

## **Ethno-botanical study on family planning and birth control in Sivasagar district, Assam**

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### **SUMMARY**

Ethno-botanical investigation of Sivasagar district was conducted in the period of 2004-2006, 23 species of medicinal plants were recorded from 73 sample villages of three sub- divisions viz. Nazira, Charaideo and Sivasagar. Among the recorded species near about 50% are wild and indigenous. 2 species are endangered, 5 species are vulnerable, 3 species are threatened. Out of the total reported species, 5 species are most effective and 6 species are practiced traditionally against anti-cancer therapeutic drugs other than family planning and birth control.

**Key words :** Ethno-botany, Family planning and birth control, Sivasagar district.

Practices of medicinal plants dates back to the ancient times have been recorded in the human history. Ancient civilization of India, Greece, China, Rome, Egypt and Incas had all practiced herbal treatments for curing and eradication of diseases. Ethno medicines are closely associated with biotic and abiotic components of nature and cultured; it is more synonymous with traditional and natural therapeutic system. At Rome convention of “World Congress of Alternative Medicines” in 1973, the WHO, long with the ethno medicinal system, identified more than 100 forms of different practices of world. As per WHO report 2007, near about 80% population of India and developing countries of the world directly depends on plants for various medicines. In India 70% of rural population follows traditional methods of treatment for child birth. North-East India is a least explored region of the country where many effective medicinal plant species are still unexplored. 50% of total floras of India are available in North-Eastern region.

A perusal of the available literature reveals that certain places of India have been explored to locate wild medicinal and food plants and enumerate their ethno-botanical utility (Hooker, 1872-1897; Kanjilal *et al.*, 1934-1940; Jain, 1981; Islam 1984, Brijjalal *et al.*, 1992; Shankar, 1997; Shankar and Ved, 2003; Laloo *et al.*, 2006). Certain ethno botanical plant species of Sivasagar district have significance for family planning and birth control, and also effective for various therapeutic drugs.

The study area, Sivasagar district of Assam extend from 94°15', East to 95°45', East longitude and 26°45' North to 27°15' North latitude. Total geographical area of the district is 2668 sq. km., comprises with three Sub-

divisions viz. Nazira, Charaideo and Sivasagar. Total population of the district as per 2001 census was 1,052802. Density of population is 394 per sq. km. Literacy rate is 74.5%. Humid monsoon climate with dry winter and rainy summer; deciduous tree with evergreen, semi-evergreen and sola forest; elevated topography with hillocks and plains; alluvial and late-rite soil; variation of flora and fauna at ecosystem level; numerous tributaries and sub-tributaries are the significant character of Sivasagar district. The areas have been selected for its varied traditional cultures. Traditional practitioners and age-old family heads and other experienced and knowledgeable persons have been selected for the study.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Ethno botanical survey was conducted during the period 2004-2006 and the information were collected from several age-old persons, traditional practitioners, age-old family heads, experienced women and other experienced and knowledgeable persons of 73 sample villages of Sivasagar district; considering the size of ethnic groups which has represented the whole population communities of the study area. The information of medicinal plants and its application methods were collected from 26 traditional practitioners, 46 age-old family heads, 21 experienced women, 30 elder persons, 12 Arunachali and 11 Naga villagers of the district. Information was collected from 146 respondents, through direct interviews and selected the person in such a way that, the community has a confidence and faith on them and well experienced in herbal practices. Primary information / data from the

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