



## Review Article

### A BRIEF REVIEW OF MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF SHIRISH (*Albizia lebbbeck* Benth.) FROM KOSHA AND NIGHANTUS

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#### ABSTRACT

Herbs and herbal drugs have created interest among the people by the clinical proven effect like anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antipyretic, immunomodulations, adaptogenic and mutagenic. Also the overuse of synthetic drug, which results in higher incidence of adverse drug reaction, has motivated humans to return to nature for safer remedies. In this review we have taken Shirish *Albizia lebbbeck* Benth. It is believed that at the end of each Samhita and Nighantu was there. In this work a Nighantu of Sushruta named Sausruta Nighantu and another by Vagbhata the Astanga Nighantu are discussed. The present work aims to discuss Shirish in various Nighantus as manuscripts or just as evidence - in a chronological order. Which is important herbal drug in various aspect like, *Albizia lebbbeck* Benth. has also been used successfully by some Ayurvedic practitioners for Svasa & Kasa (Respiratory diseases), Raktapitta (Haemoptysis), Jvara (Fever), Kustha (Skin Diseases), Kamala (Jaundice). Due to multiple uses demand of *Albizia lebbbeck* Benth. on rise so plant became endangered. So proper agro technique and other technology are required to fulfil the demand.

**Keywords:** Herbs, *Albizia lebbbeck* Benth., Jvara, Kustha, Svasa, Kasa etc.

#### INTRODUCTION

Herbal medicine, sometimes referred to as herbalism or Botanical medicine, is the use of herbs for their therapeutic or medicinal value. An herb is a plant or plant part valued for its medicinal, aromatic or savory qualities. Herb plants produce and contain a variety of chemical substance that act upon the body. Herbalists use the leaves, flowers, stems, berries, and roots of plants to prevent, relive, and treat illness. From a 'scientific' perspective, many herbal treatments are considered experimental. The reality is, however, that herbal medicine has a long and respected history. Many familiar medications of the twentieth century were developed from ancient healing traditions that treated health problems with specific plants. Today, science has isolated the medicinal properties of a large number of botanicals, and their healing components have been extracted and analyzed. Many plant components are now synthesized in large laboratories for use in pharmaceutical preparations<sup>1</sup>.

*Albizia lebbbeck* Benth. belongs to family mimosaceae, commonly known as women's tongue tree. It is native to tropical southern Asia, is a large, erect, unarmed, deciduous spreading tree found throughout India and has been used in Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani medicine<sup>2</sup>. *Albizia* species is reported to have many important medicinal properties mainly anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties<sup>3</sup>. *A. lebbbeck* bark has acrid taste and is used for bronchitis, leprosy, paralysis, and helminthes infections and is reported to have antidiarrhoeal activity. Bark were mainly used in dental infections<sup>4</sup>. decoction of the leaves and bark were used in cold and cough, respiratory problems and against bronchial asthma. The plant extract were investigated against allergic rhinitis<sup>5</sup>.

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 especially 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. Ram avatar Sharma in his introduction to Kalpadru 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. Shirish *Albizia lebbbeck* Benth. is explained in almost all the important Nighantus except Dhanvantari nighantu, with a variety of synonyms and Guna-karmas.

#### Amarkosha (5<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D.)

This book is the compilation done by Amar Singh. In this book total subject was divided into 3 parts. First and second parts include 10 chapters each and third part comprises of 5 chapters. The total subject was narrated with synonyms<sup>6</sup>. Shirish has been mentioned in the Vanausadhi Varga of Bhumyadi kanda. Here 'Shirish' originated from the word "shri hinsayam" but synonyms are Kapitan, Bhandila is used in masculine gender.

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

Based on Susruta samhita. In this Nighantu Shirish has been described in Salsaradi gana. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e. Mridupushpa, Vrittapushpa, Bhandi, Shukabhushpa, Shikhiniphala<sup>7</sup>.

#### **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 Shirish has been described in Asanadi gana. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e., Bhandi, Shukrada, Plavaga, Mridupushpaka<sup>8</sup>.

#### **Dhanvantari nighantu: (10th - 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. In this Nighantu Shirish has been described in 'Amradi Varga'. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e., Mridupushpa, Bhandika, Shankhiniphala, Kapitana, Shuktaru, Shyamvarna, Shukpriya. Shirish has vishagna, tridosahara, properties and used in the treatment of kustha, kandu, skin disorders and svasa, kasa<sup>9</sup>.

#### **Sodhala 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. In Amradi varga of Sodhala nighantu synonyms of 'Shirish' i.e Mridupushpa, Bhandil, Shankhiniphala, Kapitan, Shukataru, Shyamvarna, Shukapriya, Vishaghata, Bhandi, Bhanditaka are mentioned and useful in the treatment of Arsha, Visha, sveda, Tvagaroga, Sopha, Visharpa<sup>10</sup>.

#### **Hridayadipaka 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 Shirish has been mentioned in Kapha-vataghna varga, with its synonym 'Dandhadika'<sup>11</sup>.

#### **Abhidhanaratnamala (Sadrasa Nighantu) (13th Cent. A.D.)**

In Abhidhanratnamala synonyms of shirish are described in Kashaya dravya skandha. Following synonyms are mentioned here Plavaka, Bhandi, Shukaradru, Kinkiniphala, Shuklapushpa, Shyamparna, Bhandira, Mridupushpaka<sup>12</sup>.

#### **Madhava-dravyaguna: (13th Cent. A.D.)**

In Madhava dravyaguna Shirish is described in Vividh-aushadi varga. Here Shirish is used in the treatment of Vish, Visharpa, Sveda, Tvagdosa, Sotha<sup>13</sup>.

#### **Madanpala nighantu: (14th Cent. A.D.)**

Shirish has been mentioned in "Vatadi varga". Madanpala has included following synonyms of Shirish: Plavaga, Vipra, Shukravriksha, Kapitan, Mridupushpa, Bhandira, Shankhiniphala, Regarding its properties it has been said as Sital Dravya. It is indicated in Varnya, Visha cikitsa, Visharpa, Sotha<sup>14</sup>.

#### **Kaiyadev nighantu: (Pathyapathya Vibodhaka) (15th Cent. A.D.)**

In this Nighantu 'Shirish' is described in "Aushadi Varga" with following synonyms i.e. Kalima, Vipra, Mridupushpa, Kapitana, Bhandira, Bhandila, Bhandi, Plavaga, Shikhiniphala, Shukpushpa, Shuktaru, Shukpriya. Regarding its properties it has been said as

Unushna in Virya, Tikta and Kashaya rasa; Lagu guna. Here 'Shirish' has been mentioned for various disorders such as Visharpa, Sotha, Kasa, Vishaja-roga, Vrana<sup>15</sup>.

#### **Bhavaprakasa 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. Shirish has been mentioned in Vatadi varga and following synonyms are found in this Nighantu- Bhandila, Bhandi, Bhandira, Kapitana, Shukpushpa, Shuktaru. It possesses Madhura, Tikta and Kashaya rasa; Unushna virya which make it useful in Sotha, Visharpa, Kasa, Vishahara<sup>16</sup>.

#### **Gunaratnamala: (16th Cent. A.D.)**

In Gunaratnamala of Bhavamishra 'Shiras' word has been used in place of Shirish and its Guna karma along with characteristic features of Shirish are described as Unushna Virya, Tikta, Madhura, Kashaya; rasa, Laghu; guna, and indicated in Tridosahagna, Sotha, Visharpa, kasa, Vrana, Vishaghna action<sup>17</sup>.

#### **Rajanighantu: (Nighantu Raja, Abhidhana chudamani) (17th Cent. A.D.)**

This book is written by Narhari Pandit, who has given first place to Dravyaguna in Astanga Ayurveda. This book is particularly based on the Dhanwantari nighantu. The subject matter has been divided into 23 chapters. Shirish is included in "Prabhadradi varga". It possesses Katu rasa, Sita virya. In this Nighantu Seventeen synonyms of 'Shirish' are mentioned. This is useful in Vata disorders and also Vishahara. Synonyms of Shirish mentioned in Raja nighantu Sitapushpa, Bhandik, Mridupushpa, Shukesta, Bahiripushpa, Vishahanta, Supushpaka, Uddanaka, Shukataru, Lomashapushpaka, Kapitana, Kalinga, Shyamal, Shankhiniphala, Madhupushpa, Vrittapushpa<sup>18</sup>.

#### **Adhunika kala**

'Shirish' is explained in text books of modern periods such as Dravya guna vigyan by Dr P. V Sharma, Priya nighantu, Saligrama nighantu, Ayurvedic materia medica, Wealth of India and other books written by recent Acharyas, which provide information about its habit, habitat, morphology, chemical composition etc

#### **Nighantu Adarsa: (20th Cent. A.D.)**

This book was published in Gujarat, its author, is Vaidya Bapalaji who is the authoritative person of 20th century for identification of Ayurvedic plants. In this Nighantu there is no reference was found regarding Shirish<sup>19</sup>.

#### **Priya Nighantu: (20th Cent. A.D.)**

Acharya Priyavrata Sharma in his book Priya Nighantu has described 'Shirish' useful for Visha cikitsa<sup>20</sup>.

#### **Puspayurveda: (20th Cent. A.D.)**

In Pushpa-Ayurveda there is no reference was found regarding Shirish<sup>21</sup>.

## DISCUSSION

In rural India, 70 percent of the population is dependent on the traditional system of medicine, it is essential to intensify the study of medicinal plants. History of drug can be studied under Vaidic kala, Upanishad kala, Purana kala, Samhita kala, Nighantu kala and Adhunik kala. *A. lebbeck* is a popular tree, which is used by traditional practitioner to cure various ailments. Present study revealed that by the help of literature i.e., Kosha and Nighantus we will reach to medicine very easily and take the benefit by the traditional medicines. The Nighantus generally were coined using a therapeutic text. Authors used the prevailing and popular texts of their time and region as basis to write Nighantus. This explains the emergence of more than one Nighantu during one period. Further, two different Nighantus are seen having groups with same name but have kept different substances under them. This has happened due to the different rationale used in grouping of the substances. This offers a tremendous scope for research in order to explore the therapeutic application of a substance in different regions and era, in the same manner Shirish was also a popular drug at that time. It has tremendous effect on different diseases viz. Svasa & Kasa (Respiratory diseases), Raktapitta (Haemoptysis), Jvara (Fever), Kustha (Skin Diseases), Kamala (Jaundice) etc.

## CONCLUSION

The present review on Shirish of different Nighantus can be useful to know about the different formulations of Shirish in which different parts of this plant is used. By this way we can use Shirish in the treatment of different diseases. Most of the Nighantus have mentioned Shirish has good Vishaghna, Kushthagna, Pramehaghna Kasahara, Svasahara properties. A detailed clinical study is required to understand the mode of action of this drugs and their efficacy.

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