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***Palandu* (Onion) - A Commonly Used Adjuvant in Indian Delicacies**

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda being a holistic science is a treasure of measures of life, health and diseases. It is a science which deals with the knowledge of long and healthy life. In present era, everyone wants to live long and healthy life but due to their, busy life, and irregular diet and life style they suffer from many diseases. They do not attain maximum limit of their age. *Ayurveda* provides various *rasayana* therapies for healthy and long life. *Rasayana* therapies comprises of many compound formulations and single *dravyas*.

Onion (sanskrita name—*palandu*) is a *rasayana dravya* mentioned by *Acharya Vagbhatta*, belongs to family “*Liliaceae*” and has latin name “*Allium Cepa*”. It balances *vata dosha*, aggravates *kapha dosha* and does not affect *pitta dosha*. Its (*palandu*) properties are *madhura* and *katu rasa*, *guru* and *tikhsna guna*, mild *ushna virya* and *madhura vipaka*. It’s (*palandu*) properties are almost similar to *garlic*. It acts as an anti inflammatory and reduces pain. It increases digestive power, improves body strength and immunity, boosts quality and quantity of sperm and volume of semen. It nourishes seven *dhatus* and enhances intelligence and memory power. It is a very common adjuvant used in preparation of food articles in India. Its regular use provides immunity to the body and if used as a medicine, cures many diseases too. Research studies also prove it to be a source of essential nutrients and antioxidants.

KEYWORDS

Palandu, Longevity, Allium cepa, Antioxidants, Delicacies



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INTRODUCTION

1. Botanical classification²

- i. Scientific Name – *Allium cepa* L.
- ii. Common Name – Onion
- iii. Taxonomic Tree
 - Domain : Eukaryota
 - Kingdom : Plantae
 - Phylum : Spermatophyto
 - Subphylum : Angiospermae
 - Class : Monocotyledonae
 - Order : Liliales
 - Family : Liliaceae
 - Genus : *Allium*
 - Species : *Allium cepa*

2. Synonyms¹

- Onion is known as *Palandu* in *Sanskrit*
- It is also known as ‘*Yavanesta*’ (the *onion* which has come from west)
- *Durgandha* (it has offensive odor)
- *Mukhadooshaka* (which causes bad breath)

3. Regional Names¹

- *Hindi* – *Piyaz, Pyaz*
- *Kannada* – *Nirulli, Irulli*
- *Bengali* – *Pyanj*
- *Malayalam* – *Chuvannaulli*
- *Telugu* – *Nirulli*
- *Tamil* – *Vengayam*
- *Punjabi* – *Ganda*
- *Marathi* – *Konda*

- *Gujarati* – *Dungali, Dungari, Kando*

4. Morphological description³

- An annual biennial herb with aromaticus
- Leaves linear, hollow, cylindrical and fleshy
- Flowers many, white, in umbels, spathe composed of 2-3 reflexed walls
- Bulb covered with fleshy, white leaf scales, below the bulb
- Short stem with several adventitious roots
- Seeds are small and black coloured⁴.

5. Habitat³

- Onion is widely cultivated throughout India and is largely consumed as a food.

6. Ayurvedic Properties⁴

- *Rasa* (Taste): *Madhura* (Sweet) and *Katu* (Pungent)
- *Guna* (Physical property) : *Guru* (Heavy) and *Snigha*
- *Virya* (Potency) : *Ushana* (Hot)
- *Vipaka* (Post digestion effect): *Katu* (pungent),
- *Karma* (Action) : *Vedanasthapana* (Analgesic)



- Effect on *tridosha*: balances *vata dosha*, aggravates *Kapha dosha* and does not affect *pitta dosha*

7. Chemical composition⁴

- The bulb and leaves contains pungent, unpleasant volatile oil, also contain molecule of sulphur- Allyl Propyl Sulphide, protein, carbohydrates, calcium.
- Outer layer contains yellowish colouring molecule called Quercetin.
- The chemical constituent of Garlic is Allyl Propyl disulphide. This is the reason the properties of *Palandu* and *Rason* are almost similar as told by *Bhavapraksha*.

8. Important Karma⁵

- *Kaphanissark* (eliminates kapha dosha)
- *Vrushya(Vajikar)*(increases libido)
- *Uttejak* (increases excitement)
- *Balya* (enhance strength)
- *Mutrajanan*(diuretics)
- *Aartavajanan* (regularize menstruation)
- *Agnivardhak* (increase digestive power)
- *Deepak-Pachak* (appetizer-carminatives)
- *Anulomak* (purgative/ laxative)
- *Uttam Vatahar i.e. Shoolahar* (pain management) and *Shothahar* (swelling /edema management)

9. Rogagnata⁵

- *Kaphavikara*
- *Shukrakshay* (oligospermia)
- *Klaibya* (infertility)
- *Mutakashtata* (anuria)
- *Anartava* (oligomenorrhia)
- *Agnimandya* (in decreased digestive power)
- *Aruchi* (loss of appetite/ anorexia)
- *Adhamana* (flatulence)
- *Sndhivata* (osteoarthritis)
- *Aamavata* (rheumatoid arthritis)
- *Shoth* (swelling/ edema)
- *Aghataja shotha* (traumatic swelling)

10. Mode of use of its juice

The onion should be used as medicine in the form of swarasa(juice). It can be used with fresh juice of bijapura (lemon), Madira (wine), Honey, Sidhu (fermented sugarcane juice) are mentioned as anupana (softer drinks)⁶.

- Improves the complexion
- Increases the digestive power
- Good voice
- Provide nourishment to the body
- Increases sexual power.
- Good for eyes
- Increases radiance
- Increase the appetite
- Strength the body
- Nourishes seven *dhatu*s



- Enhances intelligence and memory power.
- Anti inflammatory and reduces pain
- Boosts quality and quantity of sperm and volume of semen
- Used along with medicine cures many diseases like diabetes, *Rakta pitta* etc^{7, 8, 9}.

11. Uses of onion in diet¹⁰

It is indicated or use as adjuvant of food for a long time or regularly. It provides strength, stability. When used in particular disease in particular condition with specific medication it cures those conditions of diseases.

12. Use of onion stalks as paste¹⁰

Its tender stalks should be made into a paste (commonly known as chutney in indian cuisine) together with surasa (tulsi-holy basil) and sumukh (a type of tulsi or mint) and is eaten with food.

13. Different kinds of eatables (snacks)¹⁰

Different types of snacks or preparation may be made from barley, green-gram, black-gram and wheat. Similarly kambalika, raga, sadava, sattaka, khala and phalasara (different kinds of syrups) added with salt, sweet smelling substances, juices of may be as well. After eating this juice of kharjura (dates), dadima (pomegranate) or

draksa (grapes) added with sita (sugar) may be taken as an after drink.

Regular use of onion provides unctuousness, bright complexion, strong digestive power, nourishment, sexual potency, immunity and longevity.

14. Therapeutic uses¹¹

i. Antidiabetic

Flavonoids also possess an antidiabetic property that is directly related to the increases of insulin production by control of pancreatic cells. Another study shows that quercetin helps in suppressing diabetic symptoms.

ii. Hair loss

Allium cepa Known as onion mainly contains protein (albumin), allyl propyl disulphide, diallyl sulphide, alliin, allicin. It also contains some mineral like potassium, zinc, calcium, vitamins, magnesium. These onion juice rubbed in affected part morning and evening until it is red. It should be rubbed with honey afterwards. That helpful for preventing hair loss. Iron is involved in the oxygenation of body's red blood cells. Another Onion produce positive effect on the circulatory system improve blood circulation and decrease inflammation and perfect amount of nourishment that stimulate hair growth effect.

iii. Anti-Dandruff & Hair Growth Activity



Zinc helps to secrete the scalp with much needed oil and avoid dandruff that may cause hair loss. Onion is used because it is rich in sulphur which is one of the essential minerals in encouraging hair growth. Blood circulation gets better due to sulphur which provides the hair follicles with anti-bacterial properties of onion help to heal scalp infections that can contribute to hair loss. Also, it contains anti-oxidants, which are antioxidants such as enzyme catalase that can prevent the hair from pre-mature greying. Honey is a natural ingredient which consists of fructose and glucose, and also has vital nutrients and vitamins that helps in healing and nourishing the body. Honey has a beautiful property of retaining water and that is reason is effective hair moisturizer.

iv. Antimicrobial Activity

Some researcher found that the methanol and aqueous suspensions of the dried *Allium cepa* (Liliaceae) bulbs extract was screened for its antimicrobial activity using the agar-well diffusion method. It is tested against Gram positive bacteria (*Staphylococcus aureus*).

v. Wound Healing

Onion is widely used in preparation of *Ayurvedic* formulations for wound healing. It also shows biological efficacy for prevention median sternotomy wound in pediatric patients. Onion extract shows the

therapeutic effect on human skin shows anti-inflammatory, antiseptic.

vi. Anti-Parasitic Activity

Some researcher has been found to be onion & garlic contains several sulfur and secondary metabolites which show anti-parasitic activity against trypanosome *brucei* & *Leishmania tarentolae*.

Part used : Rhizome⁴

Dose : Powder (1-3 G), Expressed juice (10-30 ml)⁴.

CONCLUSION

Onion is very common food adjuvant used in Indian delicacies. But it is mentioned as *rasayana* by *ayurveda* seers. Though in common practices today it is not taken in the form of medicine, but regularly used in food preparation and salads. Its regular use provides antioxidant effect and boosts immunity



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