



Review Article

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A Review of Medicinal Plants Commonly Used in Manipur: with Special Reference Against COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Prevention and cure are the part and parcel of the fight against any disease. Despite the advanced medical knowledge and skills, the global pandemic situation due to COVID-19 has strengthened the importance of age old traditional therapeutic system. The traditional therapy based on medicinal plants can be said as an alternative means to treat and cure several diseases. There are more than 1200 plant species reported to be used in the traditional medicine system in Manipur. When used in right ways, these plants can be effectively used to help protect against several diseases including symptoms similar to the SARS-Cov-2 infection.

Keywords: Disease, Covid-19, Therapeutic System, Medicinal Plants, Manipur.

INTRODUCTION

Human being has been using biological products of animal and plant sources for thousands of years, either in the pure form or crude extracts to treat many diseases. A number of herbs are used as bases of medicine in many ways [1-3]. Research interest has focused on various herbs that possess immune-stimulating properties as a useful feature in helping diminish the risk of infection from various causes as well as many diseases including cancer [4-5]. Herbs possess a wide range of phytochemicals, identified as flavonoids, lignans, terpenoids, polyphenolics, sulfides, saponins, carotenoids, curcumins, plant sterols and phthalides [6]. Several of these phytochemicals either inhibit nitrosation or the formation of DNA which stimulate the activity of protective enzymes such as the phase II enzyme glutathione transferase. Many plants contain potent antioxidant compounds that provide significant protection against chronic diseases. These compounds may defend LDL cholesterol from oxidation, inhibit cyclooxygenase and lipoxygenase enzymes, prevent lipid peroxidation, or have antitumor activity [7-8].

The use of medicinal plants in the prevention and treatment of various diseases have been a common practice all around the world since time immemorial. Such practices are a part of the tradition and culture of any community. Manipur, a north-eastern state of India, is no exception and there are several written and unwritten records of using medicinal plants as therapeutic agents [9]. In the traditional system in Manipur, the person who has the knowledge and skill of traditional treatment acquired the knowledge to perform such practices either through oral dissemination from knowledgeable elders or written edicts. They are locally known as 'maiba' or 'amaiba' in Manipuri. Apart from the Meitei community, almost all the tribal community residing in the state of Manipur have their own traditional form of plant and animal-based medicine system [10-13].

Medicinal plants are extensively used to treat and cure different types of infections and diseases. Such diseases include common ailments like cough, fever, headache, stomach problems, diarrhea, dysentery, fungal infections, etc. Several chronic diseases affecting heart, lung, liver, kidney and nerves are also subject to treatment with the help of medicinal plants in every community [14, 15]. Another unique tradition of using the medicinal plants in Manipur is the incorporation of them in the daily dietary intake as food. They are eaten either as raw or in cooked potions, which thus supplies the useful medicinal ingredients as a normal daily supplement [16].

One of the most important aspects of disease prevention and treatment is the development of the innate immune system of the body. In the last few decades, man has witnessed extensive knowledge and skills in immunology. This has expanded our view of the immune system and means of searching for its structures

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and functions in an impressive way. The basic function of the immune system is to protect against foreign pathogens and infectious agents [17]. When the immunity is well developed inside the body, several disease fighting agents called antibodies are produced through complex biochemical and physiological processes.

During normal biochemical reactions in our body, there is a generation of reactive oxygen and nitrogen species, which gets enhanced during patho-physiological conditions creating 'oxidative stresses' [18]. During this phenomenon, cellular constituents get altered resulting in various diseased states. This may be effectively neutralized by enhancing the cellular defenses in the form of antioxidants [19-21]. Dietary supplements having high antioxidant content may help greatly in such conditions. Many components present in food, such as beta-carotene, lycopene, lutein and other carotenoids function as important antioxidants which greatly boost the immune system [22,23]. Studies have revealed that the floral diversity especially those used as medicinal plants are a rich source of such substances that are claimed to induce overall immunity functions in the body.

Situated in the Indo-Burmese Biodiversity Hotspot, Manipur is a beautiful landlocked state with rich flora and fauna. The floral diversity of the region exhibits high degree of endemism which also includes valuable plants of medicinal properties [11,13]. Since time immemorial, the various floral diversity of the state has been a part of ethnic therapeutic system of different communities living in Manipur [12,21].

Table 1: List of medicinal plants found in Manipur which can be effective against Covid-19

Sl. No.	Botanical name	Family	Common name and local name	Parts used	Medicinal values
1.	<i>Acacia catechu</i> (L.F) Wild	Mimosaceae	Babul bark & Ching-gonglei	Seed, tender, pod	Muscular pain, cough, fever
2.	<i>Acorus calamus</i> Linn	Araceae	Sweet flag & Oak-hidak	Leaves, root, rhizome	Cough, fever,
3.	<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i> (L.)	Polypodiaceae	Arjunterminalia & Mayur-pambi	Leaves	Cough, chest diseases
4.	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i> (Burm.f.) Wall.	Acanthaceae	Bhubati King of bitters/ Andrographio	Leaves	Fever
5.	<i>Ardisia crenata</i> Sims.	Myrsinaceae	Coralberry & U-thum	Leaves	Cough, diarrhoea
6.	<i>Benincasa hispida</i> (Thunb.) Cogn.	Cucurbitaceae	Torbot	Fruit	Fever
7.	<i>Brassica rapa</i> L.	Brassicaceae	Hanggam	Leaf	Headache
8.	<i>Centilla asiatica</i> Linn.	Apiaceae	Indian penny wort Peruk	Whole plant/ leaf	Sore Throat
9.	<i>Clerodendrum serratum</i> (L.) Moon	Lamiaceae	Bharmgt & Moirang-khanambi	Leaves, inflorescence root	Cold, cough, rheumatism, asthma
10.	<i>Clerodendrum siphonanthus</i> R.Br	Verberaceae	Turk's turban & Charoi-tong	Stem, leaves	Cough, fever, dysentery, asthma, bronchitis
11.	<i>Clerodendrum colebrookianum</i>	Verberaceae	Turk's turban & Kuthab-lei	Leaves	Cough,
12.	<i>Clerodendrum indicum</i> (L.) Kuntze	Verberaceae	Charoi-utong	Leaves	Upper respiratory tract infection
13.	<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i> Breyn.	Lauraceae	Cinnamon & U-shingsha	Bark	Cold, astringent carminative, cough
14.	<i>Cucurma angustifolia</i> Rosc.	Zingiberaceae	East Indian arrow root & Yaipal	Inflorescence	Cough, diarrhoea
15.	<i>Curcuma caesia</i> Roxb.	Zingiberaceae	Black zedoary & Yaimu	Rhizome	Fever, cough, Sprain
16.	<i>Cymbopogon flexuosus</i>	Poaceae	Citronella grass & Houna	Leaves	Throat problem, back-pain,
17.	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L) Pers.	Poaceae	Doob grass & Tingthau	Leaves	Throat problem
18.	<i>Eclipta prostrata</i> (L.) L.	Compositae	Uchi sumbal	Whole plant	Fever & cough
19.	<i>Eclipta alba</i> (L.) Hask.	Asteraceae	Long pepper & Uchi-sumbal	Leaves	Headache, cough, fever

Herbal drugs play an important role in the treatment and prevention of diseases as well as in the overall immune boosting of the body. So far, there have been reports of more than 1200 plant species of medicinal importance in the state of Manipur [17]. These plants are used in different forms and extracts in fighting against several diseases [24]. The present review is an attempt to identify and address the use of medicinal plants of Manipur as an alternative means to fight against the impending global pandemic situation raised due to COVID-19. While considering the mode of use of these medicinal plants, it is also important to mention that the knowledge and skills of the traditional medicine practitioners will be of great help based on their extensive knowledge while using these floral resources in such times.

Manipur can be considered a place rich in medicinal plants and many plants of the place have high medicinal properties as highlighted above. Although, the list of plants with medicinal properties available in the state is quite long, there are few such plants which are frequently used in everyday life by the local people specially to cure or minimize ailments similar to the symptoms of Covid-19 such as, cold, cough, and fever. The information collected and noted below are thus plants having medicinal values and most commonly used by the local community of Manipur to fight against symptoms similar to covid-19 during this pandemic situation which are very easy to use and can be consumed without any expertise. The details of such plants and the common mode of consumption are given below.

20.	<i>Eupatorium nodiflorum</i>	Asteraceae	Ngai-camphor & Tamu-langthrei	Leaves	Fever, cough
21.	<i>Ficus auriculata</i>	Moraceae	Elephant ear Fig Heirit	Fruit and Bark	Lungs disease
22.	<i>Hedychium aurantiacum</i> Wall.	Zingiberaceae	Cogon grass & Eengel lei	Inflorescence, rhizome	Bronchitis
23.	<i>Hedychium coronarium</i> Koenig	Zingiberaceae	White ginger lily & Takhel lei angouba	Rhizome	Throat problem, tonic, dyspepsia
24.	<i>Hedychium marginatum</i> C.B. Clarke.	Zingiberaceae	Redginger lily & Takhel-lei angangba	Rhizome, leaves	Bronchitis, tonic
25.	<i>Helianthus annuus</i> Linn.	Asteraceae	Sunflower & Numit lei	Seed, leaves	Muscular pain, cold, cough, bronchitis
26.	<i>Houttuynia cordata</i> Thunb.	Sauraceae	Molucca bean & Toningkhok	Leaves, rhizome	Dysentery, muscular pain, antiviral
27.	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i> L.	Malvaceae	<i>Juba kasum</i>	Flower	Headache
28.	<i>Jatropha curcus</i> (L)	Euphorbiaceae	Physic nut & Awa-ke-ge	Leaves	Cough, dysentery, fever
29.	<i>Melothria perpusilla</i> (Blume)	Cucurbitaceae	Stinking passion flower & Lam-thabi/paba sari	Whole plant	High fever, diarrhoea
30.	<i>Mesua ferrea</i> Linn.	Clusiaceae	Iron wood & Nageshore	Seed, inflorescence	Dysentery, cough, diarrhoea
31.	<i>Perilla ocymoides</i> L.	Lamiaceae	Frangipani & Khamella	Leaves, fruit	Cough, lung infection
32.	<i>Plantago erosa</i> Wall	Plantaginaceae	Gurjan tree & Yempat	Leaves, seed, root	Fever, muscular sprain
33.	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> (L.)	Labiataeae	Gooseberry Heikru	Fruit	Dry Cough/ Asthma
34.	<i>Pinus kesiya</i>	Pinaceae	Baguio pine & Uchan	Wood, leaves	Cough, headache
35.	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> (L.)	Labiataeae	Gooseberry Heikru	Fruit	Dry Cough/ Asthma
36.	<i>Psophocarpus tetragonolobus</i> (Linn.) D.C.	Papilionaceae	Tengnou-manbi Four-angled bean/ Winged bean	Young fruit	Cough
37.	<i>Rhus chinensis</i>	Anacardiaceae	Nutgall tree Heimang	Young shoot, fruit	Antiviral, antibacterial, anti-diarrhea, antioxidant activities and as a digestive
38.	<i>Santalum album</i> Linn.	Santalaceae	Sandal wood & Cha-chandan	Wood	Headache, high fever, skin diseases
39.	<i>Sapindus trifoliatus</i> L.	Sapindaceae	<i>Kekru</i>	Seeds	Fever
40.	<i>Sesbania sesban</i> (L.)	Fabaceae	Egyptian pea & Chuchurangmei	Seed, leaves, root	Cough, fever
41.	<i>Solanum viarum</i> Dunal	Solanaceae	<i>Shingkhanga</i>	Fruit	Upper respiratory tract infection
42.	<i>Syzigium fruticosum</i> DC.	Myrtaceae	<i>Heinouman</i>	Leaf	Fever (especially for children)
43.	<i>Thysanolaena latifolia</i> (Roxb. ex Hornem.) Honda	Poaceae	<i>Urong-sumchit</i>	Leaf	Fever
44.	<i>Wendlandia glabrata</i> DC.	Rubiaceae	Ivy like fig & Pheija	Shoot, inflorescence	Cough, dysentery
45.	<i>Zingiber montanum</i> (J.Koenig) Link ex A.Dietr.	Zingiberaceae	<i>Tekhao-yaikhoo</i>	Tuber	Cough

Table: 2 Compound Ethnobotanical Plants of Manipur used in Treatment of Covid 19

Sl. No.	Botanical name	Manipuri Name	Parts used	Diseases	Treatment method	Reference
1.	<i>P. thyriformis</i> Nees + <i>Zanthoxylum acanthopodium</i> + <i>Ginger</i> + white sugar cube	Nongmankha angangba + Nongmankha angouba + Mukthrubi + Sing + Sitamasi	Tender leaf + Tender leaf + seed + rhizome+sugar	Dry cough/throat congestion and fever	The leaves, seeds and tuber along with white sugar cube are boil together till the colour turns blackish and half a glass full is serve as decoction before food.	[21].
2.	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> Roxb. + <i>Premna bengalensis</i> + <i>Acacia nilotica</i>	Mayokpha, + Upongtha Kikar	Bark+ Bark + Bark	Antiviral	The barks of these trees are boiled together and the decoction of the bark is taken orally.	Traditional knowledge (Needs to be Scientifically validated)

1. *Phlogacanthus thyrsoformis*

Family: Acanthaceae

Manipuri Name: Nongmangkha

Parts used: Leaves and flower

It is an evergreen shrub found in the sub-tropical Himalayas spreading up to Bhutan, upper Gangetic plains, Bihar, North Bengal, Assam, Arunachal and Manipur (Anonymous, 1969). It is commonly known by the name Nongmankha in Manipur. There are three different species namely, *P. thyrsoformis*, *P. pubinervius* and *P. curviflorus*, having all medicinal importance [25]. Whole plant is used for curing coughs, colds and asthma while fruits and leaves are burnt and prescribed for fevers. In Manipur, local people during this pandemic used the leaves of the plant which is boiled and the steam is inhaled through the nostril and also the boiled decoction of leaves is taken orally. Table 2 indicates that the local community of Manipur also uses certain compound in the treatment of covid -19.

2. *Azadiracta indica* A. Juss

Family: Meliaceae

Manipuri name: Neem

Parts used: Leaves

It is fast growing deciduous tree that can reach a height of 15 to 20 meters, shedding many of its leaves during the dry winter months. The leaf of the tree is used for treating many ailments. The crushed leaves are mixed with little water and about 2-3 tea spoonful is taken twice a day before each meal. Since time immemorial, neem has been respected and widely used as an immunity booster. It is very effective in keeping the body safe from attacks by harmful pathogens, thanks to its anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties. Neem can also keep your blood clean. It purifies the blood by flushing away toxins and this can strengthen immunity.

3. *Ocimum tenuiflorum*

Family: Lamiaceae

Manipuri name: Tulsi

Parts used: Leaves

It is an aromatic perennial plant which is native to the Indian subcontinent and widespread as a cultivated plant throughout the Southern Asian tropics. Tulsi contains the phytochemicals compounds like oleanolic acid, ursolic acid, rosmarinic acid, eugenol, carvacrol, linalool and β -caryophyllene. Tulsi essential oil consists mostly of eugenol (nearly 70%), β -elemene (nearly 11%) and β -caryophyllene (8%) and with the balance being made up of various trace compounds mostly terpenes. This aromatic leaf can be our primary line of defence against COVID-19. Tulsi or basil is a powerful germicide. Because of its phytochemicals and antioxidants, it can effectively locate germs, viruses and bacteria the moment they enter our body and destroy them [27]. In Manipur, people chew a few leaves first thing in the morning directly or by consuming tulsi tea.

4. *Zingiber officinale*

Family: Zingiberaceae

Manipuri name: Sing

Part used: Rhizome

It is herbaceous perennial which grows annual pseudostems about one meter tall. There are different varieties of ginger which are well known for their medicinal and economic significances. Ginger has been an age-old remedy for flu and the common cold. It can also be effective against COVID-19 [28]. It contains gingerol – an antioxidant that can power up our immune system and kill viruses. Ginger is particularly good in preventing respiratory tract infections. In Manipur, local people consume ginger tea during the pandemic.

5. *Cucurma longa* Linn

Family: Zingiberaceae

Manipuri name: Yai ngang

Part used: Rhizome

It is a rhizomatous aromatic herb extensively cultivated in both plain and hills of North Eastern states. The rhizome contains an essential oil consisting of sesquiterpenes, zingiberene, cineol and the crystalline colouring compound known as curcumin. This curcumin which is a phytochemical can remove toxins from our body and strengthen our immune system to fight off germs and bacteria [29]. People consume turmeric with milk to boost their immunity.

6. *Allium sativum*

Family: Amaryllidaceae

Manipuri name: Chanam

Parts used: Bulb

Allium sativum is a perennial flowering plant growing from a bulb. It has a tall, erect flowering stem that grows up to 1 m (3 ft). The major active components of garlic are its organosulfur compounds, such as diallyl thiosulfonate (allicin), diallyl sulfide (DAS), diallyl disulfide (DADS), diallyl trisulfide (DATS), E/Z-ajoene, S-allyl-cysteine (SAC), and S-allyl-cysteine sulfoxide (alliin) [30]. Like ginger, garlic too will protect us from coronavirus by stimulating our immunity. It contains allicin- a plant compound that acts as a germicide. Most people consume garlic as raw or partially cooked.

The review thus serves as a pool of information about the medicinal plants easily available in the state of Manipur and the ways of its consumption. This information can be vital for people residing in the state as well as those who have access to the above noted plants to reap the benefit of it in the right way. One of the positive aspects of using such medicinal plants in natural way is that there is extremely less or no side effects. In many cases, the mode of consumption is easy and can be included in regular diet. Small lifestyle changes by inculcating healthy habits of including such medicinal plants in one's

diet may result in improvement of immunity and protection from numerous ailments.

CONCLUSION

The present review will help in exploring the potential of the various medicinal plants found in Manipur to face the current pandemic situation. Since prevention is the foremost precautionary measure against any disease, we can be assured that medicinal plants available at our own backyard, when taken at the right form in the correct dose at the right time can be a healthy alternative in addition to the advanced medical practices.

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Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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