

Research Documents with New Comments 6

Introductory Note

This series is an effort to present the updated research documents with information collected through recent Ethnobotanical surveys (December 2010 onwards).

Traditional medicinal knowledge about less known herbs of Chhattisgarh, India. XXXIX. Nirmali or Kya (*Strychnos potatorum*, family Strychnaceae)

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<http://www.pankajoudhia.com/RA2.pdf>

The natives and traditional healers of Chhattisgarh of Nirmali rich areas are using its seeds for water purification since time immemorial. Due to this unique property it is named as Nirmali. The natural population of Nirmali is decreasing at alarming rates in Chhattisgarh. The heavy demand and non-scientific exploitation of this herb from its natural habitat are the main reasons.

New Comments added on December 12, 2010

Through recent Ethnobotanical surveys I have collected information about over 75 Traditional Formulations through which Nirmali can be used for water purification. In these Formulations central role is played by Nirmali. Through my writings I am suggesting the Indian planners to use these Traditional Formulations to purify polluted rivers specially after Kumbh like events.

The herb collectors informed me that day by day it is becoming hard to get Nirmali, in surrounding areas. They have to travel long distance in search of this herb. It is in the list of non-wood forest produces having regularly high demand in national and international markets. In early days, there was demand of fruits and seeds only. Now from last few decades the demand of its roots has increased many folds. The reason is still unknown. Now the traders are giving more emphasis on purchase of roots. According to the herb collectors, in early days there was no threat on its natural population when the collection of seeds and fruits was done. Now due to collection of roots, it is damaging the whole herb. In reference literatures, it is mentioned that the roots can cure all types of skin troubles. It is a boon for the patients having Leucoderma and Leprosy. I

have mentioned in previous articles that in India, the patients of Leucoderma are increasing very rapidly. This is the reason responsible for increasing pressure on herbs useful in treatment of this odd looking trouble. I am searching the modern literatures also to find out the new research findings related to Nirmali roots.

New Comments added on December 12, 2010

Nirmali is in the list of Fuel wood and due to increasing human pressure on forest natural population of Nirmali is decreasing at alarming rates. As mentioned above the collection of its all plant parts is also factor responsible for decreasing population. In Traditional Healing Nirmali is used most frequently. Its uses as medicine are popular among the Healers. In Chhattisgarh Plains, the Healers are now searching alternatives of Nirmali as its availability is becoming difficult day by day.

Through recent surveys I have collected information about over 500 Traditional Formulations for treatment of Leucoderma in which Nirmali is added as primary, secondary and tertiary ingredients. In these Formulations Nirmali is used both internally as well as externally. Most of these Formulations are not mentioned in ancient Indian literatures related to different systems of medicine. So many Traditional Formulations give freedom to the Healers to select suitable Formulations for the patients. These Formulations are given with specific diet schedules. The Healers claim that in very short time it gives miraculous effects.

It is wrong trend to use Bawchi (*Psoralea corylifolia*) with other herbs useful in Leucoderma or Vitiligo without any scientific base or experiences. Bawchi is used with Nirmali also by many modern practitioners but they get less success. Very few such practitioners know the bare fact that this combination is problematic in most of the patients and it aggravates the trouble. "If you are using Bawchi and Nirmali in same Formulation then you must add atleast 10 others herbs in order to nullify the harmful effects of this combination. If you have nine herbs then PLEASE don't use the combination." The Healers warn in hard words. They shared detailed information about these 10 promising herbs.

New research works on Nirmali are resulting in increased demand. It is good to observe that young researchers from Chhattisgarh are also showing interest in evaluating the Traditional uses of Nirmali like herbs under frame of modern science but due to lack of encouragement and financial support their important works are limited to academic publications only.

I personally feel that there is a need for giving sufficient attention to stop further non-scientific exploitation of this herb from its natural habitat in Chhattisgarh. Botanically, Nirmali is a medium sized, deciduous, glabrous tree about 12 meter in height with cracked and scaly black

bark and irregularly fluted trunk; leaves simple, opposite, elliptic, acute, transverse nerve about 4 pairs joining the second pair of ribs to the mid rib, glabrous, shining; Flowers white, fragrant, axillary cymes; Fruits ovoid or globose, glabrous berries, black when ripe; Seeds one or two, yellow, circular, not much compressed 8 mm in diameter, shining with appressed silky hairs. As mentioned early, the roots, fruits and seeds are used medicinally. Nirmali holds a reputed position as medicinal herb in different systems of medicine in India. According to Ayurveda, Nirmali fruit is useful in eye diseases, thirst, poisoning, hallucinations; emetic, diaphoretic, alexiteric, cures inflammations, anaemia, jaundice; causes biliousness whereas seeds are acrid, alexipharmic, litho-tropic; cure strangury, urinary discharges, head diseases etc. According to Unani system of medicine, seeds are bitter, astringent to bowels, aphrodisiac, tonic, diuretic; good for liver, kidney complaints, gonorrhoea, improve eye-sight.

New Comments added on December 12, 2010

Through recent surveys I have documented information about over 50 Nirmali based Traditional Formulations used as Aphrodisiac, over 90 Traditional Formulations for Kidney related troubles, over 355 Traditional Formulations for eye related troubles, over 200 Traditional Formulations for liver related troubles and over 30 Traditional Formulations for Sickle Cell Anaemia.

The expert Healers always warn that Nirmali must be used under supervision of them as its wrong use may result in harmful consequences.

The natives and traditional healers of Chhattisgarh are well aware of these medicinal properties and uses of Nirmali and they frequently use this herb in treatment of many common and complicated diseases. The use of matured fruits of Nirmali in treatment of Jaundice is very popular among the traditional healers. It is used both alone and in combination with other herbs in this treatment. Like Baibidang it is used as anthelmintic. The immature fruits are also used but the healers prefer the mature fruits because according to them, the wrong use of immature fruits may result in harmful effects. Many healers of Chhattisgarh use the mature fruits in treatment of diabetes but as other promising alternatives are available, it is used less frequently.

New Comments added on December 12, 2010

Nirmali is an important part of report on Type II Diabetes. The recent surveys revealed that Nirmali is used for treatment of Diabetes not only in Chhattisgarh but also in Orissa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra. In Indian states where it is not available in forest Healers depend on herb vendors travelling from stated where in grows in forest.

Nirmali is not under cultivation as medicinal crop in Chhattisgarh. There is a strong need to develop improved cultivation practices well in time and to encourage the herb growers to start its commercial cultivation .This commercial cultivation will help in reducing the pressure on natural population of Nirmali.

New Comments added on December 12, 2010

Few years earlier an industrialist interested in establishing processing unit for solely Nirmali based herbal products approached to me. The list of products was with him. He asked me to suggest improved farming technique for Nirmali in large areas. Based on my experience I suggested Agronomical practices as modern world literatures give very little information on cultivation aspect of Nirmali. The work is in progress and I am expecting that such plantations will encourage other innovative growers to come forward.

Thank you very much for your article.

Citation

Oudhia, P. (2010). Research Documents with New Comments 6: Traditional medicinal knowledge about less known herbs of Chhattisgarh, India. XXXIX. Nirmali or Kya (*Strychnos potatorum*, family Strychnaceae). <http://pankajoudhia.com>

***Strychnos potatorum* in Gallery**

http://pankajoudhia.com/album/main.php?g2_itemId=67024

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