



Review Article

PARPATAK AS CONTROVERSIAL PLANT

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ABSTRACT

Parpatak is an important medicinal plant used in Ayurveda for the treatment of various diseases which includes *Jwara* (fever), *Raktapitta*, *Trishna* etc. Multiple plant species have been used under the name "plant *Parpatak*," which has caused some debate. *Sandigdhadrayas*, often known as controversial plants, are medicinal plants that use contentious botanicals as sources and are mentioned in ancient Indian literature. The creation of identifying characteristics for various plant sources with similar names has become a crucial challenge. It is not about the accuracy of botanical source of a herbal drug but about the potency of the drug in curing the disease. More than 12,000 different Sanskrit plant names with overlaps are recorded in the classical stream of Ayurveda from 1500 BCE to 1900 CE. More than 200 texts, including 6 *Samhitas*, 57 *Nighantus*, and 140 *Vyakhyas*, include this knowledge. In codified literature, information about plants is organised into three main categories: morphological description, pharmacology, and pharmacy. The problem of disagreement is exacerbated by the usage of several plant species under the name of one plant due to the rising demand and decreased availability. Similar disagreement exists about the medication *Parpatak*, which greatly muddles the various plant sources used across the nation. In this regard, the present review work aims to accomplish and differentiate the medicinal plants which are known as *Parpatak*. Here an effort is made to compile the existing knowledge about the plant '*Parpatak*' from the literatures along with currently available studies to establish some understanding regarding the plant.

INTRODUCTION

Parpatak is a valued herb in Ayurvedic medicine system and is used by majority of Ayurvedic physicians. There are numerous plant sources for it, all of which have classically been referred to as *Parpatak* due to its similar pharmacological effects. The entire plant of *Parpatak* is frequently used in ayurvedic as well as folkloric medicine systems. Unani system of medicine also comprised different polyherbal formulations containing *Parpatak* as ingredients.^[1,2] It is mainly used in high *pitta* conditions such as fever, diarrhoea, gastritis, excessive thirst etc. *Shadangpaneeya* drink is a famous herbal remedy

made out of six herbs including *Parpatak* used in fever associated with thirst. Its other therapeutic uses are *Jwara*, *Raktapitta*, disease associated with *Raktadushti*, *Trishna*, *Mada*, *Bhrama*, *Daha*, *Chhardi* etc.

Parpatak is a highly controversial drug. There are various botanical sources which are currently being identified under the name as '*Parpatak*' and used in different parts of India. The lack of complete evidences about plant species gives rise to suspicion and it affects the optimal pharmacological action while using for therapeutic purposes. 'Contra' means 'against' and 'vertere' means 'to turn', so controversy is a state of ongoing public argue or discussion usually including divergent viewpoints or opinions.^[3] Controversial plants also known as '*Sandigdhdavyas*' are medicinal plants mentioned in ancient Indian literature having similarity in such a way either morphology or other characteristics with contentious botanical sources. There are numerous instances where two or more completely different plant species are referred to by

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the same common name in traditional system of medicine according to information from Ayurvedic and other literatures.^[4]

Reasons for controversy:^[5] The causes of conflict may generally be enumerated, starting with the use of the same synonyms or vernacular names for several plants, difficulties in distinguishing between fake and original plants. Other reasons enlisted as follows-

1. Unavailability of raw materials.
2. Unwanted dependency on substitutes due to increased demands of ASU drugs
3. Breaking in traditional teaching and training.
4. Improper documentation of manuscripts.
5. Allowing unauthorised persons to identify herbs.
6. Similar synonyms for the different plants and various vernacular names for same plant.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Being a contentious medicinal plant as stated in several Ayurvedic literature *Parpatak* demands adequate elucidation for the purpose of ensuring its genuine identification and authentication. More than

Parpatak description in *Samhitas*

Charak Samhita	<i>Trishnanigrahan Mahakashaya</i> ^[8] <i>Shakvarga</i> ^[9] <i>Shadangpaneeya</i> in <i>Madhyaj</i> and <i>Pittaj jwara</i> . ^[10] <i>Kwath</i> formulation used in <i>Jwara</i> with combination of <i>Musta</i> , <i>Nagar</i> . ^[11] Used in <i>Raktapitta</i> as <i>Peya</i> form and as content of <i>Kirattiktadi churna</i> .
Sushrut Samhita	<i>Shakvarga</i> ^[12] Actions- <i>Raktapittahar</i> , <i>Hridhya</i> , used in- <i>Kushtha</i> , <i>Meha</i> , <i>Shwash</i> , <i>Kasa</i> , <i>Aruchi</i> <i>Shadangpaneeya</i> in <i>Jwara</i> , <i>Kwath</i> form used in <i>Kapha-vat jwara</i> & <i>Kapha-pitta jwara</i> ^[13]
Astang Hridaya	<i>Parpatak</i> has <i>Tikta rasa</i> , <i>Katu vipak</i> , <i>Grahi karma</i> , <i>Vatvardhak</i> & <i>Kaphapittahar</i> ^[14] <i>Kwath</i> preparation in <i>Pitta jwara</i> , <i>Shadangpaneeya</i> ^[15]

Parpatak description in *Nighantus*

<i>Nighantu</i>	<i>Varga</i>	<i>Characters</i>
<i>Dhanvantari nighantu</i>	<i>Guduchyadi varga</i> ^[16]	<i>Parpatak</i> has mentioned in <i>Guduchyadi varga</i> along with <i>Tikta rasa dravyas</i> , <i>Veerya</i> is stated <i>Sheet</i> . Synonyms- <i>Parpat</i> , <i>Vartikta</i> , <i>Sutiktak</i> , <i>Raja</i> , <i>Renu</i> , <i>Panshu</i> , <i>Varmakantaka</i> , <i>Kavach</i> .
<i>Kaiydev nighantu</i>	<i>Aushdhi varga</i> ^[17]	Described as- <i>Tikta in Rasa</i> , <i>Katu in Vipaka</i> , <i>Sheet veerya</i> and <i>Laghu guna</i> . <i>Vatvardhak</i> and <i>Pittashamak</i> Synonyms- <i>Sheetvallabh</i> , <i>Charmahva</i> , <i>Charmakanchak</i> , <i>Sukshmapatra</i> , <i>Yastik</i> , <i>Triyastik</i> , <i>Trikantak</i> including syn. in <i>Dhanvantari nighantu</i> .
<i>Bhavprakash nighantu</i>	<i>Guduchyadi Varga</i> ^[18]	Characters same as mentioned in <i>Dhanvantari Nighantu</i> .
<i>Raj nighantu</i>	<i>Parpatadi varga</i> ^[19]	<i>Sheet in Veerya</i> Synonyms- <i>Charak</i> , <i>Trishnari</i> , <i>Kharak</i> , <i>Sheetpriya</i> , <i>Kalpangi</i> , <i>Krishashakh</i> , <i>Raktapushpak</i>

ten different plant species are used with adulteration or substitution as *Parpatak* according to literature review. *Fumaria parviflora* Lamb. and *Fumaria indica* had received widespread acceptance as '*Parpatak*' in a number of books and in API *Fumaria parviflora* is accepted as *Parpatak*.^[6] About sixty species of *Fumaria* has recently been identified. Among them *Fumaria indica*, *Fumaria vullentii* Losil. and *Fumaria parviflora* have similarity in the extreme. So, these three are considered as synonyms. But there are some references showing separate pharmacological activities for these three indicating them as different plant species.^[7] This causes controversy among the plants.

Extensive descriptions of '*Parpatak*' are found in *Charak-Samhita*, *Sushrut-Samhita*, *Dhanvantari Nighantu*, *Bhavprakash Nighantu*, *Kaiydev Nighantu* and many other places. In *Bhavprakash Nighantu*, '*Parpatak*' is described with several botanical sources, which leads to designing a controversy about its original source. Here some references are compiled from *Samhitas* and *Nighantus* enlisted below-

<i>Madanpal nighantu</i>	<i>Abhayadi varga</i> ^[20]	<i>Tikta rasa, Sheet veerya, Laghu guna.</i> Synonyms- <i>Bhunimba, Varkantak, Prithvik, Charmakantaka.</i>
<i>Shodhal nighantu</i>	<i>Guduchyadi Varga</i> ^[21]	<i>Tikta in Rasa, Pittashamak.</i> Synonyms- <i>Renu, Kantak, Kalyan</i> etc.

DISCUSSION

Description in classics explain about morphological characters and pharmacological properties along with several therapeutics indications. Almost in all classics stated that *Parpatak* possesses *Tikta rasa, Katu vipaka, Sheet veerya* and *Laghu guna*. By these properties it shows *Vatvardhak* and *Pittashamak* effect, and commonly used in *Pitta* related conditions like- *Jwara* (fever), *Raktapitta*, *Daha*, *Trishna*, *Mada*, *Murchha*, *Bhrama*, *Kushtha*, *Meha* etc. It is also indicated in *Chhardi*, *Atisar*, *Aruchi* etc. *Shadangpaneeya* is a medicated drink containing six herbs including *Parpatak* which is prescribed in *Pittaj* & *Madhyaj jwara*. It is described in all *Brihatrayi* and *Laghutrayi*.

Different plant sources of Parpatak^[22]

	Latin name/family	Habitat	Morphological characters & uses
1.	<i>Oldenlandia corymbosa</i> Linn. Syn.- <i>Hedyotis corymbosa</i> Linn. Fam.-Rubiaceae (<i>Kshetraparpata</i>)	Found all over India, mainly used in Bengal Chemical composition- biflorine & biflorane	Annual herb found in wet areas and rice fields. Branches- Multiple, smooth or hairy sometimes Leaf- Linear Flower- Small, white and two in number at same place Legume- Round and smooth Seeds- Light brown and pointed Uses- <i>Jwarghn, Krumighn</i> , liver disorders, jaundice, measles
2.	<i>Fumaria indica</i> Pugsley Fam.-Fumariaceae (<i>Pittapapda, Shahtarabhed</i>)	Found all over India as weed in winter season in wheat fields Chemical composition- fumaric acid, fumarines	Small herb, multibranched Leaf- Multisplited, minute and fine. Flower- Whitish or pinkish, violet at corners Fruit- round, small seeds Pungent, bitter in taste Uses- <i>Pittajwar</i> , cold, <i>Raktapitta</i> , skin diseases, <i>Kushtha</i> , liver diseases etc.
3.	<i>Polycaraoa corymbosa</i> Lam. Fam.-Caryophyllaceae	Found all over India mainly in pearl millet fields	Herb Branches- Lean, straight and hairy Leaf- Linear Flower- Silver colored, small, in blossoms Uses- internal or external use in snake bite, wound healing, jaundice.
4.	<i>Justicia procumbans</i> Linn. Fam.-Acanthaceae (<i>Ghati pittapapda</i>)	Found mainly in south India in rainy season	Small herb Leaf- Small and hairy Flower- light violet colour Uses- Diuretic and laxative, <i>Pittajwar</i> , conjunctivitis etc.
5.	<i>Glossocardia linearifolia</i> Cass. Fam.-Compositae (<i>Pittapapda</i>)	Found in Pune, mid & South India	Herb, smooth and multibranched Leaf- Splited, linear splits and alternate Flower- Small, yellow like capitulum, tongue shaped, bisexual Uses- <i>Jwarghn</i> , induces uterine contractions

6.	<i>Mollugo stricta</i> Linn. Fam.- Ficoidaceae	Southern India	Herb Branches- Thin and pointed Leaf- Circular foliage, fleshy Flower- Small, greenish or whitish Fruit- Rectangular shape Uses- <i>Deepan</i> , <i>Anuloman</i> , <i>Vishamjwarhar</i> , induces menstrual blood.
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'In Indian Materia Medica' book according to Dr. K.M. Nadkarni, *Fumaria officinalis* Linn. Is imported into India from Persia because it is not a native to India. Another species, *Fumaria parviflora* Lam. can be found much in India from the Indo-gangetic region and Nepal to the Nilgiri mountains.^[23] However, *Fumaria vaillantii* Loiseh syn. *Fumaria indica* Pugsley is described in 'The Wealth of India' and it is noted that 'Many authors have incorrectly referred to this species as *Fumaria officinalis* Linn. Or *Fumaria parviflora* Lamk. It is also referred in this book the drug that is used in liver and stomach disorders, skin diseases is named of 'Shahterah or Pittapapda, imported from Persia and fumitory imported from Europe which are *Fumaria officinalis* and *Fumaria parviflora*.^[24]

Taxonomical classification of *Fumaria Indica*:^[25]

Kingdom	Plantae
Division	Tracheophyta
Class	Magnoliopsida
Order	Ranunculales
Family	Papaveraceae
Subfamily	Fumarioideae
Genus	<i>Fumaria</i>
Species	<i>Fumaria indica</i> (Hausskn.) Pugsley

Vernacular names of *Parpatak*:^[26]

Sanskrit	<i>Parpat</i> , <i>sukshmpatra</i> , <i>vartikta</i>
English	Indian fumitory/ fine leaved fumitory
Hindi	<i>Pittapapda</i> , <i>dhamgajra</i> , <i>pittapapra</i>
Tamil	<i>Tura</i>
Telugu	<i>Parpatakamu</i> , <i>chatarasi</i>
Punjabi	<i>Shah Tara</i>
Farsi	<i>Shah Taraj</i>
Malayalam	<i>Parppadakam</i>

Synonyms:^[27]

Parpat- which flourishes widely, *Sukshmpatra*-minute & fine leaves, *Renu*- small fruits & seeds,

Vartikta-having bitter taste Some studies based on pharmacognostical and phytochemicals comparison among the different controversial substitutes of *Parpatak* revealed the presence of chemical

compounds like protopine^[28], narlumidine^[29], narceine, bicuculine,^[30] fumariline^[31] in *Fumaria indica* Pugsley. Due to presence of these alkaloids *Fumaria indica* shows hepatoprotective action, anti-inflammatory, spasmogenic effect.^[32] Although other substitutes resemble lot of similarities but also have much differences in pharmacological activities. The pharmacological activities are shown by *Fumaria indica* Pugsley are closely like actions described in classics associated with *Parpatak*.

CONCLUSION

Based on above reviews from literatures i.e., *Samhitas*, *Nighantus* and other studies conducted by researchers regarding different botanical sources of *Parpatak* in respect with their pharmacognosy, phytochemicals and pharmacological effects it is suggested that *Fumaria indica* Pugsley species resembles as extreme to the *Parpatak* plant described in classical literatures. Morphological characteristic and pharmacological activities of *Fumaria indica* are very much similar to *Parpatak*. It is important to conducting unbiased research on the plants mentioned in ayurvedic literatures in order to link their descriptions to the appropriate botanical sources using principles of 'Namroopajnanam' and 'Yuktijnanam'.

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