REVIEW ARTICLE

Glimpses of Chandranighantu of Nepal: An Appraisal

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Chandranighantu is a handwritten manuscript of Ayurveda about 250 years ago in Nepal by a well-known Vaidhya at that time of King Chandra Shamsher. It was believed that the dynasty brought to publish the manuscript with his name as Chandranighantu. It was completed in total of ten volume containing more than 900 medicinal plants and 200 minerals and metals which were available in Nepal only. Till date 5 volumes have been translated into Nepali and English language keeping the original along with; and published by Government of Nepal, but many stakeholders of Ayurveda especially Dravyaguna scholars are still unaware of it worldwide. Hence, it was attempted to highlight its importance among Ayurveda scholars, researchers and practitioners. The aim of this documentation is to explore glimpses of Chandranighantu of Nepal and propagate its uniqueness regarding explanation of medicinal plants in the editions as well as handmade manuscripts with colour sketches. **Methods:** Singhadurbar Vaidykhana Vikas Samiti (SDVKVS), Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal published the Chandranighantu (Volume I) in 2012 A.D., as a primary resource material. It was reviewed and glimpses or peculiarities have been compiled, critically analysed and presented in this work. **Results:** Chandranighantu has been written after Bhava Prakash Nighantu because most of the references have been taken from Raj nighantu, Kaidev nighantu, Madanpal nighantu and Bhava Prakash Nighantu. It has been written in 10 volumes comprising 8 volumes with descriptions of medicinal plants and 2 volumes with descriptions of minerals and animal products. In this work, the first volume of the Chandranighantu has been reviewed that includes total 99 medicinal plants describing synonyms and their properties and actions. The prime peculiarities of this nighantu is addition of local and nepali name and the style of narration of medicinal plants along with very fine handmade colourful sketches of the plants including habitat, root, stem, leaves, fruits, flowers in its natural colour, clearly differentiating its parts as well as types, which is helpful in proper identification of the plants. This style of description of colourful plants is not found in any other nighantu. This nighantu has found to be taken the basis of pre-existing nighantus such as Dhanwantarinighantu, Rajnighantu, Madanpalnighantu, Kaidev nighantu, Bhavaprakash nighantu and others including lexicons like Amarkosha. Synonyms of plants have been given in different languages like Nepali, Newari, Avadhi, Bhojpuri, Marathi, Bengali, Hindi etc. along with Sanskrit. **Conclusion:** This nighantu is the evidence of modern era history of medicinal plants use in the Ayurveda. This nighantu is written with the unique style of narration of medicinal plants by synonyms, properties and actions along with colourful sketches. The present critical review recommends scholars, academician, researchers and medicinal plants related experts of recent sciences to explore the hidden knowledge of botany, pharmacognosy, pharmacology and therapeutic uses into gaining deeper perspicuity benefitting the ailing humanity.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Chandranighantu, Dravyaguna, manuscript, Nepal.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, one of the eldest blossoming systems of health care practises substances of natural sources to improve the health complaints. Nighantus (lexicons) are the part of dravyaguna deals with synonyms, properties and actions of medicinal plants used in disease treatment and food. *Chandranighantu* is a handwritten manuscript of *Ayurveda* about 250 years ago in Nepal written by a renowned vaidhya at that time of King Chandra Shamsher. It was completed in the time of King Chandra Shamsher, hence named after him as Chandranighantu. The author of the nighantu was well versed in Avadhi, Newari, Sanskrit, Nepali, Hindi and some other languages prevalent in this area. The written language of Chandranighantu indicates that the author might belong to Avadhi or Bhojpuri language. The prime peculiarities of this nighantu is addition of local and nepali name and the style of narration of medicinal plants along with very fine handmade colourful sketches of the plants including habitat, root, stem, leaves, fruits, flowers in its natural colour, clearly differentiating its parts as well as types, which is helpful in proper identification of the plants. This style of description of colourful plants is not found in any other nighantu.¹

Chandranighantu was started to document during the period of the prime minister of Nepal, Bir Samser because of his inspiration and motivation. However, it was not continued at that time and later on it was again started in the period of the next Prime Minister chandrasamser. It was written by a well-known vaidhya under direct guidance or supervision of the king and hence the author name was not mentioned in this *nighantu*. For the goodwill among public, the manuscript was named after the King Chandra Shamsher. Hence it was named Chandranighantu. There were total 10 volumes including 1918 pages. It has been written in 10 volumes comprising 8 volumes with descriptions of medicinal plants and 2 volumes with descriptions of minerals and animal products. All together 940 medicinal plants and 336 minerals and animal products have been described in Chandranighantu. In total 1089 colour sketched have been mentioned in single pages and remaining 353 in 126 pages. In this work, the first volume of the Chandranighantu has been reviewed that includes total 99 medicinal plants describing synonyms and their properties and actions. It is hand written book and this manuscript is written in Nepali paper. All colourful sketches are very fine and handwriting is clearly presented with habitat, root, stem, branches, bark, leaves, flower, fruits, etc. This *Nighantu* is written in Sanskrit and Nepali language as well as its synonyms are mentioned in Newari, Marathi, Bhojpuri, Avadhi, Bengali, Hindi, Latin name, Gujrati etc. Among 993 drugs, some drugs have been described in more than one name or their paryayas. Most of the references have been taken from *Danwantarinighantu*, *Rajnighantu*, *Bhavaprakash nighantu* and *Amarkosha*. Synonyms and their properties and actions mentioned in such way that no repetition were seen. In first part 98 drugs

have been mentioned in the same manner as written for *pandulipi*. In 15 Nov. 1996 secretary level meeting of Nepal government was held to publish this *nighantu* for general people and created 5 member committee for that work, and thereafter it is being published regularly; one volume every year.²

By the name of Chandranighantu, Acharya Balkrisna published a book in hindi by Divya Prakashan, Patanjali Yogapitha, Haridwar, india in 2015 which is not actual Chandranighantu. It is a part of Madanadi nighantu written by kasmiri bhaidhya chandranandan.³

The total number of pages of Chandranighantu and its colourful figure numerically described below. [Table: 1]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The *Chandranighantu* (Vol.1) published by Singhadurbar Vaidykhana Vikas Samiti, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal in 2012 A.D. was reviewed to extract some important glimpses. Other relevant documents have been taken to verify the materials described in the book.

Languages used in documentation of *Chandranighantu*:

The followings are the languages used to document Chandranighantu such as Newari, Hindi, Marathi, Karnatkya, Bangali, Farshi, Latin name, Arabi Gujrati, English, Tawani, Tamil, Tailing and Pahuli,

Helpful Ayurveda literatures used to document *Chandra nighantu*:

The followings are the literatures used to document Chandranighantu such as Dhanwantarinighantu, Amarkosha, Rajnighantu, Madanpalnighantu, Bhavaprakashnighantu and Kaiyadevnighantu

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

Nighantus are one of the earliest documented source of *ayurveda* literature which deals with many medicinal plants, minerals and animal byproducts for prevailing clinical conditions. *Chandranighantu* is an older *nighantu* of *ayurveda*. It has been written in 10 volumes; out of which 8 volumes deal with medicinal plants including habitat, plant morphology, properties and action and other 2 volumes about minerals and animal byproducts.^{4, 5, 6, 7} In total 99 medicinal plants are mentioned in manuscript of volume I describing synonyms and their properties and actions. The prime peculiarities of this *nighantu* is the style of narration of medicinal plants along with very fine handmade colourful sketches of the plants, clearly differentiating its various parts as well as types, which is helpful in proper identification of plants. This style of description of plants is not found in any other *nighantu*. This *nighantu* was prepared on the basis of pre-existing *nighantus* of that time such as *Dhanwantarinighantu*, *Rajnighantu*, *Madanpalnighantu*, *Bhavaprakash nighantu*, and other lexicons like *Amarkosha*. Synonyms of plants have been given in different languages like Sanskrit, Nepali, Newari, Marathi, Bengali, and Hindi.^{8, 9, 10}

CONCLUSION

Chandranighantu is one of the nighantus written differently than other existing in Ayurveda. It has uniqueness in handmade colour photo sketches of medicinal plants; mentioning local names of the plants and searching their availability of plants mentioned in pre-existing nighantus in Nepal. It good creation of its own period of time and great thought behind it

Fig:1 - Hand Made Erand Photo

Fig:2- Erand Hand Written Manuscript

ABBREVIATIONS: Not Applicable

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Not Applicable

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: None

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Table: 1

Volumes	No. of pages	No. of Dravya	No. Colourful pages	No. Colourful Sketches
1	202	99 (Medicinal plant)	103	128
2	196	91 (Medicinal plant)	94	103
3	198	88 (Medicinal plant)	86	95
4	195	92 (Medicinal plant)	92	117
5	200	92 (Medicinal plant)	84	101
6	250	199(Medicinal plant)	119	135
7	243	125(Medicinal plant)	121	132
8	252	115(Medicinal plant)	73	80
9	107	99 (minerals and animal products)	99	196
10	75	73 (minerals and animal products)	1	2
Total	1918	993	872	1089

Table: 2 : Chandranighantu vol-1 summary data

S. N.	Sanskrit Name	No. of previous nighantus/ books consulted	No. of manuscript Language	Hindi Name	Nepali /Newari	Botanical name
1.	Brahmi	3	11	barmi	Sarswati jhar/ Medagiri	<i>Bacopa monnieri</i> Linn.
2.	Manduk Brahmi	5	6	Brahmi	Ghortapre/kholachagya	<i>Centella asiatica</i> Linn.
3.	Kakmachi	4	10	Makoya	Kalikawa/Vapkimi	<i>Solanum nigrum</i> Linn.
4.	Tanduliya	5	12	Chamrayshak	Lunde/ chawak	<i>Amaranthus viridis</i> Linn.
5.	Chhikkika	3	7	Nak chikni	Chyukyajhar/ hichitughane	<i>Centipeda orbicularis</i> Linn.
6.	Balaka	5	10	Sugandhwal	Sugandhbal/ chameha	<i>Valeriana Jatamansi</i> Jones
7.	Girikarnika	5	11	Safed koyal	Seto aparajita/ Aarbhtiswa	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> Linn.
8.	Visnukranta	3	8	koyal	Bisnukant/ Aarbhtiswa	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> Linn.
9.	Dronapuspi	4	9	Guma	Sano Dronpushpi/ Go-jawuswa	<i>Leucas cephaloides</i> Roth
10.	Devadroni	2	6	Guma	Thulo Dronpushpi / Go-jawuswa	<i>Leucas indica</i> (L.)
11.	Mundi	3	12	Choti Gora-khmundi	Sano gorakhmundi/ wasya ghaye	<i>Sphaeranthus indicus</i> Linn.
12.	Mahamundi	4	5	Wadi Gora-khmundi	Thulo Gorakhmundi/ Tama Guwasyaghane	<i>Sphaeranthus Africans</i> Linn.
13.	Bhringaraja	4 (3 Sp.)	12	Bhringara	Bhringaraja/ Bhila	<i>Eclipta prostrata</i> Linn. <i>Eclipta alba</i> (L.) Hassk.
14.	Dhattura	5 (5 Sp.)	14	Dhatura	Dhaturo/ Dhatuswa	<i>Datura metal</i> Linn.
15.	Latakasturi	Manuscript missing		Latakasturi	Latakasturi	<i>Abelmoschus moschatus</i> Medik
16.	Bijapura	3	12	Bijaura	Bimiro/ tasi	<i>Citrus medica</i> Linn.
17.	Devduti (P. Missing)	2	3	Banbijaura	Banbimiro/ Guntasi	
18.	Naranga	3 (2 Sp.)	10	Narangi	Suntala/ Suntalasi	<i>Citrus aurantium</i> Linn
19.	Amalaki	5	14	Aawala	Amla / awa	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> Linn.
20.	Madhubijpur	3	5	Mitha bijora	Madhubimiro/ chakutsi	<i>Citrus margarita</i> Lour
21.	Nimbuka	2	12	Nimbu	Kagati/ kagati	<i>Citrus aurantifolia</i> (C.S.)
22.	Mistanimbu	3	8	Mitha nimbu	Chakshi/ chakusi	<i>Citrus limettoides</i> Tarakt.
23.	Jambira	3	6	Jambiri	Jalabira / Jalbira	<i>Citrus Limon</i> Linn
24.	Shveta Eranda	5	11	Aandi	Seto Aadir/hyangualma	<i>Ricinus communis</i> Linn.

S. N.	Sanskrit Name	No. of previous nighantus/ books consulted	No. of manuscript Language	Hindi Name	Nepali /Newari	Botanical name
25.	Rakta Eranda	4	7	Lal Aandi	Lal Aadir/hyangualma	<i>Ricinus communis</i> Linn.
26.	Sthalapadmini	4	6	Sthalakmlini	Sthalakaml	<i>Hibiscus mutabilis</i> Linn.
27.	Vasaka	5	10	Aadusa	Asuro / Aalema	<i>Justicia adhatoda</i> Linn.
28.	Brihati	4	12	Badikateri	Bihim/ wihi	<i>Solanum Indicum</i> Lam.
29.	Kshavika	2	4	Kateri	Ksharito bimhi/ hangubihi	
30.	Swetbrihati	1	5	Safedphulwala-tahi	Setofulhune bihi / tuyugukha-duegubihi	<i>Solanum indicum</i> Linn.
31.	Rasona	3	13	Lahasun	Lasun / Labha	<i>Allium sativum</i> Linn.
32.	Grijan	1	6	Lal lahsun	Ratolasun / hayangri labha	<i>Allium sativum</i> Linn.
33.	Plandu	4	10	Pyaja	Pyaja / Pyaja	<i>Allium cepa</i> .
34.	Ksheera plandu	1	6	Saphedpyaja	Setopyaja/ tuyupyaja	<i>Allium cepa</i> .
35.	Rajplandu	1	8	lalpyaja	Ratopyaja / hayangupyaja	<i>Allium cepa</i> .
36.	Grijan	1	2		Chyapi / chya	<i>Allium cepa</i> .
37.	Kanthakari	4	11	Kateri	Nilo ful kanthkari / kankakari	<i>Solanum surattense</i> Burm.f.
38.	swetkanthakari	5	5	Safedbhatkatai-ya	seto ful kanthkari / tuyugukhahai kankakari	<i>Solanum surattense</i> Burm.f.
39.	Rajika	4	10	Rai	Rayo / pachchhaye	<i>Brassica nigra</i> (L.) Koch
40.	Palankya	4	10	Palak sak	Palungo / pal	<i>Spinacia oleracea</i> Linn.
41.	Ghritakumari	4	12	Gwarpatha	Ghukumari / kuchu	<i>Aloe barbadensis</i> Mill.
42.	Mulaka	4	12	Badi muli	Thulo mula / tapu gulauji	<i>Raphanus sativus</i> Linn.
43.	Chanakya mulaka	3	6	Muli	Sanu mula / chiki pulji	<i>Raphanus sativus</i> Linn.
44.	Dhanyaka	5	12	Dhaniya	Dhaniya / Gos	<i>Coriandrum Sativum</i> Linn.
45.	Chandrasura	1	11	halo	Chansur / chaushu	<i>Lepidium sativum</i> . Linn.
46.	Shatahva	4 (2 Sp.)	13	Soya	Bansupha/ Guyasosho	<i>Anethum sowa</i> kurz.
47.	Mishreya	3	5	Sauph	Bansupha/ Guyasosho	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> Mill
48.	Methika	3	12	Methi	Methi / Gumich	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i> Linn.
48.a	Vanyamethika	3	12	Banmethi	Banmethi	<i>Melilotus indica</i> (Linn.) allioni.
49.	Grinjan	1	6	Shalgam		<i>Brassica rapa</i> Linn.
50.	Pindamulaka	1	6	Gol murai	Dale mula / Gwaragulai	<i>Raphanus sativus</i> Linn.
51.	Gajar	3	10	Gajar	Gajar / hyagulai	<i>Daucus carota</i> dara Linn.
52.	Krisnasarsapa	4	6	Kali	Tori / hakueka	<i>Brassica nigra</i> (Linn.)
53.	Siddhartha	3	10	Pila Sarso	Pahelo sarsyo / hasueka	<i>Brassica campestris</i> (Linn.)
54.	Karavella	6 (2 Sp.)	10	Karela	Karela / Chigutkkcha	<i>Momordica charantia</i> Linn.
55.	Vastuka	4	12	Bathuwa	Bethe sag / Enkcha	<i>Chenopodium album</i> Linn.
56.	Chilli	3 (2 Sp.)	5	Lal bethuwa	Rato leaf bethe / hyangyeka	<i>Chenopodium ambrosoides</i> Linn.
57.	Swet chilli	1	5	Chota Bathuwa	Seto sano bathe/ tuyugu chimaguekacha	<i>Chenopodium murale</i> Linn.
58.	Kusmanda	5	10	Kusmanda	Kuvindo / Bhuephasi	<i>Benincasa hispida</i> (Thunb)
59.	Gorakshatumbi	1	6	Lauki	Gorakshatumba /Taranguja si.	<i>Lageneria siceiraria</i> (Mol.)
60.	Alabu	4 (2 Sp.)	12	Lauki	Mitho lauki / taha gujsi	<i>Lageneria siceiraria</i> (Mol.)
61.	Bhutumbi	1	6	Titlauki	Sanu mitho tumba / ...	<i>Lageneria siceiraria</i> (Mol.)
62.	Trapusa	4 (2 Sp.)	10	Khira	Kade parbate kakro / magtu si.	<i>Cucumis sativus</i> L.
63.	Valuka	3	5	Phut	Sanu chillo Kakro / butusi	<i>Cucumis melo</i> var. <i>momordica</i>
64.	Karkati	4	12	Kakadi	Kakro / Tusi	<i>Cucumis melo</i> var. <i>utilissimus</i>
65.	Chirbhita	1	6	Kachariya	Kachariya / majma tusi	<i>Cucumis melo</i> var. <i>agrestis</i>

S. N.	Sanskrit Name	No. of previous nighantus/ books consulted	No. of manuscript Language	Hindi Name	Nepali /Newari	Botanical name
66.	Mrigakshi	1	6	Choti yanaru	Sano arelu / kotusi	<i>Cucumis anguria</i> L.
67.	Chianaka kar- katika	2	5	Kundru	Chichanda like Kakro / Par- warpayegogutusi	<i>Cucumis sativus</i> var. <i>sikkimensis</i> Hook.f.
68.	Kalinga -kalinda	4	14	Tae buja	Tae buja / Tae buja	<i>Citrullus lanatus</i> (Thunberg)
69.	Kharbuja	2	12	Kharbija	Kharbujo/ kharbuja	<i>Cucumis melo</i> . Linn.
70.	Svadupatola	3	5	Parwal	Parbar / parwal	<i>Trichosanthes dioica</i> Roxb.
71.	Tikta patola	5	6	Parwal	Tito parwal / Khayu parwal	<i>Trichosanthes dioica</i> Roxb.
72.	Jati	6 (2 Sp.)	9	Chameli	Chameli / joswa	<i>Jasminum officinale</i> Linn var.
73.	Shatapatri	2	9	Sewati Gulab	Sewati gulab / sewati gulab	<i>Rosa centifolia</i> Linn.
74.	Kubjaka	4	6	Kuja	Bahmase gulab/ swalya sithe degu	<i>Rosa alba</i> Linn.
75.	Varsiki	5	8	Bela	Beli / suda swag	<i>Jasminum sambac</i> Linn.
76.	Kunda	5	7	Kunda	Kundapusp / kund swag	<i>Jasminum multiflorum</i> (B.f.)
77.	Bandhuka	5 (4 Sp.)	10	Gejunia	Dopahre / chakhipha swa	<i>Pentapeter phoenicea</i> Linn.
78.	Yuthika	4 (4 Sp.)	10	Juhi	Juhi / juhiswa	<i>Jasminum auriculatum</i> Vahl.
79.	Damanaka	5	9	Daina	Titepati / dhwsa	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> Linn.
80.	Vanyadamana	1	5	Bandwna	Bansamna / gudhwsa	<i>Artemisia absinthum</i> L.
81.	Palasa	5 (4 Sp.)	12	Dhak	Palasa / bhatuswa	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.)
82.	Arka	5	8	Aak	Rato Aak / Aakma	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i> (L.)
83.	Swetarka	5	9	Safed Aak	Seto Aak/ tupuaak	<i>Calotropis procera</i> (Aiton)
84.	Swetamandara	1	4	Safed akauaa	Aak / Aakma	<i>Calotropis</i> sp.
85.	Agastya	4 (4 Sp.)	11	Hathiya	Agstya / Agastiswa	<i>Sesbania grandiflora</i> (L.)
86.	Ashoka	4	8	Ashok	Ashok / aseswa	<i>Saraca asoca</i> (Roxb.)
87.	Champaka	5 (2 Sp.)	9	Champa	Chap / chswa	<i>Michelia champaca</i> Linn.
88.	Vanachampaka	1	5	Vanachampa	Kathechap / guchswa	<i>Michelia champaca</i> Linn.
89.	Nevali	3	8	Newari	Newadi beli /newadiswa	<i>Ixora arborea</i> ex. Sm.
90.	Muchukunda	4	11	Muchkunda	Muchkunda / chabhoyuswa	<i>Pterospermum acerifolium</i> (L.)
91.	Vasanti	2	6	Vasanti	Vasantiful / vasanti swa	<i>Jasminum arborescens</i> Roxb.
92.	Madhavi	4	10	Madhavi	Madhavi / Madhaviswa	<i>Hiptage benghalensis</i> (L.)
93.	Sweta-karavira	2	12	Safed kaner	Seto karbir / Tuyuklehsa	<i>Nerium oleander</i> Linn.
94.	Rakta-karavira	4	7	Lalkaner	Rato karbir / hyanguklehsa	<i>Nerium oleander</i> L.
95.	Patala	6	11	Padhal	Rato patla / patri sima	<i>Stereospermum suaveolens</i> DC.
96.	Baka puspa	4	7	waghula	Wak puspi / Dhuk swa	<i>Osmanthus fragrans</i> Linn.
97.	Bakula	3	11	Molsari	Mailsari / Mailsari swa	<i>Mimusops elengi</i> Linn.
98.	Tagara	4	12	Tagara	Tagar / Tahlaya	<i>Valeriana Wallichii</i> DC.
99.	Ketaki (p. Missing)	3	11	Ketaki	Kewada / ketaki swa	<i>Pandanus odorotissimus</i> Roxb.