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REVIEW ARTICLE

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## NOOTROPIC DRUGS IN BHAVAPRAKASHA NIGHANTU- A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim/Objective:** In this review an attempt is made to compile the intellect promoting drugs mentioned in Bhavaprakasha Nighantu. **Materials and Methods:** A Comprehensive literature search in Bhavaprakasha Nighantu was conducted to identify the relevant data and analyzed them to present a summary of the content. **Discussion:** Cognitive insufficiency associate with many of neuropsychiatric conditions and as developmental deficit. Nootropics are used enormously to boost cognitive abilities. Search for Ayurvedic medicinal plants for improving cognitive function magnified nowadays owing to their less adverse effects. Classical texts and Nighantus provide a database for nootropic agents. Present paper is a compilation of intellectual promoting drugs mentioned in Bhavaprakasha Nighantu, one of the most important lexicon in Ayurveda. **Conclusion:** There are 33 single drugs i.e, herbal, mineral and animal origin that has been mentioned in Bhavaprakasha Nighantu which have nootropic property. Bhavamisra mentioned these medhya dravyas in Harithakyadi varga, Karpuradi varga, Guduchyadi varga, Amradi varga, Dhaturvadi varga, Dhanya varga, Sakavarga, Mamsa varga, Dugda varga, Navaneetha varga, Ghrita varga, Mutra varga, Taila varga and Madhu varga.

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## INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. This definition is not limited to the absence of disease or infirmity. This definition of health includes psychological aspects and considers mental health to be an integral part of health. The term "nootropic" was coined by Dr. Corneliu E Giurgea, a Romanian psychologist and chemist in the 1970s. The word comes from the Greek words "nous" that means "mind" and "trepein" which means "to turn" or "to bend". So nootropic means "mind-bending" or "mind - turning". Memory enhancers, Cognitive enhancers, Intelligence enhancers and Nerve tonics are the other terms used to describe nootropic medications. Nootropics work in lots of different ways as follows:

- Improving the brain's supply of blood, glucose and oxygen
- Protecting brain from ongoing damage
- Stimulating the production of certain proteins found in the brain
- Positively affecting your body's stress response system
- Increasing available amounts of certain neurotransmitters, such as acetylcholine or dopamine

Neurologists prescribe nootropic medications to people who live with cognitive conditions, memory problems, and learning disabilities. In Ayurveda, Medhya is a term that refers to the mental faculties of intellect, memory, and cognition. It can also refer to substances that are used to improve these abilities. Herbal nootropics can vary in their effects. Some promote improved memory, sharper thinking, better concentration, and increased energy. Others may help improve symptoms of insomnia, depression, anxiety, and sexual dysfunction.

**Bhavaprakasha Nighantu:** Bhavaprakasha Nighantu was written by Acharya Bhava Mishra (16<sup>th</sup> Cen. AD) that contains the description of 494 medicinal plants and 250 food plants i.e, a total of 744 plants in the form of 1758 sanskrit verses. The plants are classified into 23 different classes termed Vargas. This lexicon explains different paryayas (synonyms), gunas (properties), karmas (actions) and bhedas (varieties) of the drugs in detail. This literary summary based on Bhavaprakasha Nighantu was carried out to collect single drugs that is useful as nootropic medications.

**Table 1. Nootropic drugs in Haritakyadi varga**

S.No	Drug	Botanical Name/Family	Raspanchaka	Reference
1	Harithaki	<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz. Combretaceae	Lavan varjitha pancha rasa Madhura vipaka Ruksha Guna	BP:1/30-33
2	Pippali	<i>Piper longum</i> Linn. Piperaceae	Katu rasa Snigha Laghu guna Madhura vipaka Anushna virya	BP:1/46-48
3	Sukla Jeeraka	<i>Cuminum cyminum</i> Linn. Umbelliferae	Katu rasa Ruksha Laghu guna Ushna virya Vata Pitta hara	BP:1/82-85
4	Krishna Jeeraka	<i>Carum carvi</i> Linn. Umbelliferae	Katu rasa Ruksha Laghu guna Usha virya Vata Kapha hara	BP:1/82-85
5	Kalajaji	<i>Nigella sativa</i> Linn Ranunculaceae	Katu rasa Ruksha Lagu guna Ushn virya Vata Kaph hara	BP:1/82-85
6	Jyothism athi	<i>Celastrus paniculata</i> Willd. Celastraceae	Katu Tiktha rasa Sara guna Ushna virya Kapha Vata hara	BP:1/171-172
7	Lashuna	<i>Allium sativum</i> Linn. Liliaceae	Katu Madhura rasa Snigdha Sara Tikshna guna Ushna virya Vata Kapha hara	BP:1/221-223
8	Bhallataka (Pakva Phala)	<i>Semicarpus Anacardium</i> Linn. Anacardiaceae	Kashaya Madhura rasa Snigdha Tikshna guna Madhura vipaka Ushna virya Kapha Vata hara	BP:1/230-231

**Table 2. Nootropic drugs in Karpuradi varga**

9	Jatamansi	<i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i> DC. Valerianaceae	Tikta Kashaya rasa Sita virya Tridoshaghna	BP: 2/89
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**Table 3. Nootropic drugs in Guduchyadi varga**

10	Gambhari	<i>Gmelina arborea</i> Linn. Verbenaceae	Madhura Kashaya Tikta rasa Guru guna Ushna virya	BP:3/14-16
11	Aparajitha	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> Linn. Fabaceae	Katu Tikta Kashaya rasa Sita virya Katu vipaka Tridosha hara	BP:3/111-112
12	Satavari	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd. Liliaceae	Madhura Tikta rasa Guru Snigdha guna Sita virya Vata Pitta hara	BP:3/184-187
13	Mundi	<i>Sphaeranthus indicus</i> Linn. Asteraceae	Madhura rasa Laghu guna Katu vipaka Ushna virya	BP: 3/ 217
14	Maha mundi	<i>Sphaeranthus amaranthoides</i> Burm. Asteraceae	Madhura rasa Laghu guna Katu vipaka Ushna virya	BP: 3/217
15	Shankhapushpi	<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i> Chois. Convolvulaceae	Kashaya rasa Ushna virya Sara guna	BP: 3/269-270
16	Brahmi	<i>Bacopa monnieri</i> (Linn) Pennell. Scrophulariaceae	Tikta Kashaya Madhura rasa Sara Laghu guna Madhura vipaka Sita virya Vata Kapha hara	BP:3/279-281
17	Mandukaparni	<i>Centella asiatica</i> (Linn.) Urban Umbelliferae	Tikta kashaya Madhura rasa Sara Laghu guna Madhura vipaka Sita virya Kapha Pitta hara	BP: 3/279-281

**Table 4. Nootropic drugs in Amradi phalavaga**

18	Dadima	<i>Punica granatum Linn.</i> <i>Punicaceae</i>	Madhura rasa, Kashaya anurasa Laghu Snigdha guna Katu vipaka Anushna virya Tridosha hara	BP:6/102-104
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**Table 5. Nootropic drugs in Dhatwadi varga**

19	Suvarnam (Gold)	-	Madhura Tikta Kashaya rasa Madhura vipaka Picchila Guru guna Sita virya	BP: 7/10-11
20	Bola	<i>Commiphora myrrha (Nees) Eng</i> <i>Burseraceae</i>	Madhura Katu Tikta rasa Sita virya Tridosha hara	(BP: 7/160)

**Table 6. Nootropicdrugs in Dhanya varga**

21	Kaidaraja Shali	<i>Oryza sativa Linn.</i> <i>Graminae</i>	Kashaya rasa Guru guna Vata Pitta hara	BP:8/9
22	Yava	<i>Hordeum vulgare Linn.</i> <i>Graminae</i>	Kashaya Madhura rasa Mrudu Guru Ruksha Picchila guna Katu vipaka Kapha Pitta hara Sita virya	BP: 8/28
23	Tila	<i>Sesamum indicum Linn.</i> <i>Pedaliaceae</i>	Katu Tikta Madhura Kashaya rasa Guru Snigdha guna Katu vipaka Ushna virya Kapha Pitta hara	BP: 8/63-64

**Table 7. Nootropic drugs in Shaka varga**

24	Kalashaka	<i>Corchorus capusularis Linn</i> <i>Tiliaceae</i>	Sara guna Sita virya Rakta Pitta hara	BP: 9/17
25	Cancuki	<i>Corchorus fascicularis Lam.</i> <i>Tiliaceae</i>	Madhura rasa Sara Picchila guna Sita virya Tridosha hara	BP:9/27

26. **Mamsa varga:**Sapada Matsya is mentioned as medhakrit in Bhavaprakaha nighantu. (BP : 10/121)

27. **Vari varga:**Amshudaka is water which is exposed to sunlight during day and to moon light during night.It is mentioned as medhya. It has laghu snigdha guna, Sita virya and Tridosha hara karma (BP: 12/62-63)

28. **Dugdha varga:** Milk is generally explained as having madhura rasa, snigdha ashukari guna, sita virya,and vata pitta hara karma and medhya (BP:13/1-2)

29. **Navaneetha varga:** Sadyo nissarita navaneetha (freshly prepared butter) is considered as medhya. (BP : 16/5)

30. **Ghrita varga:** Go ghrita (Cow's ghee) is medhya .It has madhura rasa, madhura vipaka, sita virya and Tridosha hara (BP: 17/4-6)

31. **Mutra varga:** Gomutra(Cow's urine) is mentioned as medhya. It has katu tikta kashaya rasa, laghu tikshna guna, ushna virya and kapha pitta hara karma (BP:18/1-2)

32. **Taila varga:** Tila taila (Sesame oil) is medhya dravya. It has madhura rasa, tikta kashaya anurasa, madhura vipaka, sara vikashivishada and sukshma guna, vata kapha hara karma (BP:19/1-4)

33. **Madhu varga:** 1-Bhavaprakasha mentioned madhu has medhya property.(BP: 21/1-4)

## DISCUSSION

Plant-based nootropics are a different group of natural drugs that can enhance cognitive quality through various physiological mechanisms, especially in cases where these activities are weakened or impaired. In many cases, the nootropics enhance erythrocyte plasticity and inhibit aggregation, that improves the blood's rheological properties and increases its flow to the brain. Many of these drugs have antioxidant activity that protects brain tissue from neurotoxicity and improves the brain's oxygen supply. They can stimulate the synthesis of neuronal proteins, nucleic acids, and phospholipids for constructing and repairing neuro-hormonal membranes. These natural compounds can potentially be present in a great variety of herbs, shrubs, and even some trees and vines. The plant species reviewed here is compiled from Bhavaprakasa Nighantu. There are total 33 single drugs are mentioned with this specific property, 8 drugs each in Harithakyadi varga and Guduchyadi varga, 2 drugs each in Dhathwadi varga,Saka varga, 3 in Dhanya varga,1each in Karpuradi varga, Amradi phala varga, Mamsa varga,Vari varga, Dugdha varga,

Navaneetha varga, Ghrita varga, Mutra varga, Taila varga and Madhu varga. The Dhatu (Metal) which is mentioned in this Nighantu are given in the form of Bhasma (Fine powder) after undergoing all the purification procedures according to the ancient texts. These drugs have different Karmas like Deepana (kindles the digestive fire), Pacana (enhancing the digestion), Grahi (helps in the better absorption of nutrients), Rasayana (strengthening the immune system), Balya (increasing the physical strength), and Brumhana (improving nutrition level of the body).

## CONCLUSION

There are 33 single drugs i.e, herbal, mineral and animal origin that has been mentioned in Bhavaprakasha Nighantu which have nootropic property i.e, the ability to enhance memory or other cognitive functions. Further scientific researches are to be done to explore their mode of action and clinical efficacy.

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