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Review Article

RASAYANA AND *CHAKSHUSHYA* DRUGS IN PREVENTIVE OPHTHALMOLOGY: A NARRATIVE REVIEW OF CLASSICAL CONCEPTS AND CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

In the field of preventive ophthalmology, the concept of Ayurveda related to *Rasayan* and *Chaksusya dravya* offer a sophisticated approach to ocular longevity. While modern lifestyle subjects our eyes to constant digital strain and toxic environmental factors, *Chaksusya* drugs offer a shielding factor to overall eye health. Herbs like *Yashtimadhu* and *Amalaki* not only treat symptoms; they also nourish the *Alochaka Pitta* (the metabolic fire of vision) and provide protection to retinal tissue against oxidative stress. Combination of *Rasayana* therapy with *Chaksusya dravya*, the focus shifts to systemic rejuvenation and cellular repair. This dual strategy slows down age related degeneration by strengthening the ocular circulation and nerve vitality. By incorporating these natural and healthy compounds into daily life, our systemic health, along with ocular health, remains in active condition against this stressful environment.

INTRODUCTION

Preventable blindness is a condition which could be avoided early through screening, early detection, treatment and lifestyle measures because it accounts for half of global vision impairment. Protecting eye health directly addresses most of the avoidable blindness causes like cataracts and refractive errors. The global landscape of ocular health is currently facing a silent crisis. From the study reported by World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 2.2 billion people worldwide are affected from near or distant vision impairment. The most surprising aspect of this statistic is that nearly half of the cases from 1 billion reported cases fall under preventable blindness category or has yet to be addressed. Most common condition that are listed under preventable vision loss are uncorrected refractive errors, cataracts, age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy[1]. In developing countries like India, this load is intensified by an aging population and with spike of lifestyle induced metabolic disorders. The consequence of this clinical entity shows greater impact not only as clinically but huge socio-economic stress which affects quality of life, loss of concentration and productivity and increased dependency especially in elderly demographic.

There have been improvements in the management of eye diseases and in the field of surgery (for example, micro-incision cataract surgery); however, there exists a considerable "therapeutic vacuum" in the long-term prevention of degenerative eye diseases and other lifestyle-related diseases. Shalakya Tantra, an Ayurvedic healing system that deals with supraclavicular diseases, provides a great alternative. In this context, *Rasayana* therapy of Ayurveda can be viewed as "anti-aging" solutions for the eye tissues, as they enhance rejuvenation, the vitality of the individual (boost *Ojas*), the body's antioxidant defenses, and the prevention of degeneration. This is achieved through the facilitation of *Agni* and the sustenance of micro-channel (*Srotas*) clarity, as *Chakshushya* drugs (eye beneficial) like *Triphala Ghrita*, *Amalaki*, and *Jeevaniya Gana* offer

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nourishment to the eye through their protective (nootropic) and modulatory (immunological) activities. They offer a crucial complementary solution to the long-term prevention of ophthalmic degenerative diseases and the promotion of vitality of the eyes.

AIM

To evaluate the role of *Rasayan* and *Chaksusya Dravya* in preventive ophthalmology as described in Ayurveda and contemporary sciences.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A conceptual and literature review was carried out based on classical Ayurvedic texts, journals related to *Rasayana* and *chaksushya* drugs classical and contemporary articles.

Table 1: List of *Chaksusuya* drug mentioned in *Samhitas*

Drug (Sanskrit)	**Botanical Name**	***Rasa* (Taste)**	***Guna* (Quality)**	***Virya* (Potency)**	***Vipaka***	***Dosha* Effect / Key Benefits(*Chakshushya/ Rasayana*)**	**Reference**
Amalaki	*Emblica officinalis*	*Amla, Madhura, Kashaya*	*Guru, Snigdha*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	Eye rejuvenation, antioxidant for retina, *Pitta shamaka.*	Ch. Su. 27, Ch. Chi. 1, Su. Su 38
Haritaki	*Terminalia chebula*	*Kashaya, Tikta, Amla*	*Laghu, Ruksha*	*Ushna*	*Madhura*	Vision enhancement, *Kapha-Pitta hara, Dhatu poshana.*	Ch. Su. 4, Ch. Chi. 1, Su. Su 38, B. P.haritakyadi varga
Bibhitaki	*Terminalia bellirica*	*Kashaya, Madhura*	*Laghu, Ruksha*	*Ushna*	*Madhura*	Prevents eye degeneration, longevity support.	Ch. Su 27, Su. Su 38 B. P haritakyadi varga
Jeevanti	*Leptadenia reticulata*	*Madhura, Tikta*	*Snigdha, Guru*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Netra vardhana*, balances *Vata-Pitta.*	Ch. Su4, Su. Su 38, B.p guchuchyadi varga, A. H. 4
Shatavari	*Asparagus racemosus*	*Madhura, Tikta*	*Guru, Snigdha*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Ojas* building, eye nourishment, *Chakshushya.*	Cha.Su.4; B.P.Nighantu.
Rakta chandana	*Pterocarpus santalinus*	*Madhura, Tikta,*	*Guru, ruksha*	*Sheeta*	*Katu*	Improves visual perception, balance *Kapha pitta dosha.*	Raj nighantu
Bhringraj	*Eclipta alba*	*Tikta, katu*	*Laghu, Ruksha*	*Ushna*	*Katu*	Neuroprotective, improves eyesight, *Chkasusya.*	Raj nighantu
Patola	*Trichosanthes dioica*	*Katu, Tikta,*	*Laghu, Ruksha*	*Ushna*	*Katu*	*Tridoshahara*, Balance *Kapha* and *Pitta*, *Chaksusya.*	Yogratnakar
Draksha	*Vitis vinifera*	*Madhura*	*Guru, Snigdha*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Pitta shamaka, Rasayana* supportive for eyes.	Cha.Su.27, B.P.nighantu, K.nighantu madya varga
Shali	*Oryza sativa*	*Madhura*	*Laghu, Snigdha*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata-Pitta hara, Netra prasadana*	Ch.su 27, Su.su 46, B.P Nighantu dhanya varga

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Saindhava Lavana	Rock Salt	*Lavana*	*Laghu*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata-Kapha shamaka,* supportive for eye health	Ch. Su 5, 27 Su. Su 46, A. S. Su 11, Dhanwantari Nighantu
Ghrita (Go-Ghrita)	Cow ghee	*Madhura*	*Snigdha, Guru*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata-Pitta hara,* used in Netra Tarpana	Ch. Su 27,28 A.H. Su 5
Shobhanjana (Shigru)	*Moringa oleifera*	*Katu, Tikta*	*Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna*	*Ushna*	—	*Chakshushya*, improves ocular health	Bhavprakash Nighantu Guchuyadi varga
Punarnava	*Boerhavia diffusa*	*Tikta, Madhura*	*Ruksha*	*Ushna*	*Madhura*	Anti-inflammatory, useful in *Pittaja Netra Roga*	Bhavprakash Nighantu Guchuyadi varga
Yashtimadhu	*Glycyrrhiza glabra*	*Madhura*	*Guru, Snigdha*	*Sheeta*	*Madhura*	*Vata-Pitta hara*, beneficial for eyes	Bhavprakash Nighantu Haritayadi varga
Daruharidra	*Berberis aristata*	*Tikta, Kashaya*	*Laghu*	*Ushna*	*Katu*	*Netraroganut,* beneficial in eye disorders.	Bhavprakash Nighantu, Haritayadi varga

Possible Mode of Action and Pharmacodynamics of *Chaksusya* drug in Modern:

***Amalaki* (*Phyllanthus emblica*)**

Amalaki (*Phyllanthus emblica* L.), or Indian gooseberry, is a prominent classical *Rasayana* and *Chakshushya* drug in Ayurveda. In Ayurveda, *Amalaki* is characterized by its bioactive nature like vitamin C, emblicanin A & B, gallic acid, ellagic acid, flavonoids, tannins, and polyphenols, which have good antioxidants, anti-inflammatory, anti-glycation, and neuroprotective activities. These are helpful in many ocular disorders.

The role of oxidative stress, inflammation, mitochondrial dysfunction, and glycation are evident in many degenerative eye diseases. *Amalaki* properties can be helpful in such conditions.

- **Antioxidant Property**
  Amalaki (*Phyllanthus emblica*) is considered one of the abundant natural sources of vitamin C, emblicanins, gallic acid, and polyphenols, which means it has strong antioxidant activity. Oxidative stress is a major cause of many degenerative ocular diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), cataracts, and diabetic retinopathy. The antioxidant constituents of *Amalaki* counteract the reactive oxygen species (ROS) and lipid peroxidation, and oxidative damage of retinal epithelial and lens proteins. *Amalaki* assists in the balance of the oxidative and reducing state of ocular tissues and delays age-related and metabolic degenerative disorders.
- **Anti-inflammatory Property**
  Inflammatory environments responsible for damaging ocular health by retinal degeneration, microvascular damage or ocular surface disorders in different ophthalmic ailments. *Amalaki* possess anti-inflammatory properties by inhibiting pro-inflammatory mediators including TNF- α, IL-6 or prostaglandins due to presence of different bioactive compounds like flavonoid, tannins, phenolic acid etc. Therefore. *Amalaki* contributes in maintaining normal ocular health by reducing retinal inflammation, by stabilizing ocular tissue and protecting against inflammatory conditions like dry eye syndrome, uveitis, or conjunctivitis.
- **Anti-glycation and Aldose Reductase Inhibition**
  Chronic hyperglycemic status in diabetic patients responsible for activation of polyol pathway and results in accumulation of sorbitol in ocular tissue which manifested as diabetic retinopathy or diabetic cataract.

The studies suggested that the extract of *Amalaki* helps in preventing oxidative stress in lens fibre and retinal microvasculature by reducing sorbitol accumulation via inhibiting aldose reductase enzyme. *Amalaki* also prevents lens opacification and vascular damage by preventing formation of advanced glycation end products (AGEs) as it possesses the anti-glycation properties.

- **Neuroprotective Effect**

  Amalaki possesses antioxidant and mitochondrial protective properties because of its bioactive compound like emblicanins and flavonoids which manifest as neuroprotective action. They protect retinal neurons, enhance cellular survival pathways and support mitochondrial functions from oxidative injury and apoptosis. Thereby preserving retinal structure and visual functions especially in degenerative eye disorders.

- **Immunomodulatory Effect**

  Immunomodulatory properties exhibited by *Amalaki* enhance the overall ocular immune defense mechanism by regulating cytokines productions and improving antioxidant enzyme activity. These properties shield ocular tissue against recurrent infections and other inflammatory disorders.

***Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*)**[2,3]

- **Antioxidant Property**

  Haritaki (Terminalia chebula) contains potent antioxidant like chebulagic acid, gallic acid and flavonoids, which neutralize reactive oxygen species, reduce lipid peroxidase and as strong antioxidant components which are rich in bioactive compounds like chebulagic acid or gallic acid. These compounds help in neutralize the reactive oxygen species as they are free radicals scavenging, reduces lipid peroxidase and enhances antioxidant enzymes. By protecting retinal pigment epithelium and lens proteins from oxidative damage, *Haritaki* may help to prevent or slow degenerative eye condition like ARMD, Cataract and Diabetic retinopathy.

- **Anti-inflammatory Property**

  Haritaki inhibits inflammatory cascsade and its compound like phenolics and tannins reduces ocular surfaces and retinal inflammation. By suppressing inflammatory cytokines and oxidative injury, *Haritaki* may benefit inflammatory eye conditions like dry eye syndrome, diabetic retinopathy etc.

- **Anti-glycation and Antidiabetic Property**

  Hyperglycemic induced glycation and activated polyol pathway significantly assist in diabetic retinopathy and diabetic cataract. *Haritaki* has phenolic compound that suppresses advanced glycation end product formation and helps in glucose metabolism. Studies supported the shielding nature of extract of *Haritaki* by preventing sorbitol accumulation and reducing oxidative damage to retina and lens. They play a protecting role for retinal microvasculature and delay diabetic ocular complications.

- **Neuroprotective Property**

  Degeneration of retinal ganglion cells is key factor in glaucoma and age-related retinal disorders. Its antioxidant and anti-apoptotic action mainly due to Chebulic acid and related polyphenols reduces oxidative damage and enhance mitochondrial functions. *Terminalia chebula* boosts up neuron survival and shields retinal tissue from oxidative stress, supporting its use to help preserve vision.

- **Anti-aging and Tissue Protective Property**

  Terminalia Chebula, an ayurvedic *rasayana* supports longevity and tissue regeneration. Its antioxidant and collagen protective properties reduce oxidative damage in ocular tissue and maintain tissue integrity. By improving microcirculation and lowering cell stress, it may help delay age related ocular ailments like ARMD, help preserve clearer vision.

- **Ocular Surface Protective Property**

  Haritaki which contains bioactive compound like polyphenols reduces ocular inflammations and supports tear film stability, easing symptoms of computer vision syndrome and ocular surface inflammatory condition.

Vibhatataki (Terminalia bellirica) [4]

- **Antioxidant Property and Neuroprotective Property**

  Vibhataki (*Terminalia bellirica*) shows strong antioxidants and neuroprotective actions due to presence of phytochemicals such as ellagic acid, gallic acid, tannins, flavonoids and other flavonoids. These components create oxidative stress-free environment by scavenges reactive oxygen species or free radicals, reduce lipid peroxidation, enhances cellular antioxidant defenses, protect retinal neurons, ganglionic cells and lens proteins and also protect against apoptosis. *Vibhataki* thus may protect eye against age related ocular disorders and preserve retinal functions and visual performances

- **Anti-inflammatory Property**

  Vibhataki (*Terminalia bellirica*) protects eye from different inflammatory condition like dry eye, diabetic retinopathy, computer vision syndrome

due to presence of bioactive compound like tannins and polyphenols that exhibit anti-inflammatory properties by inhibiting inflammatory mediators and cytokines. These components reduce tissue damage and protect retina and ocular surfaces from other inflammatory injuries.

- **Anti-glycation and Antidiabetic Property**

  Chronic hyperglycemic state in eye causes formation of advanced glycation end products (AGEs) and activation of polyol pathway which are responsible for manifestation of diabetic retinopathy and diabetic cataract. *Vibhataki* because of its bioactive compound like phenolic compound regulate blood glucose and reduces glycation induced tissue damage. Thus, may protect retinal microvasculature and lens proteins from diabetic ocular complication.

***Yashtimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra* Linn.)**[5,6]

- **Antioxidant Property and Neuroprotective Property**

  Yashtimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) contains different compound like flavonoids, polyphenols glycyrrhizin glabridin and licochalcones that provide strong antioxidants and neuroprotective actions. These phytochemicals scavenges free radicals, reduce oxidative stress, inhibit lipid peroxidation, prevent mitochondrial damage and inhibit neuronal apoptosis thus shielding retinal cells, lens proteins and retinal neurons from degeneration. As a results, *Yashtimadhu* may help in slowing ocular disorders like ARMD, cataract, diabetic retinopathy or other age-related ocular disorders.
- **Anti-inflammatory Property and Antidiabetic Property**

  Yastimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) has significant anti-inflammatory and anti-diabetic properties. Bioactive compound like glycyrrhizin, glycyrrhetinic acid inhibits inflammatory mediators, act similarly to corticosteroids activity therefore reduces ocular inflammation and benefit in dry eye, diabetic retinopathy, or other inflammatory situation which leads to tissue damage. Another phenolic compound like glycyrin and glyasperin act as PPAR- γ ligands which help in reduction of blood glucose levels and improve insulin resistance. By this property it lowers hyperglycemic and oxidative stress condition, thus may protect retinal microvasculature and help in prevention of progression microvascular changes in diabetic retinopathy.

***Lodra* (Symplocos racemosa)** [7,8,9]

- **Antioxidant and Haemostatis property**

  Lodra has hemostatic, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties due to its bioactive compound like tannins and flavonoids. This compound promotes vasoconstriction and stabilized capillary wall which arrests the bleeding from fragile retinal vessels. Antioxidant components in *Lodra*, helps in neutralization of free radicals which develop in oxidative stress environment, protect retinal endothelial cells, while its anti-inflammatory action reduces vascular inflammation and capillary leakage. Thereby preserving microvascular integrity and reduces retinal hemorrhage progress associated with diabetic retinopathy.
- **Anti-inflammatory effect, Tissue Protective and Astringent Property**

  Lodra contains bioactive compounds like alkaloid, cytokines, flavonoid and tannins that exhibit anti-inflammatory actions by inhibiting inflammatory mediators and cytokines. These properties helpful in several inflammatory conditions like ocular surface disorders, conjunctival inflammation or retinal tissue damage. Traditionally *Lodra* categories under *Kashaya* (astringent) and *Sheeta* (cooling) properties which has contribution in tissue protection and stabilizing effects. These actions support structural integrity of conjunctival and corneal tissue that maintain the ocular health and reduces risk of degenerative changes, thus protect visual function.

Shigru [10,11,12,13]

- **Anti-inflammatory Property and Microvascular Protective Property**

  Inflammatory cascades play an important part in several ocular ailments including computer vision syndrome, diabetic retinopathy by disturbing microvascular circulation, or dry eye. Its bioactive compounds like isothiocynates and flavonoids exert anti-inflammatory action by inhibiting inflammatory mediators and cytokines. This results in reduction of ocular surface and retinal inflammation contributing to improved ocular health Moringa oleifera extract also also possesses anti diabetic properties that regulate blood glucose levels, reduce oxidative stress and protect microvascular tissues, thus supports retinal microcirculations and reduce risk for complication of diabetic retinopathy complications.
- **Neuroprotective agents, Antioxidant properties**

  Shigru (*Moringa oleifera*) are rich sources of Vitamins A, C, E and other bioactive compound like phenolic such as flavonoids, tannins and alkaloids exhibit antioxidant properties. These components maintain the retinal functions by protecting

photoreceptors from oxidative stress, exhibit neuroprotective effects by preventing neuronal injury and support nervous system functions by reduction of oxidative stress and inflammatory environment. Bioactive components inhibit lipid peroxidation and enhance cellular antioxidant, thus protecting retinal cells and reducing risk of degenerative ocular disorders such as age-related changes and ARMD.

***Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus* Willd.[14,15,16,17,18]**

- **Antioxidant Property**

  Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*) owns significant antioxidant properties due to the presence of various bioactive compounds such as steroidal saponins (shatavarins), flavonoids, and polyphenols. Pathophysiology of macular disorder like age related macular degeneration (ARMD), lenticular conditions like Cataract or vascular disorder like diabetic retinopathy include abnormal changes retinal pigment epithelium or lens by reacting with free radicals during Oxidative stress situation.

  Reports from experimental study show that the extract of Asparagus racemosus possesses strong free radical scavenging properties which shows most important role in prevention of ocular tissue during oxidative stress situation, as this antioxidant properties neutralize free radicals, reduce lipid peroxidation and enhance antioxidant enzymes.

- **Antidiabetic and Microvascular Protective Property**

  Oxidative stress and microvascular damage are major hazardous manifestations of hyperglycemic state in diabetic retinopathy and diabetic cataract. Studies have demonstrated antidiabetic properties of *Asparagus racemosus*, as its bioactive compound helps in improving microvascular circulation and reducing oxidative injury, thus protecting retinal capillaries and delay progression of ocular complication related to diabetic.

- **Neuroprotective Property and Tissue Nourishing Property**

  Shatawari supports and enhances the retinal health by its neuroprotective, antioxidant and tissue-nourishing actions. Its bioactive compounds like flavonoids and saponins enhance cellular antioxidant defences, reduces oxidative stress and apoptosis in neuronal cells which promote neuronal survival and hence may preserve retinal ganglion cells and leads to slow progression in glaucoma and ARMD.

  Due to its nutritive and reparative effect, *Shatavari* maintain the structural integrity of cornea, lens and retina which support cellular regeneration and potentially delaying age-related changes like macular degeneration. By virtue of these properties, *Shatavari* act as adjunct for long term ocular preservation and functional maintenance.

DISCUSSION[19,20]

Rasayana and *Chakshushya* drugs as preventive medication act as proactive Ayurvedic framework for ocular degenerative diseases by targeting ocular nourishment and systemic rejuvenation. *Rasayana* prepares ocular tissue indirectly against oxidative stress environment and aging by promoting *Dhatu* (tissue) flexibility, antioxidant defences and cellular repair. *Chaksushya dravyas* exert an anti-inflammatory, lubricating, neuroprotective and vasoprotecetive effects on retina, optic nerve and ocular surfaces. It is helpful in countering nutritional deficiency linked to xeropthalmia or other deficiency conditions while modulating immunity for issues like uveitis. Key formulation like *Triphala* or *Chyavanprasha* offers neuroprotective and vasoprotective effects against chronic disorders aligning with modern need.

To validate and integrate these approaches clinically, large scale trials and longitudinal cohort in high-risk groups like diabetes, early cataract, glaucoma using end points like visual acuity, RNFL thickness, visual field changes, oxidative stress/immunological biomarkers. Therefore, for increasing safety, efficacy and reproducibility standardized formulation under GMP should be considered and interdisciplinary collaboration using modern monitoring tools should be considered.

CONCLUSION

Preventive ophthalmology is underdeveloped yet most important section especially for age related ocular issues. Ayurvedic *Rasayana* and *Chakshusya* Dravya like *Amalaka*, *Triphala*, *Yashtimadhu* or *Lodra* contain several bioactive compounds along with anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory immunomodulatory and neuroprotective properties which show promising effect related to ARMD, glaucomatous optic atrophy, presbyopia etc. Their aim is to reduce oxidative stress environment on ocular tissue enhances cellular stress resistance thereby focusing on preventive purpose rather than only treating established diseases.

For establishment of safety and efficacy of these drugs an integrated ayurvedic therapies into rigorous clinical trials should be done. Therefore, *Rasayan* and *chakshusya* treatment for early vision changes, family history of eye diseases or age-related decline are convincing preventive adjunct to standard ophthalmic care.

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