



## A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *NILI (INDIGOFERA TINCTORIA LINN.)* FROM VARIOUS AYURVEDIC TEXTS

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### ABSTRACT:

**Background:** *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* is a perennial shrub, found nearly throughout the country and widely cultivated in India from long back for the production of indigo dye. *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* also has a wide range of therapeutic aspect such as *Jwara, Kasa, Krumi, Valipalita, Vatarakta, Shotha*, etc. mentioned in Samhitas, Chikitsagranthas and Nighantus. **Materials and Method:** The available Samhitas, Chikitsagranthas were referred for collecting the data regarding *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)*. **Observation & Result:** Referring various Samhitas, Chikitsagranthas gives vital information about the formulations, dosage forms and various clinical aspect of *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)*. **Discussion:** 21 Ayurvedic texts including Samhitas and Chikitsagranthas are referred and the data obtained is well categorized for the easy interpretation. **Conclusion:** From this review study, information is gathered regarding formulations, Internal-external application, various dosage form and *Amayika prayoga* of *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* which can be prove beneficial in the clinical aspect.

**Keywords:** *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)*, *Samhita*, *Chikitsagrantha*

## INTRODUCTION:

*Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* is a perennial shrub, 1.2-1.8 m high, found nearly throughout the country and widely cultivated in India from long back for the production of indigo dye which is also known as blue gold or true indigo. *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* is known by different names in different languages in India such as; In English - Common Indigo, Hindi - *Nil*, *Gouli*, Gujarati - *Gali*, *Nil*, Kannada – *Olleneeli*, Marathi - *Nali*, *Nuli*, *Nili*, Tamil - *Avuri*, *Nilakkali*, Telugu - *Aviri*, *Shyama*. Its botanical name is *Indigofera tinctoria Linn.*<sup>[1]</sup> *Indigofera* – Indigo means blue, *fera* means producing; *Tinctoria* – of the dyers.

The earliest known scripture is said to be Vedas that includes Rigveda, Yajurveda, Atharvaveda, Samaveda. *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* is mentioned in Atharvaveda as a dark coloured plant and mentioned to be used against *Kilasa* and *Palita*.<sup>[2]</sup> Also, wide range of therapeutics of *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* are mentioned in Samhita, Chikitsagrantha and Nighantu but in present time no detailed review is available.

## MATERIALS & METHODS:

All the data related to *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* was gathered from 21 different ayurvedic texts including Samhitas and Chikitsagrantha. The data gathered has been

categorized and arranged from the 21 texts and according to it the observations and results are given below.

## OBSERVATIONS & RESULT:

### **Gana inclusion:**

Depending upon the origin, morphology, properties and therapeutic values of drug, ancient texts have classified the drugs into *Mahakashaya*, *Gana*, *Varga* and *Skandha*. But *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* is not included under any such classification in *Bruhatrayi*. Instead, it is mentioned as *Virechana Dravya* in Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Astanga Samgraha, Astanga Hridaya and Kashyapa Samhita. It is also mentioned as *Shodhana Dravya* in Kashyapa Samhita and included in *Shodhana Gana* in Vangsen Samhita.

### **Number of formulations of *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* in various Samhita/Chikitsagrantha:**

Ayurveda overview includes various Samhitas, Chikitsagranthas and Nighantu. Multiple formulations are given in these Ayurvedic texts. *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* is mentioned in various formulations and also it has wide range of therapeutic aspect. So here number of formulations of *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* available from Samhita and Chikitsagrantha are mentioned in the table below.

**Table no. 1: Number of formulations in various Samhita/Chikitsagrantha:**

No.	Samhita/Chikitsagrantha	No. of Formulations	Abbreviation
1.	<i>Charaka-samhita</i> <sup>[3]</sup>	16	Cha.S.
2.	<i>Sushruta-samhita</i> <sup>[4]</sup>	9	Su.S.
3.	<i>Ashtanga-samgraha</i> <sup>[5]</sup>	23	A.S.
4.	<i>Ashtanga-hridaya</i> <sup>[6]</sup>	17	A.H.
5.	<i>Kashyapa-samhita</i> <sup>[7]</sup>	8	K.S.
6.	<i>Bhela-samhita</i> <sup>[8]</sup>	7	B.S.
7.	<i>Vrinda-madhava</i> <sup>[9]</sup>	12	Vr.M.
8.	<i>Chikitsakalika</i> <sup>[10]</sup>	4	Chi.Ka.
9.	<i>Chakradatta</i> <sup>[11]</sup>	16	C.D.
10.	<i>Raj-martanda</i> <sup>[12]</sup>	4	R.M.
11.	<i>Harita-samhita</i> <sup>[13]</sup>	4	H.S.
12.	<i>Gada-nigraha</i> <sup>[14]</sup>	34	G.N.
13.	<i>Vangasena-samhita</i> <sup>[15]</sup>	17	V.S.
14.	<i>Sharangdhara-samhita</i> <sup>[16]</sup>	6	Sha.S.
15.	<i>Vaidya-manorama</i> <sup>[17]</sup>	7	V.M.
16.	<i>Vaidya-chintamani</i> <sup>[18]</sup>	14	V.C.
17.	<i>Bhavaprakasha-samhita</i> <sup>[19]</sup>	2	Bha.S.
18.	<i>Yogaratanakara</i> <sup>[20]</sup>	10	Y.R.
19.	<i>Bhaishajya-ratnavali</i> <sup>[21]</sup>	20	B.R.
20.	<i>Basavarajiyam</i> <sup>[22]</sup>	12	Bs.R.
21.	<i>Sahasrayoga</i> <sup>[23]</sup>	21	S.Y.

**Applications of *Nili* (*Indigofera tinctoria* Linn.):**

*Antahaparimarjana* (internal) and *Bahirparimarjana* (external) is one of the classifications of the Chikitsa. Among the various formulations of *Nili* observed, it has been used internally, externally and in both

the ways. In the table mentioned below total number of applications of *Nili* is given.

**Table No. 2: Number of internal and external application of *Nili* (*Indigofera tinctoria* Linn.)**

Internal	189
External	61
Internal & External	11

**Table no. 3: First time introduced dosage forms of *Nili* (*Indigofera tinctoria* Linn.)**

No.	Dosage form	Formulations	Indication	Ref.
1.	<i>Leha</i>	<i>Pittakasanashaka leha</i>	<i>Pittaja Kasa</i>	Cha.S.Chi. 18/87
2.	<i>Modaka</i>	<i>Trivrudadi Modaka</i>	<i>Trik, Vankshana, Hrit, Basti, Kostha- Shoola</i>	Cha.S.Ka. 7/51-54
3.	<i>Kshara</i>	<i>Dravantiyadi Kshara</i>	<i>Slipada, Apachi</i>	Su.S.Chi. 19/68-69
4.	<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Vataja Galganda</i>	A.S.U. 26/48
5.	<i>Varti</i>	<i>Guda Varti</i>	<i>Udavarta</i>	A.H.Chi. 8/135-137
6.	<i>Gutika</i>	<i>Triphaladhya Gutika</i>	<i>Udavarta</i>	K.S.Chi. 6/4
7.	<i>Guggulu</i>	<i>Triphala Guggulu</i>	<i>Gandamala</i>	V.M. 41/64-71
8.	<i>Dhoopa</i>	<i>Romantikadihara Dhoopa</i>	<i>Romantika</i>	V.M. 56/7
9.	<i>Avaleha</i>	<i>Patolamooladhya Avaleha</i>	<i>Udavarta</i>	G.N. Pra. Kha. 5/173-179
10.	<i>Arista</i>	<i>Shirishadhyarista</i>	<i>Visha</i>	B.R. 72/71-73
11.	<i>Asava</i>	<i>Arvindasava</i>	<i>Sarvabalaroga</i>	S.Y. 7/1

**Amayika prayoga of *Nili* (*Indigofera tinctoria* Linn.):**

For the treatment purpose, formulations as well as single drug is being used in the classical ayurvedic texts. While referring the Samhitas and Chikitsagranthas, it

is observed that the *Nili* (*Indigofera tinctoria* Linn.) is used in formulations as well as single drug. Here the list of Amayika prayoga of *Nili* (*Indigofera tinctoria* Linn.) is mentioned in the table below.

**Table no. 4: Amayika Prayoga of *Nili* (*Indigofera tinctoria* Linn.)**

No.	Dosage form	Indication	Ref.
1.	<i>Ghrita</i>	<i>Kokila Visha</i>	A.S.U. 46/39
2.	<i>Mahasneha</i>	<i>Hridroga</i>	B.S.Chi. 19/18-20
3.	<i>Mukhadharana</i>	<i>Krimidanta</i>	Vr.M. 58/40
4.	<i>Kalka</i> (Mix in Gomutra)	<i>Sarva Udararoga</i>	C.D. 37/42
5.	<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Jalagardabha</i>	C.D. 55/23
6.	<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Makshika Visha</i>	C.D. 65/27
7.	<i>Churna</i>	<i>Rajyakshama</i>	R.M. 12/2
8.	<i>Kalka</i>	<i>Mandali Visha</i>	R.M. 29/8

9.	<i>Nilimoola Bandhana</i>	<i>Tritayaka Jwara</i>	H.S.3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>Sthana</i> 2/215-217
10.	<i>Kalka</i>	<i>Mandali Visha</i>	G.N. 3/34
11.	<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Jalagardabha</i>	V.S. 67/16
12.	<i>Kalka</i>	<i>Mutrakriccha</i>	V.M. 7/4
13.	<i>Churna, Lepa</i>	<i>Visarpa</i>	V.M. 11/12
14.	<i>Churna</i>	<i>Rasayana</i>	V.M. 20/16
15.	<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Jalagardabha</i>	V.C. 62/66-67
16.	<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Jalagardabha</i>	Y.R. <i>Kshudraroga</i> Chi./1
17.	<i>Churna (Mukhadharana)</i>	<i>Danta-krimi</i>	Y.R. <i>Dantaroga</i> Chi./5
18.	<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Jalagardabha</i>	B.R. 60/27
19.	<i>Mukhadharana</i>	<i>Danta-krimi</i>	B.R. 61/38
20.	<i>Swarasa</i>	<i>Vatashamana</i>	Bs.R. 6/199
21.	<i>Swarasa</i>	<i>Arkadugha Visha</i>	Bs.R. 23/736
22.	<i>Lepa</i>	<i>Manushyadamshajanya Visha</i>	S.Y. <i>Visha Chikitsa</i> /78

#### DISCUSSION:

21 Ayurvedic texts including Samhitas and Chikitsagrantha has been referred. From this review it is observed that approximately 260 total number of formulations of *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* are mentioned which includes internal, external as well as both type of application of *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)*. Highest number of formulations of *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* i.e. 23 are available in Ashtanga Samgraha and the lowest number of formulations are available in Bhavprakasha Samhita which is only 2 in number. *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* has not been mentioned in any *Mahakashaya, Gana, Varga* and *Skandha* but it is mentioned as *Shodhana/ Virechana*

*Dravya* in texts such as Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Samgraha, Ashtanga Hridaya and Kashyapa Samhita. Different parts of *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* such as Root, flower, fruit, leaves, seeds together or individually are used for treatment purpose. *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* is used as a single drug as well as multi-drug formulations in many diseases. Various dosage forms such as *Ghrita, Taila, Swarasa, Lepa, Churna, Guggulu*, etc are mentioned. *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)* also has a wide range of therapeutics such as *Jwara, Kasa, Krumi, Valipalita, Arbuda, Pandu, Shotha*, etc.

#### CONCLUSION:

From this review study, information is gathered regarding formulations, Internal-

external application, various dosage form and Amayika prayoga of *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria* Linn.). It is inferred from this review study that *Nili (Indigofera tinctoria* Linn.) has wide range of therapeutic aspect which is not yet much explored. So, by conducting experimental and clinical study more detail information can be added which can be prove useful in the current time.

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