



Ethnomedicinal Plants used by the Halam Tribe of North Tripura, Northeast India

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Abstract: Documentation of ethnobotanical knowledge of indigenous communities is vital for conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity. Traditional beliefs, concepts, knowledge and practices for preventing, lessening, and curing disease are still witnessed among the Halam tribe of North Tripura, northeast India. Extensive field visits and household surveys were carried out in three villages viz. *Noagaon*, *Zuithung*, and *Baghbasha* of Dharmanagar, North Tripura district following standard protocol during February 2012 to January 2014. Findings revealed the use of 52 medicinal plants comprising of trees, herbs, shrubs, bushes, and climbers for treating 30 different ailments mainly abdominal pain, cough, dysentery, jaundice, intestinal worms. Usage of herbs was highest (48.08%), followed by trees (21%). Utilization of different plant parts viz., seed, flower, leaf, stem, bark, root, rhizome, and, even the whole plant in some cases was observed, amongst which usage of leaves was highest (41%), followed by fruits (19%) amongst all plant forms. We also reported usage of two important medicinal plants *Alstonia scholaris* (L.) R. Br. and *Cissus quadrangularis* L. plant for treating snakebite and healing bone fracture respectively, which also resonates with the findings of other workers from different parts of India. However, such immense knowledge of the Halam tribe is rapidly declining due to rapid modernization and adaptation to changing lifestyle by the younger generation. Hence, there is an urgent need to document traditional knowledge on the medicinal plants of the Halam tribe before such valuable knowledge vanishes.

Keywords: Ethnobotany, Ethnomedicine, Halam tribe, Northeast India, Traditional knowledge
