



TRIPHALA CHATURTHAM : A CLASSICAL REVIEW

Dr.Aayushi jain¹, Dr.Shiromani Mishra²

1. P.G. Scholar, Deptt. of Dravyaguna, Govt. Dhanvantari Ayurveda College, Ujjain (M.P.)

2. Guide & Reader, Deptt. of Dravyaguna, Govt. Dhanvantari Ayurveda College, Ujjain (M.P.)

Abstract - *Triphala* is an Ayurvedic concoction that comprises three medicinal herbs native to the Indian subcontinent. *Triphala* is very popular among *mishraka varga*. *Kashaya triphala* or *mukhya triphala* comprises of *Haritaki*, *Bibhitaki* & *Amalaki*. These three herbs giving excellent healing properties so ancient Ayurvedic practitioners put them together to create a concoction which has been used for various health issues for over 1000 years. *Triphala* is used to treat fatigue, oxidative stress & infectious disorders like T.B., Pneumonia, AIDs and periodontal diseases among others.¹ Apart from *kashaya triphala*, there are different types of *triphala* mentioned in *nighantu* which is lagging behind due to its less practical usage among practitioners. So in this review we compile different types of *triphala* along with its usage from ayurvedic classics.

Keywords : *kashaya triphala*, *Madhura triphala*, *Swalpa triphala*, *Sugandhi triphala*

INTRODUCTION- *Triphala* is an excellent herbal formula used since ancient time. *Triphala* is ancient about 1500 BC. It was given to the king of the kushan Empire by the renowned Ayurvedic Acharya Charak in the first century AD.² According to our oldest science, it is belief that *Triphala* take care of our internal organs in the same way a mother care for her children. *Triphala* as the name itself indicate its meaning “*Tri*” in sanskrit stands for three and “*Phala*” stands for fruit. *Triphala* generally refers to *kashaya Triphala* or *Mukhya Triphala*. *Triphala* has innumerable benefits mainly due to its composition of three powerful healing herbs i.e. *Haritaki*, *Bibhitaki* & *Amalaki*. *Triphala* also has rejuvenating effects over three main constitutional elements *vata-pitta-kapha* which governs human life that’s why it is also known as *Rasayana*. *Triphala* is a powerful source of antioxidants.³ Its references of usage as anti-ageing medicine is found in *Charaka samhita* & *Sushruta samhita*.⁴ Besides above these *triphala*, there are different types of *triphala* that are mentioned in “*Nighantu & the Nirukta*” the oldest Indian treatise on etymology philology & semantics. It is often claimed by traditional *vidyas* that *triphala* alone can deal with about 50% of the clinical conditions in practice.⁵

About *Triphala* there is less known fact that another three types of *triphala* were explained in *Mahaoushadhi Nighantu*, *Dhanvantari nighnatu*, *Kaiyyadeva nighantu* & *Raja Nighantu*. They are *Madhura triphala*, *Swalpa triphala* & *Shugandhi triphala*. The content and indications are different from *Kashaya triphala*. Let’s have look on it.

TYPES OF TRIPHALA - There are four types of *triphala* explained in different *nighantu*.

1. *Kashaya Triphala* - known as *Mukhya triphala* or *triphala*.
2. *Madhura Triphala* - Known as *Madhyam triphala* or *Swadu Triphala*.
3. *Swalpa Triphala*
4. *Shugandhi Triphala* - Known as *kanishtha* or *Surbhi Triphala*.

1. KASHAYA TRIPHALA -

Synonyms -

It comprises -

- *Haritaki* - Terminalia chebula, Combretaceae
- *Bibhitaki* - Terminalia bellerica, Combretaceae
- *Amalaki* - Emblica officinalis, Euphorbeaceae

Indication⁶ - *Prameha, Kustha, Netraroga, Visamajvara, Agnimandya, Sotha, Malabandha* etc.

2. MADHURA TRIPHALA -

It comprises of

- *Draksha* - Vitis Vinifera, Vitaceae
- *Gambhari* - Gmelina arborea, Verbenaceae
- *Kharjura* - Phoenix sylvestris, Arecaceae

Indication⁷ - *Vrishya, Vishada, Dhaturiddhikara, Kapha-Marutnashini*.

3. SWALPA TRIPHALA -

It comprises of -

- *Gambhari* - Gmelina arborea, Verbenaceae
- *Kharjura* - Phoenix Sylvestris, Arecaceae
- *Parushaka* - Grewia asiatica, Tiliaceae

4. SUGANDHI TRIPHALA -

It comprises of -

- *Jatiphala* - Myristica fragrans, Myristicaceae
- *Puga* - Areca catechu, Arecaceae
- *Lavanga* - Syzygium aromaticum, Myrtaceae

Indication⁸ - *Vrishya, Mukhagarbha Vishodhani, Hridya, Ruchikara*.

CATEGORIZATION OF *KASHAYA TRIPHALA* IN *NIGHANTU* –

S.No.	<i>Nighantu</i>	<i>Varga/Gana</i>
1.	<i>Dhanvantari Nighantu</i>	<i>Guduchyadi Gana, Mishrakadi Gana</i>
2.	<i>Madanpala Nighantu</i>	<i>Abhyadi Varga</i>
3.	<i>Kaiyadeva Nighantu</i>	<i>Oushadhi Varga</i>
4.	<i>Shodhala Nighantu</i>	<i>Guduchyadi Gana</i>
5.	<i>Raj Nighantu</i>	<i>Mishrakadi Gana, Audhabhida Gana</i>
6.	<i>Bhavaprakash Nighantu</i>	<i>Haritakyadi varga</i>
7.	<i>Priya Nighantu</i>	<i>Haritakyadi varga</i>
8.	<i>Nighantu Adarsh</i>	<i>Haritakyadi varga</i>
9.	<i>Mahaoushadhi Nighantu</i>	<i>Sankhya varga</i>

CATEGORIZATION OF *MADHURA TRIPHALA* / *SWADU TRIPHALA* -

S.No.	<i>Nighantu</i>	<i>Varga/Gana</i>
1.	<i>Raj Nighantu</i>	<i>Mishrakadi varga 4</i>
2.	<i>Mahaoushadha Nighantu</i>	<i>Sankhya Varga</i>
3.	<i>Dhanvantari Nighantu</i> ²²	<i>Mishrakadi Saptama Varga</i>

CATEGORIZATION OF *SWALPA TRIPHALA* -

S.No.	<i>Nighantu / Granth</i>	<i>Varga / sloka</i>
1.	<i>Vaidyaka Paribhasa Pradipa</i>	<i>3/ 149</i>
2.	<i>Kaiyyadeva Nighantu</i> ²³	<i>Mishraka varga</i>

CATEGORIZATION OF *SHUGANDHI TRIPHALA* -

S.No.	<i>Nighantu</i>	<i>Varga</i>
1.	<i>Raj Nighantu</i>	<i>Mishrakadi varga 5</i>
2.	<i>Mahaoushadha Nighantu</i>	<i>Sankhya Varga</i>
3.	<i>Dhanvantari Nighantu</i> ²²	<i>Mishrakadi Saptama Varga</i>
4.	<i>Kaiyyadeva Nighantu</i> ²⁴	<i>Mishraka varga</i>

PROPERTIES OF *TRIPHALA CHATURTHAM* -

Table (1) below describes the Ayurvedic properties of *Triphala chaturtham* -

<i>Dravya</i>	<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Guna</i>	<i>Veerya</i>	<i>Vipaka</i>	<i>Karma</i>
<i>Haritaka</i> ⁹	<i>Pancharasa</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridosha-shamaka</i>

	<i>alavana</i>				
<i>Bibhitaki</i> ¹⁰ 	<i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Ruksha, Laghu</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Kapha-pittashamaka</i>
<i>Amalaki</i> ¹¹ 	<i>Pancharasayu kta except Lavana</i>	<i>Guru, Ruksha, Sheeta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridosha-shamaka</i>
<i>Draksha</i> ¹² 	<i>Madhura, Kashaya</i>	<i>Sara, Guru</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridoshahara</i>
<i>Gambhari</i> ¹³ 	<i>Amla, Kashaya, Madhura</i>	<i>Guru, Snigdha</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridosha-shamaka</i>
<i>Kharjura</i> ¹⁴ 	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Snigdha, Guru</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vata-pittahara</i>
<i>Parushaka</i> ¹⁵	<i>Kashaya, Amla</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vata-Pittahara</i>

					
<i>Jatiphala</i> ¹⁶ 	<i>Tikta, Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-vatahara</i>
<i>Puga</i> ¹⁷ 	<i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Guru, Ruksha</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha- pittahara</i>
<i>Lavanga</i> ¹⁸ 	<i>Tikta, katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha- pittahara</i>

DISCUSSION -

In different types of Triphala, Acharya Kaiyadeva quoted fruits of *Draksha*, *Parushaka*, *Gambhari* together as *Maha-triphala* while *Raja-nighantu* mentioned fruits of *Draksha*, *Kharjura*, *Gambhari* are together called as *Madhura triphala*.¹⁹ In *Vaidyaka Paribhasa Pradip*, there is description about *Mahatriphala*, *Mahati triphala* & *Swalpa triphala*.²¹ In *Dhanvantari Nighantu* & *Kaiyyadeva Nighantu*, there is some difference seen in the content of *sugandhi triphala* than *Mahaoushadhi Nighantu*. *Dhanvantari Nighnatu* & *Kaiyyadeva Nighantu* comprises *Jatiphala*, *Ela* & *lavanga* in *Sugandhi triphala* while in *mahaoushadhi Nighantu* there is *puga* in place of *Ela* in *sugandhi triphala*.

CONCLUSION -

India is best known for the richness of medicinal plants compared to other countries. In india, *Triphala* is one of the greatest combination of three fruits i.e. *Haritaki*, *Bibhitaki* & *Amalaki*. All three ingredients of *triphala* are rich in nutritional value and provide a lot of power to *triphala*. The recent studies proves that the *triphala* is rich in gallic acid, vitamin C, ellagic acid, chebulic acid, bellaricanin, beta-sitosterol & flavanoids.²⁰ It is also considered as a tridoshic rasayana in Ayurvedic medicine as it promotes longevity & rejuvenation in patients of all constitutions and ages. In this review we explore different types of *triphala* which is mentioned in our *nighantu*. Apart from several benefits of *Mukhya triphala*, there are other types of *triphala* mentioned in *nighantu* which exhibit immense benefits in various ailments. *Madhura triphala* predominated in *madhura rasa* & *sheeta veerya* acts as *Balya*, *Rasayana*, *vajeekarana* and used as food supplement along with medicines. *Sugandhi triphala* acts as great appetizer and mouth freshner.

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