



Traditional use of *Litsea chinensis* Lam

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ABSTRACT

Traditional remedies are an integral part of human especially Indian culture. *Litsea* with 45 species in India is the largest genus of the family Lauraceae. *Litsea chinensis* Lam yields tannin, alkaloids, glycosides, mucilage and exhibit medicinal properties which are used by the tribal in different part of the country. The present paper accounts for the traditional uses of the *Litsea chinensis* Lam.

Key words: Anatomy, *Litsea chinensis* Lam, Lauraceae, Elements.

INTRODUCTION

Litsea is an important genus of Lauraceae, the cinnamon family, many species of which are being used for various medicinal and ethno-botanical purposes from time immemorial. There are nearly 400 species of *Litsea* Lam. growing in the warm climate of Asian countries. In India, 45 species are found to grow throughout the country, except in the desert parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat. The genus has high species concentration in the evergreen forests of the Himalaya (28 species) and the Deccan Peninsula (25 species). Of the all species, scanty of literature is available on the medicinal uses of *Litsea chinensis* Lam in tribal.

METHODOLOGY

The present work is based on the data collected during the trip to North-East state trip, study of different herbarium sheets and available literature on *Litsea*. The information was collected from the Guwahati, Nogaon, Jorhat, Kaziranga, Golghat, Shillong, foot hill and state borders of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland for the collection and study of *Litsea chinensis* Lam along with the uses claimed in tribal and native places. The specimen of *Litsea chinensis* Lam and other species were identified under the guidance and support provided from the Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Department, North – East Institute of Science and Technology, Jorhat, Assam. The plant *Litsea chinensis* Lam was collected and authenticated with the help of Botanical Survey of India, North- East Region, Shillong, Meghalaya. During the field work, views about uses of *Litsea chinensis* Lam were documented.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The genus *Litsea* and species *chinensis* and other shows maximum diversity in north- east state. Total 45 species are found and reported in country. The *Litsea chinensis* Lam is well distributed in the Indian subcontinent. Plant parts like leaf (Photograph no. 1), bark (Photograph no. 2), fruit (Photograph no. 3), root (Photograph no. 4), flower, twig (Photograph no. 5) and woods

(Photograph no. 6 & 7) are useful for it medicinal and commercial value since ancient time. Essential oil extracted from leaves are used for isolation and separation of citral, lauric acid and oleic acid. Researchers at North East Institute of Science and Technology actively work on commercial, chemical and biological utility of this species. Decoctions of the different parts are useful to cure burns, sprains, indigestion, cough, infection and diarrhoea among the localised and tribal of Meghalaya Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Jaiswal¹ has reported the use of plant decoction in Jaintia tribal community of Meghalaya, North-East India. Bark and leaf are widely used for treatment of wound healing in natural form and modified form. Antioxidant activity, wound healing, anti-inflammatory activity of aqueous extract and anthelmintic activity of ethanolic extract are well documented in primary literature.² Bark and leaf are full of gum and mucilage. Therefore, it is useful to treat cuts, open laceration, swelling and pain. Stem and twig of *L. glutinosa* exhibited 90.57% and 41.53% antioxidant activity.³⁻⁶ The bark, wood and leaf are used to treat fracture and stomach problem. The paste obtained from the bark use as emollient. The bark of *Litsea chinensis* sold in market as 'Neluka' in Assam and 'Medalakadi' or Medsakha which is mucilaginous and freely balsamic. Fruits are edible and put up for sale in market (Photograph no. 8). It yield a fat that use in preparation of soap. Fruits and seeds are eaten to treat joint problem and rheumatism. For better convenience in administration, Honey, water and milk serve as vehicle to administer different plant part. The wood is used as structural timber and excellent for fuel wood and construction of house. Wood bears good strength and protection properties therefore it use

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Photograph no. 1



Photograph no. 2



Photograph no.3



Photograph no. 4



Photograph no.5



Photograph no. 6



Photograph no.7



Photograph no.8

Photograph no. 1 to 8. *Litsea chinensis* Lam; (1) Leaf (2) Bark (3) Fruit (4) Root (5) Twig (6&7) Wood (8) Selling in market

for floor board, packing case, ceiling and roof but careful selection is advised and advantageous. Inner barks and woods sometimes use as “Agarbatti” The root is sweetish, bitter, astringent, aphrodisiac and tonic. Moreover, roots useful to treat respiratory problems, fever and throat troubles. Flowers are often used for beautification.

CONCLUSION

Study on the traditional uses of *Litsea chinensis* Lam was carried out during trip to north east state. The indigenous uses practised and inherited through generation after generation by tribal since ancient time is witnessed here. *Litsea chinensis* Lam is employed in treatment of many major to minor problems and for commercial purpose in routine. Due to advancement information and practiced in tribal may vanish. So this valuable information should be documented and proved clinically in the light of modern research. Otherwise we may lose our important medical and commercial inheritance.

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