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Sustainable Value of Navara Rice in Medicinal and Aesthetic Aspects

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Navara rice is one of the many types of rice found in India and is a unique grain plant in the *Oryza* group. Its origin is said to be somewhere in Kerala, where it is regarded as endemic. In 2007-09, Geographical Indication status was granted. Navara is known for its medicinal properties due to its mineral and chemical composition, an essential part of **Ayurvedic** treatment in the 15th century. Specifically, it is used in **Panchakarma** treatment. The rice is of two kinds, the white glumed (husked) and black glumed. The 12th century Ayurvedic text, *Ashtangahridayam*, describes the white Navara as medicinally superior but the black glumed variety seems to be preferred by physicians today. It is a muscle strengthening variety of rice and is used in a special treatment for **neuromuscular** disorders such as **arthritis**, **rheumatism**, back ache and other age related problems. Navara is also reported to provide benefits in the curing circulatory, respiratory, digestive and nervous system ailments. Boiled Navara is a good weaning food for infants, particularly those with low weight. Broth made by adding Navara rice is recommended to pregnant women as it increases the weight of the foetus.

Navara rice – In psoriasis as food (in the form of gruel). Also for osteoporosis, cirrhosis of liver and piles.

Navara bran – For ulcers (for peptic ulcer vaidyars advise to take navara bran mixed with jaggery. For ulcers in the mouth Navara rice bran in boiled milk is prescribed as a drink.)

Navara rice powder – Paste made of Navara rice powder is used in snake bite – to reduce the pain and for healing of the wound.

Navara root – Boiled in water and used as a drink in urinary tract infection and also as a diuretic.

Molecular studies conducted by a team of scientists from the Kerala Agricultural University indicated the presence of a gene fragment encoding a protein which is reported to have anti-carcinogenic (chemo-preventive) property, especially against breast cancer. This protein, christened Bowman-Birk Trypsin Inhibitor protein, is also known to possess anti-inflammatory and anti-allergic properties in animals and is reported to be capable of imparting resistance to fungal pathogens and pests in crops. Navara is considered beneficial in preventing various diseases and is also considered a safe food for diabetics.

Key words: Navara Rice, arthritis, Diabetics