



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PHARMACY & LIFE SCIENCES (Int. J. of Pharm. Life Sci.)

***Withania somnifera* : A Herb of Pivotal Importance**

Savita Shrivastava

Deptt. of Botany, Model Science College Rewa (M.P.) - India

Abstract

Herbs are vital sources of drugs from the ancient time holding the scenario of Indian system of medicine. *Withania somnifera* (L) Dunal (Solanaceae) commonly known as Ashwagandha is an important medicinal herb used in the Ayurvedic and indigenous medicine. The plant is used in the treatment of various diseases and disorders. The present paper enumerates the morphological and ethnobotanical uses of this herbs, which may help the researchers to set their minds for approaching the utility and potency of *Withania somnifera*.

Key words: *Withania somnifera*, Ethnobotanical, Morphological

Introduction

The natural and traditional relationship between human societies and plants has brought to light numerous little or unknown uses of plants. Even today the rural and aboriginal folks are very much in harmony with nature and bio-resources Madhya Pradesh is well known to harbour a rich wealth of floristic diversity which is used in alleviating suffering among natives (Jain, 1963b; Dwivedi, *et al* 2007; Dwivedi, 2008). The area is inhabited by number of tribes viz., Gond, Kol, Baiga, Panika etc. They are scattered deep in forest and remote villages and utilized numerous plant species in their day to day life. The workers have made valuable contributions towards the ethnobotanical knowledge of primitive men, tribes and other folk healers of the state (Bhagwan, 1981; Ambasht, 1986; Benee Mayar & Pushpgandhan, 1992; Dwivedi & Pandey, 1992; Balasubramaniam and Prasad, 1996). during the field studies another have documented some interesting information on *Withania somnifera*. An obvious advantage of the present study is to create awareness towards the species and enumerate their traditional uses.

*** Corresponding Author**

Methodology

Author has collected the plant from various sites of Rewa, Madhya Pradesh during January 2004 to July 2004, authenticated by Botanical Survey of India, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh and the voucher specimen has been deposited in Department of Botany, Model Science College, A.P.S.University, Rewa M.P.

Plant Profile

Withania somnifera (L) Dunal (white cherry) is an important medicinal plant of family Solanaceae. It is also called Ashwagandha because its fresh root small like horse. The plant grows widely in all drive parts of India. This perennial plant can reach a height of 60 inches, with some shrubby at the base. The greenish or lurid yellow flowers are clustered in umbellate cymes. It flowers from June to September, and seed ripening begins in late July. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by insects. The plants prefer alkaline soils.

Morphological Studies

The characteristic features of *Withania somnifera* are mentioned in the following table

S.N.	Parameters	Features
1.	Habit cultivar	A perennial herb
2.	Cultivation period	Peak April -June
3.	Plant height	2.5 to 3.5 ft.
4.	Plant characteristics	Herbaceous having horse like aroma
5.	Foliage characteristic	Medium leaves
6.	Foliage color	Light green
7.	Flower characteristic	Clustered in umbellate cymes
8.	Flown color	Greenish to lurid
9.	Fruit	Berry yellow

10.	Status	Available in wild and cultivation
11.	Conservation	By cultivation
12.	Propagation	By seeds

Medicinal uses

Fruits, leaves and seed have been used as aphrodisiac diuretics, treating memory loss. It is called Indian ginseng. It contain many alkaloid leaves here steroidal lactones. It is anti carcinogenic. It is used as liver to me anti inflammatory agent to treat bronchitis, asthma, ulcers and emaciation insomnia. It is used in anxiety, cognitive neurological disorder. It is used as immune stimulant in patient with low WBC counts.

Ethnobotanical uses

1. Roots are used to increase sexual vigour.
2. Root powder is used in the treatment of weakness and to increase the lactation in nursing mother.
3. Fresh roots are boiled in milk and are consumed.
4. Berries are used as substitute for rennet to coagulate milk in cheese making.
5. Fruit leaves and seeds are used as aphrodisiac.
6. Herb is used as a skin ointment and promoting reproductive fertility.
7. Ashwagandha oil, a combination of ashwagandha with almost oil and rose water designed to be used as facial toner.

Conclusion

It has been observed that *Withania somnifera* is effective in treatment of diuresis, memory loss. It has anticarcinogenic effect, liver tonic, bronchitis, asthma, insomnia and as aphrodisiac. Berries leaves and roots are used for medicinal & other uses like milk coagulant facial tones. The species is not such in alternation in study are it should be promoted. Therefore, it requirement detailed documentation and standardization for the formulation of valuable drugs of therapeutic.

Acknowledgement

The author is thankful to tribal natives of Madhya Pradesh for introducing. The material & providing valuable information petering to the species.

References

1. Ambasht, S.P.(1986), The useful plants of India, CSIR, New Delhi pp 261
2. Balasubramaniam, P. and Prasad, S.N. (1996). Ethnobotany and conservation of medicinal plants by Trulas of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. p. 271-273. *In-Ethnobiology in Human Welfare* (Ed.) Jain, S.K., Deep Publications, New Delhi.
3. Bence Mayar, T.S.R and Pushpagandhan P. (1992) An outline of ethnobotanical research in India, *J.Econ, Taxm.Bot* (Addl. Ser-10 : 405-428.
4. Bhagwan, N. (1981). Plants in folklife and folklore in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In S.K. Jain (Ed.) *Glimpses in Indian Ethnobotany*. pp.329-344, New Delhi, Oxford IBH.
5. Datt Bhaskar (1996), Enthobotanical resources of Chhatarpur district (Madhya Pradesh), *In-Ethobotany in Human Welfare* (Ed.) S.K. Jain, Deep Publication, New Delhi p 400-402.
6. Dwivedi, S.N. and Pandey, Archana (1992), Ehtnobotanical studies on wild and Indigenous species of Vindhyan Plateau I Herbaceous flora. *J. Econ, Tax. Bot* (Addl. Ser) 10:143-150.
7. Dwivedi, S.N. , Dwivedi, Sangeeta and Patel Prakash Chandra (2007). Status and conservation of threatened herbs. In Indian Folk Medicine, Trivedi, P.C. (Ed.), Pointer Publication, Jaipur p 313-317.
8. Dwivedi, S.N. (2008) Status servey of ethnobotanical resources of Satna district Madhya Pradesh. *J. Econ. Taxon Bot*, 32 (Suppl.); 441-456
Jain, S.K. (1963b). Studies in Indian Ethnobotany. II Plants used in medicine among the tribals of Madhya Pradesh. *Bull. Reg. Res. Lab. Jammu*. 1 : 728-128.

How to cite this article

Shrivastava S. (2016). *Withania somnifera*: A Herb of Pivotal Importance. *Int. J. Pharm. Life Sci.*, 7(10-11):5315-5316.

Source of Support: Nil; Conflict of Interest: None declared

Received: 28.09.16; Revised: 18.10.16; Accepted: 01.11.16

© Sakun Publishing House (SPH): IJPLS

5316

