



Review Article

EXPLORING THE NOMENCLATURE AND PHARMACODYNAMIC ATTRIBUTES OF *BILVA* (*Aegle Marmelos* (L.) CORRÊA) THROUGH *NIGHANTU* (AYURVEDIC LEXICON) LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Bilva (*Aegle marmelos* (L.) Corrêa) holds a distinctive place in classical Ayurvedic literature, with detailed descriptions of its synonyms, properties, and therapeutic actions recorded across the *Nighantus*. However, a systematic, part-wise comparison of this data across the classical lexicon tradition has remained limited. This review refers to twenty-seven *Nighantus* across different historical periods to trace the placement, nomenclature, *Rasapanchaka*, and *Karma* of *Bilva* according to the specific plant part described. Synonyms were categorized as morphology-based or action-based and cross-referenced with their *Nirukti* to assess whether classical nomenclature carried functional significance. Results showed that *Bilva* was consistently classified across multiple *Vargas* corresponding to specific plant parts rather than treated as a single undifferentiated drug. *Bilvamoola* was characterized predominantly by *Madhura rasa*, *Laghu guna*, and *Tridoshaghna* action, while *Apakva Bilva Phala* showed a distinct *Tikta-Kashaya*, *Ushna*, *Vatakaphahara* profile correlating with its *Samgrahi* and *Deepana Karma*. These part-specific classical attributes showed notable correlation with contemporary pharmacological evidence, particularly for the root and unripe fruit. The findings affirm that *Bilva*'s therapeutic identity is part-specific rather than uniform, underscoring the continued clinical relevance of systematic *Nighantu* study for the rational, evidence-based application of this drug in current Ayurvedic practice.

INTRODUCTION

Any substance or product that is used or is intended to be used to modify or explore physiological systems or pathological states for the benefit of the recipient is known as drug.^[1] The source of a drug can be plant, animal, or mineral in origin. When a medicine is prepared from the whole plant or specific plant parts, several chemical constituents contribute to its pharmacological action. Ayurveda promotes the use of the plant as a whole or in specific parts for medicinal purposes, with the therapeutic effect varying according to the method of preparation, vehicle, time of administration, dosage form, disease condition, and any drugs combined with it.

The properties and actions of individual plant, animal, and mineral products have been documented in detail in the Ayurvedic lexicons known as *Nighantus*.^[2]

Nighantu literature occupies a fundamental place in the study of Ayurveda, particularly in *Dravyaguna Vijnana*, functioning historically as a *Kosha* (compendium) of synonyms, properties, actions, and therapeutic uses of *Aushadha Dravyas* (drugs).^[2] The importance of studying the *Nighantus* was emphasized in the 14th century A.D. by Acharya Narahari Pandit in his *Raj Nighantu*, who stated that a physician without knowledge of *Nighantu*, a scholar without knowledge of grammar, and a soldier without knowledge of weapons are objects of ridicule in the world.^[3] A *Nighantu* essentially defines the *Nirukti* the etymological root and true sense behind a *Dravya*'s name, often revealing something about its dominant quality. While its *Paryaya* works differently: it captures the core meaning and specific identity of the *Dravya* as a whole, almost like giving it a proper introduction through terminology. Not every *Nighantu* follows the

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same approach: texts such as Ashtanga Nighantu, Paryayaratnamala, and Hridayadipaka Nighantu mainly list synonyms, while others Dhanvantari Nighantu, Bhavaprakash Nighantu, Raj Nighantu, and Sodhala Nighantu combine synonyms with the drug's types, properties, and actions. Siddhamantra Nighantu takes a different approach altogether, organizing drugs by their action on the *Doshas* rather than by name or origin. In Ayurveda practice, the understanding of drug properties and actions rests primarily on the Samhitas, with the Nighantus serving as consolidated reference texts for this knowledge.

Aegle marmelos (L.) Correa, known in Ayurveda as *Bilva*, belongs to the family Rutaceae and is characterized as a slow-growing, medium-sized tree with a spinous habit.^[4] It is commonly known by names such as Bengal quince, *Bael*, *Sriphal*, Golden apple, and Stone apple, in addition it has been utilized for over 5000 years by numerous ethnic populations of the Indian subcontinent, being widely employed in the Ayurvedic system of medicine to treat a range of ailments.^[4,5] The tree also holds considerable cultural and religious significance, with its leaves traditionally offered to Lord Shiva and the tree itself deliberately cultivated in the vicinity of Shiva temples. In Ayurvedic and folklore practice, all parts of the *Bilva* plant are used to treat various diseased conditions such as diabetes, inflammation, diarrhoea, dysentery, ulcers, asthma, anaemia, wound healing, earache, jaundice, and gastroduodenal disorders.^[6,7] Modern pharmacological studies have validated many of these traditional uses, demonstrating that fruit-derived compounds of *A. marmelos* possess notable antidiabetic^[8], anti-ulcer^[9], antidiarrheal^[10], and hyperlipidaemia-lowering effects^[8], whereas extracts obtained from the leaves, bark, and root have shown significant antidiysenteric, anti-urolithiatic, antipyretic,

and anti-inflammatory properties in preclinical models.^[11]

Knowledge of the Nighantus is mandatory not only for *Dravyaguna Vijnana* but for all branches of Ayurveda, since treatment can succeed only when drugs are used appropriately which in turn requires correct knowledge of drug properties. Classical texts caution that a drug administered without knowledge of its proper action can act as a poison, underscoring why the Nighantu is considered indispensable to a *Vaidya*.^[2] Unfortunately, in contemporary practice, the Nighantus are frequently reduced to reference texts consulted only for isolated facts about a plant, rather than studied comprehensively as originally intended.^[2]

MATERIALS AND METHOD

For this review, twenty-seven Nighantus coming in different historical periods were selected, and descriptions of *Bilva*'s synonyms, *Rasapanchaka*, *Karma* and *Doshaghnata* were tabulated for comparison, in order to trace how the understanding of the drug developed or remained consistent across time.

RESULT

The name *Bilva* itself originated from '*Bil bhedane iti bilva*' which carries its functional meaning rather than a descriptive one. Syntacticians, including Patanjali in the *Vyakarana Mahabhashya*, suggest the etymology "*Bil*" to the sense of splitting or piercing (*Bhedana*).^[12] This etymology suggest that the drug has ability to open and clear the *Srotasa* (body's subtle channels). *Bilva* also features in numerous classical formulations, most notably as a constituent of *Dashamoola*, and its *Panchanga* preparation remains widely prescribed for gastrointestinal disorders today.^[13]

Table 1: Placement of *Bilva* within different *Vargas* across Nighantus

S.No.	Name of Nighantu with abbreviation	Varga	Part use
1	<i>Sausrut Nighantu (SN)</i> ^[14]	<i>Varunadi gana</i>	<i>Moola</i>
		<i>Ambashthadi</i>	<i>Apakva-phalamajjja</i>
		<i>Brihat panchmoola</i>	<i>Moola</i>
2	<i>Amarakosha (AK)</i> ^[15]	<i>Vanaushadi varga</i>	<i>Pakva-apakva phala</i>
3	<i>Astanga Nighantu (AN)</i> ^[16]	<i>Varunadi gana</i>	<i>Moola</i>
4	<i>Paryayaratnamala (PR)</i> ^[17]	-	<i>Pakva-apakva phala</i>
5	<i>Madanadi Nighantu (MdN)</i> ^[18]	<i>Niruha</i>	<i>Moola</i>
		<i>Varunadi</i>	<i>Moola</i>
		<i>Ambashthadi</i>	<i>Apakva phala</i>
6	<i>Dhanvantari Nighantu (DN)</i> ^[19]	<i>Guduchyadi varga</i>	<i>Moola, Pakva-apakva phala</i>

		Mishrakadi varga	Moola
7	Dravyagunasamgraha (DS) ^[20]	Phala varga	Pakva-apakva phala
8	Shabdachandrika (SC) ^[21]	Vrukshadi varga	Pakva-apakva phala
		Triphaladi varga	Patra, Moola
9	Sodhala Nighantu (SoN) ^[22]	Guduchyadi varga	Moola, Pakva-apakva phala, Patra
10	Nighantushesha (NS) ^[23]	Vrukshadi kanda	Pakva-apakva phala
		Gulmakanda	Pushpa
11	Abhidhana Ratnavali (AR) ^[24]	Shashtha skandha	Pakva-apakva phala
12	Madhav Dravyaguna (MD) ^[25]	Vividha aushadhi varga	Pakva-apakva phala, APM, Moola
13	Hridayipaka Nighantu (HD) ^[26]	Dwishpada varga	Apakva phala
		Ekapada varga	Phala
14	Sidhhamantraprakasha (SmP) ^[27]	Vatakaphaghana varga	Moola
		Doshala varga	Pakva phala
15	Madanapala Nighantu (MpN) ^[28]	Abhayadi	Pakva-apakva phala
		Paniyadi	Phala
16	Kaiyadeva Nighantu (KN) ^[29]	Aushadhi	Moola, Pakva-apakva phala, Patra
17	Saraswati Nighantu (SrN) ^[30]	Mahavrukshaka varga.	Pakva-apakva phala
18	Bhavaprakasha Nighantu (BpN) ^[31]	Guduchyadi varga	Apakva phala
		Amradi phala varga.	Pakva-apakva phala
19	Raj Nighantu (RN) ^[3]	Amradi	Moola, Pakva-apakva phala
		Dharanyadi	(Nakshtra vrisha)
		Mishrakadi	Moola
20	Rajvallabha Nighantu (RvN) ^[32]	Phala varga	Pakva-apakva phala
		Nanaushadhi varga	Moola
21	Nighantu Ratnakara (NR) ^[33]	Gunadosha prakarana	Moola, Pakva-apakva phala, Patra
22	Aushadhi Nighantu (ON) ^[34]	Gunadipika	Apakva phala, Pakva phala, Taruna phala, Patra, Pushpa, Beej taila
23	Shaligrama Nighantu (SIN) ^[35]	Guduchyadi varga	Moola, Pakva-apakva phala, Patra
24	Haritakyadi Nighantu (HN) ^[36]	Guduchyadi varga	Apakva phala
		Amradi phala varga.	Pakva-apakva phala
25	Shankar Nighantu (ShN) ^[37]	Dwitiya pada	Pakva-apakva phala
26	Abhidhan Manjari (AM) ^[38]	Varunadi	Moola
		Ambashthadi	Pakva-apakva phala
		Shukadhanyadi	Moola
27	Priya Nighantu (PN) ^[39]	Haritakyadi Varga	Moola, Pakva-apakva phala, Patra

Table 2: Synonyms of *Bilva* described in Nighantus based on morphology

Nighantu	Synonyms cited
SN	Mahaphala, Neelamallika, Shalatudruma
AK	Shailoosha, Shreephala
AN	Shreephala, Mahaphala, Shalatavriksha
PR	Mahaphala, Shalatu, Hradyagandha, Gandhagarbha, Karkata, Mahakapittha, Kankatahva,

	<i>Duraruha</i>
DN	<i>Shailoosha, Shreephala, Mahaphala</i>
SC	<i>Shailoosha, Shreephala, Mahaphala, Shalatu, Hradayagandha, Gandhagarbha, Karkata, Kantaki, Dhararuha, Kuchum, Vararuha</i>
SoN	<i>Shailoosha, Shreephala, Shalatu, Hradayagandha, Gandhagarbha</i>
NS	<i>Shailoosha, Shreephala, Mahaphala, Shalatu, Sadaphala, Neelamallika, Kantaki, Karkota, Granthila, Krishnamukha, Neelamalli, Sarvarupavan, Shrigandha phala</i>
AR	<i>Shailoosha, Shreephala, Mahaphala, Shalatu, Sadaphala, Abahala twacha</i>
HD	<i>Shailoosha, Shalatu, Hradayagandha, Gandhagarbha, Karkata, Kankatahva, Kantakadhya, Peeta phala, Tripatra</i>
MN	<i>Shailoosha, Mahaphala, Gandhagarbha, Mahakapittha, Shreesangna</i>
KN	<i>Shailoosha, Mahakapittha, Neelamallika, Shalya, Karkoti, Peshi</i>
SrN	<i>Shailoosha, Shalya</i>
BpN	<i>Shailoosha</i>
RN	<i>Shreephala, Hradayagandha, Neelamallika, Karkota, Dhararuha</i>
ON	<i>Mahaphala, Shalatu, Hradayagandha, Sadaphala, Duraruha, Trishikha</i>
SIN	<i>Shailoosha, Shreephala, Shalatu, Gandhagarbha, Karkata, Mahakapittha, Neelamallika, Kankatahva, Gandhapatra, Kapeetana, Karata, Prachinapanas, Tridala, Triguni, Trishakha, Trishakha patra</i>
HN	<i>Shailoosha, Shreephala, Shalatu, Sadaphala, Kankatahva, Kantaki</i>
AM	<i>Shailoosha, Shreephala, Hradayagandha, Gandhagarbha, Karkata</i>
PN	<i>Shailoosha, Shreephala, Sadaphala, Shalatudruma, Mushtiphala, Piluphala, Shalata, Shalatika</i>

Table 3: Synonyms of Bilva described in Nighantus based on Action

Nighantu	Synonyms cited
SN	<i>Pootimaruta, Malaphala, Arimeda, Bilva</i>
AK	<i>Shandilya, Maloora, Bilva</i>
AN	<i>Shandilya, Maloora, Asitanana, Shaiva, Shreenivasaka, Pootivata, Bilva</i>
PR	<i>Lakshmiphala, Vatasara, Goharitaki, Mangalya, Satya Karma, Shrayaha, Bilva</i>
DN	<i>Shandilya, Pootimaruta, Subhadra, Bilva</i>
SC	<i>Shandilya, Maloora, Pootimaruta, Vatasara, Aruchee, Mahesha bandhu, Sarvasidhdhi, Satya Darma, Shmrahva, Somaharitaka, Bilva</i>
SoN	<i>Shandilya, Maloora, Pootimaruta, Vatasara, Satya Karma, Hrushika, Bilva</i>
NS	<i>Shandilya, Maloora, Pootimaruta, Lakshmiphala, Shreevasa, Bilva</i>
AR	<i>Shandilya, Lakshmiphala, Bilva</i>
HD	<i>Goharitaki, Patrashreshth, Satphalada, Shikinetra, Bilva</i>
MN	<i>Shandilya, Maloora, Lakshmiphala, Ruchee, Bilva</i>
KN	<i>Shandilya, Maloora, Rudra, Bilva</i>
SrN	<i>Shandilya, Maloora, Bilva</i>
BpN	<i>Shandilya, Sameerasara, Shaiva Patra, Shiveshtha, Subhootika, Bilva</i>
RN	<i>Vatasara, Goharitaki, Mangalya, Sameerasara, Shaiva Patra, Shiveshtha, Subhootika, Atimangalya, Saranga, Satya phala, Shree, Shreedruma, Shreevraksha, Shivadruma, Vilva, Bilva</i>
ON	<i>Shandilya, Maloora, Bilva</i>
SIN	<i>Shandilya, Pootimaruta, Lakshmiphala, Goharitaki, Mangalya, Bilva</i>

HN	<i>Goharitaki, Patrashreshth, Satphalada, Shikinetra, Bilva</i>
AM	<i>Shandilya, Bilva</i>
PN	<i>Maloora, Manoora, Poottipata, Vilva, Bilva</i>

Table 4: Nirukti of Synonyms

S.No.	Synonyms	Nirukti
1	<i>Arimeda</i>	It acts as enemy towards disease
2	<i>Atimangalya</i>	That which brings <i>Shoodha</i>
3	<i>Bilva</i>	The drug that brings about normalcy in disorders of the bowel by its <i>Samgrahi</i> action or it eradicates disease.
4	<i>Duraruha</i>	It is difficult to climb this tree because it possesses sharp thorns.
5	<i>Gandhagarbha</i>	Fruit pulp having pleasant odour
6	<i>Gandhapatra</i>	The tree having the leaves pleasant odour
7	<i>Goharitaki</i>	It is useful in veterinary practice for cattle as in <i>Haritaki</i> benefits the man
8	<i>Granthila</i>	Having nodular stem
9	<i>Hrudiyagandha</i>	The fruits those are pleasant in fragrance
10	<i>Kantaki</i>	The fruits those are having enormous thorns
11	<i>Kapeetana</i>	The fruits resemble the wood apple
12	<i>Karkata</i>	Fruits having hard ring
13	<i>Karkatahvyah</i>	The tree is armed with stout and sharp thorns
14	<i>Kuchuma</i>	Resembles the shape of breast
15	<i>Mahaphala</i>	Tree is having fruits larger in size
16	<i>Mahakapittha</i>	The fruit are similar to the fruits of <i>Kapittha</i> but larger in size
17	<i>Maloora</i>	Useful in bowel ailments
18	<i>Neelamallika</i>	The tree having blue flowers
19	<i>Peetaphala</i>	Fruits become yellow after ripening
20	<i>Pootimaruta</i>	Foul smelling flatus expelled on consumption of fruit
21	<i>Sadaphala</i>	Tree bearing fruits almost throughout the year
22	<i>Sangrahi</i>	The fruits are having <i>Grahi</i> action
23	<i>Shailoosha</i>	The grows in hills
24	<i>Shalatuh</i>	Unripe fruits are of therapeutic use
25	<i>Shalya</i>	The tree having enormous thorns
26	<i>Shandilya</i>	Cures diseases, or Son of Rishi Shandilya
27	<i>Shiveshta</i>	The one, which is liked by Lord Shiva
28	<i>Shrigandha phala</i>	Pulp with resinous odor
29	<i>Shreephala</i>	Beautiful fruits
30	<i>Shreevasa</i>	Goddess Lakshmi lives there
31	<i>Subhootika</i>	Best combinations of <i>Mahabhutas</i> exist in the tree
32	<i>Tripatra, Trishikha, Tridala, Trijata</i>	Leaves arranged with three leaflets
33	<i>Vatasara</i>	Acts as <i>Vata shamana</i>

Table 5: Rasapanchaka of Bilvamoola

Nighantu	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Doshaghnata
DN	Madhura	—	—	Tridoshaghna
DS	Madhura	—	—	Tridoshaghna
SoN	Kashaya, Tikta	—	Anushnashita	Tridoshaghna; does not aggravate Pitta
MD	—	—	—	Reduces Vata-Kapha; does not aggravate Pitta
KN	Madhura	Laghu	—	Tridoshaghna
RN	Madhura	Laghu	—	Tridoshaghna; specifically reduces Vata
ON	Madhura, Kashaya, Tikta	Ruksha	Ushna	Tridoshaghna; mildly aggravates Pitta
RvN	—	—	—	Reduces Vata-Kapha
NR	Madhura	Laghu	—	Tridoshaghna
SIN	Madhura	—	—	Tridoshaghna
PN	—	—	Ushna	Reduces Vata

Table 6: Rasapanchaka of Apakva (Unripe) Bilvaphala

Nighantu	Rasa	Guna	Veerya	Doshaghnata
MdN	Tikta, Kashaya	Ruksha	-	Vatakaphahara
DN	Katu, Tikta, Kashaya, Amla	Snigdha, Tikshna	Ushna	Vatakaphahara
DS	Katu, Tikta, Kashaya	Snigdha, Tikshna	Ushna	Vatakaphahara
SoN	-	Snigdha, Tikshna, Laghu	Ushna	Vatakaphahara, Pittala
SM	-	-	-	Vatakaphahara
MpN	Katu, Tikta, Kashaya	Snigdha, Laghu	Ushna	Vatakaphahara
MD	-	-	-	Vatakaphahara
KN	Tikta, Kashaya	Ruksha	-	Vatakaphahara, Pittala
RN	-	Snigdha, Guru	-	-
BpN	Katu, Tikta, Kashaya	Snigdha, Laghu	Ushna	Vatakaphahara
ON	Tikta, Kashaya	Snigdha, Tikshna, Laghu	Ushna	Vatakaphahara, Pittala
RvN	Katu, Tikta, Kashaya	Tikshna	Ushna	Vatakaphahara
NR	Tikta, Kashaya	Snigdha, Laghu	Ushna	-
SIN	Tikta, Kashaya, Madhura	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	-
PN	Tikta, Kashaya	-	-	-

Rasapanchaka of Pakvabilva phala

Across the surveyed Nighantus, *Pakvabilva Phala* is predominantly characterized by *Madhura rasa* and *Guru guna*, in the majority of texts i.e., Saushrut Nighantu, Siddhamantra Prakash, Madanpal Nighantu, Madhav Dravyaguna, Kaiyadev Nighantu, Bhavprakash Nighantu, Rajvallabh Nighantu and mentioned its action as either *Doshala* or *Tridoshakara*. Dhanvantari Nighantu and Dravyaguna Sangraha additionally attribute *Madhura, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya*, and *Amla rasa* for the fruit, its action defined as *Doshakara*. Raj Nighantu and Nighantu Ratnakar cite the complete *Rasapanchaka* (*Katu, Tikta, Kashaya, Madhura rasa; Guru guna; Ushna virya*), with the latter additionally noting a *Vata*-aggravating property. Notably, Oshadhi Nighantu diverges by attributing *Ruksha guna*, *Sheeta virya* and *Madhura-Kashaya rasa*, and *Madhura vipaka* for the fruit, whereas Shaligrama Nighantu is the only text to describe a *Pitta*-aggravating effect, contrasting with the other.

Rasapanchaka of Bilva Patra

The *Rasapanchaka* of *Bilva Patra* shows relatively limited documentation of across the surveyed Nighantus, only Oshadhi Nighantu explicitly recording three attributes -*Tikta rasa*, *Madhura rasa*, and *Ushna virya*. While four Nighantus i.e. Kaiyadeva, Oshadhi, Nighantu Ratnamala, and Shaligrama Nighantu constantly describe *Bilva Patra* as *Vatahara*, while Shodhala Nighantu alone attributes a *Kaphapittahara* action, indicating a minor divergence in how the leaf has specific action on *Dosha* was understood across different *Nighantukaras*.

Table 7: Karma of Bilva according to part used

Part Used	Karma	MdN	D N	D S	So N	MpN	M D	KN	B p N	RN	ON	RvN	NR	SI N	P N
Apakv phala	Samgrahi	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Deepana	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Pachana	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	-
	Aamanashana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	-
	Ruchya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
	Hridya	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
Pakv Phala	Durjara	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
	Pootimaruta	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
	Vidahi	-	+	+		+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
	Vishtambhi	-	+	+		+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+
	Agnisada kara	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	-
	Dahakara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	+	+	-
	Vrishya	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Grahi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-
	Shukrala	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	Sugandhi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-
	Adhmanakara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+		-	-	-
APM	Grahi	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-
	Amanashana	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Patra	Amnashana	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	Grahi	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-
	Rochana	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	Hridya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Kanda	Amanashana	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Hridya	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ruchya	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Deepana	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moola	Mutrala	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 8: Rogaghnata of Bilva according to part used

Part Used	Karma	D N	D K	So N	M N	M D	KN	B h N	RN	ON	RVN	NR	Sh N	P N
Apakva bilva Majja	Shoolahara	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-
	Atistarahara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
	Grahani Doshahara	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	-
Moola	Chhardihara	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-
	Krichhahara	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
	Swasa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	Kasas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	Hikka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-

	<i>Kshaya</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	<i>Jwar</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	<i>Atisaraa</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	<i>Shoolahara</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-
	<i>Raktapitta</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
<i>Patra</i>	<i>Shoolahara</i>	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	<i>Pramehaghna</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
	<i>Shothahara</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Kanda</i>	<i>Kasa</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Pushpa</i>	<i>Atisaraahara</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	<i>Trishnahara</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
	<i>Chhardihara</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-

DISCUSSION

The present review of twenty-seven Nighantus indicates that *Bilva* was not treated as a pharmacologically homogeneous drug in classical literature. Table 1 shows its cited across multiple *Vargas*, most frequently *Guduchyadi* and *Amradi/Phala Varga*, corresponding closely with the specific plant part described suggesting Nighantukaras given classificatory groups based on part-specific functional and morphological criteria.

Analysis of the synonym data reveals two distinct nomenclatural categories: morphology-based synonyms (e.g., *Mahaphala*, *Mahakapittha*, *Trikataka*, *Kuchuma*, *Shalatu*, *Gandhagarbha* etc.) describing observable physical characteristics, and action-based synonyms (e.g., *Bilva*, *Maloor*, *Sangrahi*, *Putiphala*, *Vatasara*, *Shreephala*, *Shandilya* etc.) describing pharmacological function. Correlation with the *Nirukti* data given in table 4 confirms that action-based synonyms consistently reference the drug's *Grahi* property, indicating that classical nomenclature functioned not merely as a descriptive taxonomy but as a repository of clinically relevant information.

The part-specific differentiation is most clearly evident in the *Rasapanchaka* comparison given in Tables 5 & 6. *Bilvamoola* is characterized predominantly by *Madhura rasa*, *Laghu guna*, and *Tridoshaghna* action, consistent with its broad, non-specific therapeutic application. *Apakva Bilvaphala*, by contrast, is characterized by *Tikta-Kashaya rasa*, *Ushna virya*, *Snigdha-Tikshna guna*, and a predominantly *Vatakaphahara* classification across the surveyed texts. This *Rasapanchaka* profile is consistent with an astringent, *Grahi*-dominant pharmacological action, and correlates well with contemporary phytochemical and pharmacological findings. The classical *Shoolahara*, *Shothahara* and *Jwarahara Karma* attributed to *Bilvamoola* (Table 8) align with direct pharmacological evidence from the root itself. Benni et al. demonstrated significant anti-inflammatory activity

of *A. marmelos* root extract in carrageenan-induced paw oedema and cotton pellet granuloma models in rats, providing support for its classical analgesic and *Shoolahara* indications.^[40] A comparative study evaluating *Mutr* (diuretic) activity of *Bilva Moola* measured urine volume and electrolyte excretion, corroborating its classical *Mutr Karma*.^[41] Taken together, these root-specific studies substantiate the *Laghu-Ushna guna* and *Tridoshaghna-Shoolahara-Mutr Karma* profile consistently documented for *Bilvamoola* across the Nighantus reviewed, indicating that its classical *Rasapanchaka* was not an abstract descriptive framework but corresponded to measurable pharmacological activity in the root itself.

Unripe *A. marmelos* fruit has been reported to contain a high concentration of tannins, which are established mediators of astringent and antidiarrheal activity.^[42] Ethanolic extract of unripe *A. marmelos* fruit significantly reduced stool frequency and faecal weight in diarrhoea-induced mice, dose-dependently.^[43] A separate study found unripe fruit pulp decoction altered gut bacterial colonization and enterotoxin activity, supporting its traditional antidiarrhoeal use.^[44] These findings give experimental support to the classical *Samgrahi* and *Deepana Karma* attributed of *Apakva Phala*, which was notable consistency across fourteen reviewed Nighantus (Table 7).

The *Rasapanchaka* of *Bilva Patra* was comparatively under documented, with only Oshadhi Nighantu specifying *Rasa* and *Virya* attributes in full. *Doshaghna* data showed general agreement, with four of five texts describing a *Vatahara* action; Sodhala Nighantu alone attributed a *Kaphapittahara* action to the leaf. The *Pramehaghna* and *Shothahara Karma* attributed to *Bilva Patra* mentioned in table 8 are supported by contemporary evidence: methanolic leaf extract significantly reduced blood glucose in alloxan-induced diabetic rats,^[9] while more recent studies

confirm α -amylase/ α -glucosidase inhibition alongside reduced oxidative stress and downregulated inflammatory markers (iNOS, TNF- α) in hyperglycaemic cell models.^[45] This dual antidiabetic-anti-inflammatory action correlates well with the leaf's classical indications and offers a plausible mechanistic basis for its continued use in *Prameha* management.

Overall, the convergence between classical *Rasapanchaka* and *Karma* data and contemporary pharmacological evidence- particularly for *Apakva Bilva Phala* supports the reliability of Nighantu-recorded pharmacological attributes and reinforces their continued relevance to evidence-based Ayurvedic practice.

CONCLUSION

This review of twenty-seven Nighantus reveals that *Bilva* (*Aegle marmelos*) is not pharmacologically uniform, but exhibits distinct, part-specific *Rasapanchaka* and *Karma*. *Bilvamoola* is predominantly *Madhura*, *Laghu*, and *Tridoshaghna*, while *Apakva Bilva Phala* is *Tikta-Kashaya*, *Ushna*, and *Vatakaphahara*, correlating with its *Samgrahi* action. Principal synonyms *Shailoosha*, *Shreephala*, *Bilva*, and *Shandilya* remain consistent across centuries, reflecting strong classical continuity. These findings, further supported by contemporary pharmacological evidence, highlight the clinical importance of part-specific drug selection and reaffirm the continued relevance of systematic Nighantu study in evidence-based Ayurvedic practice.

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