

## Indigenous Medicine “in the context of Manipur, North East India”

Dr. Jamuna Sukham

### Abstract

An attempt has been made to review the important of medicinal plants grown in the state like Manipur (North East India). Since time immemorial herbs have been an integral part of Health care. The use of herbal drugs to alleviate human sufferings is perhaps as old as the origin of man itself on this planet. Plants with medical properties enjoyed the highest reputation in the indigenous system of medicines all over the world.

Indigenous medicine is the sum total of all knowledge and practices, whether explicable or not used in diagnosis, prevention and elimination of physical, mental or social imbalance and observation transferred by individuals from one generation to another. The objectives of this paper is to review the old system of utilizing herbal home remedies for better and curative management of day today ailments. If we are aware of the identity of particular plants, definitely we will protect them and besides being benefited we will plant them with more attention which will enrich our environment also. Thus indigenous medicine can strengthen the very grass root of traditional systems and bring scientific reasoning to the pharmacodynamics of the many plant bases used in the traditional treatment of the past. Thus it is important as because the natural plant products are biologically more compatible with human system and comparatively less toxic than the synthesis.

**KEY WORDS** – *Ailment, biologically, diagnosis, indigenous, medicine, pharmacodynamics, synthesis, toxic.*

### Introduction

India being the cradle of civilization in early period, history provided spiritual knowledge and also the use of medicinal plants and part of which were spiritual practices. The plants were considered divine and held a close secret. India alone with her three main traditional system of (indigenous) medicine namely Ayurveda, Unani and Sidha, provided knowledge on the studies of macroscopic and microscopic characters of medicinal plants, checking on genuine sample and their

therapeutic properties, the earliest Sanskrit literature like Rigveda and Athurveda depicts the drug yielding plants and their application to cure different ailments. Yoga and other allied systems provide an excellent basis of preventive health care. Indigenous system of medicines take an approach that since disease or prone to disease is due to imbalance in the equilibrium, restoration of the equilibrium eliminates the disease. The treatment aims not only curing the disease but also enhancing the body vitality to combat the disease and minimize the chance of relapse.

Traditional system of medicine and practices that are recognized by Government of India are:

- ✚ Ayurveda
- ✚ Sidha
- ✚ Unani and
- ✚ Homeopathy

And the traditional practices are :

- ✚ Acupuncture
- ✚ Naturopathy
- ✚ Folk medicine and tribal medicine and
- ✚ Herbal Medicine

North-Eastern region of India, comprising of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura is inhabited by a large number of tribals of various ethnic groups and the region is the home of a number of societies like Abor, Garo, Meetei, Dafla, Khasi, Mishih, Rabha, Naga, Apatani etc. These ethnic communities are rich in traditional knowledge and have been practicing traditional healing since time immemorial. The state of Manipur, situated in the north eastern border of India lies between 23° 47' and 25° 41' N latitudes and 93° 61' to 94° 47' E longitudes. The state covers an area about 22,327 sq. Km. of which the mountains covers about 91.75% and central valley 8.25% of the total geographical area of the state. The plant resources of Manipur with a forest cover exceeding 60% of the total area lies underexplored.

Manipur is the gateway of India to South East Asia. The geographic situation of the state influenced the course of her history and cultural development. The state has gained a rich cultural tradition and heritage from various ancient civilizations. The traditional (indigenous) health care healing practices in Manipur are locally known as Maiba (Male healer) and Maibi (Female healer) known as **Maiba – Maibi Laiyeng** pathap (MMLP). They use various indigenous medicinal

substances for healing. “In a study by Ningombam and others (2014), 41 Meitei Healers (MH) had medicinal knowledge of 205 locally available medicinal plant species belong to 87 different families. These plants were used for treating 18 major diseases. Further, more than 90% of the health seeking behaviours of the Manipurians preferred folk medicine in treating ailments such as jaundice, snake bites, dog bites and stone cases.”<sup>7</sup>

Indigenous or folk medicine system of the Meitei is based on a unique set of principles and guidelines.

## **Purpose and statement of the study**

The aim of the study was to study the importance of indigenous medicine or traditional healing practice of the people in Manipur. This practice is important to the lives of the people as a preventive measure for prevention of any ailments. The people of Manipur are much concerned about their health and rely on the indigenous therapeutic practice and treatment. Every society has a shared belief and behaviour about the prevention of treatment of illness. Health is the prime concern for the people of Manipur and that they still adhered to their ancient indigenous medical system of prevention and treatment of illness and ailments. There are a lot of age-old practices founded on their cultural belief. The traditional treatments in Manipur are deeply rooted in the cultural and historical context of the region. Some common folk treatments and healing practices include:

- ✚ Herbal Medicine
- ✚ Ayurveda
- ✚ Traditional Massage and Manipulative Therapy
- ✚ Spiritual Healing
- ✚ Cupping Therapy
- ✚ Dietary practices
- ✚ Bone Setting and Yoga and Meditation.

## **Literature Review**

In order to understand the anthropological approach towards health and illness, prevention, diagnosis, treatment of disease or injury, it is necessary to know the meaning and definition of health as related to the topic. Thus, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being; it’s not only the absence of disease. A person is said to be healthy when he/she is free

of any type of disease (infectious / deficiency) when he/she is mentally happy and healthy and when his /her social relationship are healthy in society,”<sup>8</sup> Traditional healers hold an esteem and power position. They can play important and valuable role in helping communities to improve their health and quality of life. Their role is that of physician, counselor, psychiatrists and priest and people visit a traditional healer for problems ranging from social dilemmas to major medical illness. Seeking of treatment also vary from society to society and person to person. In case of any sickness, the Meiteis and some tribal communities first use the herbs and plants that are easily available at local area, but when they find that the treatment is not enough, they go to the doctor and vice versa.

## **Materials and Methods**

The present study adopted standard techniques of modern healing research pattern such as observation, case study and sample collection. Indigenous medicine or traditional medicine i.e. plant and spiritual based in Manipur incorporate a variety of materials and methods, reflecting the region's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage. These methods and materials are often tailored to the individuals needs of the patient, taking into account the specific symptoms and overall health condition. In this type of healing, a wide array of medicinal plants and herbs are utilized. And some ancient Indian system of medicine like Ayurveda and Herbal medication, employs natural remedies, including herbs, dietary changes and lifestyle adjustments.

## **Results and discussions**

While discussing and studying indigenous medicine in Manipur, it involves exploring the traditional healing practices rooted in the state's cultural and ecological context. Research often highlights the integration of local herbs, plants and spiritual beliefs into medical treatments. Discussions typically encompass the efficacy of these practices in treating various ailments, their cultural significance and efforts to preserve and integrate them with modern health care system. Understanding their role in Manipuri society involves considering both scientific evaluations and cultural perspectives to appreciate their holistic impact on health and well being.

Many plants and their parts are source for remedy of a single disease and also many more diseases. The information regarding the name and uses of the particular plants have been

## INDIC HERITAGE AND CULTURE

*An International Open Access, Peer Reviewed Refereed, Yearly Multidisciplinary Journal*

ISSN (0): 2584-2862

Vol.-4, Issue-I, 2025

presented. Details of some important medicinal plants have been included in this paper as shown below:

<u>SL No.</u>	<u>Manipuri Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>English Name</u>	<u>Kind of Plants</u>	<u>Uses</u>
1	Langthrei	Eupatorium birmanicum	Ngai Camphor	Shrub	Leaf juice used in burning sensation of stomach
2	Leikham	Goniothalamus Sequipedalis	White Champa	Shrub	Boiled leaves used for bathing new born
3	Lomba	Meriandra benghalensis	Bengal Sage	Herb	Decoction of leaves and flowers used for tonsillitis
4	Maroi Napakpi	Allium hookerii	Winter Leek	Herb	Used for high blood pressure
5	Maroi Nakuppi	Allium Odorosum	Winter Leek	Herb	Crushed leaves used for hair growth and low blood pressure
6	Mayangton	Ocimum Canum	Hoary Basil	Herb	Leaf juice with honey used for fever and cough
7	Moirang khanam	Clerodendrum	Spider Lily	Shrub	Leaf extract used for cold and cough.
8	Nongmangkha	Phlogacanthus thyrsiflorus	Malabar nut	Herb	Fruits and leaves used for Fever and Cold
9	Nungshihidak	Mintha piperita	Pepper mint	Herb	Used for stomach ache
10	Peruk	Centella asiatica	Indian penny wort	Herb	Used as digestive and dysentery
11	Poongphai	Dactyloctenium aegyptium	Crowfoot	Grass	Decoction used for small pox
12	Sheijrak	Melia azedarach	China tree	Tree	Boiled leaves extract used for sores and skin disease
13	Tera paibi	Gynura cusimbua	Silk cotton	Herb	Stem and leaves juice applied to fresh cuts and wounds
14	Tingthou	Cynodon dactylon	Doob grass	Grass	Juice extracts used for fresh cuts and wounds

## INDIC HERITAGE AND CULTURE

*An International Open Access, Peer Reviewed Refereed, Yearly Multidisciplinary Journal*

ISSN (0): 2584-2862

Vol.-4, Issue-I, 2025

15	<b>Uhal</b>	Sida acuta	Indian long pepper	Shrub	Root extract used as tonic and stomach ache
16	<b>Yempat</b>	Plantago erosa	Plantago Major/Plantain	Herb	Leaves after warming applied on boil
17	<b>Yenshil</b>	Oxaliscomiculata	Indian Sorrel	Herb	Boiled plant used for stomach disorder
18	<b>Yongchak</b>	Parkia roxburghii	Tree bean	Tree	Bark extract given for diarrhoea and dysentery
19	<b>Kanghuman</b>	Meriandra Strobilifera	Greater galangal	Herb	Leaves are used as antiseptic
20	<b>Khoiju</b>	Plectranthus termifolius	Burmese lacquertree	Shrub	Smoke and leaves as antidote boils and skin disease
21	<b>Oinam</b>	Paederia foetida	Garden mint	Climber	Leave extract given in stomach disorder
22	<b>Ureirom</b>	Bixa Orellana	Lipstick tree	Tree	Leaves and bark used at snake and other poisonous bites
23	<b>U-Thambal</b>	Mangolia grandiflora	Bull Bar	Tree	Bark used for malaria and rheumatism
24	<b>Manahi</b>	T. Citrina Rox.exflem	Chebulei Myrobalan	Fruit	Used in cough and sore throat
25	<b>Hidakmana</b>	N. Tabbacumlinn	Tobaco	Plant	Used in insect bite leech bite and to stop bleeding
26	<b>Sougree</b>	Hibiscusn Cannabinus	Decan Hemp	Plant	Used as hair care lotion boiled leaves used at acidity, used in constipation and cough
27	<b>Thangjing</b>	Euryale ferox salisb	Fox Nut	Herb	Tonic, astringent and deobstruent. Seeds are spermatorrhoea
28	<b>Sambanlei</b>	Duranta repens	Golden Dew Drop	Shrub	Diluted fruit juice in water is lethal to mosquito larvae

## INDIC HERITAGE AND CULTURE

*An International Open Access, Peer Reviewed Refereed, Yearly Multidisciplinary Journal*

ISSN (0): 2584-2862

Vol.-4, Issue-I, 2025

29	<b>Chorphon</b>	Elaeocarpus Floribundus Blume	Elaeo Carpaceae	Tree	antiseptic, used as mouth wash in inflamed gum
30	<b>Ningthoukhongli</b>	Tinospora Cordifolia	Gulancha Tinospora	Climber	Used at diarrhoea, dysentery, gonorrhoea
31	<b>Heibi</b>	Meyna-laxiflora Robyns	Rubiaceae	Tree	Leaves and fruits are used as hair care lotion, blood purifier, juice of ripe fruits are good for skin
32	<b>Kanglayan</b>	Schizophyllum Commune	Agariaceae	Fungi	flower/body are used as hoarseness asthma, tonsillitis.
33	<b>Uri</b>	Scindapsus officinalis Schott	Scindapsus officinalis schott	Aracea	applied externally for rheumatism, fruits used at diahorrhoea, Decoction is given as expectorant in asthma, it show anti-protozoal activity.
34	<b>Kongouyen</b>	Angiosperm (Dicotyledon)	Pagoda creeper	Climber	Leaf decoction useful for urinary troubles and stone cases. Crushed leaf useful for local application in bone fracture. Root decoction is blood purifier. Root powder is antiseptic, applied on wounds, cuts and injuries. Decoction of dried tubers is used as diuretic and depurative.
35	<b>Kege</b>	Ricinus Communis	Castor Seed	Plant	Leaves are used for pile treatment

## INDIC HERITAGE AND CULTURE

*An International Open Access, Peer Reviewed Refereed, Yearly Multidisciplinary Journal*

ISSN (0): 2584-2862

Vol.-4, Issue-I, 2025

36	<b>Shangbrei</b>	Pogostemon purpurascens	Angiosperm	Plant	Root and leaves are used for pile treatment, wounds, roots are stimulant and anti hemorrhage
37	<b>Lam-Ketukee</b>	Pandanus Foetidus	Pandanaceae	Shrub	Use as antidote for poisoning
38	<b>Komprek</b>	Oenanthe Javanica	Umbelliferae	Shrub	Leaves and stem are used as appetiser and digestion.
39	<b>Ishing - Ikaithabi</b>	Neptunia Oleracea	Minosaceae	Aquatic plant	Used as astringent, carache used at late stages of syphilis
40	<b>Hanurei</b>	M.roxburghii Hook (Rubiceae Genus)	Sonarupa	Plant	Leaves are used for preparation of hair-care lotion
41	<b>Kangfal - Ikaithabi</b>	Mimosa pudica	Sensitive plant	Plant	Leaves are used in uterine pain after delivery, hydrocele piles, boils, sinus, sores and piles.
42	<b>Uri – Hingchabi</b>	Mikania Cordata	Asteraceae	Climber	Leaf used at dysentery, A tribe community called Rongmeis use the plant for trapping fishes
43	<b>Ishing - Yesnshin</b>	Marsilea Minuta	Marsileaceae	Aquatic hurb	Leaves used in insomnia, paralysis. Crushed plant with salt is applied to abdomen to cure hemorrhage.
44	<b>Kolamni</b>	I. aquatica Forsk	Swanp cabbage	Herb	Used as antidote to opium and arsenical poisoning, treatment for insects bites.
45	<b>Toningkhok</b>	Houttuynia Coedata	Saururaceae	Herbaceous Stem	Used in dysentery, stomach ulcer, muscular pains.
46	<b>Silo – Sougri</b>	H. Sabdariffa	Red sorrel	Plant	Leaves and fruits are used local hair lotion, fruits is ant scorbutic, drinks in

## INDIC HERITAGE AND CULTURE

*An International Open Access, Peer Reviewed Refereed, Yearly Multidisciplinary Journal*

ISSN (0): 2584-2862

Vol.-4, Issue-I, 2025

					bilious condition.
47	<b>Takhellei</b>	Hedychium coronarium	Common Ginger Lily	Herbs	Leaves are used for gurgling tonic in throat pain, antirheumatic, applied on swelling, bruises and sprains. Boiled Rhizome is taken against cough, fever. Fresh rhizome is eaten against cough, fever and dizziness.
48	<b>Kaboklei</b>	Gardenia jasminoides	Cape jasmine	Flower Plant	Used as insect repellent, it is anti periodic, eathartic, antispasmodic and externally antiseptic.
49	<b>Chinichampa</b>	Eriobotrya latifolia	Rosaceae	Shrub	Fruit paste used at vomiting and thirst.
50	<b>Lalukok</b>	Dicrocephala Latifolia	Asteraceae	Hurb	Used as hair lotion to cure dandruff and hair fall.
51	<b>Pungphai</b>	Dactyloctenium aegyptium	Poaceae	Grass	Used at fever, small pox, grain are eaten by women who suffer from belly ache.
52	<b>Sagolhidak</b>	Datura stramonium	Jimson weed	Shrub	Dry leaves are burned and smoke is inhaled in severe asthma, paste of leafs applied in chest pain.
53	<b>Khongjai Napi</b>	Ageratum conyzoides	Goat Weed	Herb	Used as hair wash, diarrhoea, dysintery, gastro-intestinal ailment,
54	<b>Vubati</b>	Andrographis paniculata	Creat	Herb	Used in asthma, chronic fever, bronchitis and worm disease.

## INDIC HERITAGE AND CULTURE

*An International Open Access, Peer Reviewed Refereed, Yearly Multidisciplinary Journal*

ISSN (0): 2584-2862

Vol.-4, Issue-I, 2025

55	<b>Kwa</b>	Areca catechu	Betel nut	Nuts	Used in bowel complaints, offensive ulcers, astringent. Decoction of roots are used in liver disorder.
56	<b>Yenthou</b>	Arundo donax	Gramineae poaceae	Bamboo	Used at children's worm infection, typhoid, pneumonia, asthma.
57	<b>Saneibi</b>	Bambusa arandinacea	Thorny Bamboo	Bamboo	Used as antidote, alopecia, Boiled decoction is used in ringworms, tumors and meningitis.
58	<b>Uroksumban</b>	Basella alba	Indian spinach	leaf	Useful in gonorrhoea, balanitis, constipation.



SI No. 1 **Langthrei**  
(Goniothalamus Sequipedalis)



SI No. 2 **Leikham**  
(Eupatorium birmanicum)



SI No. 3 **Lomba**  
Meriandra benghalensis



SI No. 4 **Napakpi**  
(Allium hookerii)



SI No. 5 **Nakuppi**  
(Allium Odorosum)



SI No. 6 **Mayangton**  
(Ocimum Canum)

# INDIC HERITAGE AND CULTURE

An International Open Access, Peer Reviewed Refereed, Yearly Multidisciplinary Journal

ISSN (0): 2584-2862  
Vol.-4, Issue-I, 2025



SI No. 7 **Moirang Khanam**  
(Clerodendrum)



SI No. 8 **Nongmangkha**  
(Phlogacanthus thyrsoflorus)



SI No. 9 **Nungshi-Hidak**  
(Clerodendrum)



SI No. 10 **Peruk**  
(Centella asiatica)



SI No. 11 **Poongphai**  
(Dactyloctenium aegyptium)



SI No. 12 **Shejrak**  
(Melia azedarach)



SI No. 13 **Tera paibi**  
(Gynura cusimbua)



SI No. 14 **Tingthou**  
(Cynodon dactylon)



SI No. 15 **Uhal**  
(Sida acuta)



SI No. 16 **Yempat**  
(Plantago erosa)



SI No. 17 **Yenshil**  
(Oxaliscomiculata)



SI No. 18 **Yongchak**  
(Parkia roxburghii)

# INDIC HERITAGE AND CULTURE

An International Open Access, Peer Reviewed Refereed, Yearly Multidisciplinary Journal

ISSN (0): 2584-2862  
Vol.-4, Issue-I, 2025



SI No. 19 **Kanghuman**  
(Meriandra Strobilifera)



SI No. 20 **Khoiju**  
(Plectranthus termifolius)



SI No. 22 **Ureirom**  
(Bixa Orellana)



SI No. 23 **U-Thambal**  
(Mangolia grandiflora)



SI No. 24 **Manahi**  
(T. Citrina Rox.exflem)



SI No. 25 **Hidak-Mana**  
(N. Tabbacumlinn)



SI No. 26 **Shougree**  
(Hibiscus Cannabinus)



SI No. 27 **Thangjing**  
(Euryale ferox salisb)



SI No. 29 **Chorphon**  
(Elaeocarpus Floribundus Blume)



SI No. 29 **Ningthoukhongli**  
(Tinospora Cordifolia)



SI No. 29 **Heibi**  
(Meyna-laxiflora Robyns)



SI No. 29 **Kanglayan**  
(Schizophyllum Commune)

# INDIC HERITAGE AND CULTURE

*An International Open Access, Peer Reviewed Refereed, Yearly Multidisciplinary Journal*

ISSN (0): 2584-2862

Vol.-4, Issue-I, 2025

The plants used for medicinal purpose are clubbed under the category of medicinal plants. According to World Health Organization (WHO), a medicinal plants is any plant which, in one or more and its organs, contain substances that can be used for therapeutic purpose, or which are precursors for chemo-pharmaceutical semi synthesis. India has 20 present plant species of medicinal value (Table 41.4)''<sup>9</sup>

**Table 41.1 : Numbers and Plants Used Medicinally Worldwide (Schippmann et al., 2002)**

Country	Plant Species	Medicinal Plant Species	Percentage
China	26092	4941	18.9
India	15000	3000	20.0
Indonesia	22500	1000	4.4
Malaysia	15500	1200	7.7
Nepal	6973	700	10.0
Pakistan	4950	300	6.1
Philippines	8930	850	9.5
Shri Lanka	3314	550	16.6
Thailand	11625	1800	15.5
USA	21641	2564	11.8
Vietnam	10500	1800	17.1

But according to Hamilton (2003), India has about 44 percent of flora, which is used medicinally.

**Table 41.2 : Numbers and Percentage of Medicinal Plant Worldwide (Hamilton 2003)**

Country	Total No of Native Species Flora	No. of Sppecies of Medicinal Plant	% of Flora which is Medicinal
China	27100	11146	41
India	17000	7555	44
Mexico	30000	2237	7
North America	20000	2527	13
World	297000-510000	52885	10-18

## Conclusion:

Since the ancient times, the people depend upon the plants and their products for curing diseases and other purposes. Medicinal and aromatic plants have an important role in the ecology and economy of a country. Sustainable primary health care development programmes should take cognizance of the indigenous folk practices coupled with modern knowledge to make the lives of these people more healthy and meaningful life. The area and forest of Manipur represent a considerable amount of medicinal plants wealth. But these medicinal plant those constitute a large collection are in critical condition due to over exploitation and deforestation mainly due to urbanization of area. This paper discusses ethnomedicinal uses of some of the important plants found in the area. The emphasis has also been made to lists out those plant species, which are either going to be extinct nor are on the verge of the extinction.

## References

- 1) Traditional healing practices of the Khurkhul of Manipur, Ph.D thesis by Ngathem Pungfa Singh, Dept of Anthropology, Manipur University 2019, Page 10
- 2) <https://byjus.com>. (What is health - BYJU'S)
- 3) Medicinal Plants; Conservation, Cultivation and Utilization. AK Chopra, D.R. Khanna, G. Prasad, D.S. Malik, R. Bhutiani. 2007, Daya publishing house, Delhi 110035. Page 327
- 4) Recent progress in Medicinal plants. Vol-6  
Disease and their Management. P. SINHA, J.N. GOVIL, V.K. SINGH, 2002, SCI TECH publishing LLC, U.S.A.
- 5) Medicinal plants of Manipur. Dr. S.C. SINHA  
Publish by – Manipur Association for Science & Society (MASS)  
Manipur Cultural Integration Conference (MCIC), Palace Compound, Imphal 795001.  
1<sup>st</sup> Publication 1996 Jan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Publication 2001 January.
- 6) Study of Ethnomedicinal plants in Thoubal District of Manipur. Ph.D thesis. Mohd Habibullah Khan. Manipur University, Regst. 1553/2001, Dept of Life Science.

## **INDIC HERITAGE AND CULTURE**

*An International Open Access, Peer Reviewed Refereed, Yearly Multidisciplinary Journal*

ISSN (0): 2584-2862

Vol.-4, Issue-I, 2025

- 7) Endangered Medicinal Plants, AB. Chaudhuri, Daya Publishing house Delhi 110035.
- 8) Herbs, Spices and Medicinal plants. Recent Advances in Botany, Horticulture and Pharmacology, Volume-3  
Lyle E. Craker, James E.Simon. Editors. CBS Publishers and Distributers, New Delhi-2
- 9) Medicinal Plants, R.C. Grewal, Campus Books International. Delhi-2
- 10) Indigenous Medicinal Plants, Social forestry and Tribals. M.P. Aingh, J.L. Srivastava, S.N. Pandey. Daya Publishing house Delhi 110035.