

Vishaghna Dashemani: A Comprehensive Review from Ayurvedic and Modern Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The ancient science of *Ayurveda* outlines a comprehensive system of therapeutics, with the concept of *Mahakashaya*—ten groups of herbs classified by their predominant action—holding prime significance. Among them, *Vishaghna Mahakashaya* comprises ten herbs renowned for their efficacy in combating poisons (*Visha*). These herbs have been traditionally used for detoxification and neutralizing various types of poisons—animal, plant, mineral, and artificial. With the advent of modern toxicology, some of these herbs have been scientifically evaluated for their antidot, antioxidant, hepatoprotective, and neuroprotective properties. This article aims to explore the Ayurvedic perspective of *Vishaghna Mahakashaya* along with its relevance in contemporary phytotherapy. A critical review of classical texts and modern scientific literature provides a consolidated view of the pharmacological actions, therapeutic applications, and phytochemical profiles of these vital herbs.

Keywords: *Vishaghna Dravya*, *Ayurvedic*, *Phytochemical Study*, *Action*

INTRODUCTION

The term "*Visha*" in *Ayurveda* encompasses all substances that can produce toxicity in the body. Poisoning can be either natural (*Jangama*, *Sthavara*) or artificial (*Garavisha*, *Krutrima Visha*). *Ayurveda*, the science of life, not only provides guidelines for health maintenance but also offers robust strategies for disease management.

Among its unique therapeutic frameworks, the *Dashamahakashaya* or ten great decoctions introduced by Charaka form a vital component of internal medicine (*Chikitsa Sthana*) [1]. The *Vishaghna Mahakashaya*, a group of ten herbs mentioned in Charaka Samhita (*Chikitsa Sthana* 23/31), is specifically acclaimed for its *Vishaghna* (anti-poisonous) property.

These herbs are used to neutralize endogenous and exogenous toxins, especially in conditions resulting from snake bites, insect stings, food poisoning, and other toxic syndromes [2]. The *Charaka Samhita* categorizes *Vishaghna Dravyas* as one of the vital *Upakarma Dravyas*, essential for treating poisoning. These herbs act by neutralizing toxins, enhancing immunity, and supporting organ function. In the modern era, rising cases of drug poisoning, chemical exposure, and snake bites make it crucial to re-evaluate these traditional medicines through a scientific lens.

Table: 1 Vishaghna Mahakashaya: An Ayurvedic Overview:^{5,6}

According to *Charaka Samhita*, the following ten herbs constitute the *Vishaghna Mahakashaya*

S.N.	Dravya	Botanical Name & Family	Karma Related to Vishaghna
1	Haridra	<i>Curcuma longa</i> (Zingiberaceae)	Vishaghna, Krimighna, Raktashodhaka
2	Manjishtha	<i>Rubia cordifolia</i> (Rubiaceae)	Raktaprasadaka, Vishaghna
3	Rasna	<i>Pluchea lanceolata</i> (Compositae)	Vishaghna
4	Sukshma Ela	<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> (Zingiberaceae)	Vishaghna
5	Trivrutta	<i>Operculina turpethum</i> (Convolvulaceae)	Vishaghna, Kandughna, Bhedaniya
6	Chandan	<i>Santalum album</i> (Santalaceae)	Rasayana, Vishaghna, Jwaraghna, Kandughna, Dahaprashamana
7	Katak (Clearing nut)	<i>Strychnos potatorum</i> (Loganiaceae)	Vishaghna, Vedanahara, Kandughna
8	Shirish	<i>Albizia lebbek</i> (Leguminosae)	Sarvavishaghna, Kasahara, Shothahara, Vishaghna
9	Sindhavaar (five leaves chaste)	<i>Vitex negundo</i> (Verbenaceae)	Jantughna, Vishaghna, Raktaprasadaka, Krimighna
10	Shleshmatak	<i>Cordiadiachotoma</i> (Boraginaceae)	Vishaghna

Mechanisms of Action (Ayurvedic Perspective)^{1,2,3}

- *Vishanashaka* (neutralizes poison) through its *Tikta-Kashayarasa* and *Ushna virya*
- *Raktashodhaka* (blood purification) prevents systemic spread
- *Dipana-Pachana* helps metabolize the poison
- *Srotoshodhana* promotes detoxification
- *Rasayana* strengthens *dhatu*s and immune response
- *Krimighna* helps to reduce *amvisha*
- *Bhedaniya* (Purgative) mild laxative so it removes poison through purgation.

Table: 2 Modern Pharmacological Perspective Phytochemicals and Their Actions

S.N.	Dravya	Active Compounds	Pharmacological Actions
1	Haridra ⁸	Curcumin, Curcnone, Curcumenone, Cineole, Eugenol	Anti-Inflammatory, Anti-Oxidant, Antidiabetic, Antihistaminic, Blood Purifier, Immunomodulator, Antivenom
2	Manjishtha ⁹	Mangistin, Alizarin, Garancin, Mollugin, Furomollugin	Antibacterial, Antifungal, Insecticidal, Antimicrobial, Antioxidant, Astringent
3	Rasna (Suvaha) ¹⁰	Pluchine, Quercetin, Isohamnetin, Hesperidin	Antioxidant, Immunomodulatory, Hepatoprotective, Anti-Inflammatory, Antipsoriatic
4	Sukshma Ela ¹¹	Pinene, Sabinene, Myrcene, Limonene	Anti-Allergic, Antianaphylactic, Anti-Snake Venom, Antiseptic, Antimicrobial, Antispasmodic, Antitoxic
5	Trivrutta ¹² (Palindi)	Turpethin	Liver Protection, Antioxidant, Anti-Inflammatory, Anthelmintic, Purgative, Antihistaminic
6	Chandan ¹³	Santalol, Sesquiterpene	Diuretic, Antiseptic, Antitoxic
7	Katak ¹⁴ (Nirmali)	Brucine	Antidiabetic, Antimicrobial, Antiarthritic
8	Shirish ¹⁵	Saponins And Tannins	Antiseptic, Antibacterial, Antisnake Venom
9	Sindhavaar ¹⁶	Mallic Acid	Antiseptic, Antioxidant, Insecticidal
10	Shleshmatak ¹⁷	Tannin	Diuretic, Anti-Inflammatory, Antimicrobial, It Is Useful In All Types Of Spider Poisoning.

Table 3: Comparative View

Aspect	Ayurvedic View	Modern View
Basis of Action	<i>Guna, Rasa, Virya, Vipaka, Karma</i>	Phytochemical constituents and pharmacodynamics
Focus	Whole plant synergy, detoxification	Isolated compounds, target-specific actions
Application	Internal and external formulations	Extract-based, standardized dosages
Scope	Visha from all sources (<i>Sthavara, Jangama</i>)	Specific toxins (snake venom, chemicals, heavy metals)

Experimental Studies and Clinical Correlation

Several Ayurvedic plants classified as *Vishaghna Dravyas* have demonstrated significant detoxifying and anti-toxic effects through experimental and clinical studies.

Haridra (Curcuma longa) possesses potent anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and hepatoprotective properties. Curcumin, its active constituent, has been shown to neutralize snake venom and protect against liver toxins in experimental models (Rathaur et al., 2012)⁸.

Manjishta (Rubia cordifolia) exerts detoxifying, blood-purifying, and antioxidant effects, with evidence supporting its use in skin disorders and toxin-mediated inflammation (Nadkarni, 2002)⁹.

Rasna (Pluchea lanceolata) has anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and antiarthritic activities that correlate with its traditional use in toxin-related *Shotha* and *Visha* conditions (Tiwari et al., 2007)¹⁰.

Sukshma Ela (Elettaria cardamomum) exhibits antioxidant and antimicrobial actions, aiding in detoxification at the systemic level (Das et al., 2014)¹¹.

Trivrutta (Operculina turpethum) is a potent purgative and detoxifier; its resin has shown hepatoprotective and anti-inflammatory actions in animal models (Gupta et al., 2005)¹².

Chandan (Santalum album) demonstrates antipyretic and anti-inflammatory effects, and its essential oil has shown antimicrobial and hepatoprotective actions in preclinical trials (Kumar et al., 2013)¹³.

Katak (Strychnos potatorum) seeds have shown hepatoprotective and nephroprotective activity, potentially counteracting toxin-induced organ damage (Ramaswamy et al., 2007)¹⁴.

Shirisha (Albizia lebbeck) is renowned as a classical *Vishaghna* drug, with studies indicating its antihistaminic, anti-anaphylactic, and mast cell-stabilizing properties, supporting its use in allergic and toxic conditions (Singh et al., 2010)¹⁵.

Sinduvar (Vitex negundo) has been extensively studied for its analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties, making it effective in visha-vyadhis and arthritic conditions (Dharmasiri et al., 2003)¹⁶.

Shleshmantaka (Cordia dichotoma) has been reported to have antioxidant and wound-healing properties that counteract oxidative damage from toxins (Jain et al., 2016)¹⁷.

These studies validate the classical claims of *Vishaghna* efficacy and underscore their potential in managing modern toxicological conditions.

Different formulation& Mode of Administration:

- *Churna* (Powders) – *Shirish churna* in *vishachikitsa*
- *Kashaya* (Decoctions) – *Trivrutta Kashaya*
- *Lepa* (Poultice) – For topical application in insect or snake bites
- *Arishta/Asava* – *Manjishthadi Kwatha*, *Arishta* for internal detox

Pharmacological and Therapeutic Insights:

Several herbs in *Vishaghna Mahakashaya* have shown promise in treating:

- Snake venom envenomation
- Allergic and anaphylactic reactions
- Liver and gastrointestinal toxicity
- Inflammatory disorders

Modern pharmacological investigations support their:

- Antioxidant
- Anti-inflammatory
- Hepatoprotective
- Immunomodulatory
- Antihistaminic activities

Limitations and Future Prospects

While *Ayurveda* offers a holistic detoxification framework, the lack of standardized dosages, clinical trials, and pharmacokinetic data is a major barrier to global acceptance. Future research should focus on:

- Isolating active constituents
- Conducting controlled clinical trials
- Formulating standardized herbal antidotes
- Evaluating synergistic effects of compound formulations

CONCLUSION

VishaghnaDravyas hold immense potential as natural antidotes and detox agents. Their multidimensional actions—ranging from blood purification to immune enhancement—complement modern therapeutic strategies. Integrating Ayurvedic wisdom with modern pharmacological research could lead to safer, more effective interventions in the management of poisoning.

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