

Medico-ethnobotany of *Bodo* tribals in Gohpur of Sonitpur district, Assam

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The paper deals with the results of ethnobotanical survey work carried out during 2005-2006. The information was collected from 13 villages, mostly of remote places near the border area of Arunachal Pradesh. Totally, 20 plant species were collected and recorded for their use in various ailments. The species are short listed giving their plant name, family, vernacular name, and uses.

Keywords: Ethnomedicine, Traditional knowledge, *Bodo* tribe, Assam

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The tribal people of Gohpur rely on plant resources for their uses in daily life. They collect some of the important plant species from their surroundings and use according to their own traditional lore. The report reveals that about 25% of the therapeutic drugs are obtained from plants¹. But, there are many unknown plants which are still to be studied and observed. The traditional uses of plants by the different tribes may be regarded as the basic material for scientific documentation studies. Therefore, in the last few years, traditional knowledge of plants comes into focus for research work and for development of other value added products. Gohpur is situated in the extreme East of Sonitpur district (26°21'-26°93' N & 91°71'- 92°37' E) covering an area of 79 m in upper Assam². Sonitpur district is bound by Arunachal Pradesh on the North, Lakhimpur district on the East and Darrang district on the West, Brahmaputra river on the South. The northern part of Gohpur is inhabited mainly by four tribal communities, viz. *Bodo*, *Mishing*, *Deuri* and *Karbi*. Among these, *Bodo* tribes are rich in population and restricted in the northern part of Gohpur. The area is high plain land and fully covered with forest resources up to 1980. Due to deforestation, the area has now become open for human habitat. Out of total 2,43,000 population of Gohpur, *Bodo* population is about 14.04%. The surveyed area belong to the villages of Alupora, Doimalu, Kakila, Rajgarh, Doimoguri, Digambari,

Alaripur, Dharampur, Milanpur, Goroimari, Daphalagar, Karibil kachari and Jaipur of Gohpur. Several research have been done in the field of ethnobotany from Assam, on *Bodo* tribes in particular, and other parts of country³⁻¹³.

Methodology

The information was collected from informers of different villages, viz. Mr Daniel Musahari, Mr Bahadur Basumatari, Mr Jogeswar Brahma, Mr Sunil Basumatari Mrs Thuntri Basumatari and Mrs Nilachari Narjari. The collected information was verified with other knowledgeable persons. Local names, plant parts used and mode of administration were recorded. The plant specimens were studied and identified with the help of local flora, publications and Herbarium of Botany Department, Gauhati University¹⁴⁻¹⁷. The collected specimens have been deposited in the herbarium of the Botany Department, Chaiduar College, Gohpur.

Results and discussion

The plants have been described with their botanical name, family, local name, and uses (Table 1). Twenty plant species were collected and recorded for its medicinal values. The traditional methods of treatment are still prevalent within *Bodo* tribes of Assam. But due to deforestation and social changes, the folk culture and tradition has faced serious threat, which may lead to loss of traditional practices in near

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Table —1 Medico-ethnobotany of *Bodo* tribals in Gohpur

Plant name / Family	<i>Bodo</i> name	Uses
<i>Centipeda minima</i> (L.) Br. & Aschers. Asteraceae	<i>Hasiu biphang</i>	Leaves are inhaled during cold.
<i>Chenopodium album</i> L. Chenopodiaceae	<i>Buthua</i>	Fresh juice is given twice weekly in empty stomach to expel common worm.
<i>Christella parasitica</i> (L.) Lev. Thelypteridaceae	<i>Sal daukhumi</i>	Froned paste is rubbed on limb at the time of lacking sensation.
<i>Clerodendrum viscosum</i> Vent. Verbenaceae	<i>Lwkhna/Mwkhwna</i>	Root juice is given twice in a day for 3-4 days during inflated body.
<i>Colocasia esculenta</i> (L.) Schott. Araceae	<i>Thaso</i>	Petiole is heated over flame and juice is given in minor cuts.
<i>Crinum asiaticum</i> L. Amaryllidaceae	<i>Mwshou sambram</i>	Bulb paste is rubbed with mustard oil in rheumatic pain.
<i>Cymbopogon nardus</i> (L.) Rendle. Poaceae	<i>Bahta sambram</i>	Root and leaf paste is inhaled twice daily during bleeding of nose.
<i>Drymaria cordata</i> (L.) Willd. ex. R. & S. Caryophyllaceae	<i>Jabshrngi</i>	Young twigs roasted with banana leaves are inhaled during sinusitis.
<i>Eclipta prostrata</i> (L.) L. Asteraceae	<i>Daojeng jwla</i>	Young fresh twig juice is given twice daily for 2-3 days in conjunctivitis.
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i> Forsk. Convolvulaceae	<i>Maande Maigon</i>	Fresh twig juice mixed with equal amount of cow milk is given one month during bed time for treating impotency.
<i>Mentha arvensis</i> L. Lamiaceae	<i>Khudwna</i>	Leaves are put in water for 6-8 hrs; decanted extract is given once in a day for a week after breakfast in jaundice.
<i>Mimosa pudica</i> L. Mimosaceae	<i>Daosa mukreb</i>	Fresh root and leaf extract mixed with cow's milk, boiled is given once daily for two weeks after breakfast in frequent micturition.
<i>Nyctanthes arbor-tristis</i> L. Oleaceae	<i>Sepali</i>	Leaves are cooked and eaten during cough and gastritis.
<i>Oldenlandia diffusa</i> (Willd.) Roxb. Rubiaceae	<i>Dao-meoyai</i>	Young twigs are boiled with two small muddy fish (<i>Channa gachua</i>) and used as curry for increasing lactation after child birth.
<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i> L. Plumbaginaceae	<i>Agor sita</i>	Root juice mixed with 5 gm sugar is given during dog bite.
<i>Rhynchosytilis retusa</i> (L.) Bl. Orchidaceae	<i>Daotu bibar</i>	Leaf juice during morning and bed time for one week is given in Otorrhoea.
<i>Sesamum orientale</i> L. Pedaliaceae	<i>Sibing</i>	Leaf, fruit and root paste is applied on wounds.
<i>Solanum ferox</i> L. Solanaceae	<i>Khuntai gwkha</i>	Dried flowers or seeds are kept in mouth during tooth decay.
<i>Stellaria media</i> (L.) Vill. Caryophyllaceae	<i>Naa bikhi</i>	Twig juice is given during snakebite.
<i>Zingiber cassumunar</i> Roxb. Zingiberaceae	<i>Bura-ud</i>	Rhizome paste with salt is given once daily in empty stomach for two days during indigestion/ gas formation.

future. Earlier the northern side was one of the richest areas of forest trees within Gohpur. The area is now occupied by the people of different tribes and most of them are still dependent on forest and agriculture and far behind from all modern facilities. Some part of these areas may also be selected for establishment of medicinal plant garden for future uses. Some of the younger generations are gradually migrating to town and cities. As a result, the traditional wisdom is decreasing quickly day by day. So, the evaluation of traditional knowledge, the conservation of plants and scientific documentation has great significance and become an essential constituent.

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