

ROLE OF TRIPHALA IN NETRAROGA -SYSTEMIC AND LOCAL REMEDY

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ABSTRACT

Homeostasis as per *Ayurvedic* fundamentals i.e., Harmony and Balance between *Tridoshas* (Three body Humors i.e., *Vita*, *Pita*, *Kapha*), *Datus* (Seven body building blocks) and *Mala* (Excreted), *Agni* (Digestive metabolism) along with the pleasant sense of soul, mind and sense among the sense organ eye is the most important as well as delicate organ which gets easily afflicted by imbalance of basic body humours i.e., *Doshas* and results in decreased disturbed functions i.e., *Drushtikriyas*. Practical experience and very long traditional uses of *Triphala* is significant. *Triphala* which contains powder of three fruits in equal proportion viz. *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula* Retz.), *Bibhitaki* (*Terminalia belerica*) and *Amalaki* (*Emblia officinalis* Gaertn.) a very powerful *Chakshushya rasayana* (visual function enhancer/rejuvenator). Upon analyzing this formula, it has control over all three body humours i.e. *Haritaki*- on *Vata*, *Amalaki*- on *Pitta* and *Bibhitaki*- on *Kapha*.

No doubt various previous studies show *Triphala* is a wonderful clinically proven drug in maintaining the health as well as treating many ailments. As need of the hour, the increased prevalence of ocular disorders posing challenges to discuss the role of *Triphala* for systemic and ocular health.

KEYWORDS: Diabetic retinopathy, panchkarma, netrakalpa

INTRODUCTION

Preventive and curative principles of *Ayurvedic* system of medicine stands on the maintenance of *Jatharagni* (Internal digestive fire) and *Kostha* (excretory system). *Jatharagni*, which helps in the proper digestion and assimilation of ingested food as well as it helps in proper functioning of other types of *Pitta*-metabolic factors specially *Alochaka pitta*¹ (rods and cones functional entity) in eyes, whereas *kostha* helps in the proper excretion of waste products. Proper functioning of these two

systems help in maintaining the health, longevity and disease free life.

Ancient *Ayurvedic* scholars explained lot many combination of drugs which act on both the above said system.

All the materia medica and treatment procedures which create *doshic* balance (somatic and psychological) are equally implies to the treatment of eye along with a group of materia medica coined as '*Chakshushya Rasayana*' had been highlighted by Ancient scholars.

Chakshushya class of medicines has a targeted action on the eye and visual apparatus. *Triphala* is one such combination which can correct the imbalance of *doshas* as well as bring them to normalcy along with specific vision promoting effect. The ingredients that make up *triphala*² are very potent individually; when combined, So health as well as systemically treating ocular disorders in the literature available in the ancient classics and recent researches.

Charaka goes so far as to say that *Haritaki* is as nourishing and useful for everyone as mother's milk. It helps in improvising the *agni*, and thus enhances the absorption of nutrients, Another excellent quality of this fruit is that it cleanses the macro and micro circulatory channels, known as "*Srotovishodhini*" which means that it can clear the channels, both big and small³. In addition it is called as *Sarvadoshaprasamani* (pacifies all-*doshas*), very few fruits and herbs have this designation. It also supports the body's immune system. On top of everything, *Haritaki* has an anti-aging value "*vayasthapani*"⁴ (anti-aging). Thus advised in the prevention of age related eye disorders like Age related macular degeneration (ARMD), Senile Cataract, Open angle glaucoma and Retinal degeneration.

Bibhitaki helps to regulate the internal environment specially the circulation of pure

blood in the body. It is an ideal herb for pacifying both *Pitta* and *Kapha*. *Acharaya charaka* quotes *Bibhitaki* as *netrahitam*, meaning it is beneficial for the eyes and it cleanses the *Rasa* (plasma), *Rakta* (blood), *Mamsa* (muscular tissue) and *Medodhatu* (adipose tissue) when they act as *dushyas* (vitiating tissues) in the pathophysiology of a disease formation.

Amalaki helps in purifying toxins from the body, by enhancing food absorption. When our digestion becomes stronger, the food we eat is converted to nutrition rather than staying undigested and producing impurities (*Aama*). Thus flushes out the toxins out of the body. The eyes are another organ that specially benefit from *Amalaki*. In fact, *Amalaki* is called *chakshushya*, which means "strengthening the eye. This is because *Amalaki* enhances both *Ranjaka Pitta* (one type of *Pitta* that governs liver function and the blood formation) and *Alochaka Pitta*⁴ (another type of *pitta* that governs the eyes/ vision phenomenon). Because of its high content of Vitamin C, Scientific research shows that *Amalaki* is an extremely potent antioxidant, excellent in removing excess free radicals, which are at the basis of much degenerative disease and aging. All these qualities make *Amalaki* a powerful immunity-enhancer.

Triphala*⁵: *Haritaki*, *Bibhitaki*, *Amalaki

Drug Name	<i>Haritaki</i>	<i>Bibhitaki</i>	<i>Amalaki-</i>
Latin Name	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	<i>Terminalia bellerica</i>	<i>Emblica officinalis</i> Gartn.
Family	<i>Combretaceae</i>	<i>Combretaceae</i>	<i>Combretaceae</i>
Classical Name	<i>Haritaki</i>	<i>Bibhitaki</i>	<i>Amalaki, Dhatri</i>
Sanskrit Synonyms	<i>Pathya, Abhaya, Avyatha, Vayastha, Haimvati, Shiva.</i>	<i>Aksha, KaliPhala, Bhutava sa, Kalidruma, Karnaphala</i>	<i>Vyastha, Amalaki, Dhatri, Chakshusya</i>
English Name	Chebolic Myrobalans .	Belleric Myrobalans .	Indian gooseberry
Rasa	<i>Panchrasa (kashya predominance, Lavanrahit)</i>	<i>Kashya</i>	<i>Panchrasa(Amla predominance, Lavanrahit)</i>
Guna	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Sita</i>
Virya	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Sita</i>
Vipaka	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
Prabhava	<i>Tridosahara</i>	<i>Tridoshagna</i>	<i>Rasayan</i>
Doshakarma	<i>Kapha Pittasamaka</i>	<i>Kaphahara</i>	<i>Tridosahara mainly Pitta samaka</i>

Triphala: Rasapanchaka (Classical Pharmacodynamics)⁵

When we look into the *Rasa panchaka* of *Triphala* formulation as a whole;

Rasa: *Kashaya rasa pradhanapancha rasa.*

Guna: *Ruksha* and *Guru* (slight)

Virya: *Ushna*

Vipaka: *Madhura*

Doshagnata: Mainly used specifically in predominance of *Kaphadosha*, moderate vitiation of *Vata* and mildly derranged *Pitta*.

Rogagnata: *Kusta, Prameha, Medhoroga* and *Vishamajwara*. Because of these properties it is used as *Dipaniya, Pachaniya, Vatanulomana, Hridya, Chakshusya* and *Rasayana*.

Form of Administration: *Kwatha* (decoction), *Churna* (pulvalise), *Ghrita* (medicated animal fat), *Varti* (collyrium) and *Guggulu* dosage forms.

Triphala: Yogas⁵ (Formulations)

Famous *yogas* containing *Triphala* as main ingredient, which are utilized in day today ophthalmic practice, *Triphala Churna, Sadanga kwatha guggulu, Triphaladi kwatha, Triphaladi anjana, Triphala varti, Triphaladi rasakriya, Nagarjuna varti, Kokilavarti, Drustiprada varti, Candhanadi varti, Lohadiguggulu, Timirahara lauha, Saptamruta loha, Triphaladi ghrita, Mahatriphaladi ghrita and Triphala Gugg*

Triphala Briefly

“*Chakshuya tejomayam tasya visheshat sleshmato bhaya*”⁶ By nature *Kaphadosha* has a tendency to create *Abhishyandhi samprapti*(i.e microchannel obstruction) leading to morbid physiology of the eye . If this condition prevails for long time or no remedial measure is taken, it will manifest as a form of *Abhishyanda* one of the major

pathological condition affecting all parts of the eye and becomes a cause of almost all eye diseases⁷. *Abhishyanda* also signifies the unstable phase of ocular physiology which not only gives rise to discharge per ocular surface but also deranges the internal ocular metabolism (including metabolism of avascular structure). *Triphala* along with metabolic stimulant activity break the *Abhishyandatva* of the *srotas* by virtue of its *ushna* and *ruksha* properties. Not only this; the *tridoshara* combination (*triphala*) will maintain the homeostasis in the body and eye as a whole by further preventing the pathogenesis. *Chakshusya* activity of *Triphala* seems to be an overall impact of this compound on the body as a whole, but the clinical and time tested experience of our ancient scholars may be the logic behind this specific/empirical effect (*Prabhava*) i.e. *chakshusya* property, which is highlighted in all classical literatures. On the basis of the fundamental grounds this effect can be devoted to *Deepana* (property which increases the digestive power), *Pachana* (property which help in the digestion of undigested product) and *Anulomaka* (carminative) properties of *Triphala*; improvising and stimulating the *Pachaka agni* i.e. *Deepana* and *Pachana* qualities produce a quality base essence of *Ahara* (ingested food) i.e. *Rasa* (plasma nutrients), make it bioavailable after assimilation, easily transformable (by enhancing *dhatu agni*- tissue metabolism) thereby nourishes all types of *Pitta* including *Alochaka pitta* i.e. Photosensory layer of retina. The *mrudu virechaka Anulomaka* (mild laxative/ intestinal motility enhancer)

property of *Triphala* helps in the elimination of Biowastage/Excrements as and when they are produced in the body which is always a risk factor to the avascular structure of the eye. In other words enhanced digestive and metabolic process of the body will produce the best anabolic strata for body structure and functions. There by improving the visual functions along with general body function (*Cakshusya* and *Rasayana*). *Triphala* is usually a combination of equal parts of all the three fruits. But in classics depending upon the *doshic* combination and disease condition proportion of these three drugs varies. While treating eye diseases the proportion of *Amalaki* is increased whereas while treating vata related diseases the proportion of *Haritaki* is increased.

Netraroga and Triphala

External/Topical use of Triphala: *Netraprakshalana*, *Netraseka*, *bidalaka*, *Pindi*, *Aschyotana*, *Anjana*, *Tarpana* and *Putapaka* comes under *Bahir parimarjana* of *Netraroga*.

a) Netra prakshalana⁸- Ocular wash/Splashing with *Triphala* aqueous solution. *Triphala* possess mainly *ruksha* and *ushna* properties, hence it can be mainly used in *Kaphaja abhishyanda* and *Kaphaja vartmagata roga* (Eye lid disorders).

b) Netra seka⁹- Therapeutic Ocular irrigation in closed eyes from a height of 7-8 cm. Though *netraseka* with *Triphala kwatha* can act as *Tridosha shamaka*, But it comes under *lekhana Netra seka* which can be used mainly in *Kaphaja netraroga*.

c) Aschyotana¹⁰- Instilling medication in drop form a height of 3-4cm.

Aschyotana with *triphala kwatha* can be used in *Amavastha* of *Netra roga* also. According to *Acharya sharanagdhara* *triphala kwatha aschyotana* is said to be best in all types of *abhishyanda*¹¹.

d) Bidalaka¹² and Pindi¹³- Medicated application over closed eyes in paste as well as poultice form *Triphala churna vidalaka* and *pindi* is used in *shleshma pitta netraroga*.

e) Anjana¹⁴- Application of medicine in conjunctival sac. *Triphala* is one of the main ingredients in various formulations of *lekhana anjanas*.

f) Tarpana¹⁵- Satiating eye with ghee by retaining it on eye ball and blinking continuously for a stipulated period. *Triphala ghrita tarpana* is mainly indicated in *Kaphaja Timira*¹⁶

g) Putapaka¹⁷ - Pouring and withholding various form of medicated extracts prepared by specific pharmaceutical process called *putpaka* in open eyes followed by blinking continuously for a stipulated period.

Triphala is used as one of the ingredient in *lekhana putapaka* in *kaphaja netrarogas*.

Internal Use of Triphala

Triphala possess *tridosha samaka* property, *Cakshushyaas* as well as good *kostha shodhaka* hence it can be jolly well used in all *Netra vikaras* for the purpose of *shodhana* (procedure by which excess accumulation of vitiated doshas from the body is removed). Hence *Triphala* is used as both *shaman* (procedure by which accumulation of vitiated doshas from the body is pacified) and *shodana* in day today clinical practice to prevent and manage ocular disorders. *Acharayas* highlighted the role of *triphala*

prayoga as *shamana* mainly in *Drishtigata vikaras* (group of eye disease in which vision is mainly affected). *Triphala* is used as *rasayana dravya* in all *drishtigata rogas* only by changing the *anupana* (adjuvants) depending upon the *doshic* predominance. For eg: *Triphala* with *madhu*, *taila* and *ghrita* in *Kaphaja*, *Vataja* and *Pittaja Netra roga* respectively¹⁸. Use of *Triphala* is also quoted in drugs which prevent one from eye ailments¹⁹. *Triphala churna* along with *madhu* (honey) and *ghrita* (ghee) is considered to be the best rejuvenation therapy for eye disorders²⁰

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda can give a beneficial answer to the systemic as well as ocular disorders as it tries to break the pathogenesis at *Doshik* and *Panchbhautika* substratum.

Previous articles show *triphala* having free radical scavenging effect²¹, and immunomodulatory effect²².

Some study evaluated the therapeutic efficacy of *Triphala* on constipated bowel habit and well-being. No toxicity or adverse drug reactions were observed²³. Studying the detail knowledge of simple to which brings us to our basics. Adopting *Triphala* as a part of Dietic regimen to avoid diseases..

CONCLUSION

Many various work, highlighting systematic as well as ophthalmic uses in day to day life. *Triphala* is combination of equal parts of all the fruits, their proportion also enhances the effect. Ingredients that make up *triphala* has control over all three body humours i.e. *Haritaki*- on *Vata*, *Amalaki*- on *Pitta* and *Bibhitaki*- on *Kapha*. Not only this; the *tridosha* combination (*triphala*) will

maintain the homeostasis in the body and eye as a whole by further preventing the pathogenesis. *Chakshusya* activity of *Triphala* seems to be an overall impact of this compound on the body as *Doshagnata* works mainly specifically in predominance of *Kaphadosha*, moderate vitiation of *Vata* and mildly derranged *Pitta.Rogagnata: Kusta, Prameha, Medhoroga* and *Vishamajwara*. Because of these properties it is used as *Dipaniya, Pachaniya, Vatanulomana, Hridya, Chakshusya* and *Rasayana*. *Kwatha* (decoction), *Churna* (pulvalise), *Ghritha* (medicated animal fat), *Varti* (collyrium) and *Guggulu* dosage forms. Thus adopting *Triphala* as a part of dietic regimen, one can be free from systemic as well as ocular disorders also and live a disease free life

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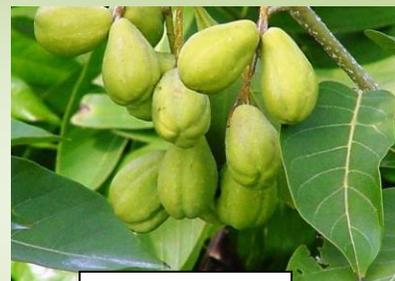
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Bhibhitaki Fruit



Amalaki Fruit



Haritaki Fruit