

A BRIEF REPORTING ON USES OF APAMARGA (*ACHYRANTHUS ASPERA* LINN.) IN TREATMENT OF VARIOUS DISORDERS IN ALLUSION OF NIGHANTUS

Abhishek Kumar¹, Minakshi Dwivedi², Praveen Kumar Singh², Sanjeev Kumar¹, Rana Gopal Singh³, Anil Kumar Singh¹, Satya Prakash^{*2}

¹Department of Dravyaguna, Institute of Medical Sciences, B.H.U, Varanasi, India.

²Centre for National Facility Tribal and Herbal Medicine, Faculty of Ayurveda, Institute of Medical Sciences, B.H.U, Varanasi, India.

³Department of Nephrology, Institute of Medical Sciences, B.H.U, Varanasi, India.

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***Corresponding Author**

Dr. Satya Prakash

Centre for National Facility
Tribal and Herbal Medicine,
Faculty of Ayurveda, Institute
of Medical Sciences, B.H.U,
Varanasi, India.

ABSTRACT

From Vedic era to space age, the continuous research for achieving the perspective goals in health management of mankind is going on. The *Nighantus*, Ayurvedic form of Materia Medica could help significantly in this direction. Numerous *Nighantus* have been written from the very beginning of Ayurvedic period to solve the hidden meanings of cryptic names of medicinal plants. It is believed that at the end of each *Samhita* a *Nighantu* was there. *Nighantu* is one of the important aspects in the study of *Dravyaguna Vigyana*. Treatment plan of any patient consists of two important parts i.e Cause and Drug. If there is deficiency of any of the two, treatment would be impossible. *Raj nighantu* stated that a physician without the

knowledge of *Nighantu*, a scholar without the knowledge of *Vyakarana* and an archer without practice are laughing stalk in this world. If there is deficiency of one of the two proper treatment could be impossible. *Nighantus* are basically the specific text dedicated for the study of all aspects of drugs from their places of origin, their pharmacological actions, useful parts up to preparations and dosage. After a great pause, Ayurveda was again revived to its past glory in the *Nighantu* period. A large number of drugs were studied and included in different *Nighantus*. *Nighantu* throws light on to the secret meaning of the terms denoting different synonyms of the plant kingdom. *Apamarga* is one of the important plants described in the *Nighantus* having a great medicinal value. *Apamarga* is said to be *Agnikrit* and

possess *Tikshana* property. *Apamarga* possesses *Deepana* property and is indicated in *Kapha-Vata* diseases. It is indicated in *Dadru & Sidhma* (Skin diseases), *Arsha* (Piles), *Kandu* (Itching), *Shoola* (Pain), *Udar roga* (Abdominal diseases), *Aruchi* (Anorexia) etc. It has got *Chedana* and *Sransana* property. In *Atharvaveda* *Apamarga* is considered as the lord of all plants which has been proved in the *Nighantus*.

KEYWORDS: *Apamarga*, *Nighantus*, Ayurveda, *Achyranthus aspera* L.

INTRODUCTION

The term *Nighantu* is based on the term *Nigama*. The etymology of *Nigama* is, which brings out the extremely concealed or secret meaning of words in systemic way. This tradition was also adopted by the Ayurvedic scholars to clarify the technical words specially in the field of *Dravyaguna*. Earlier *Nighantus* were limited to explain the synonyms only. After some time the description of properties, action and indications are also included in the *Nighantu* along with synonyms. The *Nighantu* literature is one of the important aspects in the study of Ayurveda and specially in the subject of *Dravyaguna Vijnana*. The *Nighantu* literature is also as ancient as Ayurveda. Much importance has not been given to the study of *Nighantu*. The ancient *Nighantus* were actually like *Kosa*, containing the synonyms of *Dravya*. Later on, the drugs were given the description of properties, actions and their uses. In true sense the *Nighantu* means collection of words, synonyms and the names of the medicinal substances. *Ramavatar Sharma* in his introduction to *Kalpadrū Kosa* of *Kesava* uses the term *Nighantu* for the glossaries connected with Ayurveda. To understand precisely what is aimed at these glossaries are called as '*Ayurveda Nighantu*'. The *Nighantu* may be defined as a glossary containing synonymous groups, the names of the drugs, plants, animals, minerals or anything that is administered either as food or medicine to the human body. *Apamarga* is explained in almost all the important *Nighantus* with a variety of synonyms and *Guna-karmas*.

***Apamarga* (*Achyranthus aspera* L.) Botanical Description**

The plants are widespread in the world as a weed, in Baluchistan, Ceylon, Tropical Asia, Africa, Australia and America. In the northern part of India it is known as a medicinal plant in different systems of folk medicine. *Achyranthes aspera* L., has been reported to possess medicinal properties. It is a stiff erect perennial herb of 1 to 3 feet with simple elliptic leaves. The stems are square, leaves elliptic ovate or broadly rhombate. The inflorescences are 8 - 30 cm long, with many single, white or red flowers, 3-7 mm wide. **Fruit** indehiscent dry utricle enclosed within persistence, perianth, and bracteoles. Minute egg shaped, shining and

brownish green in colour. **Ovule** - single chambered, monocarpellary with basal placentation, outer most cells reddish and cup shaped with some oil globules. Inner single layered stone cells lead into loosely arranged parenchyma cells. **Cotyledons** - two rich in starch grains; **Embryo**—very minute. **Seed**- Sub-cylindric, truncate at the apex, round at the base, endospermic, brown.^[1]

Apamarga: Ayurvedic Medicine

According to Ayurveda, it is bitter, pungent, heating, laxative, stomachic, carminative and useful for the treatment of vomiting, bronchitis, heart disease, piles, itching abdominal pains, ascites, dyspepsia, dysentery, blood diseases etc. In Ayurveda, two varieties, red and white are mentioned. It is described in 'Nighantu' as purgative, pungent, digestive, a remedy for inflammation of the internal organs, piles, Itching, abdominal diseases and enlarged cervical glands. Hindus used ashes for preparing caustic alkaline preparations. The diuretic properties of the plant are well known to the natives of India and European physicians. Different parts of the plant form ingredients in many native prescriptions in combination with more active remedies.^[2]

Apamarga in Different Nighantus

Different texts mentioned *Apamarga* in different *varga*.

1. Sausruta nighantu: (6th Cent. A.D.)

In this *Nighantu*, *Apamarga* has been described in *Arkadi gana*.^[3]

2. Ashtanga Nighantu (8th cent. A.D.)

In this *Nighantu*, *Acharya Vahata* has described maximum group of drugs on the basis of classification of *Ashtanga Sangraha* and *Astanga Hridaya*. In addition, some drugs are also mentioned in *Viprakirna varga*. In this *Nighantu* *Apamarga* has been described in *Arkadi gana*. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e., *Apamarga*, *Shaikharik*, *Pratyakpuspi* and *Mayurak*.^[4]

3. Madanadi Nighantu (10th cent. A.D)

This *Nighantu* was written by Shri Chandranandan in 10th century A.D. This *nighantu* is divided into 32 *gana*. In this book *Apamarga* is mentioned in the *Chaturtha gana*. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e. *Apamarga*, *Shaikharik*, *Pratyakpuspi*, *Mayurak*, *Kharmanjari*, *Adhahshalya* and *Kshudhaapamarga*.^[5]

4. *Dhanvantari Nighantu* (10-13th cent. A.D)

In the beginning of *Nighantu*, author pays homage to lord *Dhanawantari* and again he mentions its name as *Dravyavali*. At the end of *Dravyavali* author desires to describe the drugs of *Dravyavali* with their synonyms and after that he has described their properties and actions along with synonyms. On the availability of various manuscripts the name of the author is *Mahendra Bhogik*. There are 7 *Varga* under which plants are described. *Apamarga* is described under *Guduchyadi varga* in *Dhanvantari Nighantu*. *Apamarga*, *Shikhari*, *Pratyakpuspi*, *Mayurak*, *Adhahshalya*, *Kinihi*, *Durgraha*, *Kharmanjari*, *Shaikharik*, *Markati*, *Durabhigraha*, *Parakpuspi*, *Vashir*, *Kanti* and *Markatpippali*.^[6]

5. *Shabdachandrika* (11th cent. A.D)

Apamarga is kept in *Vrikshadi varga*.^[7]

6. *Nighantu Sesh* (12th cent. A.D)

This text is divided into 6 *Kaand*. They are *Vriksha*, *Gulma*, *Lata*, *Shaak*, *Trina* and *Dhanya*. *Apamarga* is kept in *Gulma kaand*. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e. *Apamarga*, *Adhahshalya*, *Kinihi*, *Kharmanjari*, *Dhamargava*, *Shaikharika*, *Vashir*, *Kapipippali*, *Kapivalli*, *Markatika*, *Shikhari*, *Aaghat*, *Durgraha*, *Pratyakpuspi*, *Patrapuspi*, *Keshvalli* and *Mayurak*.^[8]

7. *Shodhal Nighantu* (12th cent. A.D)

This *Nighantu* was composed by *Sodhala* in two parts named as *Namasangraha* dealing with synonyms and *Gunasangraha* dealing with properties and actions. Entire text is classified into 27 *arga*. In *Shodhala Nighantu*, *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Guduchyadi varga*. Synonyms of *Apamarga* mentioned here i.e., *Shikhari*, *Pratyakpuspi*, *Mayurak*, *Adhahshalya*, *Kinihi*, *Kanti*, *Markatpippali*, *Kshav*, *Adhomarkava*, *Ghanta*, *Markati*, *Durabhigraha*, *Pratyakshreni*, *Vashir*, *Katu* and *Kharmanjari*.^[9]

8. *Madhava dravyaguna* (13th cent. A.D)

The book is often quoted as “*Bhava Swabhava Nighantu*” in the manuscripts. This text was composed by *Acharya Madhav*. There are total 29 *Varga* in this text. Here *Apamarga* is kept in *Vividh Oshadhi varga*.^[10]

9. *Abhidhan Ratnamala (Sadrasa Nighantu)* (13th cent. A.D)

There is no indication about the author except some information in a manuscript found at Madras which mentions that the work is composed by a person who is the elder brother of

Chatura Rakshita. As the famous commentator Mallinath (14th AD) quoted about this work, it may be placed in 12-13th AD. The subject matter is arranged in six chapters on the basis of taste (Rasa). Here *Apamarga* is kept in *Tikta Skandha*. In *Abhidhanratnamala* synonyms of *Apamarga* as *Shikhari*, *Pratyakpuspi*, *Mayurak*, *Adhahshalya*, *Shaikharik*, *Durgraha* and *Kharmanjari*.^[11]

10. *Hridaydeepak Nighantu* (13th cent. A.D)

The author of this work is *Bopadeva* son of *Keshava*. The subject matter of this work is well divided into eight *Vargas*. It follows metric style of *Paryaya ratnamala* of *Madhava*. In this *Nighantu* *Apamarga* has been mentioned in *Tripaad varga*, with its synonyms of *Apamarg*: *Pratyakapuspi*, *Mayurak*, *Marga*, *Aaghat*, *Shikhari* and *Kharmanjari*.^[12]

11. *Madanpal Nighantu* (14th cent. A.D)

This book is also known as “Madana Vinoda”. This text was written by *Madanpal*. This text is divided into 13 *varga*. *Apamarga* has been mentioned in *Abhayadi varga*. *Madanapala* has included following synonyms of *Apamarga*: *Shikhari*, *Kinihi*, *Kharmanjari*, *Adhahshalya*, *Shaikharik*, *Pratyakpuspi* and *Mayurak*.^[13]

12. *Kaideva Nighantu (Pathyapathya Vibodhaka)* (15th cent. A.D)

Its author *Kaideva* is the son of *Saranga* and grandson of *Pandit Padmanabha*. This text is divided in 9 *Varga*. In this *Nighantu* *Apamarga* is described in *Oshadhi varga* with following synonyms i.e. *Shaikharik*, *Shikhari*, *Kharmanjari*, *Adhahshalya*, *Ksharmadhya*, *Durgraha*, *Durabhigraha*, *Aaghat*, *Kinihi*, *Marga*, *Pratyakapuspi* and *Mayurak*.^[14]

13. *Bhavprakash Nighantu* (16th cent. A.D)

This book is written by *Bhavamishra* who is an important landmark in the history of Indian Medicine. He stands at the junction of the medieval and modern periods which is the turning point for its future course and also because of the fact that he revived the style of *Samhitas* and contributed a good deal to various aspects of *Ayurveda* by adding new ideas and drugs. *Apamarga* has been mentioned in *Guduchyadi varga* and following synonyms are found in this *Nighantu* - *Shikhari*, *Adhahshalya*, *Mayurak*, *Markati*, *Durgraha*, *Kinihi* and *Kharmanjari*. *Apamarga* is *Tikta* and *Katu* in *rasa*, *Ushna* in *Virya*, *Tikshna* in *guna* and useful as *Dipan*, *Pachan*, *Pittavirechak*, *Vamak*, *Mutrajanan*, *Kaphaghna*, *Vishaghna*, *Kramighna*, *Amltanashak*, and *Shirovirechan*.^[15]

14. Gunratnamala (16th cent. A.D)

Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Guduchyadi varga* and following synonyms are found in this Nighantu- *Shikhari, Adhahshalya, Mayurak, Markati, Durgraha, Kinihi* and *Kharmanjari*.^[16]

15. Raj Nighantu (Nighantu Raja, Abhidhana chudamani) (17th cent. A.D)

Pandit Narahari, son of Iswara Suri is considered as the author of this *Nighantu*. For the first time Narahari gave *Dravyaguna* first place among *Ashtanga Ayurveda*. This book is particularly based on the *Dhanwantari nighantu*. This is the first lexicon which recognized the importance of nomenclature of plants. This text contains 23 *Varga*. *Apamarga* is included in *Shatahwaadi varga*. Synonyms of *Apamarga* is mentioned in this *nighantu - Shikhari, Kinihi, Kharmanjari, Durgraha, Adhahshalya, Pratyakpuspi, Mayurak, Kaandkant, Shaikharik, Markati, Durabhigraha, Vashir, Parakpuspi, Kanti, Markatpippali, Katu, Manjari, Nandi, Kshavak, Panktikantaka, Malakant* and *Kubja*.^[17]

16. Rajvallabha Nighantu (18th cent. A.D)

Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Oshadhashrayaparichhed*.^[18]

17. Shaligram Nighantu (19th cent A.D)

This text is being considered as the last in series of classical *nighantus*. It was written by Lala Saligrama, *Vaidya* of Muradabad (UP). The text is divided in to two parts *Purvardha* [Part-1] and *Uttarardha* [Part-2]. Part-1 contains 23 *Varga* and part-2 contains only 2 *Varga*. Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Guduchyadi varga*. Synonyms of *Apamarga* is mentioned as *Shaikharik, Dhamrgava, Mayurak, Pratyakaparni, Kishparni* and *Kharmanjari*.^[19]

18. Priya nighantu (20th cent A.D)

It is written by *Acharya P.V. Sharma*. Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in the *Shatpuspadi varga*. Synonyms of *Apamarga* is mentioned *Pratyakapuspi* and *Adhahshalya*.^[20]

19. Nighantu Adarsha (20th cent. A.D)

This book was published in Gujarat, its author, is *Vaidya Bapalalji* who is the authoritative person of 20th century for identification of Ayurvedic plants. His work on drug identification and controversial drugs is exquisite. He has mentioned all the relevant materials from different Ayurvedic texts as well as modern medical and botanical works. This text is available in two volumes at present which deals with synonyms, etymology, botanical

descriptions, properties and therapeutic uses. This is one of the complete texts on *Dravyaguna*. Here In *Adarsa nighantu Apamarga* is mentioned in *Apamargadi varga*.^[21]

20. *Saraswati Nighantu* (21st cent. A.D)

Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Ullap varga*.^[22]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is clear from the above description that *Apamarga* is one of the best and most useful Ayurvedic herb mentioned in the different *Nighantus*. It has got vast therapeutic properties and used in many diseases like *Dadru & Sidhma* (Skin diseases), *Arsha* (Piles), *Kandu*(Itching) , *Shoola* (Pain), *Udar roga* (Abdominal diseases), *Aruchi* (Anorexia) etc. A short knowledge on different *Nighantus* and its importance is also shown in this article. It is having property like *Graahi* and is also used to induce *Vamana*. *Apamarga* is said to be *Kaphmedoanilhar*, *Chedana* and *Sransana* role in other referances. The scientific evaluation on these properties and robust clinical trial will reveal further data on this important medicine of traditional knowledge.

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