



TULASI: A PRECIOUS HERB

Ayurveda

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KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION-

In Atharva Parishista and Shankara Dharmasutra we come across the mentioning about 'Tulasi'. However, Surasa is delineated as a forbidden leafy vegetable in Vishnu Dharmasutra.

It is quite interesting that Bruhatrayi not used the term 'Tulasi' to indicate it. Its synonyms Surasa is mainly used by them in their work while Acharya Charaka quoted Apetarakshasi as the synonyms.

Acharya Charaka included Tulasi under the name Surasa in the Shwasahara group. Today Tulasi is mainly famous as cough syrup base. However, its other properties are also important. The internal utility of Tulasi shall be in low doses and very restricted owing to their anti-implantation and anti-spermatogenic activities.

Acharya Sushruta described two kinds in the context of Surasadi Gana, Tulasi is used in Visha chikitsa also.

BOTANICAL NAME - Ocimum Sanctum Linn.

FAMILY - LAMIACEAE

SYNONYMS- Gramya, Apetarakshasi, Surasa, Bahumanjiri, Sulabha, Swarasa, Pavani, Gouri, Vishnuvallahba, Shulaghni.

VERNACULAR NAMES-

Hindi-Tulsi

English-Indian Tulasi/ Holy Tulasi/ Sacred Tulasi

Marathi-Tulasi

MAJOR CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS IN TULASI-

Bornyl acetate, Cadinene, Camphene, Camphor, Carvacrol, β -Caryophellene, Eugenol, Eugenol methyl ether, Humulene, Methyl chavicol, Limonene etc.

CLASSICAL CLASSIFICATION-

As per Acharya Charaka described in Shwasahara Gana.

As per Acharya Sushruta described in Surasadi Gana.

As per Acharya Vagbhata described in Surasadi Gana.

PROPERTIES-

Rasa- Katu, Tikta

Virya- Ushna

Vipaka- Katu

Guna- Laghu, Ruksha

KARMA- Kapha-Vatahara, Dipana, Krimighna, Putigandhahara.

INDICATIONS-

Hikka, Kasa, Shwasa, Visharoga, Parshvashula, Krimi, Vishama-Jwara.



Ocimum Sanctum (Tulasi)

THERAPEUTIC USES-

1. Khaphaja Kasa - Fresh juice of Krushna Tulasi is given with honey

(Charaka chikitsa 18).

2. Vishama-jwara -Fresh juice of Tulasi is given by adding black pepper powder (Sharangdhara Samhita).

PARTS USED- Leaf, Root, Seed.

DOSAGE- Fresh juice :10-20 ml

Root decoction: 50-100 ml

Seed powder:3-6 gm

IMPORTANT FORMULATIONS-

Surasadigana Kashaya, Surasadi Taila, Tumburvadi-Yoga, Nimbadi Lepa, Sahacharadi Taila.

DIFFERENT VARIETIES-

Acharya Bhavamishra quoted two varieties of Tulasi as

a) Shukla Tulasi (Ocimum Americanum Linn.)

b) Krushna Tulasi (Ocimum Sanctum Linn.)

In Ocimum genus the following species are medicinally used in the name of different kind of Tulasi. They are Ocimum Basilicum Linn. (Ocimum Minimum Linn.); Ocimum Gratissimum Linn; Ocimum sanctum; Ocimum Americanum and Ocimum Klimendscharicum.

BENEFITS-

- It reduces the blood pressure in Hypertension and also reduces high blood cholesterol. This lowers risk of Heart disease and their related weakness.
- Tulasi has strengthening effects on the Kidney.
- Tulasi brings cortisol levels down and make feel relax.
- Tulasi extract are known to possess radioactive properties which help fight off tumour cells and beat different types of cancer.
- Tulasi reduces blood glucose level in diabetes.
- Tulasi leaves gives hepatoprotective benefits.

DISTRIBUTION - Tulasi plant found throughout the India. Now being cultivated extensively.

MY OBSERVATIONS- In OPDs and IPDs in M.A Podar Govt Hospital from Mumbai, Maharashtra observations made for its advantages to get the relief in different ailments like Cough, Stress, Fever, Indigestion. It regulates blood pressure and lowers cholesterol. So, this is an attempt to aware the public for its benefit.

Research works on Tulasi-

- 1) Leaves shown abortifacient and antifertility activity. The aqueous extract (100 mg/kg) showed anti-implantation and abortifacient action (Vohora et al., 1969).
- 2) 50% Ethanolic extract of leaves showed hypoglycaemic effect in rats and antispasmodic activity against spasmogen-induced spasms in isolated guinea pig ileum (Dhar et al., 1968)
- 3) Crude watery extract of leaves showed transient hypotensive effect in anaesthetized dogs and cats and a negative inotropic and chronotropic effect on rabbit heart (Singh et al., 1970).
- 4) The Ether extract of leaves showed antibacterial activity (Joshi & Magar, 1952; Gupta & Vishwanatham, 1955); the essential oil also exhibited antibacterial activity (Grover & Rao, 1977).
- 5) Essential oil from leaves showed antifungal activity (Grover & Rao, 1977; Dey & Choudhuri, 1984; Singh et al., 1983, Sen et al., 1983).

- 6) Antiviral activity of leaf extract is reported (Roy et al., 1979; Tripathi & Tripathi, 1982).
- 7) Adaptogenic (Anti-stress) activity of *Ocimum Sanctum* plant (Dried powder) in rats and mice has been reported (Bhargava & Singh, 1981).

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4. Tulsi-The Wonder Herb (Pharmacological Activities of *Ocimum Sanctum*), *American Journal of Ethnomedicine*, by Sai Krishna and others, Volume 1 Issue 1, 89-95, 2014.
5. Therapeutic Benefits of Holy Basil (Tulsi) in general and oral medicine: A review, *International Journal of Research in Ayurveda and Pharmacy*, by Dr. Sumit Bhateja and Geetika Arora, Volume 3, Issue 6, 761-764, 2012.

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3. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc>
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