



## MEDICINAL EFFECT OF CHARAITA DESCRIBED IN UNANI SYSTEM OF MEDICINE -AN OVERVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

*Charaita* or *Charaita* is a well known Unani drug which is being used as medicament from centuries for the treatment of *Amraze Jildiya* (skin disease) as well as for other systems like hepatobiliary, cardiovascular, antidiabetic etc by Unani Physicians and they mentioned their medicinal efficacy in Unani Classical texts. It is native of India, China, Nepal and Bhutan. In India it is found naturally in northern hilly areas at altitude ranges of 1400-3200m. There are *musaffi e khoon*, *mulattif*, *mohallil* properties due to these it act and dissolves epidermal and dermal rashes and eruptions as well as pruritus and usually used in *amraze jildiya* (skin diseases). There are two principal chemical constituents documented such as ophelic acid and chiratin both are bitter in taste. *Majun musaffi khoon*, *Majun Ushba Majun Chobchini* are the famous compound drugs having *Charaita* as an ingredient. The present review reveals that *Swertia Chirata* is a valuable source of natural medicament and its use will lead a strong pillar in field of dermatology. This review also aimed at the minimal side effect and strong efficacy of the *Charaita* as used in crude form (holistic approach) one of the principal philosophy of Unani system of medicine.

**KEYWORDS:** *Majun musaffi khoon*, *Majun Ushba Majun Chobchini*.

### INTRODUCTION

*Swertia Charaita* is also known as Haima, kirata Tikta, Nidrari, Ramasenka, kairata in Sanskrit, in Urdu language it is called Charaita, Chirata in Bengal and in Arabic and Farsi called as Qasabuzzarirah. Chiretta is its market name.<sup>[1]</sup> Usually it is best collected when flowering (july-october) and used in dry form.<sup>[2]</sup> This ancient herb is also sometimes known as the Nepali Neem because it is annual/ biennial herb in the forests of Nepal. This plant was introduced to Europe in 1839 and has been used widely since. This annual herb is found in the Himalayas majorly between the heights of 1200 to 1500 meters and grows up to the height of 1.5 meters.<sup>[3]</sup> There are two bitter principal constituents namely ophelic acid and chiratin which posses anti-inflammatory, analgesic, resolvent, hypoglycemic properties.<sup>[4]</sup> *Charaita* which belongs to Gentianaceae family is an herbaceous plant of small height ranging as 0.5-1.25 meter. Leaves lie opposite at stem, flowers are blue, lurid and sometimes white with yellow nectaris in terminal corymbose orpanicular cymes. It is found in temperate Himalayas at an altitude between 1200-1300m from Kashmir to Bhutan. Chirata has been used as drug from ancient time and usually it is used for skin diseases as in dry and wet pruritus and it also resolute the inflammation of skin as it posses *mulattif* and *morally* and *musaffi khoon*.<sup>[5]</sup>

### Distribution<sup>[1],[2]</sup>

Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Sikkim between altitudinal ranges of 1400 – 3270 m. CHINA; TIBET; NEPAL and BHUTAN.

### Botanical Classification<sup>[6]</sup>

Kingdom: Plantae  
(Unranked): Angiosperms  
Order: Gentianales  
Family: Gentianaceae  
Genus: *Swertia L*

### Unani description

It is mentioned in Unani classical literature as *Qasabuz zarirah*. It is found in India and Iran, in India northern hilly temperate areas of Himalayas, like Kashmir, Assam. It is called *kartis* due to used by a specific hilly people called *kartis*. Whole plant is used as a medicine. *Mutative (demulcent) Mohallil (dissolvent)*. It is diuretic, blood purifier, hepatotonic and hepatoprotective. It is useful in pain of kidneys, pain due to bone origin, fever. It is useful in many skin diseases, wet and dry pruritus, leprosy. It is useful in ascites and for this it should be used with honey in empty stomach. It useful to burn injuries when used with *sirka* and *rogane gul*.<sup>[5]</sup>

### Chemical constituent

Two principal constituent namely Ophelic acid and Chiratin. Beside these Xanthones, glycosides and mangiferin (Flavonid) are also present.<sup>[2]</sup> Xanthones subtypes known as swertianin and swerchirin chemically



Swertia Chirata Linn.<sup>[6]</sup>



Swertia Chirata Linn.<sup>[3]</sup>

### Ethnobotanical Action and Uses of Charaita

Bitter tonic<sup>[1]</sup>, Sanguineous matter purifier, Anti Inflammator<sup>[8]</sup>, Laxative, Hypoglycemic.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Ethno botanical Uses

Pruritus and skin disease, Dyspepsia' Liver dysfunction.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Compound Unani formulation

*Majoon Musaffi e khoon, Majoon masakul-baul.*<sup>[5]</sup>

### Scientific Reports

#### Antimicrobial effect

Ethanol extract shows inhibition activity against *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bacillus megaterium* and *Escherichia coli*.<sup>[9], [10]</sup>

#### Hypoglycemic effect of swertia

Ethanol extract and methanol fractions of leaf of *Swertia Chirata* have shown hypoglycemic effect on Swiss albino mice at fasting condition after some hours of drug administration.<sup>[11]</sup>

#### Anti-inflammatory and analgesic property

Anti-inflammatory and analgesic activity of *Swertia Chirata* signifies the traditional use for inflammation and pain.<sup>[12]</sup>

### CONCLUSION

There is big availability of modern medicine for the treatment of skin disorders but these medicines have disadvantages like side effects, costly to common man and chance of recurrence of the disease when drug is stopped because most of the cosmetic drugs are steroid

trihydroxy3-methoxyxanthone and syringaresinol, magniferin respectively possess antifungal, antibacterial, hepatoprotective, anti-inflammatory and analgesic property.<sup>[7]</sup>

based. The medicines which are natural based have lesser side effects and easily available to patients. Charaita contain various active chemical constituents viz; swertianin and swerchirin, Ophelic acid and chiratin and flavonoids compound which have been reported as antimicrobial activity against various skin disorders besides this these possess hepatoprotective and anti-inflammatory action by which Charaita give potentiating to immunity and resolve the local inflammation through internal environment. Further elaborative research is needed to evaluate other unknown profit of Charaita. May this review will be supportive as new possibility for the research scholars for various skin diseases.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Nil.

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