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Critical Review of Ashwattha (*Ficusreligiosa*Linn.) in Different Nighantus

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Abstract:
Ashwattha (*Ficusreligiosa* Linn.), commonly known as Peepal, is one of the most esteemed medicinal trees described in *Ayurvedic* literature. Apart from its religious and cultural importance, the plant has been widely utilized for the management of various diseases since ancient times. Numerous *AyurvedicNighantus* have documented its nomenclature, pharmacodynamic properties, therapeutic actions, and clinical applications. A systematic review of these references is essential to understand the evolution of knowledge regarding this drug and its significance in *Ayurvedic*therapeutics.
The present study aims to critically analyze the descriptions of Ashwattha available in major *AyurvedicNighantus*. Literary data pertaining to synonyms, *Rasa, Guna, Veerya, Vipaka, Karma*, and therapeutic indications were collected and comparatively evaluated.
The review revealed a remarkable similarity in the descriptions of Ashwattha across different *Nighantus*. The drug is predominantly characterized by *Kashaya Rasa*,*SheetaVeerya* and is mainly indicated in disorders associated with vitiated *Rakta* and *Pitta*. Conditions such as *Raktapitta, Vrana, Daha, Prameha*, and inflammatory disorders are repeatedly mentioned in the classical texts. Variations among *Nighantus* are largely observed in nomenclature and the extent of therapeutic indications rather than in the fundamental pharmacological attributes of the drug. Modern pharmacological studies reporting antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, wound-healing, and antidiabetic activities further support the traditional claims described in *Ayurvedic* literature.The present review highlights the therapeutic relevance of Ashwattha and emphasizes the importance of *Nighantu* literature in understanding and preserving traditional *Ayurvedic*knowledge.

Keywords: Ashwattha, *Ficusreligiosa*, Peepal, *Nighantu*, Dravyaguna, *Ayurvedic*literature, Critical review.

I. Introduction

Ashwattha (*Ficusreligiosa*Linn.) belongs to the family Moraceae and is widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent. Since Vedic times, it has been regarded as a sacred tree and has been extensively used in traditional healthcare practices.References to Ashwattha are found in several *Nighantus*, indicating its widespread use and acceptance in *Ayurvedic*practice. Although each *Nighantu* presents the drug from a slightly different perspective, together they offer a comprehensive understanding of its medicinal value.
The present review was undertaken to critically evaluate and compare the descriptions of Ashwattha available in different *Nighantus* and to correlate these classical observations with contemporary scientific findings.

II. Review of Literature

Botanical Identity :
Botanical Name: *Ficusreligiosa*Linn.
Family: Moraceae

Vernacular Names:
Sanskrit: Ashwattha, Pippala, Bodhivriksha
Hindi: Pippal, Pipli
Marathi: Pimpala
English: Sacred Fig, Bo Tree

III. Materials and Methods:

Information regarding Ashwattha was collected from *Dhanvantari Nighantu*[1], *Madanapala Nighantu*[2], *KaiyadevaNighantu*[3], *Raja Nighantu*[4], *BhavaprakashaNighantu*[5],*NighantuAdarsha*[6], *PriyaNighantu*[7],and*Nighantu ratnakar*[8]. Data related to synonyms, pharmacodynamic properties, therapeutic actions, and disease indications were compiled and comparatively analyzed. Modern scientific literature on *Ficusreligiosa* was also

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reviewed to understand the pharmacological basis of its traditional uses.[7–10]

Ashwattha in *DhanvantariNighantu* :
Particular emphasis is placed on its usefulness in *Raktapitta.* The astringent nature of the drug explains its haemostatic and healing actions.

Ashwattha in *MadanapalaNighantu* :
MadanapalaNighantu elaborates upon the *Stambhana* properties of Ashwattha. The drug is considered beneficial in *kapha, pitta , vrana* and *raktavikar*. The text also supports its use in *Rakta*-related disorders and inflammatory conditions.

Ashwattha in *RajaNighantu* :
Raja Nighantu provides additional details regarding the morphology and therapeutic value of Ashwattha. Riped fruit of Ashwatha is *Yonidoshahara* and *Hrudya*. The text repeatedly emphasizes its cooling effect and usefulness in *Daha*(burning sensation), *Trishna* (excessive thirst), *Raktapitta ,Chhardi, Shosh, Aruchi and Vish.*

Ashwattha in *KaiyadevaNighantu* :
KaiyadevaNighantu presents detailed synonyms and pharmacological properties of Ashwattha.The bark and other plant parts are recommended in conditions involving ulcers, wounds, and urinary disorders.

Ashwattha in *BhavaprakashaNighantu* :
*BhavaprakashaNighantu*is one of the most widely referred *Ayurvedic* literature. The text recommends its use in *Prameha, Raktapitta, Vrana,* and*Pittaja* disorders. Its ability to reduce inflammation and promote tissue healing is emphasized.

Ashwattha in *PriyaNighantu*
Ashwatthahaving the property of *stambhan* and it is useful in the conditions like *vatrakta* (gout), *Vajikaran*.

Ashwattha in *NighantuAdarsha*
The drug is described as useful in bleeding disorders, inflammatory conditions, and diseases involving vitiation of *Rakta*and *Pitta*. The drug is useful in diseases like *vatarakta, Prameh, Vrana.*

Table 1 : Properties of Ashwatha

Nighantu	Rasa	Veerya	Major Actions	Therapeutic Indications
DhanvantariNighantu	Kashaya	Sheeta	Pittahara,	Raktapitta , RaktaStambhaka
MadanapalaNighantu	Kashaya	Sheeta	Kaphahara, Pittahara	Vrana ,Raktavikar
KaiyadevaNighantu	Kashaya,	Sheeta	Pittahara, Kaphahara	Vrana,Varnya , Raktavikar , Yonivishodhan
Raja Nighantu	Kashaya Madhur	Sheeta	Dahahara , Kaphahara, Pittahara	Visha, Chhardi, Shosh,Aruchi, Yonidoshahara
BhavaprakashaNighantu	Kashaya	Sheeta	Kaphahara,Pittahara	Varnya , Raktapitta , Yonivishodhan
NighantuAdarsha	Kashaya, Madhur	Sheeta	Rakta-Pitta Shamaka	Inflammatory disorders
PriyaNighantu	Kashaya	Sheeta	Stambhan	Vatrakta, Vajikaran
NighantuRatnakar	Kashaya , Madhur	Sheeta	Pittahara , Kaphahara, Dahahara	Visha, Shosh , Aruchi, Hrudya,Chhardi

Ashwattha in *NighantuRatnakar*
Ashwattha having the properties *guru, ruksha, varnyakara, yonishuddhikra*. And useful in the diseases like *vishadosha, Shosh, Aruchi*.

Comparative Description in *Nighantus*
Most *Nighantus* describe Ashwattha as a *Kashaya-Rasa* dominant drug possessing *SheetaVeerya*. Its actions are primarily directed towards alleviating disorders of *Rakta* and *Pitta*. The plant is repeatedly recommended in conditions such as *Raktapitta, Daha, Prameha*, *Vrana,* and inflammatory disorders.[1–6]

Modern Pharmacological Studies :
Various parts of Ashwatha, especially the stem bark, possess significant therapeutic properties. The bark

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is traditionally used for wound healing, burns, diarrhoea, dysentery, haemorrhoids, gastric ulcers, inflammation, and bleeding disorders. Pharmacological studies have reported smooth muscle relaxant, spasmolytic, antimicrobial, antiviral, antiprotozoal, anthelmintic, and hypoglycaemic effects. Major chemical constituents include β-sitosteryl-D-glucoside, vitamin K, n-octacosanol, methyloleanolate, lanosterol, stigmasterol, lupen-3-one, phytosterolin, bergapten, bergaptol, and approximately 4% tannins in the stem bark. These phytoconstituents contribute to its therapeutic efficacy, particularly in wound healing and anti-inflammatory applications.[13]

Chemically, the plant is notable for its bark, which contains active constituents such as tannin, rubber, and wax. These biochemical elements contribute to its therapeutic applications, making its bark highly effective as an external wound healer and an internal astringent for managing digestive issues, bleeding disorders, and metabolic conditions.[14]

Phytochemical studies have identified flavonoids, tannins, phenolic compounds, sterols, glycosides, and saponins in various parts of *Ficus religiosa*.[9]

Experimental studies have demonstrated significant antioxidant activity, suggesting its role in protecting tissues from oxidative stress.[10] Anti-inflammatory effects observed in laboratory studies support its traditional use in inflammatory disorders and burning sensations.[10]

The wound-healing potential of *Ficusreligiosa* has been attributed to its ability to enhance collagen formation and tissue regeneration. These findings correlate with its classical indication in Vrana. Antidiabetic studies have shown promising effects in reducing blood glucose levels, providing support for its traditional use in Prameha.[11] Antimicrobial and gastroprotective activities have also been reported in various experimental models.[9-12]

IV. Discussion

The comparative analysis of various classical *Nighantus*along side modern pharmacological literature provides the holistic understanding of Ashwatha bridging ancient *Ayurvedic* wisdom with contemporary scientific validation.

The obsevation presented in table 1 indicates that all the *Nighantus* consistently describe Ashwattha as possessing *Kashaya Rasa* (astringent taste) and *SheetaVeerya* (cooling potency). Exceptions are noted in texts like*RajaNighantu*,*NighantuAdarsha* and *NighantuRatnakar*, which also attribute a subordinate *MadhurRasa* (sweet taste) to the drug. Despite minor variations, there is an absolute consensus across all reviewed texts regarding its cooling nature and its targeted affinity for balancing *Pitta* and *Rakta*disorders.The repeated mention of *Raktapitta* and *Vrana* across different texts suggests that haemostatic and wound-healing properties were among the most recognized clinical applications of the drug.[1–6]

The *Grahi* and *Stambhana* properties described in certain *Nighantus* justify its use in *Atisara* and conditions involving excessive fluid loss. Furthermore, its indications in *Prameha* suggest a broader role in metabolic disorders. Modern pharmacological evidence largely supports these classical claims and strengthens the scientific basis for its therapeutic use[9-12]

Modern experimental studies map this efficacy directly to the high presence of tannins , along with biochemical compounds like beta-sitosterol-D-glucoside, phytosterols, and bergapten. Tannins act as natural astringents, precipitating proteins to form a protective layer over wounds, thereby accelerating collagen formation, enhancing tissue regeneration, and facilitating rapid vasoconstriction to arrest bleeding.

V. Conclusion

Across all major *Nighantus*, the tree is consistently heralded for its *KashayaRasa* and *SheetaVeerya*, making it a premier drug of choice for managing *Raktapitta*, *Vrana*, and *Pitta*-dominant inflammatory conditions. Modern phytochemical and pharmacological evaluations firmly corroborate these ancient observations, proving that the plant's bioactive constituents—most notably tannins, flavonoids, and specific sterols—exhibit potent haemostatic, wound-healing, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antidiabetic properties.

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