

**A BRIEF REVIEW OF MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF KUTAJA
(*HOLARRHENA ANTIDYSENTERICA* LINN.) FROM KOSHA AND
NIGHANTUS**

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ABSTRACT

Herbal medicines are significant and reliable sources for treating various diseases. Plants have been the basis for medicinal treatment since the beginning of human farming. There is an increasing demand for plant-based medicines, health products, pharmaceuticals, food supplements, cosmetics etc. Nighantu means the collection of words, synonyms and the names of the medicinal plants along with their thorough description, which significantly helps us to know the meanings of mysterious names of medicinal plants. Kutaja is one of the important medicinal herbs of family Apocynaceae. It possesses powerful antidiarrhetic, anthelmintic, carminative, digestive

properties. It has also been used successfully by Ayurvedic practitioners for treatment of Raktapitta, Atisar, Kushtha and Raktarsha. The present work aims to discuss Kutaja in various nighantu as the manuscript or just as the evidence in chronological order.

KEYWORDS: Nighantu, Kutaja, *Holarrhena antidysenterica*, Raktapitta, Atisar.

INTRODUCTION

In India, Ayurveda Medicinal System is based on herbs. Herbal medicines also known as herbalism or botanical medicine is the use of the herbs for their therapeutic or medicinal value. Herbal medicines are significant and reliable source for treating various diseases. Herbal plants produce and contain a variety of chemical substance that acts upon the body.

Plants have been the basis for medicinal treatment through much of human history and such traditional medicine is still widely practised today.^[1]

Nighantu means the collection of words, synonyms and the names of the medicinal plants along with their thorough description. The Nighantu literature is one of the important aspects in the study of Ayurveda and especially in the subject of Dravyaguna Vijnana. Earlier Nighantus were limited to explain the synonyms of dravyas only. But later on, the description of properties, action and indications of dravyas were also included in the Nighantus along with synonyms.^[2]

Holarrhena Antidysenterica commonly known as Kurchi, Kurci or Kutaja is one of the important medicinal herbs of family Apocynaceae. Kutaja is a large shrub or a small deciduous tree with exfoliating bark and milky latex.^[3] Kutaja occurs almost throughout India, up to or altitude of 1250 meters often gregariously in deciduous forest and open wetland, especially abundant in the Sub Himalayan tracts. Acharya Charaka quoted Kutaja tvak as the best sangrahika dravya. It possesses properties like Deepana and Pachana, which is useful in the management of Diarrhoea. The bark and seeds are bitter, astringent, powerful antidysenteric, anthelmintic, carminative and digestive. Both are useful in Amoebic Dysentery, Diarrhoea, Hepatic and Gastric disorder, Internal Haemorrhages, Bleeding Piles, Fever, Worm infestations, wound and skin disorders.^[4] Kutaja is explained in almost all the important nighantus with variety of synonyms and guna karma.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Some important Nighantu and Kosha which described Kutaja are discussed here in Chronological order -

Amarkosha (5th cent. A.D.)

This book is compiled by Amar Singh. Amarkosa is also known as Namlinganusasana. In this book, total subject was divided into three kanda. Kutaja has been mentioned in the Vanaushadhi Varga of Dwitiya kanda. Following synonyms of Kutaja are mentioned i.e. Kutaja, Shakra, Vatsak, Girimallika.^[5]

(A.K. Kanda-2/ Vanaushadhi Varga-4/ Shloka 66)

Sausruta Nighantu (6th cent. A.D.)

Based on Susruta samhita. In this Nighantu, Kutaja has been described in Aragwadhadi gana. Following synonyms are mentioned here- Indravriksha, Vrikshak, Pandurdrum, Vartikta, Yavphal, Shakra, Yava.^[6]

(Sau.Ni. /Aragwadhadi gana/ Shloka 38)

Ashtanga Nighantu (8th cent. A.D.)

In this Nighantu, Kutaja has been mentioned in Aragwadhadi gana and Vatsakadi gana. Following synonyms mentioned in Aragwadhadi gana are Kalingak, Indrayava, Vatsak, Kautaja phala. Synonyms mentioned in Vatsakadi gana are Vantikta, Kutaja, Girimallika, Vrikshak, Shakra Vriksh, Vatsak and Kutaja.^[7]

(Ast.Ni./Aragwadhadi gana/Shloka 71)

(Ast.Ni./Vatsakadi gana/Shloka 145)

Dhanvantari Nighantu (10th to 13th Cent. A.D.)

This nighantu is composed by Mahendra Bhogika in between 10th to 13th century A.D. In this nighantu, the author has mentioned the synonyms as well as the properties and action of drugs. Kutaja has been mentioned in Shatpushpadi Varga. The synonyms given in this text are Kutaja, Kautaja, Kauta, Vatsak, Girimallika, Kalinga, Mallikapushpa, Indravriksha, Vrikshak. It is Katu, Tikta, Kashaya in rasa and Ruksha, Sheeta in guna. It is indicated in Kushtha, Raktarsha, Atisar. Its seeds are known as Indrayava. Synonyms mentioned are Shakravah, Kalingaka, Vatsakbeej and Bhadrayava. It is Katu, Tikta and Ushnavirya. It is Trisdoshhar, Agnideepak and indicated in Raktarsha, Atisar, Shool.^[8]

(D.Ni. / Shatpushpadi Varga/ Shloka 13-16)

Sodhala Nighantu (12th cent. A.D.)

This Nighantu was composed by Sodhala in two parts named as Namasangraha dealing with synonyms and Gunasangraha dealing with properties and actions. Kutaja is described in Shatpushpadi Varga. Synonyms mentioned are Kutaja, Kataja, Kohi, Vatsak, Girimallika, Kalinga, Mallikapushpa, Indravriksha, Vrikshak, Vartikta, Yavaphala, Nilayashti, Kuti. It is indicated in Arsha, Atisar, Twakdoshar. Its seeds are known as Indrayava. Synonyms mentioned are Shakravah, Kalingaka, Yavaphala, Sangrahi, Bhadrayava. It is indicated in Raktapitta, Atisar, and Jwar.^[9]

(So.Ni. / Shatpushpadi Varga / Shloka 263, 296-297)

Abhidhana Ratnamala (13th Cent. A.D.)

It is also known as Sadrasa Nighantu. Kutaja has been placed in Tiktadravyaskandha and synonyms mentioned here are as follows- Kutaja, Mallikapushpa, Girij, Girimallika, Vatsak, Shakravriksha, Kshavaka, Vantiktak. Synonyms of seeds given are Indrayava, Bhadravyava, Kallingak.^[10]

(Abhi. Rt. /Tiktadravyaskandha / Shloka 34)

Hridayadipaka Nighantu (13th Cent. A.D.)

The author of this work is Bopdev, son of Keshava. The subject matter of this work is well divided into eight Vargas. In this nighantu, Kutaja is mentioned in Dwipaad Varga. Synonyms mentioned are Kutaja, Vatsak, Shakra, Vrikshak, Girimallika.^[11]

(Hr. Ni. / Dwipaad Varga/ Shloka 46)

Madanpala Nighantu (14th Cent. A.D.)

This text is composed by Madanpala in 1431 A.D. It is also known as Madan Vinod Nighantu. Its contents are divided in 13 Vargas. Kutaja has been included in Abhayadi Varga. Synonyms are as follow Kutaja, Mallikapushpa, kalinga, Girimallika, Vatsak, Kotivrikshak, Shakrabhuru, Kutaja. It is Katu, Ruksha, Laghu. It is indicated in Arsha, Atisar, Kushtha, and Trishna. Its seeds synonyms are Indrayava, Indraphala, Shakravah, Puruhut, Bhadravyava. It is Sheeta, Katu, Tridosahar, Sangrahi and used in Atisar, Jwar, Raktadosh, Krimi, Visarpa.^[12]

(Mad.Ni./Abhayadi Varga /Shloka 145-148)

Rajanighantu (14th Cent. A.D.)

It is also known as Nighantu Raja, Abhidhana Chudamani. This book is written by Narhari Pandit. This text is divided into 23 Vargas. Kutaja is included in Prabhadradi Varga. Synonyms mentioned are Kutaja, Kautaja, Shakra, Vatsak, Girimallika, Kalinga, Mallikapushpa, Pravrishya, Shakrapadap, Vartikta, Yavaphala, Sangrahi, Pandurdrum, Pravrishenya, Mahagandha. It is Katu, Tikta, Kashaya and Ushnavirya. It is indicated in Raktapitta, Twakdosha and Arsha. Its seed known as Indrayava. Synonyms are Shakravah, Shakrabeej, Vatsakbeej, Bhadrara, Kutajaphala, Bhadravyava, Vijanta, Kutaja, Kalingabeej. It is Katu, Tikta, Sheeta. It is Tridoshar, Dahshamaka and used in Atisar, Jwar, shool.^[13]

(R.Ni. / Prabhadradi Varga / Shloka 53-56)

Kaiyadev Nighantu (15th Cent. A.D.)

Author of this text is Kaiyadeva. It is also known as Pathyapathya Vibodhak Nighantu. The text is divided in 9 Vargas. Kutaja has been described in Aushadhi Varga. Synonyms of Shwet kutaja mentioned are Kutaja, Vatsak, Kohi, Kalinga, Girimallika, Utsak, Mallikapushpa, Vrishak, Vartiktaka. Synonyms of other type are Vanshkutji, Kutaji, Nilayashtika. It is Kashaya, Katu in rasa; sheeta, Ruksha in guna. It is indicated in Kaphapitta and Raktavikara, Kushtha, Atisar, Trishna, Krumi, Amadosh, Arsha. Synonyms of seeds mentioned are Bhadravyava, Shakravahayava, Kalingak, Kautaj, Nirryava, Indraka. It is Katu, Tikta, Ishatushna. Indicated in Agnideepan, Pachan, Tridoshar, Kushtha, Jwar, Visarpa, Shool, Arsha, Raktarshastravnashak.

Flowers of kutaja are Tikta, Kashaya, laghu and Sheetavirya. It is indicated in Kaphapittarakta, Kushtha, Atisar and Kruminashaka.^[14]

(K.Ni. / Aushadhi Varga / Shloka 892-897)

Bhavaprakash Nighantu (16th Cent. A.D.)

This book is composed by Bhavmishra. This text is divided into two parts-Purvardha and Uttarardha. Purvardha is related with Rasashastra and Kayachikitsa. Uttarardha is concerned with Dravyaguna. It is divided in 23 Vargas. In this Nighantu Kutaja has been described Guduchyadi Varga by the synonyms Kutaja, Kautaj, Vatsak, Girimallika, Kalinga, Shakrashakhi, Mallikapushpa, Indra, Yavaphal, Vrikshak, Pandurdrum. It is Katu, Ruksha, Agnideepak and Sheeta. It is indicated in Arsha, Atisar, Kaphapittarakta vikara, Trisha and Kushtha.^[15]

(B.P.Ni. / Guduchyadi Varga / Shloka 116-118)

Nighantu Adarsa (19th Cent. A.D.)

This book was published in Gujarat, its author is Bapalalji. In this Nighantu Kutaja has been described in Kutajadi Varga. In this book nirukti has been given along with its synonyms as Kutaja, Shakra, Vatsak, Girimallika, Indravriksha, kalinga. Its rasa is Katu, Kashaya, Tikta; Katu vipaka, Ushna virya and kaphvaatnashak. The parts used are Twacha, Beej, Pushpa. It is indicated in Atisar, Arsha, Trishna, Kushtha. Synonyms of seeds mentioned are Indrayava, Bhadravyava. Its rasa –Katu, Tikta; Virya-sheeta, Vipaka-Katu, Doshaghnta-Tridosh.^[16]

(Ni. Ad. / Kutajadi Varga)

Madhav Dravyaguna (19th cent. A.D)

The author of this text is Shri Madhav. It is also known as Bhavaswabhavavadah. Kutaja is described in Vividhausadhi Varga. It is indicated in Kaphapittarakta and Twak vikaar, Arsha, Atisar. Seeds are indicated in Raktapitta, Atisar and Jwar.^[17]

(Madh.Dg /Vividhausadhi varga /Shloka 21).

Priya Nighantu (20th Cent. A.D.)

This Nighantu is written by Acharya Priyavrat Sharma. Synonyms mentioned are Indravriksha, Kutaja, Vatsak, Girmallika. It is tikta, Kashaya, Kaphapitta shoshak, Sangrahi, Deepan, Krumighna, Amapachan. Indicated in Ama-atisar, Raktarsha, Kaphapitta vikara. Its Seeds are Known as Indrayava and its properties are same as kutaja.^[18]

(P. Ni. /Haritakyadi Varga / Shloka 58-62)

Saligram Nighantu

This Nighantu was composed by Saligram. It is divided in two parts as Purvardha and Uttarardha. Purvardha has 23 Vargas while Uttarardha has Anupanadi and Mishrka Varga. Kutaja is included in Guduchyadi Varga. Synonyms mentioned are Kutaja, Shakraparyay, Vatsak and Girmallika. It is indicated in Arsha, Atisar, Trishna, Kaphapittarakta vikar, Kushtha and Ama.^[19]

(S.Ni./ Guduchyadi Varga)

DISCUSSION

Nowadays, Population is dependent on the traditional system of medicine due to overuse of synthetic drugs which results in a higher incidence of adverse drug reaction, so it is essential to intensify the study of medicinal plants. The present study revealed that with the help of literature i.e. Kosha and Nighantu, we may assess the therapeutic value of a drug very easily and take benefits by using them.

As outlined above results from various Nighantu studies indicates Kutaja has Katu, Tikta rasa, Katu vipaka, Sheeta Virya, Laghu, Ruksha guna and Kaphapittahara. It possess many qualities as Deepana, Grahi, Jwarghna, Atisarghna, Arshoghna, Krimighna, Kushthaghna, Upashoshana, Raktastambhana, Dhatushoshana, Vamaka. It possess antitubercular, antispasmodic, antiprotozoal, antifungal, antiamebic, anti-giardiac activities. According to Nighantus, Kutaja can be used in various forms or medium. The review indicates that Kutaja may be useful in many ailments.

CONCLUSION

The present review on Kutaja from different Nighantus in chronological order can be useful to get collective information of drug at a glance. Various synonyms and properties of Kutaja along with medicinal uses were described in different Nighantus which can be useful in treating various ailments. Most of the Nighantus have mentioned that Kutaja has significant use in Raktapitta (Hemoptysis), Raktarsha (Hemorrhoid), Kushtha (Skin disorders), Jwar (Fever), Krimi (Worm infestations) etc.

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