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Traditional Medicinal Knowledge in North Eastern Region of India: A Case Study of their health Care practices among the *Meetei Maiba* healers of Thoubal District, Manipur

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Abstract

Traditional healers are still pivotal manpower resources of health care provisioning with a wide range of healing methods in Manipur, North Eastern Region of India. *Meetei Maibas* are local health care male healers and their continuity of knowledge and practices are inextricably linked with the indigenous flora and fauna and social recognition. Their system of health care knowledge and practices are transmitted through oral tradition, direct observation, and hands-on experience from one generation to the other. Their health care practices are locally known as *Maiba Laiyeng Pathap* or *Maiba* health care system of treatments. The present paper is an outcome of my fieldwork conducted in the valley district of Thoubal in Heirok Kendra among the *Meetei Maibas* in Nongpoksekmaï, Sikhong, and Heirok villages respectively. Altogether, 9 *Maibas* who practically possessed the knowledge and skills of *Maiba Layeng Pathap* were interviewed in their respective residences. Direct Observation, face to face in-depth interviews, recording and still photographs were used in the fieldwork. Above all, how they acquired the knowledge and practices and the queries for types of ailments, treatments and the medicinal plants they utilized, the method of preparation, the frequency of use, which medicinal plants used as daily food consumption, and also the evidence of healing testimonies were documented. The paper also discusses the type of *Meetei Maiba* healers and their traditional knowledge and methods of health care treatments. The continuity of this particular type of health care practices will benefit within and across the country at large scale if their health care knowledge and practices of the economic medicinal plants and their uses are properly studied. The paper also brings out the present situation of *Maiba Laiyeng Pathap* in Manipur and future prospects.

Keywords: Traditional Medicinal Knowledge, Thoubal District, Manipur, *Meetei Maiba Layeng Pathap*.

Introduction

The traditional healers of Manipur utilize these various indigenous medicinal substances for healing different diseases and ailments in the North Eastern Region of India. In Manipur, indigenous traditional healers are known as *Maiba* and *Maibi* respectively. *Maibas* and *Maibis* are the local males and females healers among Manipuri *Meetei* community respectively. There are various types of '*Maibas*' such as herbalist-*Maibas*, *jadu /mantra Maibas*, sprain-setter and bone-setter *Maibas*, ritual performance '*Maibas*' (priest) and in the case of '*Maibis*, there are *Maibis* as traditional birth attendance/*dais*, herbalist *Maibis*, ritual performance *Maibis*¹ (priestess). Their traditional health care healing practices include home remedies, herbal medicines, mantras, ritual purification; bone setting, sprain setting, dog bites, snake bites, exorcism, jaundice, stone cases. Their traditional health care healing practices are locally known as *Maiba-Maibi Laiyeng Pathap* (MMLP) (*Maiba-Maibi* health care treatments). Ningombam et al., (2014) conducted a study to document and assess on knowledge of Ethno-Medicinal Practitioners of 41 *Meetei Healers* (MH) (*Maiba and Maibi* among *Meetei* community) of Manipur and found that these healers had a special medicinal knowledge of 205 locally available medicinal plants species belonging to 87 different families which were used for treating 18 major diseases. Further, they also reported that more than 90% of the health-seeking behaviors of the Manipuris preferred folk medicine in spite of modern medicine in some ailments such as jaundice, snake bites, dog bites and stone cases².

The knowledge of folk medicinal system is mainly learnt and accumulated from forefathers and *Mangtak* i.e. revelation in a dream. Devi (2003) in her study of 'Ethno medical Practice in Manipur: A Case of Evil Eye' classifies *Maiba* into four categories namely (i) *Maiba*- a man who performs rituals (priest) during the festival of *Lai-haraoba* (merry making of gods and goddesses); (ii) *Maiba*-a medicinal male healer having the sub-category of (a) a man who performs the rituals of healing *Hingchabi Changba* (Evil Eye); (b) a man who can heal and cure ailments such as stomach ache, fracture, sprain, boils etc. (iii) *Maiba*-a shaman who performs *Potshem Jadu Touba*, which may be either good or bad (magic); (iv) *Maiba*- a man who

performs a ritual for the welfare of the family or person or community. There are various types of rituals but one of them is to exorcise the evil spirit. Moreover, she also classifies *Maibi* into three categories according to their function in the Meetei society, namely (i) *Maibi*-a woman who attends a delivery, a mid-wife, (ii) *Maibi* a woman who practices witchcraft, she performs ritual when a person asks her to do something either good or bad and she uses *Potshen Jadu Touba* (magic) and (iii) *Maibi*-who performs rituals (priestess) during the festival of *Laiharaoba*, *Apokpa khurumba* (worshipping of the ancestral deities of a particular *Salai/Yek*, i.e.clan). In her study, she found that this type of *Maibi* enters into a trance and brings the message of a person for his /her future. She acts medium connecting Gods and human beings¹. Most of the healers in Manipur are closely linked to their physical surrounding environment for their health care practices and used most of the medicinal flora and fauna that are available in their ecological environment. One of the ideal centers for biodiversity conservation in Manipur is the protection of the sacred groves of Manipur³. Khumbongmayum et al., (2005) in their study of four sacred groves in Manipur found the therapeutic applications of 120 medicinal plant species⁴.

The development of Manipur indigenous folk medicine started during the then king, Kiyamba (1467-1508), who first used *Ponheiton*, a local fruit known as Guava in English as a medicine for treatment of diarrhoea^{2,5}. During the reign of the then king *Naophangba* (428-518 A.D), healing practices using herbs were started. It was during the reign of the then king *Meidingu Chingthangkomba* (1763- 1798 A.D) that began a well-established description of medicinal plants uses for healing ailments. The Meetei kings had their personal *Maibas* or Herbalists such as *Konnok Thengra* and *Meidingu Lalhamba* as their *Maibas* respectively^{2,6}. These *Maibas* had recorded the empirical knowledge of indigenous medicine by compiling in the form of the herbal book known as *Puyas* (Holy Books of Meeteis). Most of the importance historical accounts were written in the '*Cheitharol Kumbaba*' which is translated as 'The Royal Chronicle' of Manipur by *Maichous* (Meetei Scholars in the royal court). The *Puyas* and the Royal Chronicles were written in '*Meetei Mayek*', the traditional script of the Meetei community. The *Maibas* or the indigenous traditional healers of those days preserved the indigenous medicinal knowledge system on tiny thin rectangular boards of the sapwood of *Aquilaria agallocha* (Agar) and for writing purposes, the ink was made from lampblack and the pen was made from fully seasoned *Bambusa tulda* Roxb². Some worth-mentioning *Puyas* are *Hidaklon* or Folk Medicine in five volumes namely *Kanglei sanglen puba puya*, *Shingligi maram* (treatment through reflexology system of veins), *Laimuron*, *Taorinai yangbi* and *Thepalon*². This system of folk medicine has a unique set of principles and guidelines. In olden days during the reigns of Meetei kings, indigenous traditional healers were compartmentalized into two which were led by *Maiba Ahal* who is the head of the *Maibas* (male healers) and *Maibi Ahalbi* who is the head of the *Maibis*^{2,6} (female healers). Most of the indigenous traditional medicinal plants were conserved *in-situ* in *Umang Lai* that is sacred groves and *ex-situ* in the home gardens of indigenous traditional *Maiba-Maibi healers*⁴. Many valuable sources of Meetei indigenous healing health care practices were lost forever because of the burning down of the *Puyas*. It is reported that there were six *Puyas* (Holy Scriptures of Meetei) on Health and Hygiene^{2,6}. Though, the written documents on health care practices were lost most people in Manipur are still consulting local *Maibas* and *Maibis* (Traditional indigenous healers) for their health and well-beings and take resort to locally available traditional indigenous medicinal plants, minerals, honey, seed, bark, animal parts, birds etc., as prescribed by the local healers².

Methodology

The fieldwork of the study was during October-January, 2013-2014. The study was undertaken among the *Meetei Maibas* through a qualitative research design. *Meeteis* are considered to be one of the indigenous communities of Manipur state, North Eastern Region of India. They have their own traditional knowledge of health care practices and the system of their health care practices and treatments are locally known as *Maiba Laiyeng Pathap* or in the case of the combination of both *Maiba* and *Maibi* systems, it is known as *Maiba-Maibi Layeng Pathap*. It is a local system of health care treatments mainly provided by Meetei Male and female healers who are locally known as *Maiba* and *Maibi* respectively in Manipur.

The study was conducted in Nongpok sekmai, Sikhong, and Heirok in Thoubal district, Manipur. The respondents of the study were 9 *Maibas*. These knowledgeable healers practice a variety of traditional methods and techniques for healing different human ailments and sufferings. These healers were personally contacted and also through three key informants. For documenting the knowledge and health care practices of the *Maibas*, a good quality camera was used during the fieldwork. As a part of the ethical considerations keeping in mind, a proper informed oral consent from all the healers was taken for the

in-depth interview. For taking photographs and recording, written consent was taken. The researcher visited to each of the healer's residence. Direct Observation, face to face in-depth interview in *Meeteilon* language was conducted for each of the healers about their traditional health care knowledge and practices including diseases treating, medicinal uses, methods of preparation and application etc. It was also observed that each of the *Maiba* healers handled his patient with love and care and there were no fixed fees for the patients. However, it was observed that the patient gave 100-300 in the form of cash in kind to the healers for their healing. Every medicinal plant was identified along with the concerned healers. The medicinal plants' photographs were taken at different locations of the three villages at different points of time. They were identified initially in local language i.e. *Meeteilon* along with their medicinal values of diseases treatments and methods of application. However, their English and Scientific names were adopted from the Herbal Medicine of Manipur: A Colour Encyclopaedia⁷. Healing testimonies were also taken from the *Maiba* healers' patients who were already in the process of healing from different diseases and ailments. The common observation of treatment of diseases and ailments were congestion of lungs due to a cough, diarrhea, dysentery, chronic fever, cough and cold, boils, stone case, poisonous bites, ringworm, skin diseases. Irregular menstruation, stomach pain and disorder, jaundice, migraine, burning sensation, sore throat, urinary complaints, tonsillitis, high blood pressure, joint/sprain, back pain, body ache, stomach ulcer, constipation, cut and wound, dog bite, snake bite, worm infection. Important data on diseases and human ailments, local name, the method of preparation and application and challenges of present threats to the resourceful healers and medicinal plants and their traditional knowledge were documented.

Table-1: List of Medicinal Plants utilized in the Traditional Maiba Layeng Pathap of Manipur, North Eastern Region of India

Local Name	English Name	Scientific Name	Kind of plants/Parts used	Method	Diseases/Ailments Treatments
<i>Ganja</i>	True hemp	<i>Cannabis sativa</i> Linn.	Herb	Leaves & Flowers	Decoction of leaves and flowers given for healing diarrhea and dysentery.
<i>Hameng Sampakpi</i>	Cockle bur	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i> Linn.	Herb	Leaves	Decoction leaves given for healing fever and cough.
<i>Heibung</i>	-	<i>Garcinia anomala</i> Planch	Tree	Fruit	Crushed fruits used for dysentery, bone healing ointment, and bone softening.
<i>Heikreng</i>	Hackberry/nettle tree	<i>Celtis australis</i> Linn.	Tree	Leaves	Decoction given for complaining stone cases.
<i>Hongngoo</i>	Giant taro	<i>Alocasia macrorrhiza</i> (L) schott.	Herb	Root	Root juice Given for healing poisonous bites and quick wound healing.
<i>Kanghu</i>	Greater galangal	<i>Alpinia galangal</i> Wild	Herb	Rhizome	Fresh rhizome given for healing ringworm and skin diseases.

<i>Kaphoi</i>	Pomegranate	<i>Punica granatum</i> Linn.	Tree	Leaves	Leaves fried with egg given for healing dysentery.
<i>KhujoomPere</i>	-	<i>Achyranthus aspera</i> Linn.	Herb	Leaves	Leaves extract is given for healing the irregular menstruation cycles.
<i>Laibakngou</i>	Indian worm wood fleavane	<i>Artemisia nilagirica</i> (C.B.C.) Pamp	Shrub	Leaves	Leaves extract given for healing stomach pain
<i>Lam heibi</i>	-	<i>Canthium gracilipes</i> kurz.	Shrub	Leaves	Decoction of leaves given for healing jaundice.
<i>Lam Modolei</i>	Poison bulb	<i>Crinum asiaticum</i> Linn.	Herb	Bulb	The extracted bulb pasted on the head for healing Migraine.
<i>Lam thabi</i>	-	<i>Melothria purpusilla</i> (B) Cogn.	Climber	Whole plant and fruits	Decoction of whole plant given for healing jaundice.
<i>Langthrei</i>	Ngai camphor	<i>Blumea Balsamifera</i>	Shrub	Leaves	Leaves juice given for quick healing of burning sensation.

<i>Leipoong</i>	Yellow	<i>Solanum</i>	Herb	Berries	Juice berries with honey given for healing
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<i>Khangga</i>	berried night shade	surattense Burm.f.			sore throat and cough.
<i>Loiyoomba Lei</i>	-	Crataeva nurvalaBHa m	Tree	Leaves	Leaves juice given for healing stomach disorder and Urinary complaints.
<i>Lomba</i>	Bengal sage	Meriandra benghalensis Benth	Herb	Leaves & flowers	Decoction of leaves & Flowers given for healing tonsillitis.
<i>Maroi napakpi</i>	-	Allium hookerii Thw.	Herb	Whole plant	Decoction of whole plant juice is given to reduce high blood

<i>Mayaang Lemboom</i>	-	Leucas aspera Spreng	Herb	Leaves and Flowers	Leaves & Flowers juice with honey is given for healing chronic fever, cough, and cold.
<i>Mayangton</i>	Hoary basil	Ocimum canum Sims	Herb	Leaves	Fresh leaves juice is given for healing fever, cough, and, urinary itching.
<i>Mukthroobi tingkhang panbi</i>	-	Zanthoxylum acanthopodium D.C.	Shrub	Leaves	Decoction juice given for healing chronic fever and cough.
<i>Ningthou Khongli</i>	Gulanc Ha	Tinospora cordifolia Willd	Climber	Whole plant	Whole plant Juice given for healing diarrhoea and dysentery in human as well as animals such as cow.
<i>Nongleisang</i>	-	Zylosma longifolium Clos.	Tree	Leaves	Leaves are boiled and the Vaporization used for healing joint/sprain, Back pain, body pain, also used the warm boiled water in bath.
<i>Nongmang kha asinba</i>	-	Phlogacanthus curviflorus Nees	Shrub	Leaves	Decoction juice given for healing cough, fever, and general body weakness
<i>Nongmang Kha</i>	-	Phlogacanthus thysiflorus Nees	Herb	Leaves	Decoction juice given for healing fever and cold.
<i>Noongai Peruk</i>	-	Potentilla anserine (L)	Herb	Whole plant	Decoction of whole plant is given for healing the diarrhoea.

<i>Nungshihidak</i>	Garden mint	Mentha spicata Linn.	Herb	Leaves	Fresh leaves juice with honey given for healing cold and cough.
<i>Okhidak</i>	Sweet flag	Acorus calamus Linn.	Herb	Rhizome	Rhizome extract given for healing children fever, cough, snakebite, and piles.
<i>Peruk</i>	Indian Penny wort	Centella asiatica (L) Urban	Herb	Whole plant	Fresh plant juice given for healing stomach ulcer and urinary troubles.
<i>Pungdol</i>	Guava	Psidium guajava Linn.	Tree	Leaves	Fresh leaves with salt are given for healing dysentery.
<i>Sembang Kaothum</i>	-	Cyperus rotundus Linn	Herb	Rhizome	Rhizome juice with honey is Given for healing stomach Disorders& fever.
<i>Sougri</i>	Bimlip atam Jute	Hibiscus cannabinus (L)	Shrub	Leaves	Leaves decoction is given for healing constipation &cough.
<i>Tekhaoyaikhu</i>	Wild turmeric	Curcuma aromatic Salisb	Herb	Rhizome	Rhizome extract is given for healing snakebite.
<i>Tera paibi</i>	-	Gynura cusimba (D.D.) Moore	Herb	Stem and leave	Stem and Leave juice apply to stop bleeding & quick healing.
<i>Torbot</i>	Ash gourd	Benincasa hispida (Th) Cogn.	Climber	Fruit	Boiled extract of fruit is given in healing of stomach Ulcers.
<i>Tulsi amuba</i>	Hoary basil	Ocimum americanum Linn.	Herb	Leave	Leave juice with honey is given in for healing fever and cough.
<i>Tulsi</i>	Sacred basil	Ocimum sanctum Linn.	Herb	Leave	Leave juice with honey is given for healing fever and cough.
<i>Watang</i>	-	Bambusa nutans wall.	Bamboo	Shoot	Young shoot is given for healing dog-bite/snake bite
<i>Yempat</i>	-	Plantago asiatica (L).	Herb	Leave	Fresh leave after warming in fire pasted on the area of boils to extract the pus and healing.
<i>Yenakhat</i>	-	Scutellaria discolor Colebr.	Herb	Whole plant	Whole plant is used as antidote to snake-bite & poisonous insects.
<i>Yengthou</i>	Great reed	Arundo donax Linn.	Reed	Shoot	Given Fresh shoot with honey to children for healing worm Infection.

Results and Discussion

The Herbalist *Maibas* were the sources of these 43 varieties of economical and useful medicinal plants. Some of the Medicinal Plants were grown in their pool, home garden and some of them were collected from the river side, paddy fields, nearby hills. They were found to be useful for treating different diseases and ailments as shown in the Table-1. Some of the Medicinal plants were seasonal and they were harvested during their seasonal time and used in times of the need. Herbalist *Maibas* also instructed the patients how to prepare the medicine at home. The traditional *Maiba* healers involved in the study were 9 in the three villages in the age groups of 54-55, 57-65, 70-83, and most of the healers had attended the qualification of class 2-5th and 5th to 10+2.

Classification of Traditional *Maibas* according to their Skills set.

In the present study, a mixed skills set of *Maibas* along with Herbalist *Maiba* healers were found who provide the indigenous *Maiba Layeng Pathap* or indigenous *Maiba* health care system of treatments in Manipur. In the first skills set *Maibas* were the Herbalist *Maiba* (HM), Herbalist Reflexologist *Maiba* (HRM), Herbalist Sprain Setter *Maiba* (HSSM), Bone Sprain Setter Herbalist *Maiba* (BSSHM), and followed by having only the traditional knowledge and practices of Herbalist *Maiba*. These *Maiba* healers provide different aspects of health care treatments besides the herbal medicine. These healers are not licensed healers and thus come under the purview of indigenous folk healers who are locally known as *Maibas*. Their system of health care treatments is uncodified system.

Their Methods of Healing Practices

The study found that most of the *Maiba* healers used composite traditional knowledge and practices. For example in the case of

- (i) Herbalist *Maiba* (HM), the healer used *mana mashing* or herbals in their health care treatments methods for different ailments.
- (ii) Herbalist Reflexologist *Maiba* (HRM), the healer used *mana mashing* or herbals and body massage with oil. The *Maiba* fingers softly first massage on the navel area with a firm belief that it is the main center of human soul lies. Then, he would go on massage from navel to-belly-abdomen areas of the body for healing. This system of healing practices was also found by Ningombam et al., 2014 in their study².
- (iii) Herbalist Sprain Setter *Maiba* (HSSM), the healer used herbals and applied his traditional knowledge and practices for healing sprain injuries, sprain twisted etc.
- (iv) Bone Sprain Setter Herbalist *Maiba* (BSSHM), this *Maiba* healer used to heal both sprain injuries, twisted, and also bone injuries, fractures and applied the traditional knowledge system and modern medicine as well as modern technology. The osteopath *Maiba* used X-Rays in their system of bone setting and thus this development of osteopathy is a sign of modernization in *Maiba Laiyeng Pathap* in Manipur.

Encountered with Evidence based Traditional Medicinal Healing Practices

During the fieldwork, the researcher had encountered that one of the *Maibas* (iii) was sick and had painful neck problem that needed taking X-Ray and also surgical procedures according to the Primary Health Centre doctor's advice as the concerned pain was related to collar bone injury due to fall down from the roof of straw stall meant for fodder. He could not walk properly or move himself without the support of another person. It was very painful to see the health conditions of the *Maiba*. His voice was shrinking and told his wife to collect some leaves of *Nongleisang* (*Zylosmalongifolium* Clos.).

The collected leaves were washed in the water. Then, the leaves were put in a silver metal pot with water to its neck. It was tightly covered with the banana leaves on it by *paya*, an indigenous fastening technology product made of young bamboo. Then, it was put on *Meiphu*, an indigenous technology product made of the sheets of iron use to protect from cold in winter. Two-three small holes were made on the banana leaves covering the silver metal pot. Two *phibul*, towels were also ready and put on the top of the banana leaves holes of the silver pot. The hot steams gave pressure to the *phibul* and they were alternately exchanged by putting gently on the painful neck area. The *Maiba* after getting some relief started talking to me.

Maiba: I am afraid of operation, *ibung-ngo*, which means son in *Meeteilon* language and I also don't have much money for the treatments.

Me: How do you feel now, *pabung*, father in *Meeteilon* language?

Maiba: I got some relief.

Me: *Pabung*, how did you get this knowledge and practices about medicinal plants?

Maiba: I learnt from my father who was also a *Maiba*. *Ibung-ngo*, now-a-days, nobody even my family members do not want to learn and practice our traditional *Maiba Laiyeng Pathap* or Traditional local health care treatments. Son, we are now old I have also forgotten many of the useful and valuable medicinal plants and it is very hard to find Medicinal plants now-a-days. I can't carry the knowledge and practices in my grave. I am very happy that you come to document them.

Challenges to the traditional Medicinal Knowledge

The interview cum conversation with the *Herbalist Maibas* show that most of the indigenous medicinal plants' knowledge are forgotten owing to the aging of the healers, and also the changing pattern of the diseases that they are no longer practice by the younger generation as most of them prefer to other professional occupations like modern doctor, MBA, teacher etc. Since, no one even from their family members do not intend to practice the *Maiba Laiyeng Pathap* despite having its pivotal role in healing different diseases and illness, the system of *Maiba Layeng Pathap* or the traditional health care practices and treatments with the knowledge of medicinal plants, animals, minerals etc., is on the verge of extinction day by day. Most of the Medicinal Plants in Manipur are grown in the locality areas, scarcely in the home garden, ponds, forests, nearby hills, paddy fields, river side's, sacred groves etc. It was also observed during the fieldwork that the association like *Apunba Manipur Maiba-Maibi Phurup*, an association of *Maiba-Maibi Herbalists led under the leadership of Pabung Tombi Raj, President of Apunba Manipur Maiba-Maibi Phurup (AMMMP)*, should be strengthened at any cost by the state government for continuity of this local system of health care treatments as 90% of Manipuri preferred Manipur *Maiba-Maibi Layeng Pathap* for certain diseases and illness such as jaundice, sprain injuries, bone injuries, bone fractures².

Frequently used Medicinal Plants:

Heibung (*Garcinia anomala* Planch) is used frequently after preparing as an ointment with local *yu machin*, local wine made from rice in osteopathy treatments and in softening the fractures bone for healing. *Heikreng* (*Hackberry/nettle tree*) is daily used by person having stone in kidney and gall bladder in the form decoction. *Lamthabi* (*Melothria purpusilla* (B) Cogn.) is used 1-2 months in the form of decoction for healing jaundice. *Langthrei* (*Ngai Camphor*) is used once for healing burning sensation of stomach. *Leipoong Khangga* (*Yellow berried night shade*) is used until the sore throat and cough are healed at least a week. *Nongmangkha* (*Phlogacanthus thysiflorus* Nees) is used daily for a week for healing cough and fever.

Medicinal Plants used as Daily Food Consumption:

As the saying says, 'health is wealth', and also 'food for thought', food plays an integral part of healthy life. Medicinal plants foods serve for a healthy life. The following Medicinal plants were used as foods in the community.

Chanam is used in cooking, eat as raw. *Heibi/Lam Heibi* leaves are used as *shingju mayan*. special local leaves used for a special salad along with varieties of leaves. *Heibung* is used as a fruit. *Leipoongkhanggais* used as a chatney. *Lomba* is an aromatic medicinal plant used as spicy in *Eromba*, A kind of local chatney. *Maroi napakpi* is used in cooking as a spicy and also eat raw. *Mayangton* is also an aromatic spicy used in cooking and in different cuisines as spicy. *Mukthroobi tingkhan panbia* spicy is used in meat cooking, snail cooking, as fresh in the cooked meat, in the chatney etc. *Nongmangkha* is used in the chatney and as an item of fried with sugar. *Nungshihidak* fresh leaves eat with fresh mango, chatney, in the fried items etc. *Peruk* fresh leaves eats as shingju, the boiled whole plants are consumed as chatney etc. *Sougri* leaves are cooked with varieties of dried fishes as a cuisine. *Torbot* is used as a cuisine. *Yennakhat* leaves are boiled and eat as a chatney. *Yongchak* is an economical tree bean. Fresh yongchak eat as shingju, eromba, fried and in different cuisines.

Conclusion

As reported in the literatures, the traditional medicine is very much practiced in the community, having their own traditional healers who have immense knowledge of the medicinal plants and also have belief system in religious healing. It is high time that the states recognizes the importance of the traditional knowledge and also promote and documents this knowledge. The scientific and local names of the medicinal plants and animals names should be documented, which are in the knowledge and custody of these healers. The younger generation should be given incentives to learn this knowledge and also recognize the fact that many primary level care for the communities are taken care by these healers, with low cost health care, especially for those communities which are in remote areas, poor and marginalized. Not to be misunderstood that the traditional medicine should be the only recourse for the poor and the marginalized and the rich can seek biomedical treatment. As world

over 80% of people are seeking traditional healing systems also called as Complementary and Alternative Medicine CAM, for ages, the efficacy is well established. However, it is to be recognized and promoted before it is too late and we lose the vast knowledge. The role of traditional medicine which is accessible, affordable and available at least for primary level care and for many of the chronic disease, is valuable and thus to be preserved and promoted. The state should make efforts to stop bio-piracy, and minimize anthropogenic activities, which can harm the culture, heritage and the environment and the ecosystem for commercial use. As the modern science is advancing, these medicinal plants should properly be well studied, and establish research and development for discovering therapeutic agents for healing various types of ailments that the human society is facing today. Thus, the future prospects of extracting therapeutic phytochemical curing agents would definitely be available from this resourceful *Maiba LayengPathap* of Manipur.

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