

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF BHAVAPRAKASH NIGHANTU – A REVIEW

Sonal Singh Kushwaha\* and Priya Gupta

PG Scholar, Department of Dravyaguna, Shri Dhanwantry Ayurvedic College and Hospital,  
Sector 46-B, Chandigarh, India.

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**\*Corresponding Author****Dr. Sonal Singh Kushwaha**

PG Scholar, Department of  
Dravyaguna, Shri  
Dhanwantry Ayurvedic  
College and Hospital, Sector  
46-B, Chandigarh, India.

**ABSTRACT**

*Nighantu* (Lexicon) is one of the important aspects in the study of *Dravyaguna Vijnana* (Materia medica). The *Nighantu* literature is one of the significant facets in the study of *Ayurveda* and specially in the subject of *Dravyaguna Vijnana*. In the practice of *Ayurvedic* lexicons, *Bhavaprakash Nighantu* is a treatise of *Dravyaguna*. It is composed by *Acharya Bhavmishra* in 16th century. This lexicon has 23 *varga* (sections). In this treatise, along with ancient medicinal substances, new substances like *Chopchini* (*Smilax glabra*) are also described. The objective of this review is to analyse the importance and utility of *Bhavaprakash Nighantu*. By which the identification, properties and actions of drugs and medical treatment can be made more effective and

powerful. The present work is dealt with the systematic review of all the *vargas* of *Bhavaprakash Nighantu* including the number of *dravyas* (drugs), *mishrak ganas*, specialities and varieties of drugs mentioned in each *varga*.

**KEYWORDS:** *Bhavaprakash Nighantu*, *Ayurveda*, *Manuscript*, *Dravyaguna*.

**INTRODUCTION**

The word *Nighantu* means a collection of words, vocabulary.<sup>[1]</sup> As per *Yaska* (*Nirukta* 1.20), the *Nighantu* is a group of rare or difficult words collected by former sages for easier understanding of *Vedic* texts that possibly they may not have entirely understood by themselves. The science and activities related to detection, evaluation, understanding and prevention of Adverse Drug Reactions or any other drug related problems.

The importance of *Nighantu* was first told by *Pandit Narhari* who was the son of *Isvarasuri* in his work *Raja Nighantu* during 14th century A.D. He states that a *vaidya* without the

knowledge of *Nighantu*, an intellectual without the knowledge of *Vyakarana* (Grammar) and a soldier without the knowledge of *Ayudha* (Weapons) are the subject of laughter in the world.<sup>[2]</sup> The early *Nighantus* were actually like *Kosha* (Compendium), comprising the synonyms, properties, actions and the uses of *Dravya*. Ancient texts plainly tells that if a drug is used without the knowledge of its proper action, it would undoubtedly act as a *visha* (poison). This statement clearly states that the knowledge of *Nighantu* is indispensable for a *Vaidya*.

*Bhavaprakash Nighantu*<sup>[3]</sup> or *Haritakyadi Nighantu* is considered as one of the best reference books for *Dravyaguna*. It is a recent lexicon written in 16<sup>th</sup> century AD by *Acharya Bhavamishra*, son of *Shri Latkan Mishra*. *Bhavamishra* belonged to either *Kashmir* or *Bihar* which is a topic of controversy.

This *Nighantu* is usually popular in *Ayurveda* for its exclusive contribution in understanding the properties and application of various *dravyas* used in *Ayurveda*. This classical text has been written in *Sanskrit* language. Even though it provides details on all the aspects of *Ayurveda*, it is also acknowledged as *Karmousadhi Pradhan Nighantu* meaning the index of *Ayurvedic* clinical pharmacology.

### Time period

*Acharya Bhavamishra* seems to have followed *Madanpal Nighantu* (1347 AD) and *Sharangdhar Samhita* (13<sup>th</sup> century) in writing *Bhavaprakash Nighantu*. *Yogratnakar*, *Yogatarangini* and *Lolimbaraj* (17<sup>th</sup> century) give reference of *Bhavaprakash* (16<sup>th</sup> century) in their works. Hence the time period of *Bhavaprakash Nighantu* can be said in between 13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century.

S. NO.	Varga	NO. OF DRUG
1.	Haritakyadi	83
2.	Karpuradi	55
3.	Guduchyadi	121
4.	Pushpa	33
5.	Vatadi	42
6.	Amradi phala	54
7.	Dhatu-updhatu-rasa-uparasa-ratna-upratna-visha-upavisha	55
8.	Dhanya	29
9.	Shaka	69
10.	Mamsa	13

11.	Kritanna	78
12.	Vaari	19
13.	Dugdha	20
14.	Dadhi	14
15.	Takra	7
16.	Navneet	5
17.	Ghrit	11
18.	Mutra	10
19.	Taila	9
20.	Sandhan	12
21.	Madhu	11
22.	Ikshu	25
23.	Anekarthnaam	205
	Total	980

*Bhavaprakash Nighantu* is one among the *Laghutrayee*<sup>[4]</sup> (the Lesser triad of *Ayurveda*). It is an efficient and condensed depiction of the prior classics like *Brahatrayee* (The greater triad of *Ayurveda*).

### Commentaries

No *Sanskrit* commentaries were written on it. Hindi commentary by *Pandit Shiva Sharma* 'Shivaprakashika' published by Sri Venkateshwara Press, Bombay and *K.C. Chuneekar*'s published in Chaukhambha Bharati Academy.

**Vargas:** There is total 23 *vargas* told by acharya *Bhavamishra*. They are – *Haritakyadi*, *Karpuradi*, *Guduchyadi*, *Pushpa*, *Vatadi*, *Amradi phala*, *Dhatu-updhatu-rasa-uparasa-ratna-upratna-visha-upavisha*, *Dhanya*, *Shaka*, *Mamsa*, *Kritanna*, *Vaari*, *Dugdha*, *Dadhi*, *Takra*, *Navneet*, *Ghrit*, *Mutra*, *Taila*, *Sandhan*, *Madhu*, *Ikshu*, *Anekarthnaam* *varga*.

**Haritakyadi varga:** There is total 83 drugs told. It comprises of *Mishrak ganas* like *Triphala*, *Trikatu*, *Chaturushan*, *Panchkola*, *Chaturbeej*, *Ashtavarga*, *Kshara dwaya*, *Kshara traya*, *Ksharashtak*; Drugs like *Chopchini* (*firang rog*), *Jeerak tritaya* (*Shukla*, *Krishna*, *Kalajaji*), five varieties of *Lavana* etc.

**Karpuradi varga:** It consists of 55 drugs in total. *Mishrak ganas* *Trijatak*, *Chaturjatak* are included. Drugs containing volatile oils like *Karpura*, *Kasturi* etc are mostly found in this *varga*. Varieties of *Karpura* (*Pakwa*, *Apakwa*), *Kasturi* (*Kamrupi*, *Naipali*, *Kashmir desh sambhuta*), *Chandana* (*Shweta*, *Peeta*, *Rakta*), *Agaru* (*Agaru*, *Krishna agaru*), *Tagar* (*Tagar*, *Pinda tagar*), *Guggulu* (*Mahishaksha*, *Mahaneela*, *Kumud*, *Padma*, *Hiranya*), *Kumkum*

(*Kashmiraja*, *Bahlika*, *Parshik*), *Musta* (*Musta*, *Nagarmusta*) are told. Various *Niryas* like *Sarala* (*Gandhabiroja*), *Shala* (*Raal*), *Shallaki* (*Kunduru*) are also explained.

**Guduchyadi varga:** Highest number of *dravyas* i.e., 121 in number are present in this *varga*. *Mishrak ganas* like *Brihat panchmula*, *Laghu panchmula*, *Dashmula*, *Jeevaniya gana* are placed here. It comprises varieties of *Patala* (*Patala*, *Ghanta patala*), *Eranda* (*Shweta*, *Rakta*), *Arka* (*Shweta*, *Rakta*), *Karaveer* (*Shweta*, *Rakta*), *Kanchnar* (*Kanchnar*, *Kovidar*), *Shigru* (*Shyam*, *Shweta*, *Rakta*), *Aparajita* (*Shwetapushpa*, *Neelapushpa*), *Sinduvaar* (*Shweta*, *Neel*), *Karanja* (*Karanja*, *Kantak karanja*, *Karanji*), *Gunja* (*Shweta*, *Rakta*), *Bala* (*Bala*, *Mahabala*, *Atibala*, *Nagbala*), *Darbha* (*Kush*, *Darbha*), *Durva* (*Neel*, *Shukla*, *Ganddurva*), *Shatavari* (*Shatavari*, *Mahashatavari*), *Trivrut* (*Shweta*, *Shayama*), *Danti* (*Laghu*, *Brihat*), *Indravaruni* (*Indravaruni*, *Mahendra varuni*), *Yavasa* (*Yavasa*, *Duralabha*), *Mundi* (*Mundi*, *Mahamundi*), *Punarnava* (*Shweta*, *Rakta*), *Sariva* (*Krishna*, *Shweta*).

**Pushpa varga:** Total 33 drugs are present. This *varga* consist of basically flower based drugs such as *Kamala*, *Shatpatri*, *Mallika*, *Muchkunda*, *Tulsi* etc. Different parts of *Kamala* are explained in detail with their names. Varieties of *Malati* (*Malati*, *Swarna jati*), *Yuthika* (*Yuthika*, *Peet yuthika*), *Bakula* (*Bakula*, *Brihat bakula*), *Ketaki* (*Ketaki*, *Swarna ketaki*), *Saireyaka* (*Peet*, *Rakta*, *Neel*, *Shweta*), *Tulasi* (*Shweta*, *Krishna*), *Barbari* (*Krishna*, *Shweta*, *Vatapatra*) are mentioned.

**Vatadi varga:** 42 drugs are mentioned in this. Among *Mishrak gana*, *Pancha Ksheeri vrikshas* are told here. Big trees like *Vata*, *Udumbar*, *Aswatha*, *Shalmali*, *Palasha* etc are said. Varieties of *Khadir* (*Shweta*, *vit*). *Niryas* of *Shalmali* i.e., *Mochrasa* is explained.

**Amradi phala varga:** 54 fruit-based drugs are told. *Mishrak gana* like *Chaturamla* and *Panchamla* are said here. Different stages of *Amra phala* with its *gunas* are explained in detail. Varieties of *Kadali* (*Manikya*, *Martyaka*, *Amrit*, *Champaka*), *Jambu* (*Raj*, *Jal*), *Badar* (*Sauveer*, *Kol*, *Karkandhu*), *Draksha* (*Abeeja*, *Parvatataja*, *Karmardika*), *Kharjura* (*Bhumi*, *Pinda*, *Kharjuri*), *Jambira* (*Jambira*, *Swalpa jambirika*) are present in this *varga*.

**Dhatwadi varga:** 55 *dravyas* are discussed here. It consists of *Dhatu* (7), *Updhatu* (7), *Rasa* (*Parad*), *Uparasa*, *Ratna* (9), *Uparatna*, *Visha* (9), *Upavisha*.

**Dhanya varga:** There are 29 *dravyas* told in this *varga*. Types of *Dhanya* included are *Shali dhanya*, *Vrihi dhanya*, *Shooka dhanya*, *Shimbi dhanya*, *Kshudra dhanya*.

**Shak varga:** Total 69 *dravyas* are present. Various vegetable drugs under classification of *Patra*, *Pushpa*, *Phala*, *Naal*, *Kanda*, *Samswedaja shak* are explained along with their properties.

**Mamsa varga:** 13 *dravyas* are included. Flesh of different animals and birds are included. *Jangal mamsa*- *Jangala*, *Bileshaya*, *Guhashya*, *Parnamriga*, *Vishkira*, *Pratud*, *Prasaha*, *Gramya*; *Anupa mamsa* – *Kulechar*, *Plava*, *Koshashtha*, *Padina*, *Matsya* is mentioned with examples.

**Kritanna varga:** 78 food preparations vegetarian and non-vegetarian are told in detail. Procedure of making *Daali*, *Krishra*, *Sevika*, *Mudga vatak*, *Parpata*, *Veshvaar*, *Purika*, *Shak*, *Shashkuli*, *Takra*, *Shaktu*, *Pinyak* etc. along with their properties is mentioned.

**Vaari varga:** 19 sources of water from where water can be used for drinking etc purpose with their qualities are told. *Jala bheda* – *Dhara*, *Karkabhav*, *Taushar* and *Hema* are said. Various *Bhauma Jala* like *Jangala*, *Anupa*, *Sadharana*, *Audbhida*, *Nairjhar*, *Saras*, *Tadag*, *Vaapi*, *Kaupa*, *Chaunchya*, *Paalval*, *Vikir*, *Kaidar*, *Vrishti jal*, *Anshudak* etc is also explained.

**Dugdha varga:** 20 different sources for obtaining milk along with qualities are explained in this. *Gau*, *Mahisha*, *Aja*, *Mrigi*, *Avika*, *Vadwa*, *Ushtri*, *Naari Dugdha gunas* are told. Along with this *Dharoshna*, *Piyush kilata*, *Morata*, *Santanika*, *Khandadi*, *Prabhatadi bhavasya*, *Dugdhapaan vidhi*, *Mathita*, *Dugdha phena*, *Nindita Dugdha laxana* are also mentioned.

**Dadhi varga:** 14 drugs which consist forms of *Dadhi* are explained like *Pakwa Dugdha Jata*, *Mahisha Dadhi*, *Gaalita*, *Ritu Vishesh*, *Dadhi Sar Mastu* etc along with their *gunas*.

**Takra varga:** Buttermilk preparations like *Ghol*, *Mathita*, *Udashwita*, *Chach*, *Samudhrit ghrit* *Takra*, *Pakwa*- *apakwa*, *Gavyadinam takra*, total 7 *dravyas* along with their *guna karma* are said in this *varga*.

**Navneet varga:** *Gau*, *Mahisha*, *Dugdhotha*, *Sadyo nisarita*, *Chiranta* butter preparations i.e., total 5 *dravyas* with their properties are told in this *varga*.

**Ghrita varga:** 9 ghee forms like derived from *Gau, Mahisha, Aja, Ushtri, Avika, Naari, Vadwa Dugdha* along with properties of *Purana* and *Naveen Ghrit* are explained. He also said about the persons who should not use *ghrita*. *Gunas* of *Dugdha nisarita ghrit* and *Haiyangveen* (milk extracted one day before) are said.

**Mutra varga:** Properties of urine of *Gau, Aja, Aavi, Mahish, Stree, Khara, Ushtra, Nara* are told. He also said that among *Gau, Aja* and *Mahish* – female's urine is considered more efficient in properties. Among *Khara, Ushtra, Hasti, Nara, Ashwa* – male's urine is best.

**Taila varga:** 9 drugs are included in this which comprise of plants from which oil is derived. They are *Tila, Sarshapa, Raajik, Tuvari, Alasi, Kusumbha, Khasbeeja, Eranda, Sarjarasa, Sarva*. Along with this definition of *Taila* and *Ghrita* is also given.

**Sandhana varga:** 12 fermentation preparations with their medicinal properties are told in this *varga* such as *Kanji, Tushodak, Shauveer, Aarnaal, Dhanyamla, Shindaki, Shukta, Madya, Arishta, Sura, Seedhu, Nav-puran madira*.

**Madhu varga:** 11 drugs comprising of honey varieties- *Makshik, Bhramar, Kshoudra jaatiya, Pauttika jatiya, Chatra jaatiya, Aarghya jatiya, Audyaalaka, Daal jaatiya, Nav-purana, Sheetaloshna, Madhuchista*.

**Ikshu varga:** 25 *dravyas* comprising of sugarcane varieties or preparations based *dravyas* are told in this *varga*. These are *Ikshu, Paundrak, Bhiru, Koshkar, Kantar, Vanshak, Shatporak, Taapas, Kandekshu, Suchipatra, Neelpatra, Naipal, Deerghapatra, Manogupta, Baal, Taruna, Vridha, Chushita, Yantrik, Paryushita, Pakwa, Ikshu Nirmita Padartha, Phanita, Matsyandi, Guda, Puran Gud, Naveen Guda, Khand, Sharkara, Pushpa Sita, Madhukhand*.

**Anekartha nama varga:** One name of two or many *dravyas* are enlisted here. *Dwyartha naam* (114), *Trayartha naam* (83), *Chaturartha naam* (3), *Bahu Artha naam* (4) are told.

## DISCUSSION

The *Bhavaprakash Nighantu* is also called as *Haritakyadi Nighantu*. This book contains 23 *Vargas*. Each name of the *Varga* starts with the name of first drug. Viz; *Haritakyadi Varga, Karpuradi Varga, Guduchyadi Varga, Pushpa Varga, Vatadi Varg, Amradi Varga, Dhatu Varga, Dhanya Varga, Shaka Varga, Mamsa Varga, Kritanna Varga, Vaari Varga, Dugdha Varga, Dadhi Varga, Takra Varga, Navneeta Varga, Ghrita Varga, Mutra Varga, Taila Varga,*



*Sandhana Varga, Madhu Varga, Ikshu Varga, Anekartha Varga.* The *Nighantu* explains drugs like *Dwipantara Vacha (Chopchini)*, *Parasika Vacha*, *Darusita*, *Pudina*, *Akarakarabha*. There are also some *Visha hara dravyas* which possess the anti-allergic activity, such drugs can be taken for the study to rule out the immune modulatory activity. *Kustha* is mentioned the variety of *Pushkaramoola*. The *Karpura* is two types viz; *Pakwa Karpura* and *Apakwa Karpura*. Use of Camphor and Opium in Ayurvedic medicine can be found in this treatise for the first time. The *Swarnakshiri Moola* is named as *Choka*. Interestingly, a new disease named '*Firanga*' which can be compared with 'Gonorrhoea' of the modern day is also described along with the *dravya Chopchini* for its treatment in this classical *Nighantu*. '*Tumburu*' *phala* of *Tejovati (Zanthoxylum alatum)* is explained in *Haritakyadi varga* and *Tejovati* explained in *Guduchyadi varga*. It clears many controversies on medicinal plants and illustrated several exotic plant species, making it a valued treatise for scholars of *Ayurveda* and Botany.

## CONCLUSION

As per previous discussion it tells that this *Nighantu* consolidates the entire *Dravyaguna Vijnana* with clinical applications of the drugs. The *Nighantus* have to be explored for more information like identification, organoleptic knowledge about mentioned drugs.

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