**Lichen Flora Of Niti Area From Garhwal Himalaya, Uttarakhand**

Shobha Rawat 1\*, D. K. Upreti 2and Rana P. Singh1

1Department of Environmental Sciences, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow - 226025.

2Lichenology Laboratory, Plant Biodiversity and Conservation Biology Division, National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow (NBRI - CSIR) - 226001.

shobharawat1981@gmail.com

**Abstract:** The paper deals first time with the lichen flora of way of Gamsali to Niti area of Chamoli district, Uttarakhand. A total 43 species belonging to 32 genera and 13 families from the area have been reported. Among the different growth forms of lichen, foliose lichens exhibit their dominance with 21 species followed by 14 species of crustose and 8 species fruticose form respectively. Most of the lichen growing sequence of corticolous < terricolous < saxicolous lichen species followed by 22, 18 and 9 respectively. Total 13 species of lichens are medicinally important. The available information regarding lichen diversity provides baseline data which will be useful in conducting future biomonitoring studies and developing conservation strategies in the valley.

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**1. Introduction**

Recently Indian lichens were achieved that revealed the occurrence of more than 2300 species from India (Singh & Sinha 2010). The Niti valley area is situated in higher temperate and alpine region of Chamoli district in the Himalayas. Being situated at higher altitudes of 2800-3600m, the Niti valley area exhibit luxuriant growth of many lichens particularly the lichen genera growing on soil (terricolous) and exposed rock (saxicolous). First time lichen flora has recorded from Niti area. The Gamsali, Bampa and bank of river Dhauli Ganga are the major temperate localities within Niti Valley comprised of dense coniferous forest of *Taxus baccata, Cedrus deodara, Pinus wallichiana* and bears luxuriant growth of lichen.

The long stretches of grasslands interspersed with snow streams in higher altitudes of Niti area the characteristic features of alpine meadows. The area bears good growth of many terricolous lichens together with herbaceous plants. Within the alpine regions of Niti the dry arid areas show xerophytic type of vegetation represented by scanty growth of *Juniperus, Jruinea, Artemisia* shrubs together with *Ephedra* and *Hippophae* in riverine and rocky situation. The dry and exposed habitats exhibit growth of some exclusive lichen species on rocks and soil.

**2. Materials and Methods**

In August-September 2007 more than 450 specimens of lichens were collected from the different available substrates Niti and Gamsali area. The specimens were identified in respect of their morphology, anatomy and chemistry. The chemistry of all the specimens were performed by both colour spot tests ( K, C, Pd ) followed by thin layer chromatographic (TLC) methods as described by Walker & James (1980).The chromatograms were developed in solvent A (Toluene: 1-4 dioxane: acetic acid 180: 60: 8 ml). The collected specimens were identified with the help of recent literature of Awasthi (1988, 1991, 2000, 2007); Divakar and Upreti (2005); Nayaka, (2004); Joshi, Y., (2008). The specimens are deposited in the herbarium of National Botanical Research Institute (CSIR) Lucknow (LWG).

**3. Result**

In (Table No.1) 143 species belonging to 32 genera and 13 families of lichens from Niti area. Among the different substrates, the trees host the maximum diversity of lichens represented by 22 species followed by 18 saxicolous and 11 terricolous (soil inhabiting) lichens. The area shows good growth of medicinal lichens, represented by 13 species. In Niti area, *Pinus wallichiana, Taxus baccata* are the common host tree for the lichens.

Niti area dominance of Parmelioid lichens represented by 19 species. The probable resion for scarce or poor growth of lichens on various coniferous trees may be attributed to the factors such as rocky dry area, having thinned out, open forest and stunted growth of trees. The area show good growth of saxicolous lichens as 18 species the common species are *Xanthoparmelia stenophylla* (Ach.) Ahti & D. Hawksw., *Rhizoplaca peltata* (Ramond) Leuck. & Poelt., *Xanthoparmelia conspersa* (Ehrh. ex Ach.) Hale, *Diploschistes scruposus* (Schreb.) Norman, on soil or on soil over rocks recorded from the area.

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|   | **Table 1: Total lichen taxa of Niti and Gamsali areas in Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, India**  |
|  | **Lichen species** | **Families** | **Habitat** | **Habit** | **10 Km. before Gamsali** | **10 km. before Niti** | **Medicinally important** |
| 1 | *Amandinea punctata* (Hoffm.) Coppins & Scheid. | **Caliciaceae** | Saxicolous, | Crustose | + | - | - |
| 2 | *Chrysothrix candelaris* (L.) J. R. Laundon | **Chrysothricaceae** | Corticolous, Saxicolous | Crustose | - | + | - |
| 3 | *Cladonia fimbriata* (L.) Fr. | **Cladoniaceae** | Corticolous | Fruticose | + | - | + |
| 4 | *Cladonia furcata* (Huds.) Schrad. | **Cladoniaceae** | Saxicolous, Terricolous | Fruticose | - | + | + |
| 5 | *Cladonia pyxidata* (L.) Hoffm. | **Cladoniaceae** | Terricolous | Fruticose | + | - | + |
| 6 | *Leptogium burnetii* Dodge | **Collemataceae** | Corticolous, Terricolous | Foliose | + | - | - |
| 7 | *Lecanora frustulosa* (Dickson) Ach. | **Lecanoraceae** | Corticolous | Crustose | - | + | - |
| 8 | *Lecanora muralis* (Schreb.) Rabenh. | **Lecanoraceae** | Saxicolous, | Crustose | - | + | + |
| 9 | *Lobothallia alphoplaca* (Wahlenb.) Hafellner | **Megasporaceae** | Saxicolous, | Crustose | - | + |   |
| 10 | *Allocetraria nygricascens* (Nyl.) Karnefelt & Thell | **Parmeliaceae** | Terricolous | Foliose | - | + | - |
| 11 | *Dolichousnea longissima* (Ach.) Articus | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Fruticose | - | - | + |
| 12 | *Evernia mesomorpha* Nyl. | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Fruticose | + | + | - |
| 13 | *Everniastrum cirrhatum* (Fr.) Hale ex Sipaman | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Foliose | - | + | + |
| 14 | *Flavoparmelia caperata* (L.) Hale | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous, Saxicolous | Foliose | + | - | + |
| 15 | *Flavopunctelia flaventior* (Stirton) Hale | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Foliose | + | - | - |
| 16 | *Flavopunctelia soredica* (Nyl.) Hale | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Foliose | + | - | - |
| 17 | *Hypogymnia tubulosa* (Schaer.) Hav. | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Foliose | + | - | - |
| 18 | *Melanelia tominii* (Oxner) Essl*.* | **Parmeliaceae** | Saxicolous | Foliose | - | + | - |
| 19 | *Melanelixia fuliginosa* (Fr.ex Duby) O. Blanco Crespo, Divakar, Essl. D. Hawksw. | **Parmeliaceae** | Saxicolous, | Foliose | - | + | - |
| 20 | *Melanelixia vilosella*(Essl.) O. Blanco Crespo, Divakar, Essl. D. Hawksw.. | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Foliose | + | + | - |
| 21 | *Parmelia sulcata* Taylor | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Foliose | + | - | + |
| 22 | *Parmotrema rampoddense* (Nyl.) Hale | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Foliose |   | + |   |
| 23 | *Rhizoplaca peltata* (Ramond) Leuck. & Poelt. | **Parmeliaceae** | Saxicolous, | Foliose | - | + | - |
| 24 | *Xanthoparmelia bellatula* (Kurok. & Filson) Elix & Johnston  | **Parmeliaceae** | Terricolous | Foliose | - | + | - |
| 25 | *Xanthoparmelia conspersa* (Ehrh. ex Ach.) Hale | **Parmeliaceae** | Saxicolous, | Foliose | - | + | + |
| 26 | *Xanthoparmelia stenophylla* (Ach.) Ahti & D. Hawksw. | **Parmeliaceae** | Saxicolous, | Foliose | - | + | - |
| 27 | *Usnea perplexans* Stirton | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Fruticose | + | - | - |
| 28 | *Usnea subfloridana* Stirton | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Fruticose | + | - | - |
| 29 | *Vulpicida pinastri* (Scop.) Mattsson  | **Parmeliaceae** | Corticolous | Foliose | + | - | - |
| 30 | *Peltigera didactyla* (With) J. R. Laundon | **Peltigeraceae** | Terricolous | Foliose | + | - | - |
| 31 | *Peltigera praetextata* (Flörke ex Sommerf.) Vain. | **Peltigeraceae** | Corticolous , Terricolous | Foliose | + | - | + |
| 32 | *Peltigera rufescens* (Weiss) Humb. | **Peltigeraceae** | Terricolous | Foliose | + | - | + |
| 33 | *Anaptychia kaspica* Gyeln. | **Physciaceae** | Corticolous | Foliose | - | + | - |
| 34 | *Dimelaena oreina* (Ach.) Norman | **Physciaceae** | Saxicolous, | Crustose | - | + | - |
| 35 | *Physcia gomukensis* D. D. Awasthi & S. R. Singh | **Physciaceae** | Saxicolous, | Foliose | - | + | - |
| 36 | *Physcia stellaris* (L.) Nyl. | **Physciaceae** | Corticolous | Foliose | - | + | - |
| 37 | *Physconia detersa* (Nyl.) Nyl.  | **Physciaceae** | Corticolous, Saxicolous | Foliose | + | - | - |
| 38 | *Porpidia macrocarpa* (DC.) Hertel & A. J. Schwab | **Porpidiaceae** | Saxicolous, | Crustose | - | + | - |
| 39 | *Ramalina sinensis* Jatta | **Ramaliaceae** | Corticolous | Fruticose | + | - | + |
| 40 | *Rhizocarpon geographicum* (L.) DC. | **Rhizocarpaceae** | Saxicolous, | Crustose | - | + | - |
| 41 | *Caloplaca saxicola* (Hoffm.) Nordin | **Teloschistaceae** | Saxicolous, | Crustose | + | + | - |
| 42 | *Xanthoria sorediata* (Vain.) S. Kondratyuk & Karuefelt | **Teloschistaceae** | Saxicolous, | Foliose | + | - | - |
| 43 | *Diploschistes scruposus* (Schreb.) Norman | **Thelotremataceae** | Terricolous | Crustose | + | - | + |

The sites chosen have subalpine climatic characteristics and lichen vegetation which plays a significant part in the evolution of the soils that it colonizes (Asta 2001). The most common lichen species of the area *Evernia mesomorpha, Peltigera praetextata* (Flörke ex Sommerf.) Vain., *Peltigera didactyla* (With) J. R. *Peltigera rufescens* (Weiss) Humb., and *Xanthoparmelia bellatula* (Kurok. & Filson) Elix & Johnston are terricolous species grow on moist vertical slopes along with mosses indicates the moist and humid condition of forest. The Niti area situated on the top of mountain has frequent landslides due to melting of glaciers. The landslides not only destroy the tree vegetation but also remove the top soil and thus resulted into loss of both terricolous and corticolous lichens. Niti and Gamsali areas total 13 species of lichens having medicinal properties. *Cladonia fimbriata* (L.) Fr., *Allocetraria nygricascens* (Nyl.) Karnefelt & Thell, *Flavoparmelia caperata* (L.) Hale and *Flavopunctelia flaventior* (Stirton) Hale are the commen medicinal lichen species from the area.

The available enumeration of the lichen from Niti area will be helpful in documentation of lichens from the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve will also provide status of the diversity of medicinally important lichens of the area. The present number of species, their distribution on different substrate will act as baseline data to carry out biomonitorying studies in the area in future.

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