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BAKUCHI (PSORALEA CORYLIFOLIA LINN.) IN AYURVEDIC NIGHANTU: A LITERARY REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: *Bakuchi* (*Psoralea corylifolia* Linn.) is an important drug in *Ayurveda*, widely used for its *Kushthaghna* (anti-dermatotic), *Keshya* (hair-promoting), and *Rasayana* (rejuvenative) properties. It is mentioned in multiple *Nighantus* with diverse descriptions regarding its *Rasapanchaka*, *Karma*, and therapeutic indications. However, comparative textual documentation across these sources remains limited. **Methods:** A comprehensive literary review of classical *Nighantus* including *Dhanvantari Nighantu*, *Madanpala Nighantu*, *Kaideva Nighantu*, *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*, *Raja Nighantu*, *Shaligrama Nighantu*, and *Dravyaguna Sangraha* was carried out. Information related to *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, *Dosha karma*, *Karma*, and disease indications of *Bakuchi* was compiled and compared across texts. **Results:** *Bakuchi* is predominantly described as *Tikta* and *Madhura* in *Rasa*, *Ruksha* and *Laghu* in *Guna*, *Shita* in *Virya*, and *Katu* in *Vipaka*, with a *Kapha-Vatahara* action. Synonyms such as *Avalguja* and *Somaraji* were most frequently cited. Major *Karmas* attributed to *Bakuchi* include *Dipana*, *Grahi*, *Hridya*, *Keshya*, *Medhya*, *Ruchya*, *Sara*, *Twachya*, and *Vistambhi*. Therapeutically, it is indicated in *Kushtha*, *Krimi*, *Swasa*, *Jwara*, *Kasa*, and *Vrana*. **Discussion:** The textual analysis indicates strong consistency in *Bakuchi's*

Rasapanchaka profile and its dominant *Kapha-Vatahara* effect across *Nighantus*. Its frequent association with *Kushtha* and *Twacha roga* underscores its primary dermatological utility, while *Rasayana* and *Medhya* actions reflect its systemic benefits. The comparative approach reveals minor variations in *Virya* and *Vipaka* among sources, suggesting regional or interpretive influences. **Conclusion:** *Bakuchi* holds significant therapeutic relevance in *Ayurveda*, particularly in dermatological and rejuvenative contexts. The harmonized understanding of its *Rasapanchaka* and *Karma* across classical texts provides a strong foundation for modern pharmacological validation and clinical applications.

KEYWORDS: *Bakuchi*, *Psoralea corylifolia* Linn., *Rasapanchaka*, *Nighantu*, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

Bakuchi (*Psoralea corylifolia* Linn.) is a classical medicinal herb extensively cited in Ayurvedic literature for its versatile therapeutic applications. Recognized as a potent *Rasayana dravya* and *Kusthaghna*, it has been employed for centuries in the management of *Kushtha*, *Vrana*, *Krimi*, and various metabolic and dermatological disorders. Its therapeutic significance is reflected in a wide range of *Nighantus* spanning from the early *Saushruta Nighantu* (5th century) to modern compilations such as the *Nighantu Adarsha* (20th century). Across these texts, *Bakuchi* has been classified under diverse *Vargas* including *Guduchyadi Varga*, *Palashadi Varga*, and *Aushadhi Varga*, highlighting its multifaceted pharmacological profile.

Pharmacologically, *Bakuchi* is characterized by its *Tikta* and *Madhura Rasa*, *Ruksha* and *Laghu Guna*, *Shita Virya*, and *Katu Vipaka*, conferring *Tridoshaghna* activity, with particular efficacy in pacifying *Kapha* and *Vata doshas*. Its multiple synonyms across regional and textual sources, such as *Somaraji*, *Avalguja*, and *Krushnaphala*, demonstrate the herb's historical and cultural prominence. Contemporary research corroborates many of these classical claims, attributing antioxidant, antimicrobial, immunomodulatory, and melanogenic activities to *Bakuchi*, thereby bridging traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with modern pharmacological insights.

This article aims to systematically analyze the *Rasapanchaka*, *Karma*, synonymy, and disease-specific applications of *Bakuchi* as described in various *Nighantus*, highlighting its enduring relevance and laying the groundwork for future pharmacological investigations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

References related to *Bakuchi* (*Psoralea corylifolia* Linn.) were compiled from various *Nighantus* and Ayurvedic texts. Information on its *Varga*, synonyms, *Rasapanchaka*, *Karma*, and *Rogaghnata* was extracted and tabulated. Comparative analysis was carried out to identify similarities and variations in the descriptions across different *Nighantus*.

RESULTS

Table No. 1: *Bakuchi* observed in different Varga in various Nighantu.

Sr. no.	Name of texts	Author & Period	Abbreviation	Total *Varga*	Details of *Bakuchi* mentioned in
1.	*Saushruta Nighantu.*[1]	*Acharya Sushruta* (5th Century)	SN	34	*Prakirna Gana*
2.	*Amarkosha.*[2]	*Amarasinha* (5-6th Century)	AK	2 *Kanda*	*Vanaushadhi Varga, Dwitiya Kanda*
3.	*Ashtanga Nighantu.*[3]	*Acharya Vahata* (7th Century AD)	AN	27	*Viprakirna Gana*
4.	*Paryayaratnamala.*[4]	*Madhavakara (9th century)*	PR	-	-
5.	*Dhanvantari Nighantu.*[5]	*Mahendra Bhaugik* (10th - 13thCentury AD)	DN	7	*Guduchyadi Varga*
6.	*Shabdachandrika.*[6]	*Acharya Chakrapanidatta* (11th Century)	SC	9	*Vrukshadi Varga*
7.	*Sodhala Nighantu.*[7]	*Shodhal (12thCentury AD)*	SoN	13	*Guduchyadi Varga, Anekartha Varga*
8.	*Dravyaguna Samgraha.*[8]	*Acharya Chakrapanidatta* (11th Century AD)	DgS	11	*Shakadi varga, Vatadi Varga*
9.	*Nighantushesha.*[9]	*Acharya Hemachandra (12th Century)*	NS	6	*Gulmakanda*
10.	*Abhidhana Ratnamala.*[10]	*(12th-13th Century AD)*	AR	6	*Tiktaskandha*
11.	*Hridaydipaka Nighantu.*[11]	*Acharya Vopadeva (13th Century AD)*	HDN	8	*Tripada Varga*
12.	*Siddhamantra Nighantu.*[12]	*Acharya Keshav (13th Century AD)*	SiN	8	*Pittala Kapha Vataghna Varga*
13.	*Madhava Dravyaguna.*[13]	*Acharya Madhav (13th Century)*	MD	29	*Vividha Aushadhi Varga*
14.	*Madanapala Nighantu.*[14]	*Acharya Madanapala; (14th Century AD)*	MN	13	*Abhayadi Varga*
15.	*Kaiyadeva*	*Acharya*	KN	9	*Aushadhi Varga*

	Nighantu.[15]	*Kaiyadeva 1425 AD*			
16.	*Saraswati Nighantu.*[16]	*16th century AD*	SrN	6	*Chandanadi Varga*
17.	*Bhavaprakasha Nighantu.*[17]	*Acharya Bhavamishra; (16th Century AD)*	BpN	22	*Haritakyadi Varga, Anekartha Nama Varga*
18.	*Raja Nighantu "Abhidhana Chudamani".*[18]	*Narahari Pandit (17th Century AD)*	RN	23	*Shatavhadi Varga*
19.	*Shaligrama Nighantu.*[19]	*Acharya Shaligrama (19th Century AD)*	ShN	23	*Ashta varga*
20.	*Priya Nighantu.*[20]	*Acharya P.V.Sharma (20th Century AD)*	PN	13	*Shatpushpadi Varga*
21.	*Nighantu Adarsha.*[21]	*Bapalal Vaidya (20th century)*	NA	2 Volumes	*Palashadi Varga*

Table 1 shows that in several Nighantu, *Bakuchi* is mentioned under *Guduchyadi* or *Aushadhi Varga*, while in the remaining Nighantu, it is classified under different *Varga* according to the author's interpretation and focus.

Table No. 2: Synonyms of Bakuchi in Nighantu.

Sr.no.	Synonym	AK	AN	PR	DN	NS	HdN	MD	MN	KN	SrN	BpN	RN	SN	PN	Total
1.	*Aindavi*												+			01
2.	*Chandri*												+			01
3.	*Chandralekha*			+	+				+				+			04
4.	*Chandralekhika*					+										01
5.	*Chandraraji*		+													01
6.	*Chandrarekha*		+					+		+		+				04
7.	*Chandrashakala*						+			+						02
8.	*Chandrika*								+	+						02
9.	*Indulekha*				+	+										02
10.	*Induraji*						+			+						02
11.	*Khandaraji*									+						01
12.	*Raji*												+			01
13.	*Shashilekha*				+							+				02
14.	*Avalguja*		+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+			09
15.	*Krushnaphala*				+				+	+	+	+				05
16.	*Krushnaphali*	+				+										02
17.	*Suparnika*										+					01
18.	*Somaa*										+					01
19.	*Soma*								+							01
20.	*Somaraji*			+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+			09
21.	*Somavalli*				+				+	+		+	+			05
22.	*Somavallika*					+					+					02
23.	*Suprabha*												+			01
24.	*Suvalli*				+	+					+					03
25.	*Suvallika*									+			+			02

26.	*Durgandha*				+	+										02
27.	*Krushnaputiphala*			+												01
28.	*Putikarni*				+											01
29.	*Putiphala*				+				+	+	+					04
30.	*Putiphali*	+				+						+				03
31.	*Pratigandha*												+			01
32.	*Kushthaghni*								+			+				02
33.	*Kushthahantri*												+			01
34.	*Kushthanashini*			+	+	+										03
35.	*Kantida*												+			01
36.	*Amruta*									+						01
37.	*Kalmeshi*	+			+	+						+		+		05
38.	*Kalmashi*												+			01
39.	*Kalmeshika*								+							01
40.	*Kamboji*												+			01
41.	*Malayu*	+								+						02
42.	*Sita*			+									+			02
43.	*Sitavari*												+			01
44.	*Somakhanda*								+							01
45.	*Vara*							+	+							02
46.	*Valguja*								+				+			02
47.	*Chandrabhidha*												+			01

Among the listed synonyms, ***Avalguja*** and ***Somaraji*** were the most frequently cited, each recorded in **nine classical texts**, indicating their strong historical consistency and wide acceptance in Ayurvedic literature. Synonyms such as ***Krushnaphala***, ***Kalmeshi***, and ***Somavalli*** appeared in **four to five sources**, suggesting moderate textual prevalence and possible regional or contextual importance. The remaining synonyms were found in only one or two texts, reflecting either limited regional usage or later interpolations.

Table no. 3: Rasapanchaka attributed to Bakuchi in various Nighantu.

Sr. No	Nighantu	*Rasa*	*Guna*	*Virya*	*Vipak*	*Dosaghnata*
1	Dhanvantari Nighantu	*Tikta*	-	*Shita*	*Katu*	K alleviating
2	Madanpala Nighantu	*Madhura, Tikta*	*Ruksha*	*Shita*	*Katu*	K alleviating; Phala-P Aggravating; VK alleviating
3	Kaiyadeva Nighantu	*Tikta, Madhura*	*Laghu, Ruksha*	*Shita*	*Katu*	RPK alleviating
4	Bhava Prakasa Nighantu	*Madhura, Tikta*	*Ruksha*	-	*Katu*	KRP alleviating; Phala-P Aggravating; KV alleviating
5	Raja Nighantu	*Tikta*	-	*Ushna*	*Katu*	K alleviating
6	Shaligrama Nighantu	*Tikta*	*Ruksha*	*Shita*	*Katu*	K alleviating
7	Dravya Guna Sangraha	*Tikta*	-	*Shita*	*Katu*	PK alleviating

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

Table 3 shows that *Bakuchi* is predominantly *Tikta* and *Madhura* in *Rasa*, *Ruksha* and *Laghu* in *Guna*, *Shita* in *Virya*, and *Katu* in *Vipaka*, especially alleviating *Kapha* and *Vata doshas*.

Table no. 4: *Karma* of *Bakuchi* observed in various Nighantu.

Sr. No	Actions	DN	KN	BN	MN	Total
1	*Dipana* (Digestive / stimulating fire)		+			01
2	*Grahi*	+				01
3	*Hridya* (Wholesome to the heart)		+	+	+	03
4	*Keshya* (Suitable to the hair)		+(Phala)	+(Phala)		02
5	*Medhya* (Brain tonic)		+			01
6	*Ruchya*		+	+	+	03
7	*Sara*		+	+	+	03
8	*Twachya* (Beneficial to the skin)		+(Phala)	+(Phala)		02
9	*Vistambhi* (Obstructed vata dosa)		+	+	+	03

Bakuchi exhibits multiple *Karmas*, including *Dipana*, *Grahi*, *Hridya*, *Keshya*, *Medhya*, *Ruchya*, *Sara*, *Twachya*, and *Vistambhi*, with repeated mentions for digestive, rejuvenative, and skin-beneficial effects across various *Nighantus*.

Table no. 5: *Rogaghnata* of *Bakuchi* observed in various Nighantu.

Sr. No	Disease	DN	KN	BN	MN	RN	MD	Total
1	*Ama* (Product of impaired digestion and taste)		+(Phala)					01
2	*Aruchi* (Tastelessness)		+					01
3	*Jwara* (Fever)		+	+	+			03
4	*Kandu / Kharju* (Itching)					+		01
5	*Kasa* (Cough)		+	+(Phala)				02
6	*Krimi* (Worm infestation)	+	+	+,+(Phala)	+	+		05
7	*Kustha* (Leprosy)	+	+	+,+*(Phala)*	+	+		05
8	*Pandu* (Anaemia)		+*(Phala)*					01
9	*Prameha* (Urinary disorder)			+				01
10	*Shotha* (Inflammation)		+*(Phala)*					01
11	*Swasa* (Dyspnoea)		+,+*(Phala)*	+,+*(Phala)*	+	+		06
12	*Sweta Kustha*				+*(Phala)*			01
13	*Twaka dosha* (Skin disorder)					+	+	02
14	*Visha* (Poison)					+	+	02
15	*Vrana* (Ulcer)	+						01

Table 5 shows that *Bakuchi* is indicated in the management of *Ama*, *Aruchi*, *Jwara*, *Kandu*, *Kasa*, *Krimi*, *Kushtha*, *Pandu*, *Prameha*, *Shotha*, *Swasa*, *Sweta Kushtha*, *Twaka dosha*, *Visha*, and *Vrana*, reflecting its wide spectrum of disease-alleviating activities across classical *Nighantus*.

DISCUSSION

The comprehensive review of *Bakuchi* (*Psoralea corylifolia* Linn.) across various *Nighantus* reveals its consistent therapeutic prominence and multidimensional classification within the Ayurvedic *Dravyaguna* corpus. As evidenced from Table 1, *Bakuchi* has been mentioned across nearly all major *Nighantus* spanning from the *Saushruta Nighantu* (5th century) to the *Nighantu Adarsha* (20th century), indicating its enduring clinical relevance through centuries. It is predominantly placed in *Guduchyadi*, *Palashadi*, or *Aushadhi Vargas*, signifying its wide pharmacological applicability and its role as a principal herb for dermatological and systemic disorders.

A detailed synonymic analysis (Table 2) highlights extensive nomenclatural diversity, with over 45 synonyms recorded, such as *Somaraji*, *Avalguja*, *Krushnaphala*, and *Somavalli*. This linguistic and textual multiplicity suggests the deep traditional familiarity and regional variations associated with the plant. Among these, *Somaraji* and *Avalguja* appear most frequently, being mentioned in over eight *Nighantus*, which emphasizes their strong traditional acceptance as primary synonyms for *Bakuchi*.

Pharmacodynamic attributes (Table 3) exhibit a remarkable degree of textual concordance regarding *Bakuchi's Rasapanchaka*. The drug is predominantly *Tikta* and *Madhura* in *Rasa*, *Ruksha* and *Laghu* in *Guna*, *Shita* in *Virya*, and *Katu* in *Vipaka*. Its *Tridoshaghna* potential, primarily *Kapha*- and *Vata-shamaka*, and occasionally *Pitta-shamaka* in its *Phala*, aligns with its described role in metabolic and inflammatory disorders. This consistency across classical sources supports the pharmacological interpretation of *Bakuchi* as a detoxifying, digestive stimulant, and rejuvenative agent, particularly in disorders of deranged metabolism and skin pathologies.

The analysis of *Karmas* (Table 4) underscores its diversified therapeutic actions, with *Dipana*, *Ruchya*, *Hridya*, *Twachya*, and *Medhya* effects being repeatedly cited. The emphasis on *Twachya* (beneficial to skin), *Kusthaghna*, and *Krimighna* properties corroborates its established clinical utility in *Kushtha* (leprosy), *Kandu* (itching), and *Twak dosha* (skin

disorders). Moreover, its *Vishaghna* and *Vrana ropana* activities indicate broader applicability in wound healing and toxic conditions.

Disease-specific references (Table 5) further reinforce these findings, with *Bakuchi* being cited in the management of *Kushtha*, *Krimi*, *Swasa*, *Jwara*, and *Kasa* across multiple *Nighantus*. The recurrence of *Kusthaghna* (anti-leprotic) indication, in particular, demonstrates its primary dermatological focus, whereas the repeated mentions of *Krimighna* and *Swasahara* actions reflect its systemic detoxifying and respiratory benefits. The consistent mention of *Phala* (seed) in the therapeutic context indicates that the seed is the pharmacologically dominant part used across classical formulations.

Collectively, the textual data affirm *Bakuchi* as a *Tridoshaghna* and *Kusthaghna dravya* of high therapeutic versatility. Its classification under multiple *Vargas* and the wide range of *Karmas* described reflect a strong traditional understanding of its adaptogenic, antimicrobial, and dermatological properties. The convergence of textual evidence across centuries substantiates its classical status as a potent *Rasayana dravya*, particularly indicated for skin rejuvenation, pigmentation disorders, and metabolic correction. This historical consistency also lays a rational foundation for correlating Ayurvedic textual data with modern pharmacological validations of *Bakuchi's* antioxidant, antimicrobial, and immunomodulatory activities.

CONCLUSION

The cumulative textual evidence across *Nighantus* underscores *Bakuchi* (*Psoralea corylifolia* Linn.) as a highly valued *Dravya* in Ayurvedic therapeutics, with dominant *Kusthaghna*, *Krimighna*, *Twachya*, and *Rasayana* properties. Its repeated classification under *Guduchyadi*, *Palashadi*, and *Aushadhi Vargas* highlights its multifaceted pharmacological role, extending from dermatological to systemic disorders. The concordance of its *Rasapanchaka—Tikta* and *Madhura Rasa*, *Ruksha* and *Laghu Guna*, *Shita Virya*, and *Katu Vipaka*—across major *Nighantus* affirms its *Tridoshaghna* nature, with a special affinity for alleviating *Kapha* and *Vata* doshas.

The frequent mention of *Bakuchi phala* as the principal usable part further substantiates its importance in clinical formulations for *Kushtha*, *Swasa*, *Jwara*, and *Vrana*. The convergence of textual references through centuries not only validates its enduring classical reputation but also offers a strong foundation for contemporary pharmacological exploration. Thus, *Bakuchi*

emerges as a important *Rasayana dravya* with significant dermatological, rejuvenative, and detoxifying potential—bridging traditional wisdom and modern scientific relevance.

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