



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PHARMACY AND ANALYTICAL RESEARCH

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[Review article]

### Traditional Kashmiri Recipe “*Shangri-Kahwa*” as a Stimulant Drink and Effective Home Remedy for Respiratory Problems

<sup>1</sup>Mudasir Khazir, <sup>2</sup>Ghulamuddin Sofi, <sup>3</sup>Sabha shafi, <sup>4</sup>Arshid iqbal.

<sup>1,2</sup>Dept of Ilmul-Advia (Pharmacology), National Institute of Unani Medicine (Affiliated to Raju Gandhi University of Health Sciences), Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

<sup>3</sup>Dept of PSM, Kashmir Tibbia College and Hospital, Srinagar, J&K India

<sup>4</sup>Dept of Moalejat (Medicine), National institute of Unani medicine, Bangalore.

#### Abstract

The popular recipe “*Shangri-kahwa*” is an age old home remedy for respiratory and various other problems in almost whole of Kashmir. It is prepared from important spices like liquorice, clove, cinnamon, and cardamom, which have documented health benefits. Information about its use and method of preparation was obtained from group discussions held in some villages of Baramullah district of Jammu and Kashmir. People in these villages believe that *Shangri-kahwa* is cost effective, delicious, made from easily available ingredients and can be prepared easily at home. Being residents of this area, the authors are aware of the popularity of this magical drink used as a first line of treatment for various ailments at home, particularly during cold days. This recipe is extremely famous in these villages both as a refreshing and stimulant drink, as well as believed to be highly efficacious in respiratory illnesses. It is cost effective and highly palatable. The ingredients of *Shangri-kahwa* are being used extensively in Unani system of medicine and Ayurveda for almost same indications as the recipe is used. This study was carried out to highlight the effectiveness and focus the attention of the researchers towards this attractive and effective dosage form used as home remedy in Kashmir.

**Keywords:** Indigenous medicine, *Shangri-kahwa*, Liquorice, Clove, Cinnamon, Cardamom, Home remedy

#### INTRODUCTION

The WHO defines traditional medicine as “the health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral-based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises, applied singularly or in combination to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being<sup>1</sup>. In some Asian and African countries, up to 80% of the population relies on traditional medicine for their primary health care needs<sup>2</sup>. There is no uniform approach or generic label assigned to traditional medicine; rather, it is an acknowledgment of the geographic and cultural

diversity within Indigenous knowledge. As defined in the Report on the Protection of Heritage of Indigenous People. The World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that more than half of the world’s population does not have access to adequate health care services. This is because poor people neither have access to nor could afford the present health care services. Therefore, innovative alternative approaches are needed to address this problem. Medicinal plants offer alternative remedies with tremendous opportunities. They not only provide access and affordable medicine to poor people; also

\* Corresponding author: Mudasir Khazir.

E-mail address: [mudasir1924@gmail.com](mailto:mudasir1924@gmail.com)

also generate income, employment, and foreign exchange for developing countries. Many traditional healing herbs and plant parts have been shown to have medicinal value, especially in the rural areas and that these can be used to prevent, alleviate, or cure several human diseases. Rural communities continue to rely on locally produced, plant-based remedies, some from home gardens, but many from forests, alpine pastures and other multiple-use habitats. Women and elders are the principal harvesters, marketers, and healers. Local and indigenous communities have acquired a wealth of knowledge about the healing properties of plants, minerals, insects, microbes and animal parts which has been the basis of health and veterinary care. This knowledge has been acquired through many thousand years of experience, trial and error. *Kahwa* is an aromatic drink made of various constituents like saffron, cinnamon, cardamom, clove, liquorice and petals of rose. This green tea is prepared by boiling all the above ingredients. Originating first in Kashmir, *Kahwa* tea is also used in places such as India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan as well as in some areas of Central Asia<sup>3</sup>. Since long time, the people of Kashmir consume this aromatic tea, which is often prepared in samovar, a traditional Kashmiri kettle made of brass. The main purpose of using this kettle is to keep the *Kahwa* hot for a long time. Sometimes milk is added to this tea for the elders and persons suffering from sickness. People of this area use different types of *Kahwa* depending upon the ingredients added, which may have different benefits. All of them are used generally for respiratory disorders with special individual benefits of each type of *Kahwa*. *Shangri-kahwa* is very famous in north Kashmir and is a well-known home remedy for respiratory disorders in this region. Documentation of traditional knowledge is important and accepted way of validating it, therefore all nations world over have created substantial efforts in this direction in order to preserve the fast vanishing traditional knowledge.

In the same context, this work was carried out as an attempt to carry out documentation of the popularity and use of a famous recipe called *Shangri kahwa* in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir.

### Methodology

The opinion of the people about this recipe and its method of preparation were obtained through group discussions held at various places in Baramulla district. The information about the medicinal use of the ingredients of *Shangi-kahwa* was obtained from indexed journals and Unani medical literature<sup>4,5,6,7</sup>. Medical uses of the ingredients of *Shangri-kahwa* were also discussed with some traditional medical practitioners of this area.

### Results

People in these villages believe that *Shangri-kahwa* is cost effective, delicious, made from easily available ingredients and can be prepared easily at home. *Shangri-kahwa* is prepared by boiling a small quantity of liquorice, cardamom, cinnamon, clove buds, and sugar in water for 15 to 20 minutes and is served hot. Some people also use saffron, dry fruits and green tea as ingredients. *Shangri-kahwa* is a specific form of *kahwa* used for respiratory problems particularly, by the people. Most of the people interacted with during group discussions were aware of the health benefits of *Shangri-kahwa*. They believed that *Shangri-kahwa* is an effective first line treatment in respiratory illnesses like cough and cold. They also use it as a stimulant and rejuvenator during cold weather. It energises and produces a sense of warmth and excitement. Some of them also added that it is effective in treating headache and some digestive and cardiac ailments. The health benefits of the various ingredients of *kahwa* were also confirmed through classical traditional medical literature<sup>3</sup> and by consultation with some registered traditional practitioners in that area.

**Table:1 Different types of kahwa and their local uses**

S. no.	Local Name of kahwa	Main ingredient	Local uses
1	<i>Doodh-kahwa</i>	Milk	For elderly
2	<i>Dhalchine-kahwa</i>	Cinnamon	Respiratory/digestive problems
3	<i>Teth-kahwa</i>	Green tea	Digestive problems
4	<i>Kung-kahwa</i>	Saffron	Euphoric
5	<i>Lemb-kahwa</i>	Lemon	Digestive problems
6	<i>Shangri-kahwa</i>	Liquorice	Respiratory problems

### Some important ingredients of kahwa

#### *Glycyrrhiza glabra* (liquorice)

The extracts of the roots of *Glycyrrhiza glabra* has shown magnificent antibacterial effect<sup>8</sup>. It is also a proved expectorant and demulcent. It is an ingredient in number of formulations used in case of respiratory and digestive ailments, in Unani as well as ayurvedic medicine<sup>6,7</sup>. It is also having expectorant, immunomodulatory, anti hypoglycaemic and antiulcer activity<sup>9</sup>.

#### *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (cinnamon)

It is an excellent antibacterial and a proved respiratory drug. It is a constituent of many validated polyherbal formulations like Bresol syrup, which is used in case of acute rhinitis in Ayurveda<sup>10</sup>. A number of researches have been conducted to prove the medicinal values of cinnamomum and is used as ingredient in various herbal formulations indicated for respiratory and other diseases<sup>4,6,7</sup>.

#### *Elettaria cardamomum* (cardamom)

A number of health benefits of this aromatic herb have been documented. It is used as aromatherapy in cardiac arrhythmia and for promoting physical fitness<sup>11</sup>. It is a used as ingredient in number of dosage forms for treatment of various diseases, in case of Unani system of medicine<sup>6,7</sup>.

#### *Syzygium aromaticum* (clove)

The medicinal properties of clove buds is due to its constituent essential oil, eugenol. It has been proved that clove is having anti-inflammatory and antioxidant<sup>12</sup>. It is also used in digestive ailments.

#### *Crocus sativus* (Saffron)

Many studies have shown the antioxidant and cardio protective effects of saffron<sup>13</sup>. In the Unani, medical literature saffron is a well-known cardiac drug and is used in a number of formulations<sup>6</sup>.

### Discussion

Liquorice root is a proved bronchodilator and expectorant drug in Unani medicine<sup>15</sup>. It is used as an ingredient in various dosage forms used for respiratory problems. The cardamom, cinnamon, and clove have antibacterial properties in addition to respiratory medical benefits as per Unani medical literature and practice<sup>6,7</sup>. The health benefits of these ingredients were also discussed with some local traditional medical practitioners. The interactions with people proved that *Shangri-kahwa* is extremely popular among the people in these villages. People have overwhelming faith on the curative effective of the recipe in various ailments of the respiratory tract and other diseases. Most of the people frequently prepare and use this recipe in their households. Besides being an effective medicine, it is also believed to be extremely palatable and enjoyable, so people of all age groups can use this recipe easily and comfortably. The health benefits of the various ingredients of the *kahwa* as per various research studies and classical Unani literature are surprisingly similar to what people in these villages use it for.

### Conclusion

This recipe is extremely famous in these villages both as a refreshing and stimulant drink, as well as believed to be highly efficacious in various health problems especially respiratory illnesses. It is cost effective and highly palatable. The ingredients of *Shangri-kahwa* have documented health benefits and Unani system and Ayurveda extensively uses them for almost same indications as *Shangri-kahwa* is used.

### Acknowledgment

The authors are highly thankful to the villagers who shared their valuable experiences. We also express our thankfulness to Dr Mukhtar and Dr Niyaz, the traditional practitioners of this area, for sharing their indispensable knowledge with us.

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