

## *Launaea pinnatifida* Cass. A Species of the Controversial Drug *Gojihva*: Comprehensive Review

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### ABSTRACT

According to the Ayurvedic literature *Launaea pinnatifida* Cass is belong to the class of controversial drug *Gohjiva*. This plant is well known and valuable herb as per the traditional and Ethnobotanical information. This plant has been used since ancient time as herbal remedy for jaundice, diuretic, blood purifier and hepatoprotective action by the tribal people of the Western Ghats. However, the plant remains largely unexplored. Systematic pharmacognostical and phytochemical evaluation of the plant by means of standardization leads to the generation of data which is useful for future reference. The traditional medicinal activities suggest that it may yield important bioactive phytoconstituents. Present work dealing with the compilation of available data of *Launaea pinnatifida* (*L. Pinnatifida*) including pharmacognostical work, phytochemical studies and pharmacological work. Microscopic evaluation confirmed the presence of the lignified cork cells parenchyma with prismatic crystals. The histochemical study of root powder confirms the existence of mucilage, tannins, starch, lignin and crystals. Pharmacognostical studies reveals the presence of many primary and secondary metabolites including carbohydrates, alkaloids, amino acids, glycosides, steroids and tannin in root powder. As far as phytochemical study is concern; only few phytochemical constituents have been isolated from *L. pinnatifida* including Taraxasterol from leaves taraxeryl acetate from the roots. Apart from this; triterpenoid saponins along with known compounds glutenol and hopenol B were isolated from Methanolic extract of seed of *L. pinnatifida*. Ethanol fraction of the leaves of *L. pinnatifida* has reported potent hepatoprotective activity, antimicrobial, antifungal and antioxidant activity.

**keywords:** *Launaea pinnatifida*, *Gojihva*, Pharmacognostical.

### INTRODUCTION

*L. pinnatifida* also recognized as *Launaea sarmentosa* (Willd.) it has been traditionally used as a folk herbal remedy for the many diseases. It is native to coastal areas in Africa (east coast), Madagascar, the Seychelles, Mauritius, India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia<sup>1</sup>.

*Launaea* is one of the species of the controversial drug "Gojihva"

*Species considered as Gojihva:*

*Elephantopus scaber* Linn.

*Onosma bracteatum* Wall

*Launaea pinnatifida* Cass.

*Anchusa strigosa* Labill

*Macrotomia benthamii*: Kashmiri Gaozaban

*Coccinia glauca*

*Pharmacognostical Profile*<sup>2</sup>

*Taxonomical Categorization*

Kingdom: Plantae

Sub kingdom: Phanerogams

Division: Angiosperms

Class : Eudicots

Subclass: Asterids

Order : Asterales

Family : Asteraceae

Subfamily: Cichorioideae

Tribe : Cichorieae (Lactuceae)

Subtribe : Sonchinae

Genus : *Launaea*

Species : *Launaea pinnatifida* Cass.

Local Name: Garjibhi (Gujarati), Pathri (Marathi), Beach launaea, Sagar pathari.

Species: *Launaea pinnatifida* Cass.

Range: Coastal range of Arabian Sea including India (from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and Kerala), Sri Lanka and Madagascar coastal range<sup>2</sup>.

Habitat: On sandy beaches and dunes.

Mainly 54 species belong to Genus *Launaea* Cass. and family Asteraceae were identified. Mainly such plants are found in sandy and saline habitat or nearby beaches area. Fresh leaves are generally slight greenish in colour with bitter taste (Figure 1). As per the description given the Bhavprakash Nighantu, Leaves of the Gojihva plants is rough and thick in nature. Detailed translation of the Sanskrit Sloka is gojihva is also known as gojika, gobi and dravika. Gojihva mainly used in the treatment of cough, cold, fever heart and blood related problems. Decoction of the plant is useful for the brain disorders and work as a memory enhancer.

*Organoleptic characteristics of root of L. Pinnatifida (dry and fresh form)*

The fresh roots are yellowish to brown in colour, smooth to touch, aromatic in odour and sweet in test<sup>4</sup>. Dried roots are light brown in colour, rough texture and sweet in smell and taste.

**Morphological characteristics of root of *L. Pinnatifida***

*L. pinnatifida* is also known as *Launaea sarmentosa* belong to family Asteraceae is creeping, perennial procumbent herb. Commonly found near Indian coastal line. Size of leaflets is about 10 to 15 cm with tooth shape. Taste of leaves are slightly bitter having characteristic odour.

On the basis of flower structure and morphological features (Figure 1 & 4). Rooting at inter node is the preliminary diagnostic characteristic of *L. pinnatifida* from other species of *Launaea* genus E.g. *Launaea procumbens* etc. Root is hard and semi woody. Fresh root exudates white to brownish milky latex<sup>4</sup>. Length of the roots is about 10 cm to 1 m long and diameter of 0.5 to 2 cm. Initially young roots are woody and soft in nature, slightly yellowish in colour which turns to brownish during maturity of plant where as dried roots (Figure 5) are hard and dark brown to light brownish in colour, fairly cylindrical to round in shape with aromatic odour. Texture is rough and fibrous to semi woody in nature.

**Macroscopic studies of root of *L. Pinnatifida***

Transverse section of the roots indicates the presence of parenchyma in the cork region along with laticiferous cells and prismatic crystals. Cortical cells confirm the presence of tannins and starch grains. Vascular bundle is centrally arranged and also occupied 50% of the TS<sup>4</sup>. Sieve tube is situated in between phloem and xylem with companion cells. Medullary rays also present in the TS which extended from centre to cortex region consist of starch grains and prismatic cells and having multi serrate structure with barrel shape. There is absence of pith in root.

Diagnostic microscopic features of the roots of *L. pinnatifida* root powder (Figure 6) is the presence of pitted and lignified parenchymatus cell in vascular bundle. Simple parenchyma cell and fibers are present in cortex part. Presence of the starch grain in cortex region and medullary rays contains tannins in the cortical region<sup>4</sup>.

**Physicochemical Constants**

All the physicochemical parameters were evaluated as per the guideline given in Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India (API).

**Moisture Content**

The high amount of moisture content in the sample promotes the micro bacterial growth or else affects the preservation time of plant material specially roots. Moisture content of drug was calculated to be 5.78% w/w.

**Ash Value**

Ash value is indirectly the measure of inorganic and salt material present in the herbal raw material and ash value was found to be 12.45% w/w<sup>4</sup>.

**Water and Alcohol Extractive Value**

For the absorption of the drug and bioavailability prospective Water and alcohol extractive value is indicative parameters hence was done and found to be 15.30 % w/v & 9.78% w/v respectively for root sample.

**Petroleum Ether Solubility**

Petroleum ether solubility gives the idea about the fixed oil content of the drug which was found to be 2.35% w/v.

**pH**

pH of sample was found to be 6.10 which clearly denotes that root sample is marginally acidic in nature<sup>4</sup>.

**Heave Metal**

There was no finding of heave metals like arsenic, lead and mercury but cadmium results was bit higher in sample (0.5530 ppm) not complies with limits given in API (0.05-0.2 ppm). Main cause of the result was may be contamination of soil from where plant collected. There are many resins for the heavy metals like Water, pesticides and air.

**Preliminary Phytochemical Studies**

Preliminary phytochemical studies of root of *launaea pinnatifida* revealed the presence of alkaloids, carbohydrates, amino acids steroids and tannins whereas leaves confirms the presence steroids, alkaloids, terpanoids, glycosides, flavonoids and tannins<sup>5</sup>. Through literature review, it has been found that this plant is not much exploited in the direction of phytochemical evaluation and its Bioactivity-guided isolation of different fractions of root and leaves extracts. The information available is mainly concern with its traditional use, Taraxasterol has been isolated from leaves and taraxeryl acetate from the roots of the *L. pinnatifida*. Apart from this, triterpenoid<sup>6</sup> saponins 3-O -L-rhamnopyranosyl-(13)-O-L-arabinopyranosyl (13)-O-Dgalactopyranosyl spergulatriol along with known compounds glutenol and hopenol-b were isolated from Methanolic extract of seed of *L. pinnatifida*<sup>6</sup>.

Some attempts was made by the researchers on phytochemical nature of the plants belong to genus *Launaea* Cass. They have reported that diversity of secondary metabolites present in *Launaea* Cass. Genus including steroids, triterpenoid saponins, terpanoids, sesquiterpene lactones, flavonoids, coumarins, phenolic compounds and flavones glycosides.

**Pharmacological Activity**

*L. pinnatifida* is also reported to possess galactagogue, soporific, diuretic, aperients properties and also used as a substitute for *Taraxacum*<sup>7</sup>.

According to the traditional uses the plant is given as a lactagogue. Juice of the plant is tonic, diuretic, aperients; applied in rheumatic affections and given as a soporific to children<sup>2-7</sup>.

As far as pharmacological studies have been concern this plant possess the antioxidant<sup>9</sup>, Antimicrobial<sup>5</sup> and hepatoprotective<sup>10</sup>.

70% ethanolic extract of leaves and root extract of *L. Pinnatifida* has already reported hepatoprotective activity against CCl<sub>4</sub> induced hepatic injury in rats. Different fraction of *L. Pinnatifida* leaves extract also possess significant anti-oxidant activity among that ethyl acetate fraction had promising antioxidant activity<sup>10</sup>.

Antifungal activity of triterpenoid saponins and glutenol and hopenol-b from methanolic extract of seed of *L. Pinnatifida* also were studied<sup>6</sup>.

*L. pinnatifida* ethanolic extract shown antipyretic effects by reducing temperature 36.68 °c at concentration 400 mg/kg by brewer's yeast induced model with respect to standard drug acetyl salicylic acid by 35.89°c<sup>11</sup>.



Figure 1: Fresh leaves of *Launaea pinnatifida* plant



Figure 2: Dried leaves powder of *Launaea pinnatifida* plant



Figure 3: Flowers of *Launaea pinnatifida* plant



Figure 4: Fresh roots of *Launaea pinnatifida* plant



Figure 5: Dried roots of *Launaea pinnatifida* plant



Figure 6: Dried roots powder of *Launaea pinnatifida* plant

*L. pinnatifida* exhibits anti analgesic effects at significant reaction time of 6.93 sec. With respect to standard drug Pentazocine at 7.62 sec<sup>11</sup>.

*L. pinnatifida* ethanolic extract has reported anti-inflammatory effects by Carrageenan induced hind paw edema model in rats and the results indicates that dose of 400 mg/kg exhibits maximum inhibition of 32.48% while standard drug Indomethacin also inhibits 40.13% of inflammation<sup>11</sup>.

Due to insufficient data regarding phytochemical profile of plant it is not clear that which phytochemical constituents are responsible. So more scientific and systematic evaluation regarding phytochemical study will be needed this may result in to development of a potent and therapeutically active formulation. Also such data may support the traditional claim.

Antioxidant assay was carried out on different assay including DPPH assay, Ferric reducing assay and Hydroxyl radical scavenging assay all the results indicates remarkable antioxidant activity of *L. pinnatifida* ethanolic

extract hence *L. Pinnatifida* is best source for natural antioxidant<sup>9</sup>.

#### *Ethnobotanical or Traditional Uses*

Due to the galactagogue<sup>2</sup> property this plant is given to feeding mothers after pregnancy and child birth mainly in a lehya preparation<sup>3</sup>. This plant is mainly well known in the tribal area for abdominal disorder and urinary infection. *L. Pinnatifida* having reported tonic, diuretic, soporific and aperient properties<sup>12</sup>.

Whole plant is effective in rheumatoid arthritis, joints problems and gout. Leaf preparations are used by the fisherman to cure the skin injuries caused by fish spikes<sup>4</sup>. This plant is also fed to buffaloes to increase milk production due to galactagogue property<sup>2</sup>. Mainly *L. Pinnatifida* decoction is used to treat the skin related diseases.

Hence *L. Pinnatifida* whole plant is very well known traditionally and Ayurvedic point of view due to numbers of benefits to human health.

#### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

*Launaea pinnatifida* is stoloniferous and creeping herb with rooting at internodes and likely to spread near sandy coast area. Fresh root exudates white to brownish milky latex which is viscous and sticky in nature. Microscopic observation of roots of plant indicates the presence of the lactiferous cells, tannins content, pitted vessels, calcium oxalate crystals, simple fibers and absence of pith. Preliminary phytochemical studies of root of *launaea pinnatifida* revealed the presence of alkaloids, carbohydrates, amino acids steroids and tannins. Methanolic extract of *L. Pinnatifida* is also effective source of drug for Anti pyretic, Anti-inflammatory and Anti analgesic activity also possess hepatoprotective activity. Which phytochemical are responsible for the activity is still unclear due to lack of detailed phytochemical studies and scientific data.

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