

Therapeutic Review of *Nirgundi* in Ayurvedic Classics

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ABSTRACT

Traditional medicines were originally used with vast knowledge about the therapeutic utility of numerous plants. *Vitex negundo* Linn (*Nirgundi*) is one of the very useful plants in Indian System of Medicine. It is a large aromatic shrub distributed throughout India and has been used for many thousands of years. '*Nirgundi*' has a long history of medicinal use in traditional and folk medicines for various diseases. It helps as if rather than merely curing a particular disease, aims at returning the body back to its natural state of health. This review gives a bird's eye view mainly on the therapeutic utility and actions of *Nirgundi* (*Vitex negundo* Linn) in *Brihatrayees* (Caraka Samhitha, Susrutha Samhitha and Ashtanga Hridaya)

Keywords: *Nirgundi*, *Vitex negundo* Linn., Therapeutic utility, *Brihatrayees*

INTRODUCTION

Among number of plants described in Ayurveda, *Nirgundi* is one which holds greater medical importance. According to a report of World Health Organization, more than 80% of world's populations depend on traditional medicine for their primary health care needs. A popular local quote of the Bengalis in the Western Himalayan region of India which translates as - A man cannot die of disease in an area where *Vitex negundo* Linn, *Adhatoda vasica* and *Acorus calamus* are found. [1] The plant is referred in the Indian traditional circles as '*sarvaroganivarini*' (the remedy for many diseases). As *Nirgundi* is well known drug by common people and easily available hence this drug needs a literary review which many research have been carried out on this plant. Regarding the ethymology, synonyms, morphological description, may explore further therapeutic quality for the benefit of public in larger extent. In present context, therapeutic utility is discussed,

there are enormous descriptions found in all most all *samhitas* and *nighantus*. By observing the morphology, therapeutic utility, habit and habitat different *Acharyas* have placed *Nirgundi* under different *varga* (group) for convenience of study.

Ethymology

"*Nishkasya Vyaadhinam Gundayathi Sareeram Rakshatiti*"

Nirgundi cures many diseases and protects the body. [2]

Mythological story of *Nirgundi*

It have a sacred status and used in rituals in India, *Nirgundi* is considered as a sacred plant and is thought to have originated from the abdomen of Ganesha. The leaves are offered to Lord Shiva & Gouri on Nithya Somavara Vrata. [3]

Ayurvedic properties:

Rasa- Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter)

Guna- Laghu (light), Ruksha (dry)

Virya- Ushna (hot)

Vipaka- Katu (pungent)

Doshakarma- Kapha-Vata Shamaka.

Plants on medicinal uses had been described in ancient period (period of Vedas). Among Vedas Rigveda had described 67 medicinal plants, Yajurveda had mentioned 81 plants used in medicine and Atharvaveda from which Āyurveda was

originated had mentioned 289 medicinal plants. The Caraka samhita had explained 1100, Sushruta samhita had explained 1270, and Astanga Hridaya had explained 1150 medicinal plants along with their properties and uses.



Fig I: Nirgundi (Vitex negundo Linn)

Table 1: NIRGUNDI IN CARAKA SAMHITHA [4]

DRUG	FORMULATION	USED PART	THERAPEUTIC ACTION	MODE OF ADMINISTRATION	REFERENCE
SUTRASTHANA					
Paste of sirisa with sindhuvara	<i>Visahara lepa</i>	Bark	Counteract effects of toxicosis	External application	Ca.Sam.Su. 3/28
Akshiva, maricha, nirgundi, vidanga, gandira etc	<i>Krimighna gana</i>	Prayojyanga	Destroys krimi (Antihelmintics)	Kashaya	Ca.Sam.Su 4/15
Haridra, manjishta, candana, sindhuvara, sirishaetc	<i>Vishaghna gana</i>	Prayojyanga	Mitigates visa (Antidotes to poison)	External application	Ca.Sam.Su. 4/16
SIDDHISTHANA					
Pippali,nirgundi, apāmarga, sarsapa, vartaakurasa, aragvadha etc	<i>Pippalyadhi Varti</i>	Patra	If unctuous enema (uttarabasthi) doesn't return	As suppository in urethral passage & anus	Ca.Sam. Si 9/57-61
Sprikka,kumkuma sindhuvara.tagara, khadira, brihati.,lodra, madhuka,haritala etc	<i>Mrithasanjeevana Agada</i>	Patra	Alleviates all poisons, afflictions of evil spirits and destroys fever	Gulika, dhoopana, lepa	Ca.Sam.Si 23/ 54-60
Vidanga, eranda, triphala, nirgundi, bilva,brhathi, goksura,nimbi, karavira etc.	<i>Vidangadhi Taila</i>	Patra	Alleviates the disorders of skin, worms, prameha, piles, disorders of grahani, impotency, irregularity of digestive fire etc	Medicated oil for pana,abhyanga and anuvasana vasthi	Ca.Sam.Si. 4/18-22
CHIKITSASTHANA					
Patra,agaru, mustha,suradaru, kushta,sindhuvara, rajani,gairika,nimba manjishta,laksha etc	<i>Mahagandhahasti Agada</i>	Prayojyanga	Destroys eye diseases irregular fever, indigestion, skin disease, destroys quickly the poisons of all rats , spiders, serpents etc	As anjana, external application over vrana, guda,yoni	Ca.Sam.Chi. 23/77-82
Sindhuvara , sveta and girikarnika	-	Root	For bite of darvikara type of snake,kushta	Pana in visha ,nasya in kushta	Ca.Sam.Chi. 23/195.
Candara, padmaka, usira, sirisa, sindhuvarika, ksirasukla, tagara, kushta patala, udiya, sariva etc	<i>Candanadhi lepa</i>	Prayojyanga	Universal application for spider poison.	External application	Ca.Sam.Chi23/200-201
Yastimadhu, mrdvika, payasya and sindhuvarika	-	Prayojyanga	Remove abnormal colour of breast milk (sthanyasodhaka)	Internal administration	Ca.Sa.Chi. 30/271
Nirgundi	<i>Nirgundi Taila</i>	Moola,patra	Effectiva in kushta, pama,apachi	Taila for pana, abhayanga & poorana	Ca Sam Chi 28/134-135
VIMANASTHANA					
Bhringaraja, sahadara, nirgundi, kutaja, triphala etc	-	Prayojyanga	Destroys krimi	Pupalika	Ca Sam Vi. 7/21

Charaka Samhitha classifies the dravya as per pharmacological actions. They should be used singly or in combined form in different pharmaceutical forms. The synonyms of Nirgundi used in Caraka Samhitha are Nirgundi and sinduvara. The reference of Nirgundi is quoted in almost all sthanas of Caraka Samhitha.

Table 2: NIRGUNDI IN SUSRUTHA SAMHITHA [5]

DRUG	FORMULATION	USED PART	THERAPEUTIC ACTION	MODE OF ADMINISTRATION	REFERENCE
SUTRASTHANA					
Surasa,kasamarda, nirgundi, arjaka,vidanga etc	indura, <i>Surasadi gana</i>	Prayogyanga	Mitigates kapha,swasa, kasa,vranasodhana etc	According to condition	Su.Sam.Su. 38/16
Sindhuvaraka	-	Pushpa	Destroys the pitta dosha.	According to condition	Su.Sam.Su. 46/286.
CHIKITSASTHANA					
Nirgundi, jati barihistha, jimutaka etc	-	Prayogyanga	Recovery from even a malignant form of Apachi.	Taila (For vamaana)	Su. Sam. Chi. 18/21.
Leaves of aragvadha pasted with juice of nirgundi etc	-	Prayogyanga	To bring out urethral enema liquid.	Varti	Su.Sam.Chi. 37/120-121
Triphala,ativisa, Trivrit,surasadhi gana,kushta, nimbi,guduchi etc	<i>Triphaladi Taila</i>	Prayogyanga	Mitigates obesity, lassitude,itching, diseases caused by kapha	For pana, abyanga,gandoosa,nasya,basti	Su Sam Chi 37/33-35
KALPASTHANA					
Prapoundarika, sindhuvaraka, suradaru, musta, candana, guggulu etc	<i>Tarkshya Agada</i>	Prayigyanga	Capable of neutralizing the effect even of the poison of takshaka.	Churna	Su.Sam.Ka. 5/64-67
Draksha,surasa,bilwasindh uvaraka,dadima, gairika etc	<i>Drakshadhi Agada (Mandali-vishahara Agada)</i>	Prayogyanga	Highly efficacious especially in poisoning by a mandali bite	Churna	Su.Sam.Ka. 5/76-77
Somraji,kushta, sindhuvaraka, punarnava,aragvadha sirisha etc.	<i>Ekasara Gana</i>	Pushpa	Destroys the effects of poison.	Single drug or combination according to condition	Su.Sam.Ka. 5/83-85
Candana,kushta, nagara,gairika,bala, sindhuvar, sirisa, patali, salmali etc	<i>Mahasugandhi Agada</i>	Pushpa	King of all the other agada as it destroys all poisons	Churna	Su.Sam.Ka 6/14-27
Mudgaparni, mashaparni, sindhuvara etc	-	Prayogyanga	For poison by bite of rat of Kulinga species	Kashaya	Su.Sam.Ka. 7/20
UTTARASTHANA					
Patola, selu, sunishana, tuthika, sindhuvara, atimukta etc	-	Prayogyanga	Raktapitta	As diet	Su.Sam.Utt. 45/16
Sindhuvara, bilva, kapitha, arjaka etc.	-	Prayogyanga	Balasa grathita	Anjana	Su. Sam. Utt. 11/11
Nirgundi	-	Prayogyanga	Treatment of putikarna	Karnapoorana	Su.Sam.Utt. 21/50
Nirgundi	-	Prayogyanga	Treatment of kaphaja kasa	Suitable form	Su. Sam. Utt. 52/29

Synonyms of Nirgundi used in Susrutha Samhita- Sindhuvaraka,Nirgundi.

Table 3: NIRGUNDI IN ASHTANGA HRIDAYA [6]

DRUG	FORMULATION	USED PART	THERAPEUTIC ACTION	MODE OF ADMINISTRATION	REFERENCE
SUTRASTHANA					
Haridra, katabhi, sindhuvarita, nispaava, avalguja, sataparvika etc	-	Prayogyanga	Relieve the effect of poison in case of food poisoning	Vamana & virechana then nasya, anjana & kasaya pana	Ash.Hri.Su. 7/24-25
CHIKITSASTHANA					
Nirgundi,vidanga, vyosa	<i>Nirgundi ghritha</i>	Patra	Cures cough	Ghritha	Ash.Hri.Chi. 3/57
Eranda,nirgundi, guggulu,kampilla, haritala etc	<i>Mahavajra taila</i>	Prayogyanga	Cures switra,arshas, grandimala	Medicated oil	Ash.Hri.Chi. 19/81-82
Nipa, markava or nirgundi	-	Trina patra	In treatment of sirogatha krimi	Pupalika	Ash Hri.Chi. 20/ 30
UTTARASTHANA					
Laksa, nirgundi, bhringa & darvi	<i>Lakshanirgundi anjana</i>	Prayogyanga	Best to heal pilla rogas	Anjana	Ash.Hri.Utt. 16/57
Kakadani,,jimuta langalika, visala, karkoti, nirgudi etc	-	Prayogyanga	Cures chronic gandamala with incurable features	Medicated oil for pana,abhyanga & nasya	Ash .Hri.Utt 30/18-20
Langalika, fresh juice of nirgundi	-	Prayogyanga	Cures Apaci	Medicated oil for Nasya	Ash Hri.Utt 30/21
Sindhuvarita & sveta girikarnika	<i>Sinduvaradhi nasya</i>	Moola	In case of bite by darvikara snake & also for kushta	Nasya	Ash.Hri.Utt 36/57
Yasthyahava, madana, ankola, jalini & sinduvarika	-	Prayogyanga	Kapha should be removed in case if luta visa	Churna as vamanasudha	Ash.Hri.Utt. 37/75-76
Bilva, candana, sindhuvara,bhargi, nata,sunthi etc	-	Prayogyanga	Cures the poison of spider predominant of kapha	For pana, anjana,nasya,lepa& seka	Ash.Hri.Utt 37/84-85
Sindhuvara, nata, sigru, bilva, punarnava, vaca etc	<i>Sinduvaradhi Kwatha</i>	Prayogyanga	Cures Mooshika visa	Kashaya	Ash.Hri.Utt. 38/27-28
Sindhuvara, bones of the cat visa and nata	-	Moola	Destroys the poison of rats	Nasya	Ash.Hri.Utt. 38/32.
Atimuktha, eranda,sephali, abhiru,agasthya	-	Prayogyanga	In Doshanda chikitsa	For pana & lepa	Ash Hri Utt 13/90

The synonyms of Nirgundi used in Ashtanga Hridaya are Nirgundi ,Sinduvara, Sephali.

Table 4 : NIRGUNDI IN ASHTANGA SAMGRAHA [7]

DRUG	FORMULATION	USED PART	THERAPEUTIC ACTION	MODE OF ADMINISTRATION	REFERENCE
SUTRASTHANA					
Aksiva,maricha, nirgundi,vidanga swadamstra etc	<i>Krimighna gana</i>	Prayogyanga	Destroys krimi	As per condition	Ash Sam Su 15/17
CHIKITSASTHANA					
Sirisa,selu, kakubhi, sinduvara,etc.	-	Prayogyanga	Cures raktapitta	As per condition	Ash Sam Chi 3/34
Nirgundi,,nipa, markava,vidanga	-	Prayogyanga	Cures svitra krimi.	Pupalika	Ash Sam Chi 22/49
UTTARASTHANA					
Surasa ,nirgundi, arjaka etc	-	Patra & Pusha	Evil spirits	Dhoopana	Ash Sam Utt 4/39
Prapaundarika, sinduvara, sita, padmaka sunthi etc.	<i>Tarkshya Agada</i>	Prayogyanga	Removes the effect of poisoning even of Takshaka	For pana,nasya, abhyanga & anjana	Ash Sam Utt 42/79-82
Sirisa,padmaka, usira,sinduvara, padmaka,usira, sariva etc	-	Prayogyanga	Beneficial in spider poisoning	For pana,nasya, anjana,lepa,seka	Ash Sam Utt 44/70-71
Syamadvaya,nisa, musta,nirgundi, kushta,nata etc	-	Prayogyanga	Beneficial in Luta damscha chikitsa	Lepa	Ash Sam Utt 44/43-45
Bharngi,nimbi, patali,durva, sinduvaraka etc	-	Prayogyanga	Removes the poison of puthigandha spider	As per condition	Ash Sam Utt 45/24-25

Sinduvaca, vaca, jimuta etc	-	Prayogyanga	In Mooshika damsa	Kashaya	Ash Sam Utt 46/36
Arjuna, bilva, nirgundi, markava etc	-	Prayogyanga	In Kukulaka chikitsa	Kashaya	Ash Sam Utt 12/15
Varana, arista, sinduvaraka etc	-	Prayogyanga	In Revathigraha chikitsa	Lepa	Ash Sam Utt 6/68

Astanga Samgrahakara used Bhutakesi, Sindhuvaraka, Nirgundi as synonyms of Nirgundi.

CONCLUSION

In recent year, traditional & ethnobotanical uses of natural compounds, especially plant origin receive much attention as they were well tested for their efficacy generally believed to be safer for human use. Nirgundi is one of the most used herbal plants in the field of Ayurveda. It has been widely used externally as well as internally. Thorough screening of the literature available on Nirgundi (*Vitex negundo* Linn.) depicted the fact that it is a popular remedy. The merit of the traditional use of Nirgundi has also been supported by the isolation and identification of several possible active chemical constituents, mainly flavonoids etc from different parts leaves and twigs, bark, seeds and roots.

So it is essential and needful for all of us to plant a Nirgundi in our surrounding for the betterment of our present as well as coming generations also.

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