

Pharmacognostical And Phytochemical Evaluation Of Black Turmeric-An Endangered Medicinal Herb

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ABSTRACT

“Black Turmeric” known as Karimanjal in Tamil is one of the medicinal plant belonging to Zingiberaceae family. The biological name is “*Curcuma caesia Roxb.* This rare species is widely distributed in moist deciduous forests mostly in Bengal, North east and central India. It has been regarded as endangered herb by the central forest department of India due to biopiracy. The height of the plant is about 1.2 m. Flowers are pale yellow, reddish at the outer border. The mostly used species of turmeric is *curcuma longa*. Roots are used as rubefacient. Rhizomes of *Curcuma caesia* is of bluish black in colour and has been reported for its analgesic, antioxidant, antiasthmatic, antifungal, smooth muscle relaxant, antiulcer properties. Traditional healers use this black turmeric for treating various ailments like leucoderma, piles, bronchitis, asthma, tumors, enlargement of the spleen, epileptic seizures, inflammation and allergic eruptions. Owing to its high medicinal value black turmeric is termed as “Wonder Herb”. Keeping this in view, our present study was designed to carryout the pharmacognostical evaluation and phytochemical screening of rhizomes of *Curcuma caesia Roxb.* The pharmacognostical evaluation includes organoleptic and microscopical evaluation, physical evaluation like determination of ash value, extractive value, loss on drying, crude fibre content and foreign organic matter. The phytochemical screening reveals the presence of alkaloids, amino acids, carbohydrates, tannins, flavonoids, steroids, proteins, glycosides and terpenes. Based upon the phytochemicals present in the crude powder further *in- vivo* and *in- vitro* pharmacological studies to be carried out.