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FLORAL FORMULAE OF PUSHPA VARGA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BHAVPRAKASHA NIGHANTU

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Abstract

Bhavprakasha Nighantu is a systematic compilation of the material and verses related to Ayurvedic Medical Science from the ancient treatises to make them easy to read & understand Bhayprakasha Nighantu is written by Acharya Bhavmishra in 16th Century AD. Ayurvedic Science has mentioned medicinal properties of different parts of numerous plants. Flowers is one of such useful parts of the plants. Many therapeutic properities of flowers are mentioned in Bhavprakasha Nighantu under a specific category named *Pushpa* Varga.

Floral Formula is a means to represent the structure of a flower using numbers, letters and various symbols presenting substantial information about the flower in a compact form. This study attempts to correlate the advanced taxonomical tool of Floral Formula with the ancient knowledge about flowers of medicinal plants.

Keywords

Floral Formula, Pushpa Varga, Bhavprakasha Nighantu

Introduction

Nighantu is a Sanskrit term for a traditional collection of words grouped into thematic categories often with brief annotations . In Ayurveda , Nighantus are glossaries containing synonymous groups , the names of the drugs, plants, animals, minerals or anything that is administered either as food or medicine to the human body.

Bhavprakasha Nighantu written between 15th to 17th Century AD by Acharya Bhavmishra is considered as an important Nighantu of Dravyaguna Vigyana (Science of Medicinal properties of plants). This book is divided into three sections. Different medicinal plants (Dravyas) are classified into 24 vargas or groups. There is another group containing miscellaneous dravyas in which properties of Flowers of 39 medicinal plants are described. This group of flowers is collectively called as Pushpa Varga.

During Nighantu period, the modern science of Botany was not developed. People used to rely upon their senses like sight, smell, touch, taste to identify, remember & differentiate various medicinal plants and their useful parts. With the advent of Modern system of Botanical classification of plants and development of Plant Taxonomy; it has become easy to apply this knowledge to ancient science of Ayurvedic medicine and medicinal plants in perticular.

As majority of the classification of medicinal plants in Ayurveda is based on the therapeutic properties; less emphasis is given on the morphology of different plants. So it is difficult to identify a perticular plant species merely from the synonyms or medicinal properties. In such situations, application of modern Taxonomy is helpful for accurate identification of the plant.

A Floral formula consists of five symbols indicating from left to right:

- a. Floral Symmetry
- b. Number of Sepals
- c. Number of Petals
- d. Number of Stamens
- e. Number of Carpels

Table 1. Floral Formula symbols.

Br	Bracteate			
K	Calyx			
C	Corolla			
P	Perianth			
A	Androecium			
G	Gynoecium			
<u>G</u>	Superior ovary			
\overline{G}	Inferior ovary			
3	Male			
2	Female			
Q ,	Bisexual			
Φ	Actinomorphic			
%	Zygomorphic			
Enclosing figure within brackets	Fusion			
Line drawn over symbols of floral parts	Adhesion			
0 (zero)	Absence of a perticular whorl			
∞	Indefinite number of floral parts in a whorl			

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Table 2. Pushpa Varga and Floral Formulae

S.N	PLANT NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	FAMILY	FLORAL FORMULA
1	KAMAL			
2	PADMINI	Nelubium speciosm		
3	SAMVARTIKA	(Different parts of	Nymphaceae	$\bigoplus \mathbf{\mathscr{G}}^{\!$
4	KARNIKA	same plant)		
5	KESHARA			
6	MRINALA			
7	STHALA KAMALINI	Ionidium suffruticosum	Nymphaceae	$\bigoplus \not \in \mathbf{K} \land \mathbf{C} \bowtie \mathbf{A} \bowtie \underline{\mathbf{G}} (\infty)$
8	KUMUDA	Nym <mark>phaea</mark> nouc <mark>haki</mark>	Nymphaceae	$\bigoplus \mathbf{\mathcal{G}}' \times_{4} \times_{0} \times_{0}$
9	KUMUDINI			
10	VARIPARNI	Serra <mark>to phy</mark> lleum	Nymphaceae	$\bigoplus \mathbf{\mathscr{G}}^{T} \mathbf{K} 4 \mathbf{C}_{\infty} \mathbf{A}_{\infty} \mathbf{\underline{G}_{(\infty)}}$
11	SHAIVALA			
12	SHATPATRI	Rosa centifolia	Rosaceae	Br $\bigoplus \mathcal{O}'$ K (5)to ∞ Cyto \mathbf{A}_{∞} G ∞
13	VASANTI	Ixora parvoflora	Rubiaceae	⊕ & K (4-5) C (4-5) A (4-5) G (2)
14	VARSHIKI	Jasminum polyanthum		13
15	MALATI	Jasminum officinale	Oleaceae	⊕ & K (4-10) C (4-10) A ₂ G ₂
16	YUTHIKA	Jasminum auriculatum		
17	СНАМРАКА	Michelia champaka	Magnoliaceae	Br ⊕ 🌠 P 6 to many A ∞ G 2 -∞
18	BAKULA	Mimosa elengi	Sapotaceae	Br ⊕ & K5 C (5) A5 G (5)
19	KADAMBA	Anthocephalus cadamba	Rubiaceae	$\bigoplus \not \!$
20	KUBJAKA	Rosa moschata	Rosaceae	Br

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21	MALLIKA	Jasminum sambac	Oleaceae	⊕ & K (4-10) C (4-10) A2 G2
22	MADHAVI	Hiptage benghalensis	Oleaceae	⊕ & K (4-10) C (4-10) A ₂ G ₂
23	KETAKI	Pandanus odoratissimus	Pandanaceae	
24	KINKIRATA	Acasia arabica	Mimosaceae	$\bigoplus \mathscr{G} \text{ K (4-5) C 4-5 } A_{\infty} \text{ or A4 G}_{\underline{1}}$
25	KARNIKARA	Cassia fistula	Caesalpinoideae	% & K (5) C 5 A ₁₀ G ₁
26	ASHOKA	Saraca asoka	Caesalpiniaceae	% & K (5) C 5 A ₁₀ G ₁
27	BANAPUSHPA	Anethum graveolens	Apiaceae	⊕ or % & K (5) C 5 A5 G(2)
28	SAIREYAKA	Barl <mark>eria</mark> cristata	Acanthaceae	Br 🕀 🗗 K (5) C(2-3) A2 G(2)
29	KUNDA	Jasm <mark>inum</mark> multif <mark>lorum</mark>	Oleaceae	⊕ & K (4-10) C (4-10) A ₂ G ₂
30	MUCHKUNDA	Pterospermum acerifolium	Malvaceae	\bigoplus \mathbf{G}' Epicalyx(3to7) \mathbf{K} (5) \mathbf{C} (5) $\mathbf{A}_{(\infty)}$ $\mathbf{G}_{(5to8)}$
31	TILAKA	Wendlandia exerta	Rubiaceae	⊕ & K (4-5) C (4-5) A4-5 G(2)
32	BANDHUJIVA	Pentapetes phoenicea	Malvaceae	$ \bigoplus_{\mathbf{G}(5\mathbf{to8})} \mathbf{\mathfrak{S}}^{\mathbf{T}} \text{ Epicalyx(3to7)} \mathbf{K} \text{ (5) } \mathbf{C} \text{ (5) } \mathbf{A}_{(\infty)} $
33	JAPA	Hibiscus rosa sinensis	Malvaceae	$ \bigoplus \mathbf{\mathcal{G}} \text{ Epicalyx}_{(3\text{to}7)} \mathbf{K}_{(5)} \mathbf{C}_{(5)} $ $ \mathbf{A}_{(\infty)} \mathbf{G}_{(5\text{to}8)} $
34	SINDHURI	Bixa orellana	Bixaceae	% § K (5) C 5 A ∞ <u>G</u> 1
35	MUNIVRUKSHA	Sesbania glandiflora	Fabaceae	% & K (5) C 5 A10 G1
36	TULSI	Ocimum sanctum	Lamiaceae	Br % & K (3-5) C (2-4) A(2+2) G(2)
37	MARUBAKA	Ocimum gratissimum	Lamiaceae	Br % & K (3-5) C (2-4) A(2+2) G(2)
38	DAMANAKA	Artemesia vulgaris	Asteraceae	Br % ♀ K pappus C (5) A 0 G (2)
39	BARBARI	Ocimum pillosum	Oleaceae	⊕ & K (4-10) C (4-10) A2 G2

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