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# Assessment of Diversity of Pteridophytes along Some Hill Roads in a Biodiversity Hot Spot Region of India – A Case Study of Mizoram

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**ABSTRACT:** Mizoram state of India isone of the biodiversity hotspots of the world, the Eastern Himalayan biodiversity hotspot of South Asia. Panoramic view of its roadside flora reveals that it is replete with rich diversity of Pteridophytes. This is due to unique location of Mizoram, its topography with hills and valleys, and also its geology which provide immense ranges of microclimatic conditions which facilitates its growth. These pteridophytes are one of the source of carbon sink along the road. Some work related to pteridophytes have been reported by some researchers in some protected areas like sanctuaries and some forests in Mizoram. Till date no work has been reported on the diversity, ecology and IUCN red list status of pteridophytes growing along the Hill Roads in Mizoram. The paper enlists he current diversity, habitat and ecology of such pteridophytes. Effort has been made to ascertain their status in the IUCN red list and in Catalogue of Life (COL). The study is likely to help in further capacity augmentation/widening of these roads without harming the current diversity of the pteridophytes growing there . The study also provides a protocol to be followedfor monitoring and management of biodiversity along other roads of this hotspot.

### KEYWORDS: Hill roads, Pteridophytes, Diversity, Ecology, Hotspots, Catalogue of life, IUCN red list

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Himalayas is hottest of the 34 biodiversity hotspots of the world.It comprises of a mountain range in South Asia which is youngest of all mountain ranges existing on the face of the earth. It is still in an evolving state. The ecosystem of the region, therefore, naturally exhibit great dynamism (Zobel & Singh, 1997). It also holds great significance from ecological and evolutionary point of view. This region is rich in biodiversity and harbours largest number of endemics and Schedule I species as compared to any other part of India (MacKinnon, 1986).

Mizoram, a state situated in North –East of India, belongs to this, Eastern Himalayan biodiversity hotspot, region. Within India, the entire North-East region, in which Mizoram is situated, represents the transition zone between India, Indo-Malayan and Indo-Chinese geographic regions. It is recognized under the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Planto be an eco-region. Mizoram possesses a geologically distinctive terrain in this regionwith low but steep hills ranging in height from 900 - 1,100 meters. Its unique location, topography with hills and valleys, and geology provide immense ranges of microclimatic conditionswhich support diverse gene pools of a variety of flora and fauna, making it a "biodiversity rich" area (Swamliana,2013). Pteridophytes constitute formidable part of thevegetationof Mizoram.Development has necessitated construction of hill roads from time to time. Till date these

hill roads hold flora which are treat to watch. They are mostly Pteridophytes comprising of epiphytic component possessing large, beautiful, graceful and fascinating foliage. These Pteridophytes are also one of the source of the carbon sink along the road (India State of Forest report 2015).

Pteridophytes thriving in some protected area like sanctuaries and some forests have been reported earlier. Vanlalpeka and Laha (2015) reported 32 species of Pteridophytes from eight selected forest sites in Champhai district. Out of the 32 species, 27 species were terrestrial and the other 5 species were epiphytes. Barbhuia and Singh (2014) reported 36 taxa (28 terrestrial, 7 lithophyte, 1 epiphyte) belonging to 19 genera and 15 families of peridophytes from Thorangtlnag Wild Life Sanctuary. Singh *et al* (2016) reported 37 taxa of pteridophytic flora from Tawi Wildlife Sanctuary,



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Mizoram. This includes 11 taxa. Sharma et al (2013) also collected a total of 35 species of pteridophyte under 23 genera and 21 families from Pualreng Wildlife Sanctuary, Kolasib Mizoram.

Further construction and widening of the road is in offing as the area is in path of rapid modernization. This will impact diversity of these plants.. In order to prevent diversity loss of such pteridophytes during construction of hill road, their current diversity and ecology have been studied here. Status of enlisted pteridophytesgrowing along hill roads is also ascertained from IUCN red list and list of catalogue of life (COL). The study is likely to help in further capacity augmentation/widening of these roads without harming the current diversity of the pteridophytes growing there .The study also provides a protocol to be followed for monitoring and management of biodiversity along other roads of this hotspot. Pteridophytes growing along hill roads of Mizoram has not yet reported.

#### **II. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

For listing of the Pteridophytes along the roads, three major roads of Mizoram situated in three different locations were selected, namely - Aizawl- Lunglei road, Sheling – Champhai road and Lunglei – Tlabung road (Figure -1).

All the roads were surveyed with team of experts for two consecutive years during the months of October to January (2017& 2018). Data were collected within 200m (considering corridor of impact) of the roads by traversing on foot along all the pteridophytic habitats on both side of the roads (valley side and hill side). Vegetation, water channels, ridges and various habitats within the corridor of impact (200m of the road) were also considered for the listing of the pteridophytes.

TAXONOMY:

The taxonomy of recorded species was done as per Fraser-Jenkins (2009). However, the genera and species within the families are listed alphabetically. The authorities of names follow Brummitt and Powell (1992) while the taxonomic citation is based on published literature and IPNI, Tropicos and The Plant List.

#### COLLECTION OF SPECIMEN:

All the specimens were collected in fertile stage and were processed through conventional herbarium (Jain, 1977). They were identified by matching them with herbarium specimens of local universities and research institutions and also by using different floras of nearby areas (Beddome ,R.H., 1892, Ghosh, S.R <u>etal.</u> 2004, Ghosh, C,<u>etal</u> 2008, Singh 2005) Identifications of specimens were based on field characters with the aid of existing literature (Baishya and Rao 1982; Jamir and Rao 1990; Kholia 2010a, 2014; Benniamin ,2012)

Status of the listed pteridophytes in IUCN Red list along the roads under study has been assessed as per of the IUCN Red list 2017 version 3.1. Those not finding place in IUCN red list were assessed as per annual Catalogue of life checklist 2017.

#### **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results here is the first report of Pteridophytes growing along hill roads of Mizoram, so far their diversity, ecology and status in IUCN Red List and List of Catalogue of Life is concerned.

Mizoram has total road-length much below India's national average. In view of this, Mizoram is planning to construct 300 km of new road within 5 years. State is also targeting to widen its existing 6220 km of road within 10 years. This will create impact on biodiversity (Mizoram Economic Survey 2014 - 15), especially diversity of pteridophytes which

dominate the roadside flora. Three major roads of Mizoram were surveyed to enlist the pteridophytes growing along the roadside in the present work. The current diversity,taxonomy,ecology and status in IUCN Red list and Catalogue of Life is discussed here:

### III.I DIVERSITY, TAXONOMY, ECOLOGY OF PTERIDOPHYTES ALONG THE ROADS

Along the Aizawl – Thenzal – Lunglei road, 40 species of pteridophytes were identified and listed (Table 1). They represent 20 families of Pteridophytes. Members of family Selaginellaceae and Tectariaceae dominate the roadside flora followed by members of family Polypodiaceaae and Lycodiaceae. Habitat wise distribution of the pteridophytes indicate the fact that out of total pteridophytes listed along the road 33% are terrestrial, 27% are sciophytes , 18% are hydrophytes , 10% are lithophytes and 12% are epiphytes.

Along the Seling - Champhai Road road, 33 species of Pteridophytes were identified and listed (Table 1)which represent 19 families of Pteridophytes. Members of family Pteridaceae and Polypodiaceae are the dominant along the road followed by members of family Cyathaceae, Lycopodiaceae, Thelypteridaceae and Marsilliaceae. Habitat wise



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distribution of the pteridophytes indicate the fact that out of total pteridophytes listed along the road 33% are terrestrial, 19.4 % are sciophytes, 11.1% are hydrophytes and lithophytes and Epiphytes are 16.6%.

Along Lunglei- tlabung –Kwarpuicchuah road fourty two (41) species of pteridophytes were listed which represent 20 families of pteridophytes(Table1). Dominant species of the pteridophytes along the road is represented by the members of the family Dryopteridaceae followed by members of the family Pteridaceae and Polypodiaceae .Habitat wise distribution of the pteridophytes indicate the fact that out of total pteridophytes listed along the road 45.2 % are terrestrial, 12 % are sciophytes, 14.2 % are hydrophytes, lithophytes 16.6% and Epiphytes are 12% .

#### III.II STATUS OF THE LISTED PTERIDOPHYTES ALONG THE SELECTED ROADS IN IUCN RED LIST AND CATALOGUE OF LIFE

Status of the listed pteridophytes in IUCN Red list along the roads under study has been assessed as per of the IUCN Red list 2017 version 3.1.and shown separately in Table 1. As per the list most of the pteridophyte species identified along the roads considered for study have not been assessed for IUCN red list. Only Marsilea minuta L., Marsilea quadrifolia L, Diplazium esculentum (Retz.) Sw., Leptochilus decurrens Blume, Leptochilus pteropus (Blume) and Pteris vittata L. have been listed as least concern as per the IUCN Red list 2017 version 3.1.Pteridophyte species Tectaria polymorpha (Wall.ex Hook.), Dryopteris pulvinulifera (Beddome) Kuntze Diplazium dilatatum Blume, Enum. Pl. Javae, Cyathea khasyana (Moore.ex.khum), Blechnum orientale (L.), Angiopteris evecta (G.Forst.), Angiopteris indica (Hook & Grev.), Adiantum caudatum L, Anisocampium cuspidatum Bedd.)Y.C.Liu,W.L.Chiou& M. Kato, Dicranopteris linearis (Burm. f.) Underw, Drynaria propingua (Wall. ex Mett.) Bedd, Dryopteris hirtipes (Blume) Kuntze ,Lycopodiella cernua (L.) Pic. Serm, Lygodium flexuosum (L.)Sw., Asplenium finlaysonianum Wall. ex Hook, Cyathea gigantea (Wall. ex Hook.), Underw, Dipteris wallichii (R. Br.), Dicranopteris linearis (Burm. f.) Underw, Diplazium pseudosetigerum (Christ), C.V. Morton, Pteris khasiana (C.B.Clarke), Thelypteris nudata (Roxb.) C.V. Morton which were not assessed by IUCN red list have found a place in Catalogue of life annual checklist 2017. Study reveal the fact that out of total 73 different types of pteridophytes listed in all the three roads 6 species has been listed in IUCN red list (IUCN red list 2017) and 21 species have been listed in Catalogue of Life and 46pteridophytes have neither been assessed in IUCN red list nor included in Catalogue of Life.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Roadside flora of Mizoram are rich in pteridophytes. They dominate the ground vegetation of many roads and also form an important component of many epiphytic plant communities. They function as one of the source of carbon sink along the road (India State of Forest report 2015). Their graceful look and beautiful foliage provide a fascinating sight attracting many plant lovers to Mizoram. Factors like climate change, encroachment of lands for road development pose a major threat to the survival of these groups of plants along the roads. Unplanned felling of road side trees for road maintenance and widening are a major threat for epiphytic pteridophytes. Presentstudy reveals the

fact that out of listed pteridophytesin all the three roads 14% species has been listed in IUCN red list (IIUCN red list 2017) and 50% species have been listed in Catalogue of Life and 36% pteridophytes have not been assessed in IUCN red list (Fig. 8). The Catalogue of Life is used to support the major biodiversity and conservation information services such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), Integrated Taxonomic information System (ITIS), Encyclopedia of Life (EoL) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List. It is recognized by the Convention on Biological Diversity as a significant component of the Global Taxonomy Initiative and a contribution to Target 1 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.

Hence, more than 64% of the listed pteridophytes along the roads are of global biodiversity concern. Proper attention should be made during further capacity augmentation /widening of these roads for conservation of thesepteridophytes. The study would be helpful in monitoring and management of population of the pteridophyte vegetation along other roads also. Similar protocol may be followed to curb biodiversity loss in any given region. Out of total pteridophytes listed along the roads 43% are terrestrial, 15% are epiphytes, 9% are lithophytes, 21% are sciophytes and 9% are hydrophytes (figure 2).

#### V. THANKS

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Figure 1: Roads considered for study



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Figure 2: Habitat wise distribution of pteridophytes along the roads

Sl. No	Name of the Pteridophyte species	Family	Habitat and Ecology	Status as per IUCN	Distribution of Pteridophytes along the road		
				Red list Version 3.1 an Catalog ue of life annual checklist 2017	Aizawl – Thenz al Lungle i	Seling - Champh ai	Lunglei – Tlabung – Kwarpuicch ua
1.	<i>Adiantum lunulatum</i> Burnhand.	Pteridaceae	Terrestrial, growing on moist surface of hills and also on road side	NA	-	+	+
2.	Adiantum philippense L.	Pteridaceae	Terrestrial, growing on moist surface of hills and also on road	NA		+	



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			side				
3.	Adiantum caudatum L.	Pteridaceae	Terrestrial, growing on moist surface of hills and also on road side	NA/COL		+	+
4.	Anisocampium cuspidatum Bedd.)Y.C.Liu,W.L. Chiou & M. Kato	Athyriaceae	Terrestrial, growing on moist surface of hills and also on road side.	NA/COL		+	
5.	Angiopteris evecta (G.Forst.)	Marattiaceae	Sciophytes, growing on hill slopes in wet and shady places	NA , COL	+	+	+
6.	Angiopteris indica (Hook & Grev.)	Marattiaceae	Sciophytes, growing on hill slopes in wet and shady places	NA , COL	+	_	_
7.	Angiopteris helferiana C. Presl	Marattiaceae	Terrestrial, growing on moist surface of hills side	NA			+
8.	Asplenium nidus (L.)	Aspleniaceae	Epiphyte, growing on tree trunk , valley side trees	NA	-	+	-
9	Asplenium obscurum (Blume)	Aspleniaceae	Epiphyte, growing on tree trunks both hill side and valley side trees	NA	-	+	+
10.	Asplenium finlaysonianum Wall. ex Hook	Aspleniaceae	Lithophytes, growing on degraded rock surface generally on hill side	NA/COL			+
11	Azolla pinnata (Lamarck)	Azollaceae	Hydrophyte , growing on road side waterbody	NA	+	+	+
12	Blechnum orientale (L.)	Blechnaceae	Lithophytes, growing on Degraded rock surface generally on both side of the road	NA, COL	+	+	+
13	Bolbitis heteroclite (C.Presl)	Bolbitidaceae	Sciophytes, growing on moist and shady places on road edge valley side of the road	NA	+	-	+



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14	Bolbitis nodiflora (Franer –Jenk)	Bolbitidaceae	Sciophytes, growing on moist and shady places on road edge valley side of the road	NA	+	_	+
15	Cyathea chinensis (Copel) Philipp	Cyatheaceae	Terrestrial, growing on road side surface	NA	+	+	+
16	Cyathea khasyana (Moore.ex.khum)	Cyatheaceae	Terrestrial, growing on road side surface	NA / COL	+	+	+
17	<i>Cyathia spinulosa</i> Wall.	Cyathaceae	Terrestrial, growing on road side surface	NA	+	-	_
18	Cyathea gigantea (Wall. ex Hook.)	Cyatheceae	Terrestrial, growing on valley side of the road	NA/ COL			+
19.	Christella dentata (Forssk.) Brownsey &Jermy	Thelypteridacea e	Lithophytes, growing on Degraded rock surface generally on both side of the road	NA	_	+	_
20.	Cyclosorus megaphyllus (Ching)	Thelypteridacea e	Sciophytes, growing on moist and shady places both side of the road	NA	+	_	_
21.	Davallia trichomanoides Blume	Davalliaceae	Epiphytic growing on tree trunks and sometime epilithic on different kinds of rocks, mostly in wet places	NA		+	+
22.	Dicranopteris linearis (Brum F.)	Dicranopteridaea e	Terrestrial, growing on valley side exposed surface o road with some shade and moisture	NA	+	+	+
23.	Diplazium dilatatum Blume, Enum. Pl. Javae	Athyriaceae	Sciophytes , growing on moist and shady places on valley side of the road	NA , COL	+	_	+
24.	Diplazium esculentum (Retz.) Sw.	Athyriaceae	Sciophytes, growing on moist and shady places on valley side of the road	Least concern	_	+	_



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SI. No	Name of the Pteridophyte species	Family	Habitat and Ecology	Status as per	Distribution of Pteridoph along the road		idophytes
110			2001085	IUCN			
				Red list Version 3.1 an Catalog ue of life annual checklist 2017	Aizawl – Thenz al Lungle i	Seling - Champh ai	Lunglei – Tlabung – Kwarpuicch ua
25.	Diplazium pseudosetigerum (Christ)	Woodsiaceae	Terrestrial, growing on moist surface of hills and also on road side	NA/COL			+
26	Dipteris wallichi (R.Br.)	Dipteridaceae	Terrestrial , growing on hillside moist soil	NA	+	_	+
27	Dryopteris maginata (Clarke)	Dryopteridacea e	Terrestrial, growing on moist and shady places on road edge valley side of the road	NA	+	_	_
28.	Drynaria propinqua (Wall. ex Mett.) Bedd	Polypodiaceae	Lithophytes growing on degraded rock of hill surface. Sometimes found in man-made structures like brick walls	NA/Col	_	+	+
29.	Drynaria quercifolia(L.) J.Sm.	Polypodiaceae	Epiphytic growing on tree trunks	NA		+	
30.	Drynaria coronans (Wall. ex Mett.)	Polypodiaceae	Epiphyte , Growing on tree trunk	NA/COL			+
31.	Dryopteris pulvinulifera (Beddo me) Kuntze	Dryopteridacea e	Lithophytes, growing on overhanging rock crevices	NA, COL	+	_	_
32.	Dryopteris hirtipes (Blume) Kuntze	Dryopteridacea e	Sciophytes, growing on humus-rich mountain slopes in light or deep shade.	NA/COL		+	
33.	Dryopteris sparsa (D.Don) Kuntze	Dryopteridacea e	Terrestrial, growing on valley side exposed surface o road with some shade	NA		+	+



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			and moisture				
34.	Hymenophylum exsertum (Wall.ex Hook)	Hymenophyllace ae	Lithophytes, growing on degraded rock surface generally on both side of the road	NA	+	-	-
35.	Leptochilus decurrens Blume	Polypodiaceae	Epilithic or epiphytic on trunk bases, sometimes terrestrial, often on rocks beside road side streams	Least concern		+	+
36.	Lindsaea ensifolia (SW.)	Lindsaeaceae	Lithophytes, growing on degraded rock surface generally on both side of the road	NA	+	+	+
37.	Lycopodiella cernua (L.)	Lycopodiaceae	Sciophytes ,growi ng on hill slopes in wet and shady places (creepers)	NA	+	+	+
38.	Lycopodiella phlegmaria (L.)	Lycopodiaceae	Epiphyte , growing on tree branches, hanging from hill side tree branches	NA	+	+	-
39.	<i>Lygodium altum</i> (Clarke)	Lygodiaceae	Terrestrial , growing on road side surface	NA	+	-	-
40.	Lygodium flexuosum (L.)	Lygodiaceae	Terrestrial , growing on road side surface	NA	+	+	+
41.	Lygodium salicifolium (C.Presel)	Lygodiaceae	Terrestrial , growing on road side surface	NA	+	_	+
42.	Marsilea minuta L.	Marsileaceae	Hydrophyte , growing on road side waterbody	Least Concern	+	+	+
43.	Marsilea quadrifolia L.	Marsileaceae	Hydrophyte , growing on road side waterbody	Least Concern	+	+	+
44.	Micosorum punctatum (L.)	Polypodiaceae	Epiphyte, Growing on tree trunk , valley side trees	NA	+	-	-
45.	<i>Microlepia candigera</i> (T. Moore)	Dennstaedtinace ae	Terrestrial, growing on moist and shady places on valley side of	NA	+	-	_



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			the road				
46.	<i>Microlepia hancei</i> Prantl	Dennstaedtiace ae	Terrestrial, growing on road side moist and shady places on valley side of the road	NA		+	+
47.	Microlepia speluncae (L.)	Dennstaedtiace ae	Terrestrial, growing on moist surface of hills and also on road side	NA			+
48.	Platycerium wallichi Hook.	Polypodiaceae	Epiphyte , growing on tree branches, hanging from hill side tree branches	NA		+	
49.	Pityorogramma calomelanos (L.)	Pteridaceae	Lithophytes , growing on degraded rock	NA	+	-	-
50.	Pteris pseudopellucida (Ching)	Pteridaceae	Terrestrial, growing on moist and shady places of the road as well as hills slopes.	NA	+	_	_
51.	Pteris vittata L.	Pteridaceae	Terrestrial, growing on hill side moist and shady places	Least concern		+	
52.	Pteridium aquilinum(L.)Kuhn	Dennstaedtiace ae	Terrestrial, growing on road side as well as hill side moist and shady places	NA	+	+	
53.	Pteridium revolutum (Blume)	Dennstaedtiace ae	Terrestrial, growing on road side moist and shady places	NA			+
54.	Pteris khasiana (C.B.Clarke)	Pteridaceae	Terrestrial, growing on road side moist and shady places	NA/COL			+
55.	Pteris vittata L.	Pteridaceae	Terrestrial, growing on road side moist and shady places	Least concern			+
56.	Polystichum pseudotsus-simense Ching.	Dryopteridacea e	Terrestrial, growing on moist surface of hills and also on road side	NA			+



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57.	Pyrossia lanceolata	Polypodiaceae	Terrestrial,	NA	+		+
	(Ĺ.)		growing on valley				
			side exposed				
			surface of road				
			with some shade				
			and moisture				
50		D 1 1	and moisture	27.4			
58.	Pyrossia manni	Polypodiaceae	Terrestrial,	NA	+	-	-
	(Giesenh.)		Growing on				
			surface of road				
			with some shade				
			and moisture				
59.	Selaginella ciliaris	Silaginallaceae	Sciophytes,	NA	+		_
	(Retz.)		growing on hill				
			slopes in wet and				
			shady places				
60	Selaginella repanda	Silaginallaceae	Scionhytes	ΝΔ			
00.	(Dosy oxpoir)	Shaginanaccac	growing on hill		I	-	-
	(Desv. expoir)		glowing on him				
			slopes in wet and				
			shady places				
61.	Selaginella vaginiata	Silaginallaceae	Sciophytes,	NA	+	_	-
	(Spring)		growing on hill				
			slopes in wet and				
			shady places				
62.	Selaginella wallichii	Silaginallaceae	Sciophytes,	NA	+	+	+
	(Hook & Grev.)	0	growing on hill				
	(		slopes in wet and				
			shady places				
63	Selaginella hisulcata	Selaginellaceae	Sciophytes	NΔ		+	
05	Setaginetta Distilcata	Selaginenaceae	sciopitytes,	INA		+	
	Spring		growing on nill				
			slopes in wet and				
			shady places				
64	Selaginella involvens	Selaginellaceae	Sciophytes,	NA			+
	(Sw.)		growing on hill				
			slopes in wet and				
			shady places				
65.	Tectaria imressa	Tectariaceae	Hydrophytes,	NA	+		
	(Fee)		Growing near				_
	(100)		water bodies of				
			the road				
66	Tootania nanadora	Taatariaaaaa	Hudrophytas	NA		1	1
00.		Tectallaceae	nyuropiiytes,	INA	+	+	+
	(Fee)		Growing near				
			water bodies of				
			the road				
67.	Tectaria gemmifera	Tectariaceae	Hydrophytes,	NA		+	+
	(Fée) Alston		Growing near				
			water bodies of				
			the road				
68.	Tectaria polymorpha	Tectariaceae	Hydrophytes.	NA.	+		+
	(Wall ex Hook )		Growing near	COL		_	
			water bodies of				
			the road				
60	Thelunteria	Tholymton	Tomostrial	NA			
09.	(DDw) E	Therypteridacea	i erresurial	INA		+	
	(D.Don) Fraser-	e	growing on hill				
1	Jenkins	1	surface and some			1	



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			time on degraded rock of (Lithophytes)				
70	<i>Thelypteris nudata</i> (Roxb.) C.V. Morton	Thelypteridace ae	Terrestrial, grows along road in moist and shady places	NA/COL			+
71	Thelypteris tenera (Roxb.)	Thelypteridace ae	Terrestrial, grows along road in moist and shady places	NA			
72.	<i>Vittaria fleuosa</i> (Fee in Meni)	Vittariaceae	Epiphyte, growing on tree trunk , valley side trees	NA	+	_	_
73.	Vittaria zosterfolia (Willd.)	Vittariaceae	Epiphyte, growing on tree trunk valley side trees	NA	+	_	_

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### Table 1. Distribution of Pteridophytes along the roads with their status in IUCN RED List and Catalogue of Life

(COL)