



**MEDICINAL USES OF VATA (*Ficus bengalensis* Linn.) IN BRIHATRAYEE:
A HISTORICAL REVIEW**

Umesh Kumar Mehta¹ Mita Kotecha²

¹PG Scholar , Dept of Dravyaguna, NIA Jaipur, Rajasthan

²Professor & HOD, Dept of Dravyaguna, NIA Jaipur, Rajasthan

Received on 11/04/2017

Accepted on 17/04/2017

Reviewed on 08/05/2017

Published on 22/05/2017

ABSTRACT:

The *vata* tree (*Ficus bengalensis* Linn.) is a sacred medicinal plant used in *Ayurveda* system of medicine since ancient times. Since Vedic times its small branches are used in a sacrificial rite and known for its giant structure. *Ayurveda* and other Indian literature have mentioned the use of this plant in treatment of various human ailments. Present study aimed to compile the medicinal uses of this imperative medicinal plant in the classical *Ayurveda* texts of *brihatrayee* (Main *Ayurveda* texts *Caraka samhita*, *Sushruta samhita* and *Astangahridaya*). Study observed that in traditional system of medicine various parts of this plant such as stem bark, root bark, aerial roots, vegetative buds, leaves, fruits and Latex are abundantly mentioned for assorted therapeutic conditions. Review suggests that there is lots of scope for further scientific research on this aspect to bring this wide spread of therapeutic uses in the main stream of *Ayurveda* practices.

Keywords: Banyan tree, *Ficus bengalensis*, Natural medicine.

INTRODUCTION:

Recently *Ayurveda*, the nature based system of medicine is gaining importance throughout the world due to its novel healing approach. Mother Nature has gifted mankind with tremendous medicinal plants to create a disease free and healthy life. Rich medicinal plants are existing in the Indian traditional systems of medicine mostly used one amongst them is *Vata*, also known as *Ficus bengalensis* Linn. Belongs to the family *Moraceae*. Present study aimed to find out the various therapeutic applications of this important plant as per ancient *Ayurveda* Classics (*BRIHATRAYEE*).

The Brihatrayee included three samhita ; namely Charaka samhita, Sushruta samhita and Astangahridaya. These are the basic and oldest classic of Ayurveda. Term *Vata* and its related synonyms were searched in various ancient Sanskrit transcripts and discussion was made accordingly. Study revealed out that almost all part of this plant has been regularly mentioned for various systemic ailments. It is enormously used as a *vraṇa ropaka*, mentioned under *Panchaksheeri vriksha* (~combination of other four plants) .

Acharya Charaka has asserted that each substance on this earth is useful in combating illness when applied with planning and for a specific purpose⁴. *Nyagrodha* the Banyan tree (*Ficus bengalensis* Linn.) is a sacred medicinal plant since Vedic times. The English name Banyan is given by the Britishers to this tree because under the tree Banias i.e., the Hindu merchants used to assemble for business. The triad Ganges, the Himalayas and the Banyan tree are symbolise the images of India, hence it is considered as National Tree. *Ficus* means fig and *bengalensis*

means belonging to or is of Bengal. To the most of Indians it is Sacred and symbolizes all three Gods of Hindus. The bark represents Lord Visnu, Brahma the roots and Siva the branches. Since Vedic times its small branches are used in *Yagya* & a sacrificial rite and known for its giant structure. Alexander the Great is said to have camped under a banyan tree, which was big enough to shelter his whole army of 7,000 men. As per Vēda it checks the environmental pollution and one of the source of Lāksā (Lac). Its medicinal importance is well documented in *Ayurvēda* literature. However, more research needs for understanding the medicinal properties of this symbolic tree.¹

The plant, *Ficus bengalensis* Linn. syn. *Ficus banyana* Oken. (Family-Moraceae) is a large evergreen tree distributed all over India from sub Himalayan region and in the deciduous forest of Deccan and south India. It is a grown in gardens and road sides for shades.² It is a member of four sacred trees *Nalpamara* (*Ksirivrkas*) meant to be planted around the home and temples. It is found throughout the year, it is hardy and drought-resistant; it withstands mild frost. It is epiphytic when young. It develops from seeds dropped by birds on old walls or on other trees and is therefore, considered destructive to forest trees, walls and buildings, The tree is commonly found all over India from sea level to an elevation of about 3,000 ft. it is also reported from Sri Lanka, Pakistan now widely cultivate. It is commonly known as Vada in Marathi, Banyan tree in English, Bar in Hindi and as *Avaroha* in Sanskrit.³ According to *Ayurveda* system of medicine *Ficus bengalensis* Linn (Banyan tree) is well known to be useful in Blood coagulation due to having *Kashaya* rasa and *Sheeta veerya* properties.

REFERENCES OF VATA IN BRIHATRAYEE:**Table 1: References of vata in Charaka Samhita⁴**

S.No.	References	Mentioned As	Indications	Form of use
1.	Ch.Su.4/33	Mootrasangrahaniya	-	-
2.	Ch.Su.5/22	Vata chhal	Dhumrapan	Churna
3.	Ch.Su.27/105	Nyagrodhadika patra	Pittaj Atisar	Churna
4.	Ch.Su.27/164	Nyagrodhadi phal	Kaphapitta shamak	Churna
5.	Ch. Vi. 8/144	Kashaya skanda	-	-
6.	Ch. Sha. 8/19	Vatasunga	Punsavanartha pana	Swarasa
7.	Ch.Sha. 8/24	Nyagrodhadi gana	Garvasrava (sechan), pichu dharan	Kwatha & Swarasa
8.	Ch.Chi.3/258	Chandanadi taila	Daha & jwar nasak	Kwatha
9.	Ch.Chi. 4/50	Vata sidha mansa ras	Raktapitta	Kwatha
10.	Ch.Chi. 4/75	Kiraat tiktadi churna	Raktapitta	Churna
11.	Ch.Chi. 4/86	Vatavaroaha kalka	Raktapitta (gudagat)	Kalka
12.	Ch.Chi.11/31	Nayagrodhadi ghrita	Urakshata	Kalka
13.	Ch.Chi.14/203	Nayagrodhadi swarasa	Rakta arsha	Swarasa
14.	Ch.Chi.14/225	Nayagrodha ghrita	Jwara,Gudabhransa	Kalka
15.	Ch.Chi.14/234	Sunisanaka changeri ghrita	Arsha,Atisar,Pravahika	Praroha kalka
16.	Ch.Chi.18/147	Vatashungadi kalka/Ghrita	Dhumrapan (Kshataj kaas)	Kalka
17.	Ch.Chi.19/99	Nayagrodhadi ghrita	Rakta atisar	Kalka
18.	Ch.Chi.21/73	Nayagrodhapadadi lepa	Visarpa	Kalka
19.	Ch.Chi.21/83-85	Nayagrodhapadadi Pralepa	Vata-pittaj visarpa	Kalk
20.	Ch.Chi.22/44	Vatmatulungadi jala	Trishna	Kwatha

21.	Ch.Chi.22/46	Ksheerivrikshadi	Pittaj trishna	Sheeta kashaya
22.	Ch.Chi.23/199	Ksheerivrikshadi lepa	Keeta visha chikitsa	Kalka
23.	Ch.Chi.25/46	Vataadi lepa	Shotha	Kalka
24.	Ch.Chi.25/63	Nayagrodhadi lepa	Vrana nirvapana, Parisheka	Kalka, Kwatha
25.	Ch.Chi.25/84	Vrana shodhaka kashaya	Vrana prakshalana	Kwatha
26.	Ch.Chi.25/87	Nayagrodhadi ropana kwatha	Vrana ropana	Kwatha
27.	Ch.Chi.25/110	Nayagrodhadi Kathinyakar lepa	Vrana komalta har	Kalka
28.	Ch.Kal.12/3	Nayagrodhi	Synonyms of Dravanti	-
29.	Ch.Si.10/37	Nayagrodhadi kalka	Virechena atiyoga	Kalka

Table 2: References of vata in *Susruta Samhita*⁵:

S.No.	References	Mentioned In	Indications	Form of use
1.	Sus.Su.38/48	Nyagrodhadi gana	Raktapitta,Bhagna	Kwatha
2.	Sus.Ni.2/13	Arsha nidana	Raktaarsha	Kwatha
3.	Sus.Sha.2/34	Shukrashonitshudhi sharir (vata)	Pumshamanartha	Swarasa
4.	Sus.Sha.10/7	Garbhini vyakarana shariram	Sutikagar	Wood
5.	Sus.Chi.9/23	Kusthachikitsitam	Kustha	Ksheera
6.	Sus.Chi.17/9,35	Visarpanadi stanaroga	Visarpa, Nadivrana	Kwatha, Patra swarasa
7.	Sus.Chi.25/39	Mishrakchikitsa	Vyanga,	Ksheera
8.	Sus.U 36/10	Naigameshpratishedh adhyaya	Naigmesha	Swarasa
9.	Sus. Utt.40/113	Atisarpratishedh adhyaya	Atisara	Churna
10.	Sus.Utt.40/148	Atisarpratishedh adhyaya	Atisara	Churna

11.	Sus.Ut.44/24,27	Pandurogapratishedh adhyaya	Panduroga	Kwatha
12.	Sus.Utt.45/20	Raktapittapratishedh adhyaya	Raktapitta	Kwatha

Table 3: References of vata in Astanga Hridaya⁶:

S.No.	References	Mentioned In	Indications	Form of use
1.	As.H.Su.15/6	Nyogrodhadigana	Pitta nasaka dravya	-
2.	As.H.Su.15/41,42	Nyogrodhadigana	Vrana shodhan,Grahi,Ropan,	Kwatha
3.	As.H.Su.21/16	Nyagrodhadi dhuma	Madhya dhuma	Churna
4.	As.H.Su.2/2	- -	Danta dhavana	Kanda
6.	As.H.Su.19/57	Nyogrodhadigana kwatha	Pitta dosha's Basti	Kwatha
7.	As.H.Chi.2/23	Vata twaka kwatha+Mansarasa	Vata dosha	Kwatha
8.	As.H.Chi.3/89	Nyogrodhadi yoga	Urahakshata,Bala kshina	Churna
9.	As.H.Chi.8/126	Nyagrodhadi Ksheer	Pichha Basti	Ksheera
10.	As.H.Chi.13/4	vatadi Kwath	Pittaj Vidradhi	Kwatha
11.	As.H.Chi.14/63	Nyagrodhadi Ksheer	Pittaj gulma	Ksheera
12.	As.H.Chi.15/61	Nyagrodhadi Kashaya	Pittodara	Kashaya
13.	As.H.Chi.17/30	Nyagrodhadi Ghrit	Raktapitta	Kwatha
14.	As.H.18/12	Nyagrodhadi lepa	Pittaj visarpa	Kalka
15.	As.H.Utt.9/38	Nyagrodhadi Ksheer	Pakshmakopa	Ksheera
16.	As.H.Utt.22/92	Khadiradi Gutika	Mukha roga	Churna
17.	As.H.Utt.25/29	Daha Shamaka lepa	-	Kalka
18.	As.H.Utt.25/42	Nyagrodhadi Kwatha	Vrana prakshalana	Kwatha
19.	As.H.Utt.25/47	Nyagrodhadi Kalka	Utsadanartha	Kalka

20.	As.H.Utt.25/65	Nyagrodhadi Kwatha	Vataj vrana	Kwatha
21.	As.H.Utt.27/18	Nyagrodhadi Sheetkashaya	Asthibhagna sechan	Kashaya
22.	As.H.Utt.32/27	Kumkumadi lepa	Tilkalaka, Vyanga	Kalka

DISCUSSION:

Almost all parts of the plant *vata* possess medicinal properties, particularly bark, which has been used in Ayurveda as a *vrana ropaka*, anti-dysentery, antidiabetes, leucorrhoea and menorrhagia, nervous disorders. Its several chemical constituents like Leucoanthocyanin, quercetin-3-galactoside and tiglic acid ester of taraxasterol are reported to possess several biological activities. *Vata* used as customary medicine in the treatment of diarrhea, jaundice, inflammation and several other ailments. The stem bark of *Vata* is astringent and is useful in chronic ulcer.

In every classical text wherever *Vata* is mentioned, it has been said to have *pitta shamak* properties and indicated in various *pittajanya vyadhis*, skin diseases, *atisar*, *pandu*, *vrana*, *shotha*, *mukha roga* etc. Its *ksheer* and *kwatha* is used in *basti karma*, *Varna prakshalana*, *Varna ropana*, *Rakta stambhana* etc.

CONCLUSION:

Vata is an essential plant in various traditional system of medicine like *Ayurveda*. Almost all parts of this plant are used in different therapeutic purpose. *Vata* has been mentioned under *Panchakshree vriksha* or *panchavalkala* (~combination of other four plants) along with *Ashwatha* (*Ficus Religiosa* Linn.), *Udumber* (*Ficus glomerata* Roxb.), *Plaksha* (*Ficus lacor* Buch-Ham) and *Paraspeepala* (*Thespesia populnea* Soland.) in *Ayurveda*. The bark is widely used in the Indian system of medicine as alone or in combination with

other plants and is used to treat as dysentery, diabetes, leucorrhoea, menorrhagia, nervous disorders, and astringent. This is equally effective almost all part of human body. Present review highlights the various therapeutic uses mentioned by great *Ayurveda* sages. There is huge scope of further scientific research on various therapeutic aspect of this important medicinal plant.

REFERENCES:

1. Varanasi S1, Narayana A., Medico-historical review of Nyagrodha (*Ficus bengalensis* Linn.), Bull Indian Inst Hist Med Hyderabad. 2007 Jul-Dec;37(2):167-78
2. The Wealth of India, Volume-(F-G). In: A Dictionary of Indian Raw Materials and industrial products. Vol. 4. New Delhi: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research: 1999, 24- 26.
3. Chopra R. N., Chopra I.C. Handa K.L. and Kapur L.D. Indigenous drugs of India, U.N. Dhur and sons Pvt. Ltd. Calcutta: 1958 .p.673- 675. Medicinal plants of India, ICMR, New Delhi, vol.I,1956, 415-416.
4. Charaka.Charaka samhita part 1st (Hindi commentary) by Gorakhanath chaturvedi, editor Reprint. Varanasi chaukhamba bharati Academy 2005Charaka. Charaka samhita part 2nd (Hindi commentary) by Gorakhanath chaturvedi, editor Reprint. Varanasi chaukhamba bharati Academy 2007.
5. Susruta . Susruta samhita purvardha (Hindi commentary) by Kaviraja

Ambikadutta shastri editor, reprint.
Varanasi chaukhamba Sanskrit sansthan
2008.

6. Astangahridaya(Hindi commenary) by
kaviraj Atrideva gupta editor. ed reprint .
Varanasi Chaukhambha prakashan 2007.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Dr. Umesh Kumar Mehta
PG Scholar,
Department of Dravyaguna,
NIA Jaipur, Rajasthan
Email id drukumar.mehta@gmail.com
Mobile no: 9530180536

Source of support: Nil
Conflict of interest: None Declared