

Ethno botanical uses of *Phyllanthus niruri* (*Bhūmyāmalakī* / *Elapitawakkā*) in Sri Lankan traditional medicine

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Abstract

Phyllanthus niruri is a wide spread tropical plant commonly found in coastal areas, best known by the common names stone breaker or seed-under-leaf. It is belonging to the *Phyllanthus* genus of Family – Euphorbiace Sinhala name: *Bhin Nelli*; *Pitawakka*. This plant is commonly used for medicinal purposes in olden days. However, their uses are known less presently. This review is focused at collecting and existing data and information to provide comprehensive overview on traditional uses and pharmacological actions of *Elapitawakka* in Sri Lanka. The information were collected from ancient olla manuscript, various traditional medical texts on Sri Lankan traditional system, scientific journals and through electronic media. The study was shown many valuable medicinal properties of *Elapitawakka*. According to the present study two types of *Pitawakka* were mentioned in texts as that could be medically used internally and externally. The two types are *Elapitawakka* (*Phyllanthus niruri*) and *Rathupitawakka* (*Phyllanthus urinaria*). Among them *Elapitawakka* (*Phyllanthus niruri*) is mostly used in traditional medicine. The whole plant are used for medicinal purposes. *Phyllanthus niruri* is a small, erect, annual herb that grows 30–40 cm in height and bears ascending herbaceous branches. The bark is smooth and light green Stem is angular with numerous distiches, elliptic-oblong leaves. Flowers are yellow and very numerous. Fruits very small, tiny, smooth capsules containing seeds and seeds 3-gonous, the flowering time is July to August. According to Ayurveda, therapeutic properties of this plant are *Tikta*, *Kashaya* and *Madhura Rasa*, *Lagu* and *Ruksha Guna*, *Sheeta Veerya* and *Madura Vipaka*. Also has *Kapha Pitta Shamaka*, *Stambhana*, *Shotha hara*, *Vruna Ropana* as actions (*Karma*). In Sri Lankan traditional medicine this plant widely uses in respiratory disorders; Cough, Asthma, Hiccup and as well as bleeding per vagina. In Ayurveda medicine also it is mentioned for the *Raktapradara*. Antispasmodic, pain relieving, anti inflammatory actions, antiviral actions, liver protective, detoxification, antioxidant actions, anti cancerous, cellular protective actions, anti-diabetic, anti cholesterol and hypertensive actions of *Phyllanthus niruri* has been scientifically proven. This study is an attempt to preserve the diminishing ethno botanical knowledge on the medicinal properties of *Elapitawakka*.

Keywords: *Phyllanthus niruri*, *Bhūmyāmalakī*, *Elapitawakkā*