

## Ethno medicinal plants used in post delivery problem by Tai Ahom people of Upper Brahmaputra valley, Assam

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### ABSTRACT

This paper deals with ethno medicinal plants used by Tai Ahom peoples of upper Brahmaputra valley for health care and different types of post delivery problems. Different types of post delivery problems occurs women to women after the delivery. They used various types of plant species as preventive and curative agents for various ailments. Specially Tai Ahom women have skill to prepare the drugs from varieties of plant species. In this paper we have highlighted species belonging to 32 genera from 24 families. Out of these 18 species commonly used by Tai Ahoms for treatment of post delivery problems. It is observed that plant parts like leaf, shoot and fruits are most important for medicinal uses. Now a day's most of the medicinal plants are very rarely found. The vernacular names and manner of use for each plant are described. The plant species are enumerated in alphabetical order along with families, local names, habit and parts used.

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**Key words :** Ethno- medicinal plants, Post delivery

### INTRODUCTION

Upper Brahmaputra valley, a part of North East India with a vast heritage of diverse ethnic groups and rich biodiversity is a treasure house of ethnobotanical wealth. The various tribes and aboriginal population of upper Brahmaputra Valley still practicing the herbal remedies for the treatment of post delivery problems and also for their common diseases and disorders. During the ethnomedicinal surveys and studies among the tribal populations of Upper Brahmaputra valley, attention was given to documents regarding ethnomedicinal plants having potential for the treatment of post delivery problems. The surveys and studies were conducted in the tribal tracts of Tai-Ahom area of selected study sites.

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This particular area of Assam is very rich in terms of its natural resources pertaining to flora. It lies between 92°04' and 96°09' East longitude and 25°09' and 28° North latitude. Upper Brahmaputra Valley comprises Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat and Golaghat Lakhimpur, Dhemaji and Sonitpur district and represents tropical moist evergreen to tropical moist deciduous forest vegetation. Being tropical to sub tropical climate Upper Brahmaputra Valley obviously represents an area with species rich with high degree of phytodiversity and evolutionary activity resulting in high degree of endemism. 60 per cent of Tai-ahom peoples inhabit in and around forest area and hilly tract of Assam. They used various types of plant specimens to cure different diseases. Post delivery problem is a common problem for most of the women. Age old and traditional practitioners of Tai-ahom are very expert in identification of different kind of disease and disorders.

It is an attempt to enlist the plant species utilized by these tribal populations and to check whether they use the same plant species or influence each other in the usage of certain plants. Kanjilal *et al.* (1934-39) worked on floristic diversity of Assam, Sharmah (1978) worked on flora of Sivasagar district. Hussain *et al.* (1992) published dictionary of medicinal plants'. Moreover, several ethno

botanist worked in this aspect time to time as Borthakur and Goswamy (1995) worked on herbal remedies., Baruah and Sarma (1984) worked on survey of the medicinal plants, Dutta and Nath (1999) worked on ethno- medico botany of the Tai-ahoms of Assam, Gogoi and Islam (2006) worked on biological spectrum of the flora of Charaideo Sub- division, Assam.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Information were gathered through the field trips in different forest dominant areas of Upper Brahmaputra valley specially Tai-ahom dominated areas. Survey was conducted from July, 2008 July to 2010 about medicinal plant used in post delivery problems. Most of the informations were collected with the help of age old person and traditional practitioners, including dhai and age old women. The collected species were preserved as herbarium and identified and enumerated a list of plant species along with their vernacular name, scientific name, families and their habit here.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Recorded plant species were enumerated with scientific name, vernacular name in parenthesis then family, parts used and present status.

*Alium sativum* L. (Naharu) Liliaceae, leaf of the plant used in post delivery problem as vegetables, commercially cultivated and widely used.

*Alternanthera philoxeroides* (Pani khutura) Acanthaceae, leaf of herbs used as vegetables Occasionally found in the kitchen garden.

*Bambusa bholoocha* (Bahn) Poaceae, leaf of plant use as paste for removal of placenta. Commonly found in the forest area and jungle.

*Benincas hispida* (Kumura) Cucurbitaceae, fruit of the plant is used to stop bleeding and regulation of blood pressure and sugar problem as vegetables and juice. Commonly found in the kitchen garden.

*Clerodendron colebrookianum* (Nefafu) Verbinaceae, young leaf of the plant is used to regulate the blood pressure as paste. Very rarely found in the forest.

*Cinamomum tmla* Nees and Eberm (Tejpat) Lauraceae, leaf extract is used for post delivery problem as spice, available in the market.

*Carica papaya* (Amita) Caricaceae, fruit of the plant is used as vegetables for irregular urination and constipation, common in vegetable gardens.

*Chenopodium album* L. (Jilmil) Chenopodiaceae, shoot of the plant is used as nutritive herbs, for regulation

of the blood pressure and for sugar control. Rarely found in homeland garden and jungle.

*Centella asiatica* L. (Bormanimuni) Apiaceae, juice from the shoot of the plant is used for regulation of urine. These plants are very rarely found in this area.

*Cynodon dactylon* (Duboribon) Poaceae, shoot of the plant is used to control irregular bleeding. Commonly found in grazing field.

*Citrus aurantifolia* L. (Nemu) Rutaceae, fruit juice is used to regulate the blood pressure and sugar problems. Occasionally found in the kitchen garden.

*Colocasia esculanta* Schoot (Kalakachu) Aeraceae, shoot of the plant is used for adequate milk production immediately after the delivery. Rarely found in the forest.

*Datura stramoniumfastuosa* (Dhatura) Solanaceae, young leaves are used to relief breast pain due to over production of milk. Rarely found in the jungle.

*Emblica officinalis* (Amlakhi) Euphorbiaceae, fruit of the plant is used to regulate blood pressure and sugar problem. Commonly found in the jungle and cultivated.

*Eupatorium odoratum* L. (Germony) Esteraceae, shoot of the plant is used to stop bleeding externally. Occasionally found in the jungle.

*Ficus glomerata* Roxb. (Haru dimaru) Moraceae, leaf of the plant is used for removal of placenta immediately after the delivery as herbal medicine. Rarely found in the forest areas.

*Glycorrhiza glabra* L. (Jastamadhu) Papilionaceae, bark of the plant is used for post delivery problems. Very rarely occur in the forest area.

*Hydrocotyle sibthorpioides* Lamk. (Harumanimuni) Apiaceae, shoot of the plant is used for regulation of urine. Very rarely occur in the jungle and in the kitchen garden.

*Houttonia cordata* Thumb (Masundari) Saururaceae, shoot is used as vegetables for anaemia. Rarely found in the jungle.

*Lens culinaris* (Masur dal) Leguminaceae, seed of the plant is used for production of milk. These are cultivated and occasionally found.

*Lagenaria siceraria* (Jatilou) Cucurbitaceae, fruit of the plant is used as vegetable to control blood pressure and sugar problem. These are commonly cultivated in kitchen garden.

*Musa paradisiacal* L. (Bhimkal) Musaceae, inflorescence (kaldil) is used for treatment of anaemia. These are commonly found in the homeland garden (bari).

*Moringa oleifera* (Sajina) Moringaceae, young leaves are used to control blood pressure. Rarely found in the forest area.

*Murrya koengil* (Narahingha) Rutaceae, leaf is used to relief body pain immediately after the delivery. Occasionally found in this area.

*Ocimum gratissimum* L. (Ram-tulashi) Lamiaceae, shoot is used to relief cough and headache. Rarely found in the jungle.

*Paederia foetida* L. (Bhedai-lata) Asclepiadaceae, shoot is used to relief body pain. Endangered.

*Pogostemon benghalensis* (Hukloti) Lamiaceae, shoot is used for treatment of body swelling and relief body pain. Endangered.

*Piper longum* (Pipali) Piperaceae, Leaf paste is used to relief pain and fruits are used as contraceptive.

*Piper nigrum* (Jaluk) Piperaceae, seed of the plant is used to production of milk and immediate curing of wounds. Occasionally found in the forest area and in kitchen garden.

*Ricinus communis* (Era) Euphorbiaceae, mature leaves are applied as hot treatment with burning ash after delivery. Young shoots used as pain killer, roots are used in worm control. Common in village area.

*Syzygium cumini* (Jamuk) Myrtaceae, fruit is used to control urination and sugar problem. Commonly found in this area.

*Sida rhombifolia* L. (Hunbarial) Malvaceae, leaf of the plant is used for regulation of urine. Rarely found in the forest area.

*Zinziber officinale* Roxb. (Ada) Zinziberaceae, rhizome of this plant is used for vomiting and coughs. Occasionally found in the homeland.

From the above enumeration of plants and their medicinal value it is understand that different parts of the various plants species were used in medicine. In case of small herbs and shrubs, the whole plant is used along with the leaves, shoots, seeds, fruits, bark and rhizome etc. Mode of application or administration varies viz., paste,

juice, infusion, powder, decoction and in some cases used salt and sugar for changing base or teste of the medicine. We discussed here total 32 species of medicinal plants available in the area belonging to different families, these are Zingiberaceae, Lauraceae, Poaceae, Asteraceae, Rutaceae, Piperaceae, Lamiaceae, Cucurbitaceae, Moringaceae, Apiaceae etc. 9 per cent medicinal plants are endangered eg. *Paederia foetida* and *Pogostemon bengalensis* etc. 51 per cent threatened e.g. *Sida rhombifolia*, *Piper longum*, *ocimum gratissimum*, *Houttunia cordata* etc, 18 per cent plants are occasionally found and other 31 per cent common or available in the forest as well as kitchen garden in the inhabitant of the area. During festival and in some common diseases this plant diversity is used, especially post delivery problem these plants are utilized.

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