

Project Update: November 2009

Summary of activities:

In the last couple of months, I with two research/field associates conducted an extensive survey in Lawachara area, mostly in the ethnic settlements located inside and in the periphery of the national park. We surveyed five villages/settlements namely, *Tiprapara* (Doluchara), *Garobosti*, *Baligaon*, *Magurchara* and *Lawachara Punji* representing four ethnic groups - *Tripura*, *Garó*, *Manipuri* and *Khasia* respectively. With the help of a local guide (cum translator) from each community we performed an ethno-botanical survey at household level using a common semi-structured questionnaire. The survey was deliberately biased towards older people and was aimed to identify the medicinal plant (mp) uses by four ethnic communities, documentation of their indigenous knowledge and perceptions on medicinal plant use, and finally to identify the harvesting patterns of key species. We interviewed about thirty households representing general herbal user, community heads and herbal practitioners and were include both male females. We also arranged some transect walk with local herbal practitioner (one from each ethnic group) to avoid missing of any important species and to follow the harvesting patterns of individual mp species. Our challenge is now to organize and compare the whole set of data we have already collected and to manage botanical identification of some unfamiliar (!) species. Also, in the next months our objective will be to complete an ecological and some transects surveys to identify the stocks and abundance of medicinal plants in forest as well as to find out the impacts of harvesting on key mp species.



Figure 1: *Garó* herbal practitioner Mr. Sreenath Sangma demonstrating harvesting and use of medicinal plants



Figure 2: Conducting household ethno-botanical survey in *Garobosti*



Figure 3: With Mr. Patrick Sangma (Garo community leader) in front of his medicinal plant garden in *Garobosti*



Figure 4: Interviewing an age old *Khasia* woman while working



Figure 5: Age old *Khasia* woman



Figure 6: Interviewing a *Tripura* respondent in *Tiprapara*



Figure 7: Interviewing a *Manipuri* herbal practitioner in field in *Baligaon*



Figure 8: Research and field associate Mr. Titu and Mr. Mofizul

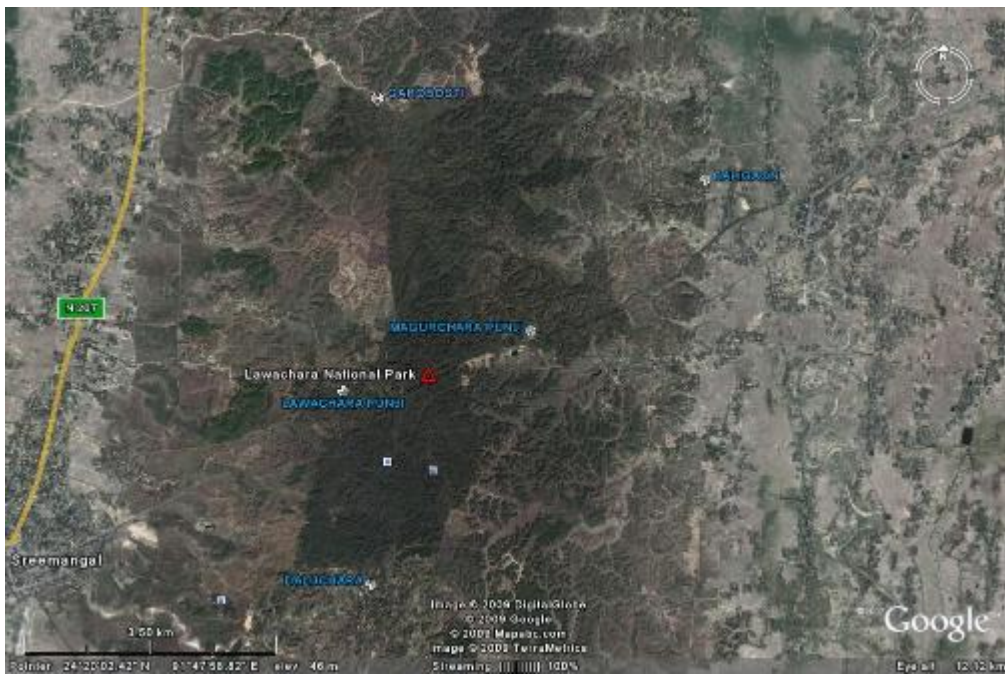


Figure 8: Google™ map representing the location of the surveyed villages/ ethnic settlements