

***Celastrus paniculatus*: Endangered traditional medicinal plant**

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Plants, the basis for life on earth have been widely used as source of medicine by man since ancient times. Most of the people depending upon traditional medicine live in developing countries and they rely mainly on traditional herbal medicine to meet their primary healthcare needs. The Indian region is rich in ethanobotanical heritage due to its rich cultural diversity. Over 16,000 species of higher plants occur in India, of which approximately 9000 are known to be economically useful. Of these, 7500 are used for healthcare by various ethnic communities in India.

The use of plants for treatment in ailments in India dates back to prehistoric times. This indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants & therapies was composed verbally and passed orally from generation to generation. Much later, some of this information was composed in treatise form like Rigveda, Yajurveda, Charak samhita, Sushrut samhita, etc. These systematized system of knowledge about medicinal plants & therapies are included under Ayurveda, The Indian traditional medicine system.

Ayurveda, an ancient traditional system of medicine that has been practiced in India since 200 B.C employs a large number of medicinal plants used in prevention and treatment of wide number of diseases. One of these includes, the plant *Celastrus paniculatus*, known for the centuries as “elixir of life”. It is considered in Ayurveda to stimulate ‘medha’ (intellect) and promotes ‘smurti’ (memory) and so Ayurveda recognises it as ‘Jyotishmati’. According to Ayurveda, depending upon the dose regimen, *Celastrus paniculatus* may be employed as stimulant nerve tonic, rejuvenant, sedative, tranquilizer and diuretic. It is also used in the treatment of rheumatism, gout leprosy, leucoderma, paralysis and asthma.

Keywords: *Celastrus paniculatus*, medicinal plants, and Ayurveda

Biography

Kamalinee Deodhar completed Ph.D. in Botany at the age of 28 yrs from Mumbai University in May, 2013. She presented 4 papers and 4 posters at national and international conferences held at Kolhapur, Amravati, Pune, Dhule, Panvel and Andaman. From last 3 months, she is working as Lecturer in Elphinstone College, Mumbai.

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