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EXPLORING THE MEDICINAL POTENTIAL OF *DRACAENA REFLEXA* LAM.: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF ITS THERAPEUTIC APPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT: Ayurveda is the traditional frame of health care known since old times. *Dracaena reflexa* is a plant of the Asparagus family with a few important phytochemical constituents utilized to treat different illnesses. In particular, its uses were widely employed in the traditional system of medicine. The present review was pointed to evaluate the phytochemistry, pharmacological properties, botanical description and microscopic characteristics of *Dracaena reflexa* leaves. The plant has a reliable number of important phytochemical constituents that are utilized as medications in different illness. Preparatory subjective phytochemical screening of *Dracaena reflexa* leaves extracts showed the presence of number of phytoconstituents such as alkaloids, flavonoids, terpenoids, saponins, amino acids, tannins, steroids, glycosides, carbohydrates and fats. Presence of these compounds contribute to the plant's potential therapeutic properties, including antioxidant, pain relieving, anticonvulsant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial activities and wound healing properties. Further research into the pharmacological potential of *Dracaena reflexa* may reveal its therapeutic benefits. Various research findings suggested that *Dracaena reflexa* might be a valuable herbal medicine for a range of sicknesses, both in prevention and treatment. Still, further research is required to understand how certain chemical components show specific biological activities. The present article attempts to give data on organic importance of *Dracaena reflexa* for advance investigation.

INTRODUCTION: Herbal medicine plays crucial role in keeping up the health and wealth of mankind. Larger part of world population uses herbal drugs. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that around 21,000 plants have been used for therapeutic purposes^{1, 2}. Herbs have proven their worth over time due to their safety, effectiveness, cultural acceptance, and minimal side effects^{3, 4}.

Therapeutic power of a few plants is primarily due to the presence of a few secondary metabolites, which collectively are referred to as phytochemicals^{5, 6}. As per the report of the WHO, herbal medication plays critical role in keeping up the health and wealth of mankind. Therapeutic properties of certain medicinal plants have been appeared mainly due to the presence of different secondary metabolites with different useful group^{7, 8}.

Naturally derived drugs that are routinely utilized are of herbal origin either arranged from the plant extracts or chemically synthesized to mimic a natural plant compound. From the most punctual times, herbal medications have been valued for their pain-killing and curing capacities^{9, 10}.

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According to the WHO, 80% of the rural individuals are dependent on therapeutic plants as initial health care system. The therapeutic value of these plants lies in a few chemical constituents that display a clearly physiological activity on the human body. The most crucial chemical constituents showing the therapeutic property of the plants are alkaloids, tannins, flavonoids, phenol compounds, *etc.* If all parameters of proximate composition are standardized in a plant, it can be considered safe for use as a dietary supplement or as an herbal medicine^{11, 12}. A medicinal plant is any plant which, in one or more of its organs, contains substances that can be utilized for therapeutic purposes, or which are precursors for chemo-pharmaceutical semi-synthesis.

The majority of the world population is dependent on therapeutic plants as a source for remedies to cure and avoid all sorts of human disorders. When a plant is assigned as a medicinal plant, it is implied that the plant contains a valuable drug or therapeutic agent or an active ingredient of a therapeutic preparation. Medicinal plants may therefore be characterized as plants with one or

more of its parts containing properties that can be utilized for therapeutic purposes or which can be utilized as precursors for the synthesis of different drugs. Medicinal plants have various naturally active compounds such as carbohydrates, proteins, enzymes, vitamins, minerals, fats and oils, tannins, quinones, terpenoids, flavonoids, sterols, carotenoids, simple phenolic glycosides, alkaloids, saponins, polyphenols, *etc.* These bioactive substances, which are very important as medicines and other activities from the plants, basically appear to have different pharmacological activities¹³⁻¹⁵. The current paper highlights the *Dracaena reflexa* Lam. medicinal plant also known as herbal medicinal plant which is wealthy source of novel lead compounds that can be utilized in different therapeutic and pharmacological activities.

Dracaena reflexa is local to Madagascar, Mauritius, and other nearby Indian Sea islands. It contains flavonoids, saponins, alkaloids, tannins, steroids, phenol abundantly in the plant^{16, 17}. So, in the present review data is compiled on botanical description, phytochemistry, traditional uses and pharmacological properties of *Dracaena reflexa*.



FIG. 1: DRACAENA REFLEXA LAM PLANT



FIG. 2: DRACAENA REFLEXA LAM LEAFS

***Dracaena reflexa* Lam.**

Kingdom: Plantae

Family: Asparagaceae

Genus: Dracaena

Species: *Dracaena reflexa*

Species Name: *Dracaena reflexa* Lam.

A study by the WHO revealed that many people around the world rely on alternative medicine and vital herbal remedies for their primary healthcare, particularly in developing countries where seeking treatment from a Western-style doctor and the expense of medications are beyond the financial reach of most individuals. Present review emphasizes on the leaves of *Dracaena reflexa*, which belongs to the Asparagaceae family; it

includes about 40 species and is categorized as a genus with roughly 150 species. The genus was first clarified by Linnaeus in 1767. Certain species of *Dracaena* include *D. fragrans*, *D. surculosa*, *D. draco*, *D. marginata*, *D. arborea*, *D. goldieana*, *D. sanderiana*, *D. deremensis*, *D. reflexa* and *D. mannii*. *Dracaenas* are shrubs or trees and are partition into two huge groups according to their development habits-tree *Dracaenas* and shrubby *Dracaenas*. The genus of *Dracaena* incorporates more than 50 species. A few species of *Dracaena* such as *D. cinnabari* stem have been inspected for *in-vitro* lipid peroxidation, antioxidant activity, anti-inflammatory activity, antimicrobial activity and anticancer activity. One more species *D. cambodiana* appeared antitumor, antioxidant action and antimicrobial movement and *D. cochichinensis*, *D. angustifolia*, *D. arborea* and *D. vand* were examined by different researchers for therapeutic potential¹⁸⁻²⁰.

Microscopic Character:

TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF *DRACAENA REFLEXA*²¹

Colour	Heavy green and yellowish and cream like
Odor	More aromatic
Taste	Slightly Peppery
Size	4 to 21 cm long, 1.4 to 4 cm wide and 4 to 5 m height
Shape	Elongated
Cultivation Status	Decorative plant

Botanical Description: *Dracaena reflexa* is a species of *Dracaena*. *Dracaena reflexa* is a shorter plant, ordinarily developed for house beautifications, it can reach a height of 6 to 8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 meters). The length of leaf is 15-60 cm and 2-7 cm in width. The trunk of *Dracaena reflexa* usually has a hard and vertical structure, exhibiting a pattern of branching as it grows²¹.

Physical Characteristics: The larger specimens of *Dracaena reflexa* are quite appealing. The leaves of *Dracaena* have a shiny finish and can grow up to around one foot in length and two inches in width. Some of them may become overgrown (especially when planted outdoors) and elevate the aesthetic to a somewhat displeasing level, which can be improved through trimming, as this species can produce clusters of small near-white flowers that are neither particularly attractive nor noteworthy.

The song of India plant was used entirely in a study focused on air purification, demonstrating its effectiveness in eliminating various toxins from the environment²².

Cultivation: There are various taxonomic groups of *dracaena* species that exhibit distinct leaf variations. This plant typically grows to a height of about 3 feet. These plants resemble bushy tree varieties and are easier to care for in comparison to other *dracaena* species. The plant necessitates its bright sunlight and significantly high humidity for flourishing. *Dracaena* species is a well-known decorative plant. Several cultivars, particularly those with variegated varieties featuring cream and yellow-green borders, have been recommended. It presents nicely as a houseplant to have tolerating infrequent watering. *Dracaena reflexa* has water needs and should be fertilized for well development in two weeks, then it can effectively grow. However, it can survive in moon light conditions, but if not given sufficient light, the plant will become lanky. Temperatures of 18 °C to 25 °C (64 °F to 77 °F) should be kept up for *Dracaena reflexa* developed inside. Norwood stem cuttings can be utilized to propagate it. A shining lightness spot while not direct sunlight is noticed. The soil must remain consistently moist and should be allowed to dry out during the winter season. It should be avoided from over-watering. Draining potting is a problem for the best outcome when the soil is mixed. The humidity in the room should be normal. It can adjust the humidity by placing the plant on a stone tray filled with water and using a humidifier. It can propagate with stem cap cuttings (3-5 inches) long approximately^{23, 24}.

Traditional uses: *Dracaena reflexa* has been used in traditional Indian herbal medicine for its germicidal (antiseptic) properties and its ability to promote wound healing, as well as serving as an expectorant to relieve respiratory issues. The Indian cress fraction is known to have anti-microbial properties, and the application of its leaves can help enhance resistance against bacterial diseases and disorders. *Dracaena* leaves and stems show up as antioxidants. The *Dracaena* species possesses properties that are antibacterial, antifungal, and antiseptic, making it beneficial for arthritis. *Dracaena reflexa* is utilized for treating malaria and diarrhea, and it also serves as an antipyretic

and hemostatic agent. The plant contains glycosides that interact with water to produce an antimicrobial effect. The plant has antibiotic activities to decrease microscopic organisms. Extracts from the plant possess antioxidant qualities. A few *Dracaena* species, including *Dracaena cinnabari* stem, have been investigated for their *in-vitro* activity on lipid peroxidation, antioxidant activity, anti-inflammatory activity, antibacterial activity, and antineoplastic activity. Antimicrobial and antioxidative properties, cytotoxicity, and the presence of numerous phenolic compounds were found in *Dracaena* ²⁵.

Phytochemistry: A preliminary phytochemical investigation of the methanolic extract of *Dracaena reflexa* (DRME), n-hexane fraction (DRHF),

chloroform fraction (DRCF), and n-butanol fraction (DRBF) of *Dracaena reflexa* was performed. This investigation uncovered the presence of different essential and secondary metabolites. A minor carbohydrate concentration was watched while amino acids and proteins were not recognized in any of the extract/fractions. Lipids were found to be abundant in DRBF and the lowest in DRHF. Among the secondary metabolites, alkaloids were found to be displayed in DRHF and DRCF; tannins and phenols were watched in all extracts/fractions; flavonoids and saponins were found to be abundant in DRME and DRBF; steroids and glycosides were recognized in a minute amount in these extracts/fractions; and resins were not recognized in any of the extracts/fractions ¹⁷.

TABLE 2: METABOLIC PROFILE OF THE N-HEXANE FRACTION IN *DRACAENA REFLEXA* BY GC-MS ANALYSIS ¹⁷

Compound Name	Molecular Formula	Molecular Weight	Pharmacological Activity	Class
Dodecane	C ₁₂ H ₂₆	170.33	Antifungal antioxidant antibacterial	Alkane
Benzenepropanoic acid,3,5-bis (1,1 dimethylethyl)-4 hydroxy-, methylester	C ₁₈ H ₂₈ O ₃	292.41	Antiandrogenic, antifungal, antioxidant	Esters
Tetradecanoicacid	C ₁₄ H ₂₈ O ₂	228.38	Nematicide, antifungal, cancer preventive, antioxidant	Fatty Acid
Campesterol	C ₂₈ H ₄₈ O	400.68	Anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, anticancer, activities and cholesterol lowering agent	Steroid Derivative
Beta-Sitosterol	C ₂₉ H ₅₀ O	414.71	Analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant	Phyto Sterol
9,12 Octadecadienoic acid, methylester	C ₁₉ H ₃₄ O ₂	294.5	Anti-inflammatory, hypocholesterolaemia, cancer preventive, antiarthritic, antihistaminic	Fatty Acid Ester
1,2 Benzenedicarboxylic acid, monophenyl ester, sodium salt	C ₁₄ H ₉ NaO ₄	264.21	COX-2 inhibitor	Sodium salt

Pharmacological Properties: *Dracaena reflexa* is traditional medication and the practitioner of Traditional medicine in Madagascar have long accepted *Dracaena reflexa* to cure malarial fever and symptoms, poisoning, diarrhoea, Loose bowels, dysmenorrhea and it is useful as an antipyretic ¹⁶.

Antioxidant Activity: Shukla A *et al.* studied the antioxidant activity of successive leaf extracts of *Dracaena reflexa*. The scavenging action on 1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl and reducing control by ferric decreasing antioxidant power test was investigated. In that study, they used a methanolic extract of *Dracaena reflexa*. This study suggested that *Dracaena reflexa*, a potential natural free

radical scavenger, which may discover use as an antioxidative. The results obtained in this study clearly indicated that leaf extracts of *Dracaena reflexa* had antioxidant activity, and the results of proximate examination support the use of the leaves as a food supplement ²⁶.

Anti-inflammatory: Pravalika Kuchana and E. Sujatha investigated the effects of a 400 mg/kg dose of methanolic extract from *Dracaena reflexa* (MEDR), which notably reduced inflammation and pain in experimental rats across the evaluated models. It was proved by a decrease in paw volume. As a result, the authors concluded that MEDR has notable anti-inflammatory properties. However, they used carrageenan as a strong

chemical, used to stimulate the release of pro-inflammatory and inflammatory mediators. It was used to induce inflammation in experimental animals to test the anti-inflammatory activities of extracts. In the current study, anti-inflammatory action was measured after four hours of treatment, and the results were shown as the rate of inhibition of oedema in the rats and compared with dexamethasone. MEDR showed 90.5% inhibition at 400 mg/kg body weight, while dexamethasone showed 91.22% inhibition at 5 mg/kg body weight. They recommended that additional research is needed to identify and separate the active components that contribute to the anti-inflammatory effects²⁷.

Analgesic Activity: The anti-nociceptive effect of the methanolic extract of *Dracaena reflexa* (MEDR) was explored by Pravalika Kochana and E. Sujatha using acetic acid-induced writhing responses, tail immersion, and the hot plate technique in rodents. In that they examined the acute oral toxicity examination for 14 days reveals the safety of methanolic extract of *Dracaena reflexa* (MEDR) with no mortality at 2000 mg/kg. Acetic acid-incited writhing technique shows the anti-nociceptive effect as the number of writhing responses with leaf extract significantly decreased (12.33 ± 0.57) in comparison to control rats (27.33 ± 1.52). In that peripheral and central analgesic effects of the drug can be evaluated by the acidic acid-induced writhing test. Intraperitoneal administration of acetic acid may stimulate the release of PGs or mediators of pain or a few of the endogenous nociceptive stimulants. The analgesic effect was tried by the writhing responses, like extension of hind limbs, trunk twisting, and stomach constrictions. NSAIDs peripherally block COX enzymes and produce an analgesic effect²⁷.

Wound Healing Properties: In that the wound-healing activity of *Dracaena reflexa* stem extract (DRSE) was studied by Mona A. Raslan and Ahmed H. Afif by the scratch assay using HSF cells in this study they found the improved wound-healing process by inducing the migration of fibroblasts. Moreover, a molecular docking study was used to evaluate the binding affinity of the phytoconstituents of *Dracaena reflexa* stem extract (DRSE) toward GSK-3 β relative to the co-

crystallized inhibitor and curcumin with the possible involvement of this pathway in the wound-healing activity of DRSE. The identified phytoconstituents, particularly those belonging to the steroidal saponin group, exert their wound-healing activity through inhibition of ATP binding to the key enzyme GSK-3 β ²⁸.

Anticonvulsant Activity: BassouekaD'Avila Judicael et al. studied the extracts of *Dracaena reflexa* leaves, which were examined for anticonvulsant effect-induced seizures in rats at doses of 50, 100, and 200 mg/kg, separately. The findings indicate that the extract from *Dracaena reflexa* leaves, across all dosages, significantly alters both the onset time and the duration of convulsions, increasing the former and reducing the latter. *Dracaena reflexa* aqueous extract shows, moreover, a significant decrease in motor activity, as does diazepam, and an increment in the immobility time by using the forced swimming test. This study suggests that *Dracaena reflexa* leaves, considering their social interaction-promoting effect, might be of benefit as an accessory in refining the life superiority of epileptic patients²⁹.

CONCLUSION: *Dracaena reflexa* Lam. is a traditional medicinal plant known for its significant therapeutic benefits. Leaves, stems, etc. of this plant have been utilized traditionally for different human sicknesses. This review basically talked about the different properties of these plants, which have therapeutic importance. These species basically contain the different phytochemicals, such as flavonoids, saponins, alkaloids, tannins, steroids, and phenols, abundantly in the plant, which primarily appear in the different pharmacological activities. These constituents are responsible for their use in different disorders traditionally. Here are the traditional herbs, and to enhance the effectiveness of herbal therapy, it is crucial to isolate the chemical compounds responsible for their effects and to understand the relationship between their structure and function. This knowledge is intended to enhance their effectiveness, absorption characteristics, and the creation of modern herbal products. Our approach emphasizes addressing clutter with minimal side effects, and we are dedicated to effectively implementing these proven methods by utilizing comprehensive knowledge of traditional medicinal

plants. These initiatives will result in more secure and affordable medications for people affected by various health conditions, which are on the rise each day.

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