

DOCUMENTATION ON SOAP NUT (*Sapindus mucorossi*)

A. Introduction:

Soap nut is a wild growing tree plant found in some parts of Meghalaya. It possesses many medicinal properties like anti-dandruff, tonsillitis, skin diseases, etc. It is locally known as 'Sohpairah' in Khasi and 'Sohpinrah' in Jaintia. According to the people of Sahnsniang village, the plant was found to grow in this village and adjoining villages more than 150 years ago. The fruits (nuts) are extensively used as soap by the people of Meghalaya for more than centuries. It was believed that during the olden days, the Khasis and Jaintias used Soap nut as washing agent for washing their clothes, utensil, bathing and washing of jewellery. In Jaintia hills particularly, soap nut was traditionally used for cleansing the dead bodies and placed an integral parts in the community.

B. Basic information about Soap nut from Jaintia Hills:

- **Distribution:-** Umsalait (WJH)/Laskein Block
Myntang (WJH)/Laskein Block
Pdein Lapatein (WJH)/Laskein Block
Shnongrim/Sahnsniang (WJH)/Laskein Block
Jowai (WJH)/Laskein Block

The plant is scarcely distributed and less populated

- **Volume of the fruits/tree:** 100-150Kg/tree

In Sahnsniang, a Self Help Group by the name of 'Chiroopleng SHG' founded in the year 2006 with ten female members have recently started manufacturing of soap from Sapindus. This group could produce a thousand soaps per year where they market it at the rate of Rs. 20-25 per soap. The production is based on the demands generated by the customers from Mookyndeng (WJH) and Shillong. This group finds it difficult to market their products and sometime display their products during District level exhibitions.

The raw materials (soap nut) required for making soap were purchased from the various villages mentioned above at the rate of Rs. 30/Kg.



Fig. 51: Soapnut tree (*Sapindus mucorossi*)



Fig. 52(a): Dried Soapnut fruits



Fig. 52(b): Soap nut Extract



Fig. 52(c): Freshly prepared soaps

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SOAP NUT AND ITS PRODUCTS

C. Method of soap production:

- Take 750gm of dried soapnut and remove the seeds from it
- Then it is soaked in water for one hour after which the excess water is squeezed off till the solution become clear
- Collect the solution and filter using a muslin cloth
- The filtrate is collected in a bucket
- Take 750ml of the filtrate in a bucket
- A solution containing 150ml of lime juice, 2kg of melted ghee and 320gm of caustic soda is prepared separately and added to the bucket containing soapnut solution.
- The solution is mixed properly till it reach a consistency stage
- Pour the solution in a square wooden tray lined with chart paper arranged in a levelled position so that the thickness is uniform
- Leave it for 2-3 hrs in a partial shade till the solution solidifies and cut it into standard pieces or blocks
- The blocks are dried in the sun for 15 days and packed for marketing

D. Challenges:

- a. Product finishing/designing
- b. No fragrance and aromatic properties of the soap
- c. No packaging features
- d. Market linkages