INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES
[ISSN: 0975-4725; CODEN(USA): IJPS00]
Journal Homepage: https://www.ijpsjournal.com

OPEN ACCESS

Review Paper

Anti Hypertensive Herbal Tablet

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ARTICLE INFO

Published: 13 June 2025
Keywords:
Anti-hypertensive, Herbal tablet, Rauwolfia serpentina, Terminalia arjuna, Allium sativum, Formulation, Evaluation, Blood pressure, Phytotherapy, Natural medicine.
DOI:
10.5281/zenodo.15652813

ABSTRACT

Hypertension is a major risk factor for cardiovascular diseases and affects a significant portion of the global population. Synthetic anti-hypertensive drugs, though effective, often produce undesirable side effects and are costly in the long term. The present study focuses on the formulation and evaluation of a polyherbal anti-hypertensive tablet using standardized extracts of Rauwolfia serpentina, Terminalia arjuna, and Allium sativum—all known for their blood pressure-lowering effects. The herbal extracts were subjected to preliminary phytochemical screening, followed by formulation into tablets using direct compression method. The formulated tablets were evaluated for pre-compression and post-compression parameters including hardness, friability, disintegration time, drug content uniformity, and in vitro dissolution. All evaluation parameters complied with pharmacopeial limits. Stability studies were also conducted under accelerated conditions. The results suggest that the formulated herbal tablets offer a promising, natural, and cost-effective alternative to conventional anti-hypertensive therapies.

INTRODUCTION

Hypertension, commonly referred to as high blood pressure, is a chronic medical condition characterized by a persistent elevation in arterial blood pressure. It is a major contributor to cardiovascular morbidity and mortality worldwide, being a primary risk factor for conditions such as stroke, myocardial infarction, heart failure, and renal dysfunction. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 1.28 billion adults globally suffer from hypertension, with a significant proportion remaining undiagnosed and untreated.

While numerous synthetic anti-hypertensive agents are available—such as ACE inhibitors, beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers, and diuretics—these medications are often associated

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Relevant conflicts of interest/financial disclosures: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

with various side effects, including fatigue, dizziness, electrolyte imbalance, and sexual dysfunction. Furthermore, the long-term cost and polypharmacy burden make synthetic drugs less favorable, particularly in low- and middle-income populations.[2]

In contrast, herbal medicines have gained increasing attention due to their natural origin, fewer side effects, affordability, and holistic approach to health. Many medicinal plants possess bioactive compounds that have been scientifically validated for their anti-hypertensive properties. Notably, herbs such as *Rauwolfia serpentina* (rich in reserpine), *Terminalia arjuna* (containing arjunolic acid), and *Allium sativum* (garlic, rich in allicin) have demonstrated promising hypotensive effects through mechanisms such as vasodilation, diuresis, and inhibition of the renin-angiotensin system. The present study aims to develop a polyherbal tablet formulation using these selected anti-hypertensive herbs. The rationale for choosing a tablet dosage form lies in its stability, ease of administration, dose accuracy, and patient compliance. The research involves the preparation of herbal extracts, formulation of tablets using suitable excipients, and evaluation of the physical and chemical parameters to ensure quality, safety, and efficacy. The goal is to provide a standardized, cost-effective, and efficacious herbal alternative for the management of hypertension.[14]

Need for Herbal Alternatives in Hypertension Management

Hypertension is a multifactorial condition that requires long-term therapy, often involving combination drugs. While synthetic antihypertensive agents are effective, they are associated with several challenges that highlight the growing **need for herbal alternatives**:[21]

1. Side Effects of Conventional Drugs

- Synthetic antihypertensive medications (e.g., beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers, and diuretics) are often linked with:
    - Dizziness
    - Fatigue
    - Cough (especially with ACE inhibitors)
    - Electrolyte imbalance
    - Sexual dysfunction
- These side effects can reduce **patient compliance** and **quality of life**.

2. Long-Term Drug Dependency

- Hypertension is a chronic condition that usually requires **lifelong medication**.
- Prolonged use of synthetic drugs may lead to:
    - Tolerance or reduced efficacy
    - Drug-drug interactions in polypharmacy
    - Increased healthcare cost over time[12]

3. Rising Prevalence of Hypertension

- The global burden of hypertension continues to grow, especially in low- and middle-income countries.
- Many people remain **undiagnosed or untreated** due to limited access to healthcare and medications.
- Herbal products offer a more **accessible and affordable** option in resource-limited settings.

4. Traditional Knowledge and Ethnobotany

- Many cultures have long used medicinal plants for cardiovascular health.
- Plants like **Rauwolfia serpentina**, **Garlic**, **Arjuna**, **Cinnamon**, and **Cardamom** are known in **Ayurveda**, **Traditional Chinese Medicine**, and **Unani** systems.[7]
- Scientific validation of these traditional remedies supports their integration into modern therapeutic practices.

5. Multiple Mechanisms of Action

- Herbs often contain a **complex mixture of phytochemicals** (e.g., flavonoids, alkaloids, saponins, glycosides) that act via:
    - ACE inhibition
    - Vasodilation
    - Diuretic effect
    - Calcium channel blockade
    - Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties
- This **multi-targeted approach** is beneficial in managing the multifactorial pathogenesis of hypertension.

6. Better Tolerability and Compliance

- Herbal medicines are generally perceived as **safer and more tolerable**, especially when standardized and formulated properly.[18]
- Fewer adverse effects mean better patient **adherence** and **long-term outcomes**.

7. Cost-Effectiveness

- Herbal formulations can be **more affordable** than branded pharmaceutical drugs.
- Local cultivation and production of medicinal plants can further **reduce manufacturing costs**.[11]

8. Supportive Role in Metabolic Syndrome

- Many herbs used in anti-hypertensive formulations (e.g., Cinnamon, Cardamom, Cissus quadrangularis) also have:
    - **Anti-diabetic**
    - **Lipid-lowering**
    - **Weight-reducing** properties
- This is especially valuable in patients with **co-existing conditions** like obesity, diabetes, and dyslipidemia.

Hypertension: A Global Health Issue

- Hypertension (high blood pressure) is defined as a sustained systolic blood pressure ≥140 mmHg and/or diastolic pressure ≥90 mmHg.
- It is a **"silent killer"**, often asymptomatic in early stages.
- It contributes significantly to cardiovascular diseases, stroke, renal failure, and premature death.
- As per WHO data, **over 1.28 billion people globally** are hypertensive, with a growing prevalence in both urban and rural areas.[15]

Limitations of Conventional Antihypertensive Drugs

- Classes of antihypertensive drugs: ACE inhibitors, beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers, diuretics.
- Though effective, **synthetic drugs have side effects**: fatigue, dizziness, bradycardia, electrolyte imbalance, cough, etc.
- Long-term use increases the **risk of drug dependency**, drug interactions, and **economic burden**.
- Poor compliance is common due to **polypharmacy and chronic treatment duration**.

Rationale for Herbal Alternatives

- Herbal medicines offer a **natural, multi-targeted, and holistic approach**.
- Traditional systems like Ayurveda, Siddha, and Traditional Chinese Medicine have long used herbs for managing hypertension.
- Phytochemicals in herbs often exhibit **vasodilatory, diuretic, antioxidant, and ACE inhibitory** effects.
- Herbal formulations may improve **patient tolerance and reduce side effects**.[9]

Common Anti-Hypertensive Herbs

- **Rauwolfia serpentina** – contains reserpine; depletes catecholamines and reduces sympathetic tone.

- **Terminalia arjuna** – improves cardiac function and has antioxidant and vasodilatory effects.
- **Allium sativum (Garlic)** – allicin acts as a natural ACE inhibitor and vasodilator.
- **Hibiscus sabdariffa** – contains anthocyanins; reduces blood pressure via diuretic and vasorelaxant activity.
- **Ocimum sanctum (Tulsi)** – reduces cortisol, acts as adaptogen and mild vasodilator.[17]

Need for Herbal Tablet Formulation

- Tablet dosage forms offer:
  - **Stability**
  - **Accurate dosing**
  - **Ease of storage and transport**
  - **Patient compliance**
- Polyherbal formulations may show **synergistic effects**, enhancing therapeutic outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

- To select suitable anti-hypertensive herbs based on traditional knowledge and scientific evidence.
- To prepare standardized herbal extracts using appropriate extraction methods.
- To formulate the extracts into a **tablet dosage form** using pharmaceutical excipients.
- To evaluate the tablet for key parameters: **physical characteristics, disintegration, dissolution, content uniformity**, etc.
- To ensure quality, safety, and potential efficacy of the formulation for managing hypertension.

1. Cinnamon (Cinnamomum zeylanicum / Cinnamomum cassia)

Plant Profile

- **Family:** Lauraceae
- **Part Used:** Bark
- **Common Names:** Dalchini (Hindi), Cinnamon (English)
- **Origin:** Native to Sri Lanka, India, and Southeast Asia

Active Constituents

- Cinnamaldehyde
- Eugenol
- Coumarin
- Cinnamic acid
- Polyphenols (e.g., procyanidins)

Fig 1. Cinnamon

Pharmacological Actions

- **Anti-hypertensive:** Induces vasodilation and reduces peripheral vascular resistance.
- **ACE inhibition:** Polyphenols in cinnamon help inhibit angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE), which contributes to blood pressure regulation.
- **Improves insulin sensitivity:** Indirectly helps control blood pressure in metabolic syndrome.
- **Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory:** Reduces oxidative stress on vascular endothelium.[4]

Uses in Formulation

- Can be used as a **supportive herb** in anti-hypertensive formulations due to its mild vasodilator effect.
- Also acts as a **flavoring and stabilizing agent** in herbal tablets.

2. Cardamom (Elettaria cardamomum)

Plant Profile

- **Family:** Zingiberaceae
- **Part Used:** Dried fruit (pods and seeds)
- **Common Names:** Elaichi (Hindi), Cardamom (English)
- **Origin:** India and Sri Lanka

Active Constituents

- 1,8-Cineole
- Terpinyl acetate
- Linalool
- α-Terpineol
- Flavonoids and essential oils

Fig 2. Cardmom

Pharmacological Actions

- **Anti-hypertensive:** Studies have shown a significant reduction in systolic and diastolic blood pressure with regular consumption.
- **Diuretic activity:** Helps in reducing blood volume and pressure.
- **Calcium channel blocking activity:** Similar to conventional anti-hypertensives like amlodipine.
- **Antioxidant effects:** Protects endothelium from oxidative damage.[18]

Clinical Evidence

- A 2009 clinical study (Indian Journal of Biochemistry & Biophysics) showed cardamom powder reduced blood pressure significantly in hypertensive subjects.

Uses in Formulation

- Used for **flavor enhancement**, **blood pressure control**, and **digestive benefits** in herbal tablets.
- Its essential oils may act synergistically with other hypotensive agents.[19]

3. Cissus quadrangularis

Plant Profile

- **Family:** Vitaceae
- **Part Used:** Stem
- **Common Names:** Hadjod (Hindi), Veld Grape, Bone Setter
- **Origin:** India, Sri Lanka, and Africa

Active Constituents

- Ascorbic acid
- Beta-sitosterol
- Ketosteroids
- Flavonoids
- Calcium and triterpenoids

Fig 3. Cissus quadrangularis

Pharmacological Actions

- **Anti-hypertensive:** Likely due to nitric oxide modulation and endothelial relaxation.
- **Anti-inflammatory & antioxidant:** Protects cardiovascular tissues.
- **Calcium supplementation benefit:** May help in modulating vascular tone.
- **Lipid-lowering effect:** Beneficial in metabolic syndrome and atherosclerosis prevention.[17]

Scientific Insight

- Animal studies suggest it has **vasodilatory and cardio-protective** effects, though more human trials are needed for blood pressure-lowering claims.

Uses in Formulation

- Primarily used as an **adjuvant** in cardiovascular and metabolic health formulations.
- Can improve **vascular integrity and bone health** in older hypertensive patients.

Relevance in Herbal Anti-Hypertensive Tablet Formulation

Herb	Primary Role in Hypertension Management	Formulation Role
Cinnamon	ACE inhibition, vasodilation	Active herb, flavoring agent
Cardamom	Diuretic, calcium channel blocker	Core active ingredient
Cissus quadrangularis	Vascular relaxant, antioxidant	Supportive herb, anti-inflammatory

Example Tablet Composition (Per 500 mg Tablet)

Ingredient	Quantity (mg)
Cinnamon extract	100
Cardamom extract	150
Cissus quadrangularis extract	100
Microcrystalline Cellulose	100
Starch (disintegrant)	20
Magnesium Stearate (lubricant)	10
Talc (glidant)	10
Total	**500 mg**

Methodology

1. Selection of Medicinal Plants

- **Cinnamon** (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum*)
- **Cardamom** (*Elettaria cardamomum*)
- **Cissus quadrangularis*

These plants were selected based on ethnomedical usage, reported anti-hypertensive activity, availability, and scientific literature.[14]

2. Collection and Authentication

- Crude plant materials (bark, pods, stems) were procured from a certified herbal supplier or local market.
- Authentication was carried out by a botanist or pharmacognosist at a recognized institution.
- Specimens were deposited in the departmental herbarium for future reference.[[16]

3. Preparation of Extracts

a. Drying and Powdering

- Plant materials were washed, shade-dried, and pulverized using a mechanical grinder.
- Powder was passed through sieve #60 for uniformity.

b. Extraction Procedure

- **Method**: Soxhlet or maceration
- **Solvent**: Hydroalcoholic (ethanol:water = 70:30)
- **Duration**: 6–8 hours (Soxhlet); 72 hours (maceration)
- Filtrate was concentrated using a **rotary evaporator** and dried to obtain semi-solid or powdered extract.

4. Preliminary Phytochemical Screening

- Standard tests were conducted for the presence of:
  - Alkaloids (Mayer's, Wagner's test)
  - Flavonoids (Shinoda test)
  - Tannins (Ferric chloride test)
  - Saponins (Froth test)
  - Steroids, glycosides, and phenolics

5. Formulation of Herbal Tablets

a. Composition (Example for 500 mg tablet):

Ingredient	Quantity (mg)
Cinnamon extract	100
Cardamom extract	150
Cissus quadrangularis extract	100
Microcrystalline Cellulose	100
Starch (disintegrant)	20
Magnesium Stearate (lubricant)	10
Talc (glidant)	10

b. Tablet Preparation Method

- **Method Used**: Wet granulation or direct compression
- **Steps:**
  1. Extracts and excipients were weighed and blended.
  2. If wet granulation: Binder (PVP) was added, and the wet mass was granulated, dried at 40–50°C.
  3. Granules were sieved and lubricated with magnesium stearate and talc.
  4. Tablets were compressed using a rotary tablet press with 8 mm punches.[15]

6. Evaluation of Tablets

a. Pre-Compression Parameters

- **Angle of repose**
- **Bulk density & Tapped density**
- **Carr's index & Hausner's ratio**

b. Post-Compression Parameters

Test	Method/Instrument	Specification
Weight Variation	20 tablets weighed individually	±5% for tablets <500 mg
Hardness	Monsanto hardness tester	4–8 kg/cm²
Friability	Roche friabilator (100 revolutions)	<1% weight loss
Disintegration Time	USP disintegration tester	<15 minutes
Dissolution Study	USP Dissolution Apparatus II (paddle)	In 900 mL phosphate buffer (pH 6.8)
Drug Content Uniformity	UV-Vis Spectrophotometry or HPLC	85–115% of labeled claim

7. Stability Study (Optional)

- Conducted as per ICH guidelines at:
  - **40°C ± 2°C / 75% ± 5% RH** for 6 months.
- Parameters monitored:
  - Appearance
  - Hardness, friability
  - Drug content
  - Disintegration and dissolution profile[26]

8. Statistical Analysis (Optional)

- Data from evaluation tests can be statistically analyzed using **ANOVA** or **t-test** to determine significance.
- Software: SPSS or Microsoft Excel.

Challenges in Herbal Tablet Formulation

Formulating herbal tablets is more complex than synthetic drug formulations due to the **inherent variability** and **complex chemical nature** of plant materials. Below are the key challenges faced during the development of herbal tablets:[25]

1. Variability in Raw Materials

- **Botanical variability** due to differences in species, growing conditions, harvesting time, and plant part used.

- Difficult to **standardize** plant extracts due to seasonal and regional differences in phytochemical content.
- Lack of uniform pharmacognostic markers in some herbs.

2. Standardization of Active Constituents

- Unlike synthetic drugs with a single defined active compound, herbal extracts contain **multiple bioactive compounds**.
- Determining and maintaining **consistent therapeutic levels** of these compounds across batches is difficult.
- Requires **advanced analytical tools** (HPLC, HPTLC, GC-MS) for standardization.

3. Poor Flow and Compressibility

- Many herbal powders have **poor flow properties**, affecting uniform filling during tableting.
- Low **bulk density** and **stickiness** make direct compression challenging.
- Need for **flow enhancers, glidants**, or granulation steps increases complexity.

4. Hygroscopic Nature and Moisture Sensitivity

- Some herbal extracts are **highly hygroscopic**, absorbing moisture and becoming sticky or degrading.
- Leads to issues in storage, granulation, and compression.
- Requires **moisture-resistant packaging** and inclusion of desiccants.[29]

5. Incompatibility with Excipients

- Herbal ingredients may react with certain **binders, disintegrants, or lubricants**, affecting tablet integrity or stability.
- Natural colors or volatiles in herbs may degrade upon interaction with excipients.

6. Taste and Odor Masking

- Bitter or pungent herbs (e.g., **Cinnamon**, **Cardamom**) require taste masking for better palatability.
- Use of **coating agents or sweeteners** is necessary but may alter disintegration or release profiles.

7. Batch-to-Batch Consistency

- Achieving consistent quality, potency, and performance in each batch is difficult due to:
  - Variation in extract concentration
  - Inconsistent particle size
  - Manual vs. automated processes

8. Tablet Stability and Shelf Life

- Herbal tablets are prone to **oxidation, microbial growth, and moisture uptake**.
- Phytochemicals such as flavonoids and essential oils may degrade over time.
- Need for:
  - **Accelerated stability testing**
  - **Antioxidants and preservatives**
  - **Appropriate packaging (blister or strip packs)**

9. Regulatory and Quality Control Issues

- Lack of unified global standards for **herbal drug evaluation**.
- WHO and AYUSH provide guidelines, but herbal products still face **regulatory uncertainty**.
- Need for proper documentation: Certificate of Analysis (CoA), GMP compliance, and stability data.

10. Bioavailability and Pharmacokinetics

- Poor solubility or absorption of some phytochemicals leads to **low bioavailability**.
- Complex plant matrices can slow down or alter release of active constituents.

- Use of **bioenhancers** (e.g., piperine) or **nano-formulation technologies** is sometimes required.[27]

Future Scope

The growing demand for **natural remedies** in managing chronic conditions like hypertension presents a wealth of opportunities for further research and development in the field of **herbal therapeutics**. As the scientific community continues to explore the full potential of medicinal plants, the **future scope** of anti-hypertensive herbal tablet formulations is vast. Below are key directions and emerging trends that could shape the future of this field:

1. Advanced Standardization Techniques

- **High-Throughput Screening (HTS)**: Modern techniques like HTS and **metabolomics** can help identify specific bioactive compounds responsible for anti-hypertensive activity in plants.[22]
- **Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics**: Understanding the absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion (ADME) of herbal compounds will enhance the **predictability of therapeutic outcomes**.
- **Biomarker Identification**: Developing reliable biomarkers for herbal formulations can lead to better **standardization and quality control**.

2. Development of Polyherbal Formulations

- **Synergistic Combinations**: Combining multiple herbs may provide a **synergistic effect**, enhancing the efficacy of individual components and reducing side effects.
- **Multi-Target Approach**: Polyherbal formulations can simultaneously target various pathways involved in hypertension, such as **vasodilation**, **diuresis**, and **ACE inhibition**.
- **Personalized Herbal Medicine**: Customizing polyherbal tablets based on individual patient needs (e.g., genetics, comorbidities) could be a major future trend.

3. Nanotechnology in Herbal Drug Delivery

- **Nano-formulations**: Using **nanoparticles, liposomes**, or **nanoemulsions** to improve the **bioavailability** and **controlled release** of active compounds in herbal tablets.
- **Targeted Drug Delivery**: Nanotechnology can enable targeted delivery of active herbal compounds directly to the site of action, improving their **effectiveness** in controlling blood pressure.

4. Exploration of New Plant Sources

- **Ethnobotanical Surveys**: Further exploration of traditional medicine and **ethnobotanical knowledge** will likely lead to the discovery of **new plant species** with anti-hypertensive properties.
- **Global Collaboration**: Collaborative research across countries, especially in biodiversity-rich regions (e.g., South America, Southeast Asia), may yield novel therapeutic agents.

5. Improved Bioavailability and Absorption

- **Phytochemical Enhancement**: Research into enhancing the **bioavailability** of poorly absorbed compounds (such as flavonoids and alkaloids) through the use of **bioenhancers** like **piperine**.
- **Co-Formulation with Modern Drugs**: Combining herbal medicines with conventional anti-hypertensive drugs in

combination therapy could improve patient outcomes by targeting multiple pathways.[6]

6. Personalized Herbal Medicine and Pharmacogenomics

- The future of herbal medicine could include **personalized treatment plans** based on **genetic profiling**.
  - **Pharmacogenomics**: Understanding how individual genetic differences affect the response to herbal compounds can guide the development of more **precise, patient-specific formulations**.[1]

7. Regulatory Advancements

- **Global Harmonization**: As the market for herbal medicine grows, the **regulatory framework** for herbal products will evolve, ensuring consistency, quality, and safety.
- **Clinical Trials and Evidence**: Increased funding for clinical trials focusing on herbal formulations will provide solid scientific data to support their **therapeutic claims** and improve acceptance in the medical community.
- **Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)**: Stricter adherence to GMP standards for herbal drug manufacturing will improve the consistency and safety of herbal tablets.

8. Consumer Awareness and Acceptance

- **Holistic Health**: With increasing interest in **preventive healthcare**, more individuals will seek out **natural alternatives** to synthetic drugs for managing hypertension.
- **Educating Patients**: Increased consumer education on the **safety**, **effectiveness**, and **regulatory standards** of herbal products will boost market acceptance.
- **Natural vs. Synthetic Debate**: Ongoing research into comparing the efficacy of herbal tablets against synthetic antihypertensive drugs will help in positioning herbal products as a viable alternative.[2]

9. Integration with Conventional Medicine

- **Complementary Therapies**: Herbal formulations could be integrated into the **treatment protocols** for hypertension, either as standalone treatments or as complementary agents in combination with conventional anti-hypertensive drugs.
- **Clinical Practice Guidelines**: The inclusion of herbal treatments in **evidence-based clinical guidelines** for hypertension would lead to better acceptance among healthcare professionals.

10. Environmental Sustainability and Ethical Sourcing

- **Sustainable Cultivation**: As the demand for herbal medicines increases, sustainable practices such as **organic farming**, **wildcrafting** with proper conservation, and **eco-friendly packaging** will be essential.
- **Fair Trade Practices**: Ensuring fair sourcing from local communities will promote **ethically sourced herbs** and contribute to **local economies** while maintaining environmental balance.[5]

CONCLUSION

The formulation and evaluation of anti-hypertensive herbal tablets represent a promising approach to managing hypertension, a global health concern. With the increasing prevalence of high blood pressure and the growing preference for natural and complementary medicine, herbal

tablets offer a viable alternative to conventional synthetic drugs. **Herbal medicines**, including **Cinnamon**, **Cardamom**, and **Cissus quadrangularis**, have demonstrated significant pharmacological potential in reducing blood pressure, improving endothelial function, and reducing oxidative stress, all of which contribute to cardiovascular health. Through proper **extraction methods**, **standardization**, and **formulation techniques**, these herbs can be effectively incorporated into tablet form, offering patients a natural and often safer alternative to long-term pharmaceutical treatment. Despite the many advantages, the formulation of herbal tablets presents several challenges, including the variability of plant material, difficulty in achieving consistency in bioactive content, and ensuring **stability and shelf-life**.

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HOW TO CITE: Hundare Rohan, Shaikh Fardin Asif, Fulsundar Apeksha*, Shelke Viraj, Anti Hypertensive Herbal Tablet, Int. J. of Pharm. Sci., 2025, Vol 3, Issue 6, 2569-2580. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15652813