

Shoneez (*Nigella sativa*) and its therapeutic effect in Unani Medicine-A Review

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Abstract:

The importance of *Shoneez* may be gauged from the fact that it cures every disease except; death as stated by blessed messenger of Islam. Worldwide *Shoneez* has been subjected to so much of scrutiny and exploitation as to its phyto chemical constituents. *Shoneez* commonly known as black seed (*Kalonji*) belongs to the family of Ranunculaceae. Seeds are used since time immemorial for the treatment of different ailments such as *Ziabetes* (Diabetes), *Zeequn Nafs* (Asthama), *Sual Muzmin* (Chronic cough), *Siman-e-Mufrit* (Obesity), *Tasammum-e-Dam* (Dyslipidemia), *Sartan* (Cancer), *Zagatuddam Qawi* (Hypertension) etc. The seeds hold both fixed and essential oils, saponin, alkaloids and proteins. Most of the pharmacological actions of the seeds have been revealed due to Nigellidine, Nigelline, Dithymoquinone and thymoquinone which is a core constituent of the essential oil.

Key-words: *Kalonji*, *Habat-ul-Sauda*, *Shoneez*, *Nigella sativa*, Unani Medicine

Introduction:

Shoneez is extensively used as a medicinal plant globally. It is widely popular in diverse systems of medicine like Unani, Ayurveda, Siddha and Folk medicine. Seeds and oil has a long history of usage as home remedies in various systems of medicines and food. The seeds of *N. sativa* have been widely used in the treatment of different ailments. In Islamic literature, it is labelled as one of the greatest form of healing medicine. It has been recommended for using on regular basis in *Tibb-e-Nabwi* (Prophetic Medicine) [1, 2]. In Unani literature it is described in the name of *Habat-ul-Sauda* [3]. According to *Tibbe Nabvi* Prophet Muhammed (saw) has advocated the use of *Shoneez* because it has cure for all diseases except death [4].

Vernacular name: [5-12].

Arabic:	Habbatul Sauda, Kabodan . Kamun Aswad, Shoneez
Persian:	Shoneez, Siyah Dana
Urdu:	Kalonji
Hindi:	Kalonji, Kalajira, Mangraila
English:	Small Funnel, Black Cumin
Bengali:	Kala Zeera, Mangrela
Gujrati:	Kalaunji Jirum, Kadujeeroo
Kannada:	Karijirige
Kashmiri:	Tukhme Gandana
Marathi:	Kalaunji-jire, kalerjire
Malyalam:	Karinchirakam
Panjabi:	Kavanji
Tamil:	Karunjarakam, Karunjiragam
Telgu:	Peeajila Kara, Nallajilakara
Sanskrit:	Susavi, Krishna jiraka, Upakuncika, Karvi, Sthula Jiraka
Sindhi:	Kalodi
Unani:	Sino, Sheenon, Kamaazaruus
Turki:	Qarachurak Audi

Chemical constituents:

Essential oil, Volatile oil, Fixed oil, Steroid, Saponin, Melanthin, Mucilage, Resins, Sugars, Alkaloids, Tannins, Linoleic acid, Palmitic acid, Stearic acid, Palmitoleic acid and Oleic acid, Nigellidine, Nigellicine, Dithymoquinone, Iron, Copper, Zinc, Phosphorus, Calcium [10, 11,13-16].

Af'aal (Actions):

Mudire Laban, Mudire Bol, Muqawwi Meda, Mufatteh Sudad, Mukhrije Janeen, Muhallile Auram, Mulayyan, Muhallile Riyah, Dafe sartan, Dafe Siman mufrit, Dafe Ziabetus, Dafe Humma, Dafe Sual, Musakkine Alam, Mudire Haiz, Mufattite Hisat, Dafe Zeequn Nafs [17-24].

Istematat (Therapeutic actions):

Ziabetus, Sartan, Qillate Laban, Hisate Kullia, Siman Mufrit, Zofe Meda, Wajaul Mafasil, Ehtabase Haiz, Kirme Shikam, Balghami Amraz, Nisyan, Yarqan, Zofe Bah, Zeequn Nafas, Humma, Zofe Ishteha, Zofe Asab, Bawaseer [3,6,18-28].

Scientific study:

Few scientific studies (preclinical & clinical) are illustrated below regarding *Nigella sativa*.

Antidyslipidemic activity:

It is reported that *Kalonji* was found quite encouraging in the treatment of dyslipidemia at the dose of 1gm in Safoof (powder) form twice a day for 60 days in 20 patients [29]. Another study revealed that *kalonji* exerts antiatherogenic effect by decreasing low density lipoprotein cholesterol level; it also enhanced the high density lipoprotein level [30]. At the dose of 500 mg of *kalonji* seed, powder along with statin (10-20mg), standard group with statin (10-20mg). Combination with *Nigella sativa* shows significant ($P < 0.05$) decrease in cholesterol, LDL, VLDL and triglycerides, and also increase HDL significantly. So it reduced coronary artery disease risk factor [31].

Hypoglycemic activity:

It is reported that the aqueous extract of *kalonji* powder at a dose of 500 mg/kg body wt showed significant ($p < 0.01$) reduction in fasting blood glucose level to 61.3% in Wistar rats after 14 days of treatment [32]. In 40 diabetic patients one study claimed that *Nigella sativa* can be used as add on drug therapy in metabolic syndrome patients with poor glycemic control and declared that *Nigella sativa* is safe and an effective remedy in patients of metabolic syndrome [33]. Another study reported that treatment with *N. sativa* (5 mg/kg b.w.) markedly increased body weight gain and the fasting blood glucose level was significantly ($p < 0.001$) reduced when compared to the control. Histopathological examination showed that the *N. sativa* (5 mg/kg b.w.) partially recovered hepatic glycogen content and protected the great deal of the pancreatic islet cells. The number of islets, cells and islets diameter were found statistically significant when compared to the control ($p < 0.01$, $p < 0.05$) [34].

Anticancer activity:

It is documented that methanolic extract of *N. sativa* exhibits potent inhibition of cancerous cell growth against HL-60 and U-937 with IC₅₀ value 13.70 µg/ml, and 28.31 µg/ml respectively [35]. Another study showed that essential oil of *N. sativa* has an anti-metastatic activity in mice or that it inhibits or delays metastasis by rapid reduction of primary tumor volume at the site of induction [36]. Another study showed that ethanolic extract of *N. sativa* exhibit antitumor activity in Ehrlich ascites tumor in mice [37].

Conclusion:

The present review was undertaken to highlight the salient features of *Shoneez* in the light of classical Unani texts. The scientific studies carried out in this regard amply testify the fact that it validates the age old claims of ancient Unani physicians as well as the veracity of the sayings of blessed messenger of Islam pertaining to *shoneez*. The need of the hour is to further undertake clinical trials scientifically and systematically, which will go a long way to mitigate the sufferings of humanity.

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