



## Review Article

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## A REVIEW ON KUTAJA: A CLASSICAL POTENT MEDICINAL PLANT

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## ABSTRACT

Indian system of medicine or Ayurveda has been recognized throughout the world in the current era due to its wide spectrum therapeutic utility mainly using plant-based medicine in various ailments. Scattered information of Medicinal plant usage is available in various literature of Ayurveda like Samhitas, Nighantus etc. to cure different ailments as well as for the prevention of diseases. According to Raja Nighantu, there are two types of Kutaja namely Sita and Asita Kutaja, which are botanically identified as *Holarrhena antidysenterica* Wall and *Wrightia tinctoria* R Br belonging to the family Apocynaceae. Acharya Charaka also opined the two varieties of Kutaja namely Pum and Sthree Kutaja which are botanically identified as *Holarrhena antidysenterica* Wall and *Wrightia tinctoria* R Br respectively. The plant Kutaja in general is used in the management of Rakthapitha, Atisara, Kushta, Jwara, Visarpa etc. Hence there is the need of compiling the scattered information present in the various literature in a systematic way to encourage further study on this drug from a different perspective and better utilization of this drug.

**Keywords:** *Kutaja*, *Holarrhena antidysenterica* Wall, *Wrightia tinctoria* R Br, Sita Kutaja, Asita Kutaja

## INTRODUCTION

Literary research can be considered as the core of conceptual studies and the fundamental step of any research work. This includes - a collection of data from all the available ancient literature as well as published research works. In the Ayurveda literature, approximately about 1200 – 1500 drugs have been incorporated in a scattered way. For carrying out any research on those drugs the initial step is to gather all the information available about the drug to have an idea of its usage in different diseases through different therapeutic modifications as well to prevent the further repetition of proven studies. Thereby helps in the better utility of the drug clinically. Thus, the present study was undertaken to gather information on the drug Kutaja for finding out its different therapeutic uses as well as for utilising it clinically for mankind.

The information regarding the synonyms, types, properties, therapeutic actions, Amayika prayoga of the drug Kutaja was collected by referring to the Samhitas, Nighantus and recent books on Ayurveda. The therapeutic utility of Kutaja is described in Brihatrayees, Laghutrayees and Nighantus. Acharya Charaka in Kalpa Sthana – Vatasaka Kalpa has mentioned 2 varieties of Kutaja as Pumkutaja and Strikutaja along with their properties and formulations<sup>1</sup>. According to Raja Nighantu 2 types of Kutaja are Sita Kutaja and Asita Kutaja<sup>2</sup>.

Classical categories of Kutaja are tabulated in Table 1. Around 33 synonyms were found for the drug Kutaja and 25 synonyms for Kutaja beeja in Nighantus. These synonyms are tabulated in Table 2 and 3.

Table 1: Classical categorisation of Kutaja

Samhita/ Nighantu	Varga
Charaka Samhitha <sup>3</sup>	Arsogna, Kandughna, Stanyasodhana, Asthapanopaga Mahakashaya
Sushruta Samhitha <sup>4</sup>	Aragwadadi, Pippalyadi, Haridradi, Lakshadi gana
Ashtanga Hrudaya <sup>5</sup>	Aragwadadi
Bhavaprakasha <sup>6</sup>	Haritakyadi varga, Guduchyadi varga
Dhanwantari Nighantu <sup>7</sup>	Satapushpadi varga
Raja Nighantu <sup>8</sup>	Prabhadradi varga
Ashtanga Nighantu <sup>9</sup>	Vatsakadi gana
Nighantu Adarsha <sup>10</sup>	Kutajadi varga
Madanapala Nighantu <sup>11</sup>	Abhayadi varga
Kaiyadeva Nighantu <sup>12</sup>	Aushadi varga
Priya Nighantu <sup>13</sup>	Haritakyadi varga
Shodala Nighantu <sup>14</sup>	Satapushpadi varga
Vrindha Madhava <sup>15</sup>	Atisara Adhikara, Kushtadhikara, Arso Adhikara

**Table 2: Synonyms mentioned for Kutaja in Nighantus**

Synonyms	Bha.N	K.N	Dh.N	A.N	P.N	R.N	N.A	M.N	Sh.N	So.N
Kautaja		+	+			+				
Kauta	+		+							
Vatsaka	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Girimallika	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+
Kalinga	+	+	+			+		+		+
Mallikapushpa	+	+	+			+		+	+	+
Indravruksha			+		+					+
Vrukshaka	+	+	+	+			+			+
Kutaja	+	+		+	+	+	+		+	+
Kohi		+								+
Utsaka		+								
Varatikthaka		+								
Vamsakutaji		+								
Kutaji		+								
Neelayashtika		+								+
Sakra						+	+			
Sakrapadapa						+				
Varatiktha						+			+	+
Yavaphala	+					+				+
Panduradruma	+					+				
Sangrahi						+				+
Mahagandha						+				
Pravrushyena						+				
Kotivruksha								+		
Sakrabruruha								+		
Kataja										+
Kuti										+
Sakravruksha				+						
Pravrushya						+				
Vanatiktha				+						
Kootaja	+									
Sakrasakhi	+									
Indro	+									

**Table 3: Synonyms mentioned for Kutaja Beeja in classics**

Synonyms	Dh N	R.N	K.N	N.A	M.N	So. N	Sh.
Sakrahwa	+	+			+	+	
Kalingaka	+		+			+	
Vatsaka beeja	+						
Bhadrayava	+	+	+		+	+	+
Indrayava		+	+	+	+	+	+
Kautaja			+		+		
Niryava			+				
Indraka			+				
Sakrabeeja		+					
Vatsaka		+					
Vatsakabeeja		+					+
Bhadraja		+					
Kutaja phala		+				+	
Beejantara		+					
Kutaja		+					
Kalinga beeja		+			+		
Sakrayava				+			
Indraphala					+		
Puruhuta					+		
Yavaphala						+	
Sangrahi						+	
Kutaja beeja							+
Yava							+
Kalinga							+
Kaalinga							+

**Table 4: Rasapanchaka of Kutaja according to various classics**

	K.N	D.N	Bha P	R.N	M.N
<b>Rasa</b>	Kashaya, Katu	Katu, Tiktha, Kashaya	Katu, Kashaya	Katu, Kashaya, Tiktha	Katu, Kashaya
<b>Guna</b>	Ruksha	Ruksha	Ruksha	-	Ruksha, Laghu
<b>Veerya</b>	Seetha	Seetha	Seetha	Ushna	-

**Table 5: Doshakarma of Kutaja according to various classics**

	K.N	D.N	Bha P	R.N	M.N
<b>Dosha Karma</b>	Kapha pitha	Pitha raktha	-	Raktha pitha	-

**Table 6: Karma of Kutaja according to various classics**

	K.N	D.N	Bha P	R.N	M.N
<b>Karma</b>	Deepana	-	Deepana	-	Deepana

**Table 7: Rogagnatha of Kutaja according to various classics**

	K.N	D.N	Bha P	R.N	M.N
<b>Rogagnatha</b>	Kushta, Atisara, Trusha, krimi, Amadosha, Arsa, Atisara	Kushta, Atisara, Pithajarsas, Raktharsas,	Arsa, Atisara, Rakthapitha, Trishna, Ama, Kushta	Rakthapitha, Twakdosha, Arsa	Arsa, Atisara, Rakthapitha, Trishna, Ama, Kushta

**Table 8: Rasapanchaka of Indrayava according to various classics**

	K.N	D.N	Bha. P	R.N	M.N
<b>Rasa</b>	Katu, Tiktha	Tiktha	Katu	Katu, Tiktha	Katu
<b>Guna</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Veerya</b>	Ushna	Ushna	Seetha	Seetha	Seetha
<b>Vipaka</b>	-	Katu	-	-	-

**Table 9: Karma of Kutaja beeja according to various classics**

	K.N	D.N	Bha P	R.N	M.N
<b>Karma</b>	Grahi	Deepana	Sangrahi	-	Sangrahi

**Table 10: Doshakarma of Indrayava according to various classics**

	K.N	D.N	Bha. P	R.N	M.N
<b>Dosha Karma</b>	Tridosahara	Tridosahara	Tridosahara	Tridosahara	Tridosahara

**Table 11: Rogagnatha of Indrayava according to various classics**

	K.N	D.N	Bha. P	R.N	M.N
<b>Rogagnatha</b>	Kushta, Jwara, Visarpa, Shoola, Gudakeela, Vatasra, Lohithanashaka	Raktharsas, Atisara, Shoola, Vami	Jwara, Atisara, Raktharsas, Vami, Visarpa, Kushta, Gudakeela, Rakthadosha, Vataraktha, Shleshma shola	Daha, Atisara, Nanajwaradosha, Shoolamulaghni	Jwara, Atisara, Raktharsa, Krimi, Visarpa, Kushta

**Table 12: Rasapanchaka of Kutajapushpa according to various classics**

	K.N	M.N
<b>Rasa</b>	Tiktha Kashaya	Tiktha
<b>Guna</b>	Laghu	-
<b>Veerya</b>	Seetha	Seetha
<b>Vipaka</b>	-	-

**Table 13: Karma of Kutajapushpa according to various classics**

	K.N	M.N
<b>Karma</b>	Deepana	-

**Table 14: Rogagnatha of Kutajapushpa according to various classics**

	K.N	M.N
<b>Dosha Karma</b>	Vatakara, kaphapithahara	Vatakara

The derivation of some of the important synonyms of Kutaja are as follows<sup>16</sup>

- Kutaja -kute vane pravruschi cha jaayate ithi  
Kutaja- kutajatatwath kuto aranye atha pravruschi ithi  
Kute girisringe jayate iti ramasami- Kutaja tree grows in forest and in rainy season.
- Kalinga- kalingadeshe bhava - Grows in Kalinga region
- Indravruksha – kalinge mahendraparvatakshetre bahusho jaayamanatwath- Commonly found in Mahendraparvata kshetra
- Chakrasakhi- chakre samuhe jaayamana shakhi vruksha- Kutaja plant grows gregariously
- Girimallika- girishu mallikavachubrapushpadharaka  
Girisabdhya sthalamallikavyavachedartha- Kutaja tree grows in mountains and flowers are white like that of Mallika.

- Panduradruma-pandutwak vruksha - The bark of Kutaja is pale white in color.
- Pravruskena- pravruschi pushpodgamath- Blossoms in the rainy season.
- Mallikapushpa – mallikaya iva subrapushpanyasya - Flowers are bright white like that of jasmine
- Mahagandha- sagandhayuktha- Flowers are aromatic
- Vatsaka- vatsadesho jaayamaana -Found in Vatsa Desha
- Varatiktha- tiktheshu sreshta - One of the best drug among Tiktha Dravya
- Sangrahi- purisham samgrahanatiti -Stops diarrhoea
- Sakra- saknoti roganapanetumithi veeryasampanna ithyartha -It is a potent drug.
- Yavaphala- yavakarabeejasahitham phalamasya,  
Beejani hi indrayava iti namna prasidhani -Seeds of Kutaja are barley-shaped

Table 15: Amayika prayoga of Kutaja

Yakshmina Atisara	Indrayava and Nagara is taken along with Tandulambhu
Rakthasrutha arsas	Kutaja Twak Kashaya along with Nagara
Kushta	Lepa prepared out of Vatsaka beeja or Udwardana using Vatsaka choorna
Rakthapitta	Ghritha prepared out of Vatsaka beeja
Pitta atisara	Kwatha prepared out of Vatsaka beeja along with Madhu
Rakthathisara	Ghritha prepared out of Vatsaka beeja
Vranaropana	Kutaja twak Kashaya
Kapha pithanubhandhi raktharsas	Phanitha prepared out of Kutaja moola twak
Sarva prakara arsas	Kutaja Vrintha and Moola Kalka along with Takra
Bahushleshma Rakthathisara	Phanitha prepared out of Indrayava
Prameha	Choorna prepared out of Kutaja pushpa
Ardra Arsas	Kutaja twak is considered as the Ramabhana Aushadhi
Sukrasari	Kutaja twak Choorna along with Pathya anna
Visphotaka	Application of Kutaja beeja choorna along with Tandulodaka
Sarva atisara	Swarasa or Putapaka rasa prepared out of Syonaka and Kutaja twak along with Madhu
Atisara	Kalka is prepared out of Kutaja twak along with Tandulodaka and is covered using Jambhu patra after that it is tied using a rope. Cow dung or mud is smeared over it and is dried in sun and then it is kept in fire and when it becomes red hot it is taken out and the Rasa is squeezed out of it and is used for treating Atisara

General Rasapanchaka of the drug as well as Beeja, Pushpa etc is separately mentioned in various Nighantus. The general Rasapanchaka of the drug Kutaja is tabulated in Table 4, General Doshakarma of Kutaja is tabulated in Table 5, General Karma of Kutaja is tabulated in Table 6, General Rogagnata of Kutaja is tabulated in Table 7, Rasapanchaka of Indrayava in Table 8, Karma of Indrayava in Table 9, Doshakarma of Indrayava in Table 10, Rogagnata of Indrayava in Table 11, Rasapanchaka of Kutaja Pushpa in Table 12, Karma of Kutaja Pushpa in Table 13, Rogagnata in Table 14, and Amayika prayoga of various parts of Kutaja is tabulated in Table 15.

Raja Nighantu has mentioned Ardra twak, Beeja, Komala Sakha and Vrintha as Prayojya Anga of Kutaja and Nighantu Adarsha have mentioned Twacha, Beeja and Pushpa as useful parts. Dosage of different forms of Kutaja are as follows- Twak/ Beeja kwatha- 50 g-100g and Beeja choorna- 1-5gms, Twak choorna-1-4gms, Kwatha choorna- 10-40 gms and Phanta-25-50 ml. Different formulations which are having Kutaja as an ingredient are Kutajarishtha, Kutajavaleha, Kutaja ghana vati, Patoladi churna, Mahamanjishtadi kashayam, Brihat gangadhara churna, Vridhagandhara churna, Jirakadya churna, Brihanmarichadya taila, Pancanimba churna, Palashabijadi churna, Laghugandhara churna.

## DISCUSSION

The utility of Kutaja in the Samhita and Nighantu period was described elaborately. In Charaka Samhita, the drug was also mentioned under Kandughna, Asthanopaga and Sthanyasodhana dashemani implies the effect of the drug in itching and cleansing the Dushita Ksheera of the mother. In Susrutha Samhita the drug is mentioned under Aragwadadi, Pippalyadi, Haridradi and Lakshadi Gana, which suggests that Kutaja is having almost similar action to the drugs mentioned under these Ganas. Kutaja was mentioned in Arso adhikara, Atisara adhikara, Kushta adhikara by Vrinda Madhava which implies the utility of the drug in Atisara and Arsas and Kushta. A separate Varga was named after the drug as Vatsakadi gana in Ashtanga Nighantu and Kutajadi varga in Nighantu Adarsha which highlights the importance of the drug.

Different synonyms are attributed to Kutaja as well as Kutaja beeja in Nighantus. There are 33 synonyms mentioned for Kutaja and 25 synonyms mentioned for Indrayava. The synonyms Kutaja, Kautaja, Kauta, Kutaji, Kataja, Kuti means that it grows

in the forest and also in the rainy season. Kaalinga, Indravruksha, Vatsaka, and Girimallika denotes the habitat of the drug i.e. it grows in Kaalinga desha, Mahendraparvata kshetra, Vatsa desha, and also in the mountains. Vrukshaka, Yavaphala, Panduradruma and Mallikapushpa denotes the morphology of the drug ie it is a tree, the seeds are barley-shaped, the bark is pale white, and flowers are bright white like that of jasmine. Pravrushya and Pravrushyena denotes that it blooms in the rainy season. Mahagandha, Varatiktha, Vanatiktha denotes the properties of the drug i.e., it is having a good aroma, and it is one among the best Tiktha dravyas, Sakra, Sakrabruruha, Sangrahi, Sakrasakhi, Sakrapadapa etc denotes the potency of the drug and also it stops diarrhea.

Rasa, Guna, Veerya etc. of different parts of the drug are separately mentioned in some of the Nighantus. There was a difference of opinion regarding the Rasa of the drug, Bhavaprakasha, Kaiyadeva Nighantu and Madanapala Nighantu consider that it is having Kashaya and Katu Rasa, while Dhanwantari Nighantu and Raja Nighantu mentions having Katu, Tiktha and Kashaya Rasa. Except for Raja Nighantu, all other Nighantukaras considers it is of Seetha Veerya but Raja Nighantu mentions it is having Ushna Veerya.

Difference of opinion regarding the Doshakarma was observed in the various Nighantus. Madanapala Nighantu mentions that Kutaja is Kapha Pitha hara but Raja Nighantu and Dhanwantari Nighantu mentions it is Raktha Pithahara. Excluding Raja Nighantu, all other Nighantukaras have mentioned its indication in Kushta. Nighantu Adarsha mentions the Amayika Prayoga of the drug in skin disorders such as Kushta, Vranaropana, and also in other conditions such as Rakthapitha, Atisara, Arsas. Ample references related to the Prayogas of Kutaja are available in the context of Arsas and Atisara which implies the effectiveness of the drug in both conditions.

The types and sources of the drugs are Sita and Asita Kutaja according to Raja Nighantu. The Sita Kutaja can be equated with *Holarrhena antidysenterica* Wall and Asita Kutaja with *Wrightia tinctoria*<sup>17</sup> R Br Acharya Charaka classified Kutaja as Pum and Stri Kutaja, here Pum kutaja is *Holarrhena antidysenterica* Wall and Stri Kutaja is *Wrightia tinctoria* R Br.<sup>18</sup>

The reference of usage of all parts is available in various Nighantus and there are commonly used formulations in day to day life for treating various ailments.

## CONCLUSION

Kutaja is botanically identified as *Holarrhena antidysenterica* Wall and the other variety is identified as *Wrightia tinctoria* R Br both belonging to the family of Apocynaceae. The usage of the potent drug Kutaja can be traced in various disorders such as Arsas, Atisara, Kushta, Prameha, Visphota, Trishna etc in various classics. It is also found that different methods of therapeutic usage of Kutaja in Arsas and Atisara are found in different books. The drug is widely used in Raktarsas etc. in current day practice.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Bha. N	Bhavaprakasha Nighantu
K. N	Kaiyadeva Nighantu
Dh. N	Dhanwantari Nighantu
A.N	Ashtanga Nighantu
P.N	Priya Nighantu
R. N	Raja Nighantu
N.A	Nighantu Adarsha
M.N	Madanapala Nighantu
Sh. N	Shaligrama Nighantu
So. N	Shodala Nighantu

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