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EVIDENCE-BASED LITERARY RESEARCH ON THE EXPLORATION OF BHUTA, PISHACHI, RAKSHASA, GRAHA AND PRETA TERMINOLOGIES IN DRAVYAGUṆA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MICRO-ORGANISMS

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Abstract

Introduction

Ayurvedic literature, particularly the *bṛhatrayī* and *bhāvaprakāśa nighaṇṭu*, frequently employs terminologies such as *bhuta*, *pishachi*, *rakshasa*, *graha* and *preta*. Though traditionally perceived as supernatural or demonic entities, several classical commentators and contemporary scholars have reinterpreted these terms as symbolic representations of disease-causing agents comparable to micro-organisms that invade the *cetanāyukta śarīra* under conditions of reduced *vyādhikṣamatva* (immunity)¹, ². These descriptions are closely associated with *janapadodhwansa*, emphasizing the relevance of *krimighna* and *rakṣoghna dravyas* in preventing and managing communicable diseases³.

Materials and methods

A comprehensive literary review was conducted by collecting references related to *bhuta*, *pishachi*, *rakshasa*, *graha* and *preta* from the *bṛhatrayī* and *bhāvaprakāśa nighaṇṭu*. Their etymological meanings were analyzed using classical lexicons such as *amarakośa* and *śabdakalpadrūma*. Classical commentaries, including *āyurvedadīpikā* and *nibandhasaṅgraha*, were critically examined to understand contextual interpretations. Additionally, contemporary open-access ayurvedic research articles were reviewed to establish conceptual parallels between these terminologies and micro-organisms. Pharmacological actions of drugs and formulations described as *krimighna*, *bhutanāśana*, *pishachināśana*, *rakshasanāśana*, *grahanāśana* and *pretanāśana* were analyzed from a dravyaguṇa perspective.

Results

Literary analysis reveals that these terminologies consistently describe invisible, subtle entities capable of invading the body, disturbing *doṣas* and producing disease⁴. Classical authors recognized both *dṛśya*

(visible) and *adr̥śya* (invisible) *krimis*, a classification analogous to macroscopic and microscopic organisms described in modern microbiology⁵.

Therapeutic interventions such as *ekamūlika dravya*, polyherbal formulations, *dhūpana karma*, *rakṣoghna agada prayoga* and *viṣaghna dravyas* are repeatedly indicated for conditions attributed to *bhuta* and allied entities⁶. These measures primarily aim at environmental purification, pathogen destruction and host immune enhancement, reflecting principles comparable to modern antimicrobial and preventive strategies.

Discussion

The reinterpretation of *bhuta*, *pishachi*, *rakshasa*, *graha* and *preta* as microbial or pathogenic entities significantly strengthens the scientific basis of ayurveda⁷. Descriptions of *abhisāṅgaja jvara* in *caraka saṁhitā* suggest awareness of contagious disease transmission through contact, paralleling modern concepts of infection spread⁸.

The concept of *janapadodhwansa*—caused by vitiation of *vāyu*, *jala*, *deśa* and *kāla*—closely resembles ecological and environmental determinants of epidemics recognized in contemporary epidemiology⁹. Recent covid-19-related ayurvedic studies have further correlated *bhūtābhisāṅgaja* and *kīṭa-viṣa* concepts with viral infections, highlighting ayurveda's relevance in understanding pandemics¹⁰.

Furthermore, emphasis on strengthening *vyādhikṣamatva* through *rasāyana*, *rakṣoghna dravyas* and *dinacaryā-ṛtucaryā* aligns with modern preventive medicine approaches aimed at immune modulation¹¹.

Conclusion

Classical ayurvedic terminologies such as *bhuta*, *pishachi*, *rakshasa*, *graha* and *preta* should be understood as metaphorical representations of pathogenic micro-organisms rather than supernatural entities. The consistent description of their etiopathogenesis, clinical manifestations and therapeutic measures establishes a strong conceptual parallel with modern microbiology and epidemiology. This evidence-based reinterpretation enhances the credibility of ayurveda and underscores the importance of dravyaguṇa-based preventive and curative strategies in managing *janapadodhwansa* and communicable diseases in the contemporary era.

Keywords

Micro-organisms; janapadodhwansa; krimi; bhuta; pretha ; pishachi; rakshasa; Dravyaguṇa evidence

INTRODUCTION

Globally, infectious diseases continue to pose a major public health challenge, accounting for nearly one-third of total mortality worldwide.¹² Epidemiological estimates indicate that communicable diseases were responsible for approximately 17 million deaths annually during the late twentieth century, frequently occurring in association with malnutrition and maternal-perinatal conditions.¹³ These observations highlight the persistent relevance of ancient medical concepts that address mass disease outbreaks.

Ayurveda uniquely describes epidemic and pandemic conditions under the concept of *Janapadodhwamsa*, literally denoting the simultaneous affliction of large populations.¹⁴ Acharya Caraka refers to this phenomenon as *Janapadodhwamsa*, Acharya Suśruta terms it *Māraka*, while Acharya Bhela designates it as *Janamāra*, indicating a shared recognition of mass morbidity across classical texts.¹⁵ The causative factors are attributed to the vitiation of four universal elements—*Vāyu* (air), *Jala* (water), *Deśa* (land), and *Kāla* (season)—which are common to all living beings.¹⁶ Among these, *Adharma* (immoral conduct),

arising from *Prajñāparādha* (intellectual blasphemy), is considered the foremost etiological factor, ultimately leading to ecological imbalance and disease propagation.¹⁷

Recognizing its clinical and societal importance, *Caraka Samhitā* dedicates an entire chapter to *Janapadodhwamsa*, elaborating its causation, clinical features, prognosis, and management strategies.¹⁸ Ayurveda, as a holistic system of medicine, provides comprehensive preventive and therapeutic approaches for communicable and epidemic diseases, including *Rasāyana* therapy, *Pañcakarma* procedures, *Sadvṛtta Pālana* (ethical conduct), and *Acharya Rasāyana* (behavioral rejuvenation).¹⁹ These measures emphasize strengthening of *Bala*, *Ojas*, and *Vyādhikṣamatva*, concepts that closely parallel modern understanding of host immunity and disease resistance.²⁰

Further, Acharya Suśruta, revered as the “Father of Surgery,” described *Aupasargika Rogas* as communicable diseases transmitted through physical contact, inhalation of expired air, and the use of contaminated objects such as clothing, bedding, cosmetics, utensils, and shared food.²¹ These descriptions demonstrate an advanced understanding of disease transmission mechanisms analogous to modern concepts of contagion and infection.

In Ayurvedic clinical practice, therapeutic approaches vary depending upon foundational principles such as *Agni*, *Srotas*, *Avaraṇa*, and *Dhātu* involvement. Among the eight branches (*Ashtanga*) of Ayurveda, *Graha Chikitsa* remains comparatively underexplored and requires systematic scientific investigation.²² Classical Ayurvedic texts such as the *Bṛhatrayī* and *Bhāvaprakāśa Nighaṇṭu* frequently mention terminologies like *Bhuta*, *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, *Graha*, and *Preta*. These terms should not be interpreted literally as demons or supernatural entities. Authoritative commentaries consistently clarify that they symbolically denote subtle, invisible pathogenic entities capable of invading the *Cetanāyukta Śarīra*, particularly under conditions of diminished immunity.²³

For instance, *Sarvāṅga Sundarī Tīkā* defines *Graha Chikitsa* as “*Graha Chikitsa nāma devādi-graha-grahītānām prāṇinām śānti karma*,” indicating therapeutic measures aimed at pacifying afflictions caused by such invasive entities.²⁴ Contemporary interpretative studies further support the view that these descriptions metaphorically represent micro-organisms, thereby bridging classical Ayurvedic concepts with modern microbiological understanding.²⁵

Repeated references to *Bhuta*, *Graha*, *Pishachi*, and *Rakshasa* occur alongside *Krimi*, *Viṣa*, and *Āgantuka Hetu*, clearly indicating an external pathogenic origin rather than supernatural causation.²⁶ The frequent therapeutic emphasis on *Dhūpana Karma*, *Rakṣoghna Dravyas*, and *Agada Prayoga* in such contexts reflects early concepts of environmental disinfection and antimicrobial intervention.²⁷ Descriptions of these entities as *Antarikṣacara* or dwellers of impure environments metaphorically correspond to micro-organisms thriving in unhygienic and low-resistance conditions, which are destroyed through purification, fumigation, and enhancement of host defense.²⁸

METHODOLOGY

The present study undertakes a critical literary and conceptual analysis of selected terminologies—*Bhuta*, *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, *Graha*, and *Preta*—frequently encountered in the *Bṛhatrayī* and *Bhāvaprakāśa Nighaṇṭu*. Instead of interpreting these terms as demons or supernatural beings, they are examined through the framework of *Nirukti* (etymological derivation), supported by lexicons such as *Amarakośa* and *Śabdakalpadruma*, and authoritative classical commentaries.

Interpretations provided by commentators such as Cakrapāṇi, Dalhaṇa, and Arunadatta were systematically compiled to establish that these terminologies metaphorically represent pathogenic entities

or groups of micro-organisms invading the *Cetanāyukta Śarīra*, particularly under conditions of compromised *Vyādhikṣamatva*.²⁹ The study adopts a purely literary and conceptual research design, correlating classical Ayurvedic descriptions with modern concepts of infectious agents and communicable diseases.

Therapeutic modalities described for *Bhuta*- and *Graha*-related conditions—such as *Ekamūlika Dravya*, compound formulations, *Dhūpana Karma*, *Snāpana*, and *Agada Prayoga* (e.g., *Kṣāra Agada*)—were critically analyzed from a *Dravyaguna* perspective.³⁰ Additionally, selected open-source experimental and review articles were consulted to correlate classical *Bhutaghna* and *Rakṣoghna* drugs with their reported antimicrobial, antiviral, and immunomodulatory activities, thereby strengthening the evidence-based reinterpretation of these classical terminologies.³¹

Etymological and Conceptual Interpretation of Selected Terms

The term *Bhuta* is derived from the verbal root “*bhū-sattāyām*,” meaning “that which exists or has come into being.” In Ayurvedic and allied classical literature, *Bhuta* does not merely signify supernatural entities but broadly denotes subtle living beings, including invisible organisms that possess existence and activity.³² Evidence from classical and modern interpretative studies suggests that ancient texts often used such terms to represent external pathogenic influences similar to microbes, particularly in conditions involving epidemic and contagious diseases.³³

Etymological explanations of allied terminologies further strengthen this conceptual understanding:

- *Bhutam* – Derived from *bhū-sattāyām*, it is traditionally explained as *Piśācādi Jantavaḥ*, denoting minute or subtle living organisms, often invisible to the naked eye, hinting at microscopic life forms.³⁴
- *Bhūtāḥ* – Described as *Devayoni Viśeṣaḥ* with subclassifications like *Adhomukha*, *Ūrdhvamukha*, *Pishachi-bheda*, *Rudrānucara* and *Bālagraha*, which can be conceptually interpreted as varied forms of environmental or bodily pathogenic agents affecting different physiological states.³⁵
- *Pishachi* – Derived from the phrase “*Piśitam (māmsam) aśnāti iti Pishachiḥ*,” meaning “one who consumes flesh.” Classical accounts describe *Pishachis* as inhabitants of impure, unhygienic environments (*Aśuci Marutdeśa Nivāsinah*), suggestive of organisms associated with decay and contamination.³⁶
- *Rakshasa* – Literally “one from whom one must be protected,” interpreted as *Kaṇapāḥ* (associated with decaying matter) and *Rātricaraḥ* (nocturnal), implying agents flourishing in decomposing substrates, conceptually akin to harmful bacteria present in such conditions.³⁷
- *Preta* – Derived from “*pra + ita*” meaning “departed,” described as *Narakastha Prāṇī* and considered a subclass of *Bhuta*. From a modern perspective, this can be interpreted metaphorically as dormant or residual entities, similar to spores or persistent microbial forms.³⁸
- *Graha* – Originating from the root “*grahaṇa*” (to seize, grasp, or capture), *Graha* symbolically denotes invisible forces that suddenly afflict the body. Contemporary interpretations suggest that *Graha* may represent subtle biological invasions or pathogenic influences akin to microbial infection or infestation.³⁹

Classical commentaries and recent literature further validate that terms like *Bhuta*, *Pishachi*, *Preta*, and *Rakshasa* are not restricted to supernatural interpretations but carry connotations consistent with

pathogenic causation in diseases described as *Aupasargika* or *Agantuka*.⁴⁰ Such conceptual parallels help bridge ancient Ayurvedic terminology with modern microbiological and epidemiological understanding.

Further elaboration of these concepts is found in the *Padma Purāṇa* (Svarga Khaṇḍa, 15th Adhyāya), which describes *Bhuta*, *Preta*, and *Pishachi* as entities inhabiting *Bhutiloka* (terrestrial realm) and *Antarikṣa* (intermediate atmospheric space).

The text states:

***“Aśvibhaṃ sthitāḥ—Bhutiloke anantā Bhūtāḥ |
Antarikṣa-carāś ca Bhuta-Preta-Pishachikāḥ, varjitvā Rudragaṇāḥ |
Sūryād adho viharanti, ūrdhvaṃ na vikramaṇe śaktiḥ.”***⁴¹

This passage metaphorically conveys the presence of innumerable subtle and invisible beings residing in the earthly and lower atmospheric realms, while being incapable of existing in higher, purified zones. From a contemporary scientific perspective, such descriptions can be correlated with micro-organisms that thrive within specific environmental niches—such as soil, water, decaying matter, or polluted air—and fail to survive under adverse conditions, including high temperature, ultraviolet exposure, or enhanced hygienic and immunological states.

Thus, the etymological, textual, and contextual interpretations of *Bhuta*, *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, *Graha*, and *Preta* strongly support their conceptual equivalence to pathogenic micro-organisms or disease-causing entities, rather than literal supernatural beings. This interpretative framework enables a rational and scientifically relevant understanding of *Graha Chikitsa* and *Agada Tantra* within the domain of infectious and communicable disease management.

Classical References to Bhuta, Pishachi, Rakshasa, and Graha in Ayurvedic Texts

1. Caraka Saṃhitā (Śārīra Sthāna 1/121) ⁴²

Mūla Pāṭha:

“Yo bhuta-viṣa-vātānām akālenāgataś ca yaḥ...
(tvak-indriya-asātmendriyārtha-saṃyoga)”

Cakrapāṇi Tīkā:

“Bhuta-sa-viṣa-krimi-piśācādayaḥ yo bhuta-viṣa-vātādīnām saṃsparśaḥ.”

Interpretation:

Cakrapāṇi explicitly groups *Bhuta*, *Sa-viṣa*, *Krimi*, and *Pishachi* under a single etiological framework, emphasizing *saṃsparśa* (contact) as the mode of entry into the body. This authoritative commentary clearly establishes that these terms signify harmful, invasive entities—such as pathogenic micro-organisms, toxins, or infectious agents—rather than literal supernatural beings. The description closely parallels modern concepts of contact-based transmission of infectious diseases.

2. Ashtanga Hṛdaya (Uttaratantra 5/12) ⁴³

Mūla Pāṭha:

“Siddhārthaka-snāna-cūrṇaḥ sarvān grahān nāśayet,
viśeṣāt asura-grahān.”

Interpretation:

This verse states that bathing with *Siddhārthaka Snāna Cūrṇa* effectively destroys all *Grahas*, particularly *Asura Grahas*. From a conceptual standpoint, this indicates the eradication of invisible pathogenic agents

through external hygienic and medicinal interventions. Such measures can be correlated with antiseptic, antimicrobial, and prophylactic cleansing practices employed in contemporary infection control and public health hygiene

3. Ashtanga Hṛdaya (Uttaratantra 5/18) ⁴⁴

Mūla Pāṭha:

“Kārpāṣṭādi dhūpanaṃ pishachi-rakshasa-asura-āveśa-jvaraghnaṃ param.”

Interpretation:

Dhūpana (medicated fumigation) with *Kārpāṣṭādi Yoga* is described as highly effective in alleviating fevers attributed to *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, and *Asura Āveśa*. Conceptually, this reflects the use of herbal fumigation for the control of airborne, environmental, and contact-transmitted pathogenic agents. This practice is analogous to modern disinfection, fumigation, and environmental sanitization techniques employed in infection control and epidemic management.

4. Ashtanga Hṛdaya (Uttaratantra 5/19) ⁴⁵

Mūla Pāṭha:

“Mahābhuta-rāhva-āvāyaṃ ghṛtaṃ grahaghnaṃ param.”

Interpretation:

The medicated formulation *Mahābhuta Rāhva Avāyaṃ Ghṛta* is indicated as highly efficacious in disorders attributed to *Graha*. From a conceptual perspective, this suggests internal therapeutic measures designed to counteract invasive and systemic pathogenic influences. Such interventions may be correlated with host-directed therapies aimed at enhancing immune resilience and restoring physiological balance during infectious conditions.

5. Ashtanga Hṛdaya (Uttaratantra 5/49) ⁴⁶

Mūla Pāṭha:

“Sarva-graheṣu pishachimantareṇa pratikūlaṃ na ācaret;
yadi kruddhaḥ pishachiḥ vaidya-sahitam āturaṃ ghnanti.”

Interpretation:

This verse cautions that among all *Grahas*, *Pishachi* is particularly dangerous when aggravated, with the potential to destroy both the patient and the attending physician. Symbolically, this may be interpreted as a reference to highly virulent, resistant, or aggressive pathogenic organisms that can exacerbate disease severity, precipitate complications, and compromise therapeutic outcomes if not managed with appropriate expertise and caution.

Conceptual Inference

The cumulative evidence from classical Ayurvedic literature clearly indicates that *Bhuta*, *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, and *Graha* are consistently portrayed as invisible, invasive, and deleterious entities that disturb normal physiological and psychological functioning. Their mode of action, described through sudden onset, transmissibility, and resistance to routine therapeutic measures, closely parallels the behavior of pathogenic micro-organisms.

The repeated therapeutic emphasis on *Snāna* (medicated bathing), *Dhūpana* (fumigation), *Ghṛta Prayoga* (internal oleation), and *Rakṣoghna* or *Krimighna* formulations strongly supports the interpretation that these entities represent infectious or pathogenic agents rather than literal supernatural beings. External

measures aimed at environmental purification and internal therapies directed at strengthening host resistance together reflect a comprehensive infection-control strategy.

Thus, the conceptual framework of *Bhuta* and *Graha Chikitsa* in Ayurveda may be understood as an early, metaphorical representation of microbial pathology and host–pathogen interaction. This integrative understanding not only reconciles classical Ayurvedic concepts with modern microbiological principles but also underscores the relevance of Ayurvedic preventive and therapeutic measures in the contemporary management of communicable and epidemic diseases.

REFERENCES OF BHUTA SHABDA IN BRUHATRAYEES

Table No. 1:

Sl. No.	Text / Context (Ashtanga Hṛdaya)	Reference	Sarvāṅga Sundarī Ṭikā	Āyurveda Rasāyana Ṭikā
1	Bhūtavijñāniya and Bhūtapraṭiśedha Adhyāya	A.H. Utt.	Adhyāyas dealing with the knowledge, causation and management of Bhūta afflictions	
2	Sarvabhūtānām matāḥ...	A.H. Sū. 2/20	Aśeṣa prāṇinām – all living beings	
3	Ye bhūta-viṣa-vāyu-agni-kṣata-bhaṅgādi sambhavāḥ (Āgantuka roga hetu)	A.H. Sū. 4/31	—	Bhūto grahaḥ – disease-causing external agents
4	Pañcabhūtātmakam tat tu	A.H. Sū. 9/1	—	Bhūta śabdena bhautikam ucyate – denotes material elements
5	<i>Bhūtakeśī</i>	A.H. Sū. 15/30	Identified as <i>Māmsī</i> (<i>Jatāmāmsī</i>)	Identified as <i>Nirgundī</i>
6	... <i>Bhūtasāṅghaś ca pāntu vaḥ</i> ... (Mantra during Vamana, etc.)	A.H. Sū. 18/16	—	—
7	Garbham jaḍā bhūtaḥṛtam vadanti... avyavaśair bhūtaiḥ upekṣeta na garbham ārtāḥ	A.H. Śā. 2/62	Bhūtaḥṛtam iti garbham vadanti – fetus afflicted by Bhūta	—
8	<i>Bhūtikam</i>	A.H. Cik. 1/139	<i>Bhūtrūṇām</i> – belonging to or arising from Bhūtas	—
9	Bhutikam	A.H. Chi. 4/52	Katrūna	—
10	Bhutakim	A.H. Kalpa. 3/14	—	Rohisham
11	Paapmaa rakshoghnām bhutonmaada nibharhanam (Brahmi Ghrita Phalashruti)	A.H. U. 1/42	—	—
12	Balyam jwara kshaya onmaada shwaasa apasmaara vataanut,	A.H. U. 2/56	—	—

	yaksha rakshasa bhutaghnām garbhini naam cha shasyate (Lakshadi Taila Phalashruti)			
13	Grutaani bhutavidyaayaam vakshyante... balim homam snapanam mantra tantravit (Baalagraha Chikitsa)	A.H. U. 3/58	—	—
14	Bhutavignyaneeeyam... bhutagraham	A.H. U. 4/1	Bhutagraham	—
15	Aartaan naraan bhutavidharshitaan śca swateekaroti anjapaana nasyayih... (Bilwadi Gutika Phalashruti)	A.H. U. 36/85	Bhutopadrutaans cha swasthayati	—

References of Krimighna /Krimihara /Kriminashana /Kriminut etc shabda available in Bhavaprakasha nighantu.

Table no 2;- Krimighna Drugs of Haritakyadi Varga.

Sr. No.	Sanskrit Name	Latin Name	Family	Action	Reference
1	Haritaki	Terminalia chebula Retz.	Combretaceae	Udarkrimihara	B.P.N.1/20
2	Gajapippali	Scindapsus officinalis Schott.	Araceae	Krimihara	B.P.N.1/69
3	Dhataki	Woodfordia floribunda Salisb. Woodfordia fruticosa kurz	. Lythraceae	Krimijit	B.P.N.1/187
4	Chakramarda	Cassia tora Linn.	Caesalpiniaceae	Kriminashanam	B.P.N.1/212
5	Katuka	Picrorrhiza kurroa Royle ex Benth.	Scrophulariaceae	Krimipranut	B.P.N.1/152
6	Bhallataka	Semecarpus anacardium Linn.f.	Anacardiaceae	Krimihanti	B.P.N.1/230,232
7	Dhanyaka	Coriandrum sativum Linn.	Apiaceae	Krimipranut	B.P.N.1/88
8	Ativisha	Aconitum heterophyllum Wall.	Ranunculaceae	Krimiharet	B.P.N.1/214
9.	Misreya	Foeniculum vulgare Mill.	Apiaceae	Krimihata	B.P.N.1/92
10.	Hingu	Ferula narthex Boiss. Ferula alliaceae Boiss Ferula foetida Regel	. Apiaceae	.	B.P.N.1/101
11	Vacha	Acorus calamus Linn.	Araceae	Jantavharet	B.P.N.1/103
12.	Vidanga	Embelia ribes Burm.f.	Myrsinaceae	Kriminuta	B.P.N.1/112
13.	Tumburu	Zanthoxylum acanthopodium DC.	Rutaceae	Kriminashyet	B.P.N.1/115
14.	Kampilaka	Mallotus philippinensis Muell.Arg.	Euphorbiaceae	Krimihanti	B.P.N.1/147

15	Kiratatikta	Swertia chirata (Rox. Ex Flem) karst.	Gentianaceae	Krimipranut	B.P.N.1/155
16.	Nakuli	Aristolochia indica Linn.	Aristolochiaceae	Krimivinashyet	B.P.N.1/166
17.	Katuparni	Argemone mexicana Linn.	Papaveraceae	Kriminuta	B.P.N.1/177
18	Laksha	Laccifer lacca (Kerr.)	Lacciferidae	Krimiapaha	B.P.N.1/195
19.	Haridra	Curcuma longa Linn.	Zingiberaceae	Krimighni	B.P.N.1/196
20.	Bakuchi	Psoralea corylifolia Linn.	Fabaceae	Kriminuta	B.P.N.1/209
21	Lashuna	Allium sativum Linn.	Liliaceae	Jantuhanti	B.P.N.1/223
22.	Bibhitaki	Terminalia bellirica Roxb.	Combretaceae	Kriminashana m	B.P.N.1/37
23.	Maricha	Piper nigrum Linn.	Piperaceae	Krimiharet	B.P.N.1/62
24.	Pippali mula	Root of Piper longum Linn.	Piperaceae	Krimiapaha	B.P.N.1/65
25.	Chitraka	Plumbago zeylanica Linn.	Plumbaginaceae	Kriminuta	B.P.N.1/71
26.	Yavani	Carum copticum Benth&Hook	Apiaceae	Krimipranut	B.P.N.1/77
27.	Ajamoda	Apium graveolens Linn.	Apiaceae	Krimiharet	B.P.N.1/79

Table 2 - References of Rakṣoghna Karma in Nighaṇṭus

This table presents Ayurvedic drugs possessing Rakṣoghna (protective / demon-repelling) action, with references from classical Nighaṇṭus in abbreviated form. Bhāvaprakāśa Nighaṇṭu is excluded.

Sr. No.	Sanskrit Name	Latin Name	Family	Action (Karma)	Reference (Abbr.)
1	Śrīveṣṭaka / Sārāla	Pinus roxburghii	Pinaceae	Vraṇa-praṇut, Rakṣoghna	Dha.Ni. – Śveta-puṣpa V.; Rāj.Ni. – Vrāṇaghna V.
2	Sthūneyaka	Costus speciosus	Costaceae	Jantujit, Jvaraghna	Mad.Ni. – Sugandhādi V.; Kai.Ni. – Auśadha V.
3	Go-ghṛta	—	—	Ālakṣmi-pāpa-hara, Ojo-vṛddhi-kara	Kai.Ni. – Sneha V.; Śod.Ni. – Drava V.
4	Sarṣapa	Brassica campestris / B. juncea	Brassicaceae	Rakṣohara, Koṣṭhakar, Grahān jayet	Dha.Ni. – Tailādi V.; Rāj.Ni. – Śatāhvādi V.
5	Śveta Sarṣapa	Sinapis alba	Brassicaceae	Graha-paha, Rakṣoghna	Kai.Ni. – Śveta-puṣpa V.; Rāj.Ni. – Viśaghna V.
6	Murā (Śālaparṇikā)	Desmodium gangeticum	Fabaceae	Jvaraghni, Rakṣoghna	Dha.Ni. – Jvaraghna V.; Mad.Ni. – Auśadha V.

7	Vṛkṣādani (Bandākā)	Cleome gynandra	Cleomaceae	Asra-rakṣa, Viṣāpaha	Rāj.Ni. – Viṣaghna V.; Kai.Ni. – Vṛṇaghna V.
8	Coraka	Angelica glauca	Apiaceae	Jvara-Viṣa- Vraṇān hanti	Dha.Ni. – Śveta-puṣpa V.; Śod.Ni. – Viṣaghna V.
9	Nāgadamani	Croton tiglium	Euphorbiaceae	Vṛṇān rakṣa, Sarva-graha- praśamana, Viṣa-nāśinī	Rāj.Ni. – Viṣaghna V.; Kai.Ni. – Viṣaghna V.
10	Kumbha- sarpi	—	—	Jvaraghna, Rakṣoghna	Mad.Ni. – Sneha V.; Śod.Ni. – Sneha V.
11	Puṣpa Dhāraṇa	—	—	Puṣpa- Dhāraṇa karma (Pāpahara)	Kai.Ni. – Māṅgalya V.
12	Dantī Taila	Baliospermum montanum	Euphorbiaceae	Rakṣoghna, Viṣaghna	Rāj.Ni. – Viṣaghna V.; Mad.Ni. – Taila V.
13	Hiṅgu	Ferula assa- foetida	Apiaceae	Rakṣoghna, Grahapaha	Dha.Ni. – Śveta-puṣpa V.; Kai.Ni. – Auśadha V.
14	Vacā	Acorus calamus	Acoraceae	Māṅgalya, Rakṣoghna	Dha.Ni. – Śveta-puṣpa V.; Kai.Ni. – Auśadha V.
15	Jalavetasa	Salix tetrasperma	Salicaceae	Vraṇa- śodhana, Rakṣoghna	Rāj.Ni. – Vṛṇaghna V.; Kai.Ni. – Vṛṇaghna V.
16	Bhurja	Betula utilis	Betulaceae	Rakṣā-patra (demon- protective leaf)	Kai.Ni. – Māṅgalya V.; Rāj.Ni. – Vṛṇaghna V.
17	Guggulu	Commiphora mukul	Burseraceae	Rakṣohara, Pāpahara	Dha.Ni. – Guggulādi V.; Rāj.Ni. – Viṣaghna V.
18	Pāda- prakṣālana	—	—	Rakṣoghna saṃskāra	Śod.Ni. – Saṃskāra Prakaraṇa
19	Rudrākṣa	Elaeocarpus ganitrus	Elaeocarpaceae	Rakṣoghna, Graha-nāśaka	Kai.Ni. – Māṅgalya V.; Rāj.Ni. – Māṅgalya V.
20	Rakta Candana	Pterocarpus santalinus	Fabaceae	Rakṣoghna, Viṣaghna	Rāj.Ni. – Viṣaghna V.; Mad.Ni. – Gandhādi V.
21	Gandha- Māmsī	Nardostachys jatamansi	Caprifoliaceae	Māṅgalya, Rakṣoghna	Kai.Ni. – Māṅgalya V.; Mad.Ni. – Gandhādi V.

22	Vetasa / Nichula	Salix caprea / Salix tetrasperma	Salicaceae	Vraṇa- śodhana, Rakṣoghna	Dha.Ni. – Vrāṇaghna V.; Rāj.Ni. – Vrāṇaghna V.
23	Madhu	—	—	Rakṣoghna (Sarpis- ānvitam Madhu)	Kai.Ni. – Sneha V.; Śod.Ni. – Drava V.
24	Puṣpa & Ratna Dhāraṇa	—	—	Pāpahara, Māṅgalya	Kai.Ni. – Māṅgalya V.; Rāj.Ni. – Māṅgalya V.

Kṣārāgada – Karma-Focused Classical Justification

Table 3 - Formulation-level Phalaśruti and Cikitsā References

Formulation	Karma described	Text	Sthāna / Adhyāya	Śloka Reference
Kṣārāgada	Krimighna	Caraka Saṃhitā	Cikitsāsthāna – Krimi Cikitsā	Ca. Ci. 7/28–30
Kṣārāgada	Bhūtaghna, Grahaghna	Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya	Uttarasthāna – Bhūtapraṭiśedha	Ah. Ut. 3/18–20
Kṣārāgada	Rakṣoghna	Suśruta Saṃhitā	Uttarasthāna – Rakṣāvidhi	Su. Ut. 60/12–14
Kṣārāgada	Piśāca–Preta nāśana (Phalaśruti)	Bhāvaprakāśa	Madhyama-khaṇḍa – Agada Prakaraṇa	Bh. P. 68/41

The *Krimighna* karma of constituent dravyas of **Ksharagada**, such as *Vidāṅga* (*Embelia ribes*), *Palāśa* (*Butea monosperma*), *Arka* (*Calotropis procera*), and *Kuṭaja* (*Holarrhena antidysenterica*), is explicitly described in the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, particularly in *Sūtrasthāna* (Krimighna MahāKashaya) and *Chikitsasthāna* chapters dealing with *Krimi* and *Viṣa* disorders^{47–49}. These drugs are repeatedly indicated for the destruction of internal and external pathogenic entities through both direct krimināśana and enhancement of host resistance.

Further, *Bhuta*- and *Graha*-nāśana properties are elaborated within the *Bhutavidyā* framework of *Caraka Saṃhitā* (*Chikitsasthāna* 9–10) and *Ashtanga Hṛdaya* (*Uttarasthāna* 3), wherein *Agada Yogas*, including formulations analogous to **Ksharagada**, are prescribed for conditions attributed to Bhuta, Graha, and Pishachi affliction^{50–52}. These contexts emphasize both internal administration and external measures such as *Dhūpana* and *Rakṣāvidhi*, reflecting an integrated approach toward pathogenic eradication.

Additionally, *Rakṣoghna*, *Pishachi*-, and *Preta-pratiśedhaka* effects are predominantly described in the *Rakṣāvidhi* and *Phalaśruti* sections of *Suśruta Saṃhitā* (*Uttarasthāna* 60) and in *Bhāvaprakāśa*, where formulations possessing *Kṣāra*, *Tikṣṇa*, and *Ushna* properties are indicated for protection against invisible harmful agents^{53–54}.

Collectively, these classical references substantiate the inclusion of **Bhuta–Krimi–Graha nāśana karmas** in **Ksharagada**, firmly establishing its role as a protective *Agada* formulation while maintaining complete fidelity to classical Ayurvedic textual authority.

Table 4. Classical Documentation of Bhuta-Krimi-Graha Nāśana Karmas

The following table documents **Krimighna, Bhutanāśana, Pishachināśana, Rakshasanāśana, Grahanāśana and Pretanāśana** karmas as described in classical Ayurvedic texts, either under Guṇa–Karma descriptions of individual dravyas or in the Phalaśruti of formulations, based on open-source authoritative editions.

Sl. No.	Drug	Karma Explicitly Stated	Text / Source	Adhyāya / Varga	Śloka No.
1	Śirīṣa	Viśaghna, Bhūtaghna	Caraka Saṃhitā	Sūtrasthāna – Viśaghna Mahākaṣāya	Ca. Sū. 4/8–10
2	Nimba	Krimighna, Grahaghna	Suśruta Saṃhitā	Sūtrasthāna – Dravyasaṃgrahaṇīya	Su. Sū. 38/15–17
3	Palāśa	Krimighna	Caraka Saṃhitā	Cikitsāsthāna – Krimi Cikitsā	Ca. Ci. 7/23
4	Arka	Krimighna, Bhūtaghna	Suśruta Saṃhitā	Cikitsāsthāna – Kṣāra Kalpanā	Su. Ci. 11/6–8
5	Snuhi	Rakṣoghna, Grahaghna	Rāja Nighaṇṭu	Śuṇṭhyādi Varga	Śl. 112–114
6	Śārapuṅkha	Pretanāśana	Bhāvaprakāśa Nighaṇṭu	Guḍūcyādi Varga	Śl. 186
7	Kuṭāja	Krimi-Jantughna	Caraka Saṃhitā	Cikitsāsthāna – Atīsāra	Ca. Ci. 19/57
8	Aśmantaka	Bhūtajit	Kaiyadeva Nighaṇṭu	Oṣadhi Varga	Śl. 412
9	Sarala	Rakṣoghna	Rāja Nighaṇṭu	Candrādi Varga	Śl. 94
10	Vacā	Grahaghna, Bhūtanāśana	Caraka Saṃhitā	Cikitsāsthāna – Apasmāra	Ca. Ci. 10/26
11	Haridrā	Viśaghna, Krimighna	Suśruta Saṃhitā	Kalpasthāna – Viśa Cikitsā	Su. Ka. 5/72
12	Vidāṅga	Sarva-Krimighna	Bhāvaprakāśa Nighaṇṭu	Haritakyādi Varga	Śl. 219
13	Abhayā	Grahaghna, Pretāpahā	Caraka Saṃhitā	Cikitsāsthāna – Rasāyana	Ca. Ci. 1/39
14	Kuṣṭha	Rakṣoghna	Caraka Saṃhitā	Cikitsāsthāna – Śvāsa	Ca. Ci. 17/58
15	Pippalī-mūla	Krimi-Graha Nāśana	Caraka Saṃhitā	Cikitsāsthāna – Kāsa	Ca. Ci. 18/45

Classical Śloka References

Drug	Text	Adhyāya / Varga	Indicative Śloka
Śirīṣa	Caraka Saṃhitā	Viśaghna Mahākaṣāya	Ca. Sū. 4
Nimba	Suśruta Saṃhitā	Dravyasaṃgraha	Su. Sū. 38
Palāśa	Caraka Saṃhitā	Krimighna Dravyas	Ca. Ci. 7
Arjuna	Caraka Saṃhitā	Hṛdya Dravyas	Ca. Ci. 26
Āmalaka	Caraka Saṃhitā	Rasāyana	Ca. Ci. 1
Kuṭāja	Caraka Saṃhitā	Atīsāra Cikitsā	Ca. Ci. 19

Arka	Suśruta Saṃhitā	Kṣāra Kalpanā	Su. Ci. 11
Snuhi	Rāja Nighaṇṭu	Śuṇṭhyādi Varga	—
Pippalī-mūla	Caraka Saṃhitā	Kāsa–Śvāsa Cikitsā	Ca. Ci. 18
Marica	Caraka Saṃhitā	Dīpanīya Mahākaṣāya	Ca. Sū. 4

Table No. 5 – Kṣārāgada Ingredients with Rasapañcaka

Akhanda Dravyas / Kvātha Cūrṇas (for burning to obtain Kṣāra)

SL.No	Drug	Latin Name	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Karma	References
1	Dhava	<i>Anogeissus latifolia</i>	Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Śīta	Kaṭu	Stambhana	Bh.P. Guḍū. 168–170; KN Ouṣa. 412–414
2	Aśvakarṇa	<i>Dipterocarpus turbinatus</i>	Kaṭu, Tikta	Laghu, Snigdha	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimi, Vraṇa, Viṣahara	RN Śāl. 132–134; DN Vṛkṣ. 96
3	Śirīṣa	<i>Albizia lebbek</i>	Kaṣāya, Tikta, Madhura	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Īśad-uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Viṣaghna	Ca. Sū. 4/8–10; Bh.P. Guḍū. 178
4	Tiniśa	<i>Ougeinia dalbergioides</i>	Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Śīta	Kaṭu	Krimi, Kuṣṭha, Śvitra-hara	KN Ouṣa. 289–291
5	Picumarḍa (Nimba)	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Śīta	Kaṭu	Krimipraṇut	Su. Sū. 38/15–17; Bh.P. Guḍū. 210–212
6	Palāśa	<i>Butea monosperma</i>	Kaṭu, Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimihara	Ca. Ci. 7/23–25; DN Vṛkṣ. 88
7	Pāṭalī	<i>Stereospermum suaveolens</i>	Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Śothahara	Bh.P. Guḍū. 243–245
8	Pāribhadra	<i>Erythrina variegata</i>	Kaṭu, Tikta	Sara	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimihara	RN Śāl. 156–158
9	Āmra	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Kaṣāya	Laghu	Śīta	Kaṭu	Varṇakara, Hṛdya	Bh.P. Phal. 45–47
10	Udumbara	<i>Ficus racemosa</i>	Kaṣāya	Guru	Śīta	Kaṭu	Vraṇa-śodhana	Su. Sū. 38/8–10

11	Karahāt a	<i>Catunareg am spinosa</i>	Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimihara	KN Oṣa. 367–369
12	Arjuna	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>	Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Śīta	Kaṭu	Hṛdya	Ca. Ci. 26/40–43; Bh.P. Guḍū. 119–12
13	Kakubh a	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i>	Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Uṣṇa	Madhura	Krimihara	Ca. Sū. 4/16
14	Sarja	<i>Vateria indica</i>	Kaṣāya	Snigdha	Śīta	Kaṭu	Krimi, Jantu- vraṇa-hara	RN Śāl. 201– 203
15	Parīṣa (Kapitan a)	<i>Thespesia populnea</i>	Kaṣāya, Amla	Laghu, Snigdha	Śīta	Kaṭu	Kuṣṭha, Vraṇa-hara	Bh.P. Guḍū. 198–200
16	Śleṣmāt aka	<i>Cordia wallichii</i>	Kaṣāya, Tikta	Guru	Śīta	Kaṭu	Viṣa, Krimi- hara	KN Oṣa. 421–423
17	Añkoṭa	<i>Alangium salvifolium</i>	Tikta, Kaṭu, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Snigdha	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimi, Viṣa- hara	RN Śāl. 178– 180
18	Āmalak a	<i>Emblica officinalis</i>	Amla, Madhura, Kaṣāya, Tikta, Kaṭu	Guru	Śīta	Madhura	Rasāyana	Ca. Ci. 1/67– 72
19	Pragraha (Āragva dha)	<i>Cassia fistula</i>	Madhura	Guru, Snigdha	Śīta	Madhura	Recanīya	Su. Sū. 38/22–24
20	Kuṭaja	<i>Holarrhen a antidysente rica</i>	Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Śīta	Kaṭu	Jantu, Kuṣṭha-hara	Ca. Ci. Atīsāra Cikitsā (Ca. Ci. 19/56– 60)

TABLE NO .6 – KALKA DRAVYAS OF KSHARAGADA WITH RASAPANCHAKA

Sl. No.	Drug	Botanical Name	Rasa	Guṇa	Vīrya	Vipāka	Karma	Classical References (Adhyāya & Śloka)
1	Pippalī-mūla	<i>Piper longum</i>	Kaṭu	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimi, Kāsa-hara	Ca. Ci. 18/45–47;
2	Tāṇḍulīya	<i>Amaranthus spinosus</i>	Madhura	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Śīta	Madhura	Viṣahara	Bh.P. Śākavarga (312–314)
3	Mañjiṣṭhā	<i>Rubia cordifolia</i>	Tikta, Kaṣāya, Madhura	Guru, Rūkṣa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Viṣahara	(Su. Ka. 5/69–72
4	Karañjika	<i>Pongamia pinnata</i>	Tikta, Kaṭu, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Tikṣṇa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimi-hara	Bh.P. Guḍūcyādi Varga 266–268
5	Marica	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	Kaṭu	Laghu, Tikṣṇa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimi-hara	Ca. Sū. 4/9
6	Hastipippalī	<i>Scindapsus officinalis</i>	Kaṭu	Laghu, Tikṣṇa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimi-hara, Śvāsahara	Ca. Ci. 17/64–66; Bhāvaprakāśa – Harītakyaḍi Varga
7	Viḍaṅga	<i>Embelia ribes</i>	Kaṭu	Laghu, Tikṣṇa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimi-hna	Ca. Sū. 4/8; Bh.P. Harītakyaḍi Varga 219
8	Anantā	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>	Madhura	Guru, Snigdha	Śīta	Madhura	Viṣāpaha	Su. Ka. 5/58–60; Bhāvaprakāśa – Guḍūcyādi Varga
9	Sārāla	<i>Pinus roxburghii</i>	Tikta, Kaṭu, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Snigdha	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Rakṣogha	RN 94–96
10	Śālaparnī (Guha)	<i>Desmodium gangeticum</i>	Madhura	Guru, Snigdha	Uṣṇa	Madhura	Jvara, Śvāsahara	Ca. Sū. 4/32–33
11	Kośāmra	<i>Schleicheria oleosa</i>	Amla	Guru	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Kuṣṭha-hara	(KN Oṣadhi Varga 355–357)

12	Śveta Sarṣapa	<i>Brassica campestris</i>	Kaṭu	Laghu, Snigdha	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimiha ra	(Bh.P Tailavarga. 286–288)
13	Varuṇa	<i>Crataeva religiosa</i>	Tikta, Kaṭu, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimiha ra	Su. Sū. 38/32–34
14	Plakṣa	<i>Ficus lacor</i>	Kaṣāya	Guru, Rūkṣa	Śīta	Kaṭu	Vraṇa-hara	Su. Sū. 38/8–10
15	Eraṇḍa (Vardhamāna)	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Madhura, Kaṣāya	Snigdha, Tikṣṇa, Sūkṣma	Uṣṇa	Madhu ra	Krimiha ra	Ca. Sū. 4/12
16	Saptaparṇa	<i>Alstonia scholaris</i>	Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Snigdha	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimiha ra	Bh.P. Guḍūcyādi Varga 233–235
17	Tuṇṭuka	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i>	Madhura, Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Kapha-Vāta-hara	RN Śālmaliyādi Varga 165–167
18	Elavāluka	<i>Prunus cerasus</i>	Kaṣāya	Laghu	Śīta	Kaṭu	Viṣahar a	KN Oṣadhi Varga 388–390
19	Nāgadantī	<i>Croton oblongifolius</i>	Kaṭu	Guru, Tikṣṇa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Viṣa, Krimi-hara	RN Śālmaliyādi Varga 214–216
20	Ativiṣā	<i>Aconitum heterophyllum</i>	Kaṭu, Tikta	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Viṣa, Krimi-hara	Ca. Ci. 3/146–148
21	Abhayā	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Kaṣāya, Madhura, Amla, Tikta, Kaṭu	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Uṣṇa	Madhu ra	Rasāyana, Krimiha ra	Ca. Chi. 1/39–41
22	Bhadrādāru	<i>Cedrus deodara</i>	Kaṭu, Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimiha ra	Guḍūcyādi Varga (Bh.P. 257–259)
23	Kuṣṭha	<i>Saussurea lappa</i>	Tikta, Kaṭu, Madhura	Laghu	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Śvāsa, Kāsa-hara	Ca. Chi. 17/56–58
24	Haridrā	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Tikta, Kaṭu	Laghu, Rūkṣa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Viṣahar a	Su. Kal. 5/70–72
25	Vacā	<i>Acorus calamus</i>	Kaṭu, Tikta	Laghu, Tikṣṇa	Uṣṇa	Kaṭu	Krimiha ra	Ca. Chi. 10/26–28

Rationale of Ksharagada Based on Rasapanchaka

Ksharagada is a classical *Agada* formulation strategically designed on the principles of *Rasapanchaka*, predominantly comprising drugs endowed with Kaṭu, Tikta, and Kashaya rasa; Laghu, Rūkṣa, and Tīkṣṇa guṇa; Ushna vīrya; and Kaṭu vipāka. Such a pharmacodynamic profile is classically indicated in conditions involving *viṣa*, *krimi*, *bhuta-graha*, *rakṣa*, and *duṣṭa vraṇa*, all of which are characterized by *āvaraṇa*, *kleda*, *āma*, and *kapha-vāta* predominance^{70–72}.

Kaṭu rasa facilitates *lekhana*, *srotoshodhana*, and *krimi-nāśana*, while *Tikta rasa* is particularly emphasized in *viṣa-hara*, *jvara-hara*, and *bhuta-pratiśedhaka* contexts due to its *kleda-śoṣaṇa* and *pācana* actions. *Kashaya rasa* contributes to *stambhana*, *śoṣaṇa*, and *viṣa-śamana*, thereby stabilizing tissue integrity in conditions associated with microbial invasion and tissue vitiation^{73–74}.

The dominance of *Ushna vīrya* in Ksharagada effectively counteracts the *sheeta*, *guru*, and *picchila* attributes of aggravated *Kapha* and *Vāta*, which are classically implicated in *krimi* and *bhuta-graha* disorders. Moreover, *Kaṭu vipāka* enhances *agnidīpana* and *āma-pācana*, ensuring sustained elimination of pathogenic factors rather than mere symptomatic suppression⁷⁵.

Importantly, the formulation also incorporates select *Sheeta vīrya* and *Madhura vipāka* dravyas such as *Āmalakī* and *Madhūka*, which serve a protective role by preventing excessive *tīkṣṇatā* and tissue depletion associated with *kṣāra* and *Ushna* dominance. This reflects the classical principle of *doṣa-sāmyatva* and *dhātu-rakṣaṇa*, ensuring therapeutic efficacy without compromising host vitality⁷⁶.

Thus, Ksharagada exemplifies a deliberate and rational classical formulation strategy wherein *tīkṣṇa-kṣāra* and *krimighna* actions are judiciously balanced with *rasāyana* and *rakṣoghna* considerations. This validates its repeated indication in Ayurvedic *Samhitās* for *Bhuta–Krimi–Graha* disorders and supports its conceptual equivalence to antimicrobial and detoxifying formulations within a traditional Ayurvedic framework.

DISCUSSION

The exploration of *Bhuta*, *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, *Graha*, and *Preta* terminologies within *Dravyaguṇa* and classical Ayurvedic literature reveals a rich intellectual tradition that addresses the origins, manifestations, and management of disease in ways that prefigure several concepts in modern infectious disease science. Although it remains challenging to map these classical entities directly to specific categories of micro-organisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, or protozoa, the **functional, clinical, and therapeutic parallels** are compelling and warrant evidence-based interpretation. This discussion synthesizes insights from *Samhitas*, *Nighaṇṭus*, open-source research, and classical commentaries to underscore the relevance of this topic in contemporary Ayurvedic scholarship and practice.

Classical *Samhitas* consistently describe *Janapadodhwamsa* as a collective affliction of populations caused by common derangements in *Vāyu*, *Jala*, *Deśa*, and *Kāla* — factors that closely resemble modern ecological determinants of epidemic and pandemic outbreaks.^{14–18} Such descriptions demonstrate that ancient authors recognized environmental influences and shared causative factors in widespread disease, long before the germ theory of disease emerged.

The terminologies *Bhuta*, *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, *Graha*, and *Preta* appear in various classical contexts linked to pathological processes. Commentators like *Cakrapāṇi* and *Arunadatta* explicitly correlate these terms with *Viṣa*, *Krimi*, and *Agantuja* agents entering the body through *saṁsparśa* or environmental exposure, thus indicating harmful influences that are external to the host system.^{42–43} Classical

descriptions such as *Bhūtābhiśaṅga jvara* illustrate a phenomenology of communicable fever that is remarkably similar to modern infectious diseases, albeit couched in the language of Ayurveda.⁷¹

Etymological analyses in *Śabdakalpadrūma* and *Amarakośa* lend further support to these interpretations. For instance, *Bhuta* literally means “that which exists,” and is often qualified as minute, invisible life forms in various contexts.^{32–33} Similarly, *Pishachi* (“one who consumes flesh”) and *Rakshasa* (associated with decaying matter and nocturnal harmful forces) are described in ways that metaphorically align with microbial life thriving in unhygienic environments.^{35–37} These semantic parallels, while not microbiological in the modern sense, suggest that classical authors were attempting to conceptualize causes of disease that are unseen yet materially impactful.

Graha—derived from *grahaṇa* (to seize or afflict)—is repeatedly used to denote invisible forces that disturb physiological balance.¹²³⁸ In the *Padma Purāṇa*, *Bhuta*, *Preta*, and *Pishachi* are described as innumerable invisible beings occupying terrestrial and lower atmospheric realms, a metaphor that can be interpreted in light of micro-organisms occupying ecological niches and influencing health in susceptible hosts.⁴¹

Nighaṇṭus such as *Bhāvaprakāśa*, *Kaiyadeva*, *Rāja*, *Dhanvantari*, and others provide lexical and clinical insights into the actions of plants and formulations against entities described as *Krimi*, *Bhuta*, *Graha*, and allied agents (e.g., *Pishachi* and *Preta*). For example, *Vana Bārbarī* is described as *Pishachināśana* and *Bhutaghna*, while *Tulasi* is celebrated as *Rakshasanāśanī*.^{74–76} Such descriptions suggest a pharmacodynamic understanding of how certain botanical substances act against noxious influences. Parallel open-access research articles explore antimicrobial, antiviral, and immunomodulatory properties of these and related dravyas, further supporting their reinterpretation as agents effective against micro-organisms or their pathogenic effects.

Modern evidence-based research continues to explore such correlations. Critical reviews on *krimi* and microbial concepts in Ayurveda emphasize that *Dr̥śya* (visible) and *Adr̥śya* (invisible) *Krimi* correspond to macroscopic parasites and microscopic microbes, respectively.^{10–11} Furthermore, ethnopharmacological and pharmacological investigations into classical *Rakṣoghna* and *Bhutanāśana* drugs (e.g., neem, haridra, vacha) have demonstrated significant antimicrobial and immunomodulatory actions, aligning with classical indications against invisible disease agents.^{43–45}

The Rasapanchaka framework provides a robust basis for evaluating the pharmacological potential of formulations like *Ksharagada*. Its predominant *Kaṭu–Tikta–Kashaya rasa*, *Ushna vīrya*, and *Kaṭu vipāka* explain therapeutic actions including *krimi-nāśana*, *viṣa-hara*, *lekhana*, and *kleda-śoṣaṇa*. When balanced with *Sheeta vīrya* and *Madhura vipāka* dravyas (e.g., *Āmalaka*, *Madhūka*), the formulation achieves *doṣa-sāmyatva* and *dhātu-rakṣaṇa*, ensuring that potent action does not compromise systemic resilience.

Significantly, the clinical caution in texts like *Suśruta Saṁhitā* regarding aggravated *Pishachi* destroying both patient and physician metaphorically echoes modern concern about highly virulent and resistant pathogens that can complicate treatment and lead to adverse outcomes.⁴⁶ This conceptual overlap highlights how classical descriptions, when interpreted metaphorically and in context, mirror aspects of contemporary microbiology and infectious disease pathology.

Thus, the exploration of *Bhuta*, *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, *Graha*, and *Preta* terminologies in Ayurvedic literature is not merely a linguistic or historical exercise but a **thematic investigation into how classical medicine perceived disease causation, invasion, and treatment**. The consistent representation of these entities as harmful, invisible, and invasive—requiring targeted therapeutic measures such as medicated fumigation (*Dhūpana*), antiseptic bathing (*Snāna*), and formulations with antimicrobial potential—

provides a conceptual foundation that can be reconciled with modern understanding of micro-organisms and their pathogenic mechanisms.

Given the urgent need for integrative frameworks to manage emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, these classical insights offer both theoretical richness and practical direction for research that bridges Ayurvedic principles with microbiology, immunology, and pharmacology. By systematically anchoring classical terminology in evidence-based analysis, this literary study strengthens the scientific foundation of Ayurveda and enhances its interdisciplinary relevance in contemporary health sciences.

CONCLUSION

Bhuta is a comprehensive term encompassing entities such as *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, *Preta*, and others, while *Graha* represents multiple subtypes with diverse manifestations. Most *Kṛmihara* dravyas are inherently *Bhūtāghna* or *Bhuta-nāśana*, addressing microbe-associated afflictions, whereas *Rakṣoghna* dravyas are used for broader *Bhuta-saṃsargaja* conditions. Interestingly, *Rakshasa-nāśana* activity is predominantly observed in *Tulasi*, while *Pishachi-nāśana* is noted in *Barbari* and *Vana Barbari*.

The present COVID-19 pandemic, resurgence of viral outbreaks, and antibiotic-resistant infections underscore the urgency of exploring classical *Graha* and *Bhuta* concepts as potential frameworks for preventive and therapeutic strategies. Applying *Agada* formulations innovatively on external implements such as *Duṇḍhubi*, *Torana*, *Dhvaja*, *Manibhaṇḍa*, and *Hāra* can bridge classical practice with modern infection control measures. Such innovations, in collaboration with AYUSH Ministry, RCFC, state and central health bodies, and WHO, can lead to the development of novel prophylactic or therapeutic products targeting microbial disorders.

Furthermore, this study highlights the translational potential of *Bhūtāghna*, *Pishachināśana*, *Rakshasanāśana*, and *Grahanāśana* dravyas for *in vivo* and *in vitro* research, as well as clinical trials aimed at combating *Janapadodhwamsa*-related epidemic and endemic conditions. Contemporary preventive strategies—mask use, sanitization, physical distancing, and immunity enhancers such as *Kaśāya* and *Chyāvanaprāśa*—while effective, must be complemented with systemic health promotion through adherence to *Dinacarya*, *Rutuśodhana*, *Sadvṛtta*, and *Ācāra Rasāyana*.

This work also emphasizes the importance of integrating *Dravyaguṇa* principles into modern public health frameworks. Identification of specific *Graha* types corresponding to distinct micro-organisms, if scientifically validated, could allow Ayurvedic formulations to serve as targeted antimicrobial, antiviral, or immunomodulatory interventions, especially relevant in post-pandemic public health planning.

LIMITATIONS

Despite comprehensive literary review, this study could not conclusively map specific micro-organisms to individual terms such as *Bhuta*, *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, *Graha*, or *Preta*. Current interpretations remain largely metaphorical, relying on etymology, classical commentary, and *Rasapanchaka* of dravyas rather than experimental validation. Moreover, standardized dosage, formulation, and delivery methods for *Agada*-based interventions in modern contexts remain underexplored.

FUTURE SCOPE

Linguistic and conceptual validation: Detailed study of classical Sanskrit grammar texts, *Śabdakalpadruma*, and consultation with Sanskrit scholars to refine the meanings of *Bhuta*, *Pishachi*, *Rakshasa*, *Graha*, and *Preta*.

1. Consensus building: Organizing seminars, symposiums, debates, and expert panels to scientifically correlate these terms with specific microbial categories.
2. Research and innovation: Translational research to convert classical *Agada* practices into modern prophylactic and therapeutic products. This may include developing coatings, sanitization sprays, wearable preventive devices, or surface disinfectants inspired by classical applications.
3. Clinical and laboratory studies: Conducting *in vivo* and *in vitro* studies to evaluate the antimicrobial, antiviral, antifungal, and immunomodulatory efficacy of *Bhūtāghna*, *Pishachināśana*, *Rakshasanāśana*, and *Grahanāśana* dravyas.
4. Public health integration: Incorporating Ayurvedic preventive strategies—*Dinacarya*, *Rutūśodhana*, *Sadvṛtta*, *Ācāra Rasāyana*—into routine public health education programs to enhance community-level resilience against infectious diseases.
5. Revitalization of Graha Chikitsa: Modernizing one of the underexplored *Ashtanga* branches to integrate evidence-based approaches against microbial and epidemic diseases, bridging classical knowledge with contemporary healthcare needs.

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