



A Comprehensive Review on *Vela (Cleome gynandra)* in the Context of *Visha Vaidya Jyotsnika*: Unique Toxicological and Ritualistic Applications in Ayurveda

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Abstract

Visha Vaidya Jyotsnika is a seminal traditional treatise on Visha Chikitsa from Kerala, attributed either to Vaidya Narayana or Vaidya Karattu Namboothiri of the Kashyapa lineage. Vaidya Karattu Namboothiri, a revered priest of Thrissur Vadakumnatha temple and a well-known Vishahari (expert in treating of poison). Detailed across 21 Adhikarana (chapters), the text provides comprehensive management for poisoning from sources like *Sarpas* (snakes), *Lootha* (spiders), and *Vrischika* (scorpions). It uniquely integrates Ayurvedic principles with traditional Dravidian toxicology, combining practical approaches with Mantra Chikitsa (therapeutic invocations). Prognosis is detailed based on astrological signs (*Nakshatra*, celestial positions) and *Dootha Lakshana* (characteristics of the messenger)¹. This article focuses on the 16th chapter, "*Sarva Maha Visha Chikitsa*," in this chapter, they explained about *vela (Cleome gynandra)*. A detailed review is presented on the botanical profile of *Vela (Cleome gynandra)* and its varieties (*Cleome viscosa*, *Cleome rutidosperma*), *Rasa Panchaka*, phytochemical constituents, and traditional synonyms. Crucially, the review explores the highly ritualized methods of cultivation and collection, unique usage as a diagnostic tool, and complex *Yogas* (formulations) for comprehensive *Visha Chikitsa* management as described in this traditional text.

Keywords: *Vela*, *Visha Chikitsa*, *Cleome gynandra*, *Cleome viscosa*, *Cleome rutidosperma*, *Visha Vaidya Jyotsnika*.

Introduction

visha vaidya Jyotsnika is a traditional visha chikitsa grantha in Kerala, The 16th chapter, "*Sarva Maha Visha Chikitsa*," is mainly highlighting the plant *Vela (Cleome gynandra)*², *Cleomaceae* Family, grows up to 1 – 3 feet tall. Leaves digitate, hairy. Leaflets webbed, 2 – 10 cm long, subsessile, obovate-elliptic to oblanceolate.

Flowers are white, have long stalks. Fruit capsule, long-stalked, spindle-shape, 12 cm long³. *vela* which has three varieties, white variety - *Cleome gynandra* - White flower, Yellow variety - *Cleome viscosa* - Yellow flower⁴, Blue variety - *Cleome rutidosperma* - Blue flower⁵



Cleome gynandra



Cleome viscosa



Cleome rutidosperma

Vernacular Names⁶.

Language	Name(s)
Sanskrit	Paśugandhā
Assamese	Bhutmulla
Bengali	Hurhuria, Shulte
English	Dog Mustard
Gujrati	Talvani, Dhelitalavan
Hindi	Hulhul, Hurhur, Kavalia
Kannada	Naram bele Soppu, Nayeetulasi
Kashmiri	Gandi Buti
Malayalam	Atunari vela
Marathi	Tilvan, Bhatvan, Mabli, Tilavana, Tilvant
Oriya	Anasoria, Anasoria
Punjabi	Bugra
Tamil	Nal valai, Nal velai
Telugu	Vaminta, Vayinta

***Vela*(*Cleome gynandra*)_ Ritualistic cultivation and collection⁷**

Visha vaidya jyothsnika explains specific and ritualistic methods for the cultivation and collection of *Vela* (*Cleome gynandra*)to maximize its therapeutic potency.

Dig a pit in a square shape, half a man's height (approx. 2.5 to 3 feet) deep, and fill it with the bark and leaves of the *Kaanjiram* (*Strychnos nux-vomica*) tree. Cover the remaining part with soil, and then squeeze the fruits of *Strychnos nux-vomica* to extract the juice and pour it over the soil. After seven days have passed in this manner, on an auspicious day, sow the seeds of the white *Vela*(*Cleome gynandra*)in this soil, and water it. At the four corners of this pit, plant four *Kaanjiram* stems each, and tie them together using a new thread (*Kodinul*) and *Darbha grass* (*Desmostachya bipinnata*). Offer water daily at this spot and chant prayers. One must not forget to light the evening lamp here.

***Vela* (*Cleome gynandra*)- Method of Collection (*Graahya Krama*)⁸**

Know that when the plant is full of flowers and fruits, it has attained its full potency (*Veeryasampoornata*). Simultaneously, one must mentally visualize the living energy (*Jeevachaitanyam*) within the plant. For three days, maintain physical and mental purity (*Shareera-Mano-Shuddhi*) and fast (by eating only once a day - *Orikkaloonu*). On the fourth day morning, offer rice and flowers to the plant, circumambulate it, salute it with folded hands, bow down, and chant prayers. After this, the plant should be uprooted. There are many uses and applications for this.

Rasa Panchaka and Karma :*Vela* (*Cleome gynandra*)⁹

- **Rasa :** *Katu*
- **Guna :** *Laghu , Ruksha*
- **Veerya :** *Sita*
- **Vipaka :** *Katu*
- **Karma :** *Hridyam, Dipanam, Vata Hara, Pittalam*

Chemical Constituents¹⁰

- *Cleome gynandra* : fixed oil, Essential Oil and Oleoresin

Classical Categorization¹¹

Caraka, Susruta, Vagbhata - Saka varga

Bhavaprakasha Nighantu- Guduchyaadi Varga¹²

Kaiyadeva Nighantu - Aushadi Vargham¹³

***Vela* (*Cleome gynandra*) - Samanya Prayogas In *Visha chikitsa* ¹⁴**

- Grind the entire plant (*Sa-moolam*, including the root) with *Thulasi* (Holy Basil) juice, form it into a pill, and administer it in a quantity equal to a *Kunnikkuru* (*Abrus precatorius* seed). This will alleviate all poisons.
- In cases of poisoning where blood oozes out through the hair follicles all over the body due to a venomous bite. Grind the entire herb (*Sa-moolam*) in *buffalo* dung juice and apply it as a paste (*Lepanam*).
- It can also be mixed with human urine and given for consumption. This will destroy the vitiation of blood and all types of poisons.

- If blood is observed coming out through the ears, recognize that a critical situation will occur after four *Nazhika* (approx. 96 minutes).
- In such a case, grind the aforementioned pill in cow urine (*Gomootra*) and apply it to the site of the bite (*Damsha-sthaanam*).
- The pill, ground in cow urine, can also be administered as a nasal drop (*Nasyam*).
- Grind the pill in betel leaf juice (*Vettila-neeru*) and use it as an eye ointment (*Anjanam*). If there is no movement in the eye, it can be almost certain that death will occur.

Other uses in Visha chikitsa¹⁵

- Take equal quantities of Manassila (Realgar/Arsenic disulfide), Thrikadu (The three pungents: Dry Ginger, Black Pepper, Long Pepper), and Vela (whole plant). Grind them sequentially in the following liquids
 - First in the sap of Kalli (*Euphorbia antiquorum*).
 - Next in the sap of Chathurakkalli (*Euphorbia tirucalli*).
 - Next in the sap of Erukku (*Calotropis gigantea*).
 - Finally in betel leaf juice.
- **Note:** The mixture must be ground and dried in the shade after each liquid before grinding in the next one. Apply this mixture to a clean cloth, roll it into a wick (*Thiri*), dry it, and store it.
 - If a person bitten by a venomous creature has fainted burn this wick in ghee and blow the smoke into the nostrils through a tube, Repeat this seven times, and then close the nose tightly.
 - The patient will immediately open their eyes. If not, know that death will occur.
 - If the patient is alive, the poison and the smoke will be visible at the site of the bite. If the body turns black (*Krishna-varnam*), one can be certain that death will occur immediately.
 - Take the same cloth-wick, about two *Angulam* (approx. 1.5 inches) long, squeeze it in Thumpu (*Leucas aspera*) juice and *Thulasi juice*, add a small quantity of cow ghee (*Kashu-vattam* - the size of a coin), and administer it orally immediately. This will completely eliminate the entire group of poisons (*Visha-samhooham*).
 - If it is the time of death (*Mruthyu-kaalam*), the administered medicine will seep out through the hair follicles.
- The whole Plant *vela* (*Cleome gynandra*) along with *draksha*, old *pepper*, *thrikatu*, *pukayara*, grinded and sieved through a thin cloth. The powder is collected and stored in a clean *shringa pathra*.

As diagnosing tool¹⁶

Give the patient, *muyalcheviyan* (*akhukarni-Emilia sonchifolia*) *swarasa* in left hand in a vessel, and tell him to mix the above mentioned choorna in “*oru kashu vattam*” (the size of a coin) quantity, with right hand. If the mixture turns in to black in colour, the patient is about to lose his life.

As medicine

1. If the above mentioned mixture doesn't turn black, the choorna will cure visha, on consumption. The same choorna can be used in the form of *pradhamana nasya*, to regain consciousness in unconsciousness due to visha.
 - This yoga is extremely confidential and It must be administered with utmost cleanliness.
- Plant *vela*, along with, dung of elephant, feathers of peacock, *kozhinjil* (*sharapunkha-Tephrosia purpurea*), *karalekam* (*Aristolochia indica*), dried cow dung are taken and rubbed over the body (or moved over the body) from head to toe. The medicine is then tied over the body a little away from the wound. It will cure, *visha*, *devatha peeda*, *baala graha peeda*, *yaksha-gandharva-bhootha badha*.

- The whole vela plant is grinded and squeezed into water. The mixture is heated over fire. The unconscious patient will regain his consciousness, when the mixture is reduced into half. If the patient is not awake, consider him as dead.
 - This procedure should be performed, in case, every other method fails. Never try to perform otherwise.
- A whole plant of *vela*, can be added as an ingredient, one part as quantity, in every lehya, ghritha, thaila, gulika etc. for visha.
 - ***Vela* is considered as the supreme panacea for visha. It is extremely confidential.**
 - **It must be performed as per the guidance of guru.**

Conclusion

The plant *Vela* (*Cleome gynandra*), occupies a supreme and highly confidential position within the toxicological framework of the *Visha Vaidya Jyotsnika*, a key text of Kerala's Visha Chikitsa tradition. The text emphasizes not merely the pharmacological properties of *Vela* (*Cleome gynandra*), which are detailed as *Katu Rasa*, *Teekshna Guna*, and *Ushna Veerya*, but also a unique integration of ritualistic practice. The highly specific ritualistic cultivation and collection methods are essential to maximize the plant's potency.

Crucially, *Vela* (*Cleome gynandra*) is described not only as a comprehensive antidote, used in various forms like *Lepanam* (paste), *Nasyam* (nasal drops), and *Anjanam* (eye ointment) etc...

Ultimately, the *Visha Vaidya Jyotsnika* treats *Vela* (*Cleome gynandra*) as a medicine requiring utmost cleanliness, confidentiality, and guidance from a *Guru*, underscoring its profound significance and the traditional knowledge system's emphasis on integrating botanical science with ritualistic integrity.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process.

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used chat gpt in order to rearrange words of sentences and to generate figure. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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