

# People have been consuming giloy since the outbreak of COVID-19: Experts

TNIE

Koo



Giloy can be prepared and consumed in a variety of methods. (Photo| EPS)

By Rajkumari Sharma Tankha  
Express News Service

A study published in the Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hepatology that links liver toxicity to Ayurvedic herb Giloy and claims it was the use of giloy that caused the death of six patients in Mumbai, has not been taken too kindly by the practitioners of Ayurveda.

They say that the rising prominence of Ayurveda is not being liked by many, hence the row. "Giloy is widely mentioned as a much-used ingredient for making various medicines and concoctions in all Ayurveda literature, including the Charak Samhita, the Ayurvedic Pharmacopeia of India and the Ayurvedic Formulary of India. The National Medical Library (at Ansari Road, near AIIMS in Delhi) has scores of research papers on the benefits of giloy," says an Ayurvedacharya working with the Delhi Government.

"Actually, the pandemic has brought all pathies on an even keel. Allopathy is also down from the exalted position it once occupied. This, and also the very fact that the general mood moved towards Ayurveda and other indigenous systems has rattled allopathic practitioners. Hence this controversy," he opines, adding that an RTI should be filed to find out the medical history of the patients concerned as also the etiology of the disease each had.

Dimple Jangda, Ayurveda Health Coach and researcher, and Founder, Prana Healthcare Centre and Prana Academy for Ayurvedic Lifesciences, agrees, "The questions that arise are: Was giloy the only herb or drug that was consumed by the six patients? Were they administered any other medication?"

"What dietary habits did the patients follow before and during the time of research? What is their hereditary and genetic coding? To conclude a research based on the analysis of a single herb consumed by six patients, is an inconclusive research that can mislead the masses," she says.

Jangda states the results appear skewed because these do not take into consideration variables like previous medication history, genetic disorders, underlying health conditions, and more.

"The fact is, giloy is administered to patients suffering from liver damage, viral hepatitis or poisoning from alcohol. It helps repair fibrosis and regenerates new liver tissue," says Jangda, adding that the only contraindication to giloy is that it should not be consumed during pregnancy.

Stating that giloy has immense health benefits in conditions like indigestion, burning sensation of hands and feet, fever, gout, fatigue, jaundice, diabetes, liver problems.

Ayurvedacharya Dr Partap Chauhan, Director of Jiva Ayurveda, cites a study published in the World Journal of Gastroenterology, wherein it was found that both giloy (*Tinospora cordifolia*) and turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) are hepatoprotective in patients who were taking anti-tuberculosis treatment.

"The herb has been a part of clinical trials conducted by various Ayurvedic institutions. Adverse effects, if any, would certainly have been noticed. Further, scores of people have been consuming giloy since the pandemic hit. However, I would not advise self-medication. One must always consult a qualified Ayurvedic doctor," says Chauhan.

And, this is something which doctors at Delhi government dispensaries refute. They say that pure giloy is an OTC product, used as a prophylactic not a therapeutic medicine. And while it begins improving body systems after six months, outwardly the results only begin to show after prolonged use.