

## **An ethnomedicinal plant-A less known Spices used by Meitei Community of Manipur**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Northeast state of India has a valuable heritage of herbal folk medicinal knowledge. This region is also well known for its ecological distinctive and rich biodiversity. Through an ethnomedicinal survey of aromatic local spices use by Meitei community of Manipur, about twenty (20) plant species were collected from different valley district of Manipur. This methodical field survey was undertaken during the month of January to May of 2015 from the herbal practitioner, kavirajs and maibas. All this folk medicinal knowledge was possessed from locally available resources of plant.

**Keywords:** Spices, herbal remedies, Meitei Community, Manipur

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Man and plant co-exist on this planet earth. Since time immemorable plants have been provide us unlimited kindness and benevolence by providing various products to the mankind. Among these products the most significance usage is curative value. A rich heritage of knowledge to preventive and curative medicines were available in ancient scholastic works included in the Atharvaveda, Charaka, Sushruta, etc.. Traditional medicine is "the knowledge, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, used in the maintenance of health and in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness" (World Health Organization, [http://www.who.int/topics/traditional\\_medicine/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/traditional_medicine/en/)).

Manipur, a state of north-eastern India situated between 23.83°N and 25.68°N latitude and 93.03°E and 94.78°E longitude. It comprises 1820 sq.km of flat plateau of alluvial valley and 20507sq.km of hill territory and forms a part of the Himalayan mountain system which carries this cup-shaped wonderland inside its series of hill ranges. The valley part is mainly inhabited by the Meitei (Manipuri) and Meitei pangal (Manipuri Muslim) whereas the hilly areas are inhabited by 30 different tribes<sup>[1]</sup>. More than 60% of the Manipur is under forests and almost all the ethnic groups have been directly or indirectly depending upon these natural resources. So, Manipur is known for its ecologically distinctive and rich biodiversity, having many endemic flora and fauna and also known for its valuable heritage of herbal medicinal knowledge. Among them spice is contributing not only flavours, colorants and preservatives for their culinary properties but also being used for their potential health benefits. It has been eaten both in dry and fresh<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The main objective of the present study was to identify the key information sources and compile systematically of local available spices to improve their conservation and usage. Survey was conducted in four different districts of Manipur (Imphal east, Imphal west, Bishnupur and Thoubal) in the month of January to May of year 2015 and collected the information of local spices used by the Meitei community. The voucher specimens of ethnomedicinal importance were collected and documented with their folk-therapeutic data. The information was

collected from herbal practitioners, Kavirajs and Maibas. The voucher specimens were mounted. In this context, the information collected during the survey is also cross checked from available literatures.<sup>[3-8]</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Twenty (20) plant species which is used as spices were collected from different valley districts of Manipur. These plants were found to be commonly used by the Meitei Community of Manipur for treatment of different disease in their own traditional method. The plant is arranged in alphabetically along with their family, vernacular name (Manipuri) and plant part/s used (Table no.1) and mode of administration in disease (Table no.2). These plants were distributed across 10 families of which Lamiaceae and Apiaceae tops the list followed by Alliaceae, Rutaceae, and etc. (Figure no.1). The most common part of plant utilized by indigenous people is leave. Among the species given below, leaves of 16 species are used for various ailment and treatment. Fruit and bark of *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*, *Citrus latipes* and *Zanthoxylum aromatum* are used for the treatment of cough, colic and used as vitalizing alimentary canal, appetizer and carminative and applied for rheumatism.

The older ethnic people generally used to cure some diseases as a home remedy, namely headache, cough, toothache, asthma, blood pressure, diabetes, rheumatism, urinary problem, digestive problem, colic, diarrhoea, constipation pile etc..

Table no.1:-Spices used by Meitei Community of Manipur

Sl. No.	Botanical Name	Family	Vernacular Name	Part used
1	<i>Allium ascalonium</i>	Liliaceae	Tilhaomacha	Leaf and Bulk
2	<i>Allium hookeri</i>	Alliaceae	MaroiNapakpi	Leaf
3	<i>Allium odorum</i>	Alliaceae	MaroiNakupi	Leaf
4	<i>Allium sativum</i>	Liliaceae	Chanam Macha	Leaf and Bulk
5	<i>Cinnamomum tamala</i>	Alliaceae	Tejpata	Leaf
6	<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i>	Lauraceae	Ushingsha	Fruit and Bark
7	<i>Citrus latipes</i>	Rutaceae	Haribob	Fruit cover
8	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	Apiaceae	Phadigom	Leaf and Young stalk
9	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Zingiberaceae	Yaingang	Rhizome
10	<i>Elsholtzia blanda Benth.</i>	Lamiaceae	Lomba	Leaf and dried inflorescence
11	<i>Elsholtzia ciliate</i>	Lamiaceae	Tekta	Leaf
12	<i>Eryngium foetidum</i>	Apiaceae	Awa phadigom	Leaf except old inflorescence
13	<i>Euphorbia hirta Linn</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Phakhang ton	Young twig and inflorescence
14	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Apiaceae	Pakhon	Leaf
15	<i>Houttuynia cordata thumb.</i>	Saururaceae	Tonikhok	Whole part except flower
16	<i>Meriandra benghalensis Benth</i>	Lamiaceae	Kanghuman	Leaf
17	<i>Ocimum canum</i>	Lamiaceae	Mayang ton	Young shoot and inflorescence
18	<i>Polygonum posumba Buch</i>	Polygonaceae	Phakpai	Tender shoot
19	<i>Zanthoxylum aromatum</i>	Rutaceae	Mukthrubu	Young leaf and fruit
20	<i>Zingiberofficinale</i>	Zingiberaceae	Sing	Rhizome

Figure no.1: Percentage distribution of plant species according to their family

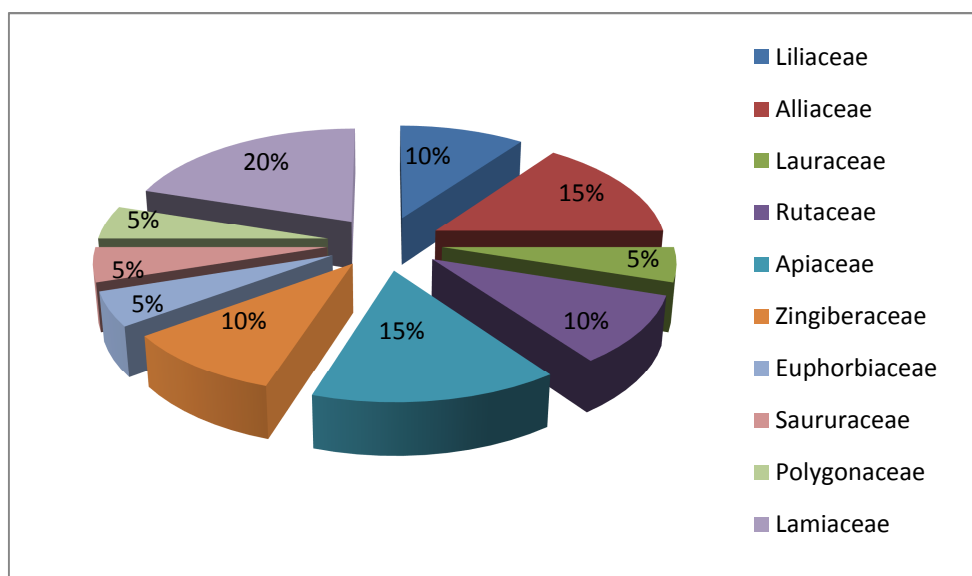


Table no.2:- Plant used against various human ailments

Plant	Mode of administration in disease
<i>Allium ascalonium</i>	a) Crushed the bulk with garlic and applied to the infected area of the skin. b) Smashed bulk is applied in the toothache
<i>Allium hookeri</i>	a) Leaf decoction/paste is applied on forehead in excessive body temperature. b) It helps for reducing high blood pressure. c) Salty leaf juice is consumed in stomach ulcers
<i>Allium odorum</i>	a) Leaf decoction is taken for urinary disorder. b) Leaf paste is applied on head for improving hair growth
<i>Allium sativum</i>	a) Bulk fried in master oil is applied on chest, back and joint pain as massage to get relief pain and from cough. b) Bulk paste is applied on injuries to remove pus
<i>Cinnamomum tamala</i>	a) Decoction of leaf is taken against cough, headache and dizziness. b) Bark and leaf are given in rheumatism, colic, diarrhoea and dysentery.
<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i>	a) Fruit is taken for cough relief. b) It is used for vitalizing alimentary canal. c) Bark is used as astringent and carminative
<i>Citrus latipes</i>	a) Fruit is given in dyspepsia and fruit aroma makes feel appetite. b) Salty juice is given in colic
<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	a) It is used for the treatment of skin inflammation
<i>Curcuma longa</i>	a) Rhizome juice is given to cure pile and urinary tract infection b) Paste is applied on wound area for its antiseptic property and it is used as face pack for glow
<i>Elsholtzia blanda Benth.</i>	a) Dried inflorescence is used against fever, cough, tonsil and menstrual disorder. b) It is useful in chronic diarrhoea.
<i>Elsholtzia ciliate</i>	a) Leaf decoction is taken for antibacterial and antiallergic. b) It is used as astringent and carminative
<i>Eryngium foetidum</i>	a) Leaf is useful in paralysis and prevent epileptic attack also. b) It is consumed in constipation
<i>Euphorbia herta Linn</i>	a) Leaf extract is applied in skin disease and used as mouth wash.
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	a) Leaf is given in colic, intestinal worm, digestive problem b) It is used as anti-inflammation
<i>Houttuynia cordata thumb</i>	a) Leaf extract is given to dysentery and muscle sprain
<i>Meriandra benghalensis Benth</i>	a) Leaf juice is used in cholera and dysentery. b) It is also useful in measles, eye and skin troubles. c) Rhizome is taken in peptic ulcer
<i>Ocimum canum</i>	a) Leaf extract is applied against fever
<i>Polygonum posumba Buch</i>	a) Leaf juice in a glass of warm water is used for gastric problem. b) Leaf decoction is consumed for reducing sugar level
<i>Zanthoxylum aromaticum</i>	a) Leaf and seed are taken to get relief from cough and asthma. b) Leaf is eaten with meal to cure tasteless and false smell. c) Leaf and seed are taken in chronic fever and dyspepsia. d) Aromatic seed is used in toothache. e) Plant extract is used as insecticide. e) Seed oil is applied in rheumatism
<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	a) Rhizome extracted juice with honey is used for cough and asthma. b) Leaf or rhizome extract is used for digestion

## CONCLUSION

Now-a-day people rarely followed the folk medicinal practice of traditional knowledge. It is a high time to look into this problem in scientific way and timely study their medicinal values and its properties. Scientific cultivation, conservation and sustainable use of plant species by ethnic communities would be highly advantageous for socioeconomic growth, in conservation of rare and unexplored plant species and the Indigenous knowledge for the future generations.

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