

A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON PHYTOCHEMICAL AND PHARMACOLOGICAL
PROPERTIES OF *CAESALPINIA SAPPAN* (FABACEAE)Rasheed Ahmed*¹, Praveen Kumar Goyal² and G. Jeyabalan²¹Ph.D. Research Scholar RUHS, Jaipur, Rajasthan.²Alwar Pharmacy College, MIA, Alwar - 301030, Rajasthan, India.

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*Corresponding Author

Rasheed Ahmed

Ph.D. Research Scholar
RUHS, Jaipur, Rajasthan.

ABSTRACT

Traditional medicinal plant *Caesalpinia sappan* belongs to Fabaceae family, it is commonly known as Brazil or Sappan wood and Bakam or Patang in Hindi. The presence of potentially active chemical constituents and their multifunctional properties make *Caesalpinia sappan* perfect candidates for the production of phyto-pharmaceutical products. Major chemical compound present in drug are triterpenoids, flavonoids, steroids, oxygen heterocycles, and amino acids has been reported in the heartwood and seeds of this plant. Traditionally *Caesalpinia Sappan* used for the treatment of blood pressure, diabetes, burning sensations, cancer, cataract, digestion, dysmenorrhea, ear diseases, gonorrhoea, heart diseases, jaundice, nervous disorders, obesity, ophthalmic diseases, spermatorrhea, stomach aches, syphilis, urinary diseases and vascular diseases. Although it is used widely around the country, single hand information about its ethnobotanical, phytochemical and pharmacological action is still lacking. Traditionally appreciated for its pharmacological properties by the various researcher *Sappan wood* is still hardly recognized because of insufficient scientific information. The aim of this review is to summarize all the traditional property of *Caesalpinia sappan*.

KEYWORDS: *Caesalpinia sappan*, Traditional, Phyto-pharmacological, Diabetes, Brazil.

1. INTRODUCTION

Back to nature is not merely a slogan. The last forty years have seen a resurgence of interest amongst researchers in seeking new medicinal agents from plants. This can be attributed to the fact that synthetic and presently available medicines are either too expensive or tend to bring out side effects. In addition, there are many diseases still requiring antidotes. As a result of modern isolation techniques and pharmacological testing procedures, new plant drugs usually find their way in to medicines as purified substances.^[1]

Herbal drugs referred as plants materials or herbalism, involves the use of whole plants or parts of plants, to treat injuries or illnesses.^[2] Herbal drugs are use of therapeutic herbs to prevent and treat diseases and ailments or to support health and healing.^[3] These are drugs or preparations made from a plant or plants and used for any of such purposes. Herbal drugs are the oldest form of health care known to mankind.^[4]

Caesalpinia sappan Linn. is belonging to Fabaceae family, it is commonly known as Brazil or Sappan wood and Bakam or Patang in Hindi. *Caesalpinia sappan* Linn. geographically distributed in Southeast Asia and its dried heartwood has been used as traditional ingredient of food or beverages.^[5] The heartwood of the plant is commonly

used for the extraction of red dye. The heartwood of *Caesalpinia sappan* Linn. has long been used in Thai folk medicine to treat tuberculosis, diarrhea, dysentery, skin infections and anemia.^[6]

The tree is cultivated in the gardens for its large, ornamental panicles of yellow flowers. It is propagated from seed and is quick growing. It is a spreading tree or shrub up to 10 m in height, found wild and as an escape in South India, West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, Malaya and Sri Lanka and cultivated throughout the Asian tropics. The wood is orange red, hard, very heavy, straight grained with a fine and even texture. Branches, rufous-pubescent armed with small prickles. Leaves large hairy to glabrous, bearing small prickles at the base; pinnae 9-14 pairs; leaflets sessile, oblong, membranous, obliquely truncate, 10-20 pairs per pinna.^[7] Flowers in panicles, which are terminal and in the axils of the upper leaves, 30-40cm long; pedicels 1.3-1.5cm long, bracts lanceolate, 8mm long, caducous. Calyx 11mm, long, leathery, glabrous, corolla 2cm across; petals orbicular subequal, yellow, the upper with a red spot at the base, stamens delicate, waxy-white, filaments densely woolly at the base. Pods 7-10 by 3.8-5cm, woody, obliquely oblong, sub compressed, polished, indehiscent with a hard returned short beak at the upper angle of the obtuse apex. Seeds 3-4.

Wood has outer sapwood which is white pale buff colour and inner orange red heartwood.^[8-9]

The wood was formerly used in calico printing of cotton, wool and silk. It is now however now replaced by synthetic dyes.^[10]

1.1 Taxonomic Classification^[11]

Kingdom	Plantae
Sub kingdom	Viridiplantae
Infra kingdom	Streptophyta
Super division	Embryophyta
Division	Tracheophyta
Sub division	Spermatophytina
Class	Magnoliopsida
Super order	Rosanae
Order	Fabales
Family	Caesalpiaceae/Fabaceae
Genus	<i>Caesalpinia</i> Linn.
Species	<i>Caesalpinia sappan</i> Linn– Sappan wood



Figure 1: Photograph of *Caesalpinia sappan* plant with insight showing fruit, flower wood and heartwood.

2. Phytochemical Constituents

Chemical investigation has been carried out in *Caesalpinia Sappan linn.* and presence of compounds, viz: triterpenoids, flavonoids, steroids, oxygen heterocycles, and amino acids has been reported in the heartwood and seeds of this plant.¹² The wood of *Caesalpinia Sappan linn* reported to contain a glycoside containing β -amyrin, glucose and the free amino acids: alanine, aspartic acid, glycine, proline, valine, leucine, threonine; free sugars: lactose, galactose, 2-deoxyribose and glucose also present.^[13-14]

Heartwood of *Caesalpinia Sappan linn.* contains several aromatic compounds, brazilin, sappanichalcone, caesalpin J, caesalpin P, protosappanin A, protosappanin B, homoisoflavonoids β -sitosterol and presence of monohydroxybrazilin and benzyl dihydrobenzofuran derivatives is also reported in the lignum. It also contains sappanol, episappanol, 3'-deoxysappanol, 3'-O-methylsappanol, 3'-O-methylepisappanol, 3'-methylbrazilin, 4-methylepisappanol, sappanon β , 3-deoxysappanone β , 3'-deoxysappanone β and dibenzoxocin derivative, 10-O-methyl-

protosappanin β . Presence of 4,4'-dihydroxy-2'-methoxychalcone, 8-methoxybonducellin, quercetin, rhamnetin and ombuin is also reported.^[15]

Three new homoisoflavonoids, 7-hydroxy-3-(4'-hydroxy-benzylidene)-chroman-4-one, 3,7-dihydroxy-3-(4'-hydroxy-benzyl)-chroman-4-one and 3,4,7-trihydroxy-3-(4'-hydroxybenzyl)-chroman were isolated from the dried heartwood together with the known compounds 4,4'-dihydroxy-2'-methoxy chalcone, 8-methoxybonducellin, quercetin, rhamnetin and ombuin.^[16]

The seeds contain 7% protein. The amino acids present in the seed-protein are: alanine, cystine, glycine, isoleucine, lysine, threonine, tryptophan and valine. Petroleum ether extract of seeds give orange colored fixed oil (18%). The fatty acid content: capric, lauric, myristic, myristolpalmatic, palmitic, palmitoleic, oleic, linoleic, linolenic and arachidic acids. The fixed oil is a potential ingredient of paints.^[16] Two compounds were such as tetraacetyl-brazilin and protosappanin isolated from the stem of *C. sappan*.^[17] Sappanichalcone is

isolated from *C. sappan*, the proposed biosynthetic precursor of brazilin.^[18]

Beak NI et al reported that Sappan- chalcone and brazilin were isolated from ethyl acetate extract of wood of *C. sappan*.^[19]

Phenolic compounds mainly included phenolic acids, flavonoid, tannins, coumarins, lignans, quinones, = stilbenes, and curcuminoids are isolated from different = traditional medicines includ-ing *Caesalpinia sappan*.^[20]

2.1 Chemical structure of brazilin

Brazilin [(6aS-cis)-7, 11b-dihydrobenz [b] indeno [1,2-d] pyran-3, 6a, 9, 10 (6H)- tetrol] was isolated as red crystal,^[21] or amber yellow crystal.^[22] Brazilin exhibit a melting point of 145 °C–149 °C. The EI mass spectrum of brazilin showed a molecular weight at m/z 286

corresponding to C₁₆H₁₄O₅. The optical specific rotation value of brazilin was [α]_D^[20] + 118.8° (c = 1.9, MeOH). The UV–visible spectrum showed maximum absorption at 292 nm. The ¹H NMR (500 MHz, CD₃OD) and ¹³C NMR (150 MHz, CD₃OD) spectra of brazilin were shown in Table No 1. A signal at 144.3 ppm in ¹³C spectrum, assigned to C₉ atom bonded to a hydroxyl group. The proton spectrum of brazilin with a group of aromatic signals at the range between 7.15 and 6.50 ppm, and that of carbinolic protons at 4.12 and 4.39 ppm. Brazilin shows electronic transition in blue shifted region due to the sp³ carbon atom at C₉ which does not have planarity in this part of the molecule. Vibrational wave numbers of brazilin together with tentative assignment is shown in Table No 2. Brazilin does not show vibrational band at 1 365 cm⁻¹ because of the absence of the C=O bond.^[23]

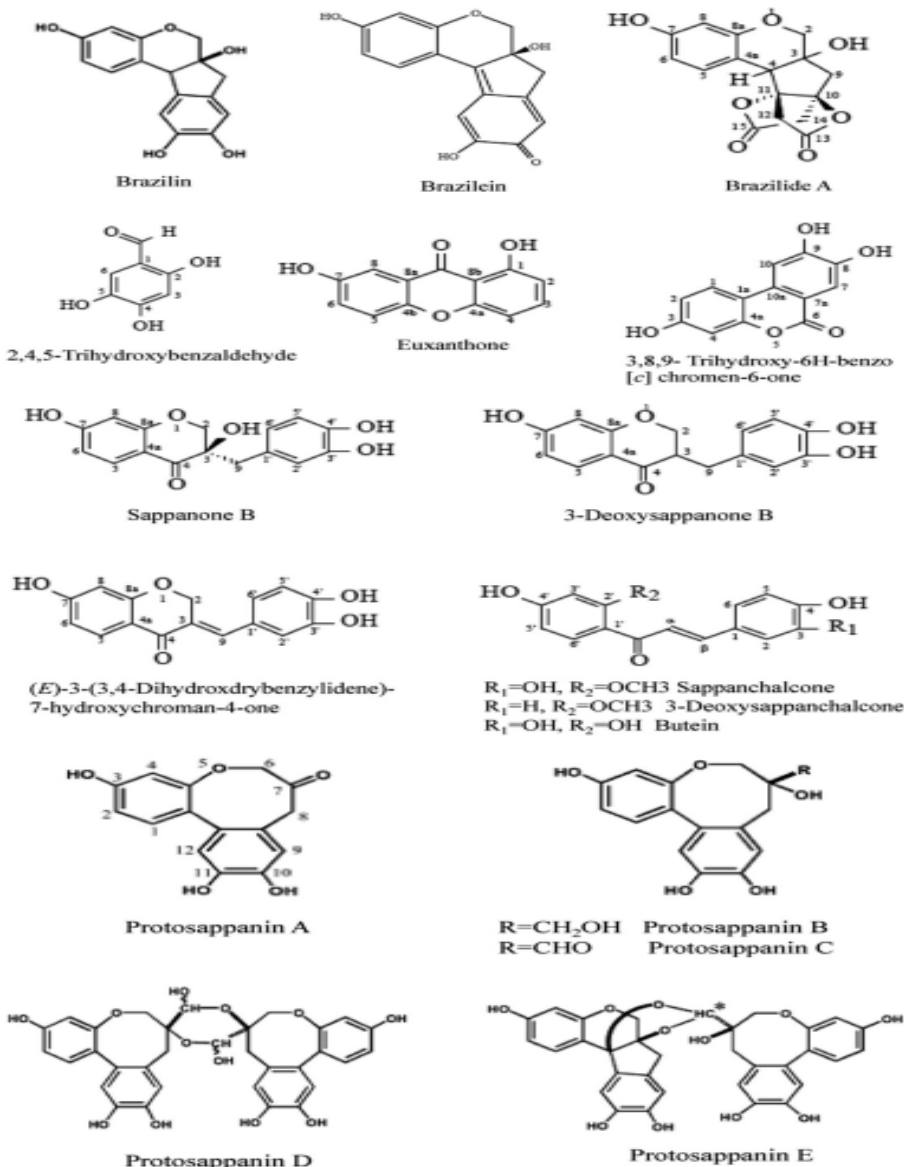


Figure: 2 Chemical structures of different compounds isolated from *Caesalpinia Sappan* heartwood.

Table 1:

Position	Brazilin	
	δ_C type	δ_H (J in Hz)
1	132.2, CH	7.18, d (8.2)
1a	115.5, C	
2	109.9, CH	6.46, dd (8.2, 2.5)
3	155.7, C	
4	104.2, CH	6.28, d (2.5)
4a	157.8, C	
6	70.8, CH ₂	3.68, d (11.5) 3.91, d (11.5)
6a	78.0, C	
7	42.9, CH ₂	2.76, d (15.8) 3.01, d (15.4)
7a	131.3, C	
8	112.8, CH	6.70, s
9	145.6, C	
10	145.3, C	
11	112.4, CH	6.58, s
11a	137.4, C	
12	51.1, CH	3.95, s

Table 2:

Brazilin	Tentative assignment
252 vw	Ring deformation
423 vw	$\delta(\text{ring}) + \delta(\text{CO})$
473 vw	$\delta(\text{ring})$
490 vw	$\delta(\text{ring})$
501 vw	$\delta(\text{ring})$
549 vw	$\delta(\text{ring})$
642 vw	$\gamma(\text{CH})$
687 vw	$\gamma(\text{CH}) + \delta(\text{CC}=\text{O}) + \delta(\text{CC}-\text{O})$
732 mw	$\gamma(\text{CO}) + \gamma(\text{CH})$
767 w	$\gamma(\text{CO}) + \gamma(\text{CH})$
792 vw	$\gamma(\text{CO}) + \gamma(\text{CH})$
945 vw	$\rho(\text{CH}_2)$
990 vw	$\nu(\text{C}-\text{C}) + \nu(\text{C}-\text{O})$
1032 vw	Ring stretching
1172 vw	$\delta(\text{CCH}) + \nu(\text{C}-\text{C})$
1230 sh	$\nu(\text{C}-\text{O}) + \nu(\text{C}-\text{C})$
1260 sh	$\nu(\text{C}-\text{O}) + \nu(\text{C}-\text{C}) + \delta(\text{CH}_2)$
1320 m	$\nu(\text{C}-\text{O}) + \delta(\text{OCC}) + \delta(\text{CH}_2)$
1451 w	$\nu(\text{C}=\text{C}) + \delta(\text{ring}) + \delta(\text{COH})$
1525 w	$\nu(\text{C}=\text{C})$
1614 s	$\nu(\text{C}=\text{C})$
2858 w	$\nu(\text{CH})$
2900 sh	$\nu(\text{CH}_2)$
2940 m	$\nu(\text{CH}_2)$
3060 mw	$\nu(\text{CH})$ aromatic

3. Traditional Use

Traditionally Caesalpinia Sappan used for the treatment of blood pressure, burning sensations, cancer, cataract, digestion, dysmenorrhea, ear diseases, gonorrhoea, heart diseases, jaundice, nervous disorders, obesity, ophthalmic diseases, spermatorrhea, stomach aches, syphilis, urinary diseases and vascular diseases.^[24]

4. Pharmacological Activities

Anthelmintic Activity: Brazilin recovered from heartwood showed cestocidal activities against *Hymenolepis nana*, and reduction of spontaneous movement in *Anisakis simplex*. Petroleum ether and methanol extracts from leaves showed anthelmintic

activity in earthworms in terms of causing paralysis and death of worms. Petroleum ether extract of leaves of *Caesalpinia sappan* Eisenia foetida exhibited marked anthelmintic activity causing paralysis and death of worms.^[25]

Wound Healing Activity: Ethanol extract and Brazilin from *Caesalpinia sappan* displayed wound healing activity through Fibroblast proliferation, fibroblast migration, and collagen production. Similarly, Brazilin-rich extract from heartwood was shown to be effective in terms of its wound healing activity as studied by scratch wound assay.^[26,27]

Hepatoprotective Activity: Methanol and aqueous extracts from heartwood showed hepatoprotective activity in CCl₄ induced toxicity in animals. Caesalpinia sappan extract from heartwood showed PASS Predicted hepatoprotective activity in Thioacetamide-Induced Liver Fibrosis in Rats.^[28,29]

Anti-inflammatory Activity: Brazilin, Sappanchalcone, protosappanin A, protosappanin B, protosappanin C, protosappanin D, and protosappanin E recovered from heartwood showed anti-inflammatory activity through inhibition of the chemical mediators of inflammation in J774.1 cell line. Ethanolic extract from heartwood displayed anti-inflammatory potential through suppression of the expression of inflammatory mediators in human macrophages and OA chondrocytes. Brazilin rich extract and Brazilin isolated from the heartwood of Caesalpinia Sappan. The Caesalpinia sappan were shown to exhibit anti-inflammatory activity as evaluated by anti-denaturation assay. Ethanol extract and Brazilin from C. sappan displayed anti-inflammatory activity through inhibition of the production of NO, PGE₂ and TNF- α . Compounds viz. Episappanol, protosappanin C, Brazilin, iso-protosappanin B and sappanol isolated from heartwood exhibited anti-inflammatory potential in macrophages and chondrocytes.^[30,31,32,33]

Insecticidal Activity: Two cassane-type diterpenoids, Caesalsappanin R and Caesalsappanin S, isolated from seeds of Caesalpinia sappan were evaluated for insecticidal activity against *Culex quinquefasciatus*. The isolated diterpenoids were effective but with low toxicity. Ethanol extract from seeds of Caesalpinia sappan was shown to control cockroaches by causing mortality of cockroaches.^[34]

Cytotoxicity and Anti-tumour activity: The anticancer activity of brazilein, a compound isolated from *Caesalpinia sappan* was investigated. MTT assay showed that the IC₅₀ value of brazilein against human breast cancer MCF-7 cells was 7.23 \pm 0.24 μ mol/L. Western blot, RT-PCR assay, and RNA interference assay illustrated that brazilein induced growth inhibition of breast cancer cells and down regulation of GSK-3 β / β -catenin pathway was involved in its mechanism.^[15] The chloroform extract induces cell death in head and neck cancer cells lines. It resulted in increases in the HNSCC4 and HNSCC31 cells, which is linked to increased cellular levels of p21^{WAF1/CIP1}. Sappan wood act as an anti-tumour agent in oriental medicine.^[16] Methanol and water extracts exhibited marked cytotoxic activity against human cancer cells lines such as HeLa, MDA MB, A 549, and HCT-15 in the MTT assay. The water extract obtained from the heartwood of *Caesalpinia sappan* has shown promising cytotoxic and apoptotic potential. The in vivo study in albino mice using Ehrlich carcinoma model resulted in an increase in the lifespan.^[35]

Anti-oxidant Activity: Antioxidant activity of C. sappan heartwood was studied both by in-vitro and in-vivo models. The ethyl acetate, methanol, and water extracts exhibited strong antioxidant activity, as evidenced by the low IC₅₀ values in both 1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) and nitric oxide methods.^[36]

Cardiovascular System Protection: Application of brazilein (10-100 μ mol/L) dose dependently relaxed the NE- or high K⁺ -induced sustained contraction of endothelium-intact aortic rings (the EC₅₀ was 83.51 \pm 5.6 and 79.79 \pm 4.57 μ mol/L, respectively). Brazilin induces relaxation in rat aortic rings via both endothelium-dependent and -independent ways as well as inhibiting NE-stimulated phosphorylation of ERK1/2 and MLC. Brazilin also attenuates vasoconstriction via blocking voltage- and receptor operated Ca²⁺ channels.^[37]

0.01g of a 70% ethanol extract of Caesalpinia sappan L. per 20g of body weight can modulate unfavorable lipoprotein composition in hypercholesterolemic patients. Found an elevated antioxidative capacity to suppress lipid peroxidation and protein oxidation in mice fed with hypercholesterolemic diet supplemented with ethanol extract of Caesalpinia sappan L. This supports of ethanol extract of Caesalpinia sappan L. supplementation had beneficial effects in preventing human cardiovascular diseases, especially atherosclerosis, by attenuating intracellular oxidative stress and inflammation.^[38]

Antidiabetic Activity: Brazilein, active component of sappan wood, decreases blood glucose in diabetic animals. Brazilein inhibits hepatic gluconeogenesis by elevating the F-2, 6-BP level in hepatocytes, possibly by elevating cellular F-6-P/H-6-P levels and PFK-2 activity. Increased pyruvate kinase activity may also play a role in the anti-gluconeogenic action of brazilein.^[39]

Antiproliferative Activity: Methanol, methanol-water (1:1) and water extract of C. sappan showed selective activity against human cervix HeLa adenocarcinoma, human lung A549 adenocarcinoma, murine colon 26-L5 carcinoma, murine Lewis lung carcinoma (LLC) and murine B16-BL6 melanoma cells. Characteristic morphological change and DNA fragmentation indicated the antiproliferative activity to be due to the induction of apoptosis.^[40]

Antiplatelet Activity: Brazilin, the major component of C. sappan was reported to show antiplatelet activity through the inhibition of phospholipase A₂ (PLA₂) activity and the increase in intracellular free Ca²⁺ concentration ([Ca²⁺]_i), its derivatives such as BRX-018, (6*S*,*cis*)-Malonic acid 3-acetoxy-6*a*-bis-(2-methoxycarbonyl-acetoxy)-6,6*a*,7,11*b*-tetrahydro-indeno [2,1-*c*]chromen-10-yl ester methylester, was confirmed as one of the potential antiplatelet agents. Its antiplatelet activity may be based on the inhibitory mechanisms on TXA₂ synthesis in stimulated platelets.^[41]

Analgesic Activity: The ethanol extract of heartwood and three crude fractions (petroleum ether (60-80°C), diethyl ether and ethyl acetate) were subjected to pharmacological screening for analgesic activity using acetic acid-induced writhing in albino mice. The ethanol extract of heartwood and three crude fractions were found to show peripheral analgesic activity.^[42]

5. CONCLUSIONS

Caesalpinia Sappan linn. heartwood extract has been used in oriental folk medicine. It is being used in India and several parts of the world for its medicinal properties. Caesalpinia Sappan linn. heartwood is also known for its coloring properties. Ethanol (95%) is the better solvent to obtain high extraction yield of Caesalpinia Sappan linn. heartwood. Brazilin is the major phytochemical found in the heartwood and is responsible for most of the pharmacological activities of Caesalpinia Sappan linn. heartwood.

Brazilin shows various biological activities including antioxidant, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, hypoglycemic, hepatoprotective, and vasorelaxation etc. Brazilin has the potential to develop into a drug and also act as a nutraceutical. In the future more basic research is needed to elucidate the mechanism of action and isolation of its active ingredients.

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