



ISSN: 2278-2648

International Journal of Research in Pharmacology & Pharmacotherapeutics (IJRPP)

IJRPP | Vol.13 | Issue 4 | Oct - Dec -2024

www.ijrpp.com

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.61096/ijrpp.v13.iss4.2024.390-396>

Research

Anti Depressant Activity Centella Asiatica

P. Anjali*, Dr. D. Swathi, K. Radhika, T. Vijayalaxmi, Dr. K. Shravankumar

Department Of Pharmacology, Samskruti College Of Pharmacy, Ghatkesar, Telangana. 501301.

*Author for Correspondence: P. Anjali

Email: anajalipetwal143@gmail.com

| | |
|---|--|
|  | Abstract |
| Published on: 17 Oct 2024 | <p>Centella asiatica Belongs to the family Apiaceae. Depressions are widespread psychiatric disorders affecting around 5% of the population. Furthermore, it is difficult to predict which patient will respond to any given treatment. In the traditional systems of medicine, many plants have been used to treat anxiety and depression for thousands of years. The present study was designed to evaluate the antidepressant activity of the alcoholic and aqueous extracts of Centella asiatica leaves in rodents. The antidepressant activity was tested by using forced swim test and Open Field Test. The results infer that reduced immobility time elicits antidepressant activity. It was concluded that alcoholic and aqueous extracts of Centella asiatica leaves having antidepressant activity. Alcoholic extract of Centella asiatica leaves showing more significant activity over the aqueous extract.</p> |
| Published by: DrSriram Publications | |
| 2024 All rights reserved. | |
|  | <p>Keywords: Centella asiatica, Antidepressant activity, forced swim test, Open Field Test.</p> |
| <p>Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.</p> | |

INTRODUCTION

Medicinal plants are various plants thought by some to have medicinal properties, but few plants or their phytochemical constituents have been proven by rigorous science or approved by regulatory agencies such as the United States Food and Drug Administration or European Food Safety Authority to have medicinal effects. World Health Organization (WHO) has provided a definition of medicinal plants, that is “A medicinal plant is any plant which, in one or more of its organs, contains substances that can be used for therapeutic purposes or which are precursors for synthesis of useful drugs.”¹

World Health Organization (WHO) reported that 80% of the world’s population depends on medicinal plants for their primary health care. In the Plant Kingdom, Medicinal plants form the largest single grouping of plants. It is estimated that 30,000 species worldwide fall in this group, of which around 33% are trees² Plants are known to be the source of many chemical compounds. Medicinal plants were used by people of ancient cultures without knowledge of their active ingredients. The common practice of taking crude extract orally is laden with hazards as the extracts may contain some toxic constituents. There is an ever increasing need to limit toxic clinical drugs. In modern times, the active ingredients and curative actions of medicinal plants were first investigated through the use of European Scientific methods³. The most important ingredients present in plant communities turn out to be alkaloids, terpenoids, sterioids, phenols glycosides and tannins².

The information obtained from extracts of medicinal plants makes pharmacological studies possible. The mode of action of plants producing therapeutic effects can also be better investigated if the active ingredients are characterized. Infectious diseases are the leading cause of death worldwide. The clinical efficiency of many existing antibiotics is being threatened by the emergence of multidrug resistant pathogens. Bacterial pathogens have evolved numerous defense mechanisms against antimicrobial agents and resistance to old and newly produced drug is on the rise. The increasing failure of chemotherapeutics and antibiotic resistance exhibited by pathogenic microbial infectious agents has led to the screening of several medicinal plants for their potential antimicrobial activity⁴.

There are several reports in the literature regarding the antimicrobial activity of crude extracts prepared from plants⁵. Plants produce a diverse range of bioactive molecules making them a rich source of different types of medicines. Higher plants as sources of medicinal compounds have continued to play a dominant role in the maintenance of human health care since ancient times. Over 50% of all modern clinical drugs are of natural product origin and natural products play a vital role in modern drug development in the pharmaceutical industry⁶.

Major depressive disorder

Clinical guidelines

The UK National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 2009 guidelines indicate that antidepressants should not be routinely used for the initial treatment of mild depression, because the risk-benefit ratio is poor. The guidelines recommend that antidepressant treatment should be considered for:

- People with a history of moderate or severe depression,
- Those with mild depression that has been present for a long period,
- As a second-line treatment for mild depression that persists after other interventions,
- As a first-line treatment for moderate or severe depression.

The guidelines further note that antidepressant treatment should be used in combination with psychosocial interventions in most cases, should be continued for at least 6 months to reduce the risk of relapse, and that SSRIs are typically better tolerated than other antidepressants.

American Psychiatric Association treatment guidelines recommend that initial treatment should be individually tailored based on factors that include severity of symptoms, co-existing disorders, prior treatment experience, and patient preference. Options may include pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) or light therapy. Antidepressant medication is recommended as an initial treatment choice in people with mild, moderate, or severe major depression, and should be given to all patients with severe depression unless ECT is planned.

Systematic reviews

Conflicting results have arisen from studies analyzing the efficacy of antidepressants by comparisons to placebo in people with acute mild to moderate depression. Stronger evidence supports the usefulness of antidepressants in the treatment of depression that is chronic (dysthymia) or severe.

Researchers Irving Kirsch and Thomas Moore have contested the pharmacological activity of antidepressants in the relief of depression, and state that the evidence is most consistent a role as active placebos. Their study consisted of a meta analysis incorporating data from both published studies and unpublished data obtained from the FDA via a Freedom of Information Act request. Overall, antidepressant pills worked 18% better than placebos, a statistically significant difference, but not one that is clinically significant. In a later publication, Kirsch concluded that the overall effect of new-generation antidepressant medication is below recommended criteria for clinical significance.

Another study focusing on paroxetine (Paxil) and imipramine found that antidepressant drugs were only slightly better than placebo in cases of mild or moderate depression they surveyed but offered "substantial" benefit in those with severe depression.

Main articles: Serotonin syndrome and MAOIs

Almost any medication involved with serotonin regulation has the potential to cause serotonin toxicity (also known as serotonin syndrome) – an excess of serotonin that can induce mania, restlessness, agitation, emotional lability, insomnia and confusion as its primary symptoms. Although the condition is serious, it is not particularly common, generally only appearing at high doses or while on other medications. Assuming proper medical intervention has been taken (within about 24 hours) it is rarely fatal. MAOIs tend to have pronounced (sometimes fatal) interactions with a wide variety of medications and over-the-counter drugs. If taken with foods that contain very high levels of tyramine (e.g., mature cheese, cured meats, or yeast extracts), they may cause a potentially lethal hypertensive crisis. At lower doses the person may be bothered by only a headache due to an increase in blood pressure. In response to these adverse effects, a different type of MAOI has been developed: the reversible inhibitor of monoamine oxidase A (RIMA) class of drugs. Their primary advantage is that they do not require the

person to follow a special diet, while being purportedly effective as SSRIs and tricyclics in treating depressive disorders.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The designing of methodology involves a series of steps taken in a systematic way in order to achieve the set goal(s) under the prescribed guidelines and recommendations. It includes in it all the steps from field trip to the observation including selection and collection of the medicinal plant, selection of dose value, standardization of protocol, usage of instruments, preparation of reagents, selection of specific solvents for extraction, formation of protocols and final execution of the standardized protocol. All this requires good build of mind and a good and soft technical hand to handle the materials and procedure in a true scientific manner.

Drugs and Chemicals

Drugs and Chemicals used in this study were of analytical grade and of highest purity procured from standard commercial sources in India.

Table 1: Drugs and Chemicals

| S.No | Materials | Company Name |
|------|-----------|----------------------|
| 1. | Diazepam | Nicholos Piramal Ltd |

Experimental animals

Wistar rats (150-200 g) and Swiss albino mice (18-22g) of either sex selected for the study. Animals were housed in appropriate cages in uniform hygienic conditions and fed with standard pellet diet (Amrul Laboratory Animal Diet) and water ad libitum. All the animals were maintained under standard conditions, that is room temperature $26 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$, relative humidity 45 - 55% and 12:12 h light – dark cycle. Animal studies had approval of IAEC.

Plant Material Collection

The fresh leaves of *Centella asiatica* was collected from local market. The plant material was cleaned, reduced to small fragments, air dried under shade at room temperature and coarsely powdered in a mixer. The powdered material was stored or taken up for extraction process.

Preparation of plant extracts

Preparation of Aqueous Extract

Fresh leaves of *Centella asiatica* were collected and washed under tap water. The leaves extract used was prepared by taking 20gms of finely cut leaves into 250ml beaker containing 200ml of water. The contents were mixed well and then the mixture was boiled up to $80-100^\circ\text{C}$ for 4-5hrs. Further the extract was filtered with whatmann filter paper. The filtrate was boiled until the concentrated residue is formed. The concentrated product was sealed in sample covers and stored under room temperature and used for further experiment to check the activities.

Preparation of Alcoholic Extract

Fresh leaves of *Centella asiatica* leaf were collected and washed under tap water. The leaves extract used was prepared by taking 20gms of finely cut leaves into 250ml beaker containing 200ml of alcohol. The contents were mixed well and then the mixture was boiled up to $50-60^\circ\text{C}$ for 4-5hrs. Further the extract was filtered with whatmann filter paper. The filtrate was boiled until the concentrated residue is formed. The concentrated product was sealed in sample covers and stored under room temperature and used for further experiment to check the activities.

Selection of dose for animal study

The dose considered for the experiment on rats was obtained from conversion of human dose of *Centella asiatica* (3-5 g/kg). The conversion factor of human dose (per 200 g body weight) is 0.018 for rats and 0.002 for mice (Ghosh 1984). Hence the calculated dose for the rats (considering human dose 3 and 5 g/kg) is 200 mg/kg and for mice is 20 mg/kg. Acute toxicity was done at dose of 2000mg/kg body weight.

Pharmacological evaluation

Preparation of extracts

The aqueous and alcoholic extracts of *Centella asiatica* suspended in water in presence of 3%v/v Tween-80 solution.

All the drugs were administered orally for experimental purpose. Each time preparations of the extracts were prepared when required. The drugs were administered at a constant volume of 10ml/kg for each animal.

Acute Oral Toxicity

The acute oral toxicity of aqueous and alcoholic extracts of *Centella asiatica* was determined by using rats and mice which were maintained under standard conditions. The animals were fasted 12 hour prior to the experiment, up and down procedure OECD guideline no. 425 were adopted for toxicity studies. Animals were administered with single dose of individual extract up to 2000mg/kg and observed for its mortality during 2days and 7days study period (short term) toxicity and observed up to 7days for their mortality, behavioral and neurological profiles.

Screening For Antidepressant Activity

The aqueous and alcoholic extracts of *Centella asiatica* leaves were tested for antidepressant activity using despair swim test and tail suspension test.

Treatment

Animals were divided into four (I-IV) groups.

Group I - Control group received distilled water (1ml, p.o).

Group II - Standard group received Diazepam (10mg/kg i.p).

Group III - Test group received aqueous extract of *Centella asiatica* (200mg/kg p.o).

Group IV - Test group received alcoholic extract of *Centella asiatica* (200mg/kg p.o).

Procedure for Antidepressant Activity

Despair Swim Test Apparatus

For the determination of antidepressant activity, forced swim test (FST) protocol was employed. During the test, animals were individually placed in a glass cylinder (20 cm in height, 14 cm in diameter) filled with water up to a height of 10cm, at $25 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$. All animals were forced to swim for 5 min and the duration of immobility was observed and measured during the 5 min interval of the test. Immobility period was regarded as the time spent by the rats to float in water with no struggle and making only those movements necessary to keep its head above the water. In order to check the fitness level of each test animal, a pre-test was carried out 24 h before the FST by subjecting each test animal to a session of 15 min swimming.

Tail suspension test

Tail suspension test was performed based on the method prescribed. The mice were suspended 58cm above the floor by means of an adhesive tape, placed approximately 1cm from the tip of the tail. The total duration of immobility was quantified during a test period of 5min. Mice were considered immobile when they were completely remain motionless.

Open field test (OFT)

This test was carried out on mice's to evaluate the effects of investigational drug on mobility of animal. Open field equipment was made of plywood which is white in colour and measured 72 by 72 and wall is 36cm long In this test mice's were treated individually with DMSO, standard drug Diazepam (10mg/kg) and testing drugs alcoholic extracts of *Centella asiatica* (200/ml). Then placed them independently in the middle of the open field for 5 minutes to count Total Locomotion (TL) i.e. the total number of square crossed both outer and inner ones, Peripheral Locomotion (PL), and Central Locomotion (CL) respectively. The other factors, which were also evaluated, are number of rearing, leaning, grooming and defecation.

Statistical analysis

The values were expressed as mean \pm SEM data was analyzed using one-way ANOVA followed by T-test. Two sets of comparison had made. i.e. Normal control Vs All treated groups. Differences between groups were considered significant at $P < 0.001$ and $P < 0.05$ levels.

RESULTS

Antidepressant Activity Of *Centella Asiatica*

Forced Swim Test

Antidepressant activity of aqueous and alcohol solvent soluble fraction of the leaves of *Centella asiatica* studied at a dose of 200 mg/Kg, using Forced Swim Test experiment.

The anti-depressant activity of AQECA and ALECA was assessed using Forced Swimming Test in Swiss albino rats were illustrated in Table No: ---. It was observed that AQECA and ALECA at a dose of 200mg/kg

exhibited significant reduction in immobility time when compared to control in dose dependent manner. Similarly the animals treated with diazepam (10mg/kg) as expected showed significant decrease in immobility time.

Table 2: Effect of extracts of *Centella asiatica* on Anti-depressant activity

| S.No | Group | Dose(i.p; mg/kg) | Immobility period | | % change in activity |
|------|----------|------------------|-------------------|-------|----------------------|
| | | | Before | After | |
| 1 | Control | 5ml/kg | 132 | -- | --- |
| 2 | Diazepam | 10mg/kg | 181 | 67 | 64.15% |
| 3 | AQECA | 200mg/kg | 179 | 66 | 61.91% |
| 4 | ALECA | 200mg/kg | 302 | 194 | 37.62% |

The results are expressed as means ± S.E.M Differences in mean values between groups were analyzed by a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Statistical significance was assessed as $p < 0.05$.

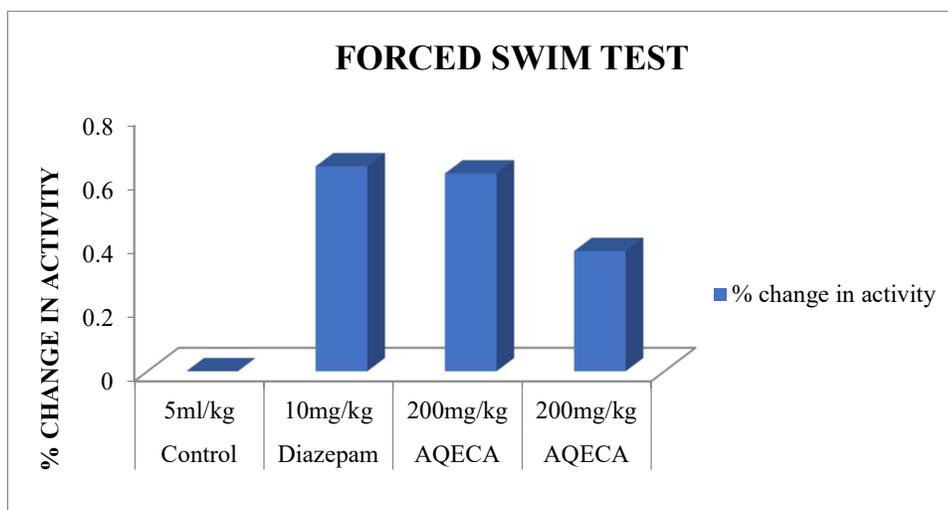


Fig 1: Effect of extracts of *Centella asiatica* on Anti-depressant activity

Open Field Test

Antidepressant activity of aqueous and alcohol solvent soluble fraction of the leaves of *Centella asiatica* studied at a dose of 200 mg/Kg, using Forced Swim Test experiment. In tail suspension test, the alcoholic and aqueous extracts of leaves of *Centella asiatica* at a dose of 200 mg/kg i.p. significantly decreased the immobility time. The magnitude of the antidepressant effects of 200 mg/kg i.p. of alcoholic and aqueous leaves of *Centella asiatica* was comparable to that of Diazepam 10 mg/kg i.p. (Table 3).

Table 3: Effect of Ethanolic and Aqueous Extracts of *Centella asiatica* Leaves on Open Field TEST in Mice at Different Time Intervals

| S.No | Treatment | Dose (mg/kg) | Duration of immobility | | % Change in activity |
|------|-----------|--------------|------------------------|-------|----------------------|
| | | | Before | After | |
| 1. | Control | --- | 40 | ----- | ----- |
| 2. | Standard | 10 | 26 | 121 | 86.89% |
| 3. | AQECA | 200 | 46 | 183 | 76.36% |
| 4. | AQECA | 200 | 61 | 167 | 63.42% |

Table 4: Effects of *Centella asiatica* on duration of immobility time in open field test (OFT)

| Treatments | Dose (mg/kg) | TL | CL | PL | L | G | D |
|------------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Control | --- | 141.2±1.01 | 31.0±1.50 | 114.9±9.25 | 8.2±9 | 1.6±3.54 | 0.43±2.00 |
| Diazepam | 10 | 154.4±2.24 | 38.1±2.15 | 118.6±3.24 | 9.3±3.62 | 0.39±2.10 | 0.0±0.0 |
| AQECA | 200 | 123.5±2.98 | 26.1±0.13 | 95.3±8.50 | 11.6±0.34 | 1.42±5.24 | 0.0±0.0 |
| AQECA | 200 | 134.0±1.56 | 29.3±2.25 | 27.2±6.14 | 11.2±2.50 | 2.53±1.36 | 0.0±0.0 |

Values are expressed as Mean \pm S.E.M (n=10). *P <0.05, **P<0.01, ***P<0.001 when compared with control groups. TL: Total Locomotion, PL: Peripheral Locomotion, CL: Central Locomotion (CL), L: leaning, G: grooming, D: defecation.

For the open field test number of line crosses and the frequency of rearing are usually used as measures of locomotor activity, but are also measures of exploration and anxiety. A high frequency of these behaviors indicates increased locomotion and exploration and/or a lower level of anxiety. The number of central square entries and the duration of time spent in the central square are measures of exploratory behavior and anxiety. A high frequency/duration of these behaviors indicates high exploratory behavior and low anxiety levels.

DISCUSSIONS

Phytochemical Analysis

The phytoconstituents are known to play an important role in bioactivity of medicinal plants. In qualitative phytochemical analysis reveals the presence of alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, terpenoids and saponins have associated with various degree of anti-microbial, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, anti-oxidant and anti-termites. Therefore, the anti-diabetic, hypoglycemic, anti-depressant, anti-anxiety, skeletal muscle relaxant property, locomotor activity, anti-inflammatory, analgesic and diuretic activities were observed in this study may be due to the presence of chemical constituents in both aqueous and alcoholic extracts of *Centella asiatica*.

Behavioural Activities

Anti-Depressant Activity

Open Field Test

Open field behavioral model was used to study exploratory and locomotor activity in this investigation. Reported studies have shown that stress factors account for the decreases in mobility and functional responses against novel environment. The purpose of including this test was to assess the general activity of the animals after performing FST. The results observed in the open field test showed that i.p administration of aqueous and alcoholic extracts of *Centella asiatica* (200 mg/kg) did not significantly increase the locomotor activity in unstressed groups of rats as compared with their control groups. However, aqueous and alcoholic *Centella asiatica* administered rats following the exposure to repeated restraint stress showed significant (p<0.01) increases in locomotor / exploratory activity on an open field arena. It is therefore, suggested that the extract has the ability to reverse or normalize the locomotor suppressant behavior in laboratory animals and hence may help to cope with immobility factor associated with depression in humans. In the present study that administration of aqueous and alcoholic *Centella asiatica* at the dose of 200 mg/kg significantly altered the behavioral deficits induced by injections of atypical neuroleptic, haloperidol and increased brain serotonin metabolism in mice. The results are in general agreement with our previous studies in continuation to this plant and indicating its antidepressant-like activity in behavioral models of depression.

Forced Swim Test

Mood disorders are one of the most common mental illnesses, with a lifetime risk of 10% in general population. Prevalence of depression alone in general population is estimated to be around 5% with suicide being one of the most common outcomes. Commonly used Antidepressants often cause adverse effects, and difficulty in tolerating these drugs is the most common reason for discontinuing an effective medication, for example the side -effects of Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor (SSRIs) include: nausea, diarrhea, agitation, headaches. Sexual side-effects are also common with SSRI's. The Food and Drug Administration requires Black Box warnings on all SSRIs, which state that they double suicidal rates (from 2 in 1,000 to 4 in 1,000) in children and adolescents. Side effects of Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCA's) include drowsiness, anxiety, emotional blunting (apathy/anhedonia), confusion, restlessness, dizziness, akathisia, hypersensitivity, changes in appetite and weight, sweating, sexual dysfunction, muscle twitches, weakness, nausea and vomiting, hypotension, tachycardia, and rarely, irregular heart rhythms.

In the present study we have evaluated the antidepressant activity of *Centella asiatica* of both aqueous and alcoholic extracts in FST. The development of immobility when rodents are placed in an inescapable cylinder of water during FST reflects the cessation of their persistent escape-directed behavior. Conventional drugs reliably decrease the duration of immobility in animals during this test. This decrease in duration of immobility is considered to have a good predictive value in the evaluation of potential antidepressant agents. Exact mechanisms underlying the antidepressant action cannot be concluded at the moment due to the presence of large number of Phytochemical in the *Centella asiatica*. However, the antidepressant activity may be attributed to the presence of saponins, flavonoids and tannins in the extract. It is possible that the mechanism of anxiolytic action of AQECA and ALECA could be due to the binding of any of these phytochemical to the GABA_A-BZD_S complex.

SUMMARY

1. The fresh leaves of *Centella asiatica* used for this project work.
2. The dried leaves of *Centella asiatica* were successively extracted with alcohol and water. Percentage yield was calculated.
3. Therapeutic dose of the extracts were calculated after carrying acute oral toxicity studies in both rats and mice.
4. Extracts were tested for their anti-depressant activity in mice.
By Forced Swim Test.
Both aqueous and alcoholic extracts (200 mg/kg) showed significant decrease in duration of immobility time.
By OPEN FIELD TEST.
Both aqueous and alcoholic extracts (200 mg/kg) showed significant decrease in duration of immobility time.

CONCLUSION

In the present study plant parts of *Centella asiatica* have been evaluated for antidepressant activity. As literature shows that traditionally this plant is being used in the treatment of depression. The plant materials *Centella asiatica* used for the present studies were commercially procured from local market. Albino mice were used for the antidepressant activity. The results obtained in this study indicate that the methanol fractions of the leaves of *Centella asiatica* have significant CNS Depressant activities in animal model systems. The medicinal values of the plant leaves may be related to their constituent phytochemical. So, further detailed investigations are needed to isolate and identify the active compounds present in the plant extract and its various fractions and their efficacy need to be done. It will help in the development of novel and safe drugs for the treatment of different types of CNS disorders.

REFERENCES

1. Sofowora, A., 1982, Medicinal Plants and Traditional Medicine in Africa, John Wiley and Sons Ltd., Chichester. New York. Toronto. Singapore, pages 6,10,11,74,114,256.
2. Abayomi, S (1993). Historical review of traditional medicine in Africa, Spectrum Book Ltd pp: 9-25. Ibadan.
3. Herborn, J.B (1998). Phytochemical methods, A guide to modern techniques of plant analysis, pp. 5-11, 2nd edition.
4. Colombo, M.L and Bosisio, E (1996). Pharmacological activities of chelidonium majus L (papaveraceae), Pharmacol. Res 33: 127-134.
5. El-seedi, H.R., Ohara, T., Sata, N. and Nishiyama, S (2002). Antimicrobial terpenoids from *Eupatorium glutinosum* (Asteraceae), J. Ethnopharmacol 81:293-296.
6. Baker, J.E., Brotz, H., Leichert, L.I.O., Labischinski, H and Hecker, M (2003). Proteomic approach to understanding antibiotic action, Antimicro. Agents. Chemotherapy 47: 948-955.
7. Levetin and McMahon, (2003), Plants and Society, 3rd edition.
8. Chopra, R.N., Nayar, S.L. and Chopra, I.C. (1956) In Glossary of Indian medicinal plants, Vol. I. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi, pp. 197.
9. Rabe T, Staden JV (1997): Antibacterial activity of South African plants used for medicinal purposes. J. Ethnopharmacol. 56: 81-87.
10. Kamboj VP (2000): Herbal medicine. Cur. Sc. 78(1): 35-39.
11. Ghani, A. (1998). Medicinal Plants of Bangladesh: Chemical Constituents and Uses. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka.
12. Farnsworth, N.R., Akerele, O., Medicinal plants in therapy. Bull. World Health. Org.. v.63, n.6, p.965-981, 1985.
13. Chatterjee, I. Chakravarty, A.K., Gomesa A., (2006) Daboia russellii and Naja kaouthia venom neutralization by lupeol acetate isolated from the root extract of Indian sarsaparilla *Hemidesmus indicus* R.Br. Journal of Ethnopharmacology 106(1), 38-43.
14. Ramadan, Mohammad A., and N. A. Safwat. "Antihelicobacter activity of a flavonoid compound isolated from *Desmostachya bipinnata*." *Australian Journal of Basic & Applied Sciences* 3.3 (2009): 2270-2277.
15. Kumar, K. Ashok, et al. "Chemical composition and antimicrobial activity of the essential oil of *Desmostachya bipinnata* linn." *International Journal of Phytomedicine* 2.4 (2011).