

**COMPARATIVE *IN VITRO* ANTIOXIDANT ACTIVITY OF
EXTRACTS OF AERIAL PARTS OF *GINKGO BILOBA* L. FROM
KUMAUN HIMALAYA**

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ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out to evaluate the antioxidant activity of leaf and twig methanol, hexane and DCM extracts of *Ginkgo biloba* L., a valuable rare exotic medicinal plant. This was achieved by radical scavenging, metal chelating, FRAP assay and ABTS radical scavenging activity determination. Total phenolic and flavonoid contents were also evaluated. Among the extractants, methanol gave the best results for phenolic content (285 ± 0.12 mg gallic acid equivalent (GAE)/g dry weight) and FRAP (224 ± 0.20 mg gallic acid equivalent (GAE)/g dry weight) assay especially, in case of leaf extract. For flavonoids content, DCM extract (278.64 ± 0.77 AAE /100

g dry weight) showed the best result with leaf extract. Total phenolic, flavonoid contents and FRAP activity were estimated in the highest amount from leaf extracts as compared of the twig extracts. For DPPH activity, hexane leaf extract and DCM twig extract showed maximum activity with, however, for ABTS activity, hexane leaf and hexane twig and for metal chelating, DCM leaf and methanol twig extracts showed maximum EC_{50} in comparison to the standards. FRAP and DPPH antioxidant activity showed significant positive relationships with total phenolic content while flavonoid was significantly correlated with FRAP antioxidant activity. Flavonoid content showed significant negative correlation with the antioxidant activity performed by metal chelating method.

KEYWORDS: Antioxidant activity, total phenolic content, FRAP, flavenoids, *Ginkgo biloba* L.

INTRODUCTION

Plant species of the Himalayan region medicine has been known for a long time. The importance of medicinal plants is being reported as a source of natural antioxidant and functional foods.^[1] Antioxidant property is considered to be the best among various functional foods because it controls and reduces the oxidation processes in the body^[2] by protecting against reactive oxygen species (ROS).^[3] Now-a-days secondary metabolites present in medicinal plants have been receiving a great attention mainly due to their role in preventing diseases that arises due to oxidative stress. As a result of stress, the body system releases reactive oxygen species (ROS) such as singlet oxygen and various radicals involved in a number of disorders including cardiovascular malfunctions, tissue injury, DNA damage and tumour promotion. Free radicals are cause of many human diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's disease, cardiac reperfusion abnormalities, kidney and liver disease, fibrosis, atherosclerosis, arthritis, neurodegenerative disorders and aging. Several studies suggested that antioxidants could be helpful in preventing accumulation of these reactive oxygen species radicals and beneficial for their treatment.^[4,5,6] Because of their natural origin, the plant based antioxidants are of greater beneficial effects in comparison to the synthetic ones. Excessive ROS content can have deleterious effects on protein, lipid, RNA and DNA since they are present in a very small quantity and highly reactive.^[7] However, during environmental stress time and cell dysfunction, ROS level can increase dramatically. In order to prevent the ROS-induced oxidative damage, there is an antioxidant defence mechanism in human beings that includes metal chelating, free radical-scavenging activities, ABTS, FRAP and total phenol, flavonoid content to neutralize these free radicals immediate after they are *Ginkgo biloba* L. (Ginkgoaceae) known as median hair tree with remarkable order of great antiquity, is represented by a sole survivor regarded as a "living fossil". It came into existence during the Permian and achieved worldwide distribution and luxuriance during the Triassic and Jurassic periods of Mesozoic age. *Ginkgo* has various uses in traditional medicine and has been used for a numerous types of health complaints and diseases. *Ginkgo biloba* L. is medicinally important due to the presence of several groups of compounds, such as terpenoids, flavonoids, glycosides, polyphenols, organic acids and amino acids.^[8,9] (Boonkaew and Camper, 2005; Beek and Montoro, 2009).

Ginkgo biloba L. has been traditionally used to treat cardiovascular and neurological diseases and the leaf extract is used in the formulations of cosmetics and skin care products. There are certain reports on the essential oil composition^[10,11,12,13] extract composition^[14,15] antimicrobial activities^[16,17,18] and conservation strategies^[19] of *G. biloba*. *Ginkgo biloba* L. has been previously reported to have strong antioxidant activities due to the presence of glycosides that scavenge free radicals.^[20,21,22,23] These antioxidants may help in protecting cellular damages due to oxidative stress and also lower the risk of chronic diseases^[24] by regular intake of antioxidants.^[25] Examination of biological activity of separate plant parts allows a significant contribution to medicinal plant study. Therefore, in the present work, an attempt has been made to evaluate the antioxidant activity of various extracts of leaf and twig of *Ginkgo biloba* L. from Kumaun Himalaya.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Collection and extraction of plant material

Ginkgo biloba L. plant parts were collected from the D.S.B. Campus Nainital Uttarakhand. The plants parts viz. leaves and twig were separated and allowed to shade dried. The dried parts were powdered in a blender to obtain a coarse powder. Ten gm of leaf (L) and twig (T) sample were taken and mixed with 100 mL of Methanol (ML & MT), Hexane (HL & HT) and Dichloromethane (DL & DT), kept as air tight for 48 hr, and were shaken frequently for uniform mixing of powdered samples distribution. The solutions were filtered and extracts of sample were stored for further analysis.

Determination of total phenolic contents

Total phenolic content (TPC) in the leaf and twig extracts of *Ginkgo biloba* L. was determined by Folin–Ciocalteu’s calorimetric method.^[28] One mL of each plant extract (1.0 mg/mL) was mixed with Folin–Ciocalteu’s reagent (1.0 mL) and allowed to stand for reaction for 5 minutes. This mixture was then neutralized by 7% sodium carbonate (10 mL) and kept in dark at room temperature for 90 min at 23°C. The absorbance of resultant blue color was measured at 750 nm using UV–VIS spectrophotometer and quantification of the total phenolic content was done on the basis of standard curve of gallic acid prepared in 80% (v/v) methanol as mg of gallic acid equivalents (GAE) per gram of dried sample (mg GAE/g dried extract).

Determination of total flavonoid contents

Aluminium chloride calorimetric method was used for flavonoids determination.^[29] 0.3 mL of each extract was mixed with 3.4 mL of 30% methanol, 0.15mL of NaNO₂ (0.5M) and 0.15mL of 10% aluminium chloride. After 5 min, one mL of NaOH was added, the solution was well mixed and measure the absorbance against reagent blank at 506 nm. The standard curve for flavonoids was made using quercetine standard solution (0 -100 µg/mL) under the same procedure and the total flavonoids were presented as mg of quercetine equivalent per g of dry extract.

Evaluation of FRAP

Ferric reducing antioxidant power (FRAP) assay is a technique which determines the total antioxidant power as a function of the reducing capability. The FRAP assay was first given by Benzie and Strain (1996)^[30] and later on by Faria et al. (2005)^[31] with some modifications. A mixture of 300 mM acetate buffer (pH 3.6) (i.e. 3.1 g of sodium acetate and 16 mL glacial acetic per liter); 10 mM TPTZ (2, 4, 6-tri-2-pyridyl-1, 3, 5-triazin) in 40 mM HCl (1mL) and 20 mM ferric chloride (1 mL) was made to prepare the FRAP reagents. This reagent mixture was pre warmed at 37°C for 8 minutes. Absorbance was taken at 593 nm UV-VIS spectrophotometer a blank sample was prepared by ascorbic acid and results were expressed in mg ascorbic acid equivalent (AAE) per g dry extract.

ABTS radical scavenging activity

Total antioxidant activity was measured by the ABTS (2, 2'- Azinobis 3-ethylbenzothiazoline- 6-sulphonic acid) radical scavenging method.^[32] ABTS (7.0 mM) and potassium per sulfate (2.45 mM) was added in to an amber coloured bottle and kept for 16–18 h in the dark at room temperature. The ABTS solution was diluted with 80% (v/v) ethanol till an absorbance of 0.70 ± 0.05 at 734 nm was obtained. ABTS cation solution (3.90 mL) was added to 0.1 mL of supernatant extract and mixed thoroughly and allowed to stand for six minutes in dark at 23°C temperature. The absorbance was recorded at 734 nm on the UV-VIS spectrophotometer (U-2001, Hitachi, Japan). The extract samples were diluted 80% (v/v) in different solvent to obtain the concentration. Standard curve was prepared by using a range of concentration of ascorbic acid for quantification of antioxidant potential and the activity of each sample was expressed as EC₅₀ (the concentration required for 50% reduction of ABTS).The percentage of inhibition was calculated by the formula:

$$\text{Scavenging effect} = \frac{\text{control absorbance} - \text{sample absorbance}}{\text{control absorbance}} \times 100$$

Determination of metal chelating activity

Hundred microlitter of 1 mM FeCl₂ was added to 1 mL of each extract and 3.7mL of distilled water. The reaction was initiated by the addition of 0.2 mL of 5mM ferrozine solution. The mixture was vigorously shaken and left to stand for 2 minutes at room temperature. The absorbance of the solution was measured at 562 nm.^[33] The standard curve was prepared by using a range of concentrations of ascorbic acid for quantification of antioxidant potential of each extract. The activity of each extract was expressed as EC₅₀ (the concentration required for 50% reduction of metal chelating). Sodium salt of EDTA was used as positive control as the percent activity was determined using the formula:

$$\text{Scavenging effect} = \frac{\text{control absorbance} - \text{sample absorbance}}{\text{control absorbance}} \times 100$$

DPPH scavenging activity

The method for evaluating DPPH activity given by Brand-William, Cuvelier and Berset (1995)^[34] is based on scavenging of 1, 1-diphenyl-2-picryl-hydrazyl radical (DPPH). 400µM DPPH was dissolved in pure 80% ethanol. DPPH cation (DPPH) (3.0 mL) was mixed with extract (1 mL) and kept in dark at room temperature for 20 minutes. Reduction in the absorbance at 520 nm was recorded by UV-VIS spectrophotometer. The control was prepared without any sample and standard curve was prepared by using a range of concentrations of ascorbic acid for quantification of antioxidant potential. The activity of each sample was expressed as EC₅₀ (the concentration required for 50% reduction of DPPH). The scavenging activity was calculated by using the following equation:

$$\text{Scavenging effect} = \frac{\text{control absorbance} - \text{sample absorbance}}{\text{control absorbance}} \times 100$$

Statistical analysis

All the data of antioxidant activity assay were conducted in three replicates and the data for each activity was presented as the mean value ± standard deviation (SD). Significant difference among means was tested by one way ANOVA (Duncan's test) using SPSS 16.0 and correlation between phenolic content, flavonoids content and the antioxidant activity was performed by Pearson's correlation test using SPSS 16.0. Significance level of p≤0.05 was considered as statistically significant level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present work was performed to evaluate the reducing or protecting power of natural antioxidants present in the *Ginkgo biloba* L. leaves and twig extracts.

Total phenol content (TPC)

Phenolic compounds are the important class of secondary metabolites that are synthesized by the plants in response to biotic and abiotic stresses. The total phenolic content was observed to be the highest in methanolic extract (285 ± 0.12 - 255 ± 0.51 mg GAE/g dry extract) followed by DCM (240 ± 0.73 - 210 ± 0.22 mg GAE/g dry extract) and hexane extract (165 ± 0.30 - 105 ± 0.50 mg GAE/g dry extract) for both leaf and twig (Table1). The leaf extracts had greater phenolic content as compared to twig extract. There are some previous reports on the antioxidative properties of some medicinal plants. The total phenolic content of methanolic rhizome extract of *Hedychium spicatum* Buch. Ham. ex D. Don from Uttarakhand was 4.692 ± 0.025 mg gallic acid equivalent/g dry^[25] while methanolic twig extract of *Ocimum tenuiflorum* from Pollachi, Tamilnadu showed 3.66 mg GAE/g dry weight phenol content and 2.84 mg GAE/g dry weight. Previous studies on the methanolic leaf extracts of *Ginkgo biloba* L. showed the total phenolic content of 75.30 ± 0.69 mg/g dry weight from Egypt.^[26]

Flavonoid content

Flavonoids are the important components of human and animal diet because of their common presence in the plants. The irregular consumption of plants for secondary metabolites has serious positive and negative consequences to health as they have different biological activities. Total concentration of flavonoids in the DCM leaf extract was 278.64 ± 0.77 mg QE/g dry weight while in the DCM twig extract was 263.52 ± 0.81 mg QE/g dry weight. Methanol leaf extract showed 257.04 ± 0.36 mg QE/g of flavonoid while methenolic twig extract showed 241.92 ± 0.35 QE/g dry weight. Hexane leaf and twig extracts showed 155.52 ± 0.37 and 142.56 ± 0.39 QE/g of flavonoids content respectively (Table 1). DCM leaf and twig extracts were observed to contain the highest flavonoids concentration. Flavonoids content estimated by a previous study in methanolic leaf extract of *Ginkgo biloba* L. was 84.59 ± 1.43 mg QE /g from Egypt.^[26]

Total FRAP

It has been observed that the transition metal ions contribute to the oxidative damage in neurodegenerative disorder like Alzheimer's and parkinsons disease and hence, determination of the iron (II) chelating activity of plant extract is of great significance. Total FRAP content

of leaf extract varied from 80 ± 0.65 to 224 ± 0.20 mg ascorbic acid equivalents (AAE)/g dry extract (Table 1). The FRAP content was found to be the highest for methanolic extract (224 ± 0.20 AAE/g dry extract for leaf and 241.92 ± 0.35 mg AAE/g dry extract for twig) and the lowest for hexane extracts (80 ± 0.65 AAE/g dry extract for leaf and 64 ± 0.38 AAE/g dry extract for twig). For DCM and hexane extracts, it was higher for leaf extract whereas with methanol extract, the FRAP content was higher for twig as compare to leaf.

DPPH scavenging activity

In the present study, free radical scavenging activity of *Ginkgo biloba* L. extracts of leaf and twig were evaluated. DPPH radical scavenging ability is helpful in evaluating the antioxidant potential of medicinal plants. The standard (ascorbic acid) EC_{50} value of $45.277 \mu\text{g/mL}$. It was observed that methanol and hexane leaf extracts showed better scavenging activity as compared to DCM leaf extract while vice versa was true for twig extracts (Figure 1). The order of DPPH scavenging activity for leaf extract was $HL > ML > DL$ and for twig extract was following the order : $DT > HT > MT$. Table 2 showed the scavenging effect of leaf extracts (HL, ML, DL) on DPPH radical and was observed in the following order: HL ($46.483 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> ML$ ($46.516 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> DL$ ($47.961 \mu\text{g/mL}$) while twig extracts were DT ($46.123 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> MT$ ($47.872 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> HT$ ($49.391 \mu\text{g/mL}$) in order. Hexane leaf and DCM twig extract showed the highest activity. DPPH free radical scavenging activity % of inhibition was 71% for leaf extract and 11% for twig extract. Methanolic extracts of *G. biloba* had a noticeable effect on scavenging free radical (75.86%) at a concentration of $150 \mu\text{g/mL}$.^[27]

Metal chelating property

Metal chelating standard showed $44.510 \mu\text{g/mL}$ EC_{50} value while leaf and twig extracts had activity in following order: DL ($48.941 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> ML$ ($49.012 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> HL$ ($49.333 \mu\text{g/mL}$) for leaf extracts while twig extracts had the following order: MT ($46.567 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> HT$ ($46.760 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> DT$ ($48.843 \mu\text{g/mL}$). DCM leaf and methanol twig extracts showed the highest chelating activity as shown in Figure 2. Methanolic twig extract showed maximum metal chelating activity among all extracts. The percentages of metal scavenging capacity at $200 \mu\text{g/mL}$ of methanolic extract of *Ginkgo biloba* L. found to be 32.2%^[27] *ABTS activity*.

ABTS standard showed $45.433 \mu\text{g/mL}$ EC_{50} value (Figure 3) while leaf and twig extracts had ABTS activity in following order: HL ($48.932 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> ML$ ($49.284 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> DL$ ($50.267 \mu\text{g/mL}$) for leaf extracts and $HT >$ ($47.967 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> MT$ ($48.180 \mu\text{g/mL}$) $> DT$ ($48.264 \mu\text{g/mL}$) for twig extracts. DCM leaf and methanol twig extracts showed the highest activity.

Correlation study

Correlation matrix revealed significant positive relationship of total phenolic contents with FRAP and DPPH antioxidant activity while flavonoid with FRAP antioxidant activity. Flavonoid content showed significant negative correlation with the antioxidant activity performed by metal chelating method (Table 3).

Table 1: Total phenolic, flavonoid and FRAP content of the leaf and twig extracts and extract yield.

Antioxidant assays	Leaf extract			Twig extract		
	Hexane	Methanol	DCM	Hexane	Methanol	DCM
Phenolic content (mg gallic acid equivalent (GAE)/g dry weight)	165.00±0.30 ^b	285.00±0.12 ^f	240.00±0.73 ^d	105.00±0.50 ^a	255.00±0.51 ^e	210.00±0.22 ^c
Frap	80.00±0.65 ^b	224.00±0.20 ^f	144.00±0.30 ^d	64.00±0.38 ^a	192.00±0.32 ^e	112.00±0.33 ^c
Flavinoid AAE /100 g dry weight	155.52±0.37 ^b	257.04±0.36 ^d	278.64±0.77 ^f	142.56±0.39 ^a	241.92±0.35 ^c	263.52±0.81 ^e
Extract yield (%(w/w))	0.77±0.21 ^b	5.64±0.23 ^f	0.59±0.04 ^a	1.50±0.15 ^d	4.50±0.25 ^e	1.00±0.05 ^c

Table 2: EC₅₀ values (µg/mL) of different antioxidants activities.

Plant part	DPPH (standard 45.28 µg/mL)			Metal (standard 44.52 µg/mL)			ABTS (standard 45.43 µg/mL)		
	Hexane	Methanol	DCM	Hexane	Methanol	DCM	Hexane	Methanol	DCM
Leaf	46.48	46.52	47.96	49.333	49.01	48.94	48.93	49.28	50.27
Twig	49.39	47.87	46.12	46.76	46.57	48.84	47.97	48.18	48.26

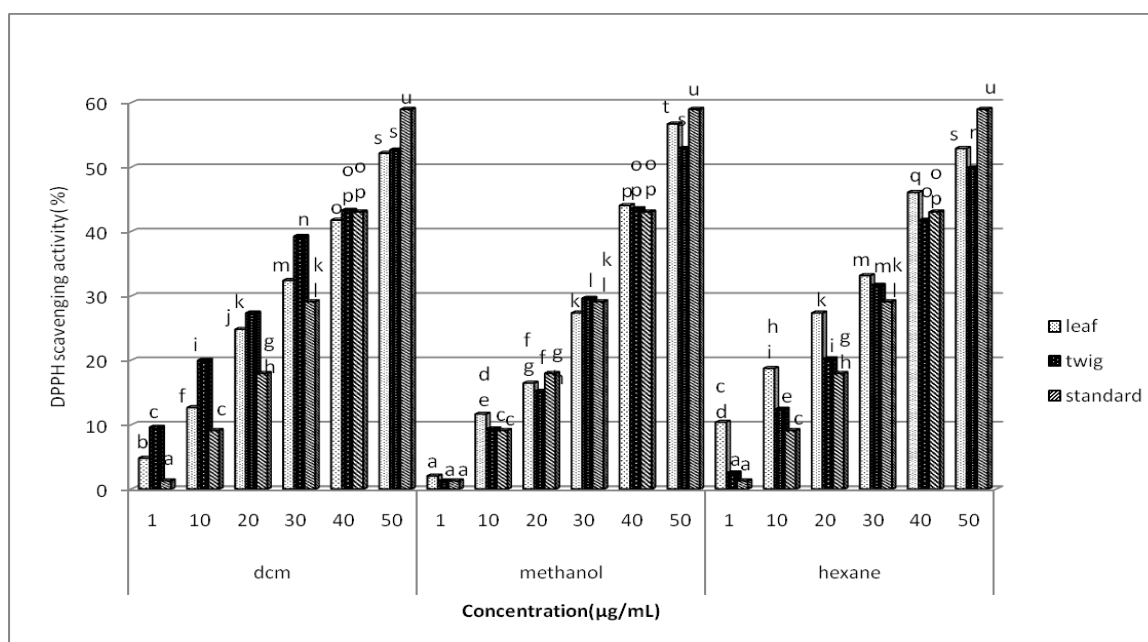


Figure 1: Comparative DPPH scavenging activity in *Ginkgo biloba* L. leaf and twig extracts with standard

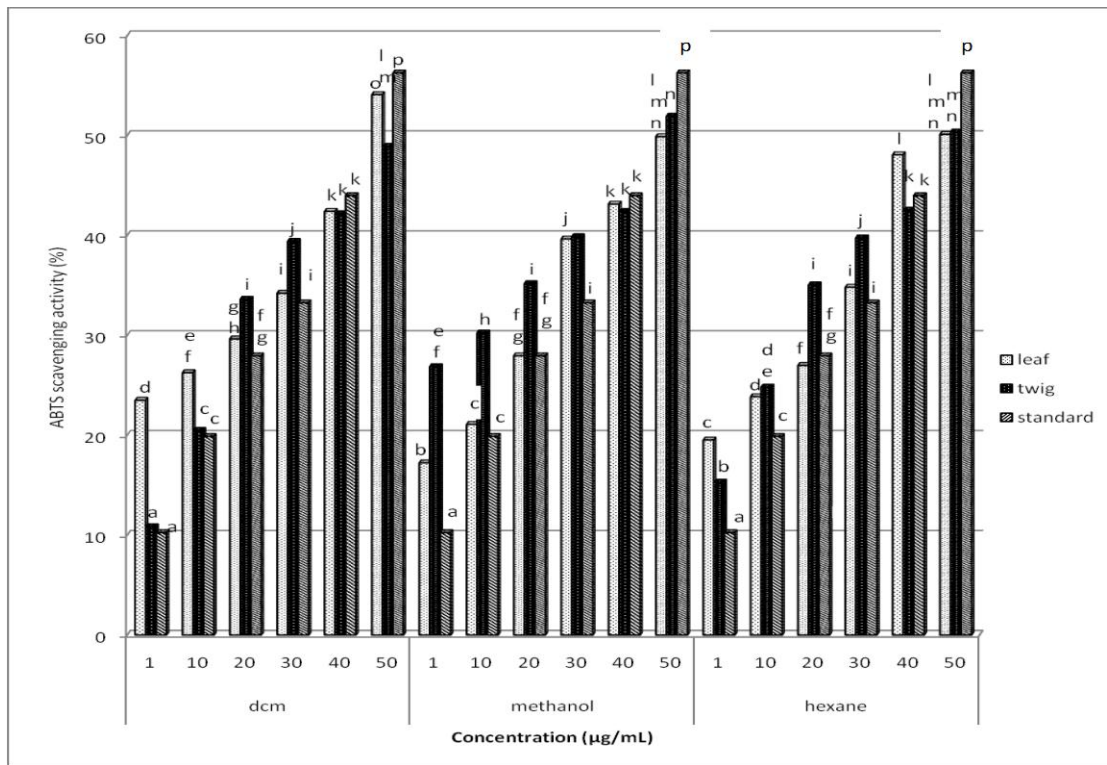


Figure 2: Comparative ABTS radical scavenging activity in *Ginkgo biloba* leaf and twig extracts with standard

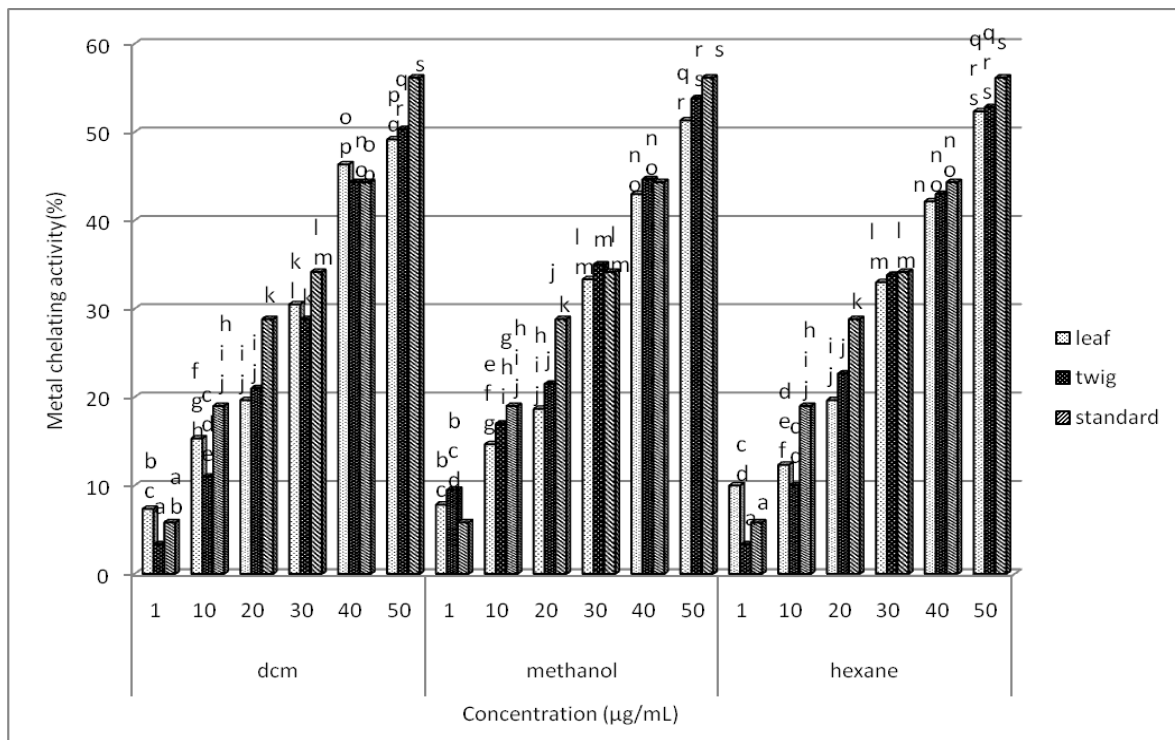


Figure 3: Comparative metal chelating ability of *Ginkgo biloba* L. leaf and twig extracts with standard

Table 3: Correlation between total phenolic and flavonoid contents and antioxidant activity in *Ginkgo biloba* L.

	DPPH	ABTS	Metal	Frap	Phenol	flavonoid
DPPH	1	-0.145	-0.161	0.200	0.675**	0.420
ABTS		1	-0.099	0.332	0.226	0.289
Metal			1	0.731**	-0.229	-0.502*
Frap				1	0.591**	0.894**
Phenol					1	0.857**
Flavonoid						1

CONCLUSION

In the present study, analysis of antioxidant activity (DPPH, ABTS, Metal chelating and FRAP) revealed that *Ginkgo biloba* L. methanolic leaf and twig extracts had the best FRAP activity. Leaf extracts showed better antioxidant activities as compared to twig extracts.

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