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Ethno-medicinal herbs: A pharmaceutical prospect of hepatitis drugs

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ABSTRACT

An ethno-medicinal investigation was carried out on herbs used for hepatitis treatment in Sivasagar District of Assam during 2008-2009. 57 herbs were recorded so far from 42 reputed ethno-medicine practitioners and 245 users. 14 species are effectively used by reputed practitioners for all forms of hepatitis including HB+V. 31(54.4%) are frequent, 26(45.6%) are occasional, 13(22.8%) are cultivated and 40(71.7%) are naturally grown. 24(42.15%) herbs are threatened for several anthropogenic causes. 45(78.94%) reported herbs are traditionally used by communities and tribes as recipe during hepatitis. Anti-hepatitis therapeutic drugs have strong social reliability among the all section of people in the District. The species are conservation oriented and has agro-economic and pharmaceutical prospect.

Key words : Ethno-medicine, Herbs, Hepatitis

INTRODUCTION

Ethno-medicines are those alternative medicines, practices by ethnic communities and tribes in a particular geographical area or region with biotic and abiotic components of nature for prevention and control of diseases and illness of human, animals, cultured crops and other purposes. Such practices are inherent linked with folk-culture and tradition. The chief source of ethno-medicines is plants and its different parts and products. Medicinal plant bio-resources have played a significant role in ethno-medicinal health care system. It fulfilled the basic health care needs of large section of rural masses of the world with providing vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants and other essential phyto-molecules. It is one of the many service systems that have emerged to facilitate fulfillment of individual as well as social goals (Fulop.1986).

Liver inflammatory diseases are common in all areas of the world, especially in the industrial areas. Hepatitis is an inflammatory liver disease, caused by bacteria, virus and other factors. Out of different forms of hepatitis, HB+V is serious and lead to chronic liver diseases and cancer. 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 in 2008 that over 184000 people died from HBV in India. In Indian

Ayurvedic systems of medicine uses over 100 native plant species for control and prevention of liver inflammatory diseases. 57 anti-hepatitis herbs were recorded so far from the reputed practitioners and users sources in Sivasagar District. Few anti-hepatitis drug doses of the area have strong social reliability for their effectiveness and less adverse effect on health. Considering significant ethno-medicinal value of herb bio-resources in the District, an attempt has been made in this paper to highlight the anti-hepatitis herbs with the following objectives - i. to explore the medicinal herbs used traditionally by ethno-medicine practitioners and users for hepatitis treatment in Sivasagar district of Assam and their present status; ii. to examine the agro-economic and pharmaceutical prospect of herbs in the District.

The study is of significance for pharmacologist, nutritionist, botanists, bio-technologist, environmentalist, medical geographers, economist, agricultural scientist, planners and decision makers of government of Indian and scholars of relevant fields in the realistic formulation of strategy and need based plan for effective economic utilization and management. Anti-hepatitis herb bio-resources of the area could be utilized in pharmaceutical and nutritional industries of the country for quality base drugs and medicinal supplements production with proper clinical and pharmaceutical studies. Such integrated studies will be helpful for the millions of hepatitis patients of the world and contribute a new concept in pharmaceutical