

## Keshya drugs in Bhava Prakasha Nighantu: A Review

### Review Article

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#### Abstract

Beauty has very important role in our life. Hair plays very vital role in our beauty. A human body without hair would be seen just as a tree without leaves. So everyone has an ambition that his/her hair should be long, black and thick. As the hair is a beauty for women as well as men also, hair plays a significant role in personality. From the ancient time, hair has got exceptional place in our poetry especially for describing the beauty of women. In *Ayurveda* hairs are known as *Kesha* and the drugs which are suitable to hairs, are known as *Keshya* drugs. In this article we have made an effort to compile all the *Keshya* drugs which are described in *Bhava Prakasha Nighantu*.

**Key points:** *Kesha*, *Keshya*, *Bhava Prakasha Nighantu*.

#### Introduction

Lord Brahma has created all the creatures of this universe including human being, while creating the creatures. Brahma has done artistic job by giving aesthetic touch to the beings of this universe, similarly, as the painter paints the painting by giving different colours to it, so that his painting could look beautiful and attractive. In the same way, Brahma added 'Hairs of the scalp' an additive factor of personality. Beautiful, long and attractive hairs of the scalp add plus factor to the personality.

Hairs are present on most of the skin surfaces except the palms, palmer surfaces of fingers, the soles, and the planter surfaces of the feet. In adults, hair usually is most heavily distributed across the scalp, in the eyebrows, in the axilla, and around the external genitalia. Genetic and hormonal influences largely determine the thickness and the pattern of distribution of hairs. Although the protection it offers is limited, hair on the head guards the scalp from injury and the sun's rays. It also decreases heat loss from the scalp. Eye brows and eye lashes protect the eyes from foreign particles, as does hair in the nostrils and in the external ear canal.(1)

A normal human being has approximately 1 million hair follicles on his body, of which 1 lac hairs on the scalp. A hair normally grows at the rate of approximately 1 cm per month, but each hair grows in cycles, each cycle being constituted by –

- The growth phase (Anagen)
- The transition phase (Catagen)
- The resting phase (Telogen)

The catagen phase in a hair cycle usually lasts 3 weeks, while the telogen phase lasts 3 months. The duration of the anagen phase in different hair follicles however, varies depending upon the site of the body. In the scalp hair the duration of anagen phase can be as long as 10 years. After completing the anagen phase, each hair follicles enters into the catagen phase which is followed by telogen phase. The old hair however, falls off only after the completion of the telogen phase and when the new hair has already started growing in its place. (2)

In *Ayurveda* hairs are known as *Kesha*. The word '*Kesha*' originally has been brought about from "shee" with "ach + aluk samasah" which has been explained as "ke mastake shete iti" by *Halayudha-Kosha* (3)

#### *Keshotpatti*

There is no detailed description found in *Ayurvedic* claim regarding the producing of *Kesha* in particular. The *Asthi Dhatu* has emerged from *Meda Dhatu*. The *Prasada* portion and the *Kitta* portion are differentiated and the *Kitta* portion of it is *Kesha* or hair on the scalp. (*Su.Su.* 16/36, *Ca. Chi.* 15/19, *A.H. Sa.* 316/364). *Sharangdhara*, *Shabdastoma Mahanidhi* and *Vedic* index believe in the theory that *Kesha* are the *Upadhatu* of *Majja Dhatu*. (*Sa. P. Kh.*5/15, *Sha. S.M.* pg. 134)

#### *Kesha Sankhya*

In ancient many controversies have been noticed in the counting of the hair. The number of hair as per various texts may be summarized as under:

- According to *Yagnyavalkya* the total number of human hair is 3.5crores.
- *Acarya Caraka* has described that there are 29956 *Kesha*, forms and *shamashra* in the body which are equal to the numbers of *Dhamanigras* (*Ca. Sa.* 7/14)
- According to *Vidyotini Tika* of *Caraka Samhita* the number of hair stated by *Aptopadesha* is 72 crores (*Ca.Sa.* 7/14)
- According to *Susruta Samhita*, there are mainly 4

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oblique *Dhamanies*, which supplies to *Romakoopa* and are responsible for the drainage of *Sneha* & *Sveda*. According to this statement one can believe that there are innumerable hairs of the body. (*Su. Sa.* 9/9).

### **Kesha Poshana**

According to *Acarya Caraka* ingested food is digested to assimilable nutritional fluid (*Ahara rasa*) which further divides into two parts namely – essential fluid (*Sara bhaga*) and the excretory matter/waste matter (*kitta*). The waste matter is responsible for the production and nutrition of so many things like sweat, urine, hair, etc., and among them are the hair follicles the hair of the head and beard, hair of the body, etc., (*Ca. Su.* 28/5). According to *Sushruta Kesha* nutrition form the end part of *Dhaman*, which are attached to the *Romakoops* (*Su.Sa.* 9/9)

### **Kesha Varnotpatti**

Pertaining to the effect of *prakiti, jati, vansha, desha, kala*, etc., the colours of hair are also observed different just as black, brown, red golden, etc. While describing the beauty of hair, the colour of hair like that of the *Bhramara* has been mentioned. Regarding the production of the colour of hair, *Ayurveda* says that the production of each & every element in this human body has been attributed to *Panchamahabhoota*. The production of hair colour has been attributed to *Teja Mahabhoota* as *varnya* in the *Artha* (Subject) of *teja*. One of the manifestation of *teja* is *Bhrajaka pitta*, which does all the colouring, particularly of skin work through out the body for the whole life. *Teja* when combines with *Prithvi* and *Vata Mahabhoot* then *krisna varnya* is produced. (*Ca. Sa.* 8/15, *Su. Sa.* 2/36)

### **What are Keshya drugs?**

**Keshya-** The drugs which are beneficial for hair, make the hair healthy and black in color e.g. *Bhringaraja*. (4)

**Keshya-**Suitable to hair, *Eclipta prostrata* L., Black aloe wood L.(5)

*Dravyas* which are beneficial for *Keshas* are known as *Keshya*. These *dravyas* increases the length of *Kesha* and made its colour natural so it is divided into two parts-

- *Kesha vardhana*
- *Kesha ranjana* (6)

### **Basic elements of hair**

In the origin and development of *Kesha* i.e. hair, there is significant need of *Prithvi* (earth element) and *Akasha* (space/ether) *Mahabhoota*. During the process of formation and development of hair, the successive role of other tissues can also be estimated; because, though its origin begins at the earliest for its appearance it takes much time. So the role of later *dhatu*s like *asthi* and *shukra* can be well judged by this.

As far as the matter of hair and its growth is concerned, once again we can deduce the need of nutrition and essential body requirements as it is formed/derived from the later tissues. This is explained

with the broad heading of **Keshya** concept. The word 'keshya' is suggestive of '*keshyaaya hitam yat tat*'. It means that which is good for hair. So the goodness of hair can be understood by three perspectives like-

1. **Kesha sanjanana**—that which helps in the origin of hair.
2. **Keshha vardhana**—that which promotes hair growth or which makes hair dense and thick.
3. **Kesha ranjana**—that which gives dark black color to the hair. (7)

### **Aims and Objectives**

The main aims and objective of this work is to evaluate all the *Keshya* drugs which are described in *Bhava Prakasha Nighantu* with their *Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka* and *Doshik karma*, along with their latest researches already done in the reference of *Keshya karma*.

### **Materials and Methods**

The drugs are taken from different *vargas* of *Bhava Prakash Nighantu* (Indian Materia Medica) of *Shree Bhava Mishra* (C.1500-1600 A.D.) commentary by Prof. Krishna Chandra Chunekar, published by *Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, Varanasi*, Reprint: year 2013. In this study we have selected only the drugs which are having *Keshya karma* described in *sloka* form.

The drugs identified are tabulated as in Table No 1.

### **Researches already done on Keshya Karma of the above said Drugs:**

#### **Yashtimadhu:**

Petroleum ether extract of the root of *Glycyrrhiza glabra* is taken to investigate the hair growth in female *Wister* rats divided into 3 groups. After complete removal of hair from their dorsal skin, one group is treated with paraffin oil, (control), second group with 2% of minioxidil solution and third group with petroleum ether extract of *G.glabra* root, was applied for 30 days. During this period visual hair growth was observed and then skin biopsy was done for follicular density and cyclic phase. Animal treated with petroleum ether extract of root *G. glabra* showed significant hair growth as compared to other two groups. This study shows that petroleum ether extract root of *G. glabra* works as a hair growth agent for females.(8)

#### **Bhringaraj:**

The study was conducted to evaluate the methanol extract of *Eclipta alba* as a hair growth promoter. In this study the extract was applied topically to assess telogen to anagen transition in pigmented C57/BL6 mice. The study showed that methanol extract of *Eclipta alba* may have hair growth promoting property. (9)

#### **Japa Pushpa:**

Study of polyherbal HO4 formulation of four drugs, *Tridax procumbens* (Linn.), *Hibiscus rosasinensis* (Linn.), *Trigonella foenum graecum* (Linn.), and *Embilica officinalis* (Linn.) for their

**Keshya drugs described in Bhava Prakasha Nighantu**

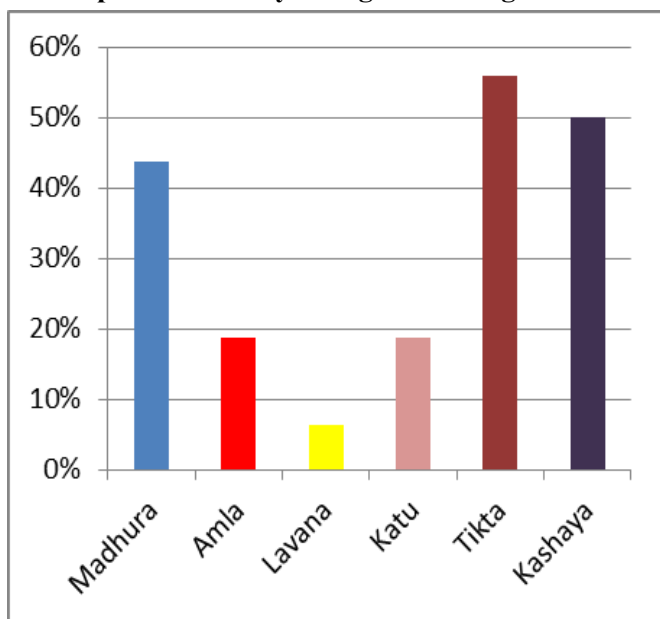
(V=Vata, P=Pitta, K=Kapha, R=Rakta)

S. No	Name of Drugs (part used)	Botanical Name	Family	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Doshagh nata (karma)	References (Varga, Sloka no, Page no)
1	Vibhitaki (Phala)	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i> Roxb.	Combretaceae	Kasaya	Ruksha	Ushna	Madhura	KP shamaka (Keshya)	Haritkyadi, 35, 9
2	Yasti-madhu (Moola)	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> Linn.	Fabaceae	Madhura	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	PVR shamaka (Keshya)	Haritkyadi, 145, 62
3	Bakuchi (Phala)	<i>Psoralea corylifolia</i> Linn.	Fabaceae	Madhura, Tikta	Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	KV shamak (Keshya)	Haritkyadi, 206, 119
4	Bhallataka (Vrint)	<i>Semicarpus anacardium</i> Linn.f.	Anacardiaceae	Madhura,	Laghu, Snigdha, Tikshna	Ushna	Madhura	P shamaka (Keshya)	Haritkyadi, 228, 134
5	Gambhari (Phala)	<i>Gmelina arborea</i> Linn.	Verbenaceae	Amla, Kasaya,	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	VPR shamaka (Keshya)	Guduchyadi, 14, 264
6	Sindhuvara (Panchanga)	<i>Vitex negundo</i> Linn.	Verbenaceae	Tikta, Kasaya, Katu	Laghu	Ushna	Katu	KV shamaka (Keshya)	Guduchyadi, 113, 329
7	Gunja (Seeds)	<i>Abrus precatorius</i> Linn.	Fabaceae	Tikta, Kashaya	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	VP shamak (Keshya, Indralupta)	Guduchyadi, 125, 339
8	Neeli (Panchanga)	<i>Indigofera tinctoria</i> Linn.	Fabaceae	Tikta	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	KV shamaka (Keshya)	Guduchyadi, 207, 392
9	Bhringaraja (Panchanga)	<i>Eclipta alba</i> Hassk.	Compositae	Katu	Tikshna, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	KV shamaka (Keshya)	Guduchyadi, 239, 414
10	Saireyaka (Patra, Moola)	<i>Barleria prionitis</i> Linn.	Acanthaceae	Tikta, Madhura, kinchit Amla	Atisnigdha	Ushna	Katu	VRK shamaka (Kesharanjana)	Puspa, 49, 489
11	Japa puspa (Puspa)	<i>Hibiscus rosasinensis</i> Linn.	Malvaceae	Kasaya, Tikta	Laghu, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	KV shamaka (Keshya)	Puspa, 58, 493
12	Bijaka (Sara)	<i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i> Roxb.	Fabaceae	Kasaya, Tikta	Laghu, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	KRP shamak (Keshya)	Vatadi, 28, 512
13	Kashisham			Amla, Tikta, Kasaya	—	Ushna	—	KV shamaka (Keshya)	Dhatvadi, 152, 609
14	Tila (Seed)	<i>Sesamum indicum</i> Linn.	Pedaliaceae	Katu, Tikta, Madhura, Kashya	Guru, Snigdha	Ushna	Katu	KP shamaka (Keshya)	Dhanya, 63, 638
15	Kadali (Kanda)	<i>Musa sapientum</i> Linn.	Musaceae	Madhura	—	Sheeta	—	— (Keshya)	Shaka, 105, 685
16	Avi dugdha	Sheep milk		Lavana, Madhura	Snigdha, Guru	Ushna	—	PK kara V shamaka (Keshya)	Dugdha, 19, 745

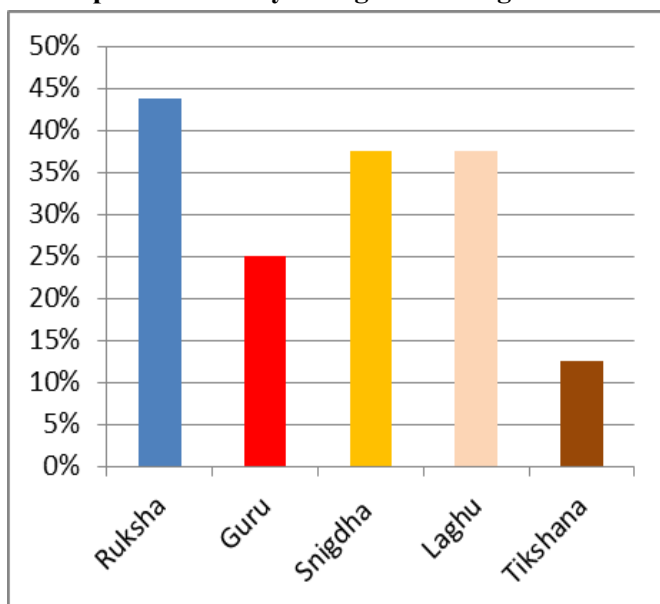
traditionally claimed hair growth promoting property. Topical application of formulation was done and hair growth initiation time and hair growth completion time was visually observed in experimentally induced alopecia animal models. Study showed that the prepared formulation of these drugs have hair growth promoting capability and have potential to cure alopecia as well. (10)

**Observations and Results:**

**Graph No 1: Keshya drugs according to Rasa**

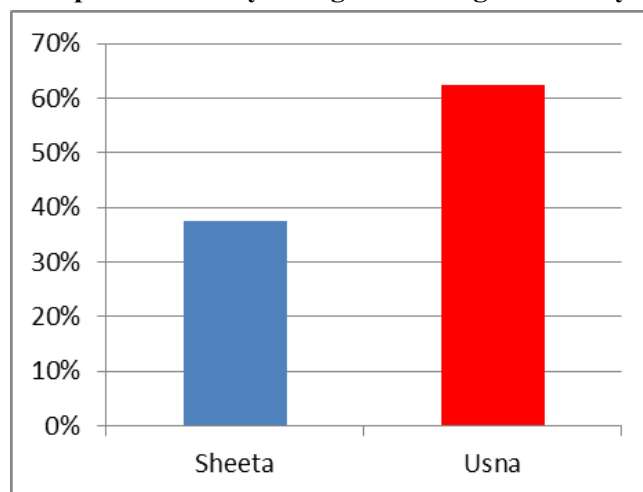


**Graph No 2: Keshya drugs according to Guna**

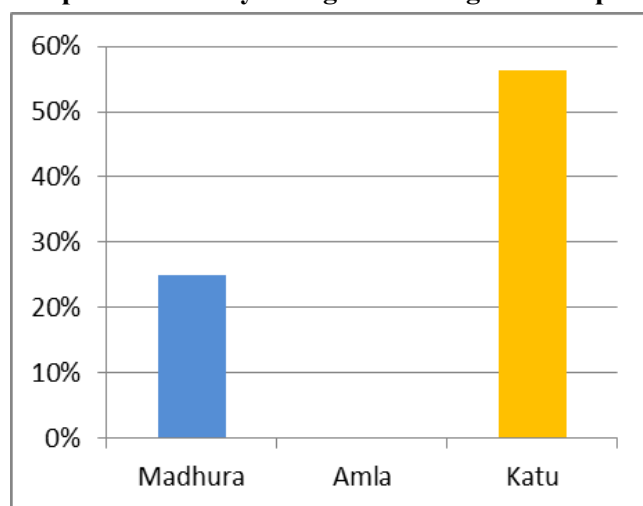


Graph no 1: Showing that the most of the drugs are having *Tikta*, *Kashaya* and *Madhura* predominant *rasa*. Similarly graph no 2 is showing that most of the drugs are having *ruksha*, *snigdha* and *laghu* *guna* predominant.

**Graph no 3: Keshya drugs according to the Virya**

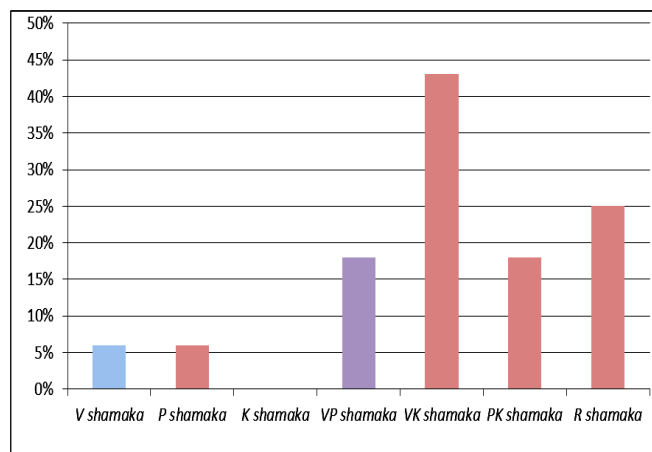


**Graph No 4: Keshya drugs according to the Vipaka**



Graph no 3 is showing that most of the *keshya* drugs described in *Bhava Prakasha Nighantu* are having *ushna virya* and similarly graph no 4 indicating that most of the drugs are having *katu vipaka*.

**Graph No 5: Keshya drugs according to the Dosha Karma**



According to *doshika karma* graph no 5 is showing that most of the drugs are *VK shamaka* and *PK shamaka*.



## Discussion

Most of the diseases described in *Ayurveda* related to hair are *Khalitya* (Gradual falling of hairs), *Palitya* (Whitening of hairs), *Indralupta* (Sudden falling of hairs) etc. According to *Sushruta*, the *samprapti* of *Khalitya* is as follows- The vitiated *vata* takes the *pitta* to the *romakupa* which leads to hair fall, there after the vitiated *rakta* along with *kapha* blocks the *romakupa* which leads to permanent hair loss i.e. *Khalitya*. In case of *Palitya*, the vitiated *pitta* enters into the *romakupa* and leads to discoloration of hair.

From the above study it is observed that most of the *keshya* drugs described in *Bhava Prakasha Nighantu* are having *Tikta*, *Kashaya* and *Madhur rasa*, *Ruksha guna*, *Usna Virya*, *Katu vipaka*, and *VK shamaka* property. As above said that vitiated *Vata* and *Pitta* are responsible for hair fall and vitiated *Rakta* and *Kapha* are responsible for permanent hair fall. Similarly vitiated *Pitta* is responsible for discoloration of hair. As *Tikta*, *Kashaya* and *Madhur rasas* are *Pitta shamaka*, *Ruksha guna* and *Usna Virya* are *vata shamaka* and *Katu vipaka* is *Kapha shamaka*. Hence these drugs are helpful in checking hair fall and discoloration of hair. So these drugs are definitely having *keshya* property.

In *Khalitya*, *vata* and *pitta doshas* are vitiated. The drugs which are having *vata- pitta shamaka* property are helpful in *Khalitya* such as *Gunja*. The drugs having *pitta shamaka* property are helpful in *Palitya* such as *Bhallataka vrint*. Similarly the drugs having *rakta* and *kapha shamaka* property are helpful in permanent hair loss such as *Saireyaka*.

## Conclusion

*Keshya* drugs are the drugs which are beneficial to hair by helping in the origin of hair, promoting hair growth, make hair dense and thick or give dark black colour to hairs. There are so many diseases described in *Ayurveda* which are related to hairs such as *Khalitya*, *Palitya*, *Indralupta* etc. There are so many drugs described in *Ayurvedic* texts which are beneficial in these diseases such as *Yastimadhuka tail*, *Nilikadya tail*, *Bhringaraja tail*, *Triphala ghrita*, *Abhraka bhasma*, *Sadabindu tail*, *Triphaladi tail*, *Bhringamalakadi tail*, *Nilibhringadi tail*, *Narasimha churna* etc. but in *Bhava Prakasha Nighantu* total 16 drugs are found having

*Keshya* property, out of which 14 drugs are of plant origin, one is *rasa ausadi* and one is of animal origin. Out of 14 plant origin drugs we are able to find only 3 plants (*Yastimadhu*, *Bhringaraja* and *Japa puspa*) on which research work have been done in reference to *Keshya karma*. It indicate that there is a need of research work on remaining plants.

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