

A Case Study

ADVANCE RESEARCH JOURNAL OF
C R P
IMPROVEMENT
Volume 3 | Issue 1 | June, 2012 : 64-66
.....

Medicinal rice- an ignored episode

■ SHYAMASHREE ROY AND SUDESHNA BHATTACHARJYA¹

AUTHORS' INFO

Associated Co-authors' :

¹Department of Soil Science,
College of Agriculture, G.B. Pant
University of Agriculture and
Technology, PANTNAGAR
(UTTARAKHAND) INDIA

Author for correspondence :

SHYAMASHREE ROY

Department of Agronomy, College
of Agriculture, G.B. Pant University
of Agriculture and Technology,
PANTNAGAR (UTTARAKHAND)
INDIA

Key Words : Medicinal rice, Beri-beri, Njavara

How to cite this paper : Roy, Shyamashree and Bhattacharjya, Sudeshna (2012). Medicinal rice- an ignored episode, *Adv. Res. J. Crop Improv.*, **3** (1) : 64-66.

Paper History : Received : 04.04.2012; Accepted : 12.06.2012

Rice is a staple food and an indispensable part of the festivities and rituals in India since historical era. It is not only the enormous source of nutrition for human beings but also possesses lots of medicinal properties. Though some Asian countries have been using rice for medicinal purpose since time immemorial, the theory of medicinal value of rice is believed but not scientifically proven effective yet. For example: Philippines where rice bran is extracted and used as an excellent source of vitamin B to prevent and cure beri-beri. In Malaysia, rice is used for treating eye and for use with acute inflammation of the inner body. In Cambodia, mature hulls are considered useful for treating dysentery. China uses rice for strengthening weak stomach and in India, rice water is prescribed to counteract inflamed surface (Gutierrez, www.medicinalrice.html). In Ayurveda, India's traditional system of health treatment of which the roots date back thousands of years, there is a mention of Navarakizhi (pronounced: Navarakiri) which is one of the more exotic treatments offered by practitioners. Ayurveda also recommends white rice for the problem of gas, bloating, or indigestion. It is said clearly in ancient Indian literature that every plant on this earth is somehow beneficial for human beings, animals and for other plants (Oudhia, 1999). India is blessed with a wide range of medicinal plants most of which have been traditionally used in Ayurveda, Unani systems of medicines and by tribals for generations. Rice is considered to be acrid, oleaginous, tonic, aphrodisiac, fattening, diuretic and useful in biliousness (Caius, 1986). According to M. S. Swaminathan, (Chairman, MSSR

Foundation), "India has a host of rice varieties of medicinal value, which must be fully exploited. If properly researched and developed, the varieties can be used as valuable infant food. At present, varieties such as 'Njavara' are being used by practitioners of Ayurveda to cure illness". It is written in Ayurveda that the Raktashali red rice has nutritive food and medicinal properties. Also some other rice stains like Sashtika, Sali, and parched rice having medicinal value were documented in the Charaka Samhita and the Susruta Samhita. Various diseases such as diarrhea, vomiting, fever, hemorrhage, chest pain, wounds, and burns may be treated with them. Also there is the mention of coloured rice which was popular at that time for their special features such as medicinal value and exclusive taste. In India, rice was distinguished into three broad kinds according to hardness, colour, flavour and size of the grain (Ray Chaudhuri, 1964). These varieties are not still these varieties are cultivated in some pockets of the country by tribals and small farmers who are not at all acquainted with modern agricultural techniques and medical facilities, where indigenous paddy with their nutritional and medicinal properties are a rich alternative for a good livelihood.

The medicinal quality of rice varies from type to type. Many of the beneficial compounds present in brown rice are absent from the highly refined white rice. There is 25 per cent fibre in rice bran which is known to assist the absorption of fats in the gut and in decreasing the levels of cholesterol in the blood. Fibre is also helpful in digestion and can be used as a mild laxative. The oil obtained from rice bran contains vitamin