INTRODUCTION
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The chocolate or copper mahseer, the boker of Assam and the Katli mahseer of the North-Eastern hill region (Plate 1) is identified as *Acrossocheilus hexagonolepis* (McClelland) which has now been renamed as *Neolissochilus hexagonolepis* (McClelland) by the revised nomenclature (Talwar and Jhingran, 1991). But, till recent years those who followed the classification given by Day (1878) considered the mahseer as *Barbus* or *Tor* (Hamilton). Hora (1939, 1940) supported Hamilton (1822), Sykes (1838) and McClelland (1839). Hora, nevertheless, retained Cuvier's genus *Barbus* adopted Gray's genus *Tor* as subgenus listing the various species under *Barbus* (*Tor*). Later on Munro (1955) following Deraniyagala (1930) preferred to replace the composite genus *Barbus* (*Tor*) by Gray's *Tor*. The chocolate mahseer, belonging to a different genus altogether, has also been classified diversely. McClelland (1839) placed it under *Barbus*, but later it was placed under the genus *Lissocheilus* and finally under the genus *Acrossocheilus* (Misra, 1959). Though the fish belong to a different genus, yet it has been included broadly in the mahseer group (Nautiyal, 1994).

Jhingran (1982) described 8 species of mahseers like *Tor putitora* (Hamilton), *Tor tor* (Hamilton), *Tor mosal* (Sykes), *Tor khudree* (Sykes), *Tor mussullah* (Sykes), *Tor (Barbus) neilli* (Day), *Tor progeneius* (McClelland) and *Acrossocheilus*
Plate 1: Chocolate Mahseer - an endangered game fish of India
*hexagonolepis* (McClelland). Sen and Jayaram (1982) and Kulkarni (1988) reviewed the literature on mahseers in India and described 6 species (*T. putitora, T. tor, T. mosal, T. mussullah, T. khudree, T. progeneius*) and 3 subspecies (*T. khudree longispinis, T. khudree malabaricus, T. mosal mahandicus*). He also described some uncertain species of mahseer (*Barbus hexastichus, B. dukai, B. neilli, B. chilinoides*). Talwar and Jhingran (1991) have recognised seven species of true mahseers in India, viz. *Tor putitora* (Hamilton), *T. tor* (Hamilton), *T. mosal* (Hamilton), *T. progeneius* (McClelland), *T. khudree* (Sykes), *T. mussullah* (Sykes) and *T. chelynoïdes* (McClelland) and *Neolissocheilus hexagonolepis* (McClelland) belonging to a separate genus.

Recently, Menon (1992) synonymised *T. mosal* (Hamilton) with *T. putitora* (Hamilton), *Tor mosal* of Hora with *T. tor* (Hamilton), and re-identified the deep bodied mahseer from the peninsula so far confused with *Tor mussullah* Sykes as an abnormal *T. khudree* (Sykes). As per Menon there are five valid species of *Tor* viz. *T. putitora* (Hamilton), *T. tor* (Hamilton), *T. khudree* (Sykes), *T. progeneius* (McClelland) and *T. kulkarni* (Menon). *T. kulkarni* is a dwarf cognate of *T. khudree* (Menon, 1992).

In the group of large scaled barbels or mahseers there are genera like *Tor, Acrossocheilus, Neolissochilus* and *Naziritor*. Mayer (1941) suggested *Acrossocheilus* as a replacement of *Lissochilus* - a generic name used for a fossil
Rainboth (1985) considers that *Acrossocheilus* is a group of species—a closely related phylogenetic unit confined to China. Rainboth erected the genus *Neolissochilus* for *hexagonolepis* type of mahseer fishes. There are two species of *Neolissochilus*, *N. hexagonolepis* (McClelland) and *N. wynaadensis* (Day). Khuda-Buksh (1980) has shown that *Tor* and *Neolissochilus* (*Acrossocheilus*) have tetrapod genomes. Therefore, it appears that polyploidization has happened in different lineages other than the line leading to *Tor* and *Neolissochilus* (Singh and Menon, 1994).

As per Sinha (1994), the chocolate mahseer *Neolissochilus hexagonolepis* (McClelland), (*Syn. Acrossocheilus hexagonolepis* (McClelland)) is now one of the threatened cold water fishes of North-Eastern India.

Among the mahseers, golden or putitora mahseer (*T. putitora*) and tor mahseer (*T. tor*) are the most common species found all along the Himalayas from Kashmir to Assam. The chocolate or copper mahseer occurs in Assam, Bangladesh, Burma, China, Meghalaya, Nepal and is most abundant in North-Eastern India (Dasgupta, 1994). *A. hexagonolepis* also found in the Cauvery River in Tamil Nadu (Jhingran, 1982).

Studies on biology and sporting qualities of the different species of mahseer commenced with Thomas (1897), Snee Dhu (1923), Hora and Mukherjee (1936), Hora and Misra (1938),

The morphometric reports on the chocolate mahseer *Acrossocheilus hexagonolepis* (McClelland), were published by Hamilton (1822), McClelland (1839), and Hora (1940). Some accounts on the morphology and distribution of this species are described by some authors (Hora, 1940; Hora and Misra, 1941 and Dasgupta and Nasar, 1981). The food and feeding habits, reproductive organs, spawning habits, early development and culture of this fishes are also observed by some workers (Langdale Smith, 1944; Ahmad, 1948 and Alikunhi, 1948). A report on ichthyothriasis in chocolate mahseer has been made by Nasar and Dasgupta (1979).

The growing popularity of the chocolate mahseer in recent years demands extensive research work to be carried out on
the scientific management aspects, to develop suitable capture fishery in large water bodies and culture fishery technology for developing aquaculture in the hills. It is, therefore, felt that there is ample scope for an exhaustive and authentic research work on the chocolate mahseer biology and culturability, which could play a significant role in the agrarian economy of Meghalaya.