



Review Article

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF *INGUDI (BALANITES AGEYPTIACA LINN. DELILE)* FROM *KOSHA* AND *NIGHANTUS*

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ABSTRACT

Ingudi (Balanites aegyptiaca Linn. Delile) known as 'Desert Date' is a small evergreen tree. Man, the superior most of all species has always been remaining in a search of One Prime Goal: "The perfect health". From Vedic era to space age, all the researches have been directed by the eminent scholars to achieve the same. The *Nighantu*, Ayurvedic form of Materia Medica could help significantly in this direction. Numerous *Nighantu* have been written from the very beginning of Ayurvedic period to solve the hidden meanings of cryptic names of medicinal plants. 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 *Vaghbata* the *Ashtanga Nighantu* are discussed. The present work aims to discuss *Ingudi* in various *Nighantu* as manuscripts or just as evidence - in a chronological order.

INTRODUCTION

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 *Nighantu* 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 aspects 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 *Nighantu* 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. *Ramavtar 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. '*Ingudi*' is explained in almost all the important *Nighantu* except *Dhanvantari nighantu*, with a variety of synonyms and *Guna-karmas*.

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. *Ingudi* has been mentioned in the *Vanausadhi Varga* of *Bhumyadi kanda*. Here word '*Ingudi*' has been used in both masculine and feminine gender but synonym *Tapasataru* is used in masculine gender^[1].

Sausruta nighantu: (6th Cent. A.D.)

Based on *Susruta samhita*. In this *Nighantu Ingudi* has been described in *Arkadi gana*. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e. *Tapasavriksha, Kantaka, Prativarna, Angara* and *Tiktamaja*^[2].

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 Ingudi* has been described in *Arkadi gana*. Following synonyms are mentioned here i.e., *Tiktamajja, Piluka, Tapasadruma*^[3].

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. No reference was found regarding *Ingudi/Hingota* in *Dhanvantari nighantu*^[4].

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 *Amradi varga* of *Sodhala nighantu* synonyms of '*Ingudi*' i.e *Putipatraka, Tapasadruma, Tiktamajja, Krisaraka, Jalajantuvinashaka* are mentioned^[5].

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 Ingudi* has been mentioned in *Kapha-pittaghna varga*, with its synonym '*Tapasataru*'^[6].

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

In *Abhidhanratnamala* synonyms of *Ingudi* are described in *Tikta dravya skandha* as *Tiktamajja, Tapasa, Angara*.

Madhava-dravyaguna: (13th Cent. A.D.)

In *Madhava dravyaguna* *Ingudi* is described in *Taila varga* along with other drugs^[7].

Madanapala nighatuu: (14th Cent. A.D.)

'*Ingudi*' has been mentioned in "Vatadi varga". *Madanapala* has included following synonyms of *Ingudi*: *Bhallaki, Vrikshakantaka, Tapasadruma, Inguda*. Regarding its properties it has been said as *Usna* in *Virya*. It is indicated in *Kustha, Bhutaja Vikara, Vrana, Visa, Svitra, and Kapha vataja roga*^[8].

Kaiyadev nighantu: (Pathyapathya Vibodhaka) (15th Cent. A.D.)

In this *Nighantu 'Ingudi'* is described in "Aushadhi Varga" with following synonyms i.e. *Bhallaka, Tiktamajja, Putikarnika, Kantakirna, Angaravriksha, Vyavharika, Tiktaka, Kantakavriksha, Kantaka, Tapasadruma*. Regarding its properties it has been said as *Ushna* in *Virya*, *Katu* in *Vipaka*. Here '*Ingudi*' has been mentioned for various disorders such as *Krimi, Kustha, Bhutaja Vikara, Vrana, Visa, Svitra, and Kaphavataja roga*. Further there is separate description

of its *Phala*, *Phala* has been said as *Madhura, Tikta rasa, Snigdha* and *Ushna guna*^[9].

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.

Ingudi has been mentioned in *Vatadi varga* and following synonyms are found in this *Nighantu-Angaravrksa Tiktaka, Tapasadruma*. It possesses *Tikta rasa, Katu vipaka* and *Ushna virya* which make it useful in *Kustha, Bhutavikara, Graha roga, Vrana, Visa, Krimi, and Svitra vikara*^[10].

Gunaratnamala: (16th Cent. A.D.)

In *Gunaratnamala* of *Bhavamishra* '*Hingota*' word has been used in place of *Ingudi* and its *Guna karma* along with characteristic features of *Phala* are described as *Usna, Tikta, Madhura, Snigdha, Katu Vipaka* and indicated in *Kustha, Bhuta roga, Vrana, Visa chikitsa*, and has *Kaphavatahara* action^[11].

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.

Ingudi is included in "Salmalyadi varga". It possesses alcohol odour, *Katu rasa, Usna virya, Laghu guna, Rasayana* and frothing properties. In this *Nighantu* thirteen synonyms of '*Ingudi*' are mentioned. This is useful in *Vata kaphaja* disorder cures and also *Krimi vrana*. Synonyms of *Ingudi* mentioned in *Raja nighantu Hingupatra, Visakanta, Anilantaka gaura, Supatra, Sulari, Tapasadruma etc*^[12].

Adhunika kala

'*Ingudi*' is explained in text books of modern periods such as *Dravya guna vigyan* by Dr P. V Sharma, *Priya nighantu, Saligrama nighantu, Ayurvedic materia medica*, Wealth of India and other books written by recent *Acharyas*, which provide information about its habit, habitat, morphology, chemical composition etc.

Nighantu Adarsa: (20th Cent. A.D.)

This book was published in Gujarat, its author, is *Vaidya Bapalalji* 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 'Ingudi'* is said to possess *Madhura, Tikta, Snigdha, Usna, Gunas* and *Kapha vata samaka* action^[13].

Priya Nighantu: (20th Cent. A.D.)

Acharya Priyavrata Sharma in his book *Priya Nighantu* has described ‘*Ingudi*’ useful for *Vrana ropaka, Snehana karma*^[14].

Puspayurveda: (20th Cent. A.D.)

In *Pushpa-Ayurveda* flowers of *Ingudi* are described as *Snigdha, Madhura, Tikta*, and destroys *Vata-kapha* disorders, also useful in wound healing^[15].

DISCUSSION

History of drug can be studied under *Vaidic kala, Upanishad kala, Purana kala, Samhita kala, Nighantu kala* and *Adhunika kala*. Seeds of ‘*Ingudi*’ were taken out on breaking the fruits by stones. People living in forest areas used ‘*Ingudi*’ *taila* as hair oil and for external application in wounds. The *Nighantus* generally were coined using a therapeutic text. Authors used the prevailing and popular texts of their time and region as basis to write *Nighantus*. This explains the emergence of more than one *Nighantu* during one period. Further, two different *Nighantus* are seen having groups with same name but have kept different substances under them. This has happened due to the different rationale used in grouping of the substances. 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 *Ingudi* was also a popular drug at that time. It has tremendous effect on different diseases viz. *Vrana ropana, Vrana sodhana, Jantughna, Krimighna, Prameha*, etc.

CONCLUSION

The present review on *Ingudi* of different *Nighantus* can be useful to know about the different formulations of *Ingudi* in which different parts of this plant is used. By this way we can use *Ingudi* in the treatment of different diseases. Most of the *Nighantus* have mentioned *Ingudi* as a good *Vrana ropak, Vrana shodhak, Krimighna* and *Pramehaghna*. A detailed clinical study is required to understand the mode of action of this drugs and their efficacy.

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