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Research Paper



Cutch Tree: A Brief Review on Ayurveda and Modern Pharmacological Properties with Special Reference to Nighantus

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ABSTRACT-

Plants are the prime source of ayurvedic medicines. A wide variety of plants are gifted to our nature and maximum of them have significant medicinal properties, we are using them to cure various ailments and diseases since the ancient time. Still many herbs are not explored and need extensive research of them to prove safety and efficacy. One of such well known plant is Acacia catechu Willd. which is popularly known as the Khadira Cutch tree. It is an evergreen tropical tree. Different parts of it are used as medicine as well as it is also proven to have Antimicrobial, Anti-diabetic, Antibacterial, Antidiarrheal, Antipyretic, Anti-inflammatory and hepatoprotective activities etc. It is reported that it contains various alkaloids, flavonoids and phenolic compounds which have conferred this plant with plentiful amount of medicinal potential. Vedas and various ancient ayurvedic Samhitas like Charaka Samhita, Sushurut Samhita, Nighantu Granthas viz. Dhanvantari Nighantu, Raj Nighantu, Madanpal Nighantu, Shaligram Nighantu, Kaiyadeva Nighantu, Bhavprakash Nighantu, had described Acacia catechu Willdand its ayurvedic properties and therapeutic uses in detail. This present review articleextensively deals with compilation of the information regarding Khadir(Cutch tree) from ancient literature and latest discoveries.

KEYWORDS: Review, Acacia catechu, Cutch tree, Khadira, Nighantu, Pharmacological activities.

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I. INTRODUCTION—

Our Healthcare system mainly depends on Physician, Medicine, Nurse and Patient. Among them medicine plays a most important role in preventive and curative approach. Now ayurvedic medicine has become popular and an integral part of our Healthcare system, as they are used both traditionally as well as in on-going scientific research work. Ayurvedic medicines are rich in natural substances that can promote our health and prevent us from getting ill. In Ayurveda, many herbs are enlisted to cure different ailments. The plant *Acacia catechu*also known as cutch tree belonging to Fabaceae family, has been used in Ayurveda for the treatment of various diseases and ailments of human being.

According to Rigveda, Khadira (Cutch tree) is one of the important trees both of rituals and medicinal usage "अभिव्ययस्वखदिरस्यसारभोजोधेहिस्पन्दनेशिंशपायाम्"।ऋ.वे.३/५३/१९).

It is described with the synonym 'Vibadha'. Its heartwood is considered to be very strong and is used as wedge while manufacturing chariots. SatapathaBrahmana mention it as one of the strongest trees and strength of its stem is simile to the bone in strength. Khadira (Cutch tree) was used as fire wood and as vessel/container.

The extract of heart wood (Khadira (Cutch tree)sara) is used for external wearing like precious stone. In Paippalada Samhita it is specifically quoted in the treatment of leucoderma (Kilasa) and poisoning cases (Vişaroga).

Ayurvedic texts quote Khadira (Cutch tree)twing as the best among the tooth brush which is astringent (Kaşaya) in taste. Caraka described it as the best drug for Kuştha (skin diseases). Kuşthaghna term is used by

Caraka at once but it is considered to be Cakramarda. Gayatri is the synonym used by Susruta and Vagbhaţa. Another name Balapatra was mentioned by Vagbhaţaalone . In one context Suśruta described 'Gāyatrya' denoting one of the varieties of Soma but not Khadira (Cutch tree) .Vāgbhata emphasized its utility as tooth brush. Cakradatta describes Khadira (Cutch tree) in the treatment of Svarabheda.^[1]

BOTANICAL NAME- Acacia catechuWilld.

TAXONOMICAL CLASSIFICATION

- Kingdom: Plantae;
- Subkingdom: Tracheophyta;
- Superdivision: Spermatophyta;
- Division: Equisetopsida;
- ✤ Order: Fabales;
- Family:Fabaceae;
- Genus: Acacia;
- Species: Acacia catechu Wild.



Showing Leaves, Flowers, Fruits & Bark of Khadira (Cutch tree)

https://indiabiodiversity.org/files-api/api/get/raw/img//Acacia%20catechu/Acacia_catechu_leaf.jpg https://indiabiodiversity.org/filesapi/api/get/crop/img//Acacia%20catechu/Acacia_catechu_unripe_fruit.jpg?h=500 https://indiabiodiversity.org/files-api/api/get/raw/img//Acacia%20catechu/Acacia_catechu_flower.jpg https://indiabiodiversity.org/files-api/api/get/raw/img//Acacia%20catechu/Acacia_catechu_bark.jpg CLASSICAL NAMES Khadira (Cutch tree), Balpatra, Bahushalya, Dantadhawana, Raktasara, Yadniya, Gayatri

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VERNACULAR NAMES

- Eng.- Cutch tree;
- Hindi Khair;
- Beng. Khayar;
- ✤ Guj.- Kheriobaval, Khair, Kathe, Kher;
- Kan.- Kalu, Kachu, Kaggali, Kanti, Kaggalinara, Kachinamara, Koggigida;
- Mal. Karingali, Khadira;
- Mar.- Kaderi, Khair,
- Punj.-Khair, Tam.- Karunkali, Kadiram, Karngalli;
- Tel.- Podalimamu, Kaviri, Kachu, Kadiramu, Sandra,
- Assam-Kharira, Khara, Khayar, Khoria, Kash.Kath,
- Kon. -Kathu;
- Oriya Khoiru, Khaira,
- Urdu Chanbekaath.^[2]

NAMARUPA VIJNANA (SYNONYMS)-

१.खदिरः (भा०)-खदतिस्थिरंतिष्ठतिहिनस्तिचरोगानिति; 'खदस्थैर्येहिंसायांच'।

- २. कण्टकी (भा०)-कण्टकाःसन्त्यस्य।
- ३. कुष्ठघ्नः (अ०)-कुष्ठंहन्तीति।
- ४. गलरोगनुत् (सो०)-गलरोगनाशकः
- ५. गायत्री(भा०)-गायन्तंत्रायते, यज्ञेप्रयोज्यत्वात्, गलरोगेहितत्वाच्च।
- ६. जिह्यशल्यः (सो०)-जिह्याःवक्रा: शल्याःकण्टकाअस्य।
- ७. दन्तधावनः (भा०)-दन्तधावनेप्रयुक्तत्वात्।
- ८. बहुशल्यः (भा०)-बहवःशल्या: कण्टकाअस्य।
- ९. बालपत्रः (भा०)-हस्वपत्रत्वात्।
- १०. मेदोघ्नः (सो०)-मेदोहरः।
- ११. यज्ञियः (भा०)-यज्ञेप्रयुज्यमानः।
- १२. रक्तसारः (भा०)-रक्तवर्ण: सारोऽस्य।

१३. सारद्रुमः (रा०)-सारवान्वृक्षः।^[3]

Khadira (Cutch tree)(*Acaciacatechu*Willd.) is a wild thorny tree (kantaki, bahusalya), the spines being curved (jihmaśalya). Wood is regarded as holy and used in sacrifices (gāyatrī, yajñiya). It has firm and red heart-wood (sāradruma, raktasāra) and small leaves (bālapatra). Twigs are used as tooth-brush (dantadhavana). Khadira (Cutch tree) is a specific drug for leprosy (kusthaghna) and is also efficacious in obesity (modoghna) and disorders of throat (galaroganut).

VEDIC PERIOD:

II. LITERATURE REVIEW-

In the Vedas this drug is mentioned as Khadira (Cutch tree). During the Vedic period the drug was widely used for: 1. Kriminashana (as anti-bacterial drug) 2. Bal, Veerya (as rejunvnative) and 3. BhuthiManibandan (as amulet) The Atharvans considered the drug as most potential anti-bacterial drug. The niryas (gum resin) of this drug also described as anti-bacterial. In one context the Atharva Veda III: 6-1 reveals that the most potential man can give birth to potential children in the similar manner the Ashwatha which grow on Khadira (Cutch tree) is also most potential drug. In Rigveda III the usage of Khadira (Cutch tree) as Manibadhan for Graha dosha and Bhrihaspathi, Savitha, Chandrama, Varuna and also for the improvement of ojas has been given^[4]

SAMHITA PERIOD:

<u>In Charaka Samhita (3^{rd} centuary.B.C.)</u> The medicinal plants have been classified according to Karma (action) and prabhava (specific action).' Charaka mentioned Khadira (Cutch tree) in the Kushthagna, Kashaya Kskandhagana(the group of drugs that were used for skin disorders, mainly for Kushtha and as Vranaropanadravyas in the treatment of Vranas) Charaka Samhita refers to use of this drug for various conditions such as : 1. For the management kofRaktapitta (Haemothermia) and prameha (Urinary anomaliesj/. 2. Visahara, Agada and as anti-dote to NakhaDantavisha.^[5,15]

<u>Chakrapani (1040 AD.)</u> Described the drug for wide range of uses 16. Such as 1. In hoarseness (swarbheda), Khadira (Cutch tree) rubbed with oil (Til Tail) is recommended to be kept in the mouth. 2. In oral diseases, in the form of swalpaKhadira (Cutch tree)vatika. 3. In skin diseases, externally and internally. 4. As Shodhana

(wash) for inflammed parts and ulcers in the form of decoction. 5. In the form, of arishtha for internal use in boils, measles and other skin disorders.^[5]

<u>Sushruta (6th century B.C.)</u> Classified the drugs according to actions, odour and taste. The Khadira (Cutch tree) has been described in Salsaradilgana (the group commenced with Salsara, Ajakarna, Khadira (Cutch tree) etc. These drugs cure Kushtha (obstinate skin diseases including leprosy), Meha (obstinate urinary disorder including Diabetes), pandu (Aneamia). These drugs also cleanse kapha and medas (Fat). Sushruta mentioned following therapeutic uses of Khadira (Cutch tree). 1. as Rasayana for the treatment of prameha (urinary disorders including Diabetes) and Raktapitta (Haemothermiaj/ 2. as Krimihara for the management of Kushtha (obstinate skin disorders including leprosy) and Vranasf 3. as Kaphara in the shwasa, kasa, swarbheda 7. In Sushruta Samhita the drug Khadira (Cutch tree) was described as Kadar, Kushthghna, Gayathri, Rakthasar etc. According to Dalhana Kadar is like Khadira (Cutch tree) with yellow wood (ApeethasarahKhadira (Cutch tree)karah). But it is usually said to be shwetaKhadira (Cutch tree), which may be other species of Acasia, i.e. AcassiasumaBuch^[6, 16]

AH	AV	BR	BP	CS	DN	KN	RN	RV	SN	SLN	SS
+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-
-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-		+	-
-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-
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+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+
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Table No.1- Synonyms of Khadira (Cutch tree) from various Nighantus^[17, 18, 19]

'+' indicates present &' - 'indicates absent

A.H= AstangaHridaya, B.R.= BhaisajyaRatnavali,CS= CarakSamhitsa RN= Raj Nighantu, DN=Dhanwantari Nighantu, MN= Madanpal Nighantu, KN= Kaiodev Nighantu ,PN= Priya Nighantu, Ni.A= Nighantu Adarsha,SN= SaligrtamNighantu,Ma. N= Madhava Nidana SS= Sarangadhar Samhita

III. PHARMACOGNOSY AND PHARMACOLOGICAL REVIEW

BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION-

Acacia catechuWilld. is a medium sized thorny deciduous tree upto 3-15 m high ; stem straight and grayish brown, bark dark grey to dark grayish brown, exfoliating in narrow strips brown and red in side;

The leaves are bipinnately compound, with 9-30 pairs of pinnae and a pubescent glandular rachis; leaflets 16-50 pairs, oblong-linear, 2-6 mm long, glabrous or pubescent with a pair of short, hooked shape, recurved prickles or spines at the base of the rachis;

Inflorescencecylindrical, axillary pedunculate spike . Flowers are actinomorphic to zygomorphic, 5-10 cm long, sessile, pentamerous, creamy whitish to pale yellow and with a campanulate calyx of 1-1.5 mm length, and a corolla of 2.5-3 mm length. Stamens are numerous and far exerted from the corolla, with white to yellowish white filaments, bisexual and have single superior carpel; pod is one chambered legume, glabrous oblong, 3-10 seeded, straight, flat and brown in colour with triangular beak at the apex, shiny, narrowed at base

A. catechu heartwood is light, red, turning brownish red to nearly black with age and attached with whitish sapwood. The fracture is hard, odour, characteristic and taste is astringent. The gummy extract of the wood is called katha or cutch which is mostly shining black or brownish mass, hard and brittle, and breaks easily. The fractured surfaces show brownish color but dull gloss and small cavities. It gives dull brown fine odorless powder having strong astringent taste^[7]

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DISTRIBUTION-

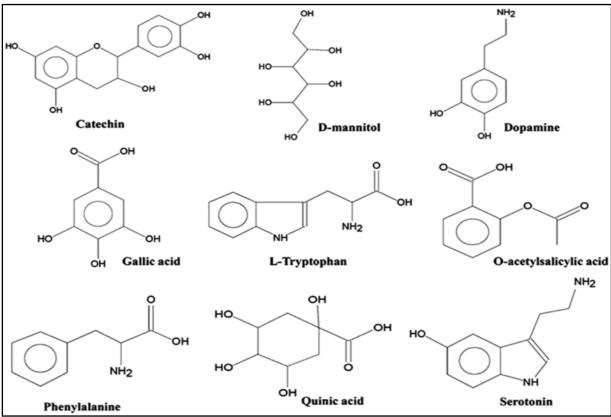
Throughout the Sub-Himalayan tract of Punjab., Peninsular region, particularly in drier parts, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. Also, in Eastern slopes of Western Ghats.^[2]

DIFFERENT VARITIES-.

In the Samhitas 'Khadira (Cutch tree)' and 'Kadara' are described which are A. catechu and A. suma Buch respectively. In Dhanvantari Nighantu two varieties Khadira (Cutch tree) and Sõmavalka are described while RājaNighanţu quotes five varieties viz., Khadira (Cutch tree), Somavalka, Tamrakanţaka, VitKhadira (Cutch tree) and Arimeda. Amarakosa mentioned three varieties viz., Khadira (Cutch tree), ViţKhadira (Cutch tree)&Sāmavalka. We come across description of 'VallīKhadira (Cutch tree)' in NighanţuRatnākaram. Bhavamisra quoted Khadira (Cutch tree), Kadara and Irimeda.There are three varieties which are commonly used today. They are: *A. catechu; A. sundra* and *A. catechuoides*.^[8]

CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS-

B- sitosterol, 4a, 5a- oxidoeudesm- 11- en- 3a- ol from (rhizomes); pinene, cineol, alcohol- isocyperol (essential oil from the tubers); linolenic, linolic, oleic, myristic and stearic acids and glycerol (fatty oil); a sesquiterpeneketoneMustakone and copaene, cyperotundone, sesquiterpenes- (+)- copadiene, (+)epoxyguaine, (-)- rotundone and cyperolone; cyperenone designated as isopatchoul- 4(5)- en- 3- one and aureusidin (essential oil); two sesquiterpenicketoalcohols, a- rotunol, B- rotunol, kobusone and isokobusone; oleanolic acid and its glycoside, oleanolicacid- 3- (- neohesperidosidealongwith sitosterol, sesquiterpenes- a- cyperone, cyperene, B-selinine and cyperenone (tubers); luteolin and aureusidin (leaves).^[9]



Chemical constituents of Khadira (Cutch tree)

ACTION& USES

The bark is used in melancholia, conjunctivitis and haemoptysis. Heartwood is bitter, astringent, acrid, cooling, depurative, anthelmintic, antiseptic, antidystenteric, antipyretic, appetiser, haemostatic, antiinflammatory and tonic. It is used in catarrah, cough, pruritus, leprosy, leucoderma, skin diseases, helminthiasis, anorexia, diarrhoea, dysentery, foul ulcers and wounds, haemoptysis, haematemesis, haemorrhages, fever, anaemia, diabetes and pharyngodynia. The catechu (kattha) is acrid, bitter, thermogenic, digestive, appetiser, aphrodisiac, vulnerary, anthelmintic, depurative and tonic. It is used in laryngopathy, flatulence, ulcers, wounds, leprosy, skin diseases, urine incontinence, and colporrhagia. A small piece of catechu with cinnamom and nutmeg is held in toothache, loss of voice etc, also in cases of mercurial salivation,

hoarseness, relaxed sore throat, bleedingulcerations and sponginess of gums. It is used for bed sores. Catechu in the form of injection is useful in treatment of gonorrhoea, otitis, otorrhoea.^[10]

AYURVEDIC PROPERTIES-

- ✤ Rasa− Tikta, Kashaya
- Guna Laghu, Ruksha
- Veerya– Sheeta
- Vipaka– Katu
- **Prabhava** Kushthaghna
- Doshaghnata– Kaphapittashamaka

Rogaghnata – Aruchi, Atisara, Kaphajakasa, Prameha, Kushtha, Twakaroga, Jeernajwara, Raktapitta, Krimi. Karma – Ruchivardhaka, Stambhana, Shonitasthapana, Mutrásangrahana, Kushthaghna, Kandughna, Vranaropaka.^[2]

			MN	RN	KN		SHA.N	NA	SN	PN
RASA	Tikta	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Madhura	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Kasaysa	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
GUNA	Laghu	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
VIRYA	Sheeta	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
	Ushna	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-
VIPAKA	Katu	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-
PRABHAVA	Kushthaghna	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+

Table 2- Rasapanchaka of Khadira (Cutch tree) From Various Nighantus- ^{[17, 18}	3, 19]
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'+' indicates present &' - 'indicates absent

RN= Raj Nighantu, DN=Dhanwantari Nighantu, MN= Madanpal Nighantu, KN= KaiodevNighantu ,PN= Priya Nighantu, Ni.A= Nighantu Adarsha,SN= SaligrtamNighantu,Ma. N= Madhava Nidana

PHAMACOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES-

Antimicrobial Activity:

Study showed Acacia catechu Willd leaves Extract is found to possess broad-spectrum antimicrobial activity Results showed AC has antimicrobial activity by inhibiting common human pathogenic organisms like Staphylococcus aureus (Gram positive), Escherichiacoli, Pseudomonas aeruginosa, Klebsiella pneumoniae, and Salmonellatyphi (Gram negative) and fungi like Candida albicans, Aspergillus niger supporting its use in traditional medicine. Acacia catechu Willd leaves, Bark, root extract also possess Anti mycotic activity. The bark extract showed an inhibitory effect on the growth of fungi such as Piriculariaoryzae and Colletotrichum falcatum.^[11]

Antioxidant Activity:

Study of 70% methanol extract of heartwood extract of Acacia catechu showed significant antioxidant activity, iron chelating and DNA protective activity which is partly due to the phenolic and flavonoid compounds present in it Standard methods like The dot?blot assay, TLC study and the DPPH assay showed that the AC extract is a highly effective antioxidant. Catechin, rutin and isorhamnetin are reported as free radical scavengers and these compounds largely contribute to the biopotency of Acacia catechu.^[12]

Antidiarrheal activity:

Antidiarrhoeal activity was evaluated in albino rats after inducing diarrhea with castor oil.1 The antidiarrhoeal property of the ethyl acetate extract of Acacia catechu appears to be due to its tannin content, which has astringent property.^[12]

Antipyretic activity:

The antipyretic effect of Acaciacatechu is due to presence of flavonoid compounds, as some flavonoids are predominant inhibitors of cyclooxygenase or lipooxygenase.^[12]

Hypoglycaemic activity-

Acacia catechu possess hypoglycaemic activity. The hypoglycaemic effect of A. catechu may be due to presence of flavonoids which acts as insulin secretagogues. Epicatechin, a flavonoid compound, is reported to promote regeneration of β cells of the Islets of Langerhans.^[13]

Hepatoprotective activity:

Acacia catechu also possesses hepatoprotective property found in the heartwood. During trials, an ethyl acetate extract in male rats decreased CCI4-induced elevated enzyme levels in acute and chronic models of liver

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damage. The results indicated some form of repair of the structural integrity of the hepatocyte cell membrane or regeneration of damaged liver cells. Decreased levels of serum bilirubin after treatment with the extract in both acute and chronic liver damage indicated the efficacy of the extract in restoring normal functional status of the liver and the protective action of the extract was further substantiated by histopathological observations. The hepatoprotective activity of A. catechu could be due to the presence of bioflavonoids which have hepatoprotective and antioxidant properties.^[12]

Immuno modulatory activity:

Study on Wistar albino rats shows that the aqueous extract of Acacia catechu have significant effect on both the cell mediated and the humoral immunity The exact constituent(s)responsible for the immunomodulatory effect is not known. However, the catechins, by virtue of their antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, and antioxidant effect may be the main constituents responsible for their activity.^[12]

PARTS USED- Bark, heartwood, ^[2]

DOSE-

Powder of bark-1-3gm Decoction-50-100ml Heart wood-0.5-1gm^[2] **IMPOTANT PREPARATION"-:**^[14] Khadira (Cutch tree)divati Khadira (Cutch tree)ristha Khadira (Cutch tree)ditailam Amritastaka Astangadasangalanha Kusthakalamla rasa, Kusthashailendra rasa. Krimivinasana rasa, Arshoghnivati Palosabijadichurna Kasisadigrita Jatyadigrita Nimbapatradiupnaha

IV. CONCLUSION-

Acacia catechuis a deciduous, gregarious tree. It is very common tree of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India. The review on Khadira (Cutch tree) traces out from the Vedas to modern literature text and research. It has many medicinal properties, which can be used to cure or helps to reduce many ailments like Skin disorders, diabetes, worm manifestation, liver disorders, ulcers, fever etc. It has ayurvedic propertieslike Tikta, kshaya in rasa, Laghu, ruksha in guna, Sheeta in virya, Katu in vipaka and Kapha-pitta shamak in doshakarmata. This medicinal plant has long beingresearched for its phytochemicals and its pharmacological activities. The plant also contains various chemical constituents mostly Catechin, kaempferol, Rutin, Ferulic acid, caefflic acid, saponins and tannin etc. Many parts of this plant hasbeen used in traditional systems of medicines for treating various ailments due to its Antimicrobial, Anti-diabetic, Antibacterial, Antidiarrheal, Antipyretic, Anti-inflammatory and hepatoprotective activities etc. Further research is required to evaluate the plant's active potential as drugs or medicinal purpose.

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