

Terminalia Chebula A Traditional Herbal Drug – A Short Review

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Abstract: The usage of medicinal plants used from ancient times to treat various diseases due to its potential medicinal applications. *Terminalia chebula* is one of the common herbal drugs used in traditional systems in worldwide. The review tries to focus the traditional use of *Terminalia chebula* as herbal drug and the importance and its impact in the medicinal applications.

Keywords: *Terminalia chebula*, Description, medicinal application, side effects.

I. Introduction

Terminalia chebula is a moderate tree used in traditional medicines. It belongs to the family Combretaceae. It is commonly called as Black myrobalan, Ink tree (or) Chebulic myrobalan and also known as “King of medicine”. It is extensively used in unani, ayurveda and homeopathic medicine. *Terminalia chebula* is a popular traditional medicine not only used in India but also in other countries of Asia and Africa. This is used in traditional medicine due to the wide spectrum of pharmacological activities associated with the biologically active chemicals present in this plant. It is used for the treatment of number of diseases like cancer, paralysis, cardio vascular diseases, ulcers, leprosy, arthritis, gout, epilepsy etc. It has been reported as antioxidant (1), anti-diabetic (2), anti-bacterial (3), anti-viral (4), anti-fungal, anti-cancerous, anti-ulcer, anti-mutagenic, wound healing activities etc. It is used extensively in the preparation of many Ayurvedic formulations for infectious diseases such as chronic ulcers, leucorrhoea, pyorrhoea and fungal infections of the skin. The fruits, bark and leaves are the major used part for the medicinal application. It increases the frequency of stools and has got the property of evacuating the bowel completely. It is used to prevent aging and impart longevity, immunity (5) and body resistance against disease. It has beneficial effect on all the tissues.

II. Distribution

It grows in India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Iran, Egypt, Turkey, China etc. In India Haritaki tree is grown in deciduous forests and found in North India and South woods to the Deccan table lands at 1000 to 3000 ft. In Myanmar country grow up to 5000 ft. It consists of pericarp of mature fruit of *Terminalia chebula*, a moderate sized (or) large tree found throughout India chiefly in deciduous forests and areas of light rain fall but occasionally also in slightly moist forests up to about 1500 meter elevation throughout India, flowers appear from April – August and fruits ripen from October – January. *Terminalia chebula* is also called as Haritaki, Harad, Hirada, Alalekaayi, Kadukkai, Horitoky, Hilikha, Karakkaya in India, Aralu in Srilanka, Zhang-Qin-Ge, Hezi in China, Harra, Harro in Tibet, Myrobalane in Germany, Myrobalan in dien in France.

III. Description

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IV. Phytochemical components

The screened plants were rich in flavonoids, tannins, steroids, cardiac glycosides and alkaloids. Out of the seven plants screened, *Terminalia* species were the best possessing rich source of phytochemicals and justify their traditional use. They can be therapeutically used individually or synergistically in combination with other extracts to treat any disease and disorder. It also contains the triterpenes arjun glucoside 1, arjungenin and the chebulosides 1&2. Other constituents contains tannins up to 30%, chebulic acid 3-5%, chebulinic acid 30%, tannic acid 20-40%, ellagic acid, 2,4-chebulyl-β-D-glucopyranose, gallic acid, ethyl gallate, punicalagin, terflavin A, terchebin, some purgative of the nature of anthraquinone, flavonoids like luteolin, rutins, and quercetin etc.

V. Medicinal application

It is good to increase the appetite, as digestive aid liver stimulant, as stomachic, as gastrointestinal prokinetic agent and mild laxative. It stimulates the liver and protects it further by expelling the waste excretory products from the intestines. It is indicated in protracted diarrhea with hematochezia and prolapse of rectum. It is a good nervine, used in nervous weakness, nervous irritability. It promotes the receiving power of the five senses. It is helpful in renal calculi, dysuria, and retention of urine and used for treating parasitic infection. It is used as a blood purifier, gargle for sore throat, ulcerated gums, and muscular rheumatism. With sugar water it is used to treat ophthalmia, skin itching and edema. It is used as an antioxidant, neuroprotective drug and treatment for heart disease, inflammation, brain dysfunction. It is used as an anti-aging agent and it is found to improve the mental faculties. The plant also has adrenergic function and helps to recover from stress. One compound Chebulagic acid from Haritaki has shown antispasmodic action like papaverine (6).

VI. Side Effects

Terminalia Chebula possess some side effects, traditional herbal practitioners not recommended use during pregnancy because it may reduce the production of breast milk. The persons suffering from fever, debility and depression the extreme use of *Terminalia chebula* grounds grave healthiness problems. People with a lean body, weak immunity, low strength, excessive sexual activity, fasted for long, had long exposure to the sun, persons having dryness or feeling lack of water in the body, alcoholics and children below 5 years of age do not advise the use of *Terminalia chebula*.

VII. Conclusion

Terminalia chebula is an herbal tree with invaluable medical applications. *Terminalia chebula* is well-known drugs which prevent aging and imparts longevity, immunity and body resistance against disease and also used extensively in several ayurvedic formulations prescribed for infectious disease. The indigenous herbal medicinal practitioners especially in rural areas recommended for the use of *Terminalia chebula* to dairying farmers for treating mastitis infections in cows. *Terminalia chebula* hold good antimicrobial activity against mastitis isolates but some of the literatures stated that excessive use of *Terminalia chebula* possess toxic effect and also reduce the yield of milk.

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