

Therapeutic Role of *Bhringaraj* (*Eclipta alba* L.) in *Pachan* (Digestive Care): A Critical Appraisal of *Dhatvagni* and *Bhutagni* Modulation in Hepato-Metabolic Disorders

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Abstract:

Bhringaraj (भृङ्गराज - *Eclipta alba* L.), a prominent herb in the Asteraceae family, is extensively documented in classical Ayurvedic texts like *Bruhatryees* and *Bhavaprakasha*. While widely recognized as *Keshya* (hair tonic), its pharmacodynamic properties—specifically its *Katu* (pungent) and *Tikta* (bitter) taste (*Rasa*), combined with *Ushna* (hot) potency

(*Virya*)—make it a critical agent for metabolic correction¹. The aim of this project is to evaluate the therapeutic efficacy of *Bhringaraj* in the management of digestive disorders (*Koshtha roga*) and hepatobiliary dysfunction². This study involves a review of Ayurvedic literature and modern pharmacological data, analyzing formulations like *Suvarnasootshekhar*, *Bhrugarajasav* and phytochemicals such as wedelolactone³. It is observed that *Bhringaraj* acts as a potent *Yakrut-uttejak* (liver stimulant), downregulating inflammatory signals like

NF- κ B⁴. In conclusion, *Bhringaraj* is established not only as a rejuvenator but as a potent digestive aid that corrects *Ama* (metabolic toxins) and regulates bile secretion in all the *strotas*.

Keywords: *Bhringaraj* (भृङ्गराज), *Eclipta alba* L., *Bhutagni*, *Dhatvagni*, Hepatoprotection.

Introduction:

Bhringaraj (*Eclipta alba* (L.) Hassk.), belonging to the family *Asteraceae*, is a revered herb in Ayurveda. Traditionally documented in the *Bruhatryees* and *Bhavaprakasha*, it holds the popular perception of being *Keshraja* (King of Hair). However, this presentation highlights a therapeutic shift, focusing on its often-overlooked potential as a metabolic corrector. Its *Ushna* (hot) potency and *Pachana* properties posit it as a vital herb for correcting digestive fires (*Agni*). With the rising prevalence of hepato-metabolic disorders, understanding the role of *Bhringaraj* beyond hair care is essential for holistic management.

Aims and Objectives:

The primary aim is to evaluate the therapeutic efficacy of *Bhringaraj* in the management of digestive disorders and hepatobiliary dysfunction.

The specific objectives are:

1. To analyze the *Deepana* (appetizer) and *Pachana* (digestive) actions of *Bhringaraj*.
2. To examine its role as a *Yakrut-uttejak* (liver stimulant) influencing *Bhutagni* (elemental fire).

3. To document its clinical efficacy in *Aamavisha* (chronic indigestion), *Pandu* (anemia), and *Yakrut roga* (liver diseases) influencing *Dhatvagni* (tissue metabolism).

Material and Methods:

This study utilizes a Literary and Pharmacological Review methodology. Data sources include classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Bruhatryees*, *Bhavaprakasha*, and other *Nighantus*. Modern research data is derived from phytochemical analyses (HPTLC, HPLC) and in vitro studies focusing on hepatoprotection. The analysis involves correlating the *Rasapanchaka* (Ayurvedic pharmacodynamics) of *Bhringaraj* with metabolic functions such as *Dhatvagni* and *Bhutagni*.

Observation:

1. Ayurvedic Pharmacodynamics (*Rasapanchaka*):

- **Rasa (Taste):** *Katu* (Pungent), *Tikta* (Bitter).
- **Guna (Quality):** *Ruksha* (Dry), *Tikshna* (Sharp), *Ushna* (Hot).
- **Virya (Potency):** *Ushna* (Hot).
- **Vipak (Post-Digestive Effect):** *Katu*.
- **Significance:** The combination of *Ushna Virya* and *Tikta/Katu Rasa* makes it a potent *Kapha-Vata* alleviator and *Amanyut* (destroyer of toxins).

2. Mechanism on *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni*:

Bhringaraj acts on the *Yakrut* (Liver), the seat of *Bhutagni*. As a *Yakrut-uttejaka* (Liver Stimulant), it triggers bile secretion and corrects *Ranjaka Pitta*. Regarding *Dhatvagni* (tissue metabolism), it is effective in *Pandu* (Anemia) and *Shotha* (Edema), indicating correction of

Rasa and *Rakta Dhatvagni*. *Twachya* &

Kusthanut by digesting *aam* and improving *Mansa agni*; By acting on *Medagni* it manages the *kleda vikruti* in body managing *sweda* and *mutra*. Its *Kesharanjana* and *Dantya* property signifies action on *Asthi* (Bone) and *Majja* (Marrow) *srotas*. It digests *aam* in *Shukra* and improves fertility making it a *Rasayan dravya*.

3. Modern Pharmacological Evidence:

Active constituents include Wedelolactone and Demethylwedelolactone. Studies indicate potent hepatoprotection against fatty liver caused by high-fat diets and the downregulation of inflammatory signals like NF-κB in liver cells. It also aids in liver cell regeneration and induces apoptosis in pancreatic, colon, and breast cancers⁵.

Result:

The review indicates distinct clinical utility in digestive care:

- **Amlapitta (Hyperacidity):** Effective in the *Saam* stage (with toxins) via formulations like *Suvarna Sootshekhar Ras*⁶, *Lilivilas ras*.
- **Gastro-Intestinal:** It treats foul stool odor and undigested faeces (*Ama*), clearing *Kleda* and *Ama* from all channels via formulations like *Bhrungarajasav*.
- **Krimi (Worms):** Its *Kriminyut* action aids in clearing intestinal parasites via formulations like *Ashwakanchuki Rasa*.
- **Bruhatrayi-** Less than 50 references. Mostly use of *Panchanga* in fresh form.

Discussion:

The pivotal role of *Bhringaraj* lies in the "Ama Connection." Its *Katu/Tikta* rasa digests *Ama* (metabolic waste) at the cellular level, and it is effective against *Amavisha*,

suggesting deep-seated detoxification. By stimulating both the *Yakrut* (liver) and *Pliha* (spleen), it optimizes blood formation and detoxification. Quality control is vital; the "True" *Bhringaraj* is identified when crushed leaves turn black and contain Wedelolactone. The observation stated clarifies its use in Juice or fresh form rather than choorna. Many Vriddha Vaidya push its use in fresh form only. This might be the reason of its less than 50 references in *Bhruhatrayee*. It could be a seasonal herb during that time. The range of diseases it acts on and its *aam Vishaghna karma* with an extraordinary rejuvenator property makes it a versatile herb modulating *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni*.

The main phytoconstituents in *Eclipta alba* that work on the liver are coumestans, particularly wedelolactone and demethylwedelolactone, which have potent hepatoprotective, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory effects. These compounds work by protecting the liver from damage, reducing inflammation by suppressing inflammatory signals like NF- κ B, and aiding in liver cell regeneration.

Conclusions:

Bhringaraj is established not only as a *Keshya* (hair tonic) but as a potent digestive aid. It corrects *Bhutagni* via liver stimulation and optimizes *Dhatvagni*, leading to quality tissue formation from *Rasa* to *Shukra*. Its ability to treat *Yakrut Roga*, *Amlapitta*, and *Pandu* confirms its status as a vital herb for comprehensive *Pachan* and Hepatoprotection. It is recommended to use the herb in its fresh form for maximum efficacy.

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