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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PEETHA BHRINGARAJA [WEDELIA CHINENSIS (OSBECK) MERRILL] – AYURVEDIC LITERARY REVIEW.

Krishna priya.A¹ and Dr.Shincymol.V.V².

1. PG scholar, Department of Dravyagunavijnanam, GAVC, Tripunithura.
2. Associate professor, Department of Dravyagunavijnanam, GAVC, Tripunithura.

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Abstract

Bhringaraja (Eclipta prostrata (L.)) Is a plant widely used for liver disorders and Anaemia. The drug is said to have three varieties based on the colour of its flower. The other two varieties are Peetha Bhringaraja with yellow coloured flower and Nila Bhringaraja with blue coloured flower. The variety Peetha Bhringaraja, Yellow flowered variety is botanically identified as Wedelia chinensis (Osbeck) Merrill. The drug was widely mentioned as an ingredient in many herbo-mineral preparations in the text books of Rasasasthra. The drug was referred in many literary works as 'Kesaraja'. The drug was popularly used as a remedy for cancer among folk lore practises. The present review article aims at exploring the literature for collecting the available informations regarding the drug Peetha Bhringaraja Wedelia chinensis (Osbeck) Merrill.

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Introduction:-

Utilisation of natural resources for human well being dated back to Vedic period. Ayurvedic health care system uses plants and plant based products for treating various ailments. There is an abundant source of knowledge in the ayurvedic literatures regarding the immense therapeutic potentials of many plants, which still remains in the dark without being explored. Nighantus are such literary works which gives a wide range of explanation regarding the properties and therapeutic indications of herbal, mineral and animal source of drugs. Many plants are being explained with its varieties, that may be due to their morphological resemblance or due to similarity in therapeutic utility. But, while considering the practise, most of such varieties remain ignored or not utilised. They lost their popularity as a valuable medicine among main stream practise. Such unexplored plants are now facing the threat of endangerment due to the lack of awareness regarding its medicinal importance.

Peetha Bhringaraja [Wedelia chinensis (Osbeck) Merrill], is such a drug which has lost its attention in the main stream clinical practise among the ayurvedic community. The drug is mentioned as a variety of Bhringaraja (Eclipta prostrata (L.)) in some Nighantus. The drug is popular among folklore practises for their anti cancer activity.

Nirukthi of Peetha Bhringaraja

Peetha varnayuktho Bhringaraja bhedaha ¹(Vachaspathyam) - The drug is the yellow coloured variety of Bhringaraja.

Corresponding Author:-Krishna priya.

Address:-PG scholar, Department of Dravyaguna vijnanam, GAVC, Tripunithura.

Historical back ground

Samhitha period

In Vangasena Samhitha, Athisara adhikara, the drug 'Kesaraja' is advised to make Gutika with water and taken orally in the condition of amathisara along with pain and bleeding. The commentator Nirmal saxena interpreted that the term Kesaraja in this context is the drug Bhringaraja itself.²

Nighantu period

Sodhala Nighantu in Lakshmanadi varga mentioned two varieties of Bhringaraja. One is with swetha pushpa (White flower) called 'Jayanthi' and the other is with Peetha pushpa (Yellow flower) called 'Avanthi'. Avanthi is said to be similar to Jayanthi (Bhringaraja) with respect to its leaf shape and number of leaves.³

Raja Nighantu, in Sathahwadi varga 3 varieties of Markava or Bhringaraja is described based on the colour of flower. They are Bhringaraja, Peetha Bhringaraja and Nila Bhringaraja. Six synonym of Peetha Bhringaraja also mentioned. by Pandit Narahari in Sathahwadi varga.⁴

Saligrama Nighantu, in Guduchyadi varga mentioned three varieties of Bhringaraja. They are Bhringaraja, Peetha Bhringaraja and Nila Bhringaraja. The Nighantukara mentioned the synonyms of Peetha Bhringaraja as similar to that mentioned in Raja Nighantu.⁵

In other Nighantus, no varieties of Bhringaraja are mentioned. In Dhanwanthari Nighantu, Karaviradi varga the drug Bhringaraja is included and has got Kesaranjana as synonym. In the book, 'Studies on material plants and drugs in Dhanwanthari Nighantu' by Dr. D.K.Kamat, three varieties of Bhringaraja is explained. The yellow variety is termed as 'Haripriya'. He explains that Bhringaraja is used for medicinal purpose, Yellow variety is used in worship of deities and the third variety is not differentiated by practitioners.⁶ In Madanapala Nighantu, no varieties are mentioned for Bhringaraja.⁷ In Kaiyyadeva Nighantu (Oushadhi varga) and Bhavaprakasa Nighantu (Guduchyadi varga) the synonyms and properties of Bhringaraja is mentioned. Kesaraja is mentioned as synonym of Bhringaraja. But varieties of the drug is not mentioned.^{8,9}

Horthus malabaricus

Horthus Malabaricus is a 12 – volume treatise on the plant wealth of Malabar published in Latin language during the period 1678-1693 from Amsterdam. This drug is included in the 10th volume of the treatise. The name of the drug mentioned is 'Pee-Cajenneam' and 'Peekayyunniyam'. 'Pee' refers to wild and 'Kayyunniyam' refers to Eclipta alba. It is also called as 'Manjakaiyyunniyam'. It occurs in marshy places in coastal lowlands of Malabar, commonly around Cochin. The therapeutic uses of the drug is mentioned as similar to that of Kaiyyunniyam.¹⁰

Text books of Rasasasthra

Rasasasthra is the specialised branch of Ayurveda dealing mainly with metals and minerals. The detoxification of metals and minerals was done with various herbs through different type of processing methods. The drug Peetha Bhringaraja and Bhringaraja is being widely used in the formulations of Rasasasthra. Peetha Bhringaraja is referred by the name Kesaraja in most of the literatures. In most of the formulations, Bhringaraja and Kesaraja are used simultaneously. So from this it can be inferred that Kesaraja in that context refers to Peetha Bhringaraja only. In many formulations the drug is included as one of the ingredient, whereas in some formulations it is used for doing Bhavana, a specialised process of trituration. Most of the yogas in which Kesaraja is an ingredient contain heavy metals like Abhraka (Mica), Loha (Iron) etc. In Rasendra chinthamani, Amla pitha Adhikara a Sodhana procedure for Abhraka is mentioned; in which Kesaraja swarasa is one of the bhavana dravya.¹¹ The formulations in which Kesaraja is included is indicated predominantly for diseases like Grahani, Amlapitha, Jwara, Jwarathisara, Kasa, Pandu, Prameha, Rajayakshma, Sotha etc.

The reference regarding the name 'Kesaraja' for the drug Peetha Bhringaraja is not present in any of the Nighantus. Instead Kesaraja is being used as a synonym for Bhringaraja in some Nighantus. In the treatises of Rasasasthra, the drug is widely mentioned by the name Kesaraja. May be due to this fact the drug is included in Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India in the name Kesaraja. The description of the drug along with macroscopic and microscopic features is included in API 6th volume. The botanical source accepted for Kesaraja in API is *Wedelia chinensis* (Osbeck) Merrill.¹²

Synonyms^{3,4,5,}

Synonyms of the drug Peetha Bhringaraja is available in Sodhala Nighantu, Raja Nighantu and Saligrama Nighantu.

Synonyms of Peetha Bhringaraja

Synonyms	Interpretation	So.N	R.N	Sa.N
Avanthi	Name of a sacred city	+		
Deva priya	Dear to the Gods	+	+	+
Dvijathaka	Twice born	+		
Haripriya	Liked by Vishnu, Possess yellow coloured flower	+	+	+
Harivasa	Wearing yellow garland, Possess yellow flower Purifier	+	+	+
Pavana	That which is able to purify		+	+
Pitha bhringa	Yellow coloured variety of Bhoringaraja	+		
Pithru priya	Dear to ancestors	+		
Swarna bhringara	That possess yellow coloured flower		+	+
Vandaniya	Which is to be respectfully greeted, or that possess yellow flower	+	+	+

Rasapanchaka

The ayurvedic pharmacological properties are Rasa, Guna, Virya, and Vipaka. There is no direct reference regarding the Rasapanchaka of Peetha Bhoringaraja in Nighantus. The literary reference of Rasapanchaka of Peetha Bhoringaraja is available from Ayurvediya Oushadha Nighantu of Thayyil Kumaran Krishnan¹³ and from API.¹²

Rasapanchaka of Peetha Bhoringaraja

	Ayurvediya Oushadha Nighantu	API
Rasa	Thiktha	Katu, Thiktha, Kashaya
Guna	Ruksha, Laghu, Theekshna	Theekshna
Virya	Ushna	Ushna
Vipaka	Katu	Katu

Action of Peetha Bhoringaraja on doshas¹²–

Vatha hara , Kaphahara

Other Karmas of Peetha Bhoringaraja¹²–

Muthrala, Hridya, Vrishya, Swedakara, Kesya, Balya

Therapeutic indications¹² –

Arsa, Athisara, Dourbalya, Hridroga, Indralupta. Jwara. Krimi, Kamala, Kasa, Pandu, Pliha vridhi, Sirasula, Slipada, Sthiroga, Sula, Swasa, Vrana

Prayojya anga (Officinal part)^{13, 12, 14}

In Ayurvediya Oushadha Nighantu of Thayyil Kumaran Krishnan and Vaidyarathnam Oushadha Nighantu written by Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboothirippad, the officinal part mentioned for drug Peetha Bhoringaraja is whole plant. In API, the drug Kesaraja consists of dried whole plant of Wedelia chinensis (Osbeck) Merrill excluding the root.

Aamayika prayoga

1. In Amathisara with Sula and bleeding, Kesaraja is made into pills along with water and taken orally.²
2. Kesaraja prayoga in Jwara is mentioned in Bhaishajya rathnavali. The root of the drug Kesaraja is taken and made into seven pieces and each piece is taken daily along with Ardraka, cures all types of Jwara.¹⁵
3. A special prayoga is mentioned in Bhaishajya rathnavali, Bala roga chikitsa for curing condition called Anamaka, and protect child from Bhutha etc. A cloth which is soaked in Kesaraja swarasa. The fruit hair of Arka and hair of sheep is kept inside the cloth. Then the cloth is made into a varthi, which is then dipped in thaila, made to burn and Kajjali prepared out of it. This is then applied as anjana on a child.¹⁶
4. The juice of Peetha Bhoringaraja along with iron rust mixed in cow's urine is taken for dropsy.
5. Decoction of leaves with fresh oil mitigates head ache.¹⁰

Formulations

References of formulations of Peetha Bhringaraja are mainly available from various text books of Rasasasthra. The drug is being widely used as both ingredient as well as bhavana dravya in many formulations.

Formulations in which Peetha Bhringaraja is an ingredient

Name of formulation	Reference
Grahani mihira thailam	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Grahani chikitsa, 583
Bhaskaramritha abhrakam	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Amlapitha chikitsa, 34
Kshudhavathi Gutika brihathi	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Amlapitha chikitsa, 84
Vyaghri thailam	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Balaroga chikitsa, 151
Sindhooradi thailam	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Galagandaadirogachikitsa – 83
Nayanamritha loham	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Nethra roga cikitsa, 227
Viswa vallabha ghritham	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Pradara roga chikitsa, 100

Formulations in which Peetha Bhringaraja is a Bhavana dravya

Name of formulation	Reference
Balaroganthaka rasa	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Balaroga chikitsa, 112
Brihat rasendra gutika	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Kasa chikitsa, 91
Sarivadi vati	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Karna roga chikitsa, 72
Lakshmi vilasa rasa	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Kasa chikitsa, 130
Kasa samhara bhairava rasa	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Kasa chikitsa, 84
Kamalanthaka loham	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Pandu roga chikitsa, 45
Chandra suryathmako rasa	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Pandu roga chikitsa, 74
Sarveswara rasa	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Prameha chikitsa, 180
Kanchanabhra rasa (Brhat)	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Rajayakshma chikitsa, 143
Rasabhra manduram	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Sotha chikitsa, 124
Sothankusho rasa	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Sotha chikitsa, 53
Sudha Nidhi (As Bhavana drava and Anupana)	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Sotha chikitsa, 104
Sri vaidyanatha vatika	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Grahani roga chikitsa, 301
Achintha sakthi rasa	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Jwara chikitsa, 575
Vishama jwaranthaka loham Brhat	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Jwara chikitsa, 1155
Rasabhra vati	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Grahani chikitsa, 315
Khasarpa vatika	Bhaishajya rathnavali, Grahani chikitsa, 308
Rasendra gutika	Rasendra chinthamani, Kasa chikitsa 1
Brihat paneeya baktha gutika	Rasendra chinthamani, Amlapithadikara, 45
Thriphaladi mandura	Rasakamadhenu, Amlapitha chikitsa
Abhra vatika	Rasendra sara Sangraha, Jwarathisara chikitsa, 13
Jathiphaladi gutika	Rasendra sara Sangraha, Grahani chikitsa, 11
Baidyanatha vati	Rasendra sara Sangraha, Grahani chikitsa, 48
Rasabhra vati	Rasendra sara Sangraha, Grahani chikitsa, 120
Brihat kanchanabhra rasa	Rasendra sara Sangraha, Yakshma chikitsa, 65
Brihat rasendra gutika	Rasendra sara Sangraha, Kasa chikitsa, 1
Kasa samhara bhairava rasa	Rasendra sara Sangraha, Kasa chikitsa, 11
Lakshmi vilasa rasa	Rasendra sara Sangraha, Kasa chikitsa, 17
Bala rasa	Rasendra sara Sangraha, Bala roga chikitsa, 1
Bala roganthaka rasa	Rasendra sara Sangraha, Bala roga chikitsa, 6

Conclusion:-

Apart from Nighantus the drug is mentioned in textbooks of Rasasasthra. None of the Nighantus have mentioned the name Kesaraja for the plant. Instead, the name Kesaraja is the synonym of Bhringaraja in some Nighantus. But most of other books have mentioned Peetha Bhringaraja by the name Kesaraja. API also included the drug by this name and botanically identified as *Wedelia chinensis* (Osbeck) Merrill. The drug is not popularly used in practise, may be due to the confusion in the name Kesaraja. The drug was said to possess similar therapeutic action as that of

Bhringaraja. Peetha Bhringaraja is a promising drug of choice as Vishahara, Balya and Rasayana. More clinical researches have to be carried out with this drug and should promote the conservation and cultivation of the drug.

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