

## Economic Aspect of Some Medicinal Plants Available in Nowgong District of Assam, India

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The North Eastern Region of India comprises of five states, viz., Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, and Nagaland, and two Union Territories, viz., Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh, abounds in natural resources including immense potential for medicinal plants (Tiwari et al. 1978). Assam is specially renowned for her herbal treasure and has been prominent for saints, tantriks, mantriks, and persons practising witchcraft from time immemorial. Nature has garlanded her with greens (Bhattacharjee et al. 1977). The district of Nowgong which is situated on the south bank of the mighty Brahmaputra occupies a central geographical position in Assam. (The district lies between 25°45' and 26°49' North latitudes and 91°50' and 93°20' East longitudes.)

During the Ahom period the system of indigenous medicine and treatment of diseases was extensively prevalent in this state. The treatises on diseases and indigenous medicines were known as Nidan Sastras. It was also seen that people resorted to divination for prognosis and cure of diseases. Incantations and mantras were also practised as specifics. The mantras are interesting and important as documents of social history, folk beliefs, and superstitions (*Gazetteer of India* 1979). Incantation of mantras is still employed in rural areas of the district, particularly for curing of snake bites. Mayong, a place in the North West of the district, was very famous as the land of charms, incantations, and mantras and the district took pride in a good number of folklore medicines mostly used by the local people (mostly villagers, Ojhas, Bez, local Kaviraj) for curing their ailments and encountering the problem of birth control etc. (Bhattacharjee et al. 1980; Majumder et al. 1978; Tiwari et al. 1979; Gogoi et al. 1979; Boissya and Majumder 1980 and n.d.).

Authors while they were on ethnobotanical study tours to this district took note of certain useful plants from the Ayurvedic as well as other economic points of view. The present paper is the continuation of their past efforts (Boissya et al. 1981).

For plentiful rainfall there is absence of dry hot summer in the district of Nowgong and the climate is characterised by a highly humid atmosphere throughout the year. July is the rainiest month of the year. Rainfall mostly occurs as thunder showers in the pre-monsoon months of April and May and in October. The thunder storms during March to May are sometimes accompanied by hail. Fog appears during post-monsoon period and in the winter season and it is frequent in December. January is the coldest month. Winds are generally light throughout the year. The atmosphere over the district is highly humid throughout the year.

Average meteorological data of the district in which the ranges are located are being indicated below (1972-1976).