

Traditional uses of Chimpong by the Thadou -Kuki tribe of Churachandpur district, Manipur

Hoikhokim¹, Ruth Laldinthar²

^{1,2} Assistant Professor, Department of Botany, Churachandpur College, Churachandpur Manipur, India.

Abstract—Chimpong' is the local name in Thadou Kuki for the plant scientifically known as *Hibiscus sabdariffa* L, one of the most important plants with different indigenous uses. The seeds are fermented by women as a means of food preservation and source of income. The inflorescence or flowers are used in the preparation of traditional hair shampoo. The leaves and tender twigs are consumed as vegetables. Decoction of the leaves is used traditionally for treatment of leukorrhoea, hypertension and digestive problems. Despite having many important uses of this plant by the Thadou Kuki tribes; no written record is available. Therefore, the purposed of this work aimed at documentation of the traditional knowledge and the economic importance of 'Chimpong'.

Index Terms—documentation, *Hibiscus sabdariffa*, Thadou Kuki, tribe, traditional uses.

I. INTRODUCTION

Hibiscus sabdariffa L. also known as Roselle or red sorrel is locally known as Chimpong by the Thadou Kuki tribe in Churachandpur. The plant is an erect, mostly branched, annual shrub. Stem reddish in colour and upto 3.5m tall belongs to the family Malvaceae. The plant is indigenous to Malaysia and India, where it is grown extensively in many tropical countries (Ogundapo et al., 2014). Many research work had been carried out by different scholars from different aspects. It was found that the plant is allegedly an effective treatment for cancer, abscesses, cough, debility, dysuria, scurvy, and fever, as well as an antihypertensive, antiseptic, strict diuretic, and purgative (Olawale, 2011). According to Pegu et al. (2021), infusions of the leaves or calyces of *H. sabdariffa* are traditionally used for their diuretic, cholerectic, febrifugal, and antihypertensive properties, as well as to lessen blood viscosity and induce intestinal peristalsis. Calyces of *H. sabdariffa* are used in Sudan to treat high blood pressure, cold

symptoms, and flu (Issa et al., 2018). People in Zimbabwe utilise the plant's calyces, which are edible, to treat cancer. According to a survey on ethnomedicinal plants used by traditional healers in Zimbabwe, *H. sabdariffa* has been utilised to treat all kinds of cancer (Matowa et al., 2020). In spite of many works carried out on *H. sabdariffa* across the globe, no documentation work has been carried out on the knowledge of this plant by the Thadou- Kuki community. Therefore, the aim of the study was to survey and document the knowledge on the traditional uses of *H. sabdariffa* by the Thadou- Kuki tribe of Churachandpur district.

Study site

Churachandpur district occupies the south-west part of Manipur state. It stretches between 93° 15'E and 94° 45'E Longitude and between 24°N and 24° 30 N Latitudes. It has 4570 Sq.km geographical area constituting 20.47% of the total geographical area of the State and it is the largest district of Manipur in terms of area. It is bounded by Jiribam Sub division of Imphal East, Tamenglong District on the North, Bishnupur and Chandel District on the East Myanmar (Burma) and Mizoram state on the South and Cachar District of Assam on the West. The topography of the district is hilly. Churachandpur is inhabited by the Kuki Zo tribal communities. The Thadou -Kuki tribe is one of the major tribes residing in churachandpur district.

About Thadou Kuki Tribe

In Manipur, the Thadou- Kuki tribe is the second largest in terms of population, with over 215,000 individuals according to the 2011 census, The Thadou Kuki people have a diverse food culture and rich in tradition. They consume rice as a staple food and eat different types of wild and cultivated vegetables. They are fond of eating meat such as pork, beef, chicken, mutton, fish and different types of

fermented foods, including bekanthu, shithu, ngathu, toibung, chimpongthu etc. Their rich traditional knowledge on fermented food and varieties of consuming wild plants are handed down from their parents and forefather from generation to generation. Traditionally, the Thadou-Kuki people are engaged in animal husbandry, cultivation, hunting, and fishing. Jhum (slash-and-burn) agriculture is a predominant method of farming.

II. METHODOLOGY

Collection of Data: For the present study, field survey was conducted in different villages during the month of December and January in the year 2024, under Tuibong Sub division of Churachandpur district where the plants were cultivated. Some of the villages visited were Chonghang Veng, Teiseng, Leizangkhopi, Koite and N. Molhoi. A total of 120 elderly women were selected who were well-versed in traditional indigenous knowledge of this plant from these villages. A home visit was carried out to gather information from the informants. The informants were interviewed with pre-form questionnaires and data were recorded, and photographs were taken.

III. RESULTS

The details of the traditional indigenous uses of *H. sabdariffa*, recorded from the respondents are listed below.

a) Used in vegetable dishes

The leaves and tender twigs are cooked with onion, green chilli and small dry fish. A little amount of salt is added to taste and consumed as a delicious dish.

b) Consumed as a beverage

Calyces of *H. sabdariffa* are dried and pounded into powder. One tea spoonful of the powder is mixed with a glass of water and a little sugar is added to taste, then can be served hot or cold.

c) Used in traditional medicine

One glass of the leaf's decoction is taken daily for a period of one month for treatment of leukorrhoea, hypertension and indigestion problems.

d) Used in the preparation of hair shampoo

The leaves and calyces are boiled with rice water. The filtrate is applied to hair. This solution gives the hair a silky, lively and lustrous appearance.

e) Used in preparation of traditional fermented food known as "chimpongthu"

The dried seeds are boiled in water till the seeds can be crushed between the finger's tips. The seeds are transferred to airtight container called *sinkhup* (bamboo base with lid) with banana leaves lining and were kept unopened for a minimum of five days during summer and ten days during winter. When it produces smell the seeds were crushed in a traditional wooden crusher to make it into paste. The paste is then wrapped in a banana leaf and were kept near the fire place for two days. Chimpongthu is mixed with green chili, potato, onion and served as delicious chutney. It is also cooked with *Colocasia* and dry fish or meat. It can also be mixed with any kind of vegetable curry. During the survey, it was learned that as Chimpongthu preparation require less labor and raw materials are locally available. For the older adults, this is a simple and accessible way to earn a supplemental income.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results of the investigations carried out on *H. sabdariffa* conveyed the immense potential of this plant. Besides its other uses, it also highlights the importance of the plant in treatment of various ailments. The studied tribe grow and cultivate this plant for its multiple uses. This serves as a means of documenting their rich traditional knowledge. The documentation work fills a research gap in finding novel therapeutic compounds from this plant which in turn helps in improving public health and wellbeing. It also helps in preserving cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and promoting sustainable agriculture and economic growth.

Photo plate



Fig.1 Young leaves of *H. sabdariffa*



Fig. 2 Calyces of *H. sabdariffa*



Fig. 6 Wrapped seeds kept above a fire place in the kitchen



Fig. 3. Dried seeds



Fig. 4 The dried seeds are crushed with mortar and pestle



Fig. 5. The crushed seeds are wrapped with *Musa paradisiaca* leaves

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to the respondents, for their time and inputs and for sharing their insights and experiences.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ogundapo, S. S., Onuoha, J. C., Olekanma, C. N., Okon, A. B., Soniran, O. T., Omoboyowa, D. A., & Okor, D. A. (2014). Alteration in biochemical parameters of Hibiscus sabdariffa calyces (zobo) supplemented with commercial flavor additive. *Journal of Natural Product*, 7, 116-123.
- [2] Olawale, A. S. (2011). Studies in concentration and preservation of sorrel extract. *African Journal of Biotechnology*, 10(3), 416- 423.
- [3] Pegu, F., Paul, A., Chetia, A., & Zaman, K. (2021). An updated review on phytochemistry and therapeutic uses of Hibiscus sabdariffa L. *Current Trends in Pharmaceutical Research*, 8(1), 41-72
- [4] Issa, T. O., Mohamed, Y. S., Yagi, S., Ahmed, R. H., Najeeb, T. M., Makhawi, A. M., & Khider, T. O. (2018). Ethnobotanical investigation on medicinal plants in Algoz area (South Kordofan), Sudan. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, 14, Article number 31.
- [5] Mootosamy, A., & Fawzi, M. M. (2014). Ethnomedicinal application of native remedies used against diabetes and related complications in Mauritius. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, 151(1), 413-44.