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RESEARCH ARTICLE

AYURVEDIC REVIEW ON EFFICACY OF SAHACHARA

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Ayurveda being a nature-based system of medicine have a wealth of therapeutic herbs and among there one of them being the most effectively employed is Sahachara. Sahachara is an Ayurvedic herb mentioned in various Ayurvedic Samhitas and Nighantus. It is a folk medicine used in different regions of India. Sahachara is a multipurpose drug also used worldwide due to presence of its unique properties and wide range of phytochemical constituents present in it. Sahachara is known by various vernacular names in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and other traditional system of medicine as Sahachara, Kurantaka, Vajradanti, Kat-Sareya, Peela-Bansa etc. In Ayurveda, Sahachara is mentioned as one of type of Saireyaka. Two Varieties of Saireyaka are mentioned in Ashtang Hridyam, other Samhitas and authentic textbooks of Ayurveda also. Its vast description is also available in Nighantu.

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INTRODUCTION

Sahachara is one of type of plant Saireyaka mentioned in Ayurveda. Four varieties of Saireyaka, viz. Rakta, Peeta, Neela, Shweta are mentioned in Nighantus. Sahachara is discussed by different Acharyas in Brihattrayee (Charaka, Sushruta, Astanga Samhita) and Laghuttrayee (Bhavprakas, Sharangdhara etc). Botanical name of Sahachara is Barleria prionitis, belongs to Acantheaceae family and genus Barleria which has total 300 species. It is a perennial, bushy medicinal plant found extensively in India^[1]. Sahachara is an indigenous plant of Africa and south Asia. Along with the whole plant its particular part like flower, roots, stem, leaf, bark has their specific therapeutical action against numerous diseases. Apart from the therapeutical properties, it is also used as decorative plant. Sahachara is commonly known as 'Yellow Nail Dye Plant' in English.

Vernacular Names / Local Names^[2]

Sanskrit: Bana, Jhinti, Katasarika, Kuranta, Kurantaka, Peetapushpaka, Peetsariyaka, Sahachara, Saireyaka, Shwetapushpa.

Hindi: Sahachara, Katsareya, Vajradanti, Peela-bansa

English: Porcupine flower, Crossandra, Barleria, Yellow Nail Dye Plant.

Urdu: Peela-bansa, Piya-bansa.

Marathi: Koranta, Koranti, Kalsunda.

Botanical Classification^[3]

Botanical name:	Barleria prionitis
Family:	Acanthaceae
Kingdom:	Plantae
Subkingdom:	Tracheobionta
Division	Magnoliophyta
Class:	Magnoliopsida
Subclass	Asteridae
Order:	Scrophulariale
Genus:	Barleria
Species:	prionitis

Morphological Description ^[4]: *Sahachara* is an erect perennial shrub of 0.6-1.5 m. height and the plant is very much branched. *Sahachara* is usually prickly shrub and the spines (spikes) are about 1-2 cm long.

Stem: The plant is usually single stemmed but branched, and the bark of the plantis whitish in color.

Leaves: The leaves are about 9-18 in number and up to 2.5-5.7 cm. Leaves are elliptic and pointed with a fine point. Leaf has hair (ciliated) on the margin and the base is wedge shaped. Dotted glands are present beneath the surface of leaf. Tip of the leaf is bristle. Arrangement of leaves is like- glabrous at above and more or less pubescent (especially the young leaves) are beneath. The base of leaf is tapering into the petiole. Usually 3 (sometimes more or less) divaricate acicular spines are present in the axils.

Flowers: Morphologically the flowers are solitary or in cyamose cluster in lower axils and often sessile and becoming spicate above. The flowers are whitish and golden yellow in color. According to the color of flower *Sahachara* is categorized in two varieties i.e. White-flowered variety and Yellow-flowered variety. Flowering is usually from November to January. Flowers are used as garlands.

Fruit: The fruit is present as ovoid capsule and having usually single seeded or sometimes two seeded. The fruit of Sahachara is appressed hairy. Fruiting is from January and onwards.

Seeds: Seed of plant *Sahachara* is 8 mm. in diameter and is compressed, clothed with silky appressed hairs.

Varietes of Sahachara^[5]

- White-flowered variety: This variety is bitter, sweetish; heating, alexiteric, useful in toothache, leucoderma, blood complaints, bronchitis, itch, etc.
- **Yellow-flowered variety:** This variety is bitter, acrid; heating, appetiser, useful in diseases of the skin and the blood, itching, pruritis, inflammations.

Classification In Ayurveda: *Sahachara* is found in following four varites ^[6]

- **Peeta:** This variety is mentioned in *Bhavprakash* Nighantu, in Abhidhan Ratnamala in Tiktaskanda^[7] as Kurantaka, in Naam Samghraha and Dhanvantari Nighantu in Guduchiyadi Varga^[8]
- **Rakta:** It is mentioned in *Dravya Naam Samgraha* ^[9] and *Nighantu Shisha* ^[10].
- *Neela*: It is mentioned in *Kaiydev Nighantu* ^[11] and in *Dhanvantari Nighantu*.
- *Shweta*: It is mentioned in *Naam Samgraha* and *Kaiydev Nighantu*.

Rasa Panchaka:^[12] Rasa: Madhura, TiktaGuna: Guru, Snigdha Virya: Ushna

Vipak: Katu

Karma: Vata-hara, Kapha-hara, Deepana, Pachana, Shophahara, Visha-hara, Kesh-Ranjana.

Important Formulations: Sahacharadi Taila, Nilikadya Taila, Ashthavarga Kwatha Chura, Rasnarandadi Kwatha Churna etc.

Therapeutic Uses: Vata-Kapha Vyadhi, Kustha, Kandu, Vatarakta, Palit etc.

Action of Sahachara

Doshaghanata: *Vata* and *Kapha Shamaka* **Dhatugamitva:** Rakta, Shukra, Rasa

Indications: Vata- Vyadhi, Vrana, Kustha, Shotha, Vidradhi, Gandamala, Raktavikara, Sarvangshotha, etc.

The whole plant, and especially the root is much used as a diuretic. A medicated oil is prepared by boiling the leaves and stems of Sahachara with an oil having Madhura Vipaka until all the water content has been evaporated. This oil is used in *Vata- Vyadhi* and for the cleaning of wounds^[14]. In the Konkan, the dried bark is given in whooping cough, and two tolas of the juice of the fresh bark with milk in anasarca; it acts as a diaphoretic and expectorant. The juice of the leaf is used by the natives in Madras in catarrhal affections of children, accompanied with fever. The ashes of the burnt plant, mixed with kanjee and water, are used in dropsy, and anasarca, and also in coughs. In Bombay, the natives apply the juice of the leaves to their feet in the rainy season to prevent cracking. A tooth paste made of the astringent leaves and common salt is used to strengthen the gums and in tooth-ache due to caries. In La Reunion, the plant is credited with diuretic, febrifugal, and Anti-catarrhal properties.

Action on Dosha, Dhatu, and Mala

Dosha: Sahachara pacifies the "Vata" and "Kapha" Dosha, contributing to its role in managing conditions associated with their imbalance.

Dhatu: The effects of Sahachara extend to multiple tissues ("*Dhatu*"), with a significant influence on the "*Rasa*" *Dhatu* (plasma) and "*Rakta*" *Dhatu* (blood tissue).

Mala: Sahachara's potential impact on the "Kapha" Dosha may contribute in maintaining balanced Mala (waste products) elimination.

AYURVEDIC DESCRIPTION

Charak Samhita: In *Charak Samhita, Sahachara* is also mentioned with name *Kurantaka*. In *Charak Chikitsa, Sahachara* is mentioned in chapter *Vata Vyadhi Chikitsa* in the formulation of oil (*Sahachara Taila*)^[13]. *Sahachara* posseses *Guru, Snigdha Guna* and *Ushna Virya* which are opposite to *Vata's Laghu, Ruksha* and *Sheeta Guna*, hence pacifies vitiated *Vata Dosha*.

In *Trimarmiya Adhyaya*, *Sahachara* is mentioned as *Zhinti* (*Neela Sahachara*) in the treatment of *Palitya*.^[14] According to *Acharya Charak*, *Pitta* and *Vata Doshas* are mainly responsible for the diseases *Palitya*. Here with the *Madhur Rasa* and *Snighda Guna*, *Sahachara* normalizes the vitiated *Vata* along with *Kapha Dosha*.

Sushruta Samhita: Acharya Dalhan mentioned Sahachara as *Peeta Pushpa* in Araghwadhadi Gana. Sahachara dwaya has been mentioned as *Rakta* and *Neel* in Varunadi gana, ^[15] and indicated in Kaphaj-Vata Vikara. Karma of the drug Sahachara is Vata and Kapha Shaman.

Ashtang Hridaya: In Ashtang Hridaya, Sahachara Yugma is mentioned in Varunadi Gana in Shodhanadigana Sanghraha Adhyaya ^[16]. Acharya Arundatta mentioned Sahachara yugma as Kurubaka (Rakta) and Kurantaka (Peeta). Kurantak is also mentioned in Visarpa for external application, and application to eyes after Arma Shastra Karma. Total four references of Kurantaka are found in Ashtang Hridaya.

Bhavprakash Samhita: Bhavprakash mentioned Peeta Sahachara as Kurantaka (in Mishra Prakaran). Sahachara is mentioned in Ardra Dravya Vishesh, as a Kalka Dravya in Anuvasan Taila. It is also mentioned for Vata Vyadhi as Kwath Dravya in Mahanarayan Taila. It is also described in Jwara Adhikaran, in Sandhik Sannipataj Jwara Awastha^[17] because the symptoms of Sandhik Jwara are specifically found in bones (Asthi) and joint (Sandhi) like pain and swelling in bones and joint and same symptoms are found in Aam Vata. Asthi is the main site (Adhisthaan) of Vata Dosha. So, basically Vata Dosha is responsible for the development of above diseases i.e., Vata-Vyadhi, Sandhik Jwara and Aam Vata. To normalize the vitiated Vata, the drug Sahachara is used because it has opposite Guna i.e. Guru and Snighda, which are opposite to Vata's Laghu and Ruksha Guna.

Yog-Ratnakara: In *Yoga Ratnakara, Sahachara* is mentioned in *Vata Vyadhi* in *Shadasthi Guggulu. Vata Prakopaka Nidana* like the *Ahara* which are of *Sheeta, Ruksha Guna* and *Ushna Virya* cause vitiation of *Vata Dosha*. So, to normalize the vitiated *Vata*, the drug having opposite *Guna* and *Vipaka* that of *Vata* i.e. *Snighda, Guru* and *Ushna Virya* will help to balance the *Vata Dosha*.

Sharangdhar Samhita: Sahachara is mentioned as *Kurantaka* in *Sharandhar Samhita's Madhyam Khand*. Kashyap Samhita *Sahachara Dwaya* has been mentioned as *Neela* and *Rakta* in *Baalgraha Chikitsa* and *Dhatri Chikitsa*.

Bhaishajya Ratnavali^{[18].} In *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*, reference of *Sahachara* is found in *Sootika Roga Chikitsa*.

Description in Nighantu

Abhidhaan Manjiri:^[19] Shweta and Neela varities of Sahachara are mentioned in Abhidhaan Manjiri.

Abhidhaan Ratnamala:^[20] In *Abhidhaan Ratanmala*, *Nighantu* mentioned total of three varities of *Saireyaka* as *Peeta*, *Neela* and *Aruna*. Description about *Peeta Saireyaka* is given in *TikitaSkandh* as *Kurantaka*.

Ashtang Nightanu:^[21] In *Ashtang Nighantu*, about two varities of *Saireyaka* are mentioned as *Peeta* and *Neela*.

Madanadi Nighantu:^[22] In *Madanadi Nighantu, Saireyaka* is mentioned in *Chaturdasha Gana*.

Naam Samgraha:^[23] In *Guguchaydi varga*, four varities of *Saireyaka* are mentioned according to colour of flowers. Variety with *Peeta* flowers is accepted as *Kurantaka*.

Nighantu Shisha:^[24] Three varities of *Saireyaka* along with their specific names are mentioned in *Nighantu Shisha*. *Kurantaka* is mentioned as *Peeta Pusha*, *Rakta* as *Artagala* and *Neela* as *Vasa/Dasi/Audakya*.

Dhanvantari Nighantu:^[25] In *Guduchyadi varga*, three types of *Saireyaka* are mentioned according to the colour of flowers - *Peeta*, *Rakta* and *Neela*. *Peeta* variety is mentioned as *Kurantaka*, and *Rakta* is mentioned as *Kurubaka*. *Dhanvantari Nighantu* has specially mentioned *Guna-karma* of *Kurantaka* and having action as "*Tri doshashamak*".

Kaiyadev Nighantu:^[26] Kaiyadev Nighantu has mentioned about all four variety of Saireyaka, one with Peeta Pushpa is known as Kurantaka. Vata and Kapha Hara, Kushtha, Kandu, Visha Hara are mentioned as Guna Karma of Saireyaka. Synonyms of Saireyaka are given as Saireyaka, Sahachara, Saireya, Mrudukantak. Guna are mentioned as Tikta, Madhur, Ushna, Snigdha, Kesh Ranjak, Kapha-Vata Raktavikaar Hara, Kustha, Kandu, Visha Nashak.

Madanpal Nighantu:^[27] *Kurantaka* is mentioned as *Peeta Saireyaka* in *Madanpal Nighantu*. Two other varities like *Rakta* and *Neela* are also mentioned.

Raj Nighantu:^[28] In *Raj Nighantu*, seven synonyms of *Kurantaka* are mentioned in *Karviradi varga* having *Ushna Virya* and *Vata-Kapha Hara* action.

Bhavprakash Niganthu:^[29] *Bhavprakash* has mentioned *Kurantaka* should be always taken in wet form in *Aushadh Graham* rules. And '*Kurantaka*' is the name given to *Peeta Saireyaka*.

Important Phytoconstituents *Sahachara*'s pharmacological attributes are attributed to its diverse collection of phytoconstituents:

- Alkaloids: These compounds contribute to the plant's pharmacological activities.
- Flavonoids: Flavonoids are known for their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.
- **Triterpenoids:** Triterpenoids offer anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory effects.
- Saponins: Saponins have diverse biological activities, including anti-inflammatory and antifungal properties.

Diuretic Activity: Diuretic activity of *Barleria prionitis* flower extract show significant increase in the urination and sodium elimination but not potassium.

Anti-Hypertensive Action: Methanolic extract from whole plant of *Barleria prionitis* possessed profound antihypertensive activity.

Hepatoprotective Activity: The oral administration of IF (222 active fraction (iridoid enriched) of *Barleria prionitis* has a beneficial effect on the hepatoprotection. It may be suggested that the use of IF inhibits the hepatocellular metabolic alteration.

Anti-Diabetic Activity: The leaves and root of *Barleria* prionitis contains alcoholic extract having antidiabetic activity. *Barleria prionitis* leaves show significant decrease in blood glucose level, glycosylated hemoglobulin and significant increase in seruminsulin and liver glycogen level.

Anti-diarrhoeal Activity: The leaves of *Barleria prionitis* has Butanol fraction which show significant anti-diarrhoeal activity. The butanol fraction also reduces the gastrointestinal motility.

CONCLUSION

As per the Samhitas and Nighantus, the plant Sahachara is used in various forms for multiple therapeutic benefits. Katu, Tikta, Kashaya Rasa and Laghu, Sheeta, Ruksha Guna which are responsible for the vitiation of Vata Dosha. This vitiated Vata Dosha leads to the development of Vata Vyadhyis. The drug Sahachara has Madhura Rasa and Guru, Snighda Guna and Ushna Vipaka which pacifies Vata Dosha (Shaman of Vata Dosha) and hence, relives the sign and symptoms of disease by removing the root cause i.e, Vata Dosha, with the action of Madhura Rasa, Guru, Snighda Guna and Ushna Vipaka. Hence, it not only gives the symptomatic relief but removes the root cause of the disease. Results from various Samhitas and Nighantus also indicate that Sahachara possesses many qualities, including Doshaghanata and Kapha-Vata Shamaka action. It is also helpful in management of Vrana, Kustha, Shotha, Vidradhi, Gandamala, Raktavikara, Updansha, Sarvangshotha, Pratishayaya, Kaphaj Kasa, Jwara etc.

The chemical Compounds such as tannins, saponins, glycosides, phenolic acids, phytosterols, and terpenes have been identified in the plant. The plant Sahachara is scientifically known as Barleria prionitis, emerges as a dynamic botanical drug of Ayurveda. Sahachara is found as very effective and safe Ayurvedic drug with tremendous medicinal properties. Samhitas and Nighantus are the basic literature to understand and identify different medicinal plants. After review of Sahachara in different Samhitas and Nighantus different synonyms and properties of Sahachara along with multiple formulations and their medicinal uses has been explored. Along with these, pharmacological activities are also reported in Barleria prionitis. This plant attributes its unveiled role through its Rasa Panchaka (Rasa, Guna, Viriya, Vipaka, Prabhav), therapeutic indications, and potential formulations which testify its specific benefits for holistic health. Sahachara has multifaceted nature and its potential to enhance well-being in alignment with Ayurvedic principles.

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