



A comprehensive review of *Shivlingi* (*Bryonia laciniosa* Linn.)

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Abstract

Shivlingi (*Bryonia laciniosa* Linn.) is a perennial herb that has significant importance in traditional medicine, especially in *Ayurvedic* and *Unani* practices, known for its medicinal properties. *Shivlingi* is utilized for a variety of health benefits, including its potential in managing conditions like infertility, arthritis, gastrointestinal issues, cholera, bronchitis, constipation, diabetes, inflammation, paralysis, snake bites, abdominal diseases and mainly used as an aphrodisiac agent. This article explores the botanical characteristics, medicinal uses, pharmacological properties of *Bryonia laciniosa* Linn.. A focus is placed on its active compounds, therapeutic mechanism, and historical usage in various cultures.

Keywords : *Shivlingi*, *Bryonia laciniosa*

Introduction

Shivlingi, scientifically known as *Bryonia laciniosa* is a medicinal plant belonging to Cucurbitaceae family. Commonly found in the Indian subcontinent, particularly in region like the Himalayas, this plant has long been recognized in *Ayurvedic* medicine for its various therapeutic properties. The name *Shivlingi* is derived from the resemblance of its seeds to the symbolic representation of Lord Shiva, a Hindu deity. In addition to its association with religious practices, the plant is believed to offer numerous health benefits. *Shivlingi* seeds are used in the treatment of infertility and boost the chances of conception in women suffering from infertility. According to *Bhavprakash*¹ the *Shivlingi* seeds act as a fertility enhancer used in Ayurveda.

Taxonomic classification

Taxonomical classification	Taxon
Kingdom	Plantae
Sub-kingdom	Tracheobionta
Super division	Spermatophyta
Class	Magnoliopsida
Sub class	Dieniidae
Order	violales
Family	Cucurbitaceae
Genus	Bryonis
Specie	laciniosa Linn.

Shivlingi in various texts:

Raj Nighntu

Raj Nighntu, has mentioned sixteen synonyms² of *Shivlingi* in *Guduchyadi Varga* (45-46) that are *Lingini*, *Bahuptra*, *Ishvari*, *Saivavallika*, *Svayambhu*, *Lingasambhuta*, *Lingi*, *Chitraphala*, *Amrita*, *Pandoli*, *Lingja*, *Devi*, *Chanda*, *Apstambhini*, *Shivja* and *Shivavalli*. Also mentioned it is *Katu* in *Rasa*, *Ushna* in *Virya* and it has foul smell. According to *Raj Nighntu* *Shivlingi* possesses a *Rasayana Karma* by which finest *Shukradhatu* is created, assisting in conception.

Bhavprakasha

Bhavprakasha, *Chikitsa* 70-31 mentioned that the seeds of *Shivlingi* and roots of *Kouch* if taken with milk which will provide male progeny to pregnant mother³.

Nighantu Ratnakar

Nighantu Ratnakara mentioned that the *Shivlingi* can be used in excessive bleeding and skin disorders⁴.

Morphological Character

Flower : In male flowers peduncle 5-15mm. long, calyx tube 2-4x3-6 mm, lobes spreading, corolla greenish-yellow, shortly papillose 4-10mm. broad, lobes ovate, acute, filaments 1-15mm. long, anthers 2 mm long. Female flower fasciculate, ovary globose. Flowers monoecious, often male and female clustered together. Calyx campanulate, lobes subulate. Corolla campanulate, 5-partite, segments often reflexed. Pedicels shorter in male flowers⁵.

Leaves : Leaves deeply palmately 5-lobed, leaves 8-12 cm. in diam. Scabrous above, smooth, beneath, margin denticulate, undulate or sub-crenulate.

Fruit : Fruits berries, spherical yellowish-green or green-white, 6-striped, 12-17 mm. thick, upto 2 cm. across.

Seeds : Seeds ovoid with thickened, corrugated, margins, seed Ca. 5x3 mm. grey, belted attenuate with raised projections on both sides.

Stem : Enormously expanded, thin, scored, labrous. Rings are slender, striate, glabrous.

Ayurvedic properties

<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Katu</i>
<i>Guna</i>	<i>Laghu ruksha</i>
<i>Virya</i>	<i>Ushna</i>
<i>Vipaka</i>	<i>Katu</i>
<i>Doshakarma</i>	<i>Pittakaphahara</i>
<i>Karma</i>	<i>Rasayana kusthahara</i>
Organ effect	Uterus ovaries and testes
Main indication	Infertility

Therapeutic uses

The durg *Shivlingi* is *Garbhashapana* (conception promoting or foetus stabilizing) herbal agent promoting fertility (*Praja Sthapana*). The seeds are orally given for treating sterility (*Vandhytava*) as well as helping conception and development including stabilization of foetus in pregnancy. As a fertility-drug, *Shivlingi* is appreciably regarded an important medicine for male progeny (*Putra Janan*). *Bhav Prakash Chikitsa* 70-31/32 mention that the seeds of *Shivlingi* are taken with milk which provide male progeny to pregnant mother. *Shivlingi* belongs to group of valuable drugs in the area of therapeutics of gynecological disorders specially progeny (promoting conception) against sterility attaching classical significance in Indian medicine. The leaves are pasted over swelling. Leaves, fruits and roots medicinally useful. The drug is useful in fever, flatulence, skin diseases and general debility, it is bitter tonic.

Traditional use-

One of the most well known traditional uses of *Shivlingi* is its role as an aphrodisiac. In Ayurveda, it is commonly used to improve sexual health, vitality and libido. The root of the plant is believed to stimulate sexual desire and enhance reproductive health in both men and women. Paste made from the roots is sometimes applied to the affected areas or the powder may be mixed with other herbs and taken orally to reduce inflammation⁶. Traditional use includes consuming a decoction or powder of *Shivlingi* to help with stomach disorders including indigestion, acidity and gas. In some cases the plant is used as a mild natural laxative to relieve constipation⁷. In Ayurveda *Shivlingi* is sometimes prepared as a tonic often combined with other herbs to restore overall balance and promote health.

Active compounds

1. Alkaloides
2. Saponins
3. Flavonoids and terpenoides
4. Glycosides
5. Punicic Acid

Dosage

Adults : 1-3 gm.

Maximum possible dosage : 6 gm. /day (in divided doses)

Discussion and Conclusion

Shivlingi (*Bryonia laciniosa* Linn.) is a plant with significant medicinal value, particularly in traditional system of medicine. Its diverse therapeutic uses such as improving fertility, alleviating joint pain and supporting digestive health are well documented in texts. *Shivlingi* is one such drug which gives Ayurveda an upper hand due to its dual effect for infertility treatment in both the sexes. The plant seeds are used by traditional healers since thousands of years. In spite of its wide area of usage and its innumerable claims of effect on infertility the data and literature regarding *Shivlingi* is very limited. *Shivlingi* clearly has a plethora of medicinal benefits and it holds quite a lot of promise as a multi-purpose medicine but further clinical trials are needed to scientifically prove its efficacy.

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