

An ethno-medicinal survey of anthelmintic medicinal plants used by the local people of Sonitpur district, Assam

¹Jupitora Devi, ¹Pritimani Bharali and ^{2*}Sanjib Kalita

¹Department of Botany, Gauhati University, Guwahati-781014 (India)

²Department of Botany, Moridhal College, Dhemaji-785001 (India)

*Corresponding author, Email: ksanjib45@gmail.com

Abstract

In India, using herbal medicine as a kind of treatment is a popular practice. Since the North Eastern region is rich in such medicinal plants, the local people have intensively investigated it for medical purposes. Sonitpur district is primarily inhabited by Assamese, along with bodo, missing etc. tribes and other religious minorities and they rely on plant-based medicines. In today's scenario, helminth infection becomes one of the most common infections mainly due to poor sanitation practices. Though, some plants are known to be widely used against helminthiasis, but proper and detailed scientific documentation about the traditional knowledge of these plants and their use against helminthiasis are lacking from the area under this district. Hence, in this present study, a comprehensive document has been prepared about the plant used against helminthiasis by the Assamese and other tribes residing in this area.

Key words : Herbal medicine, Helminthiasis, Sonitpur.

An integral part of health-related issues relies on the traditional use of plants and animals, which is regarded as an age-old practice throughout the world. Utilization of plants as a source of medicine is considered as a major element of the Indian and global healthcare systems. The ethnomedicinal knowledge system is transferred from one generation to the next without any formal communication⁶². According to the WHO⁶⁴ Traditional Medicinal Strategy 2014-23, there is a high demand for ethnobotanical practices

and practitioners all over the world. Due to availability and lesser side effects with may be more efficacious property, application of plant-based products and medicine is growing day by day^{8,9,64}. Scientific studies revealed the bioactivity property of many plants, preeminent to development of various therapeutic drugs. Many studies have revealed medicinal properties against various diseases, including helminthiasis^{2,8,9,14,42}.

Helminthiasis is a severe tropical

disease that affects millions of people, livestock as well as the poultry industries (Kumar & Nain 2013; Das & Laha 2017; Dixit et al. 2017; Salam & Azam 2017). Soil-transmitted helminth (STH) infections are among the most common infections worldwide with an estimated 1.5 billion infected people or 24% of the world's population. Approximately 1 in 5 people in India are infected with soil transmitted helminths (STH), leading to anaemia and malnutrition⁵. Despite improved health facilities, sanitation, drinking water, and mass deworming programs, helminthiasis remain a major health issue in several states of India⁵⁶. In addition to poor economic conditions, most rural Indians cannot access commercial anthelmintic drugs because of geographical isolation and the high cost of the drugs. However, as an alternative, locally available traditional medicines become the first choice for healthcare needs⁵⁹.

The northeastern region (NER) of India, consisting of eight member states, including Assam, covers an area of 262,184 km² (<https://databank.nedfi.com>). NER is one of the 36th biodiversity hotspots on earth with rich flora and fauna²⁵. This region is inhabited by more than 200 ethnic tribes who boast of their indigenous and authentic tradition. Sonitpur, is one of the major district of Assam predominantly inhabited by tribe groups like assamese, bodo, missing, adibashi, bengali, nepali peoples. These culturally active tribal people make herbal plants as their first choice as medicine. Thus, this survey aims a proper documentation of plants used against helminthiasis by the local people of Sonitpur, Assam. This will be helpful from the viewpoint of conservation of plant resources and their sustainable utilization for

the management of helminthiasis and its related complications.

Study site :

A survey was carried out in Sonitpur district of Assam, India, which was inhabited predominantly by the people of Assamese and Bodo-Kachari tribe, Adibashi (Tea-tribe), Nepali, Bengali, Missing, and Religious minorities. Sonitpur district is one of the 31 districts of Assam. It is positioned in the valley of the Brahmaputra which forms its southern border. Geographically, Sonitpur district of Assam is located between 26°42'03" and 27°01'00" North Latitude and 92°16'00" and 93°43'00" East Longitude. District has an area of 2076.70 km² with a population of 1,311,619 (2011 census). The climate in district is characterized as sub-tropical humid climate with a hot summer with an average temperature of 29°C and moderate winter with an average temperature 16°C. South-west monsoon activates from June and continues up to September- October. The average rainfall of the district is 2,837.97 mm. Sonitpur district is bounded by Arunachal Pradesh to the north and Lakhimpur District to the east. The Brahmaputra river flows in an east-west-direction along the southern side, while Darrang district is on the west. The district is divided into three sub divisions viz. Tezpur, Biswanath and Gohpur and seven revenue circles. It consists of 14 civil blocks and 159 Gaon Panchayats.

Data collection :

During the course of conducting the investigation, elderly members and local

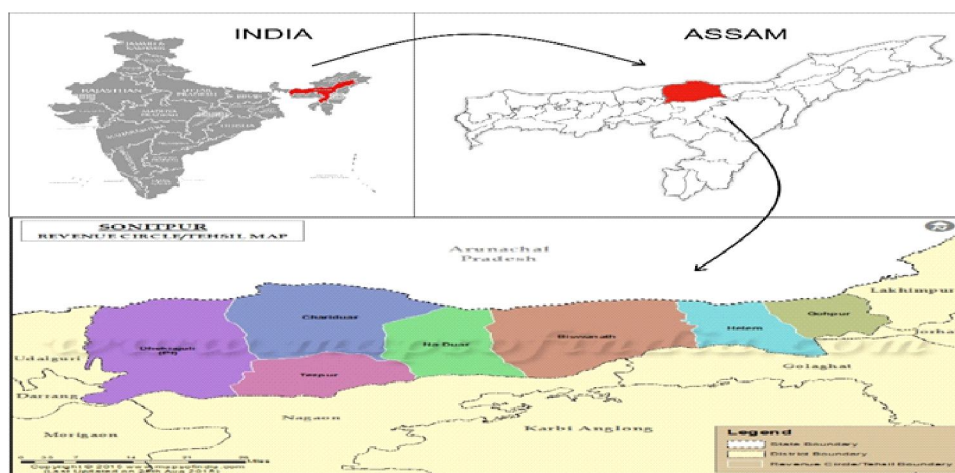


Figure 1: The study area of Sonitpur district, Assam (Source: MapsofIndia.com)

traditional healers, commonly known as “Bez” or “Ojah,” of the villages of Sonitpur district were chosen to gather information about the medicinal plants used to treat helminthic symptoms by the local people of the district. To collect data on these plants, we employed questionnaires and conducted personal interviews with the local community. The questionnaires included inquiries about local names of the plants, which specific parts were edible and used for helminthic treatment, as well as the duration of availability for these plants.

The data obtained during the investigation period is summarized in Table-1. A total of 50 plant species were recorded that were used by the local people of Sonitpur district to treat helminthic. The knowledge of these medicinal plants was typically passed down from previous generations, such as parents, grandparents, or great-grand parents. *Amaranthus spinosus* L., *Zingiber officinale* Roscoe, *Ocimum sanctum*, *Tinospora cordifolia*, *Curcuma longa* L. and *Azadirachta indica* were among the most commonly used plants in the area against

helminthic. Table-1 provides ethnobotanical information on the parts of the plants used, and some of their previously reported antidiabetic activity. It had been observed that different parts of the same plant species were used to treat the disease and the plant parts were used either in decoction, infusion and raw form or consumed with different cuisines. Leaves were the most frequently used parts of most of the plants (Figure 1). The current study highlights the abundance of plant resources utilized by traditional healers belonging to tribal community in the Sonitpur District of Assam for treating helminthic infections. Comparative ethnobotanical analysis of this study with other ethnobotanical surveys of plants used traditionally in treating helminthic revealed some similarities in the plant species cited in the present study. Results of phytochemical and *in vitro* analyses in a number of previous studies on various plant species, which are also common in this survey (Table-1), signify the effectiveness of these plants in the management of helminthic and related complications.

Table-1: Anthelmintic ethno-medicinal plants species used by the local people of Sonitpur District, Assam

Botanical name	Family	Local names	Habitat	Parts used	Formulation	Anthelmintic(<i>in vitro</i> / <i>in vivo</i>) from other studies
<i>Aegle marmelos</i> (L.) Correa	Rutaceae	Bel	Tree	Leaves	Decoction	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁶³
<i>Allium sativum</i> L.	Amaryllidaceae	Naharu	Herb	Tuber	Raw	<i>In vitro</i> anthelmintic activity were found ²⁸
<i>Aloe vera</i> (L.) Burm.f.	Xanthorrhoeaceae	Aloevera	Herb	Leaves, Jelly	Raw	<i>In vivo</i> anthelmintic activity were found ⁴³
<i>Alstonia scholaris</i> (L.) R. Br.	Apocynaceae	Sotiyana	Tree	Bark	Infusion	<i>In vitro</i> anthelmintic activity were found ⁶⁰
<i>Amaranthus spinosus</i> L.	Amaranthaceae	Kata khutura	Herb	Leaves	Decoction	<i>In-vitro</i> anthelmintic activity were found ³⁵
<i>Ananas comosus</i> (L.) Merr	Bromeliaceae	Anaras	Herb	Leaves	Raw	<i>In-vivo</i> anthelmintic activity were found ¹⁵
<i>Andrographis paniculata</i> (Burm. f.) Nees	Acanthaceae	Kalmegh	Herb	Leaves	Raw	<i>In-vitro</i> anthelmintic activity were found ¹¹
<i>Anthocephalus cadamba</i> (Roxb.) Miq.	Rubiaceae	Kadam	Tree	Flower	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ¹
<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A. Juss.	Meliaceae	Neem	Tree	Leaves	Decoction	<i>In-vitro</i> anthelmintic activity were found ⁵⁰
<i>Bryophyllum pinnatum</i> (Lam.) Oken	Crassulaceae	Dupor tenga	Herb	Leaves	Decoction	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁴
<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.) Taub.	Fabaceae	Polash	Tree	Flower, Seed	Infusion	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁴¹
<i>Calotropis gigantea</i> (L.) Dryand.	Asclepiadaceae	Akon	Shrub	Leaves	Raw	<i>In-vitro</i> anthelmintic activity were found ⁶¹

<i>Carica papaya</i> L.	Caricaceae	Amita	Tree	Root	Decoction	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ³¹
<i>Cassia fistula</i> L.	Leguminosae	Sonaru	Tree	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ²⁹
<i>Centella asiatica</i> L.	Apiaceae	Manimuni	Herb	Leaves, Whole plant	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ³
<i>Cinnamomum verum</i> J.S. Presl	Lauraceae	Dalsini	Tree	Bark	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ¹⁰
<i>Citrus limon</i> (L.) Osbeck	Rutaceae	Nemu	Tree	Seed	Decoction	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ³³
<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L.	Arecaceae	Narikol	Tree	Endosperm	Decoction	In-vivo anthelmintic activity were found ¹⁶
<i>Curcuma caesia</i> Roxb.	Zingiberaceae	Kola Halodhi	Herb	Rhizome	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁵²
<i>Curcuma longa</i> L.	Zingiberaceae	Halodhi	Herb	Rhizome	Raw	In-vitro anthelmintic activity were found ⁴⁸
<i>Ficus religiosa</i> Linn.	Moraceae	Anhotgos	Tree	Bark	Decoction	<i>In-vitro</i> anthelmintic activity were found ²³
<i>Holarrhena antidysenterica</i> (L.)	Apocynaceae	Dudkhuri	Tree	Bark	Infusion	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁴⁵
<i>Justicia gendarussa</i> Burm. f.	Acanthaceae	Bishalyakarani	Herb	Leaves	Raw	In-vitro anthelmintic activity were found ⁵⁴
<i>Leucas aspera</i> (Willd.) Link.	Lamiaceae	durun	Herb	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ²⁴
<i>Mangifera indica</i> L.	Anacardiaceae	Aam	Tree	Seed	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ³⁸

<i>Morinda citrifolia</i> L.	Rubiaceae	Noni	Shrub	Leaves	Decoction	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ³⁴
<i>Musa bulbiciana</i> Colla	Musaceae	Athiakol	Tree	Fruit	Infusion	Enthnomedicinal recorded ¹²
<i>Ocimum basilicum</i> L.	Lamiaceae	Ram tulsi	Shrub	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁴⁷
<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> L.	Lamiaceae	Tulsi	Shrub	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁶
<i>Oroxylum indicum</i> (L.) Kurz	Bignoniaceae	Bhatghila	Tree	Bark, Flower	Decoction	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ¹⁸
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> L.	Oxalidaceae	Tengesi	Herb	Leaves	Decoction	<i>In-vitro</i> anthelmintic activity were found ¹⁹
<i>Paederia foetida</i> L.	Rubiaceae	Bhedailota	Climber	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ³²
<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i> L.	Arecaceae	Khejur	Tree	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁴⁶
<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> L.	Euphorbiaceae	Amlokhi	Tree	Fruit	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ³⁰
<i>Piper nigrum</i> L.	Piperaceae	Jaluk	Tree	Seed	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁵³
<i>Polygonum hydropiper</i> L.	Polygonaceae	Bihlongoni	Herb	Whole plant	Decoction	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁷
<i>Prunus persica</i> (L.) Stokes	Rosaceae	Bon bogori	Tree	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ³⁶
<i>Psidium guajava</i> L.	Myrtaceae	Madhuriam	Tree	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁵⁸

<i>Punica granatum</i> L.	Lythraceae	Dalim	Shrub	Bark, Root	Raw	<i>In-vitro</i> anthelmintic activity were found ¹³
<i>Rauvolfia tetraphylla</i> L.	Apocynaceae	Bar chandrika	Shrub	Leaves, Bark, Root	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁴⁰
<i>Ricinus communis</i> L.	Euphorbiaceae	Era gos	Shrub	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ³⁹
<i>Saccharum spontaneum</i> L.	Poaceae	Konhuaful	Shrub	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁴⁹
<i>Scoparia dulcis</i> L.	Plantaginaceae	Bon-dhonia	Herb	Leaves	Decoction	None
<i>Solanum torvum</i> Sw.	Solanaceae	Borbhekuri	Herb	Flower	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ²²
<i>Spondia pinnata</i> (L.f.) Kurz	Anacardiaceae	Amora	Tree	Bark	Decoction	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁴⁴
<i>Terminalia bellirica</i> (Gaertn.) Roxb.	Combretaceae	Bhomora	Tree	Fruit	Raw	<i>In-vitro</i> anthelmintic activity were found ⁵⁷
<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	Combretaceae	Hilikha	Tree	Fruit	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ²¹
<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> (Willd.) Miers	Menispermaceae	Amor lata, giloi	Climber	Stem	Raw	<i>In-vivo</i> anthelmintic activity were found ⁵¹
<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Roscoe	Zingiberaceae	Ada	Herb	Rhizome	Raw	<i>In-vivo</i> anthelmintic activity were found ²⁸
<i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> Lam.	Rhamnaceae	Kasi bogori	Shrub	Leaves	Raw	Anthelmintic compounds were found in phytochemical analysis ⁵⁵

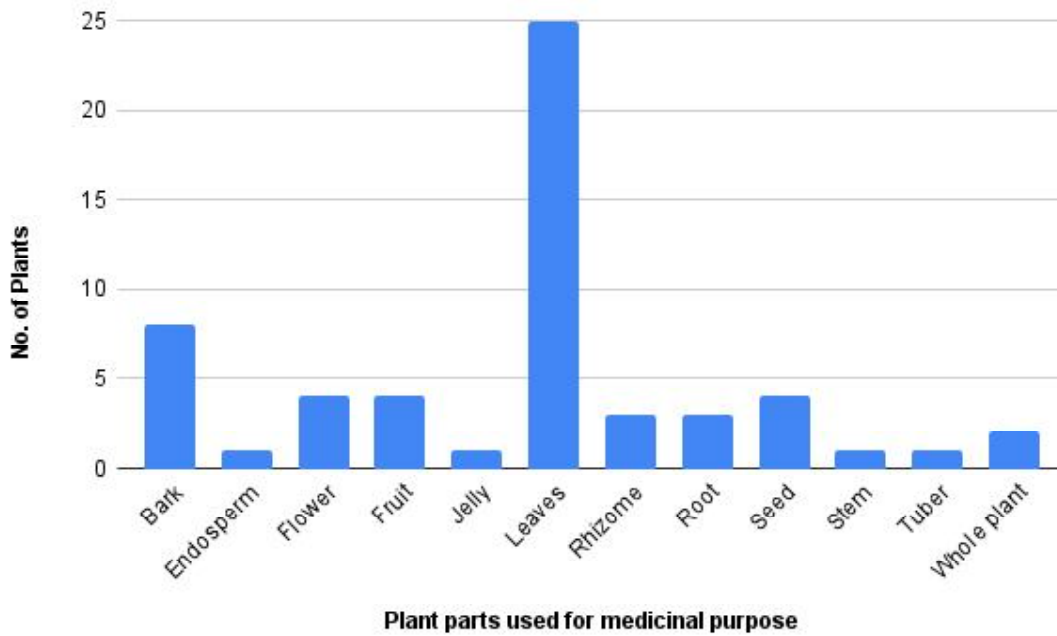


Figure 2. Parts wise use of various medicinal plant species used by local people community in Sonitpur District.

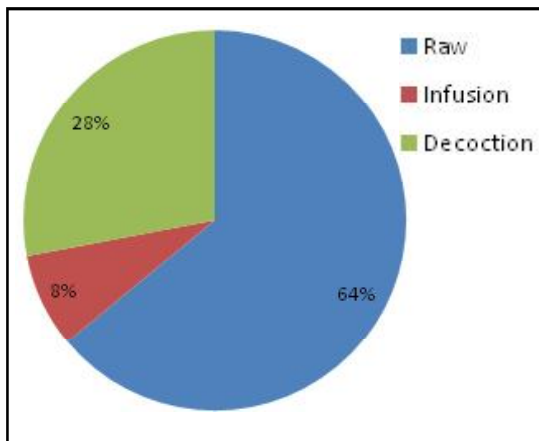


Figure 3. Diagram showing the various forms of medication practiced by local people in Sonitpur District.

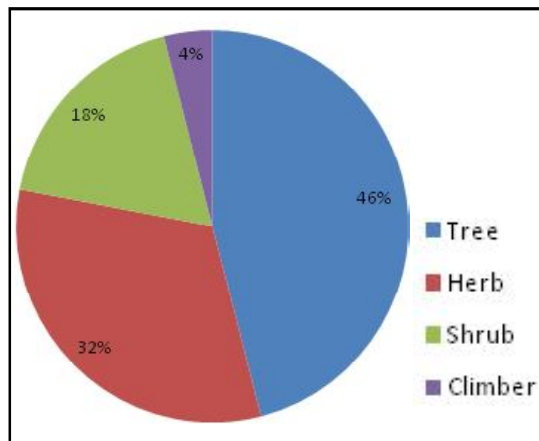


Figure 4: Diagram showing habits of documented plant species.

The current investigation reveals the remarkable variety of indigenous medicinal plants with anthelmintic properties found in Sonitpur district of Assam. These plants play a crucial role in the traditional treatment of helminthiasis within the local community. However, factors such as increase in urbanization, widespread deforestation, and the availability of modern health care facilities have led to a decline in the knowledge of these plants and their traditional uses. Herbal medicines are often favored for their potential to treat diseases with minimal side-effect. This study has the potential to preserve and transfer the ancient ethnomedicinal knowledge of the local people to future generations. Additionally, it may contribute to the development of effective plant-based remedies for helminthiasis, utilizing a coordinate multiomics approach in the near future. Furthermore, the finding can aid in planning conservation strategies for the unique plant resources and indigenous knowledge specific to this region and have the potential to be further explored in future scientific investigation within the field of core pharmacology and phytochemistry. These investigations can aim to uncover hidden novel entities present in the studied plants, which may have promising application for safe therapeutic uses.

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