

A study on the rhizomatous plant Sivasagar district and their ethnomedicinal importance

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SUMMARY

Sivasagar district is endowed with luxuriant vegetation and rich in biodiversity. It lies between 94°8' and 95°4' east longitude and 26°7' and 27°2' north latitude. Seven reserve forests with elevated topography receives the highest rainfall of the area. Number of Ethnic people inhabits in the transitional area of such reserve forest and they believe in natural methods of treating different diseases through various plant species. Medicinal use of rhizome bearing plants was observed among Ethnic group during the survey period(2004-2006).The present study deals with the ethnomedical study on the rhizome bearing plants of Sivasagar District, Assam. During our survey 22 rhizome bearing plants species having ethnomedicinal importance were collected. An efforts has been made to enumerate some of the important species known for their value.

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Northeast India is one of the mega biodiversity centers. Its ecosystem vary from tropical wet evergreen moist deciduous, sub alpine, alpine forest and grassland to numerous freshwater lakes, rivers, wet lands and swamps, topographically the region is mostly hilly and the climate varies from sub-tropical climate in the plains of Assam, Tripura and Manipur to temperate climate in parts of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. The region receives a high precipitation that makes the area an ideal place for the survival of a large number of plant and animal species.

The varied physiography of North-Eastern region together with rich vegetation cover and floristic diversities has made the region a “hot spot” of the country. The region is a part of Eastern Himalayas where the original primary forest habitat comprises at least 9000 plant species, out of which 39% plant species are endemic. Medicinal plants are also an integral part of these floristic components, which are frequently used in Indian system are medicines like Homeopathy and Ayurveda. It was estimated that 43% of total Indian flora exist in this region, out of which at least 70% of the medicinal plant species

are available in forested area. At least, there are about 400 such plant species, which are utilized to cure different diseases.

The district comprises with three sub-division, Sivasagar, Nazira and Charaideo. The district is a historical place with many monuments. It was a capital of Ahom Kingdom. Number of ethnic people inhabits here viz., Tai-Ahom, Nepalis, Naga, Mishing and tea gardener. Out of total population, 30% people are tea garden communities. These tea garden communities used different types of plant species in day to day life in different aspect. The district is between 94°8' and 95°4' East longitude and 26°7' and 27°2' North latitude.

A number of rhizomatous plant is popular among the tribes specially in rural folks of Sivasagar district of Assam for curing different diseases. These are *Zinziber casumunar* (Wild zinger); *Curcuma longa* (turmeric); *Curcuma aromatica* (Wild turmeric); *Curcuma amada* (Mango Zinger); *Alpinia allughas* (Tara); *A. galanga*; *Canna edulis*; *Musa sapientum* etc., These plants are highly prized for its medicinal value though a diverse number of plant species, many still unexplored. On the other hand some of these has been over harvested from the wild to a point just short of total extinction. The effort to conserve medicinal plants in the district is very poor. Some traditional practitioners have started to conserve medicinal plants by cultivating at home gardens, though the effort is minimal. Therefore, in the present study documentation, utilization and management of ethno-

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