

Exploring the Healing Power of Tulsi: Unveiling The Benefits of An Indigenous Herb In Lahore's Traditional Medicine

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Abstract: Traditional medicine in Lahore and the surrounding area has relied on Tulsi, also called Holy Basil, for many years and generations. Using a qualitative research approach, this essay delves into the therapeutic benefits of Tulsi, shedding light on its significance in Lahore's traditional medicine. To understand the role of Tulsi in traditional medicine in Lahore, a qualitative research method was used. People who practice traditional medicine, such as indigenous healers and herbalists, were interviewed extensively. Our goal is to uncover the benefits of Tulsi and how it can improve general health through careful observation, in-depth interviews, and research into traditional healing practices. Documenting the nuanced perspectives and experiences related to Tulsi's medicinal properties was the aim. Based on the findings, tulsi is suggested as a potential remedy for a wide range of conditions, including but not limited to anxiety, cough, asthma, diarrhea, fever, dysentery, arthritis, eye diseases, nostalgia, indigestion, hiccups, vomiting, gastric, cardiac, and genitourinary disorders, back pain, skin diseases, ringworm, as well as insect, snake, scorpion, and malaria bites.

Keywords: Tulsi, Holy Basil, Indigenous Healers, Herbalists, Lahore, Punjab

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1. Introduction

"Ocimum Tenuiflorum" is the official scientific name of this plant. Holy Basil, or Tulsi, is the common name for this plant. The natural herb tulsi, often called holy basil, is very important in Lahorean traditional medicine. A small annual or short-lived perennial shrub, holy basil can grow up to a height of 1 meter. Hair covers the stems, which alternate with oppositely placed serrated or smooth leaves. The fragrant leaves can be green or purple, depending on the kind Kumar et al, (2022). Holy basil contains compounds that provide

multiple health benefits. It has many potential health benefits, including protection from infection, lowered cholesterol and blood sugar levels, relief from joint pain, and gastrointestinal protection. It has compounds in it that can alleviate depressive and anxious feelings. Tulsi, which has its roots in Ayurveda, is well-known for its remarkable medicinal properties. It is believed that this herb can improve the immune system, reduce inflammation, and act as an antioxidant. Traditional medicine from Lahore often

makes use of tulsi to boost overall health, alleviate stress, and encourage respiratory wellness Gowri et al, (2023).

Tulsi can combat a variety of oral health issues, such as bad breath, gum disease, and ulcers caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus mutans*, which is responsible for tooth caries. By reducing DNA damage and inducing apoptosis in precancerous or cancerous cells. As a result, experimental malignancies form less, and survival rates are improved. Agarwal, (2010)

There is some evidence that tulsi can help with a variety of human bacterial infections. These include UTIs, skin and wound infections, TB, cholera, gonorrhea, acne, herpes simplex, leishmaniasis, different types of pneumonia, and fungal infections. Also, it could help fight diseases spread by mosquitoes, such as dengue, malaria, and filariasis. In numerous animal studies, Tulsi has shown promising results in preventing and treating ulcers caused by various substances, such as alcohol, histamine, reserpine, serotonin, acetic acid, meloxicam, cold confinement, and pyloric ligation when it comes to wound healing. Suresh et al, (2022).

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To explore the healing power of Tulsi in Lahore's traditional medicine to uncover and understand the benefits of this indigenous herb.
2. To explore the challenges faced by indigenous healers in using tulsi due to modernization.

1.2 The rationale of the Study

The study aims to explore the healing power of Tulsi in Lahore's traditional practices to uncover the incredible benefits of this indigenous herb. By delving into the knowledge and experiences of local healers, we aim to shed light on how Tulsi is used for healing purposes and understand its cultural significance in Lahore. The research attempts to further enhance our understanding of the holistic health perspectives within Lahore. Research also has potential consequences for healthcare policy and practices. This project aims to create a more inclusive and holistic approach to well-being in Lahore. By combining culturally aware strategies that honor and incorporate conventional treatment modalities into a larger healthcare framework, the research also has potential consequences for healthcare policy and practices.

2. Literature Review

New scientific research is confirming the beneficial effects of Tulsi, the most important herb in Ayurveda (*Ocimum sanctum* Linn). Tulsi has shown that it can protect organs and tissues from a variety of stresses, including chemical stress from heavy metals and industrial pollutants, physical stress from ischemia, physical restraint, prolonged physical exertion, cold, and loud noises. By controlling blood sugar, blood pressure, and lipid levels, tulsi can reduce metabolic stress. On top of that, it helps reduce mental stress through its anxiolytic and antidepressant effects, and it improves memory and cognitive function Cohen (2014).

Ocimum is the genus to which Tulsi belongs. Worldwide, in warm temperate, subtropical, and tropical zones, you can find *ocimum* plants, which are members of the Lamiaceae family. The "Queen of Herbs" moniker goes to Tulsi because of the wide variety of aromatic compounds it can extract from its essential oils. Both the aroma and the flavor of tulsi are delightful. Jacobs (2021).

"Unparalleled" is the meaning of the Sanskrit word tulsi. An esteemed culinary and medicinal herb belonging to the Lamiaceae family, Tulsi is also called holy

basil in English. Its use in Ayurvedic medicine dates back more than three thousand years, and it is native to the Indian subcontinent. Tulasi is widely recognized as a "Panacea" in Ayurveda for its medicinal qualities and its efficacy in treating a wide range of common health problems Patel (2020).

Tulsi, or *Ocimum sanctum*, is a medicinal herb that is sometimes called the "Queen of herbs." In the medicinal traditions of Ayurveda and Siddha, every part of this plant is highly prized. The plant possesses a wide range of pharmacological benefits, such as those that improve memory, prevent blood clots, ease arthritis, speed wound healing, reduce inflammation, fight viruses and fungi, combat asthma, and lower body temperature. This article offers a thorough overview of *Ocimum sanctum* (Tulsi), including its synonyms, chemical components, uses, and pharmacological actions. Ghulane et al, (2021)

A member of the Lamiaceae family, Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) is revered in Ayurvedic texts for its miraculous medicinal and sacred properties. Most commonly used for their medicinal properties are the roots, seeds, and leaves. In addition to its many other beneficial effects, tulsi is also recognized to

have antibacterial qualities and positive impacts on memory and cognitive function, illnesses as diverse as injuries, respiratory problems, hepatic disease, viral infections, earaches, back pain, hiccups, newborn conjunctiva inflammation, stomach problems, urinary problems, seborrhea disease, different toxicities, and mental stress are all successfully treated with this medication. Kaur et al, (2020)

2.2 Materials and Methods

The researcher used a qualitative research approach to learn about Tulsi's role in traditional medicine in Lahore by using a sample size of seven. Seven local people through interviews and semi-structured questions. People who practice traditional medicine, such as indigenous healers and herbalists, were interviewed extensively. Capturing the nuanced perspectives and experiences associated with Tulsi's therapeutic properties was the goal.

2.3 Universe

The study's universe was Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

2.4 Study Sample

The study sample consisted of seven people. A careful examination of the relationship between the healing power of tulsi and

community cultural practices is ensured by this methodical sampling strategy. To provide a thorough representation of viewpoints, the sample makeup takes age, gender, and socioeconomic background into account. These participants participated in a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of their experiences, perspectives, and roles within the framework of conventional healing techniques through semi-structured interviews. The small but good sample size is intended to yield deep insights and enable a comprehensive understanding of the complex processes influencing the healing power of Tulsi.

2.5 Instrument

Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data-gathering technique in this study. Semi-structured interviews were used since they allowed participants to talk freely and in-depth about their ideas, perceptions, and experiences with the healing power of Tulsi. This technique made it possible to thoroughly examine each person's story while guaranteeing that important elements, such as cultural customs and healing methods, were consistently included in every interview. The semi-structured format allowed for a compromise between the necessity for structure to keep the key issues

of the healing power of Tulsi and the flexibility required to capture the diversity of participant experiences.

2.6 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the individuals who were chosen for this research project. The main goal of these interviews was to delve into particular areas of the community's decision-making processes related to healing with tulsi. The answers that the participants gave in these interviews were carefully noted and documented in preparation for further examination. This systematic methodology ensured that important insights from the participants were gathered and could be carefully investigated in the context of the study's objectives. It also allowed for a focused analysis of the complex dynamics surrounding the healing power of Tulsi and cultural practices.

2.7 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was selected as the primary method to examine the qualitative data gathered in this study. This method worked very well for methodically locating recurrent themes and patterns in the responses provided by the participants. A thorough investigation of the underlying

factors driving traditional healing practices within Lahore was made possible by the application of thematic analysis, which provided insightful information about the cultural dynamics.

3. Results

3.1 Healing Properties of Tulsi

Tulsi, or *Ocimum sanctum*, is a medicinal herb that is sometimes called the "Queen of herbs." In the medicinal traditions of Ayurveda and Siddha, every part of this plant is highly prized. The plant possesses a wide range of pharmacological benefits, such as those that improve memory, prevent blood clots, ease arthritis, speed wound healing, reduce inflammation, fight viruses and fungi, combat asthma, and lower body temperature. This article offers a thorough overview of *Ocimum sanctum* (Tulsi), including its synonyms, chemical components, uses, and pharmacological actions. Ghulane et al, (2021)

One of the respondents said that:

"If they get any injury, accident or if they are suffering with any respiratory problem like asthma, cold, cough, flu, fever they make a tea of the leaves of Tulsi"

The participants in the qualitative investigation consistently highlighted the diverse character of Tulsi's therapeutic effects. Reportedly, the herb possesses antimicrobial, antiviral, and anti-inflammatory properties. Traditionally, Tulsi has been used by local healers to alleviate respiratory problems, reduce stress, and strengthen the immune system.

3.2 Cultural and Spiritual Significance

This study shows that the Iranian Muslim adult's journey towards spiritual health promotion is significantly influenced by their faith-based beliefs and spiritual values. That is strongly in line with the community's goal of transcendence, which is based on Islamic spirituality and morals Azita Jaber, (2021). These values of wisdom-thinking and spiritual seeking, reflect the teachings that stress the use of reason and comprehension in trying for spiritual elevation Scales, (2014). Tiliouine, Cummins, & Davern (2009) also narrated in the same fashion.

One study participant said that:

"In our community, we find strength and healing through our faith-based beliefs and spiritual values. These guiding principles bring us a

sense of peace, guidance, and overall well-being. They provide comfort and serve as a source of support in our lives."

The participant highlighted the spiritual aspects of their healing practices, which are frequently based on religious convictions. The subject emphasized the close relationship between the religious beliefs and traditional therapeutic methods of Lahori's whether through the use of particular prayers, ceremonies, or requests for heavenly help. This blending of spirituality and therapeutic practices highlighted a comprehensive strategy for well-being in the community's cultural setting.

3.3 Challenges and Modern Perspectives

Traditional herbs are renowned from very ancient times due to historical, mythological, and medicinal significance. In the present scenario, traditional herbs are a "Necessity of the new era" because they are also effective for the deadly coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Traditional herbs are beneficial to treat common ailments and act as a remedy for cardiovascular disorders sexual dysfunctions diabetes, tummy trouble, headaches, and irritation from bug bites due

to the presence of some polyphenolic and herbal compounds. Traditional herbs or medicinal plants may be consumed in the form of pills, teas, essential oils, and food garnishing. Traditional herbs are undervalued due to a lack of knowledge/awareness and low availability in the market. Therefore, the present survey would be useful for society's awareness and daily consumption may improve physical and mental health. In the future, herb farming would be a good choice for extra income sources and sustainable development in both rural and urban communities. Gupta et al, (2021)

One of the study participants said that:

“Tulsi is a cure for several diseases but due to urbanization (modernization) it’s also facing challenges as people have stopped using tulsi and they have moved towards modern medicines and a new generation cannot take its advantage.”

Despite Tulsi's enduring appeal in traditional medicine in Lahore, new challenges have arisen in the wake of modernization. Urbanization and the influence of Western medicine pose a threat to the preservation of these traditional practices. A small number

of interviewees expressed concern about the younger generation's dwindling familiarity with and use of Tulsi.

4. Discussion

Research into the medicinal uses of the revered native plant Tulsi has uncovered several benefits. Holy Basil, or Tulsi, is a plant with many potential health benefits, including relief from Anxiety, asthma, diarrhea, fever, dysentery, arthritis, otalgia, indigestion, hiccups, vomiting, gastric, cardiac, and genitourinary disorders, back pain, skin diseases, ringworm, insect, snake, and scorpion bites, and malaria are among the many ailments for which Tulsi is recommended as a remedy. It is also an effective antioxidant. There is some evidence that Tulsi can improve respiratory health, regulate blood sugar levels, and strengthen the immune system. Additionally, it is believed that the body can better handle various stresses due to its adaptogenic properties. Tulsi tea or supplements, when taken regularly, can help with stress management and general health. Because of its high antioxidant content, tulsi is an excellent weapon against free radicals. Oxidative stress is linked to many chronic diseases and the aging process; antioxidants play a crucial role in preventing this. Because of its antioxidant characteristics,

Tulsi helps keep cells healthy and may reduce vulnerability to some diseases.

5. Conclusion

The fact that Tulsi is so useful in traditional medicine in Lahore shows how closely connected culture, spirituality, and health are. To maintain the wide variety of traditional medical practices in Lahore, it is crucial to safeguard and promote the usage of native plants such as Tulsi even as we face the difficulties of modernization. The wealth of experience and information that has backed the use of Tulsi for centuries can be better understood through qualitative research. This gives us a look at how tradition and progress are always influencing one another. These findings have consequences that go beyond the domains of culture and community. Acknowledging the function of traditional medicinal methods in conserving cultural legacy highlights the significance of incorporating these methods into more comprehensive healthcare conversations. These conventional methods should be recognized and respected by policymakers and healthcare providers, who should view them as essential to the community's overall health. The focus on therapeutic herbs suggests possible areas for cooperation

between contemporary medical professionals and traditional healers. Examining these herbs' medicinal qualities could help find new therapeutic agents or create healthcare strategies that are responsive to cultural differences. Furthermore, knowledge of the spiritual and religious aspects of traditional medicine has consequences for psychosocial and mental health. Including these elements in healthcare, interventions can holistically improve patient care by recognizing the connection between spiritual, cultural, and physical dimensions.

6. Recommendations

The study unveils the benefits of indigenous herbs i.e. Tulsi in Lahore. however, there are several noteworthy areas where additional study and action can enhance the overall comprehension and implementation of these findings. Initially, as medicinal plants play a big part in traditional therapeutic methods, ethnobotanical research is necessary to thoroughly record and examine the characteristics of these herbs. A thorough database that not only maintains traditional knowledge but also informs future cooperation between traditional healers and contemporary healthcare practitioners might be developed with the help of such research.

Also, community-based educational programs can be implemented to guarantee that younger generations receive this important knowledge, promoting a long-lasting relationship with medicinal plants. Healthcare practitioners must be sensitive and knowledgeable enough to handle these situations and provide inclusive and courteous patient care.

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