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SYNONYMS AND THERAPEUTIC REVIEW OF SHATAVARI (*Asparagus racemosus* Willd.) FROM KOSHA AND NIGHANTUS

Sanjeev Kumar^a, Sarvesh Kumar Bharati^b and Anil Kumar Singh^c

^aPh. D Scholar, ^bM.D.(Ay.) and ^cProfessor & Head, Department of Dravyaguna, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India, E-mail: Drsanju38@gmail.com, Mob. 09451108691, Corresponding Author: Sanjeev Kumar

Abstract: Shatavari consists of tuberous roots of *Asparagus racemosus* Willd. (Fam. Liliaceae), an ascending, spinous much branched, perennial climber found throughout the country. It is also useful in treatment of Epilepsy, Kidney disorders, Chronic fever, Excessive heat, Gastric ulcers and Liver cancer, increases milk secretion in nursing mothers and regulates sexual behaviors. It is believed that at the end of each Samhita a Nighantu was there. In this work a Nighantu of Sushruta named Sausruta Nighantu and another by Vaghata the Astanga Nighantu are discussed. The present work aims to discuss Shatavari in various nighantus as manuscripts or just as evidence - in a chronological order.

Keyword: Nighantu, Ayurveda, *Asparagus racemosus*, Shatavari, Kosha.

Introduction : The plant Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus* Willd; Fam. Liliaceae) is an ascending, spinous, much branched, perennial climber. It is indigenous to tropical and subtropical India and quite commonly met within most states from sea level to about 1,400 m elevation ^[1]. *Asparagus racemosus* Willd. (family Asparagaceae; Liliaceae), is commonly called Satavari, Satawar or Satmuli in Hindi; Satavari in Sanskrit; Shatamuli in Bengali; Shatavari or Shatmuli in Marathi; Satawari in Gujarati; Toala-gaddalu or Pilli-gaddalu in Telegu; Shimaishadavari or Inli-chedi in Tamil; Chatavali in Malayalam; Majjigegadde or Aheruballi in Kannada; Kairuwa in Kumaon; Narbodh or atmooli in Madhya Pradesh; and Norkanto or Satawar in Rajasthan. The term Nighantu is based on the term Nigama. The etymology of nigama is, which brings out the extremely concealed or secret meaning of words in systemic way. This tradition was also adopted by the Ayurvedic scholars to clarify the technical words specially in the field of dravyaguna. Earlier nighantus were limited to explain the synonyms only. After some time the description of properties, action and indications are also included in the nighantu along with synonyms. The Nighantu literature is one of the important aspect in the study of Ayurveda and

specially in the subject of Dravyaguna Vijnana. The Nighantu literature is also as ancient as Ayurveda. Much importance has not been given to the study of Nighantu. The ancient Nighantus were actually like Kosa, containing the synonyms of dravya. Later on, the drugs were given the description of properties, actions and their uses. In true sense the Nighantu means collection of words, synonyms and the names of the medicinal substances. Ramavatar Sharma in his introduction to Kalpadru Kosa of Kesava uses the term Nighantu for the glossaries connected with Ayurveda. To understand precisely what is aimed at these glossaries are called as 'Ayurveda Nighantu'. The Nighantu may be defined as a glossary containing synonymous groups, the names of the drugs, plants, animals, minerals or anything that is administered either as food or medicine to the human body. 'Shatavari' is explained in almost all the important nighantus with a variety of synonyms and guna-karmas.

Materials & Methods

Amarakosha (5th Cent. A.D): This book is the compilation done by Amar Singh. In this book total subject was divided into 3 parts. First and second parts include 10 chapters each and third part comprises of 5 chapters. The total subject was narrated with synonyms. "Shatavari" has

been mentioned in the *Vanausadhi Varga* of Bhumyadi kanda. Here word 'Shatavari' has been used in feminine gender. Its synonyms has been mentioned as Shatamuli, Bahusuta, Abhiru, Indivari, Vari, Rishyaprokta, Abhirupattri, Narayanya, Shatavari^[2].

Sausruta Nighantu (6th Cent. A.D) 'Based on Susruta Samhita': In this Nighantu 'Shatavari' has been described in Vidarigandhadi gana. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e. Shatavari, Sukshmapatra, Pivari, Indivari, Abhiru, Bahumula, Jatamula^[3].

Ashtanga Nighantu (8th Cent. A.D): In this nighantu, Acharya Vahata has described maximum group of drugs on the basis of classification of Ashtanga Sangraha and Astanga Hridaya. In addition, some drugs are also mentioned in viprakirna varga. In this Nighantu 'Shatavari' has been described in Vidarigandhadi gana. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e. Phanajihva, Parnyabhiru, Pivari, Indivari, Vari, Sukshmapatra, Dwipishatru, Shatamuli^[4].

Dhanvantari Nighantu (10th – 13th Cent. A.D): In the beginning of nighantu, author pays homage to lord Dhanawantari and again he mentions its name as Dravyavali. At the end of Dravyavali author desires to describe the drugs of Dravyavali with their synonyms and after that he has described their properties and actions along with synonyms. In this nighantu Shatavari has been described in Guduchyadi Varga. In Guduchyadi varga of this nighantu synonyms of 'Shatavari' i.e. Shatapadi, Pivari, Indivari, Vari, Rishyaprokta, Dwipishatru, Dwipika, Urdhwakantaka are mentioned. It has Tikta, Madhura rasa; Shita virya; Vatapittashamaka properties. It has been indicated in Kshaya, Raktavikara, Shukravardhaka and as Rasayana^[5].

Sodhala Nighantu (12th Cent. A.D): This nighantu was composed by Sodhala in two parts named as Namasangraha dealing with synonyms and Gunasangraha dealing with properties and actions. In Guduchyadi varga of Sodhala nighantu synonyms of 'Shatavari' i.e. Shatasvarya, Shatapadi, Pivari, Vari, Rishyaprokta, Dwipishatru, Dwipika, Adharkandaki, Sahasravirya, Tugini, Bahupatrika, Mahapurushdanta, Shatavarya, Urdhwakantaka are mentioned⁵. Its properties has described as Madhura tikta rasa, Tridosha shamaka. It is indicated as Hridya, Balya, and Rsayana^[6] etc.

Hridayadipaka Nighantu (13th Cent. A.D): The author of this work is Bopadeva son of Keshava. The subject matter of this work is well divided into eight vargas. It follows metric style of Paryaya ratnamala of Madhava. In this nighantu Shatavari has been mentioned in Tripada varga, with its synonyms Shatapatra, Bahusuta, Shatamuli, Shatavirya, Varyabhiru, Mahapurushadantika^[7].

Abhidhanaratnamala (Sadrasa Nighantu) (13th Cent. A.D): In Abhidhanaratnamala synonyms of Shatavari are described in Swaduskandha dravya as Sukshmapatra, Dwipishatru, Shatamuli, Tugini, Bahupatra, Dwipini, Urdhwakantaka^[8].

Madhava-dravyaguna (13th Cent. A.D): In Madhava dravyaguna Shatavari is described in Vividhaushadhi varga along with other drugs^[9]. It has Kashaya, Madhura rasa; Shita virya and Vatapittashamak properties.

Madanpala Nighantu (14th Cent. A.D): 'Shatavari' has been mentioned in "Abhayaadi varga". Madanapala has included following synonyms of *Shatavari*: - Dwipishatru, Dwipika, Dharakantaka, Narayani, Shatapadi, Shatapada, Bahupatrika. Regarding its properties it has been said as Shita in virya; Guru, Snigdha guna. It is indicated in Shukra, Stanya vikara and Vatapittaj roga^[10].

Kaiyadev Nighantu (Pathyapathya Vibodhaka) (15th Cent. A.D): In this Nighantu 'Shatavari' is described in "*Aushadhi Varga*" with following synonyms i.e. Bahuputra, Shatapadi, Shatamuli, Narayani, Dwipishatru, Dwipika, Adharkantaka. Regarding its properties it has been said as Shita in virya, Tikta-Madhura rasa, Guru-snigdha guna and Vatapittashamaka doshakarma. Here 'Shatavari' has been mentioned for various disorders such as Shukra, Stanya, Rakta vikara and as a Medhya^[11].

Bhavaprakasa Nighantu (16th Cent. A.D): This book is written by Bhavamishra who is an important landmark in the history of Indian Medicine. He stands at the junction of the medieval and modern periods which is the turning point for its future course and also because of the fact that he revived, the style of Samhitas and contributed a good deal to various aspects of Ayurveda by adding new ideas and drugs. 'Shatavari' has been mentioned in Guduchyadi varga and following synonyms are found in this Nighantu- *Bahusuta, Bheeru, Indivari, Vari, Narayani, Shatapadi, Shatvirya, Pivari*. It possesses Madhura-tikta rasa, Shita

virya, Guru guna and Vatapittashamaka in doshakarma. Which make it useful in Shukravardhaka, Stanyakaraka, Medhya, and as Rasayana^[12].

Gunaratnamala (16th Cent. A.D.): In Gunaratnamala of Bhavamishra 'Shatavari' word has been used in 'Guduchyadi Varga' as usual and its guna karma along with characteristic features are described as Guru, Snigdha guna; Madhura Tikta rasa; Shita virya and indicated in Gulma, Atisara, Shukra, Stanya and has Vatapittahara action^[13].

Rajanighantu (Nighantu Raja, Abhidhana chudamani) (17th Cent. A.D): This book is written by Narhari Pandit, who has given first place to Dravyaguna in Astanga Ayurveda. This book is particularly based on the Dhanwantari nighantu. The subject matter has been divided into 23 chapters.

'Shatavari' is included in "Shatahayadi varga". It possesses Madhura rasa; Shita virya; Madhura vipaka properties. In this nighantu thirty one synonyms of 'Shatavari' are mentioned. Synonyms of Shatavari mentioned in Raja nighantu It is useful in Kaphavata and pitta disorder are Shatapadi, Pivari, Indivari, Vari, Bhiru, Dipya, Dwipishatru, Dwipika, Amarkantika, Sukshmapatra, Bahumula, Narayani, Swadurasa, Shatahvaya, Laghuparnika, Atmashalya, Jatamula, Shatvirya, Mahaudani, Madhura, Shatamula, Keshika, Shatnetrika, Vishwakhya, Vaishnavi, Karshani, Vasudevi, Variyasi, Durmara, Tejavalli.^[14]

Nighantu Adarsa (20th Cent. A.D.): This book was published in Gujarat, its author, is vaidya Bapalaji who is the authoritative person of 20th century for identification of Ayurvedic plants. He has mentioned all the relevant materials from different Ayurvedic texts as well as modern medical and botanical works. In Adarsa nighantu 'Shatavari' is described in 'Lashunadi varga'. It has said to possess Tikta.madhura rasa; Shita virya; Madhura Vipaka and Vatapittashamaka^[15] properties.

Priya Nighantu (20th Cent. A.D.): In this nighantu 'Shatavari' is described in 'Pippalyadi varga'. It possess Tikta, madhura rasa; Shita virya and Vatapittashamaka properties. It has the Shukravardhaka, Stanyajanana and Balya action^[16].

Discussion: History of drug can be studied under Vedic kala, Upanishad kala, Purana kala, Samhita kala, Nighantu kala and Adhunik kala. *Asparagus racemosus*, traditionally known as shatavari means "who possesses a hundred

husbands or acceptable to many". In Ayurveda it is considered a female tonic. *Asparagus racemosus* Willd. (Liliaceae), commonly known as 'Shatavari', is a much-branched, spinous under shrub found growing wild in tropical and sub-tropical parts of India. Shatavari is a woody climber growing to 1-2 m length. The leaves are like pine-needles, small and uniform. There are also several gaps in the existing literature with regard to the pharmacological actions of *Asparagus racemosus*. These include an incomplete understanding about the interaction/synergy between *Asparagus racemosus* and other plant constituents in polyherbal formulations; lack of information regarding the mode of action of the various constituents of *Asparagus racemosus*, etc. This offers a tremendous scope for research in order to explore the therapeutic application of a substance in different regions and era, in the same manner Shatavari was also a popular drug at that time. It has tremendous properties viz. Shukravardhaka, stanyakaraka, Medhya, and as Rasayana, etc.

Conclusion: The present review on Shatavari of different nighantus can be useful to know about the different formulations of Shatavari in which different parts of this plant is used. By this way we can use Shatavari in the treatment of different diseases. Most of the Nighantus have mentioned Shatavari as a good Shukravardhaka, stanyakaraka, Medhya, and Rasayana. A detailed clinical study is required to understand the mode of action of these drugs and their efficacy.

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