

Review Article

A Comprehensive Ethno-pharmacological and Phytochemical Update Review on Medicinal Plant of *Terminalia arjuna* Roxb. of Bangladesh

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Abstract: This review paper focused on ethno-pharmacological uses and phytochemical constituents of *Terminalia arjuna* Roxb., an important medicinal plant of Bangladesh, used in various indigenous system of medicine. This review has been conducted to pile up information that is available in different scientific literatures. It is observed that a large number of phytochemical components have been obtained from the plant e.g. arjunin, arjunetin, gallic acid, terminic acid, pyrocatechols, luteolin, β -sitosterol, calcium, magnesium, zinc, copper and these components exhibit various medicinal and pharmacological activities such as anti-mutagenic, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-atherosclerotic, anti-diabetic etc. The present comprehensive update review is therefore, an effort to give detailed information on phytochemical and pharmacological studies of *T. arjuna* Roxb. and this information will help the researchers to carry out research on this pharmaceutically important medicinal plant.

Keywords: Ethno-pharmacological activity, *T. arjuna* Roxb., scientific literatures, systematic study.

INTRODUCTION

After decades of serious obsession with the modern medicinal system, people have started looking at the ancient healing systems like Ayurveda, Siddha and Unnani because of their less adverse effects combined with lower cost that are associated with synthetic drugs [58]. These drugs play an important role in health care programs especially in developing countries. For the treatment of different diseases, about 80% people in the world still rely on conventional medicine [43]. Therefore, the valuation of rich heritage of conventional medicine is essential [64, 46, 55, 57]. The use of therapeutic plant either as a single drug or in combination is increasing in the health care of human being. Phytomedicines or botanical medicines refer to the use of bark, seeds, root, berries, leaves, or flowers of any plant for therapeutic purposes by large number of people. It has now been recognized that the plants which naturally accumulate and synthesis some secondary metabolites like glycosides, alkaloids, tannins, volatiles oils and contain vitamins and minerals, possess medicinal properties [26].

The scientific name of arjun is *Terminalia arjuna* Roxb. It is about 60-80 feet height perennial tree found everywhere in Bangladesh. It is composed of enormous active constituents include glycosides, tannins, flavonoids, triterpenoids, β -sitosterol and minerals [47] which possesses high therapeutic value and traditionally used for the treatment of different ailments for human

beings. The bark extract of *T. arjuna* Roxb. is considerably prevented the isoprenaline-induced increase through oxidative stress, decrease in endogenous antioxidant level and also avoid fibrosis without increasing the heart weight and body weight ratio, as well as it can prevent myocardial changes induced by the action of chronic beta-adrenoceptor stimulation [35]. The bark is anti-dysenteric, cardiogenic, lithotriptic, antipyretic, astringent, and tonic while the powder of the bark acts as a diuretic in cirrhosis of liver and gives relief in symptomatic hypertension [11]. In studies in mice, the leaves of *T. arjuna* Roxb. have been shown to have anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties [47]. It may also be useful in treating hypercholesterolemia by reducing LDL levels [41]. The bark powder has been found to possess cardioprotective properties, anti-ischaemic, antioxidant action [54], hypocholesterolaemic effect, fungicidal [36], anti-microbial [65], anti-bacterial, anti-fertility, treatment of ulcers, skin disorders and as antidote to poisons. It is also useful to cure obesity, hypertension and hyperglycemia [44]. The bark constituents are promising in anti-mutagenic and anti-carcinogenic potential [53, 63, 32, 61, 56].

The aim of this present study was to deliver valuable information on phytochemical and pharmacological characteristics of *T. arjuna* Roxb. This compendium review also includes its taxonomy, monograph,

morphology, and distribution of this highly significant medicinal plant.

Taxonomy of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

Medicinal plants are characterized according to the habit, habitat, part used, therapeutic value etc., besides the usual botanical classification. But botanical classification is the most scientific classification and comprehensive. The botanical classification of *T. arjuna* Roxb. is as following:

Kingdom	Plantae
Division	Magnoliophyta
Class	Magnoliopsida
Order	Myrtales
Family	Combretaceae
Genus	<i>Terminalia</i>
Species	<i>T. arjuna</i> Roxb. [54]

Chromosome number of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

The chromosome number of *T. arjuna* Roxb. is n=2 [44].

Plant parts of *T. arjuna* Roxb. used as medicinal purposes or medicines

Its fruit, root bark, seeds root, leave and mostly barks are useful in the medicinal purposes [57]

Monograph of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

- Bengali name: Arjun, Arjhan [43].
- English name: Arjun terminalia, White murda, Tropical almond, Malabar almond [43].
- Botanical name: *T. arjuna* Roxb.
- Family: Combretaceae [35, 36, 62].
- Duration: Perennial.
- Growth habit: Tree.
- Native: Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka [43].

Morphology of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

- Tree is about 60-80 feet in high, large, drooping branches and evergreen with a spreading crown [44].

- Leaves are simple, borne sub-opposite coriaceous, often crenulating, oblong or elliptic.
- Petioles are 6-10 mm long with one or usually two prominent glands at the top, immediately below the leaf. This is a unique pharmacognostic feature of *T. arjuna* Roxb. [32].
- Panicles are small, apical and when young, it is light green and when it is mature, then turns into their color.
- Stems are buttressed and often fluted.
- Bark is thick, soft and smooth gray, red color from inside, irregular sheets, curved and rather flat pieces [60].
- Flowers are white or yellowish and found in groups.
- Calyx is glabrous.
- Fruit is a drupe, 2.5-5 cm long, ovoid or oblong, fibrous-woody, smooth-skinned with five hard angles or wings [32].
- Seeds are hard germination 50-76 days [50-60%].
- Odour is characteristic.
- Taste is bitter.
- Root is superficial, shallow and spreads radially along stream banks.

Distribution of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

T. arjuna Roxb is a deciduous tree found in dry hill areas by the side of water bodies- ravines, streams and rivers. It is abundance throughout Bangladesh, Madhya Pradesh, Indo-sub-Himalayan tracts of Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and South Bihar. It is also found in forests of Sri Lanka, Burma and Mauritius [65].

Phytochemical studies of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

The chemical constituents of *T. arjuna* Roxb. are shown in Table 1. The whole plant of *T. arjuna* Roxb contains tannins, triterpenoid, flavonoids, saponins, gallic acid, ellagic acid, OPCs, phytosterols, zinc, copper, calcium, magnesium etc. It also contains oleanolic, arjunic acids, arjunoside I, II, arjunolic acid, 8-hydroxyl hexadecanoic, and β -sitosterol.

Table 1: Major chemical constituents of various parts of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

Plant part	Chemical constituents	References
Stem bark	Triterpenoids: arjunolic acid, arjunic acid, arjunin, *arjungenin, **terminic acid	[53]; *[60]; **[5]
	Glycosides: arjunetin, *arjunoside II, *arjunoside I, **arjunaphthanolside, ***terminoside A	[61, 54]; *[31]; **[1]; ***[2]; [62]
	β -Sitosterol	[5]
	Flavonoids: arjunone, bicalein, arjunolone, *luteolin, ethyl gallate, gallic acid, kempferol, pelargonidin, quercetin, oligomeric proanthocyanidins	[62]; *[2]; [6]
	Tanins: terflavin C, castalagin, punicallin, casuarinin, punicalagin, terchebulin, casuarin, pyrocatechols	[36, 65, 44]

	Trace elements/Minerals: zinc, copper calcium, aluminium, silica, magnesium	[37]
Roots	β -Sitosterol	[5]
	Triterpenoids: terminic acid, arjunic acid, oleanolic acid, arjunolic acid	[5]
	Glycosides: arjunoside I, arjunoside II, arjunoside III, arjunoside IV, *2,19-dihydroxy-3-oxo-olean-12-en-28-oic acid 28-O-d glucopyranoside	[4, 3]; *[44]
Leaves and fruits	Glycosides	
	Flavonoids: luteolin	[63]
Note: *, ** and *** denote corresponding reference for the constituent.		

Folk remedies and traditional uses of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

In Bangladesh, *T. arjuna* Roxb. are used for the treatment of diabetics without using any modern diagnostic procedures by Kabirajes and local people [8, 56]. Bark of *T. arjuna* Roxb. is useful in diseases of the heart, dysentery, asthma, hypertension, menstrual problems, anaemia, wounds and pains. It also stops bleeding and pus formation in the gums [56]. The bark of *T. arjuna* Roxb. is soaked in water and the water is taken once daily on an empty stomach for 4 days for dysentery and 41 days for low sperm count. 50g powder

obtained from dried leaves is taken with 20g sugar twice daily for heart disease [58].

Pharmacology of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

Following the traditional and folk uses of *T. arjuna* Roxb, it has been scientifically investigated about the potential of the plant in cure of different ailments. The pharmacological activities of *T. arjuna* Roxb are mentioned in Table 2. It may be used to treat diabetics, heart diseases as well as for the treatment of wound. It has also antiviral, antibacterial, anticancer properties [63, 65].

Table 2: Various pharmacological activities of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

Activity	Plant part used	Animal model	Observations	References
Anti-atherosclerotic	Orally administered indigenous drug	Rabbits	Partial inhibition of rabbit atheroma indicating antiatherogenic role	[61]
Antibacterial	Acetone, hexane and dichloromethane from leaf extract	Human pathogens <i>E. coli</i> , <i>P. aeruginosa</i> , <i>B. subtilis</i> , <i>S. aureus</i> and <i>S. epidermidis</i>	Exhibit antibacterial activity	[63]
Anti-cancer	Arjunic acid isolated from bark	Human oral [KB], ovarian [PA 1] and liver [HepG-2, WRL-68] cancer cell lines	Treated as anti-cancer treatment	[59]
	Aqueous extract of <i>T. arjuna</i>	Lymphoma bearing mice	Down regulation of anaerobic metabolism by inhibiting the activity of lactate dehydrogenase and reducing the oxidative stress leading to anti-carcinogenic activity	[65]
Antidiabetic	Ethanol extract from stem bark	Liver and kidney tissues of diabetic rats	Exhibit the antioxidant activity through correction of oxidative stress and validates the traditional use of this plant in diabetic animals	[59]
Anti-inflammatory	Bark powder	Carrageenan-induced rat paw edema	Prevention of inflammation	[29]
Antioxidant	Casuarinin extracted from <i>T. arjuna</i>	Madin-Darby canine kidney [MDCK] cells	H ₂ O ₂ induced oxidative stress, decreases DNA oxidative damage	[41]

Antimutagenic	Tannin fraction	<i>Salmonella typhimurium</i>	Inhibit the mutagenicity of 2-aminofluorene in Ames assay	[35]
Antiviral	Casuarinin isolated from the bark	Herpes simplex type-2 <i>in vitro</i>	Inhibit viral attachment, penetration and also disturbing the late event of infection	[34]
Cardiovascular activity	Aqueous extract of bark	Rats	Prevent myocardial changes induced by chronic beta-adrenoceptor stimulation	[54]
Gastric activity	Methanol extract	<i>Helicobacter pylori</i> lipopolysaccharide induced gastric damage in rats	Anti-ulcer effect damage the gastric mucosa and protect the mucosal defensive factors	[19]
Hepatoprotective activity	Arjunolic acid	Arsenic induced cytotoxicity in isolated murine hepatocytes	Cytoprotective activity of Arjunolic acid protects arsenic induced cytotoxicity in murine hepatocytes	[39]
Reproductive activity	Arjunolic acid, a triterpenoid saponin isolated from the bark	Arsenic induced testicular damage in mice	Chemopreventive role against toxicity	[40]
Wound healing activity	Hydroalcohol and tannins extract of the bark	Dermal wounded rat <i>in vivo</i>	Astringent of tannins by drawing the tissues closer together.	[12]

Side effects of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

T. arjuna Roxb. has been used in the dose of 1-2 g/day in various clinical studies. At this dosage, it is well tolerated and has fewer side effects like mild gastritis, headache and constipation. No haematological, metabolic, renal and hepatic toxicity has been reported even more than 24 months of its administration [24, 61]. It has role in contraindicated obesity. It tends to decrease the amount of fat by eliminating it from the body. For this reason, in the case of an obese person, the risk or benefit ratio of the cardiovascular benefits must be evaluated [57].

Tissue Culture of *T. arjuna* Roxb.

In vitro clonal propagation of this medicinal plant of *T. arjuna* Roxb. has been reported by using cotyledonary node explants from 21 day old seedlings which were cultured on MS medium supplemented with different concentrations of BAP for shooting and IBA for root generation. About 80% of these plantlets were successfully acclimatized and 70% plantlets were transferred in the field. [58].

CONCLUSION

The present comprehensive ethno- medicinal or ethno- pharmaceutical review reveals that *T. arjuna* Roxb. is a very important medicinal plant with its large number of phytochemical and pharmacological properties as well as medicinally important chemicals like tannins, triterpenoid, saponins, flavonoids, gallic acid, ellagic acid, oleanolic, arjunic acids. From the point of view a number of investigations of pharmacological activity have been observed. *T. arjuna* Roxb. is to be very useful in anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-mutagenic, anti-inflammatory and wound healing activities. While some of the other reported uses include

anti-dysentric, anti-pyretic, anti-diabetic, anti-oxidant, gastric and reproductive activity. The most exciting aspects of the medicinal plant of *T. arjuna* Roxb. was treatment of diabetics, cancer and heart diseases. This compendium literature are supported various potential medicinal characteristics of *T. arjuna* Roxb. So, this review can be a preliminary authentic source for the researchers to investigate the unknown and unexplored potential of this medicinal plant of *T. arjuna* Roxb. through modern techniques such as NMR, Mass spectrophotometer analysis, HPLC and HPTLC. Moreover, further systematic study and research is essential to extend the next stage of clinical trial to form novel drugs for the treatment of serious ailments.

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