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# PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIVITY AND MEDICINAL VALUE OF ANKOLA (ALAN-GIUM SALVIFOLIUM LINN.)-A REVIEW

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# ABSTRACT

We all are well aware of the medicinal value of plants. They are one of the most important sources of medicine. Medicinal plants are extensively utilized throughout the world in two distinct areas of health management: the traditional system of medicine and the modern system of medicine. *Alangium salvifolium Linn.*, commonly known as Ankolah (Ankola) is categorized under rare plant species. *it* has been used traditionally for the treatment of various diseases. Almost every part of *it* including roots, leaves, stems, and bark is used in the *Ayurveda* systems of medicines for the treatment of various diseases. The present review highlights the traditional uses of different parts of *A. salvifolium*, its phytochemical constituents with therapeutic activity, and the evidence-based studies on various pharmacological effects of the plant.

Keywords: Alangium salvifolium Linn., Alangiaceae, Ankola, Medicinal herbs, Antimicrobial, Pharmacological activity

#### INTRODUCTION

The medicinal plant also called medicinal herbs, has been discovered and used in traditional medicine practices since the pre-historic period medicinal plants extract pure compounds or as a derivative is being used for various therapeutic purposes. The WHO (World Health Organization) reported in 2008 that 80% of the Asian population uses herbal medicinal products for their primary health care and the data are the same for developed countries also.<sup>1</sup> In earlier classical ayurveda text mention that -अङ्कोलः कट्कः स्निग्धो विषलूतादिदोषनूत् । कफानिलहरः सतः शुद्धिकद्रेचनीयकः ।।(राजनिघण्ट्. प्रभद्रादिवर्ग ७५) is Katu(pungent) Ankola in rasa (taste), Snigdha(unctuous) in Guna and also used in Luta visha (infectious bite of spider) etc., it pacifies kaphavata dosha and also purgative in nature.

Later on, modern text described that the roots of *A. salvifolium* have been used as an astringent, emollient, anti-helminthic, and diuretic, and to treat rheumatism (Anon, 1996). Decoction of the bark has been used as an emetic in India (George, 1984). Fruits of A. salvifolium are used as a purgative and cooling agent (Anon, 1996). Alangium A and B from root bark, and akoline, lamarkine, alangine, akharkantine from bark, have been reported (Chopra et al., 1980).

# Geographical distribution of A. salvifolium

A. salvifolium is widely distributed over the plains and lower mountain areas throughout India and elsewhere in East Africa to China, Indonesia, Vietnam, and New Guinea. In peninsular India, usually found in dry deciduous forests, along roadsides, and cultivated lands near villages (Hyderabad forests and Sitamata wildlife sanctuary, Rajasthan.).

#### Morphology

Macroscopical evolution of the plant-



Fig.1

Alangium salvifolium Linn.(Family- Alangiaceae) is a deciduous bushy shrub or small tree, with or without spines, with young branchlets often rusty-pubescent. Bark pale brown, aromatic, with rough cracks, and exfoliating in corky scales. Leaves alternate, elliptic, or ovate, apex acute or obtuse with a pair of basal and 4–6 pairs of lateral veins. Inflorescence axillary, flowers are white or yellowish-white, bisexual, on articulated pedicels and the flowering season is between February to June. Fruit drupaceous, crowned with remnants of the calyx, 1–2 seeded, and *A. salvifolium* can be propagated by seeds and is albuminous in shape.<sup>2</sup>

Microscopical evaluation of the plant

The stomatal index and stomatal frequency of the leaves of *A. salvifolium* are 52.63 and 65/sq. mm re-

#### Fig.2

spectively. The vein islets number is 11.4/sq. mm, and the vein termination is with an average of 13/sq. mm. The organoleptic evaluation reveals that the extracts from different plant parts are odourless and tasteless. Under fluorescent light leaf powder shows different colours in various extracts. The leaves stem and root powders with various extracts show the presence of alkaloids, phenol, tannins, and reducing sugars. It also shows the presence of chlorine, sulphur, and iron in the stem, roots, and leaves<sup>3</sup>. TS of the root bark shows outer phellem, a broad zone of irregular phellem showing the development of rhytidome, a narrow band of cortex and phloem. Phellem is well developed and 0.1-0.15 mm wide. Phellem tissue is sometimes seen in 5 or more successive layers with alternating parenchymatous tissue in between them due to the formation of phellogen at different levels in the outer phloem region of the root. The parenchymatous tissues in between two phellem layers are composed of slightly obliterated phloem elements and parenchyma cells. Some of the cells contain druse crystals of calcium oxalate measuring up to 18–30  $\mu$  in diameter. The phloem extends from the cambial zone up to the phellem tissue. The cells are usually uniformly thin-walled and regularly arranged except that the cells towards the phellem show radial divisions and are larger in size. Sclerenchyma cells are absent in the phloem region. Cambium is a narrow zone composed of 4–5 rows of thin-walled regularly arranged cells measuring 12–27  $\mu$  tangentially and 6–9  $\mu$  radially<sup>4</sup>. Preliminary phytochemical studies

Preliminary phytochemical investigation reveals the presence of various primary metabolites tubulosine, isotobulosine, like cephaeline, psychotrine, and alangiside in roots. Alkaloids A & B, dimethylpsychotrine, Alangicine, marckine, marckidine, lamarckinine in bark. root Alangimarkine, ankorine. deoxytobulosine. alangiside, alangine, sterols, and three triterpenoids cepheline, N-methylcephaeline, deoxytobulosine, and alangiside in fruits and alangimarine, alamanine, alangimaridine, emetine, cephaeline, psychotrine in seeds. <sup>5</sup>, <sup>6</sup>, <sup>7</sup>(fig. 3,4,5,6,7,8)



Fig. 7. Dimethylphychotrine.



Fig. 8. Tubulosine.

Ethnomedicinal uses अङ्कोटो दीर्घकीलः स्यादङ्कोलश्च निकोचकः । अङ्कोटकः कटुस्तीक्ष्णः स्निग्धोष्णस्तुवरो लघुः । रेचनः कृमिशूलामशोफग्रहविषापहः ॥139॥ विसर्पकफपित्तास्रमूषकाहिविषापहः । तत्फलं शीतलं स्वादु श्लेष्मघ्नं बृंहणं गुरु । बल्यं विरेचनं वातपित्तदाहक्षयास्रजित् ॥140॥<sup>8</sup>।भावप्रकाशनिघण्टु॥

A. salvifolium has been used as traditionally laxative, antiepileptic, astringent, antiulcer, pungent, purgative, alleviates spasms, anthelmintic, emetic, antiprotozoa, hypoglycemic agent. It has been reported that it is used to cure skin diseases like leprosy, scabies and as contraceptives for pigs and cattle rearing by the tribes in Kerala.

Stem and root barks of *A. salvifolium* were screened for their helicon bactericidal activity. During the summer season, it is used for timber, fuel, and fodder because of its good nutritional value in some of the West Himalayan areas of India.

In Ayurveda, the roots and the fruits are used for the treatment of rheumatism, burning sensation, and haemorrhages. The root barks of *A. salvifolium* were used externally as an antidote against snake/scorpion, rabbit, rat, and dog bites. In the Philippines, the roots and the fruits are used for the treatment of rheumatism and hemorrhoid externally<sup>9</sup>. In Comoros, Africa, a decoction of the whole plant along with a fruit of coconut is used to treat boils. Leaves are used to cure asthma in China<sup>10</sup>.

Pharmacological screening of A. salvifolium

#### > Antimicrobial activity

To evaluate the antimicrobial activity, the agar cup plate test was used to determine the sensitivity of the samples and the well micro-dilution was used to determine the minimum inhibitory concentration. Aqueous and alcoholic extracts were tested on gram

positive (Staphylococcus aureus ATCC 25925, Bacillus subtilis ATCC 6633, Staphylococcus epidermis ATCC 12228 and Micrococcus luteus ATCC 10240)) and gram-negative bacteria (Enterobacter aerogens ATCC 13048, Escherichia coli ATCC 25922, Salmonella typhi ATCC 51812 and Shigella dysenteriae ATCC 25931). The results of antimicrobial assays showed that all tested extracts were active against all tested microbial species including gram-positive and negative bacteria. The alcoholic extract showed direct antimicrobial activity against all tested microorganisms with minimum inhibitory concentrations ranging between 0.130 and 0.520 mg/ml, while the aqueous extract showed 0.26-2.10 mg/ml, respectively. The extract has been reported to contain phenolic compounds and flavonoids. Hence these compounds may be responsible for the antimicrobial effect by killing the bacteria by directly damaging the cell membrane.<sup>11</sup>,<sup>12</sup>,<sup>13</sup>

#### Antiulcer activity

The petroleum ether, chloroform, methanol, and aqueous root extracts of *A. salvifolium* at the doses of 100, 200, and 400 mg/kg were tested on pylorusligated Wistar rats. Among the extracts, the petroleum ether extract of *A. salvifolium* reduces the total acidity, free acidity, peptic activity, and ulcer index significantly when compared to other extracts. It has been proved that *A. salvifolium* acts by blocking the acid secretion on the H<sup>+</sup>-K<sup>+</sup>-ATPase proton pump by inhibition of H<sup>+</sup>- K<sup>+</sup>-ATPase activity of the parietal cells. <sup>14</sup>, <sup>15</sup>

#### Antiarthritic activity

The antiarthritic activity of *A. salvifolium* stem barks was evaluated in Wistar rats using Fruends adjuant arthritis model. The petroleum ether, choloroform, methanol, ethyl acetate, and aqueous extracts were administered at a dose of 100 mg/kg for 21 days. The

paw volume and paw thickness were measured and all the extracts of *A. salvifolium* showed potent antiarthritic activity and the potency was in the order as follows, >chloroform > ethyl acetate > aqueous > petroleum ether > methanol. It has been reported that the steroids present in the plant extracts may be responsible for the anti-arthritic activity by inhibiting the inflammation due to the Fruends adjuant (inflammogen).<sup>16</sup>,<sup>17</sup>

> Anthelmitic activity

*A. salvifolium* bark extract of 50, 100, and 150 mg/ml were tested against earthworms (*Pheretimaposthuma*) to evaluate the anthelmintic activity. The methanol and chloroform extracts exhibited significant anthelmintic activity at the highest concentration of 150 mg/ml. The possible mode of action is by increasing chloride ion conductance of the worm muscle membrane there by produces hyperpolarization hence excitability decreases, which leads to muscle relaxation and flaccid paralysis <sup>18</sup>.

Antioxidant activity

The antioxidant activity of the alcoholic root extract of A. salvifolium was tested by using DPPH and nitric oxide radical inhibiting activity methods. In the DPPH radical scavenging method, alcoholic and aqueous extract of A. salvifolium root at a dose of 200 µg/ml exhibits 76.4% and 62.4% inhibition and standard drug ascorbic acid showed 88.6% inhibition, and the EC<sub>50</sub> ( $\mu$ g/ml) was found to be 120.48, 135.14 and 96.15 µg/ml, respectively. In the nitric oxide radical scavenging method, alcoholic extracts, aqueous extract, and ascorbic acid exhibited 74.9%, 59.7%, and 83.5% inhibition, and the  $EC_{50}$  (µg/ml) was found to be 308.80, 450.8, and 201.32 µg/ml respectively. Among these two methods, the alcoholic extract exhibited more antioxidant activity with a low EC<sub>50</sub> value. The presence of high phenolic and flavonoid content in the A. salvifolium extracts has contributed directly to the antioxidant activity by neutralizing the free radicals.<sup>19,20</sup>

# Antifertility activity

The androgenic and anti-androgenic activity of the total alkaloid fraction of *A. salvifolium* stem bark methanolic extract was performed in male wistar rats.

Oral administration of 10 and 20 mg/kg b.wt. total alkaloid fraction was administered for 7 days. The results of the study showed a significant increase in the weight of the testis, seminal vesicles, ventral prostate, and epididymis in the treated rats. The total alkaloid fraction has produced abortifacient and less anti-implantation activities<sup>21</sup>.

Analgesic and anti-inflammatory activity

Analgesic activity of the methanolic extract of *A*. *salvifolium* root was performed using albino mice. The methanolic extract at doses of 100 and 200 mg/kg was administered i.p, 30 min before writhing induction. Acetylsalicylic acid at a dose of 400 mg/kg was used as standard. The study showed marked analgesic activity at a dose of 200 mg/kg (i.p), the extract possessed a slightly weaker analgesic activity than acetylsalicylic acid (400 mg/kg)<sup>22</sup>.

The anti-inflammatory study was performed using a carrageenan- induced paw edema model. The methanolic extract of A. salvifolium root at doses of 100 and 200 mg/kg and standard acetylsalicylic acid (400 mg/kg) were intraperitoneally injected into rats 30 min before carrageenan induction. It was found that the methanolic extract inhibited the carrageenaninduced rat paw edema at 100 and 200 mg/kg b. wt. The possible mechanism of action is that salviifoside B, the major component in the extract inhibits the production of nitric oxide, prostaglandin E2, and tumor necrosis factor- $\alpha$ , which are the mediators of inflammation. Similarly, anti-inflammatory activity was also observed in the case of the root extract in the carrageenan-induced paw edema model in rats. Significant percent inhibition of paw oedema was observed within 6 h, supporting its traditional use for the treatment of inflammation<sup>23</sup>.

# Diuretic activity

The benzene and ethyl acetate extracts of *A. salvifolium* root at a dose of 250 mg/kg were evaluated for diuretic activity using the Lipschitz method. The study involves the evaluation of total urine volume and Na+, K+, and Cl- concentration in urine. The extract (250 mg/kg) treatment showed increased urine volume and concentration of Na+, K+, and Cl- in urine. From the study, it was confirmed that the benzene and ethyl acetate extracts of *A. salvifolium* root possess potent diuretic activity at a dose of 250 mg/kg b.wt. The possible mechanism of action of *A. salvifolium* is by inhibiting sodium reabsorption through another mechanism that involves neither the Na<sup>+</sup>/H<sup>+</sup> exchanger nor NaKCl<sub>2</sub> transporter, leading to more sodium and consequently more water retention in the tubes <sup>24</sup>.

> Antifungal activity

Aqueous leaf extract of A. salvifolium is reported for its growth inhibitory activity against Trichotheciumroseum, a fungal pathogen, however, the effect was not found to be very much significant. The ethanolic extract of roots has been reported against Aspergillus niger, A. fumigatus, A. flavus, Fusariumoxysporum, Penicillumsps, and Rizopussps. The lyophilized powder extract of pulverized wood showed an inhibitory effect against various isolates of dermatophytes and Candida albicans. The inhibitory effect on dermatophytes was found to be comparable to ketoconazole in agar disc diffusion assay, however, significant differences were observed in the case of *Candida albicans*<sup>25,26</sup>.

Anticancer activity

In vivo anticancer potential of crude extract of A. salvifolium flowers was evaluated in the Ehrlich Ascites Carcinoma model in mice. Intraperitoneal administration of extract resulted in a significant reduction in tumor growth as compared with control mice. The anticancer activities of chloroform extract were also investigated which showed similar results. The study indicated a significant increase in the lifespan of the tumor-bearing mice by 32 days. Similarly, in vitro antitumor activity was tested against Dalton's ascitic lymphoma murine cell lines using different doses of methanolic extract. The extracts significantly decreased tumor volume, weight, and viable cells and increased non-viable cells after 14 days of oral administration. Lesser side effects were observed during the treatment. Compounds 27- O-transcaffeoylcylicodiscic acid and myriceric acid exhibited cytotoxic activity towards the MOLT-3 cell line with IC<sub>50</sub> values of 5.6 and 3.9 µm, respectively, and compound 8 selectively inhibited the growth of the

HepG2 cancer cell line with an IC<sub>50</sub> value of 7.1  $\mu$ m<sup>27</sup>,<sup>28</sup>.

Acute toxicity study

*A. salvifolium* extract was evaluated for acute toxicity study according to the OECD guidelines No. 425 of CPCSEA. The LD<sub>50</sub> values of the extract were found to be 1000 mg/kg b. wt.<sup>29</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

A. salvifolium is an excellent medicinal herb that has numerous bioactive phytochemicals. Almost every part of this plant has been used in Ayurveda and various other traditional systems of medicine for the treatment of various diseases. In modern scientific literatures, plant extracts have been reported to have potential efficacy against hypertension, diabetes, cancer, inflammation, ulcer, etc. Various plant parts have been found to possess biological activity more specifically towards overcoming metabolic ailments. This review illustrates the medicinal value of plant parts such as leaves, flowers, roots, root bark, stem, and stem bark.

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