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Review Article

REVIEW OF *APAMARGA (ACHYRANTHES ASPERA LINN.)* IN DIFFERENT *NIGHANTUS*

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ABSTRACT

Nighantu is one of the important aspects in the study of *Dravyaguna Vigyana*. Treatment consists of two important parts i.e *Nidan* and *Dravyaguna Vigyana*. 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 practise 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 *Nighantu* 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*, *Arsha*, *Kandu*, *Shoola*, *Udar roga*, *Aruchi* etc. It has got property like *Graahi* and is also used to induce *Vaman*. *Apamarga* is said to be *Kaphmedoanilhar*. 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*, *Nighantu*, *Kapha-Vata* diseases, *Kaphmedoanilhar*, *Vaman*.

INTRODUCTION

Initially the Ayurvedic *Nighantus* were composed on the style of the *vedic Nighantu* containing only the synonyms which communicated the prevalent names, morphological characters, properties, actions of drugs, habitat and relevant information. Later on properties, actions and uses were also added after the synonyms. Thus there were two distinct patterns which created two types of *nighantus*. One giving only synonyms and the other consists of synonyms as well as properties, actions and uses. *Ashtanga nighantu*, *Paryaya ratnamala*, *Nighantu sesh*, *Abhidhan ratnamala* etc. lie in the first group while *Dhanvantri nighantu*, *Shodhal nighantu*, *Madanpala nighantu*, *Raj nighantu* etc. lie in the second group. The era of *Nighantu* is very important for the aspect of systematic understanding of the drugs because the authors of *Nighantu* tried their level best to give detailed description of the drugs by introducing synonyms and *Guna-Karmas*.

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

1. **Saushrut Nighantu (5th cent. A.D.)** - The writer of this *Nighantu* is not precisely clear but some scholars believed that it is written by *Acharya Sushruta* in 5th century A.D. Here *Apamarga* is kept in *Arkadi gana*¹.

2. **Ashtanga Nighantu (8th cent. A.D.)** - It is said to be the oldest *Nighantu* written by *Vahata* and considered it to be an appendix of *Astanga Hrudaya*. Here *Apamarga* is kept in *Arkadi gana*².

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*³.

4. **Dhanvantari Nighantu (10-13th cent. A.D.)** - The original name of the book appears to be *Dravyavali Samuchchaya*. 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*⁴

5. Shabdachandrika (11th cent. A.D) - *Apamarga* is kept in *Vrikshadi varga*⁵.

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*⁶.

7. Shodhal Nighantu (12th cent. A.D) - This *Nighantu* is otherwise known as “*Guna Samgraha*” or “*Nama Samgraha*”. This text has intimate relation with *Dhanvantari Nighantu*. Entire text is classified into 27 *Varga*. In *Shodhala Nighantu*, *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Guduchyadi varga*⁷.

8. Madhava dravyaguna (12-13th 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*⁸.

9. Abhidhan Ratnamala (12-13th cent. A.D) - This text is otherwise known as “*Shadrassa Nighantu*”. 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*⁹.

10. Hrudaydeepak Nighantu (13th cent. A.D) - Here *Apamarga* is kept in *Tripaad varga*¹⁰.

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*. Here *Apamarga* is kept in *Abhayadi varga*¹¹.

12. Kaideva Nighantu (15th cent. A.D) - This book is otherwise known as “*Pathya Apathya Vibodhini*”. Its author *Kaideva* is the son of *Saranga* and grandson of *Pandit Padmanabha*. It is assumed therefore that *Kaideva* might have written this lexicon to mention the properties of the herbs described in the earlier text. It resembles *Madanapala Nighantu* in description style. This text is divided in 9 *Varga*. Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Oshadhi varga*¹².

13. Bhavprakash Nighantu (16th cent. A.D) - This book is also known as “*Haritakyadi Nighantu*”. Its author *Bhava Mishra* is the son of *Latkan Mishra* has been divided this *Nighantu* mainly in to two parts. One is *Samhita* part which is based on *Sarangadhara Samhita* and another is *Nighantu* part which is based on *Madanapala Nighantu*. This text is divided into 23 *Varga*. Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Guduchyadi varga*¹³.

14. Gunratnamala (16th cent. A.D) - Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Guduchyadi varga*¹⁴.

15. Raj Nighantu (17th cent. A.D) - This book is known with the names “*Abhidhana Chudamani*” and “*Nighantu Raja*”. Some other people named it as “*Dravyabhidana Gana Samgraha*”. *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 is the first lexicon which recognized the importance of nomenclature of plants. This text contains 23 *Varga*. Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Shatahwaadi varga*¹⁵.

16. Rajvallabha Nighantu (18th cent. A.D) - Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Oshadhashrayaparichhed*¹⁶.

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*¹⁷.

18. Priya nighantu (20th cent A.D) - It is written by *Acharya P.V. Sharma*. Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in the *Shatpuspadi varga*¹⁸.

19. Nighantu Adarsha (20th cent. A.D) – It is written by *Vaidya Bapalal* who is born at *Sanasoli village of Gujarat* in 1896. His work on drug identification and controversial drugs is exquisite. 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 *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Apamargadi varga*¹⁹.

20. Saraswati Nighantu (21st cent. A.D) - Here *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Ullap varga*²⁰.

Ayurvedic properties of Apamarga²¹

Ras: Tikta

Veerya: Ushna

Vipak: Katu

Doshagnata: Kapha-Vata

Different types of Apamarga mentioned in Different Nighantus

In most of the *Nighantu* *Apamarga* is described as two types²²:

1. *Sveta* (white variety)

2. *Rakta* (red variety).

But *Kaiyadeva Nighantu* has mentioned 3 variety of *Apamarga*²³.

1. *Apamarga*

2. *Vashira*

3. *Ramatha (Jalapamarga)*

Raj Nighantu has also mentioned 3 varieties of *Apamarga*²⁴.

1. *Apamarga*

2. *Raktapamarga*

3. *Kshudrapamarga*

In *Nighantu Adarsh* 3 varieties of *Apamarga* has been mentioned.

1. *Sveta*

2. *Rakta*

3. *Krishna*

In *Nighantu Adarsh* there is also mentioned a different variety of *Apamarga* i.e *Neelpuspi Apamarga*. A large quantity of *Kshar* is present in it, especially in the leaves. That is why it is also known as *Ksharmadhya*²⁵.

Synonyms of Apamarga in Different Nighantu

1. Ashtanga nighantu: *Apamarga*, *Shaikharik*, *Pratyakpuspi* and *Mayurak*²⁶.

2. Madanadi Nighantu: *Apamarga*, *Shaikharik*, *Pratyakpuspi*, *Mayurak*, *Kharmanjari*, *Adhahshalya* and *Kshudhaapamarga*²⁷.

3. Dhanvantri Nighantu: *Apamarga*, *Shikhari*, *Pratyakpuspi*, *Mayurak*, *Adhahshalya*, *Kinihi*, *Durgraha*, *Kharmanjari*,

Shaikharik, Markati, Durabhighraha, Parakpuspi, Vashir, Kanti and Markatpippali²⁸.

4. **Shabdachandrika:** Apamarga, Shaikharik, Dhamargava, Mayurak, Pratyakaparni, Kishparni, Kinihi, Kharmanjari, Pratyakpuspi, Kishpuspi, Dhanuska and Linghvardhini²⁹.

5. **Nighantu sesh:** Apamarga, Adhahshalya, Kinihi, Kharmanjari, Dhamargava, Shaikharika, Vashir, Kapipippali, Kapivalli, Markatika, Shikhari, Aaghat, Durgraha, Pratyakpuspi, Patrapuspi, Keshvalli and Mayurak³⁰.

6. **Shodhal Nighantu:** Apamarga, Shikhari, Pratyakpuspi, Mayurak, Adhahshalya, Kinihi, Kanti, Markatpippali, Kshav, Adhomarkava, Ghanta, Markati, Durabhighraha, Pratyakshreni, Vashir, Katu and Kharmanjari³¹.

7. **Abhidhanratnamala:** Apamarga, Shikhari, Pratyakpuspi, Mayurak, Adhahshalya, Shaikharik, Durgraha and Kharmanjari³².

8. **Hridayadeepak Nighantu:** Apamarga, Pratyakpuspi, Mayurak, Marga, Aaghat, Shikhari and Kharmanjari³³.

9. **Madanpal Nighantu:** Apamarga, Shikhari, Kinihi, Kharmanjari, Adhahshalya, Shaikharik, Pratyakpuspi and Mayurak³⁴.

10. **Kaideva Nighantu:** Apamarga, Shaikharik, Shikhari, Kharmanjari, Adhahshalya, Ksharmadhya, Durgraha, Durabhighraha, Aaghat, Kinihi, Marga, Pratyakpuspi and Mayurak³⁵.

11. **Bhavprakash Nighantu:** Apamarga, Shikhari, Adhahshalya, Mayurak, Markati, Durgraha, Kinihi and Kharmanjari³⁶.

12. **Gunaratnamala:** Apamarga, Shikhari, Adhahshalya, Mayurak, Markati, Durgraha, Kinihi and Kharmanjari³⁷.

13. **Raj Nighantu:** Apamarga, Shikhari, Kinihi, Kharmanjari, Durgraha, Adhahshalya, Pratyakpuspi, Mayurak, Kaandkant, Shaikharik, Markati, Durabhighraha, Vashir, Parakpuspi, Kanti, Markatpippali, Katu, Manjari, Nandi, Kshavak, Panktikantaka, Malakant and Kubja³⁸.

14. **Shaligram Nighantu:** Apamarga, Shaikharik, Dhamargava, Mayurak, Pratyakaparni, Kishparni and Kharmanjari³⁹.

15. **Priya Nighantu:** Apamarga, Pratyakpuspi and Adhahshalya⁴⁰.

16. **Nighantu Adarsh:** Apamarga, Shikhari, Pratyakpuspi, Adhahshalya, Kharmanjari, Mayurak and Kinihi⁴¹.

Elaboration of different Synonyms of Apamarga^{42,43}

- **Aaghat:** Grows in abundance.
- **Apamarga:** Cleanses channels particularly head.
- **Adhahshalya:** deflexed spinous bracteoles.
- **Durgraha:** Difficult to handle.
- **Kharmanjari:** spinous bracteoles and pointed perianth.
- **Kinihi:** Cures the eruptive conditions like *vrana* etc. or its touch may produce eruptions.
- **Ksharmadhya:** Plant is predominantly alkaline.
- **Marga:** Cleanses channels.
- **Markati:** Leaves have close appressed hairs beneath.
- **Mayurak:** The tip of its spike is bent and is compared to the head of peacock.
- **Pratyakpuspi:** deflexed spinous bracteoles.
- **Shikhari:** Has flowers at the top.

Synonyms Of Rakta Apamarga: Aaghat, Alpatrika, Dugdhanika, Kapipippali, Kharachhad, Kuntha, Markati Pratyakshreni, Raktabinduk, Vashir, Vrittaphala etc.^{44,45}

Synonyms Of Ramatha(Jala Apamarga): Samasthil, Toyvritti, Toymanjari, Ullak, Soshaha, Toyapamarga and Mayurak⁴⁶.

Therapeutic uses of Apamarga mentioned in Nighantus
Apamarga is said to be *Kaphmedoanilhar*. It has got *Chedana* and *Sransana* property⁴⁷. It is indicated in *Arsha, Kandu, Udar roga* etc. It has got property like *Graahi* and is also used to induce *Vaman*⁴⁸. Apamarga is said to be *Agnikrit* and possess *Tikshana* property⁴⁹. It also possesses *Deepana* property and is indicated in *Kapha-Vata* diseases. It is indicated in *Dadru, Sidhma, Arsha, Kandu, Shoola, Udar roga, Aruchi* etc⁵⁰. Apamarga is said to possess property like *Kledana* and *Sransana*⁵¹. Apamarga is also indicated in *Vibandh, Twak dosha, Shoola* etc⁵².

CONCLUSION

Thus 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 very vast therapeutic properties and is used in many diseases like *Dadru, Sidhma, Arsha, Kandu, Shoola, Udar roga, Aruchi* etc. A short knowledge on different *Nighantus* and its importance is also shown in this article. It has got property like *Graahi* and is also used to induce *Vaman*. Apamarga is said to be *Kaphmedoanilhar*. It has got *Chedana* and *Sransana* property. In *Atharvaveda*, *Apamarga* is known to be lord of all plants, and it is very well proved by the description of *Apamarga* in different *Nighantus*.

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