

## CRITICAL REVIEW OF KUMARI (ALOE VERA) - AN AYURVEDIC HERB

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### ABSTRACT

*Kumari*, in Latin it is named as *Aloe vera*, an *Ayurvedic* herb which is widely mentioned in *Ayurvedic* texts. It is a perennial dwarf fleshy leaved plant which can survive even in less supply of water owing to its cold property. This highlights its survival capacity in the adverse conditions. It is cultivated throughout India as a commercial plant. Juice obtained from pulp of leaves which resembles *ghee* possess many medicinal properties i.e. *Bhedana*, *Rasayana*, *Jwarahara* etc. and mainly useful in disorders of teenage girls. It also shows cooling effect and helpful in *Raktvikrtijanaya*, *Pittavikrtijanya*, *Dahayuktavikara*. This article further explores its various properties and uses in medical field.

**Keywords:** *Kumari*, *Bhedana*, Cooling, *Pittavikrtijanya vikara*

### INTRODUCTION

For the first time description of the plant appeared in *Shodhalanighantu*. In different *Nighantus* it is mentioned with many names e.g. *Ghrithkumari*, *Grahakanya*, *Sthooladala* which shows its medicinal properties. It is not mentioned in *Samhitas* and *Dhanvantrinighantu*. Growing up to the height of 60-100 cm tall. Leaves are simple, radical glaucous green with white specs on the lower surface, narrow, lanceolate, succulent and smooth except prickly margins. Leaves are crowded in a basal rosette.<sup>[1]</sup>This juice obtained from pulp of leaves when dried become solid mass of irregular shape and different sizes, dark chocolate to black in colour. It has got nauseating odour and bitter taste. Flowers usually bloom from January

to February. Fruits occur later. According to *Ayurveda* it possess *Bhedana*, *Rasayana*, *Netrya*, *Brahmana*, *Balya*, *Vrasya*, *Vishahara*, *Jwarahara*, *Kusthaghna*, *Krimighna* properties useful in *Yakrutvikara*, *Kamala*, *Vibhandha*, *Rajorodha*, *Krachaartva*, *Jwara*, *Netraroga*, *Pitta*, *Rakta* & *Twakvikara* etc.<sup>[2]</sup> According to pharmacology it have many chemical constituents in which anthraquinone glycoside is most abundant and in *Aloe* (dried form of *Aloevera* pulp) a crystalline glycoside Aloin which is water soluble and light yellow in colour.

#### Etymological Derivation

*Kumari-Kumaryate Kridate swalpenapi jalena sitalatavataA*

Plant which can survive with little quantity of water and it has cooling effect.

**Meaning of Scientific Name**

Latin name- *Aloe vera* Tourn.ex.Linn.

Family –Liliaceae

*Aloe*- A name from Arabic

*vera*-Native of India <sup>[3]</sup>

*Acharya Shivdatta* has quoted beautiful lines with respect to its habit and habitat. The lines go as-

*Kumari ksara bhudese panktibaddhadal abala*

*Vistari badakandini visala piccha sambhrta*

*A Dhvajabha madhyadanda sa aruna rajiyutaprthuh*

*A (Shivdatta)*

The plant *Kumari* grows in *Ksharabhumi*. It has bulky leaves in series with strong underground stem (*Badakandini*) spreading widely and the leaf contains slimy pulp. The peduncle rising from the mid of the leaves and ending with no. of orange/red colored flower in sequence.<sup>[4]</sup>

**HABITAT**

Planted in gardens. A native of Central Africa and West Indies. Naturalized in India and found in Semi-Wild state in many parts.<sup>[5]</sup>

**Table 1:** Showing Different Synonyms and their Elaborations according to the various classical texts<sup>[6-10]</sup>

Synonyms	Elaborations
<i>Sthooldala</i>	<i>Kumari (Aloe vera)</i> has very big and thick leaves
<i>Ghritikumari</i>	Leaves of <i>Kumari</i> has juice which resemble ghee
<i>Vipulsrava</i>	On cutting the leaves it secretes more juices
<i>Kanya</i>	<i>Kumari</i> possess rejuvenative qualities and it is also very useful in disorders of teenaged girls
<i>Grahakanya</i>	Plant has got very good medicinal properties and useful in disorders of teenagers, so liked by all the people
<i>Vanodbhava</i>	It grows wildly
<i>Sthaleruha</i>	It is a terrestrial plant
<i>Dirghpatra</i>	It bears long leaves
<i>Prithudala</i>	It has fleshy leaves
<i>Mandala</i>	Leaves occur in a circle(whorl)
<i>Atipichhila</i>	Its leaves contain very slimy pulp
<i>Ambhudisrava</i>	Liquid oozes out of leaf when incised
<i>Kumari</i>	Plant which can survive with little quantity of water and it has cooling effect
<i>Bahupatra</i>	Many leaves arising from the base
<i>Kantakpravata</i>	Thorns are present on the borders of the leaves
<i>Sukantaka</i>	Thorns are arranged in order
<i>Surasa</i>	The exudates is jelly like
<i>Bhringestha</i>	The flowers are attracted by bees
<i>Phalamatsaya</i>	It bears Fish shape fruits
<i>Sthooldala</i>	The leaves are succulent
<i>Mata</i>	-
<i>Aakshikirasa</i>	-
<i>Mridukanya</i>	Useful in disorders of teenage girls
<i>Ajara</i>	Promotes longevity of life
<i>Amara</i>	Promotes longevity of life
<i>Veera</i>	-
<i>Vranghani</i>	Used in inflammatory and wound conditions
<i>Taruni</i>	Useful in disorders of teenage girls
<i>Rama</i>	-
<i>Kapila</i>	-
<i>Aphala</i>	-
<i>Mridughritakumarika</i>	-
<i>Saha</i>	-

<i>Rasayani</i>	<i>Kumari</i> possess rejuvenative qualities
<i>Katikani</i>	-
<i>Savara</i>	-
<i>Vanodhbhava</i>	-

**Table 2:** Showing the *Varga/Ganas* according to various classical texts

Different Lexicons	Different <i>Varga/Ganas</i>
<i>Dhanvantri nighantu</i> <sup>[11]</sup>	Not mentioned
<i>Kaiydev nighantu</i> <sup>[12]</sup>	<i>Aushadh ivarga</i>
<i>Madanpal nighantu</i> <sup>[13]</sup>	<i>Abhayadi varga</i>
<i>Priya nighantu</i> <sup>[14]</sup>	<i>Shatpushpadi varga</i>
<i>Raj nighantu</i> <sup>[15]</sup>	<i>Parpatad ivarga</i>
<i>Bhavprakash nighantu</i> <sup>[16]</sup>	<i>Guduchyadi varga</i>
<i>Adarsh nighantu</i> <sup>[17]</sup>	<i>Lashunadi varga</i>
<i>Shodhala nighantu</i> <sup>[18]</sup>	<i>Lakshamanad ivarga</i>
<i>Charaka Samhita</i> <sup>[19]</sup>	Not mentioned
<i>Sushruta Samhita</i> <sup>[20]</sup>	Not mentioned
<i>Astanga Hridaya</i> <sup>[21]</sup>	Not mentioned
<i>Shaligram nighantu</i> <sup>[22]</sup>	<i>Guduchyadi varga</i>

**Table 3:** Showing the *Rasa Panchaka* according to the various classical texts

PROPERTIES	D.N <sup>[23]</sup>	K.N <sup>[24]</sup>	M.N <sup>[25]</sup>	P.N <sup>[26]</sup>	R.N. <sup>[27]</sup>	A.N. <sup>[28]</sup>	B.N. <sup>[29]</sup>	SHA.N. <sup>[30]</sup>
<b>Rasa</b>	-	<i>Tikta, Madhura</i>	-	<i>Tikta Madhura</i>	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Tikta, Madhura</i>	<i>Tikta, Madhura</i>	<i>Tikta, Madhura</i>
<b>Guna</b>	-	-	-	<i>Sara</i>	-	-	<i>Snigdha, Picchila</i>	-
<b>Veerya</b>	-	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>
<b>Vipaka</b>	-	<i>Katu Madhura</i>	-	<i>Katu Madhura</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu Madhura</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu Madhura</i>
<b>Prabhava</b>	-	<i>Bhedana</i>	<i>Bhedana</i>	-	-	-	<i>Bhedana</i>	<i>Bhedana</i>

**Table 4:** Showing the *Karma* (Pharmacological activities) according to various classical texts

KARMA	D.N <sup>[31]</sup>	R.N <sup>[32]</sup>	SHA.N <sup>[33]</sup>	B.N. <sup>[34]</sup>	P.N <sup>[35]</sup>	M.N <sup>[36]</sup>	CH.S <sup>[37]</sup>	K.N <sup>[38]</sup>	SU.S <sup>[39]</sup>
<i>Bhedana</i>	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Rasayana</i>	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
<i>Netrya</i>	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Brahmana</i>	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Balya</i>	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Vrasya</i>	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Vishahara</i>	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Jwarahara</i>	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Kusthaghna</i>	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Krimighna</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-

**Table 5:** Showing the therapeutic indications (*Rogagnata*) according to various classical texts

Therapeutic indication	D.N <sup>[40]</sup>	R.N <sup>[41]</sup>	SHA.N <sup>[42]</sup>	B.N. <sup>[43]</sup>	P.N <sup>[44]</sup>	M.N <sup>[45]</sup>	CH.S <sup>[46]</sup>	K.N <sup>[47]</sup>	SU.S <sup>[48]</sup>

<i>Yakrutvikara</i>	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
<i>Gulma</i>	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	-
<i>Pleeharoga</i>	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
<i>Granthi</i>	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Agnidagdha</i>	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Visphota</i>	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Pittavikara</i>	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Raktavikara</i>	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Twakvikara</i>	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Jwara</i>	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-
<i>Netraroga</i>	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Visha</i>	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Kustharoga</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Krimiroma</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
<i>Kasa</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Shwasa</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Chardi</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Rajorodha</i>	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-

**Chemical Composition** Aloin (crystalline glycoside), Anthraquinone (Aloe emodin or trihydroxy methyl), Resin, Volatile oil, Gallic acid.<sup>[49]</sup>

#### Varieties

**According to Ayurveda texts:-**

Varieties- **2 to 3**

When we read *Bhavprakash Nighantu* critically two *Rasa* are mentioned for *Kumari* one is *Madhura* and other one is *Tikta*. Based on *Rasa*, we can consider two varieties of *Aloevera* one is *Madhura* and other one is *Tikta*.<sup>[50]</sup>

**According to Modern texts:-**

**According to the place of Cultivation-**

- Zanziber
- Arabian
- Mysorean
- West Indies

**Botanically varieties which are used are as under-**

- **Aloe vera (Linn) Burm.F.**-Planted in Indian gardens, Himalayas, South India.
  - **Aloe barbadensis Mill**
  - **Aloe ferox**
  - **Aloe Abyssinia-** Abyssinia, Central Africa, Kathiwar coast
  - **Aloe perryi-** Island of socorta
  - **Aloe Succotri-**Indigenous to South Africa
- Many other species are also found.<sup>[51]</sup>

#### Description of Useful Part-Aloe

**Synonyms-***Kumarisara, Sahasara, Kanyasara, Aloe, Aluwa, Krishnabola, Mussabara, Aeliyaka, Kumarisartoudbhava*

**Types of Aloe:-**

Commercially there are four varieties: -

- **Curcao aloe-**Black brown colour
- **Cape aloe-**Green brown colour
- **Socotrina aloe-**Dark brown colour with glossy structure
- **Zanziber aloe-** Light blue colour

*Curcaoaloe* is also known as *IndianAloe, Barbados-Aloe, MusabbarAloe*. In *Curcaoaloe* 30% Aloin is present.<sup>[52-53]</sup>

**Procedure of formation:-** By crushing green succulent leaves a sticky liquid of golden yellow colour having nauseating odour and metallic taste is obtained. When drying it becomes solid mass of irregular shape and different sizes known as aloe.

**Drying or Solidifying of this sticky liquid can be done in two ways:-**

- 1.Heated by sun heat or on a low flame by this method clear and transparent hepatic aloe is obtained.
- 2.If it is dried or solidified on high flame transparent, glassy, vitreous aloe is obtained. It is alcohol soluble in nature.<sup>[54]</sup>

**Pharmacological properties of Aloe:-**

*Laghu, Rusksha, Ushna, Teekshna, Bhedana, Artavanjana, Krimighana, Deepana, Pachana, Balya.*

**Substitutes & Adulterants**

Drug from Kathiawar region of Gujarat is frequently adulterated with those obtained from Karnataka and other parts of the country, considering inferior in quality. Market samples are also found adulterated with black *Catechu*, sander iron dust.<sup>[55]</sup>

**Therapeutic Uses<sup>[56-57]</sup>**

- It is useful in Liver diseases and helps in digestion.
- The juice extracted from *Kumari (Aloe vera)* is used as *Nasya* for *Kamala*.
- Juice of *Kumari (Aloe vera)* mixed with *Haridra (Curcuma longa)* taken internally relieve *PleehaV-raddhi* (Splenomegaly) and this therapy is also useful in *Apachi* (Scrofula).
- *Kalka* prepared from *Kumarirasa* and *Jiraka (Cuminum cyminum)* if applied will relieve burning sensation and inflammation.
- In larger doses it shows *Bhedana* and *Artavanjana* property, in lesser doses it is useful as *Deepana, Pachana, Balya*.
- For *Virechana* it is given with other *Vataanulomana, Udvestananirodhi Aushadha*.
- In *Anartava, Pandu, Vibhandha* in women it is given. It should not be given in *Garbhini* and *Stanpana* (feeding mother) women.

**DISCUSSION**

*Kumari*, Latin named as *Aloe vera* is an Ayurvedic herb which is widely mentioned in *Ayurvedic* texts. It is cultivated throughout India as a commercial plant. Whole plant is useful in various therapeutically conditions. In Indian kitchens, as a vegetable it is used. It is a home medicine for the diseases of women and especially for virgins. It is a main component of *Rajahpravartanivati* which is helpful for *Rajorodha, Kastaartava* like menstrual disorders. Till present time various researches are conducted and its anti-inflammatory, immunostimulant and anti-obesity effects are observed. *Aloe* obtained from pulp of leaves possess *Bhedana, Rasayana, Netrya, Brahmana, Balya, Vrasya, Vishahara, Jwarahara, Kusthaghna, Krimighna properties*. We can use it in both ways ex-

ternally or internally. Due to increase in commercialization in usage of *Aloe vera*, a rise in its adulteration is seen. Various chemical tests are mentioned in texts to check its purity. According to most of the *Nighantus Kumari* is *Vatpittashamaka* whereas *Acharya Bhavprakash* has mentioned it as *Tridosha shamaka* in nature.

**CONCLUSION**

When we read *BhavprakashNighantu* critically two *Rasa* are mentioned for *Kumari* one is *Madhura* and other one is *Tikta*. Based on *Rasa*, we can consider two varieties of *Aloevera* one is *Madhura* and other one is *Tikta*. We can use *Madhura* variety for *Brahana, Balya, Vrishya, Vata* and *Vishanashaka Karma* and *Tikta* variety for *Netrya* and *Rasayana Karma*. *Kumari* possess *Bhedana* properties and its Juice obtained from pulp of leaves possess *Ushna* and *Teekshna* properties in nature.<sup>[73]</sup> It is clearly mentioned in texts to use *Kumari* in Hepatomegaly, as it improves liver function in that way due to these properties we can use *Kumari* in Gall stones also. Externally it is beneficial in *Stanshotha, Netraabhishtyanda, Twakroga, Arshas, Vrana*. Internally it is beneficial in *Anartava, Pandu, Vibhandha*, liver disorders, digestive disorders.<sup>[74]</sup>

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