

REVIEW OF DASHAPUSHPAM WSR TO VISHACHIKITSA**Dr. Tanuja Vyavahare^{1*}, Dr. Mamata Narvekar² and Dr. Sanjay Nandedkar³**

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ABSTRACT

Agadtantra is the one of the branches of Ashtang Ayurveda which deals with the signs and symptoms and also with management of poisoning resulting from various sources. Poison or Visha is mainly classified as Sthavar Jangam And Krutrim Visha Signs and symptoms of various type of poisoning is seen externally, internally or both. The external signs and symptoms appear on the skin in the form of local pain, Raga (Redness), Shotha (inflammation), Sphota (blisters/vesication), Kandu (Itching), Srava (oozing) etc. Treating these external signs and symptoms is important in the management of poisoning. Agada plays very important role in the Visha Chikitsa and is well described in Agadtantra is used in the treatment of various poisonous conditions arising due to Sthavar Visha, Jangam Visha, Gara Visha and Dooshi Visha. The utility of different parts of plant of course stated centuries ago specially the use of divine flowers like ketaki, kamala etc in various ailments in, the concept of Dashapushpam is a prominent

traditional medicine which constitute a group of ten potential herbs which are auspicious and medicinally potent to the people of south India especially state of Kerala, since from long time. These ten drugs are widely used by Visha vaidyas of Kerala to treat various diseases like wound, ulcer and fever of any origin.

KEYWORDS: Visha, Visha Chikitsa, Dashapushpam, Agada, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

Through this paper the authors makes review of various folklore, therapeutic uses and pharmacological studies conducted for the anti- cancer activity of Dashapushpa, a traditional medicine in the management of cancer. And also to draw the attention of research scholars and research institutes to these ten drugs. Thorough literary search was made through various Ayurvedic classical texts such as Arogya Kalpadruma, Sarvaroga Chikitsaratna, Abhidana manjari, Kodasheri margam, Prayoga samuchayam, Chikitsa kauthukam, Vaidya manorama and Agastya marmashastra and also various research papers. Methodology comprised of a concept about the role of traditionally used medicine, i.e. Dashapushpa in the management of cancer on the basis of its clinical practice by some traditional Visha Chikitsaka (traditional Vaidyas practising toxicology). Dashapushpam literally means ‘ten flowers’ (Dasham refers to ten and Pushpam ‘refers to ‘flowers’). In the present context, the word “Dashapushpam” refers to ‘ten species of plants.’ Dashapushpas are culturally and medically significant to the people of Kerala. All are used as ingredients in various Ayurvedic formulations (Sindhu et al., 2009). The plants referred to as Dashapushpas are listed in table: 1 (Mini VN et al., 2010).

Cultural view on Dashapushpas

As per the tradition of Kerala, women wear Dashapushpa garlands on the head. In front of the household shrine, the ten sacred plants of Dashapushpa were displayed in a gleaming brass plate in the Malayalam month of Karkkidakam (the monsoon season in Kerala when diseases are more prominent and the body has little resistance against diseases) in the olden days. It is also used with “Ashtamangalyam” (group of eight auspicious materials which are carried on a large bronze vessel for offerings) during marriage functions. It was also prescribed by the Rajavaidyas (doctors for the king) to the ladies to wear these plants on their head, probably due to the medicinal value imparted by them. Dashapushpas are been eaten in the form of Karkkadaka kanji in Karkkidaka masam to get better health in the upcoming monsoon season (Jiny et al., 2010). They are considered auspicious and each herb is associated with a deity in Hindu mythology. It has been shown in table: 2 (Mini VN et al., 2010).

Table 1: General Description of *Dashapushpa* – The group of ten Medicinal flowers

| SANSKRIT NAME | LATIN NAME | POPULAR ENGLISH NAME | FAMILY NAME | PARTSUSED |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Bhadra | <i>Aerva lanata</i> (L.) Juss. | Indian water lily | Amaranthaceae | Wholeplant |
| Viparitha lajjalu | <i>Biophytum sensitivum</i> (L.) DC. | Sensitive wood Sorrel | Oxalidaceae | Wholeplant |
| Indravalli | <i>Cardiospermum Halicacabum</i> (Linn.) | Balloon vine | Menispermaceae | Shoots,leaves |
| Musali | <i>Curculigo orchoides</i> Gaertn. | Black musali | Amaryllidaceae | Tuber |
| Durva | <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (Pers.) | Bermuda grass | Poaceae | Leaves |
| Bhringaraja | <i>Eclipta alba</i> (L.) Hassk. | | Asteraceae | Shoots, leaves |
| Akhukarni | <i>Emilia sonchifolia</i> (L.) DC. | Canada Flea-bane | Convolvulaceae | Shoots, leaves |
| Harikrantha | <i>Evolvulus alsinoides</i> (Linn.) Linn. | Slenderdwarf morning glory | Convolvulaceae | Wholeplant |
| Lakshmana | <i>Ipomea sepiaria</i> Roxb. | Ipomea | Convolvulaceae | Whole plant |
| Sahadevi | <i>Vernonia cinerea</i> L. | Ash coloured Flea-bane | Asteraceae | Whole plant |

1. Gorakshaganja (Bhadra) (God: Lord Yama)

Scientific Name – *Aerva lanata* (Linn.) juss. Family – Amaranthaceae Much branched pubescent woody herb flowers minute white in axillary spicate clusters. The whole plant is diuretic (*Mutrala*), lithotriptic (*Ashmari bhedana*), diabetis (*Prameha*) and haemetemesis (*Raktapitta*). Yama the lord of death; hence the plant is included in all funeral rituals. It is believed to destroy the causative factors of all unhealthy features and bestow good health.

2. Alambusha (God: Sreeparvathy)

Scientific Name – *Biophytum sensitivum*(L.) DC.Family: Asteraceae

An erect hispid herb, leaves sensitive in touch, compound, crowded in to a rosette at tip of the stem, flowers small yellow in long peduncled umbel inflorescence. The whole plant alleviate fever (*Jwara*), burning sensation (*Daha*), cronic cough (*kasa*) and urinary calculi (*Ashmari*) Ladies always wear this on hair for the health of husband and children. There is a belief that Alambusha with three flowers at the same time in an inflorescence is a symbol of finding fortune underneath it.

3. Indravalli (God: Lord Indra)

Scientific Name – *Cardiospermum halicacabum* L. Family – Sapindaceae Annual tendrillar hook climber, leaves deeply lobed, flower small white in axillary cymose fruit a capsule. Root

and leaves are diuretic (*Mutrala*), good for hair (*Keshya*), fever (*jwara*), and oedema (*shotha*). Dharana of this has proven to fulfill all the wishes and for attaining salvation after death, also stated that tying the plant around the pot with which first cooking is done for the child to getting food without any obstacles throughout the life.

4. Krishna Musali (God: Prithvidevi)

Scientific Name – *Curculigo orchioides Gaertn.* Family: Hypoxidaceae

A small perennial herb with long cylindric, root-stock. Flowers small, yellow in short scape. Musali is a reputed rejuvenative (*rasayana*), aphrodisiac (*Vrishya*), cough (*kasa*), jaundice (*Kamala*), and urinary diseases (*Mutra vikara*).

Dharana of the herb musali proven to be good for acquiring patience and tolerance also for getting better wisdom righteousness etc

5. Durva (God: Lord Surya)

Scientific Name - *Cynodon dactylon (Linn.) pers.* Family: Poaceae

It is a perennial slender creeping herb of grass family with small white flowers in spikelet. The entire herb is used in epistaxis (*Nasagata raktapitta*), haematuria (*Adhoga raktapitta*) and scabies.

Woring this plant is believed to cure all diseases, brings longevity, pregnant ladies wear this for getting good and healthy off springs.

6. Bhringaraja (God: Lord Brahma)

Scientific Name – *Eclipta prostrata(L.) L.* Family: Asteraceae

It is an erect or prostrate strigosely hairy herb with white small flowers in axillary heads. The whole plant is a good rejuvenator (*Rasayana*), good for hair (*Keshya*), skin (*twachya*), eye diseases (*akshiroga*), cough and asthma (*kasa-swasa*).

Wearing this while meditating Lord Siva is like confession so that he will forgive all our sins and provide good and harmonious married life.

7. Shashasruti (God: Lord Chandra)

Scientific Name – *Emilia sonchifolia DC.* Family – Asteraceae

It is an erect decumbent or straggling annual herb bearing both radical and cauline leaves, flowers purplish or red on terminal long peduncled solitary or lax corymb. The whole plant is used in fever (*Jwara*), intestinal worm (*Udara krimi*), ear diseases (*Karna roga*) and specific for bleeding piles (*Raktarshas*). Wearing this will bring peace of mind and become more

beauty.

8. Vishnukrantha (God: Lord Vishnu)

Scientific Name - *Evolvulus alsinoides* (Linn.) Linn. Family: Convolvulaceae

It is a diffuse densely hispid herb with spreading branches, flowers blue, solitary on axillary filiform peduncles. Whole herb is specific for all kind of fevers (*Jwara*), a powerful brain stimulant (*Medya*), aphrodisiac (*Vrishya*), and uterine bleeding (*Asrigdara*)

Those who wearing this will get the blessings of lord Vishnu and all his "Avathaars"(incarnation) and all the prosperity in life.

9. Lakshmana (God: Mahalakshmi)

Scientific Name - *Ipomoea sepiaria* Koenig ex Roxb Family: Convolvulaceae

A slender twiner with slightly thickened perennial root, leaves ovate with cordate base, bloched with brownish patches towards the middle. Flowers light pink funnel shaped, fruit a capsule. It promotes bodily strength (*Balya*) and a reputed drug to cure sterility in women (*Vandyatva*). Those who wearing this will get blessings from Godess Lakshmi (Sree Bhagavathy), improves wealth and prosperity of the house, and Heart shaped leaves is believed to bring purity of heart.

10. Sahadevi (God: Lord Brahma)

Scientific Name – *Vernonia cinerea*(Linn.)Less. Family: Asteraceae

An erect hispid herb, leaves simple in variable shape and size, flower heads pinkish violet. The entire plant is considered very beneficial in fever (*jwara*), subdues mental distraction (*chetovikara*), leucorrhoea (*astisrava*) and bestows happiness and beauty (*mangalya and Kanti*) to women. Those who wear this herb will get blessings from Lord Brahma and removes poverty and sadness. There is a belief that if we worship this plant everyday, even the gateway will become gold. Bride and groom use this in form of collyrium made from this plant on the wedding day for getting the successful married life.

Therapeutic use of Dashapushpas

Dashapushpas are therapeutically active against fever, dysentery, haemorrhage, constipation, lithiasis, strangury, headache, dyspepsia, jaundice, liver congestion, pneumonia, typhoid, insomnia, tumours etc (Radhamani and Muralidharan, 2000). Herbs play a significant role in pharmaceutical industries as natural sources of life saving drugs (Khanna et al., 2008). Healthcare sectors around the world, more frequently than ever are facing the problems of

combating the entry of novel, mutant pathogenic strains of microorganisms and their resistance against synthetic drugs (Khanna et al., 2008). This calls for the discovery of new antimicrobial compounds with diverse chemical structures and novel mechanisms of action. Natural products either as pure compounds or as standardized plant extracts is the right solution because of their unmatched display of chemical diversity (Parekh and Chanda, 2007). Essential oils from some plants like *Allium* sp. having antimicrobial properties can be used as natural antimicrobial additives in food production (Benkeblia, 2004). But for the development of safe and effective antimicrobials based on indigenous knowledge and ethno medicine, the screening of enormous, untapped plant wealth is inevitable (Amit and Shailendra, 2006). The wild flora of Peninsular India, one among the mega diversity centres in the world still remains to be exploited for its medicinal properties. These plants are therapeutically very active for various diseases and ailments. These are used from time immemorial in Visha Chikitsa. Some of them are scientifically validated for various bioactivities related to anti-cancer therapy. Dashapushpas has been used by traditional Vaidyas of Visha Chikitsa.

DISCUSSION

The concept of Dashapushpam also known as divine flowers, which is a unique practice of Kerala state that not only shows their religious importance, the season in which used the dashapushpam are in Pitta – Rakta doshas are vitiated. The herbs that are given importance in these are predominant of Tikta, Kashaya, Katu rasas which boosts up the digestive fire, Cleanses the channels, wound healing, increases the intellect, anthelmintic, nutritious and proves to be immunoboosting, rejuvenating and aphrodising properties. So also the herbs mentioned in this group are easily available in western ghat regions and are used alone or as combinations in regular dietary substance by preparing local recipies like Karkataka kanji (Medicinal rice soup) etc.

CONCLUSION

The therapeutic potential of these ten sacred plants are unlimited and un-explored completely to cure various illness. Same time the population of these plants getting reduced day by day due to natural destruction. Hence we should conserve these medicinal plants and should try to discover new set of actions through scientific methodologies. The traditional practices which our ancestors were practicing will definitely have the scientific background which in those days was un explored hence it is the need of the hour for young researchers to explore those

secrets and efforts to be done in their standardization, mode of pharmacological activities, toxicity studies and clinical trials may help to develop new drugs for treating various diseases.

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