



Indian Journal of Agriculture and Allied Sciences

A Refereed Research Journal

ISSN 2395-1109
e-ISSN 2455-9709

www.mrfsw.org

Volume: 3, No.: 1, Year: 2017

Received: 16.12.2016, Accepted: 09.02.2017

AN OVERVIEW: *Withania somnifera* (Linn.) DUNAL IN KOSHA AND NIGHANTUS

Priyanka Gautam¹, Sanjeev Kumar² and Anil Kumar Singh³

¹Junior Resident, ²Assistant Professor and ³Professor & Head, Department of Dravyaguna, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-221005, Mob.: 9453494755, E-mail: priyankagautam190@gmail.com, Corresponding Author: Priyanka Gautam

Abstract: Ayurveda is the only medical system which believes in holistic approach of treatment, *Withania somnifera* (Linn.) Dunal. is a branched erect under shrub used widely in medicine for internal use. Drugs are the essential tool of the physician for preservation of health and management of disorders. These fall in three categories- vegetable, mineral and animal products out of which plants dominate the field. Since earliest times compilation of terms relating to medicinal plants has been taken up. One may find such attempt in the vedic nighantus where terms have been compiled at one place so that their meanings become clear. Different Koshas and Nighantu have given synonyms of so many medicinal plants, in which one is Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) a well known plant is used in promoting body strength and sexual potency, provide male progeny and also used in various vatika disorders. The aim of present work is to discuss its description in Kosha, Astanga Nighantu, Sausruta Nighantu and other various Nighantus in chronological order.

Keywords: Ashwagandha, *Withania somnifera*, Kosha, Nighantus.

Introduction: Ashwagandha consists of dried mature roots of *Withania somnifera*^[1]. It is a branched erect undershrub 0.3-1.5m. high, branches terete, usually clothed with mealy stellate hoary tomentum. Leaves of *Withania somnifera* are 2-2.5cm, ovate, subacute, entire, more or less minutely stellately pubescent, base acute; main nerve about 6 pairs, stout, conspicuous; petioles 6-13mm. long stellately tomentose. Flowers of *Withania somnifera* are greenish or lurid yellow, usually about 5 together in a sessile umbellate cyme; pedicel 0.4mm. long^[2].

Withania somnifera is an important tropical medicinal plant belongs to the family

Regional Language Name^[1]:

Latin	: <i>Withania somnifera</i>
Assamese	: Ashvagandha
Bengali	: Ashvagandha
Gujarati	: Asgandha
Hindi	: Asgandh
Kannada	: Angarberu
Kashmiri	: Asagandh
Malayalam	: Amukkuram
Marathi	: Asagandha, Askagandha

Solanaceae. This under shrub is found in dried region of India and is wild grown almost throughout country ascending upto 5000ft. It is known as 'Indian Ginseng' for its wide range of therapeutic uses in Ayurvedic and other traditional system of medicine. More than 91 pharmaceutical products are produced from this plant (Rai et al. 2001)^[3].

Constituents: Alkaloids, Withanone, Withaferin A, Withanolides & Withanosides^[1].

Therapeutic Uses: Kshaya (Emaciation), Daurbalya (Weakness), Vataroga (Diseases of Vata dosha), Sotha (Inflammation), Klaihya (Male impotence)^[1].

Oriya	: Aswagandha
Punjabi	: Asgandh
Tamil	: Amukkaramkizangu
Telugu	: Pennerugadda
Urdu	: Asgand

Ashwagandha has been mentioned in various classical texts of Ayurvedic system of medicine like Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Vagbhata Samhita, Bhavprakash Samhita, Dhanwantri Nighantu and other Nighantus. In Charak Samhita it is indicated in preparation of Mula Ashava and Aphrodisiac, and in diseases like

Jvara(Fever), Rajyakshama(Tuberculosis), Udar roga(Abdominal diseases), Arsha(Piles), Swasa(Asthma), Kasa(cough), Visha(Poisoning), Vatika disorders etc^[4]. In Sushruta Samhita it is mentioned in group of Sleshma sophanasak, Vrana Ropana and in best Utsadana dravyas, also

Properties and Action^[1]:

Rasa : Tikta, Kashaya,

Guna : Laghu

Virya : Usna

Vipaka : Madhura

Karma : Vatakaphashamak, Balya, Rasayana, Vajikaran.

Materials & Methods

Vaijyanti Kosha: Vaijyanti kosha written in the form of Eight kanda which is divided into two parts Paryaya bhaga and Nanartha bhaga. Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) described in name of "Ashwagandhi" in the 3rd Vanodhaya chapter of Bhumikanda, having Tikta rasa and Katuparpatao, Ashwakanda synonyms^[6].

Dhanwantri Nighantu (10-13th Cent. A.D.): In the beginning of Nighantus era, author named this nighantu as 'Drayawali'. Ashwagandha(*Withania somnifera*) mentioned in Asthapanadi gana, used in asthapanasti, that act as a carminative(Dipan). The first varga of this nighantu is Guduchyadi varga. Ashwagandha described in this with synonyms of Vajigandha, Kanchuka, Aswawrohaka, Varahkarni, Turgi, Balya & Vagikari. Here also described about the pharmacological properties of Ashwagandha are Kashaya, Tikta rasa, Usna virya, effective in Visha(Poisoning), Vrana(Wound), Kshaya(Emaciation) and promoting Kanti(Lusture), Virya(Sexual potency), and Bala(Body strength).^[7]

Sodhala Nighantu (12th Cent.A.D.): This nighantu was composed by Sodhala in two parts. 'Guduchyadi varga' is the first varga of this nighantu in which Ashwagandha(*Withania somnifera*) has been described with various synonyms with properties are Varahkarni, Turgi,

indicated in diseases like Vatarakta(Gout), Visarpa, Mudhagarbha^[5]. There is no description of Ashwagandha find in Amarkosha & Medinikosha and in earliest Nighantu -Astanga Nighantu, Saushruta Nighantu and others like Pushpayurveda, Vanausadhi Vimarsha. But Medicinal properties of Ashwagandha(*Withania somnifera*) with synonyms is detailed in Dhanwantri Nighantu, Madanpal Nighantu, Kaidev Nighantu, Bhavaprakash Nighantu etc. Ashwagandha has prominent place in medicinal plants. Its most useful part is Root (mula) which is mentioned by Acharya Charaka (1000B.D.-4th Cent. A.D.) in preparation of Mula Ashava^[4].

Balya, Vajikari, Kusthagandha, Kandara, Aswarohaka, Vargatrakari, Punya, Sistagandha, Peevra, Elaparni, Marutaghni, Syamala, Kamrupini^[8].

Hridaya Dipaka Nighantu (13th Cent.A.D.): The author of this book is Bopdeva. The subject of this nighantu is divided into eight varga. Ashwagandha(*Withania somnifera*) has been described in dravyas of 'Ekpadavarga'^[9].

Abhidhanaratnamala(Sadrasi Nighantu) (13th Cent.A.D.)

There are six Skanda described in Sadrasi nighantu. Ashwagandha(*Withania somnifera*) was described in the last one 'Kashaya Skanda'. Varahkarni, Balya and Bhutabalya described as synonyms of this plant^[10].

Madanapala Nighantu (14th Cent.A.D.): Ashwagandha(*Withania somnifera*) has been mentioned in 'Abhyadi varga'. It is effective in soppa(inflammation), Svitra(Vitiligo), Kshaya(Emaciation). The synonyms of Ashwagandha are Turanghwa, Gokarna, Aswarohaka, Varahkarni, Varda, Balya, Vajikari, Vrasa. The pharmacological properties and action also described as kashaya, Tikta rasa, Usna virya, Balya(strength promoting), Rasayana effect(Rejuvenation) and Atisukrala(Increase production of semen)^[11].

Kaidev Nighantu (Pathyapathya Vibodhaka) (15th Cent.A.D.): In this nighantu Ashwagandha

(*Withania somnifera*) is described in first varga i.e. 'Aoshadhi varga'. The synonyms of Ashwagandha has been enumerated here Kusthagandha, Hiyahwa, Ashwarohaka, Varahkarni, Gokarni, Turgi, Varda, Vrasa, Balya, Vajikari, Peeta, Bahirpich, Kanchuki. Its properties are kashaya, Tikta rasa and Usna virya with action of Vrisya(Aphrodisiac), Rasayana, Balya, also effective in Kasa, Vrana, Sopha(Inflammation), Kandu(Itching), Visha, Svitra, Krimi(Worm infestation), Shvasa, Kshata, Kshaya^[12].

Bhavaprakasha Nighantu (16th Cent.A.D.): Ashwagandha(*Withania somnifera*) is described in third varga of Bhavaprakasha Nighantu, which named as 'Guduchyadi varga'. All synonyms of 'Haya(Horse)' is consider as the synonyms of *Withania somnifera*. Rasa of *Withania somnifera* is Tikta-Kasaya and Usna virya. Varahkarni, Varda, Balda, Kusthgandhini have been also described in this nighantu. The following karma of Ashwagandha have been enumerated as Vata-Kapha nasaka, Balya, Rasayana, Atisukrala and effective in Svitra, kshaya, Sotha^[13].

Gunaratnamala (16th Cent.A.D.): Gunaratnamala of Bhavamishra 'Ashwagandha' word has been used in 6th 'Guduchyadi varga' with guna-karma and characteristic features are Tikta-Kashaya rasa, Usna virya, Balya, Rasayan, Atisukrala and Sopha, Svitra, kshaya, Vatakaphahara action^[14].

Raja Nighantu (17th Cent.A.D.): In this Nighantu Ashwagandha(*Withania somnifera*) described in 'Satahvadi varga'. There are so many synonyms described like Vajigandha, Kambukastha, Vrahika, Varahkarni, Turgi, Vanja, Vjini, Hayi, Pustida, Balda, Punya, Hayagandha, Peevra, Palashparni, Vtaghni, Syamala, Kamrupini, Kalpriyakari, Balya, Gandhapatri, Hayapriya & Barahpatri. It has been Katu and Tikta rasa, Usna virya, smell like Madagandha(Sedative), Balya(strength enhancer), effective in Vatika disorders Kasa-Shvasa-Kshaya-Vrana^[15].

Shaligrama Nighantu (20th Cent.A.D.): Saligrama Nighantu written by Lala Saligram. A new synonym 'Katuka' metioned with other synonyms like Vajigandha, Ashwarohaka, Varahkarni, Turgi, Balya, Vajikari & Haya. The properties of Ashwagandha(*Withania somnifera*) also described as described in Bhavaprakash Nighantu & Raj Nighantu^[16].

Nighantu Adarsha (20th Cent.A.D.): This book written by Vaidya Bapalalji for the identification of medicinal plants in 20th century. In this

Ashwagandha(*Withania somnifera*) considered as herb in 'Kantakaryadi Varga' and used tuber of this plant having a single property Vajikara(Aphrodisiac). Kandini, Vajigandha, Parpotivatphala, Vanja & Vrataparni are the synonyms described here^[17].

Shankaranighantu (20th Cent.A.D.): The author of this book is Pandit Shankara Datt Gaur. It is indicated in Vatakapha-Sopha, Svitra Kustha, Kshaya roga. It is Strength promoting, Rejuvenating, and Aphrodisiac agent^[18].

Mahausadha Nighantu (20th Cent.A.D.): Mahausadha Nighantu written by Pt. Aryadasa Kumar Singh. Synonyms of Ashwagandha are Vajigandha, Vajini, Kamrupini, Varahkarni, Varda, Hiyahwa & Kusthagandhini. It is indicated in Vata-Kapha disorders-Svitra-Sotha-Kshaya and Balya, Rasayana and Sukrala^[19].

Priya Nighantu (20th Cent.A.D.): This nighantu is written by the great personality of modern ere Acharya Priya Vrit Sharma. Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) has been find in the 'Satpushpadi varga' of this Nighantu. As usual Tikta rasa of this plant mentioned here and properties are Vatahara, Enhancement of body strength, Increased production of semen and Rejuvenation^[20].

Shodshanghridyam (20th Cent.A.D.): In this Nighantu Acharya Priya Vrit Sharma considered, Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) as a drug which enhances the Sexual desire and potency like Vaji(horse) in man & described properties are Balya, Rasayana & best in Vatika disorders^[21].

Conclusion: From the period of ancient time various plants are used in various diseases as a food and medicines. In the Traditional system of medicine there are so many medicinal plants used by medical practioners, in which one is Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is a popular plant which is used by traditional medical practitioner to cure various disorders, enhancement of sexual potency and body strength and rejuvenation and results are very encouraging. So, it indicate this herb should be more studied more.

In present work with the help of literature i.e. Kosha and various Nighantus we will reach to medicinal plant very easily and take the benefit of its(W.S.) medicinal properties. Further need to clinical studies should be conducted as well as animal based studies for the understanding of proper mechanism of action of *Withania somnifera* (Ashwagandha).

References

1. The Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India. (2011). Part 1, Vol.8, Edition 1st Govt. of India, Dept. of AYUSH, New Delhi. pp.28-39.
2. Kirtikar, K.R. & Basu, B.D. (1935). Indian Medicinal Plants, Vol.3rd, Edition 2nd, M/S Bishen Singh, New Connaught Place, Dehra Dun, pp.1773-1779.
3. Rezwana Khan, et al. (2010). *Communities of endophytic Fungi in Medicinal plant Withania somnifera*, *Park.J.Bot.*, 42(2): 1281-1287.
4. Shastri Sri Satyanarayan. (2009). *Charak Samhita of Agnivesha*, Vidyotini Hindi Comm., Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Varanasi, part 1-479, (part 2-525,773).
5. Shastri Ambikadutt (Ed). (2012). *Sushruta Samhita*, Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 177.
6. Hargovindashastri Pt. (Ed). (2008). *Sriyadavprakashacharya, Vaijyanti Kosha, Bhumikanda*, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Varanasi, pp.39.
7. Singh Amrit Pal. (1925). *Dhanwantri Nighantu, Aasthapanadi Gana & Guduchyadi Varga*, Puna, pp.9&73.
8. Dwivedi, R.R. (2009). *Sodhala, Sodhala Nighantu, Guduchyadi Varga*, Comm., Chaukhamba Krishnadas Academy Varanasi, 1st Edition. pp.52.
9. Sharma, P.V. (1997). *Bopadeva, Hridayadipaka Nighantu with Siddhamantraprakash, Ekapada Varga*, Chaukhamba Amarabharti Varanasi, 1st Edition. pp.7.
10. Penchala Goli Prashad. (2009). *Sadrasa Nighantu, Kashaya Skandha*, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series Varanasi, 1st Edition. pp.117.
11. Tripathi Pandit Harihar Prashad. (2009). *Madanpal Nighantu, Abhyadi Varga*, Chaukhamba Krishnadas academy Varanasi, pp.36.
12. Sharma, P.V. and Sharma Guruprasad (Ed.). (1979). *Kaiyadeva, Kaiyadeva Nighantu, Aushadhi Varga*, Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi, 1st Edition, pp.193.
13. Chuneekar, K.C. and Pandey, C.S. (Ed.). (1982). *Bhavmishra, Bhavaprakasha Nighantu, Guduchyadi Varga*, Chaukhamba Bharat Academy, Varanasi.6th edition. pp.111.
14. Sharma, P.V. (2006). *Gunaratnamala, Guduchyadi Varga*, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Bhawan, Varanasi, 1st Edition, pp.252-253.
15. Tripathi Indradev. (1988). *Raj Nighantu, Satahvadi varga*, Acharya Vishwanath Dwivedi Pub. Krishna Das Academy, Varanasi, pp.83.
16. Lala Saligramjivaisya. (2011) *Shaligram Nighantu, Nighantu Bhusanam, Guduchyadivarga*, Khemraj Shri krishna Das Mumbai, pp.293-294.
17. Bapalal G. Vaidya. (2007). *Nighantu Adarsha, Kantakaryadi Varga*, Chaukhamba Bharat Academy, Varanasi, pp.134-141.
18. Gaur Pandit Shankardatt. (2002) *Shankaranighantu, Pratham bhaga*, Chaukhamba Subharati Prakashan, Varanasi, pp.13.
19. Singh Pandit Aryadasa Kumar. (1971). *Mahausadha Nighantu*, Chaukhamba Bharati Academy, Varanasi, pp.124.
20. Sharma, P.V. (2004). *Priya Nighantu, Satpushpadi varga*, Chowkhamba Surabharati Prakashan Varanasi, pp.110.
21. Sharma, P.V. (2002). *Shodshanghrityam, Dravyagunam*, Chaukhamba Viswabharati Varanasi, 2nd Edition, pp.48.