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A Brief Review of Medicinal Properties of *Nirgundi* (*Vitex negundo* Linn.) from *Nighantus*

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ABSTRACT

Increasing adverse drug reaction due to overuse of synthetic drugs and surprising outcome of herbal drug therapy; which has been proven clinically for various ailments by evidence based researches, has motivated humans to returns to mother nature for safer remedies and healthy livelihood. *Nirgundi* (*Vitexnegundo* Linn.) is one the valuable herb from our ancient texts. *Nirgundi* (*Vitexnegundo* Linn.) has also been therapeutically indicated and used successfully by *Ayurvedic* practitioners for various diseases like *vataroga*, *kusthakrimi*, *gulma*, *aruchi*. The present work aims to explore description regarding medicinal properties of *Nirgundi* elaborated in various *Nighantus* in chronological order adding a new domain to its knowledge status and medicinal use.

KEYWORDS

Nirgundi, *Vitexnegndolinn.*, *Nighantu*, *Vataroga*, *Kustharoga*, *Krimiroga*



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INTRODUCTION

Drugs derived from herbal sources are denoted as herbal medicines which are used as a whole or in extract form for their therapeutic or medicinal value. Herbs are plant or plant part valued for its medicinal, aromatics or savoury qualities. Herbs contain a variety of chemical compounds that act upon various systems of the body. Different parts of plant like leaves, flowers, stems, berries and roots of plant shows effect over different illness. At present time many herbal treatments are still considered experimental. Herbal medicines have a respected legacy and many famous medications of the twentieth century were derived from ancient traditional herbs that were used to treat many health problems. Medical science has isolated active principles from large no of botanicals and their healing components have been extracted and analyzed¹.

Earlier *Nighantus* only explained about synonyms of herbal drugs. Later on the description of properties, action and indications are also included in the *Nighantus* along with synonyms. *Nighantu* are one of the most important aspects in the study of *Ayurveda* and especially in the subject of *DravyagunaVijnana*. The *Nighantuliterature* is also as old as *Ayurveda*. Much importance has not been given to the study of *Nighantus*. Earlier

Nighantu were actually like *Kosha*(dictionary) containing only the synonyms of a particular drug. Later on, *Nighantu* also described the properties, action and uses of drugs.

Amarkosha(5th cent. A.D.)

This book is compiled by Mr.Amar Singh. This book is divided into 3 parts. First and second parts include 10 chapters each and third part comprises of 5 chapters. This book was narrated with synonyms. Amarkosh is also known as *Namlinganushasana*. *Nirgundi* has been mentioned in the *VanausdhiVarga* of *bhumyadi kanda*². Synonyms of *Nirgundi* mentioned in this texts are *Sindhuvar*, *Sursa*, *Nirgundi*, *Indrani*.

SausrutaNighantu(6th Cent.A.D.)

Based on *Susrutasamhita* in this *NighantuNirgndi* has been described in *Sursadigana*. Following synonyms are mentioned here *Nirgundi*, *Sindhuvar* etc.³

AstangaNighantu(8th cent.A.D.)

Author of this *Nighantu* is AcharyaVagbhatta.This *Nighantu* is based on classification of the *AstangaSangraha* and *AstangaHridaya* mainly. In addition, some drugs are also mentioned in *Viprakrinavarga*. In this *NighantuNirgundi* has been described in *Sursadigana*. Following synonyms are mentioned here



i.e, nirgundi, sindhuvar, Shefalika, SwetapuspaSweta nirgundika⁴.

Dhanvantari Nighantu (10th to 13th Cent. A.D.)

After paying homage to lord Dhanawantari, this Nighantu mentions its name as Dravyavali. At the end of Dravyavali author decides to describe the drugs of Dravyavali with their synonyms and after that he has described their properties and action along with synonyms. In this Nighantu nirgundi has been described in Karviradi Varga. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e., Nirgundi, Sindhuk, Sindhuvara, Sindhwarak. Nirgundi has vata and kaphahar properties and used in the treatment of kushtha, krimi, pliharog, gulma and aruchi⁵.

Sodhala Nighantu (12th cent. A.D.)

This Nighantu was written by Sodhala in two parts named as Namasangraha dealing with synonyms and Gunasangraha dealing with properties and actions. In Karviradi Varga of Sodhala Nighantu synonyms of Nirgundi i.e. Sindhuk, Sindhuvara, Indrani, Bhutkeshika are mentioned and useful in the treatment of vataroga, krimi, kushtha, sophaghni, vrana and dantagata vata⁶.

Hridayadipaka Nighantu (13th Cent. A.D.)

The author of this work is Bopdev son of Keshava. The subject matter of this work

is well divided into eight Vargas. It follows metric style of Paryayaratnamala of Madhava. In this Nighantu Nirgundi has been mentioned in Aknam-Varga⁷.

Madanpala Nighantu (14th Cent. A.D.)

Nirgundi has been mentioned in Abhyadi Varga. Madanpala has included following synonyms of Nirgundi i.e., Nirgundi, Sindhuvar, Mevdi. Regarding its properties, *Nirgundi* has been referred as Ushna dravya. It is indicated in Sandhi Vata, Inflammation, Krimi, Kustha.⁸

Rajanighantu (14th Cent. A.D.)

This text is also known as Nighantu Raja, Abhidhanachudamani and is written by Acharya Narhari Pandit, who has given Dravyaguna first place in *Astanga Ayurveda*. This book is particularly based on the Dhanvantari Nighantu. The subject matter has been divided into 23 chapters. Nirgundi is included in Sathavadi Varga. It possesses katu rasa, ushna virya⁹.

Kaiyadev Nighantu (15th Cent. A.D.)

It is also known as Pathyapathya Vibodhak Nighantu. In this Nighantu Nirgundi is described in Ausadhi Varga with following synonyms i.e., Neelsindhuk, Girisindhuk, Sindhuvarak, Vanka, Sindhuk, Sindhuvara, Bhutkesi, Bhutvasa. Regarding its properties, it has been said as Sheet Virya, Katu, Tikta, Kasahya rasa and Laghuguna.



Here Nirgundi has been mentioned for various disorders such as Shula, Amadosh, Gulma, Medoroga, Vrana, Krimi, Kustha, Swasa and Kasa and specially Nirgundi leaves are Deepana and Krimighana¹⁰.

Bhavaprakash Nighantu(16th Cent.A.D.)

Author of this Nighantu is AcharyaBhavamishra who was 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 thatAcharyaBhavamishrarevived the writing style of Samhitas and contributed a good deal to various aspects of Ayurveda by adding new ideas and drugs. Nirgundi has been mentioned in GuduchyadiVarga and following synonyms are found in this NighantuNirgundi, Sindhuvar, etc. It possesses Katu, Tikta and Kasaya rasa and ushna in Virya.It is useful in Shula, Grahani, VataRoga, Krimi¹¹

Adhunika Kala

Nirgundi is explained in text books of morden periods such as DravyagunaVijyana by Dr. P.V. Sharma ,PriyaNighantu, SaligramNighantu, Ayurvedic material 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.)

Author of this Nighantu is Bapalalji who is the authoritative person of 20th century for identification of Ayurvedic plants. In this NighantuNirgundi has been describe in NirgundiyadiVarga. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e., Nirgundi, Sindhuvar, Sursa. It is useful in Vataroga, Krimi, Kustha etc.¹²

Shaligram Nighantu (20th Cent.A.D)

ThisNighantu were composed by Saligram. InGuduchyadiVarga of ShaligramNighantu synonyms of Nirgundii.e, Sindhuvar and Samhalu. It is useful I treatment of Sandhivata, Shula, Swelling, Vataroga, Vrana, Aruchu, Medorog¹³.

DISCUSSION

India, which is country of villages, 70% of the population is still dependent on the traditional system of medicine for their primary healthcare. History of drug can be studied under Vaidickala, Upanishad kala, Puranakala, Samhitakala, Nighantukala and Adhunickala. Nirgundi is a proper tree, which is used by traditional practitioner to cure various ailments. Present study reconfirms that with the help of literature i.e. Kosh and Nighantus, identification of drugs will be very easy for medicines preparation. The Nighantus generally named after a therapeutic text.



Authors used the prevailing and popular text of their time and region as basis to write Nighantus. This explains how more than one Nighantus emerged in the same time 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 offer is a tremendous scope for research in order to explore the therapeutic application of a substance in the different regions in the era, in the same manner Nirgundi was also a popular durg at the time. It has tremendous effect on different diseases viz. Svasa, Kasa (Respiratory diseases), Rakta pitta (Haemoptysis), Jvara (Fever), etc.

CONCLUSION

This review article can be helpful to know about the different formulation of Nirgundiin which different part of this plant is used. By this way we can use Nirgundiin the treatment of different diseases. Most of the Nighantus have mentioned Nirgundi has good Pramehaghana, Javarnasak, Kasaghana, and Rasayana properties. A detailed clinical study is required to understand the mode of action of this drugs and their efficacy.



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