

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF SHATAVARI (*Asparagus racemosus*) DRUG MENTIONED IN THE AYURVED

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ABSTRACT

Medicinal plants are useful for curing human diseases and play an important role in healing due to presence of phyto chemical constituents. India having a rich diversity of medicinal plants and rich plant diversity has provided an initial advantage to the local people for scrutinizing various plant species for the purpose of food, medicine, perfumes and spices. The natural and unique medicinal plants are used for curing various diseases/ailments and income generation. Ayurveda and other Indian literature have mentioned the use of plants in treatment of various human ailments. Food is the major source for serving the nutritional needs, but with growing modernization some traditional ways are being given up. Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*), a climbing Ayurvedic plant, is known for its numerous activities such as hyperlipidemia, hypertension, angina, dysmenorrhea, anxiety disorders, benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), leucorrhoea and urinary tract infections. This plant possesses a wide range of secondary metabolites inclusive of steroids, alkaloids, dihydrophenanthrene derivatives, flavonoids, furan derivatives and essential oils. Information from the literature suggests that, the major constituents of *A. racemosus* are steroidal saponins which are mainly responsible for different biological activities of *A. racemosus*. This article details the review of single drugs Shatavari mentioned in Ayurvedic classical books. Present article also aims for validating classical fact with published scientific research work.

KEYWORDS: *Asparagus racemosus*.

INTRODUCTION

Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*) is an important medicinal plant of tropical and subtropical India. The genus *Asparagus* includes about 300 species around the world. Out of the 22 species of *Asparagus* recorded in India. Shatavari is a woody climber growing 1- 2 m in height, the root are finger-like and clustered. The leaves are like pine needles, small and uniform and the inflorescence has tiny white flowers in small spikes. This plant belong to Liliaceae family, is common at low altitudes in shade and in tropical climates throughout India, Asia, Australia and Africa. In Sanskrit, the meaning of shatavari is described as 'able to have one hundred husbands and in Ayurveda this amazing herb is known as the "queen of herbs" because it promotes love and devotion and as it increases the capacity for lovemaking.^[1]

Vedic period

In Vedic period we can't find Shatavari as an internal medicine but it was used as an external therapy in the form of "Mani".

According to Acharya Sayana "Sat – Sankhyakan - Roga Nivarti Iti – Shatavarah". It means Mani which is able to kill 100 diseases is called Shatavarah. It indicates its several therapeutic uses. "Its roots or spines will be hundred (appox) in number or its utility is seen in hundreds of diseases." This is claimed to be Rakshoghna, Durnamakantak and Vajikaran. Sayana indicated this for kustha, pama, etc. However it is mainly useful in durnama (arsha). In Vedic period Shatavar Mani was being used to kill different diseases named as Papma, Yakshma, Raksasa, Graha, Apasmara, Dadru, Kustha etc.

In Atharva Veda (1400-1000 BC) Dvitiya Kanda, Shatavari related description found in Sukta 8, Kshetriy roga dura karna. Bhagvati – Vaisanvi, Laghu Shatavari, Tulsi, Aprajita, Visnukranta.^[2]

More over in 'Vedon mein Ayurveda' it has been stated that Shatavar mani kills the several Yakshma by using its own properties. Further more it kill Rakshasa and patients of the skin disease named as 'Darnam'.

शतवारो अनीनशद् यक्ष्मान् रक्षां स तेजसा ।

आरोहन् वर्चसा सह म णर्दुर्णामचातानः । । अथर्ववेद 19/36/1

We also get the detailed study of Shatavari in Atharvaveda where it is described that the frontal growing part of the plant kills the Rakshasa of the surrounding atmosphere. The middle part of the plant kills the entire Yakshma disease and the root of the plant kills the Yatudhanakyapranis. Lastly in this shloka it has been mentioned that this unique Shatavar Mani kills the Papma disease.

शृङ्गाभ्यां रक्षो नुदते मूलेन यातु धान्यः ।

मध्येन यक्ष्मं बाधते नैनं पाप्माति तत्रति । । अथर्ववेद
19/36/2

For the identification of Shatavar Mani the synonym “Hiranya – sringa” was given in Vedo me Ayurveda.^[3]

हिरण्यशृङ्ग ऋषभः शातवारो अयं म णः ।

दुर्गाभः सरवास्तृड्ढाव रक्षांस्यक्रमीत । । अथर्ववेद 19/36/5

In Purana, Shatavari related description mainly found in Garuda purana (1st millennium CE) in Saptasastya dhiksatam Adhayay, Dvisaptasastyadhiksatam Adhayay, where Shatavari is used as Vatarakta, Nadivran, Strirogadi Chikitsa and Ghrita taila prakaran.^[4]

In Matasya purana (Pratham khandh), Shatavari is described in name of Pivari and Satavahya.^[5]

Samhita Kal

Shatavari is classified in Ayurvedic literature in different context, because of its several valuable uses.

Charak Samhita^[6]

Acharya Charak has described Shatavari in the different ganas as Vayah Sthapana, Prajasthapana, Garbhasthapana, Madhura Skandha, Mulasava, Sakavarga etc.

Charak has mention a Shatavari in valuable medicinal Yogas like Shatavari ghrita, Shatavari churna Shatavaryadikshira Shatavari kalka etc.

Regarding Shatavari Charaka Samhita contains nearly 80 referances.

Sushruta Samhita^[7]

Acharya Sushruta has described Shatavari in Varunadi gana and Vidarigandhadi gana. According to action and uses of Shatavari Acharya Sushruta has described Shatavari in pitta Samsamana Varga and Vata Samsamana Varga.

More over according to botanical background Acharya has stated in kantaka panchmula, Kanda Varga. In Susruta Samhita nearly 38 reference of this plant.^[8]

Astanga Samgraha^[9]

In Astanga Samgraha about 83 referances given of Satavari.

Astanga Hridaya^[10]

According to Astanga Hridaya Shatavari is described in Jeevan Panchmula, Madhurgana, Varunadigana and Astanga Samgraha, Shatavari is stated in pitta Samsamana as well as Varunadi gana also.

In Astanga Hridaya about 49 referances given of this drug.

Other Samhita

Acharya Bhavaprakasha 57, Sharngadhara 19 and Chakradatta has stated 68 references each approximately.

Nighantu Kal

In the Nighantu Kal Shatavari became very famous and popular. So all the Nighantu have described its botanical background property and therapeutic uses. All the Nighantu have mentioned the valuable properties of Shatavari like Rasayana (Rejuvenative), Agni pustida evam Pitta shamaka (Increases digestive power), Sheeta (cold), Vrisya (Aphrodisiac), Stanya janaka (Increases breast milk– galactogogue property) etc.

Amarakosha^[11]

In Amarakosha Shatavari is described in Vanoushadhi Varga. Shatmuli, Bahusuta, Abhiru, Indivari, Vari, Risyaprokata, Abhirupatri, Narayani, Shatavari, Aheru are 10 different names mentioned in book.

Rajvallabha Nighantu^[12]

In this Nighantu shatavari is described under the Nanaousadhi Varga. It has Vata, Pita, Meha, Raktahar, and Sara guna.

Dhanvantari Nighantu^[13]

In this Nighantu synonames and properties of Shatavari is described in Guducyadi Varga. It is useful in Rakta, Vata, Pita dosha, Shukravardhak and Rasayan.

Shodhala Nighantu^[14]

In this text Shatavari is described under the Guduchyadi Varga. It has Swadu, Tikta, Sheeta Guna and it is useful in Vrisya, Doshatrayapranuta, Hridya, Medha, Agni bala vardhani, grahni arshavikargni, Balya, Rasayani, Retodoshahar, ayusya, Vayasthapani param, Garbhaprada, Khalityanasni.

Madanpala Nighantu^[15]

In this text Shatavari is include in Abhayadi Varga. Synonyms given in this Nighantu as Shatavari, Dvipishatru, Dvipika, Dharkantka, Narayani, Shatpadi, Shatpada, Bahupatrika. It is useful in Rasayana, Virya and Bala vardhani, Vatapita, Rakta, Sotha nasani, Stanyavardhak.

Kaiyadeva Nighantu^[16]

In this Nighantu Shatavari is described in Oushadhi Varga. It has Tikta, Sheeta, Swadu, Guru, Snigdha guna. It is useful in Rasayana, Stanya, Medha, Agni pustida, Vatapitta, Gulma, Atisara, Sopha.

Raj Nighantu^[17]

In this Nighantu Shatavari is described under the Shatavhadi Varga. It has Tikta, Sheeta, Swadu Guna. It is useful in Pitta, Kaphavatahara, Rasayana, Vrisya.

Shankar Nighantu^[18]

In this Nighantu Shatavari is described in Madhura, Sheeta, Tikta, Guru, Snigdha guna. It is useful in Viryavardhak, Rasayana, Dugdhaprada, Agnihradipak, Balkarka, Medhajanaka, Sukrajanaka, Netrahitkar, Pustikarak and Pitta, Kapha, Vata, Kshaya, Rudhirvikar, Gulma, Atisara nasaka.

Shaligram Nighantu^[19]

In this Nighantu Shatavari is described in Guduchyadi Varga. It has Guru, Sheeta, Tikta, Swadu, Snigdha guna. It is useful in Rasayana, Medhakaraka, agnivardhak, Pustidayak, Gulma, Atisara, Vata, Raktapita nasaka.

Bhava Prakash Nighantu^[20]

In this Nighantu Shatavari is described in Guduchyadi Varga. It has Madhur, Sheeta, Guru, Snigdha guna. It is useful in Stanyajanan, Mutrajanan, Shukrajanan, Balya, Vrisya, Vayasthapan, Chakshusaya, Agnivardhak, Alpasangrahak, Tridoshagna.

CONCLUSION

The plants may be used as a huge amount of raw material for pharmaceutical industries for manufacturing the medicines. Uses of medicinal plants are time-tested and used by people worldwide and no side effects and cost effective compare to other system of medicine. With the changing scenario, there is a need to enhance and promote the conservation and cultivation of natural resources for medicinal plants. In addition to the requirement for conservation of medicinal plants it has also become essential to protect and patent the traditional knowledge. The data compiled will help for analysis of the Shatavari and its properties and help for isolating the similar chemical constituents and active principles having antimicrobial property which in turn will contribute the Ayurvedic drug industry vastly.

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