post-vedic period (800-600 B.C.). The garden containing ponds full with lotus, jasmine etc. of Vasava Datta was mentioned by Sudraka in his Mrikchha Matikam in about 100 B.C. The golden age of Hindu culture is considered to be between 100 and 600 A.D. during the rules of Kanishka and the Gupta kings (Randhawa and Mukhopadhyay, 1986). It was the period of Kalidas (about 57 B.C.) who created the great epopees namely “Sangharam”, “Abhigyan Shakuntalam” and “Meghdutam” etc. which contains huge information about the plants and their use in ornamental gardens.

A description about the flowering plants growing in gardens was made by famous poet Bana Bhatta in his world famous book the ‘Harsh Charita’ during 600-700 A.D. Sculptures of Sanchi and Mathura and painting of Ajanta and Ellora also highlight on the

At the time of Lord Buddha, described by Hiuen Tsang, the bathing tank of Sakya Muni was filled with lotuses and lilies. Amrapali gifted a park named Amrvana which was dominated by flowering trees to Lord Buddha when he visited Vaishali. Trees and flowering plants were planted by Buddhist for making a peaceful ideal place for meditation.

Mughal period:

A great change in Indian garden style took place in the Mughal period. Firoz Tughlaq (1351-1388 A.D.) before the Mughals came to India developed about twelve hundred gardens

around Delhi and more elsewhere. The Mughals were very fond of gardens. The great Mughal Empire Babur was a great lover of flowers and gardens. He made gardens at Panipat and Agra which were mixture of Persian and local one. During this period much progress in making gardens was made. However, some old Mughal gardens still can found in Delhi, Agra, Kashmir and Rajasthan.

British period:

The arrival of the British in India changed the whole pattern of gardening. They modify most of the Mughal gardens by replacing the orchards with lawns surrounded by shrubberies. Not only that they also introduced the idea of English landscape garden in India. The Mughal gardens in India were laid out in a symmetrical pattern, but the English changed the style into informal patterns by laying out parks and gardens (Randhawa and Mukhopadhyay, 1986). The Macdonald park of Allahabad and Hewett park of Agra are examples of English landscape gardens in India.

Modern period:

After the independence, a lot of changes took place in making gardens in India. Some development works including the river valley projects have come up. Under this project, some dry river beds have been developed into beautiful gardens like the Brindaban garden in Mysore.

About 708-762 A.D. the importance of gardens and nature were noted in the poem of Li-Po of Tang period. Japan is a great place of plants and flower lovers. In the period of Heian the first garden was constructed in Kyoto for holding garden parties dating A.D. 794.

Apart from love, war & hunting the people of Iran were establishers of garden from 558-323 B.C. Cyrusi, the Persian Gardener in that period, planted a garden of sanding in Lydia, and had set the design of the Chahav Bagh. In Greece the first park was dedicated to Diana in the period 434-356 B.C. The King Xenophon got his inspiration from Persian garden. The Greek period was the first where potted plants with floral design were used in main part of ceremonies (Mc Ghee and Griffith 2014).

One of the heartlands of the Rome Empire was Italy. It was the state of agriculture in 3rd& 2nd centuries B.C. There were a small number of horticulturists and growers of gardens at that time. Roses were commonly decorated during evening meals. They would place flowers around feathery branches to the point that the branches could no longer be seen they were then placed in a likon (Mc Ghee and Griffith, 2014).

However, the seeds of floriculture were first planted in Babylonian times with the hanging gardens of Babylon which is regarded as one of the seven ancient wonders of the world. The first greenhouse was built dating around A.D. 30 for the roman emperor Tiberius and the history of floriculture has grown from here (Chuck Ayers-the History of floriculture).