

COMPARATIVE CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF NAGARADI CHURNA AND BHUNIMBADI CHURNA IN PITTAJA GRAHANI

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Article Received on 15 Sept. 2026,
Article Revised on 05 Oct. 2026,
Article Published on 16 Oct. 2026,

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23384520>

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How to cite this Article: Vd. Shruti Sameer Joshi^{1*}, Dr. Gayatri S. Sawant². (2026). Comparative Conceptual Study Of Nagaradi Churna And Bhunimbadi Churna In Pittaja Grahani. World Journal of Pharmaceutical Research, 15(20), 585-594.

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Grahani* is a disease of impaired *Agni* and its seat, the *Grahani*. Pittaja Grahani arises when aggravated *Pitta*, with its increased *Drava Guna*, weakens *Agni*. Classical texts prescribe *Shodhana* followed by *Tikta Rasa Churna* and medicated *Ghruta*. *Nagaradi Churna* and *Bhunimbadi Churna* are two such *Churna* formulations described under Pittaja Grahani, yet their stage-wise application is not clearly distinguished. **Aim:** To conceptually analyse and compare the therapeutic rationale of *Nagaradi Churna* and *Bhunimbadi Churna* in Pittaja Grahani with reference to the *Avastha* of the disease. **Materials and Methods:** This conceptual literary study drew on the *Brihatrayi* and *Laghutrayi* with commentaries, *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*, *Dravya-Guna-Shastram* and *Charaka Kalpa Sudha*. Contemporary literature

was searched in PubMed, DHARA and Google Scholar. The ingredients, *Rasapanchaka*, *Karma*, *Anupana* and *Phalashruti* of both formulations were compiled and compared. **Discussion:** *Nagaradi Churna* has a predominance of *Tikta-Katu Rasa* and *Ruksha Guna*, and shows *Deepana-Pachana*, *Grahi*, *Raktaprasadana* and *Vatanulomana* actions, with *Madhu* and *Tandulodaka* as *Anupana*. *Bhunimbadi Churna* is dominated by *Kutaja* (about two-thirds of the formulation) and is *Tikta*, *Shita* and *Ruksha*, acting through *Drava-shoshana* and *Vibandha-nashana*, with *Guda-Shitambu* as *Anupana*. **Conclusion:** *Nagaradi Churna*

appears more suitable when *Raktapravartana*, *Vibandha* or *Avaruddha Vata* is present. *Bhunimbadi Churna* appears more suitable when *Raktapravartana* is absent, in *Dravapradhana Pitta* and in *Shakhagata Pitta*. Both formulations may be used for *Pachana* in *Sama Avastha* by changing the *Anupana*.

KEYWORDS: *Pittaja Grahani*, *Nagaradi Churna*, *Bhunimbadi Churna*, *Avastha*.

INTRODUCTION

Ahara, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya* are known as *Trayopastambha* (three pillars of life). The *Ahara* (food) we consume nourishes *Dhatus*, *Oja*, *Bala*, *Varna*, and other vital attributes. The key factor responsible for this transformation and ultimately the nourishment is *Agni*.^[1] *Agni* is the unique concept/ contribution of Ayurveda. *Ayu*, *Varna*, *Bala*, *health*, *Utsaha*, *Upachaya*, *Prabha*, *Ojas*, *Tejas*, the other *Agnis*, and *Prana* depend on the proper functioning of *Dehagni*.^[2] When *Agni* functions properly, a person lives a long and healthy life. Therefore, *Agni* is described as the fundamental basis of life and health.^[3]

The seat of this *Agni* is said to be *Grahani*, situated above *Nabhi*.^[4] *Agni* and *Grahani* share an *Adheya-Adhara* relationship. *Grahani* is said to be situated at the opening of *Pakwashaya*. *Vagbhata* uses the analogy of a door/barrier to describe the function of *Grahani*. Just as a barrier controls passage through an opening, *Grahani* regulates the movement of food through the gastrointestinal tract.^[5] When *Grahani* possesses adequate strength, it retains the ingested food in the *Amashaya*, ensures its proper digestion, and thereafter facilitates its downward passage. However, when *Grahani* is weakened, it expels the undigested food.^[6] *Agni* is the strength of *Grahani*, and *Agni* also derives its strength from *Grahani*. Therefore, when *Agni* is impaired, *Grahani* also becomes impaired and becomes the root of disease.^[7]

Nidana of Grahani: *Agnidushti Hetus* thus lead to the impairment of *Grahani*. *Abhojana*, *Ajeernabhojana*, *Atibhojana*, *Vishamasana*, *Asatmya*, *Guru*, *Shita*, *Ruksha*, *Sandushta bhojana*, *Panchakarma-Vibhrama*, *Vyadhikarshana*, *Dedsh-Kala-Rutu Vaishamya* and *Vegavidharana* are stated as the *Agnidushti Hetus*.^[8]

The weak *Agni* cannot properly digest the food and expels it either in an upward or downward direction. When the food passes in the downward direction, either properly digested or undigested, the condition is described as *Grahani Roga*. In this condition, *Agni* cannot properly digest almost all the ingested food. In this condition, the frequency of stools

is increased; stools may get obstructed, or may even be watery. This condition is associated with other symptoms as well, such as loss of appetite, increased thirst, abnormal metallic or foul odour and bitter or sour belching, etc.^[9]

Brihatrayis describe 4 types of *Grahani Rogas*: *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, and *Sannipatika*. *Nagaradi* and *Bhunimbadi Churnas* are stated under the *Adhikaran of Pittaja Grahani*.

Pitta aggravated by *Katu Ahara*, *Ajeerna* (indigestion), *Vidahi* (foods causing a burning sensation), *Amla* (sour substances), *Kshara* and similar factors; destroys *Agni* just like hot water extinguishes fire. This condition is characterised by passage of bluish-yellow or yellowish, watery stools, foul and sour belching, burning sensation in the cardiac and throat region, anorexia, and thirst.^[10]

Chikitsa Upakrama: *Vagbhata* states that *Grahani* should be treated the same as *Ajeerna* and associated *Ama* should be treated with the same treatment principles described for *Atisara*.^[11] In *Pittaja Grahani*, *Pitta* possesses *Ushna Guna*. However, because of the increased *Drava Guna*, it reduces the strength of *Agni* and produces the pathogenesis of *Pittaja Grahani*. Therefore, while treating this condition, *Drava Guna* of *Pitta* should be predominantly considered.^[10]

Initially, *Shodhana - Vamana* or *Virechana* should be performed. Thereafter, *Churna* having *Tikta Rasa* and medicated *Ghrita* are indicated for pacifying the remaining *Pitta* and for stimulating *Agni*.^[12]

AIM

To analyse and compare the therapeutic rationale of *Nagaradi Churna* and *Bhunimbadi Churna* in the management of *Pittaja Grahani*, with reference to their relevance at different stages (*Avastha*) of the disease through *Brihatrayi*.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the references, ingredients, *Rasapanchaka*, and *Karma* of *Nagaradi* and *Bhunimbadi Churna*.
2. To compare the two formulations and establish which stage of the disease each is better suited to, based on their *Samprapti Vighatana*

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The materials for this conceptual study were collected from classical Ayurvedic texts, including the *Brihatrayi* and *Laghutrayi*, along with their respective commentaries. References pertaining to both formulations were compiled from *Brihatrayi*, *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*, *Dravya-Guna-Shashtram* and *Charaka Kalpa Sudha*. Relevant contemporary literature was searched on open access database. The collected data were organised, analysed, and compared to derive an *Avastha*-based approach.

A) Nagaradi Churna

Chapter / Indication – *Pittaja Grahani* (*Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana* 15/129–131)

References from Other Texts - *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Chikitsasthana* 10/39–41

Ingredients and Method of Preparation

Shunthi, *Ativisha*, *Musta*, *Dhataki*, *Rasanjana*, *Kutaja*, *Indrayava*, *Bilva*, *Patha* and *Kutaki*.

All the above drugs should be taken in equal quantities and prepared in the form of a fine powder (*Churna*).

Method of Administration: The *Churna* should be mixed with honey.

Anupana: *Tandulambu* (*Tandulodaka*) – rice-wash water.

Drug	Rasa	Vipaka	Guna	Dosha	Specific Actions
Nagara (Shunthi)	Katu	Madhura	Ushna, Laghu, Snigdha	Kaphaghna, Vataghna	Deepana, Pachana, Rochana Vibandhanut; Charaka Gana – Arshoghna, Shulaprasamana
Ativisha	Tikta, Katu	Katu	AnUshna, Laghu, Ruksha	Kapha, Pitta	Pachana, Deepana; Charaka Gana – Lekhana, Arshoghna
Musta	Tikta, Katu, Kashaya	Katu	Shita, Laghu, Ruksha	Kapha, Pitta	Deepana, Pachana; Charaka Gana – Grahi, Trishnanigrahana, Stanyashodhana
Dhataki	Kashaya, Katu	Katu	Shita, Laghu, Ruksha	Pitta	Raktaprasadana; Charaka Gana – Sandhaniya, PurishasanGrahaniya, Mutravirajaniya
Rasanjana	Tikta, Katu	Katu	Ushna	Kapha	Chhedana, Rasayana
Vatsaka Tvak (Kutaja)	Tikta, Kashaya	Katu	Shita, Laghu, Ruksha	Kapha, Pitta	Deepana, Pachana, Sthambhana, Kledashishana, Raktaprasadana; Charaka Gana – Arshoghna, Kaphaghna (best among these drugs for Arsha)

Vatsaka Phala (Indrayava)	<i>Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Shita, Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Tridosha</i>	<i>Grahi, Deepana, Gudakilaghna, Shulajit</i>
Bilva	<i>Tikta, Katu, Kashaya</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushna, Ruksha</i>	<i>Kapha, Vata</i>	<i>Deepana, Pachana, Grahi, Balya; Charaka Gana – Arshoghna, Asthapanopaga, Shothahara</i>
Patha	<i>Tikta, Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushna, Laghu, Tikshna</i>	<i>Kapha, Vata</i>	<i>Pachana, Shaman, Charaka Gana – SamGrahaniya, Stanyashodhana</i>
Kutaki-Rohini	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Shita, Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Kapha, Pitta</i>	<i>Deepana, Rochana, Bhedana; Charaka Gana – Lekhaniya, Bhedaniya</i>

Phalashruti: Pittaja Grahani, Raktam yaccha Upaveshyate (Sarkta Malapravartana), Arsha, Gudashula, Pravahika.

B) BHUNIMBADI CHURNA

Chapter / Indication: Pittaja Grahani (Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana 15/132–133)

References from Other Texts

1. Ashtanga Hridaya, Chikitsasthana 10/37–39
2. Ashtanga Sangraha, Chikitsasthana 12/93 – In the Phalashruti, Mukharoga, Shula and Kshaya are mentioned as additional indications.

Ingredients and Method of Preparation

- Bhunimba (Kiratatikta), Kutaki, Trikatu, Musta, Indrayava – 1 part each
- Chitraka – 2 parts
- Kutaja Tvak – 16 parts

All the above drugs should be taken and prepared in the form of a powder (Churna).

Drug	Rasa	Vipaka	Guna	Dosha	Specific Actions
Bhunimba (Kiratatikta)	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Shita, Ruksha, Laghu</i>	<i>Kapha, Pitta</i>	<i>Pachana, Shaman, Kledashoshana Charaka Gana- Stanyashodhana</i>
Kutaki-Rohini	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Shita, Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Kapha, Pitta</i>	<i>Deepana, Rochana; Charaka Gana – Lekhaniya, Bhedaniya</i>
Trikatu	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Kapha-Medoghna, Vata</i>	<i>Deepana, Pachana</i>
Musta	<i>Tikta, Katu, Kashaya</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Shita, Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Kapha, Pitta</i>	<i>Deepana, Pachana; Charaka Gana – Grahi, Trishnanigrahan, Stanyashodhana</i>
Indrayava	<i>Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Shita, Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Tridosha</i>	<i>Grahi, Deepana, Gudakilaghna, Shulajit</i>
Chitraka	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ushna, Ruksha,</i>	<i>Kapha, Vata</i>	<i>Deepana, Pachana, Grahi Charaka Gana- Truptighna,</i>

			Laghu		Deepaniya, Lekhaniya, Bhedaniya, Arshoghna
Vatsaka	Tikta, Kashaya	Katu	Shita, Laghu, Ruksha	Kapha, Pitta	Deepana, Pachana, Raktaprasadana; Charaka Gana – Arshoghna, Kaphaghna (best among these drugs for Arsha)

Anupana: Guda and Shitambu – jaggery with cold water. (Chakrapani mentions that only a limited amount of jaggery should be used, just enough for its sweetness and colour to blend into the water.)

Phalashruti: Grahani, Gulma, Kamala, Jwara, Pandutva, Meha, Aruchi, Atisara

DISCUSSION

• COMPARISON OF INGREDIENTS OF THE TWO CHURNAS

Ingredient	Nagaradi Churna	Bhunimbadi Churna	Gamitva
Nagara	✓		Koshtha, Rasa, Shukra, Meda
Ativisha	✓		Koshtha
Musta	✓	✓	Koshtha, Rasa, Agni, Rasa, Rakta, Meda
Dhataki	✓		Koshtha, Rakta, Meda
Rasanjana	✓		Rakta, Urdhwajatru
Vatsaka Twak	✓	✓	Koshtha – Pakwashaya, Rakta
Indrayava	✓	✓	Koshtha – Pakwashaya, Rakta
Bilva	✓		Koshtha
Patha	✓		Koshtha. Rasa, Rakta
Katuka	✓	✓	Rasa, Rakta, Koshtha,
Bhunimba		✓	Koshtha, Rasa
Trikatu		✓	
Chitraka		✓	Koshtha

✓ = Present

A) Nagaradi Churna

Ingredients from the Nagaradi Churna possess Tikta-Katu Rasa, Kapha-Pittaghna, Deepana-Pachana and Grahi/Shoshana properties as well. All of the constituents predominantly act on Koshtha and Rasa.

Shunthi, Bilva and Patha are Ushna, while Ativisha and Rasanjana are mildly Ushna. They produce Grahi and Vibandhaghna actions. The rest of the ingredients – Musta, Dhataki, Kutaja, Indrayava, Patha and Kutaki are Shita in nature. Except for Shunthi, all the other drugs are Ruksha. Thus, predominance of the Ruksha Guna is seen in this formulation.

Drugs like *Musta*, *Dhataki*, *Rasanjana*, *Kutaja*, *Indrayava*, *Patha*, *Kutaki* act on *Rakta Dhatu* by doing *Pachana* and *Prasadana* of *Rakta*. A few of the drugs also possess *Raktasangrahana* properties.

In a nutshell, together these constituents do *Deepana* of *Agni* and *Aama* and *Saama-dosha Pachana* by the virtue of *Tikta-Katu Rasa*, *Ushna Virya* and their *Deepan-Pachana* properties. But as the *Kalpa* is balanced with respect to the *Virya* of the *Dravyas*, the *Ushna Guna* of a few constituents doesn't increase *Pitta*. *Ruksha Guna* present in all the constituents except for *Shunthi* acts against the increased *Drava Guna* of *Pitta*. Together they produce a *Raktasangrahana* effect by doing *Dosha Pachana*, *Agni Deepana* and *Raktaprasadana*.^[13] *Shula* thus caused by *Pitta*, *Rakta* or obstructed *Vata* gets relieved. *Pravahika* and *Kaphanubandhi Arsha* also get relief due to the *Kaphaghna* properties of the *Churna*.

Its *Anupana* is described as *Madhu* and *Tandulodaka*. Classical texts usually describe them alongside *Stambhana* formulations, for example, *Pushyanuga Churna*. Both *Madhu* and *Tandulodaka* possess *Madhura* and *Kashaya Rasa* and are therefore useful for *Sangrahana*. However, these *Anupanas* should not be used in *Sama Avastha*. By changing the *Anupana*, the same formulation can also be used for the purpose of *Pachana*.

Dosha

- *Pittaghna* – particularly opposite to the qualities of *Drava*, *Sara*, *Snigdha* and *Ushna*.
- *Kaphaghna* – particularly opposite to the qualities of *Snigdha* and *Guru*.
- *Vataghna* – pacifies *Vata* produced due to obstruction of the channels, particularly *Vata* situated in the anal region.

Dushya: *Grahani*, *Agni* and *Rakta* (specific sites: *Guda* and *Pakvashaya*)

Principal actions: *Grahi*, *Deepana*, *Raktasangrahana*

B) Bhunimbadi Churna

In this formulation, approximately two-thirds of the total quantity is *Kutaja*. Therefore, the action of the formulation is greatly influenced by the action of *Kutaja* itself. *Charaka* has described *Kutaja* as “*Shleshma-Pitta-Rakta-Sangrahiropashoshananam Agryah*”^[14], meaning that it is the best choice of drug among those with *Kapha-Pitta*-pacifying, *Sangrahana* and *Upashoshana* actions. The *Ruksha Guna* plays a major role in these actions. Absorption of the *Drava* portion is the common factor underlying all these actions. The same property is beneficial in *Pittaja Grahani* as well.

Kutaja also possess *Pachana* and *Deepana* properties. It is more effective in diseases produced due to *Agni Dushti*, such as *Arsha*, *Atisara* and *Grahani*. It is included in the *Arshoghna* and *Kandughna Ganas* described by *Charaka*. It acts prominently on *Rasa* and *Rakta Dhatu*.

Because of the predominance of *Ruksha*, *Shita Guna* and *Tikta-Kashaya Rasa*, its *Sangrahana* action is strong. However, this may lead to *Vata* aggravation and *Vibandha* (constipation/obstruction). To prevent this, *Trikatu* and *Chitraka* have been included in *Bhunimbadi* in comparatively small quantities. They both excellently perform *Deepana* of *Agni*.

Among the other ingredients, *Bhunimba*, *Kutaki*, *Musta* and *Indrayava* are all *Tikta*, *Shita* and *Ruksha*, and possess *Pachana*, *Sangrahi* and *Pittashamaka* properties. These properties contribute in decreasing excess *Pitta* and enhancing *Agni* in *Pittaja Grahani*.

No specific condition associated with *Raktapravartana* has been mentioned in *Bhunimadi Churna*.

Various *Shakhagata Sampraptis* are also enlisted among the *Phalashruti* of the same. Thus, this *Churna* can pacify the *Shakhagata Pitta*. Excessive aggravation of *Pitta* due to *Amla-Lavana Rasa* and *Kshara* increases the *Drava* as well as the *Ushna Guna* in *Pitta*. This *Churna* will also help in pacifying the *Shakhagata Pitta* by the virtue of *Tikta Rasa*, *Pachana* properties and *Shita Guna*.

Maha so enlisted in the *Phalashruti* indicates the increase of *Drava Guna* in the body.

Since the *Anupana* of this formulation is *Guda-Shitambu* (jaggery with cold water), its use is considered appropriate in the *Nirama Avastha*. Most of the ingredients in this formulation have *Katu Vipaka*, which increases *Pitta*. The *Madhura Vipaka* of *Guda*, along with its affinity for the *Pakvashaya*, helps balance the *Katu Vipaka* of the ingredients. As there is no excessive *Ruksha* effect of the *Churna*, the chances of retention of stools are decreased. Since this is a *Tikta*-predominant formulation, by changing the *Anupana* it can also be used for *Pachana*, when appropriate.

Dosha

- **Pitta** – particularly opposite to the qualities of *Ushna*, *Drava*, *Snigdha* and *Sara*.
- **Kapha** – particularly opposite to the qualities of *Snigdha* and *Guru*.

Dushya: Agni, Grahani, Rasa, Rakta, Mansa and Meda.

Principal actions: *Drava-shoshana* (absorption of excess fluid) and *Vibandha-nashana* (removal of obstruction/constipation).

CONCLUSION

1. *Nagaradi Churna*: *Nagaradi Churna* is preferable when *Raktapravartana* is present. When *Ushna* and *Tikshna Gunas* are involved in the *Samprapti* like those for *Raktapravartana*, *Nagaradi Churna* is more appropriate. *Nagaradi Churna* is more useful for *Vatanulomana* and for relieving *Vibandha* and *Avaruddha Vata*.
2. *Bhunimbadi Churna* is indicated when more *Samshoshana* is required along with *Pachana*. *Bhunimbadi Churna* may be preferred when *Raktapravartana* is absent. In *Drava-pradhana Avastha* of *Pitta* or *Dhatus*, *Bhunimbadi Churna* is the better choice. In *Pittaja Grahani* associated with manifestations of *Shakhagata Pitta*, *Bhunimbadi Churna* is preferred.

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