



Review Article

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF AMALAKI- (EMBLICA OFFICINALIS GAERTN.) IN CLASSICAL TEXTS AND PROMOTE ITS USE IN OUR LIFE

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ABSTRACT

The drug *Amalaki* (*Embllica Officinalis* Gaertn.) belongs to family Euphorbiaceae, is used since ancient time for therapeutic purposes. It has been used in the traditional Indian medicine of 'Ayurveda' for the treatment of a variety of diseases. *Amalaki* has five *Rasa* (taste) except *Lavana* (salt), It is mainly *Amla Ras Pradhan*. Its *Vipaka* (taste after digestion) is *Madhura* (sweet) and *Veerya* (potency) is *Sheeta* (cool). Because of these qualities, the plant performs various pharmacological actions such as anti-inflammatory activity, antioxidant activity, immunomodulatory activity, anti-tussive, antiulcer activity, anticancerous activity, anti-diarroheal and spasmolytic, antidiabetic, in reducing cholesterol and dyslipidemia, antimicrobial, anti-asthmatic. It helps to improve physical and mental health, prevents degeneration, extends youth and delays aging or rather reverse the aging process. Various parts of *Amalaki* has been described in morphology like root, stem, leaf, seed, flower and fruit. Synonyms and their interpretation, Vernacular names, *Rasapanchaka* and *Karma* of *Amalaki* in various *Nighantus* (*Dhanwantri Nighantu*, *Shodhal Nighantu*, *Madanpal Nighantu*, *Bhavprakash Nighantu*, *Kaiyadeva Nighantu* and *Raj Nighantu*) has been described. Classical categorization of plant *Amalaki* in *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya* has been explained according to its *Karma* and this paper presented a comprehensive review of *Embllica Officinalis Gaertn*.

INTRODUCTION

Amalaki in *Brihatrayi*

Charaka has described *Amalaka* in *Sutrasthana*, *Chikitsasthana*, *Kalpasthana* and *Siddhisthana* mostly for the treatment of diseases and for *Rasayana Karma* (to increase the body immunity). In *Charaka Samhita*, *Amalaki* is prescribed in different kinds of diseases in different dosages form. It is included in *Kushthaghna*, *Virechanopaga*, *Kasahara*, *Jwarahara*, *Vayasthapana Mahakashaya* and *Amlaskandha*.

In *Sushruta Samhita*, *Amalaka* is mentioned in *Sutrasthana*, *Chikitsasthana*, *Kalpasthana* and *Uttaratantra*. It is described in *Mustadi*, *Triphala*, *Amalakyadi Gana* and *Amlavarga* in *Sutrasthana*.

Sushruta mentioned *Mustadi Gana* which is useful in *Yonidosha*; it is *Stanyashodhana* and *Pachana*. *Triphala* is useful in *Kapha Pitta Roga*, *Meha*, *Kushth*; it is *Chakshushya*, *Dipani*, *Visham jwarahara*. *Amalakyadi Gana* for *Jwarahara*, *Chakshushya*, *Dipani*, *Vrishya* and *Kapha-Arochakanashana*. *Amalaki Phala Majja* has the property of *Trishna*, *Chhardi* and *Vatnashaka*. *Sushruta* quoted *Dhatri* and *Dadima* are *Agrya* (superior) in *Amla Dravya*. *Sushruta* described *Amalaka Svarasa* along with *Haridra* and *Madhu* in *Prameha*.

In *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Amalaka* has been mentioned in *Sutrasthana*, *Chikitsasthana* and *Uttarasthana*. *Vagbhatta* mentioned *Triphala* (*Amalaki*, *Haritaki*, *Bibhitaki*) in *Parushakadi Gana*, *Mushkakadi Gana*, *Mustadi Gana* and *Virechanadi Gana*. It is useful in *Trishna*, *Vatajvikara*, *Gulma*, *Meha*, *Ashmari*, *Pandu*, *Medoroga*, *Arsha*, *Shukra*, *Kaphajavikara*, *Yoniroga*, *Stanyaroga* and as *Malapachaka*. *Amalaki* has *Shita Virya*, *Amla Rasa*, *Katu Vipaka*, *Keshya* and *Chakshushya* properties. *Amalaka Churna* is indicated in *Atisthoulya Chikitsa*. *Dhatri Svarasa* along with *Haridra* and *Madhu*

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used in Prameha. Amlaka Svarasa along with Guduchi and Madhu is indicated in Prameha.

Description of Amalaki in Charaka Samhita

Table 1: Showing Review of Amalaki in Charaka Samhita

Adhyaya & Shloka	Used as Ingredient
Sutrasthana^[1]	
2-26	<i>Virukshani Yavagu</i>
2-31	<i>Kanthya Yavagu</i>
4-11/13	<i>Kushthghna Mahakashaya</i>
4-13/24	<i>Virechanopaga Mahakashaya</i>
4-16/36	<i>Kaasahar mahakashaya</i>
4-16/39	<i>Jwarhar Mahakashaya</i>
4-18/50	<i>Vayahsthapan Mahakashaya</i>
25-40	<i>Agrya Dravya</i>
27-4	<i>Not Pittakaraka</i>
27-147,148	<i>Phala Varga as Kaphapittaharam</i>
Vimansthana^[2]	
8-140	<i>Amla Skandha</i>
Chikitsasthana^[3]	
3-184	<i>Jwaranashaka Peyaa</i>
3-186	<i>Jwaranashaka peyaa</i>
3-201	<i>Anyedyushka Jwarhar kashaya</i>
3-202	<i>Chaturthak Jwaranashaka Kashaya</i>
3-204	<i>Vatsakadi Kashaya</i>
3-206	<i>Madhukadi Sheeta Kashaya</i>
3-207	<i>Jatyadi Kashaya</i>
3-208	<i>Triphaladi Kwatha</i>
3-220	<i>Pippalyadi Ghrita</i>
3-222	<i>Vasadi Ghrita</i>
3-225	<i>Baladi Ghrita</i>
3-230,231	<i>Virechana Dravya</i>
3-299	<i>Vishamajwarahara</i>
5-106	<i>Neelinyadi Ghrita</i>
5-115	<i>Rohinyadya Ghrita</i>
5-120	<i>Trayamanadya</i>
5-123,124	<i>Drakshyadya Ghrita</i>
11-38	<i>Amritprasha Ghrita</i>
11-50	<i>Dhatriphaladya Ghrita</i>
11-63	<i>Sarpiguda</i>
18-88	<i>Pittaja Kasa Chikitsa</i>
18-90	<i>Pittaja Kasa Chikitsa</i>
18-94	<i>Pittaja Kasa Chikitsa</i>
18-118	<i>Vatanugata Kaphaja Kasa Chikitsa</i>
18-120	<i>Kaphaja Kasa Chikitsa</i>
18-122	<i>Vata Kaphaja Kasa Chikitsa</i>
18-136	<i>Kshat Kasa Chikitsa</i>
21-112	<i>Visarpa Chikitsa</i>
24-183	<i>Madatyaya Chikitsa</i>
26-209	<i>Arochaka Chikitsa</i>

26-253	<i>Netra Roga Chikitsa</i>
29-99	<i>Sukumaraka Taila</i>
30-92	<i>Pushyanuga Churna</i>
<i>Kalpasthanā</i>^[4]	
1-12	<i>Anupana in Pittaparakopa</i>
7-42	<i>Kalyanaka Modaka in Jwara, Mandagni</i>
7-46	<i>Vyoshadi Modaka Yoga in Jwara</i>
7-65	<i>Virechana Dravya</i>
<i>Siddhasthanā</i>^[5]	
10-43	Used as enema

Description of Amalaki in Sushruta Samhita

Table 2: Showing Review of Amalaki in Sushruta Samhita

<i>Adhyaya & Shloka</i>	Used as ingredient of
<i>Sutrasthanā</i>^[6]	
38-55	<i>Mustadi Gana in Pachana</i>
38-57	<i>Triphala in Visham Jwara</i>
38-61	<i>Amalakyadi Gana</i>
42-19	<i>Amla Varga</i>
46-140	<i>Phala Varga- Ushna</i>
46-143,144	<i>Guna of Amalaki - Pittashamak</i>
46-206	<i>Phala Majja - Pittashamak</i>
<i>Chikitsasthanā</i>^[7]	
9-8	<i>Mahatiktaka Ghrita in Vishama Jwara</i>
9-44	<i>Kustha Chikitsa</i>
9-47	<i>Kustha Chikitsa</i>
10-4	<i>Sarvamantha Kalpa</i>
11-8	<i>Mutra Vikar Chikitsa</i>
12-10	<i>Mutra Vikar Chikitsa</i>
14-7	<i>Shleshmodara Chikitsa</i>
24-15	Used as facewash
25-28	<i>Nili taila</i>
27-12	<i>Vijayasaradi Rasayana</i>
28-6	<i>Brahmi Rasayana</i>
<i>Kalpasthanā</i>^[8]	
5-78	<i>Vamasatvagadi Agada</i>
<i>Uttar Tantra</i>^[9]	
10-12	Eye drop
11-15	<i>Pistaka Chikitsa</i>
12-12	<i>Anjana</i>
17-48	<i>Timira Chikitsa</i>
39-138	<i>Pathya in Vata - Pittaja Jwara</i>
39-199	<i>Kiratatiktadi Kwaath in Vata-Pittaja Jwara</i>
39-212	<i>Triphaladi Yoga in Visham Jwara</i>
39-220	<i>Pippalyadi Grita in Jeerna Jwara</i>
39-227	<i>Patoladi Ghrita in Jwara</i>
39-248	<i>Triphaladi Ghrita in Jwara</i>
39-251	<i>Patoladi Ghrita in Jwara</i>

39-304	Dadimadi kalka for Gandusha
48-18	In Trividha Trishna Chikitsa
49-19	Treatment of Vataja emesis
52-38	Kalyanaka Ghrita
57-10	Leha in Arochaka
58-66	Mahabala Ghrita

Description of Amalaka in Nighantus

1. Dhanvantri Nighantu (10th A.D.): Guduchyadi Varga
2. Shodhala Nighantu (12th A.D.): Guduchyadi Varga
3. Madanpala Nighantu (14th A.D.): Abhayadi Varga
4. Kaiyadeva Nighantu (14th A.D.): Aushsdhi Varga
5. Bhavaprakasha Nighantu (16th A.D.): Haritakyadi Varga
6. Raj Nighantu (17th A.D.): Amradi Varga

Synonyms of Amalaki

The synonyms suggest the different morphological features along with the therapeutic properties of the plant as enlisted in classical texts are mentioned:

Table 3: Showing Paryaya (Synonyms) of Amalaki

Paryaya	D.N.[10]	S.N.[11]	M.P.N. [12]	K.N. [13]	BH.N. [14]	R.N. [15]
Amalakam	+	+	+	+	+	-
Amalaki	-	-	-	+	+	+
Amrita	-	+	-	+	+	+
Amritodbhawa	-	-	-	+	-	-
Amritphalam	+	+	+	+	+	+
Andakam	-	+	-	-	-	-
Dhatreyi	-	-	-	-	-	+
Dhatri	-	-	-	+	+	-
Dhatrika	-	-	-	-	-	+
Dhatrphala	+	+	+	+	+	+
Divya	-	-	-	+	-	-
Jatiphalam	-	-	-	-	-	+
Jatiphalarasam	+	+	-	+	+	-
Kola	-	-	-	+	-	-
Nishka	-	-	-	+	-	-
Radha	-	-	-	+	-	-
Rasaphala	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rochani	-	-	-	-	-	+
Shaanta	-	-	-	-	-	+
Sheetaphala	-	+	-	+	-	-
Shiva	-	-	-	-	-	+
Shivam	+	+	+	+	+	-
Shringi	-	-	-	+	-	-
Shriphalam	+	+	+	+	+	+
Shukti	-	-	-	+	-	-
Sidhuphala	-	-	-	+	-	-
Sidhuras	-	-	-	+	-	-
Tishya	-	-	-	+	-	-
Tishyaphala	-	-	-	+	+	-
Varshaphala	-	+	-	-	-	-
Vayahsthah	+	+	-	+	-	+

Vrishya	+	+	-	+	+	+
Vrishyaphala	-	-	-	+	-	-
Vrittphala	-	-	-	-	-	+
Vyasya	-	-	-	-	+	-
Seeta	-	-	-	-	-	+

(D.N. - Dhanwantri Nighantu, S.N.- Shodhal Nighantu, M.P.N.- Madanpal Nighantu, K.N.- Kaideva Nighantu, Bh.N.- Bhavparkasa Nighantu, R.N.- Raj Nighantu)

Interpretation and etymology of synonyms^[16]

- **वयस्या-** 'वयसे आयुषे हिता' ।
Useful for longevity.
- **वयःस्था-** 'वयः तारुण्यं स्थापयति इति' ।
Prevents aging process. Keeps or prolongs youthfulness.
- **आमलकी-** 'आमलते रसायनादि गुणान्,मल' धारणे ।
दोषशमनाद् वा, आमलते धारयति शरीरम्' । 'आमलते गुणान् आमलकी, अमला च '(क्षी., अमर २.४.५८. ।
'अम्लात्वात् वा' ।
It has the *Rasayana* property. It specifies *Dosas*. Sustains the body. It is devoid of *Malas*.
- **वृष्या-** 'वृष्यगुणोत्कर्षात् ।शुक्रवर्धनी' ।
Promotes virility.
- **जातिफलरसम्-** 'जाती प्रशस्तः फलरसो=स्य' ।
Its fruit juice is beneficial.
- **शिवम्-** 'कल्याणकारी' ।
Beneficial to health.
- **धात्रीफलम्-** 'धात्रीव देहस्य धारणपोषणकारी' ।
Its fruit sustains and promotes *Dhatu*s (tissues) and nourishes body tissues.
- **श्रीफलम्-** 'श्रीः कान्तिः वर्तते फले' ।
Use of fruit improves the complexion. (Fruits has good complexion)
- **अमृतफलम्-** 'अमृतं वसति अस्याः फले' ।

'तदा ह्यवश्यममृतं वसत्यामलके क्षणं '(च.चि.१.३.१२)

Its fruit has properties of divine elixir.

- **धात्री-** 'धात्रीव देहस्य पोषणधारणकारी' ।
It nourishes and maintains body tissues.
- **तिष्यफला-** 'तिष्ये पौष मासे फलं जायते=स्याः' । (क्षी.)
Fruit ripens in *Pausa* month.
Its fruit is auspicious.
- **अमृता-** 'अमृतवद् गुणकारिणी, रसायनत्वात्' ।
It has *Rasayana* property (like divine elixir).

Vernacular Names^[17]

Sanskrit: Amtaphala, Ēmalaka, Dhatriphala

Assamese: Amlakhi, Amlakhu, Amlaku

Bengali: Amla, Dhatri

English: Emblic Myrobalan

Gujrati : Ambala, Amala

Hindi: Amla, Aonla

Kannada: Nellikayi, Bela nelli, Pottadenollikayi

Kashmiri: Amla, Embali

Malayalam: Nellikka

Marathi: Anvala, Avalkathi

Oriya: Ainla, Anala

Punjabi: Aula, Amla

Tamil: Nellikai, Nelli

Telugu: Usirika

Urdu: Amla, Amlaj

Rasapanchaka of Amalaki

Table 4: Showing the Rasapanchaka of Amalaki

Rasapanchaka	D.N. [18]	S.N. [19]	M.P.N. [20]	K.N. [21]	BH.N. [22]	R.N. [23]
Madhura Rasa	+	+	+	+	+	+
Amla Rasa	+	+	+	+	+	+
Katu Rasa	+	-	-	-	-	+
Tikta Rasa	+	-	-	-	-	-
Kashaya Rasa	+	+	+	+	+	+
Sara Guna	+	-	-	-	-	-
Laghu Guna	-	-	-	-	-	+
Ruksha Guna	+	-	+	+	+	-
Sheeta Virya	+	+	+	+	+	+
Katu Vipaka	-	+	-	-	-	-
Amla Vipaka	-	-	-	-	-	-
Madhura Vipaka	-	+	-	-	-	-

(D.N. - Dhanwantri Nighantu, S.N.- Shodhal Nighantu, M.P.N.- Madanpal Nighantu, K.N.- Kaideva Nighantu, Bh.N.- Bhavparkasa Nighantu, R.N.- Raj Nighantu)

Amalaki has Madhura, Amla, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya Rasa, Laghu, Ruksha Guna, Sheeta Virya and Madhura Vipaka.

Karma of Amalaki**Table 5: Showing the Karma of Amalaki**

Karma	D.N. [24]	S.N. [25]	M.P.N. [26]	K.N. [27]	BH.N. [28]	R.N. [29]
<i>Atisaranashaka</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Bhagnasandhankrita</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Chakshushya</i>	-	+	-	+	-	-
<i>Chhardinashak</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Dahanashaka</i>	-	+	-	-	-	+
<i>Hridya</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Jwarghna</i>	+	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Kanthy</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Kapha-pittanashaka</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Kasahara</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Keshya</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Pramehaghna</i>	-	-	-	-	+	+
<i>Raktapittanashaka</i>	-	-	+	-	+	+
<i>Rasayana</i>	+	-	-	-	+	+
<i>Shoolahara</i>	-	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Shophaghna</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Shukrajanak</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Tridosahara</i>	+	-	+	+	+	-
<i>Trishnashamak</i>	-	+	-	+	-	-
<i>Vrishya</i>	+	+	+	+	+	-
<i>Medoroganashaka</i>	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Vibandha</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+
<i>Adhmaan</i>	-	-	-	-	-	+

(D.N. - Dhanwantri Nighantu, S.N.- Shodhal Nighantu, M.P.N.- Madanpal Nighantu, K.N.- Kaideva Nighantu, Bh.N.- Bhavparkasa Nighantu, R.N.- Raj Nighantu)

Morphology [30]

Habit: A deciduous small or middle sized tree with crooked trunk and spreading branches; bark greenish grey, peeling off in conchoidal flakes; branchlets glabrous or finely pubescent, 10-20cm. long, often deciduous.

Leaves: Subsessile, 10-13 by 2.5-3mm, closely set along the branchlets, distichous, light green, glabrous, narrowly linear, obtuse, imbricate when young, having the appearance of pinnet leaves; stipules ovate, finely acute.

Flowers: Greenish yellow, in axillary fascicles on the leaf-bearing branchlets, often on the naked portion below the leaves, with fimbriate bracts at the base.

Fruit: 1.3-1cm. fleshy, globose with 6 obscure vertical furrows, pale yellow, of three 2-seeded crustaceous cocci.

Chemical Composition

Amalaki is one of the most extensively studied and reviewed plants in Ayurvedic systems of Medicine. Results of Reports suggest that it contains alkaloids, tannins and phenols.[31] The fruit of *Amalaki* contains two hydrolysable tannins Emblicanin A and B,[32] which

are good antioxidants, one on hydrolysis gives gallic acid, ellagic acid and glucose wherein the other gives ellagic acid and glucose respectively. The fruit also contains Phyllembin.[33] Activity directed fractionation revealed the presence of several phytochemicals like gallic acid, corilagin, furosin and geraniin.[34] Its fruit juice contains the highest concentration of vitamin-C (478.56mg/100ml). Vitamin C levels are more than those in oranges, tangerines and lemons.[35,36]

Pharmacological Action

Anti-inflammatory activity[37], antioxidant activity[38], immunomodulatory activity[39], antitussive[40], antiulcer activity[41], anticancerous activity[42], anti diarrhoeal and spasmolytic[43], antidiabetic[44], in reducing cholesterol and dyslipidemia[45], antimicrobial[46], antiasthmatic.[47]

Part used: Fruit pulp/fruit[48]

CONCLUSION

Amalaki has *Amla Pradhana*, *Pancha Rasa*, *Guru*, *Ruksha Guna*, *Sheeta Virya*, *Madhura Vipaka* and is *Tridosahara* as well as a *Rasayana*. The dry extract of *Amalaki* exhibits the antitussive activity not only due

to antispasmodic and antioxidant efficacy effects, but also to its effect on mucus secretion in the airways. Because of its antioxidant property it is able to alleviate many health problems. It is also has many nutrients and vitamins. *Amalaki* is not only used in medicine but it should be consumed in our diet, it can be used like candy, pickle, *Murabba*, jam, *Chutney* etc. It has been scientifically proven in many research that how much it is beneficial to our health, it fulfilled the principle of Ayurveda also it help to maintain good health and treats number of diseases so the use of *Amalaki* should be promoted by the Ayurvedic practitioners or faculty and scholars as well.

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