



A review of controversial aspect of drug *shitivarak* (*Celosia argentea linn.*)

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ABSTRACT

Controversy in the identification of drugs is one of the major barriers in the field of medicine as well as in the process of standardization. There are so many reasons for the creation of controversies in a field that is Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the synonymies of drugs. The drug *Shitivaraka* (*Celosia argentea linn.*) is mentioned and has utilized by the *Brihatrayi* for the treatment. Here controversy arises due to some synonymy's like *Sunnishanaka*, *Kurantika*, *Kurantak* etc. and efforts has been made to clarify all doubts with help of *Dhalhan tika*. This drug was less used by later *Ayurvedic* Physicians. But since long, this is one of the best drugs used in the armamentarium of *Bhrihatrayi Ratan Vaidyaraj A.V.Datar* who is founder of *Vaidyaraj Datar Panchmabhutik Chikitsa and Samshodhan Kendra, Sangli*. This drug is available in abundant quantity at low cost. So this may be the choice of drug for the physician for treatment of the patient.

KEYWORDS: Controversy, *Shitivaraka*, Synonymy's, *Sunnishanaka*, *Kurantika*, *Kurantak*, *Dhalhan tika*.

INTRODUCTION

India is content with various languages, types of persons and obviously *Ayurvedist*. So one plant is known by various synonyms and different plants have one name in various parts of the country and this has resulted and contributed for many controversial plants. So for better future of *Ayurveda* there is a need to study controversial aspect of plant if it is there and certainly it is not an easy task.

But, if everything was so simple it would not have created any room for curiosity and research. As the world is looking towards the identification and standardization of all the available sources of drugs, it becomes necessary to standardize the right source of classical drugs i.e. Drugs mentioned in the *Ayurvedic* literature specifically in *Samhitas*. Controversy in the identification of drugs is one of the major barriers in the field of medicine as well as in

the process of standardization. There are so many reasons for the creation of controversies in a field.^[1]

In the field of *Dravyaguna* controversy can arise due to

1. Non availability of *Samhitakalina* drugs in the later periods.
2. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the synonym's of drugs.
3. Lack of knowledge of plants etc.
4. Same plant used by different names in different places.
5. Different plants used in different geographical areas under the same name.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the authenticity of *Shitivaraka* on the basis of classical texts.
2. To clarify the misconception related to synonyms and morphology of drug *Shitivaraka*.
3. To clarify the controversial aspect of *Shitivaraka* (*Celosia argentea linn.*) with experts opinion.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is an attempt to clarify the misconception related to drug *Shitivaraka* (*Celosia argentea linn.*) and claiming that scholar has removed all the possible controversies of this plant.

A] In this era the confusion is created by synonyms.^[2] The drug *Shitivaraka* is

having different synonyms and *Sunishinnaka* is among one of them but there is another drug available under same name so here some controversy may arise.

But the drug *Sunishinnaka* is totally different from *Shitivaraka*; the identification character has been quoted by *Dalhana* very nicely^[3]

*Shree brahmadevastu chaturdalamah
tatlakshanm kathytate,
Changeri sadrushai patrae sunishannak
chaturdala,
Shako jalanvite deshe chatusha patrai
kathytate.
(Su.Su46/262 Dalhana comm.)*

The meaning of the verse is *Sunishnnaka* plant has leaves like *Changeri* plant, but in this leaves are four in numbers (in *changeri* leaves are three) and it grows in watery place. *Bapalal Vaidya* is convinced with the commentary of *Dalhana* and they are mentioned that *Sunishinnaka* is nothing but *Marsilea quadrifolia*; meaning four leaves, which coincides with *Chatuspatri* (*Chowpatia-Hindi*). It grows in vicinity of water.^[4]

The another expert opinion is given by *Thakur Balwanta Singh* and *Dr. K C Chuneekar* in Glossary of vegetable drug in *Brhatray-1972* that is *Sunishnnaka* *Marsilea minuta* *Linnis* is often been confused with *Shitivaraka* which is different. *Marsilia* is a non-flowering plant belonging to the group of ferns while *Shitivaraka* is a flowering plant bearing seeds which are used.^[5]

B] The *Kurantika* is one of the synonyms of *Shitivaraka* and here there is no confusion

and controversy regarding the synonym, but there are some drugs whose names are nearer to *Kurantika*.

The word *Kurantika* is mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta* in his *Samhita* and *Dalhana* has described the identification character of this drug as ^[6]

Kurantika Krushan Suksham Phala
Shirivalika Iti Loke,
Su Su 38/10 Dhalhan Tika

Shitivaraka (Celosia argentea linn.) has

Black, small seeds

In the same chapter, there is one drug named *Kuruntaka* which is different from *Kurantika* and for that *Dahlana* has commented;

Kuruntak Pitapushapa Nilapushapa Saeva
Dasi Kurantak,

Su Su 38/10 Dhalhan Tika

Kuruntaka is nothing but the *Pitta-Sahachara* and *Dasi-Kuruntaka* is *Neel-Sahachara*. In *Virtarvadi Gana* all three are included that is both *Sahachara* and *Kurantika(Shitivaraka)*

Kuruntaka is the name which may resemble to that of *Kurantika* but here *Acharya Sushruta* has considered *Kuruntaka* as *Sahachar*

Experts Opinion:

1. *Thakur Balwant Sing* has mentioned *Shitivaraka* and has considered its botanical name as *Celosia*

argentea Linn. And it has synonym's *Kurantika, Kurant* etc.

2. *Bapalal Vaidya* also completely agrees with *Thakur Balwant Sing*.^[7]
3. *Vaman G. Desai* has also considered *Celosia argentea Linn* as botanical source of *Shitivaraka*.^[8]
4. Probably all the available literatures also agree with the above opinions of the experts.

DISCUSSION

1. The references of this drug are found in *samhitas* and later on in *Nighantus* but therapeutic use of this drug is very rare and the drug remained untouched since along. This is the main cause of confusion and another is the similarity in synonyms of drug.
2. The drug *Shitivaraka* is having different synonyms and *Sunishinnaka* is among one of them. *Sunishinnaka* has leaves like *Changeri* plant, this is nothing but *Marsilea quadrifolia*. It grows in vicinity of water.
3. The word *Kurantika* is mentioned by *Acharya Sushruta* in his *Samhita* and *Dahlana* has described the identification character of this drug as *Krishn sukshma phala {Su Su 38/10}* (*Celosia argentea linn.*) Has having the Black, small seeds.
4. *Thakur Balwant Sing* and *Bapalal Vaidya* has mentioned that *Shitivaraka* is considered as the botanical name *Celosia argentea Linn.* And it has synonym's *Kurantika, Kurant* etc. and *Dr. Vaman G. Desai* also gave *Celosia*

argentea Linn as botanical source of
Shitivaraka

CONCLUSION

1. *Aacharya Dahana* has described the identification character of this drug as *Krishn sukshma phala {Su Su 38/10}* which can be correlated with *Celosia argentea* linn. which is having the Black, small seeds.
2. *Sunishinnaka* is often been confused with *Shitivaraka* but *Sunishinnaka* is nothing but the *Marsilea quadrifolia* which is a non-flowering plant belonging to the group of ferns while *Shitivaraka* is a flowering plant and it is nothing but the *Celosia argentea* Linn..

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Conflict of Interest: Non

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52482/ayurlog.v9i04.922>

Source of funding: Nil

Cite this article:

A review of controversial aspect of drug shitivarak (*Celosia argentea* linn.)

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Ayurlog: National Journal of Research in Ayurved Science- 2021; (09) (04): 01- 04