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VISHA CHIKITSA AND APARAJITHA: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON POISON MANAGEMENT IN ANCIENT MEDICINE

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ABSTRACT

Agadatantra is the sixth branch of Ayurveda, primarily focused on the study and preparation of antipoisonous medicines, known as "Agada." These medicines are formulated by combining various drugs to counteract the effects of poison. Ayurveda describes several medicinal plants that are used to treat poisoning (Visha), one of which is Aparajita. In the Bhavprakash Nighantu and Kaiyadev Nighantu, Aparajita is referred to as "Vishapaha," meaning it alleviates toxins. In the Sushruta Samhita, it is included in the Arkadi Gana, a group of plants known for their toxin-eliminating properties. Pharmacologically, Aparajita has demonstrated several beneficial activities, including nephroprotective, hepatoprotective, anti-inflammatory, diuretic, and antihistaminic effects. Its roots, flowers, seeds, and leaves are used for medicinal purposes, both internally and externally. This review aims to explore the antipoisonous formulations and activities of Aparajita(clitoria ternatea).

KEY WORDS: *Vishapaha, Aparajitha, Agada, Clitoria Ternatea,*

INTRODUCTION

Agadatantra is the sixth branch of Ayurveda, specializing in *Agada*—medications with antipoisonous properties. These medicines are crafted by combining various therapeutic herbs to neutralize toxins. *Ayurveda* identifies several plants used in the treatment of poisoning (*Visha*), and one such plant is *Aparajita*. In both the *Bhavprakash Nighantu* and *Kaiyadev Nighantu*, *Aparajita* is referred to as "Vishapaha," meaning it has the ability to alleviate or neutralize toxins[1,2]. Additionally, the *Sushruta Samhita* includes it in the *Arkaadi Gana*, a group of herbs known for their potent detoxifying properties.[3]

Aparajita is widely distributed across India and is often grown in gardens for its ornamental value. The plant is also known as *Gokarnika* due to its flowers, which resemble the shape of a cow's ear[4]. Ayurvedic texts mention two varieties of *Aparajita*: one with blue flowers and the other with white. Its roots, flowers, seeds, and leaves are utilized for a range of medicinal purposes, both internally and externally.

This review seeks to explore the diverse aspects of *Aparajita*, including its detailed descriptions, chemical composition, pharmacological properties, and its role in *Visha Chikitsa* (the treatment of poisoning). By examining these elements, the review underscores the significance of *Aparajita* in traditional medicine and its potential applications in modern therapeutic practices. Through this analysis, the therapeutic value of this herb is highlighted, emphasizing its historical importance and continued relevance in the treatment of poisoning and related ailments.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The information was sourced from authoritative Ayurvedic texts, electronic database searches, and peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Table 1: *Aparajitha* (*clitoria ternatea)* in ayurveda text

Classic texts	Terminology used	Varga (class) or uses	Reference
Charaka samhita[5]	Shweta	*Mulinidravya*	*Ch.Su.01/77*
		Shirovirechanopaga	*Ch.Su.04/13*
		Vayasthapan	*Ch.Su.04/50*
		Sirovairechanik Dhoom	*Ch.Su.05/26*
		Agurvadi taila	*Ch.Chi 03/267*
		Dhoompan dravya	*Ch.Chi 09/70*
		Nasya	*Ch.Chi 10/42*

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		Gandhahasti agada	*Ch.Chi 23/71*
		Maha gandhahasti agada	*Ch.Chi 23/78*
		Vishachikitsa	*Ch.Chi.23/100*
	Girikarnika	*Vishaghna*	*Ch.Chi.23/195*
	Ashanparni	*Madhurskandha*	*Ch.Vi.08/139*
Sushrut samhita 5 (1000 B.C - 2 A.D.)[6]	*Girikarnika*	*Shirovirechana*	*Su.Su.39/06*
		Nadivrana	*Su.Chi.09/39*
		Prameha	*Su.Chi.11/10*
	Girihya	*Pittabud*	*Su.Chi.18/34*
		sarpdansha chikitsa	*S. Ka. 5/75*
	Shweta	*Kaval dharniya dravya*	*Su.Chi.22/63*
		Medhyadravya	*Su.Sa 10/69*
		Vishaghna	*Su.Ka 01/54*
		Nasya	*Su.Ka.01/65*
		sarpdansha chikitsa	*Su. Ka. 5/75*
		Visha sanshamana	*Su.Ka. 6/12*
		Mushik damsha	*Su.Ka. 7/23*
		Kaphaja pratisyaya	*Su.Ut. 24/32*
Ashtang sangraha 6 (6th Century AD)[7]	*Asphota*	*Formation of kshara*	*As.Su.39/08*
	Shweta	*Vishatailachikitsa*	*As.Su.08/17*
		Arkadi group	*As.Su.16/20*
	Ashwakhura	*Ward-off all evil spirit*	*As.U.04/07*
Ashtang hriday 7 (7th Century AD)[8]	*Shweta*	*Vranashodhan*	*Ah.Su.15/28*
		Mruduvirechana	*Ah.Su.21/18*
	Adrikarni	*Sidharthakghrita*	*Ah.U.05/10*
		Mahabhutaravaghruta	*Ah.U.05/20*
	Girikarnika	*Snake bite*	*Ah.U.36/57*

Compendia *Aparajita is mentioned in Chakradatta,*[9] *Vangsen,*[10] *Yogaratnakar* [11] *& Sharangdhar samhita*[12]

Table 2- Aparajita in various compendia

Classical texts	***Terminology used***	***Varga (class) or uses***	***Reference***
Chakradatta(11thCent.A.D.)	*Shweta*	*Nasya in Unmada*	*Unmad Chi 20/50*
	Girikarnika	*Gandamal*	*Galaganda Chi.41/09*
Vangasen (12th Cent. A.D.)	*Girimallika*	*Pest in Edema*	*V.S.Shotha Chi.91*
		Galaganda	*V.S.Shotha Chi.20*
Sharandhar(13thCent. A.D.)	*Vishnukranta*	*Parinama Shula*	*Sha.S.Ma. Kh. 05/17*
Yogaratnakar(17thCent.A.D.)	*Vishnukranta*	*Parinamashula*	*Y.R.Parinamshula Chi.*
	Shweta	*ShyamadiKwath*	*Y.R.Udavatha Chi.*

Table 3- Aparajita in various Nighantu

Name	***Varga***
1. Dhanvantari Nighantu[13]	*Karavirãdi varga*
2. Mãdhav Dravyaguna[14]	*Vividha Ausadhi varga*
3. Siddharnantra Prakãša[15]	*Kaphagna varga*
4. Hridaya Dipaka Nighautu[16]	*Ekpãda varga*
5. Madanpala Nighantu[17]	*Abhayãdivarga*
6. Kaiyadeva Nighantu[18]	*Ausadhi varga*
7. Bhavaprakša Nighantu[19]	*Guducyãdi varga*
8. Rãj Nighantu[20]	*Guducyadi varga*
9. Šaligram Nighant[21]	*Guducyadi varga.*
10. Nighantu Adarša[22]	*Palashadi varga*

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Table 4 Taxonomical Classification of Aparajita (Clitorea ternatea)[23]

Kingdom	Plantae
Order	Fabales
Family	Fabaceae
Genus	Clitoria
Species	C.ternatea
Botanical Name	Clitoria ternatea Linn.

MORPHOLOGY

It is a perennial twining herb having 7 leaflets, which are elliptic and obtuse. Leaves are pinnate 5-9 foliolate. Flowers are showy, blue or white, petals are unequal, style bearded below the stigma. Fruit pods are linera and compressed. The pods are 5-7 cm long, flat with 6 to 10 seed in each pod. Seeds are 6-10 and black in colour. Plant flowers in rainy season and fruits in winter.[24]

Chemical Constituents[25]–

Root - It contain taraxerol and taraxerone.
Seed - It contain cinnamic acid and an anthoxanthin glucoside.
Seed oil - It contain palmitic, stearic, oleic, linoeic and linolenic acids.
Leaves - It contain glycosides of kaempferol and stigmast-4-ene-3, 6-dione.
Flowers - It contain delphinidin – 3, 5 – diglucoside.

- Pharmacological Properties of Aparajita according to Ayurveda[26]
  Rasa -Tikta, Katu, Kashaya
  Virya - Shita
  Vipaka - Katu
  Guna -Tikshna, Laghu
  Doshakarma – Tridoshghna

Pharmacological activity according to ayurveda

It is useful in the treatment of *udar, kaphavikar, jwara, mutravikara, galganda, gandmala, shotha, netraroga, unmada, aamavata, kushtha, and visha vikar*.[1]

Pharmacological Activity

1)Nephroprotective activity

It is shown that the administration of ethanol extract of Clitoria ternatea has nephroprotective potential against APAP-induced nephrotoxicity. This nephroprotective activity of clitoria ternatea might be due to the synergetic effect of chemical compounds present in them making them good sources for the production of a nephroprotective herbal medicine.[27]

2)Anti carcinogenic activity

Clitoria ternatea extracts is well correlated with other reports from different plant extracts on cancer suppressing activity or anti carcinogenic activity.[28]

3)Hepatoprotective activity

The methanol, chloroform and petroleum ether extract of roots of blue and white flowered varities of clitorea ternatea found to have hepatoprotective property. This was assessed by evaluating their hepatoprotective potential against carbon tetrachloride induced hepatotoxicity in rats.[29]

4)Immunomodulatory effects

The studies were conducted on oral administration of aqueous extract of Clitoria ternatea to alloxan induced diabetic rats for a duration of 60 days which significantly decreased the serum glucose and cholesterol levels. The total white blood cells, red blood cells, T lymphocytes and B lymphocytes were significantly increased in treated animals, while monocytes and eosinophils showed an opposite trend. These results further indicate that these plant extracts have immunomodulatory effects that strengthen the immune system. [30]

5)Diuretic Activity – The powdered form of dried whole root and ethanol extract were evaluated for diuretic activity and only single I.V. dose of extract produce moderate increase in urinary excretion of Na, K and decrease in Cl but no change in urine volume. Also so appreciable effect seen on oral dosing.[30]

6)Wound healing activity –

The effects on wound healing were investigated using excision, incision and dead space models in rats. Seed and root extracts significantly improved wound healing property when administered orally by gavages as well applied topically as ointment which are comparable to that of cotrimoxazole ointment. The finding of this study suggested that plant possesses effects on all three phases of wound healing, inflammatory, proliferative and remodeling phase.[31]

Formulations of aparajita in visha chikitsa

A) In sthavara and jangam visha chikitsa

Aparajita is used to preapare *yavagu* which is used in the treatment of *sthavara* and *jangama visha* .[32]

B) In Snake bite

1. Juice of *shweta aparajita* along with *valmika mrutika* is useful in snake bite.[33]
2. *Shweta aparajita* is one of the ingredients of agada which is used in *darveekar sarpa* (hooded snake) bite treatment.[34]
3. *Shweta aparajita* is one of the ingredients of agada which is used in *mandali sarpa* bite treatment.[35]
4. Powder of *sinduvara* root, *vacha* and *aparajita* is given with water in the treatment of *darveekar* snake bite poisoning.[36]
5. Root powder of *shweta aparajita* and *sinduvara* along with water is beneficial in *darveekar* snake bite.[37]

C) In Rat bite

1. Ghrita prepared with the paste and juice of shweta aparajita is beneficial in poisoning.[38]
2. Aparajita along with apamarga, danti, langali etc is used in treatment of rat bite.[39]
3. Aparajita along with paste of shweta punarnava and honey is useful in the treatment of kapil mooshika (Rat)bite.[40]

D) In Spider bite

1. Aparajita sinduvara, along with haridra, sarpgandha, rasna etc. are made into paste and applied in spider poisoning predominant of kapha. [41]

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2. Nasal drops prepared from juice of fruit of aparajita is beneficial in spider bite poisoning.[42]
3. *Agada* prepared from *shirish, bakuchi, surala, katabhi, jati, shweta aparajita* is beneficial in spider bite poisoning.[43]

E) In insect bite

1. *Aparajita* along with *pippali, marich, apamarga* etc is used for aplication at bite site in *bhramar visha.*[44]
2. Fume of *shweta aparajita, guggula, bhallataka, arjuna* etc. destroy serpents, rats, insects and insects of clothing.[45]

F) In fish bite

1. *Shweta aparajita, shunthi, marich, pippali* along with *ghrita* is used for application in fish bite poisoning.[46]
2. Application of powder of aparajita, bhinda , trikatu along with honey is beneficial in fish bite.[47]

G) In *Visha Upadrava* (Complication of poisoning) –

If there is excessive bleeding due to poisoning, suvarna bhasma with juice or paste of *aparajita* is used for treatment.[48]

H) In injury caused by weapon with poison - Application of *kshara* prepared with *aparajita, mushkaka, somtwaka, manjishta, shirish and grudhranakhi* is useful in the treatment of injury caused by weapon with poison[49]

Table No 5: Agada formulations containing *Aparajita*

Sr. No.	Anti poisonous formulation	Ingredients	Indication
1.	Mahasugandhi agada	Shweta aparajita, shirish pushpa, sinduvar, chandana, tagar, haridra, daruharidra, kushtha etc.	It destroys poison of king of snake even of vasuki (Celestial serpent).[50]
2.	Amruta ghrita (Sushruta samhita)	Seeds of apamarga and shirish, shweta and neela aparajita, kakmachi, cow urine.	It is best to mitigate poison and it restores even a dead man to life.[51]
3..	Meghnaad agada	Tanduliyaka, kashmarya, kinihi, aparajita, matulunga, sharkara, sinduvara	It is beneficial in the treatment of darveekara and rajimana snake bite.[52]
4.	Yapana agada	Shweta aparajita, chandan, valaka, musta, dhymaka, katuka, dadima, kumkuma, shunthi etc.	It restores the life of the person who is unconscious by the effect of poison.[53]
5.	Suryodaya agada	Shweta aparajita, shriveshtaka, haridra, daruharidra, kanchanar, manshila, pippali, patala, manjishta etc.	It destroys effect of poison just as the sunrise dispels darkness .[54]
6.	Lodhradi agada	. Lodhra, shweta aparajita, shirishpushpa, harenuka, marich, vacha etc	It destroys the poison of snakes, rats, wasp, jackal, dog etc.[55]
7.	Rushabhakaadi agada	Rushabhaka,jeevaka, bharangi, madhuka, shweta aparajita etc.	It is useful in treatment of complications of poisonng. e.g. Dyspnoea, fever etc.[56]
8.	Param agada	Vacha, vanshatwaka, patha, nata, shirish, aparajita etc.	It is useful in the treatment of insect bite. e.g. vishwambhara bite[57]
9.	Amrita ghrita (Charaka samhita)	Shweta aparajita, shirish twak, trikatu, chandan, sariva, patala etc.	It is useful in all types of poisoning. It revives the persons almost dead due to poisoning and hanging.[58]

DISCUSSION

In Ayurvedic texts like *Bhavprakash Nighantu*, *Kaiyadev Nighantu*, and the *Sushruta Samhita*, Aparajita is described as *vishapaha*, meaning it has the ability to eliminate poison. Once poison enters the body, it disrupts the balance of the three doshas (vata, pitta, and kapha).[59]Aparajita is known for its tridoshaghna action, which means it helps to restore balance by treating the effects of poisoning.

Aparajita has several proven pharmacological benefits, including nephroprotective (protecting the kidneys), diuretic (promoting urine production), hepatoprotective (protecting the liver), anti-inflammatory, and antihistaminic properties. It is especially effective in treating nephrotoxic poisons (such as lead and mercury) and hepatotoxic poisons (such as paracetamol and carbon tetrachloride). Due to its diuretic properties, it helps in flushing out poisons from the body.[60]

Ayurvedic texts also mention various formulations that include Aparajita, which are used for treating bites from snakes, spiders, rats, insects, and fish. Aparajita is an important ingredient in many antipoison formulations (known as *agada*), such as Mahasugandhi Agad, Amruta Ghrita, Meghnaad Agad, Yapana Agad, Suryoday Agad, Lodhradi Agad, Rushabhakaadi Agad, Param Agad, and Amruta Ghrita. These formulations are beneficial in combating poisoning from various sources.

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CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Aparajita holds a significant place in classical Ayurvedic medicine, particularly in anti-poison formulations like Aparajita Agada. Revered for its detoxifying and healing properties, it proves to be a potent remedy for combating various toxic effects within the body. With its proven ability to treat poisoning from snake bites, spider bites, rat bites, insect bites, and fish bites, Aparajita stands as a valuable herb in Ayurvedic therapy. Its multifaceted benefits, including its nephroprotective, hepatoprotective, diuretic, and anti-inflammatory actions, make it an essential component in the effective treatment of different types of poisoning, reaffirming its importance in traditional medicine.

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