Review Article

A CRITICAL REVIEW ON KAKANDOLA: AN AYURVEDIC HERB

Sharma Tarun ^{1*}, Ramamurthy A. ², Nathani Sumit ², Anand Parul ¹

¹P.G. Scholar, Dept. of P.G. Studies in Dravyaguna, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

²Assistant Professor, Dept. of P.G. Studies in Dravyaguna, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

*Corresponding Author Email: tarunsharma1286@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Kakandola, since ages has been used on the name of the herb named kapikachhu, for its medicinal properties. It is said to have the gunas like that of masha (*Phaseolus mungo* Linn.) and is used for its vrishya karma. In market two varieties of kapikachhu are available, both of which are believed to possess same aphrodisiac properties. But these varieties have wide range of difference in their cost, as surveyed in the market. Though this has been an unrevealed fact as to which variety kakandola can be correlated with. Present article aims to analyse the same using the available texts.

Keywords: Kakandola, kapikachhu, vrishya karma, aphrodisiac

INTRODUCTION

Kakandola has been mentioned as the synonym of kapikachhu in samhita and nighantu. Literally, Kakandola refers to the seeds which resemble to the eggs of crow as per Vachaspathyam.

Kakandasya tula upma phale yatr praso. Talopah ¹.

Shabdakalpadruma also states the same meaning of the word, giving it the simile of crow's egg.

Kakandola- kakandmorti tat saadrashyambeejeprapnoti ²

Traditionally being used as an aphrodisiac, it has been mentioned to have vrishya properties in samhitas as well as nighantus. Researches discover that it is also used in many other diseases such as for treating arthritis, anxiety, cancer, cough, diarrhoea, dysentery, diabetes, dysmenorrhea, delirium, gonorrhoea, gout, impotence, muscular pain, parasitic infections, rheumatic disorders, as analgesic and antipyretic, to induce vomiting, to treat snakebite and scorpion stings, sexual debility, sterility, tuberculosis and its direct application on skin can help to stimulate surface blood flow in conditions that involve paralysis. Chiefly being used as potent antiparkinsonian, anti-inflammatory, aphrodisiac and nervine tonic, it is one of the potent natural substance, particularly plant, used either to prevent or to treat the sexual disorders in males.

Kapikachhu botanically known as *Mucuna puriens* is available in market in two varieties i.e black and white seeds. *Mucuna* is self-pollinating; hence, natural out-crossing is rare. The dozen or so cultivated *Mucuna* sp found in the tropics probably represent a fragmentation from the Asian cultigen, and there are numerous crosses and hybrids³. The most commonly cited species include *M. deeringiana* Merrill, *M. utilis* Wallich (Bengal velvet bean), *M. pruriens* (L.) DC., *M. nivea*, *M. Hassjoo* (Yokohama velvetbean), *M. aterrima* Holl and (Mauritius and Bourbon velvet bean), *M. capitata*, *M. monosperma* DC. ex Wight and *M. diabolica*⁴. However, the taxonomy of these species is confused.

In this reference it still remains unclear, whether to which variety Kakandola can be correlated with, based on its appearances and gunas as told in the Ayurvediya texts.

REVIEW OF KAKNDOLA IN SAMHITA KALA

Kakandola is firstly mentioned in Charaka Samhita in Shamidhanya Varga and it is said that Atmagupta⁵ and Kakandola both have same property like Masha (*Phaseolus mungo* Linn.). Atmagupta is the synonym of Kapikacchu. Acharya Charaka has given their indications in Vishaprakarana of Chikitsa Sthana by the name of kakanda⁶.

Kakandola Atmaguptanam maashvat phalamaadishet ⁷

Acharya Chakrapani commented on Kakandola and said it as Shukarshimbi⁸.

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned Kakandola by the name of Kakanda phala in Mudgadi Varga in Annapanavidhi Adhyaya and said that Atmagupta and Kakandola both have same property like Masha (*Phaseolus mungo* Linn.).

Maashesamanamphalamatmaguptamuktamcha kakandphalamtathev ⁹

Acharya Dalhana commented on it and said that Atmagupta and Kakanda have property like Masha. Ashvaka synonym is given for Kakanda phala. Kakanda phala is same as Atmagupta phala and has property like Masha. Shukarshimbi resembles to Kapikacchu shimbi.

*Atmaguptkakadyorgunamaah
Maasherityadi. Atmagupta kapikacchu, tasya
phalamatmaguptam.
Kakandphalamashvakah, kapikacchusadrshyasimbih kakandah
'sukarsimbi' iti loke*¹⁰.

Acharya Dalhana also said in Vajikarana prakarana in Chikitsa Sthana that kakanda phala is having property of Shukrajanana and Shukra pravartnam both¹¹.

Acharya Vagbhata has mentioned Kakandola in Shimbidhanyavarga. He also said that kakandola and Atmagupta phala have same property like Masha.

*Phalani mashvatvidhatkakandolaatmaguptayo*¹²

Acharya Arundatta commented on it and said that Kakandola and Atmagupta phala have similar appearance and properties like Masha. He also said that Kakandola is Katabhi while Atmagupta is Kapikacchu¹³.

Acharya Hemadri mentioned Kakandola and Atmagupta phala like that of Masha but he specified that Kakandola is nihshuka Kapikachhu (which means Kapikachhu pods without hairs), while Atmagupta is Kapikachhu¹⁴.

REVIEW OF KAKANDOLA IN NIGHANTU KALA

In Nighantu period many of Acharya have given their different views on Kakandola and Kapikacchu like variety.

Dhanwantri Nighantu

It is one of the most ancient Nighantu available now days. Here the drug Dhadhipushpi (Kapikacchu vishesha) has been mentioned under Guduchyadi Varga. Here also its properties are said to be same as Masha.

Dadhipushpi

Dadhipushpitukhatvangikhatwaparyankapadika.
Vrishbhisatukakandigeya sukarpadika.
Kapha-pittaharagurviranjnivanashini.
*Ushnaviryaswadurasakakandimashvadbhavet*¹⁵

Sodhala Nighantu

Acharya Sodhala has described Laghukacchu which properties are said to be similar as Kapikacchu. Here the drug Laghukacchu has been mentioned under Laxmanadi varga¹⁶.

Kaideva Nighantu

Here the drug Kakandola has been mentioned under Aushadhi Varga. Acharya Kaideva has given its synonyms, properties and functions.

Kakandolakoshshimbitathasukarpadika.
Dirghpushpitukakandakhangarnikapadika.
Kakandolaraseswaduvataghnikaphapittala.
Shukragnisaadkritvrishyabadvitruchidaguru.
Paryankapadiprabhavamphalamshlesmagnisaadkrit.
*Vata-pittaharam hridyambadvitruchidamaguru*¹⁷

Dravyaguna VigyanaVth volume

Acharya P. V. Sharma has mentioned Kakandola most likely to be *Mucuna monosperma* DC¹⁸. Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya¹⁹ and Prof. K. C. Chunekar²⁰ have mentioned in their commentaries that white seeds of Kapikachhu which are being sold in Punjab drug market may be Kakandola.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION ABOUT KAKANDOLA

To assess the apparent properties of Kakandola, black and white seeds of Kapikachhu were collected from the market and were cultivated and evaluated. Cultivated white seeds were seen with the same leaves and flowers as that of black variety of *Mucuna pruriens*, with pods having 2 to 5 seeds. Immature pods had green colour while if subjected to maturation turned to dark grey colour having minimal hairs and no intense itching on touch. Also, the pods were not in bunches unlike that of black variety of *Mucuna pruriens*.

Figure 1: White variety of Kapikachhu plant

Figure 2: Flowers

Figure 3: Immature pods

Figure 4: Mature pods

Figure 5: Seeds

DISCUSSION

White seeds of Kapikachhu have been abundantly in use for vrishya karma. In nighantu Kakandola has been mentioned as a synonym of Kapikachhu, whereas in general, Kapikachhu is available in two varieties. Hence it can be concluded that Kakandola, which literally means crow's egg, thereby indicating to white colour of the seeds clearly supports the fact that Kakandola may be the white variety of Kapikachhu i.e *Mucuna pruriens* variety *utilis*.

Acharya Hemadri has mentioned in his commentary named Ayurveda Rasayana on Ashtanga Hridayam that Kakandola is nihshuka Kapikachhu i.e particular variety of Kapikachhu having pods without hairs. In the observation made on the cultivation of white variety of Kapikachhu, it was seen that it's pods had minimal hairs at both immature and mature stages, and had no itching on touch. Hence, it would be apt to say that Kakandola may be botanically *Mucuna pruriens* (L.) DC. var. *utilis*.

Acharya P. V. Sharma has given short description of *Mucuna monosperma* DC. According to him, the plant has Pods which are ovoid, ellipsoid or rhomboid in shape, winged, obliquely plaited on both faces, densely clothed with rusty irritant bristles, 1-seeded, seeds rounded, slightly compressed, dark brown, smooth and shining¹⁸. The variety of Kapikachhu which we cultivated and observed had somewhat different morphological characters. The variety we cultivated, had pods with 2 to 5 white coloured seeds, with no itching in its pod. Hence above facts reveal that Kakandola may be white variety of Kapikachhu i.e *Mucuna pruriens* (L.) DC. var. *utilis*.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of above references and observations, it can be inferred that kakandola, which has been mentioned as the synonym of Kapikachhu, is the cultivated white variety of Kapikachhu i.e *Mucuna pruriens* (L.) DC. var. *utilis*.

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