



Medicinal utility of *Calotropis procera* (Ait.) R. Br. as used by natives of village Sanwer of Indore District, Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

Calotropis procera (Ait.) R. Br., a wild growing plant of family *Asclepiadaceae*, is well known for its medicinal properties. The present paper enumerates the medicinal uses of part of *Calotropis procera* for the treatment of various human ailments by the natives of village Sanwer of Indore district of Madhya Pradesh.

Keywords: *Calotropis procera*, medicinal uses, human ailments, Sanwer

Introduction

The herbal medicines occupy distinct position right from the primitive period to present day. The ethnobotanical pharmacology is as old as man himself. These medicines have less side effects and man can get the herbs easily from nature. India being a tropical country is blessed with vast natural resources and ancient knowledge for its judicious utilization. However, in order to make these remedies acceptable to modern medicine, there is a need to scientifically evaluate them, to identify the active principles and to understand the mechanism of action.¹⁻⁴ *Calotropis procera* in India holds a pride of place largely because of its other uses and economic values. The genus *Calotropis* R.Br. (Asclepiadaceae) is distributed in tropical and subtropical regions of Asia and Africa (The wealth of India, 1959). It is represented in India by two species viz. *C. procera* and *C. gigantean*.

Calotropis procera (Ait.) R. Br., a wild growing plant of family *Asclepiadaceae*, is well known for its medicinal properties. Different parts of this plant have been reported to exhibit anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and antioxidant properties. It is found in most parts of the world in dry, sandy and alkaline soils and warm climate and is more common in south western and central India and western Himalayas. It is found in waste lands and grows as a weed in agricultural lands. In ancient Ayurvedic medicines the plant *Calotropis procera* was known as “Rakta arka”.

Morphologically the plant is erect, tall, large, much branched and perennial shrub or small tree that grows on a height of 5.4m, with milky latex throughout. Bark is soft and corky, branches stout, leaves sub sessile, opposite, decussate, broadly ovate, oblong, elliptic or obovate, acute, thick, glaucous, green coloured with fine cottony pubescent hair on young. Flowers in umbellate cymes and tomentose on young. Seeds broadly ovate, acute, flattened, minutely tomentose, brown coloured and silky.

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Material and methods

The present study was conducted during Jan-2010 to May-2010 in various study sites located at village Sanwer of Indore District of Madhya Pradesh. Various information about the use of the plant was collected as per method design and the medicinal use of the different part was enumerated.⁵⁻⁷

Table 1. Medicinal utility of *C. procera*

S/No.	Part Used	Medicinal Utility
1.	Whole Plant	To treat common diseases such as fever, rheumatism, indigestion, cold, eczema and diarrhoea. In boils and also to remove thorn from body for the treatment of jaundice
2.	Root	Eczema, leprosy, elephantiasis, asthma, cough and rheumatism. In the treatment of Diarrhoea and dysentery. In case of diarrhoea it changes the faecal matter into a semisolid mass with in the first day of treatment
3.	Stem	For the treatment of skin diseases, enlargements of abdominal viscera and intestinal worms. To people suffering from leprosy. To cure Leucoderma.
4.	Leaves	To prompt healing, used for joints and waist pain, for asthma. To cure malarial fever. Eczema, leprosy, elephantiasis, asthma, cough and rheumatism. In rheumatism, gout and to relieve pains. To apply on ulcers. To cure flatulence, anorexia, indigestion and intestinal worm infestation.

Result and Conclusion

The study on plant *Calotropis procera* has revealed the enormous diversity of its medicinal uses and popular use of the plant *C. procera* for a wide range of common ailments like fevers, rheumatism, indigestion, cough, cold, eczema, asthma, elephantiasis, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Either the whole plant or a plant part used singly or mixed with other plant materials to enhance the efficacy. Plant based drugs have been in use against various diseases since the time immemorial. The primitive man used herbs as therapeutic agents and medicament, which they were able to procure easily. The nature has provided plant wealth for all living creature, which possess medicinal virtues. Medicinal plants are an important source of drugs in traditional system of medicine. The reason for their popularity is due to high cost of allopathic medicines and side effects. This information about medicinal values of *C. procera* has paramount importance in life and how these ethno herbal data have key role in life. Moreover, it can be initiative for further phytochemical and pharmacological investigations about the medicinal use of the plant, which may be a step ahead towards the new drug development

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