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Conservation and management of ethno medicinal herbs in homeland gardens (Bari) of Assam

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ABSTRACT

The present paper highlighted 57 anti-hepatitis ethno-medicinal herbs recorded from 18 such sample homeland gardens of Sivasagar District, Assam during 2008-2009 from 42 reliable practitioners and 245 users. During hepatitis rural communities and tribes confidently used 46(80.8%) reported species as medicinal supplements. Out of the total reported species 14(22.8%) are effective, 31(54.4%) are frequent, 26(45.6%) are occasional, 24(42.15%) are threatened, 13 (22.8%) are cultivated and 40 (71.7%) are naturally grown. 14 species are seasonally found in local markets. Homeland gardens are the chief source of the reported herbs and have agro-economic and pharmaceutical potentiality. Such traditional land used model has significant value in intreatgrated local and regional level climate and environmental management.

Key words : Conservation, Management, Ethno-medicinal herbs, Homeland garden, Assam

INTRODUCTION

Homeland gardens (Bari) of Assam has played a significant role in biodiversity conservation and management. Over 500 species of native and endemic ethno-medicinal flora are found in any ideal homeland garden of communities and tribes. It may be considered as *living gene banks* of native and endemic species, managed by communities and tribes with their inherent knowledge based idea and techniques. Conservation and management of medicinal herbs has become a global concern. It's played a vital role in socio-cultural and economic life of rural masses of the region. Extension and development of Bari is an integral part of Assamese culture. Ethno-medicinal herbs have directly fulfilled the basic health care needs of the local inhabitance with providing necessary vitamins, minerals and other important phytomolecules. The scientific management of land resource is essential for sustainable agricultural development and environment preservation (Singh, 1996).

Ethno-medicines are those traditional raw therapeutic drugs and supplements, practices and uses by communities and tribes with their inherent knowledge based ideas and experiences for control and prevention of various diseases and illness of human, pet animals, cultured crops and other purposes. Such traditional medicine practices are closely associated with biotic and a-biotic components of nature

and culture. It is one of the many service systems that have emerged to facilitate fulfillment of individual as well as social goals (Fulop, 1986). It is observed that over 100 species of edible herbs are commonly found in any such ideal homeland gardens (Bari) of Sivasagar District. Other than health care an ideal homeland garden provides numbers of services such as food and drink, biological resources, eco-system services, socio-cultural and economic services to the rural people. Other than these activities, it protects the wild life, maintain soil health, balancing the carbon di-oxide ratio in atmosphere, checking soil erosions, balancing ground water table, maintain local and regional climate.

Hepatitis is an inflammatory liver disease, caused by bacteria, virus and other factors. Out of different forms of hepatitis, HB+V are serious and lead to chronic liver diseases and cancer. It is observed that 99% raw therapeutic drugs and medicinal supplements formulated by ethno-medicine practitioners for hepatitis treatment are from plant sources. As per World Health Organization report-2003, 5000 people die each year in U.S.A, due to HB+V. As per Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report-2003 that 1.25 million people in U.S.A have chronic HB+V. Indian Journal of Medical Research reported that, over 184000 people died from HBV in India in 2008. Many thousands of people died each year in the

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