

BLACK CUMIN (*NIGELLA SATIVA* L.) – A REVIEW

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Abstract: Black cumin (*Nigella sativa* L., Family: Ranunculaceae) is an annual herb possessing wide range of medicinal uses apart from its commercial significance as a spice yielding plant. Black cumin seeds are used in folk (herbal) medicine all over the world for the treatment and prevention of a number of diseases. Prophet Mohammad (Peace be Upon Him) said: "Use this Black Seed; it has a cure for every disease except death" (Sahih Bukhari). The plant species is also important cytogenetically and may be used as a model plant for better understanding of gene and chromosome relationship. Despite the major advancement of modern medicine in human health-care, it is still intangible and beyond reach to ailing humanity, especially the destitute and therefore in recent years plant based system has been utilized for traditional medicine and phytotherapy. 'Medicinal plants are gift of nature' and black cumin is one such plant with potential uses, which can be explored for safe and effective herbal medicine for human benefit. Considering nearly all essential aspects of the species (synonym(s), common names, origin of the name, distribution, varieties, plant description, floral biology, pollination biology, scanning electron microscopy of seed surfaces, cultivation, economy, diseases, pest, microscopical and powdered characteristics, biochemical constituents, extraction methods of essential oils, therapeutic uses, insecticidal activity, other uses, clinical trials, biosafety, tissue culture and patents), a monograph is prepared on the laid formulation of WHO (World Health Organization) as well as on other significant parameters (cytogenetics and molecular genetics) with the following objectives: to provide an unabridged repository of references regarding the species for its effective and safe utilization as a 'Potential Medicinal Herb'; for creating awareness regarding the use of plant based medicine; understanding economic status, biosafety and patents for regulating herbal medicinal market Nationally and Internationally and exploration of cytogenetical and genetical aspects.

Keywords: Black cumin, Herbal medicine, *Nigella sativa*

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