



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Ayurveda

RUDRAKSHA : THERAPEUTIC APPROACH IN AYURVEDA

KEY WORDS: Elaeocarpus ganitrus, Rasa panchaka, Formulations, Benefits, Antihypertensive

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ABSTRACT

Elaeocarpus is a genus comprising of evergreen broad-leaved trees and shrubs, belonging to family Elaeocarpaceae which is widely distributed in warm regions. In traditional system of medicine, different parts of rudraksha such as beads, bark, leaves and outer shell of beads are taken for the alleviation of various health problems such as mental disorders, headache, fever, skin diseases, and for healing the wounds. A categorization of rudraksha fruits as thermogenic, sedative, cough alleviator is mentioned in some ayurvedic texts and are useful for the treatment of bronchitis, neuralgia, cephalagia, anorexia, migraine, manic conditions and other brain disorders.

INTRODUCTION

“Elaeocarpus ganitrus” commonly called Rudraksha belongs to the Elaeocarpaceae family in India and it grows mainly in the Himalayan region¹. Rudrakshas are considered to be sacred and King of herbal medicine having many spiritual and medicinal values both as preventive and curative.² Type Elaeocarpus has about 360 species, found over Australia, East Asia, Malaysia and the Pacific Islands. Fom different parts of Asia, about 120 species belongs to this genus and 25 species out of this occur in India alone. According to Hindu mythology, Rudraksha beads bear a great religious, spiritual, and materialistic significance; also considers Rudraksha as symbol of link between earth and heaven. It is believed that it contains the secrets of evolution of entire cosmos within itself.³

BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION^{4,5}

It is a large evergreen tree having large leaves. Its height ranges from 50–200 feet. Leaves are large and shining green on the sun facing side and dull stringy on earth facing side. Flowers become visible in the month of April- May and are white or yellow in colour.

SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION^{5,6,20}

- Kingdom : Plantae
- Sub kingdom : Viridiplantae
- Super division : Embryophyta
- Division : Tracheophyta
- Sub division : Spermatophytina
- Class : Magnoliopsida
- Order : Oxalidales
- Family : Elaeocarpaceae
- Genus : Elaeocarpus
- Species : Ganitrus

MORPHOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION^{3,4,5}

Leaves are simple, glabrous, oblong-lanceolate, sub-entire or irregularly crenate, acute or acuminate. Flowers are White or yellow colored, in dense racemes and mostly from axils of fallen leaves, fringed petals, anthers are linear, appear in April-May. Having round or oval, small, violet or blue colored fruit and acidic in taste. The endocarp will be stony and is hard, globular, strongly tubercule, marked with 5 to longitudinal ridges, rarely 1 to 4, reddish brown in colour.



FIG 1 : RUDRAKSHA FRUIT



FIG 2 : RUDRAKSHA SEEDS



FIG 3 : FIVE MUKHI RUDRAKSHA

SYNONYM AND REGIONAL LANGUAGE NAMES^{4,5,7-10}

Different synonyms of Rudraksha mentioned in classical books like Bhavaprakash Nighantu, Raj Nighantu, Shankar Nighantu, Dravyaguna Vigyan, Nighantu Adarsha, etc. are Bhutanasana, Sivaksha, Sarwaksha, Paawana, Haraksha, Sivpriya.

The regional names include Utrasum bead tree , Wooden begger bead in English, Rudraksham in Malayalam, Rudraki in Hindi, Rudrakya in Bengali, Rudraksha or Ruttiratcam in Tamil.

MACROSCOPICAL EXAMINATION OF SEED¹¹

The seeds which are round or bulbous are of reddish brown in colour and on fully ripening it shows blueish colour. It is hard in texture and sour in taste. The size varies from ½ - 1 inch.

ACTIVE CONSTITUENTS^{3,20}

The Elaeocarpus ganitrus fruit have many phytoconstituents such as alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, carbohydrates, steroids, triterpenoids and cardiac glycosides. Also contains a significant amount of phytocomponents such as isoeleocarpicine, elaeocarpine, isoeleocarpine and quercetin, gallic, ellagic acids and rudrakine.

COMPOSITION OF RUDRAKSHA¹⁴

Rudraksha beads contains carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen and trace elements in combined form. Percentage composition of gaseous elements in rudraksha beads are 50.031%, 17.897%, 30.53%, 0.95% respectively.

AYURVEDIC PROPERTIES⁵

It is Madhura in rasa, guru (heavy) & snigdha (unctuous) in

guna, madhura in vipaka (sweet in post-digestive taste) and have sheetha virya (cooling potency). It is vrishya (aphrodisiac) and rasayana (rejuvenative). Because of all these attributes it is mainly Vatahara and has vata-pitta pacifying action on the body.

PARTS USED⁵

- Fruits
- Seed kernel

TYPES OF RUDRAKSHA^{9,18}

Rudraksha comes from 1 to 38 mukhis, but Rudraksha of 1 to 14 mukhis are commonly found. The five-faced Rudraksha are found easily and abundantly. One mukhi Rudraksha is extremely rare Rudraksha.⁹

Rudraksha beads can be put in water that is meant for regular drinking purposes. Preferably, a mud put can be used to soak the beads overnight and this is recommended for use in summer. When this water is consumed regularly in the morning on an empty stomach, it is found to control blood pressure and heart problems.

Here are details of the effects of Rudraksha of various mukhis on different parts of the body. This requires only wearing of rudraksha over the body in the form of a necklace or bracelet.

- 1 Mukhi :- Pineal, pituitary, optic chiasma, hypothalamus.
- 2 Mukhi :- Heart
- 3 Mukhi :- Throat, celiac plexus
- 4 Mukhi :- Adrenal, heart
- 5 Mukhi :- All major chakra points.
- 6 Mukhi :- Prostrate and reproductive organs, root Chakras
- 7 Mukhi :- Optic chiasma, pancreas
- 8 Mukhi :- Medulla Oblongata
- 9 Mukhi :- Pineal Pituitary
- 10 Mukhi :- Heart power
- 11 Mukhi :- Abstract nerve energy
- 12 Mukhi :- Cerebral hemisphere, hiatus of stomach, esophagus
- 13 Mukhi :- Celiac plexus, prostate
- 14 Mukhi :- Heart
- 15 Mukhi :- Ileocecal valve, lymphatic throat area system
- 16 Mukhi :- Thyroid thymus, spleen, pancreas
- 17 Mukhi :- Small intestine, lungs and bronchial tree
- 18 Mukhi :- Liver, womb
- 19 Mukhi :- Lungs bronchial
- 20 Mukhi :- Adrenal
- 21 Mukhi :- Reproductive organs

IMPORTANCE OF RUDRAKSHA IN AYURVEDA²⁰

Rudraksha has been in use as an Ayurvedic Medicine and finds mention in several books for herbal preparations both as a preventive and as a curative medicine. The residents of the area where rudraksha trees grow use the bark of the tree, its leaves and also the outer shell of the beads for various ailments, particularly mind-related disorders, headache, fever and skin diseases and to heal wounds. It is listed as a medicinal product in Indian Materia Medica. As is widely known, a man's health can be properly maintained by balancing vata, pitta and kapha and without having to resort to allopathic medicines and thus protecting from their side effects. As rudraksha influence the mind through its subtle electro-magnetic properties, many diseases can be cured using it.

There are a few published and unpublished research works on Rudraksha showing its effectiveness as a medicine. For example, tests carried out at the university of Mumbai have established its positive impact on intelligence and memory and on cardiac vascular disorders. There is ample scope for the bead to be used as an ingredient in making several herbal medicines. Experience of local residents of the areas where Rudraksha trees are found, have indicated that on mind related disorders and in the control of blood pressure.

Rudraksha is acidic and warm and controls vata and kapha. It removes headache, cures mental diseases. Our ancient epics mention the bead as useful for several ailments.

IMPORTANT FORMULATIONS OF ELAEOCARPUS GANITRUS^{9,13}

- Dhanwantharam gulika
- Chukkumtippalyadi gulika
- GoroChanadi gulika
- Mritasanjeevani gulika
- Suwarnamuktaadi gulika
- Rudraksha Churna
- Rudraksha Hima
- Rudraksha Lehyan
- Rudraksha Vibhuti
- Rudraksha tailam
- Rudraksha Bhasma

DOSAGE⁵

- Children : 500mg – 1 gm
- Adults : 1gm – 3gm

BENEFITS OF RUDRAKSHA^{15,16,17}

- Provides strength to the body.
- Reduces headache & beneficial in mental disorders.
- Acts as blood purifier.
- Possess anti ageing property
- Immuno-stimulatory property.
- Good for women's who suffering from hysteria and coma.
- Adjuvant therapy in breathing disorders & chronic cough.
- Anti hypertensive & cardio protective.
- In liver disorders & abdominal disorders.
- Rudraksha powder which is used as paste with rose water increases skin glow.
- Fruit/ bark : good remedy for controlling epilepsy.
- To cure small pox equal quantity of black pepper & Rudraksha powdered and taken with water.

THERAPEUTIC BENEFITS & MEDICINAL USES OF RUDRAKSHA¹⁹

The main action of Rudraksha is on brain, nerves and alimentary canal. The details of its therapeutic benefits with appropriate adjuvants is given below:

Restlessness & Body Ache in Fever

Rudraksha makes person feel better in fever. It has ameliorative effects. The studies show it has immunostimulatory effects. Therefore, it can also help as adjuvant to fight off infections.

Taking 1 to 3 grams of Rudraksha Churna with Shadanga Paniya (medicated water prepared with Mustha, Chandana, Shunti, Udeechya, Parpata and Ushira or with warm water helps reduce fatigue, body pain and burning sensation due to high fever. However, this remedy is not commonly used, but it can be used to relieve excessive restlessness and irritability due to fever.

DIABETES

Research studies show the potential antidiabetic effects of Rudraksha. In some experimental studies with animals, a notable reduction is observed in blood sugar level is recorded.

Intake of 1 gram Rudraksha Churna with 2 teaspoons of neem leaf juice helps controlling blood sugar level. Also the mixture of Rudraksha churna 1000mg, Jamun leaves 1000mg and tulsi leaves 1000mg should be taken on empty stomach and twice a day.

High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)

Rudraksha is a good alternative measure against hypertension as it is having antihypertensive and cardioprotective effects. The research studies suggested that

intake of Rudraksha soaked in water in copper vessel, in the morning on empty stomach is more beneficial in high blood pressure. Copper may increase the antihypertensive property of Rudraksha.⁶⁾

Ayurvedic measures to use Rudraksha for managing high blood pressure is as follows:

1. Take 250 ml water in a copper vessel and soak Rudraksha in this water overnight. Drink the water on empty stomach.
2. Alternatively, eating 2 grams Rudraksha churna with water kept in copper vessel is more beneficial as compared to first one.
3. The decoction made with 400 ml water and 5 grams Rudraksha churna and then reduced to 100 ml water is also beneficial in hypertension.

Chicken Pox

Rudraksha helps reducing severity of chickenpox symptoms. It reduces malaise, tiredness and headache. It also decreases burning sensation and pain on chicken pox rashes. It speeds up recovery process and prevents complications.

Acne & Pimples

Anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties help curing acne and pimples. Its local application is more effective, reduces recurrence, and provides soothing feeling by alleviating acne symptoms.

- According to Ayurveda, Rudraksha churna and Arjuna twak churna in equal proportion is mixed together. A teaspoon of this mixture is mixed with 2 to 3 teaspoons honey. A thin paste is prepared Applied on the affected parts or on whole face. Wait for 30 minutes and then rinse your face with warm water.

This remedy provides glowing effect to the face and skin. It also reduces acne and prevents recurrence.

- Rudraksha powder can be mixed with lemon juice to make paste and applied on the face which is more beneficial for skin glow. It makes you feel fresh.

Black Spots & Blemish

Rudraksha fades dark spots and reduces blemishes. It is used internally as well as externally.

Internal Use:

Rudraksha is taken with Mulethi (Licorice), Amalaki (Indian Gooseberry) and Manjistha. Intake of this mixture reduces hyperpigmentation, black spots and blemish. 1 tsp powder should be taken with water an hour after meal twice a day.

External Use:

Fine Rudraksha churna after mixing with rose water is applied over the skin with dark spots, hyperpigmentation and blemishes. The regular use fades the dark spots and makes skin clearer.

Burning Sensation

If patient feels burning sensation in whole body, then the decoction of Rudraksha churna and sandalwood (Chandan) is used in amount of 50 to 100 ml. It gives relief in burning sensation.

If burning sensation is only on the skin, the Rudraksha paste made with rose water is applied over the skin.

Cough

Rudraksha churna can be used with honey to cure cough. It is more beneficial when patients have cough with chest tightness and cough starts with irritation in the throat.

Breathing Problems & Asthma

Effective in curing severe cases of asthma and breathing troubles.

Rudraksha churna and haridra churna (turmeric) each of 2000 mg are mixed in equal amount with honey (10ml). In acute attack, the patient is asked to lick the paste after every 15 to 30 minutes. In chronic cases, this mixture should be taken 2 to 3 times a day.

Tuberculosis

Even though we have better treatment for tuberculosis, our ancient doctors were using the following Rudraksha combination.

Herbs	Quantity per Dose
Rudraksha Powder	2000 mg
Rudanti Powder – Capparis Moonii	2000 mg
Vamshalochan – Bamboo Manna	1000 mg

This mixture was given to patients with tuberculosis. Now, it can be used as supportive therapy along with Swarna Bhasma and Vasant Malti Rasa in case of Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis. Vamshalochan should be added in higher possible dosage to protect and strengthen the lungs.

RAJANIGHANTU REFERENCES :-⁹

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पावनोनीलकण्ठाक्षोहराक्षश्चशिवप्रियः॥
- रुद्राक्षमम्लमुष्णंचवातघ्नंकफनाशनम्।
शिरोऽर्तिशमनंरुच्यंभूतग्रहविनाशनम्॥

DRAVYAGUNAVIJNANAM REFERENCE :-⁴

रुद्राक्षस्यफलास्थिस्यान्मधुरंशीतलंलघु।
मनोविकारशमनंरक्तभारापहंसरम्॥
दाहज्वरप्रशमनंशस्यतेवातपैत्तिके।
अपस्मारेतथोन्मादेरक्तभारेऽधिकेत्षि॥
मसूरिकायांविस्फोटेऽश्वसेयकृद्गदेषु च।

SUMMARY

The mode of action of Rudraksha covers the basic principles of Ayurveda and also fulfils the ideas of gentle, harmless and quick restoration of health basing on comprehensive principles. Rudraksha being purely herbal and most tolerable by human body, can be taken by persons of any age, sex and profession with least side effects.

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