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A Detailed Review of Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa Roxb.*) and Vata (*Ficus benghalensis* Linn.) From Classical Text

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Abstract

Symplocos racemosa and *Ficus benghalensis* are important medicinal plants widely documented in Ayurvedic literature for their broad therapeutic utility and pharmacological potential. *Symplocos racemosa* (Lodhra), belonging to the family Symplocaceae, is traditionally recognized for its styptic, wound-healing, anti-inflammatory, and astringent properties. It is extensively used in the management of diarrhoea, dysentery, bleeding disorders, epistaxis, menorrhagia, skin diseases, eye and ear disorders, hepatic ailments, asthma, and gynecological conditions. Ethnomedicinal reports further support its application in uterine disorders, gum diseases, fever, snake bite, and arthritis. Phytochemical investigations have identified important constituents including alkaloids such as loturine, collutrine, and loturidine along with tannins and coloring compounds, which are believed to contribute to its therapeutic actions. Experimental studies have demonstrated significant analgesic, anti-inflammatory, anthelmintic, hepatoprotective, hypolipidemic, anticancer, anti-androgenic, and anti-asthmatic activities.

Ficus benghalensis Linn. (Vata), a large evergreen tree of the family Moraceae, is another highly valued medicinal plant in Ayurveda. Various plant parts including stem bark, root bark, aerial roots, leaves, fruits, and latex possess medicinal importance. The stem bark is an essential component of Panchavalkala and is traditionally indicated in yonidosha, raktapradara, raktapitta, vrana, visarpa, daha, jwara, sopha, and dermatological disorders. Ayurvedic texts describe the drug as having kashaya rasa, guru-ruksha guna, katu vipaka, and sheeta veerya with predominant Kapha-Pitta shamaka properties. Modern pharmacological studies have validated its antidiarrhoeal, antiulcer, anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, and antidiabetic activities. This review critically compiles the classical references, ethnomedicinal claims, phytochemical constituents, and experimentally proven pharmacological activities of Lodhra and Vata, emphasizing their therapeutic relevance and future research potential.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the traditional system of medicine practiced in the Indian subcontinent, utilizes plant-based formulations to prevent and manage diseases by addressing their underlying causes. India is recognized as one of the world's major biodiversity hotspots, harboring nearly 45,000 plant species, of which approximately 7,500 medicinal species are used in traditional healthcare practices. Among these medicinal plants, *Symplocos racemosa* Roxb. (Lodhra) and *Ficus benghalensis* Linn. (Vata) hold significant therapeutic importance in classical Ayurvedic literature.

Symplocos racemosa Roxb. belonging to the family Symplocaceae, is a medium-sized evergreen tree distributed predominantly in the Himalayan regions of North and East India. In Ayurveda, Lodhra is described as possessing Kashaya rasa (astringent taste) and Sheeta veerya (cool potency), and is traditionally indicated in disorders associated with bleeding, inflammation, wound healing, diarrhea, dysentery, menorrhagia, skin diseases, and gynecological conditions. Classical texts including Ashtanga Hridaya describe two varieties of Lodhra (Lodhradvaya/Lodhrayugma), both characterized by styptic and wound-healing properties. Contemporary pharmacological investigations have further validated its analgesic, anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective, hypolipidemic, anti-asthmatic, anticancer, and antiandrogenic activities.

Ficus benghalensis Linn., commonly known as Banyan tree and belonging to the family Moraceae, is revered as the national tree of India. The term "Vata" refers to its extensive spreading habit supported by numerous aerial roots. Descriptions of Vata are found in Vedic literature, Samhitas, and Nighantus, highlighting its broad therapeutic applications. Different parts of the plant have been traditionally employed in the management of diabetes, wound healing, inflammation, diarrhea, and gynecological disorders. Modern studies have also demonstrated significant antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antidiabetic activities.

The present review aims to compile and critically analyze the classical references, taxonomy, therapeutic properties, pharmacological activities, and clinical significance of Lodhra and Vata in Ayurvedic and contemporary medicine.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A thorough literary search of various classical literatures, Ayurvedic text books, text books
on pharmacognosy and published research articles has been undertaken.

3. RESULT AND OBSERVATION

General Description of Lodhra:

LODHRA

Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*) is a medium-sized evergreen tree, 6-15 meters high, native to India, featuring thick, gray-brown bark and simple, elliptical leaves. It is known for its fragrant, pale yellow or white flowers blooming in clusters (racemes) and small, purplish-black oval drupe fruits containing 1-3 seed.

Taxonomical Classification

Kingdom	Plantae
Division	Magnoliophyta
Class	Mangnoliopsida
Order	Ericales
Family	Symplocaceae
Genus	Symplocos
Species	Racemosa

Botanical Name	*Symplocos racemosa* Roxb.
Common Name	Lodhra, lodh, Lodha
Part Used	Bark, Roots etc
Habitat	Found abundantly in Indian forests, usually in north-east India
Synonyms	Lodhra, Akshibhaisajya, Rodhra, Shavaraka, Tirita, Tilva

Vernacular Names-

- Hindi, Bengali & Marathi- Lodhra
- English- Symplocos tree or Lodh tree
- Telugu- Lodduga
- Tamil -Belli lotti
- Gujrati- Lodhara
- Kannada-Pachettu
- Malayam- Pachotti
- Oriya- Lodho.

Rasapanchak of Lodhra

Rasa	Kashaya
Guna	Laghu, Ruksha
Veerya	Sheeta
Vipaka	Katu
Doshaghnata	Kaphapittashamaka
Rogaghnata	Shotha, Vrana, Netrabhishyanda, Karnasrava, Atisara

Classical Categorization

Charaka- Shonitasthapana, Sandhaniya, Purisha Sangrahniya
Sushruta- Lodhradi, Nyagrodhadi ganas
Vaghbhata- Rodhradi, nyagrodhadi
Raj Nighantu-Pippalyadi varga

Constituents of *Symplocos racemosa*:

Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*): Part-wise Chemical Composition and Pharmacological Actions: -

Plant Part	Major Chemical Constituents	Major Pharmacological Actions
Stem Bark (most used part)	Alkaloids: loturine, loturidine, colloturine; Glycosides: symplocoside, salireposide, symplocuronic acid; Flavonoids: quercetin, kaempferol; Triterpenoids: betulinic acid, oleanolic acid, acetyl oleanolic acid; Tannins and phenolics	Astringent, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, uterine tonic, anti-diarrheal, anti-ulcer, wound healing, hepatoprotective, anti-diabetic, anti-cancer, anti-androgenic, hemostatic
Leaves / Aerial Parts	Flavonoids, isoflavone glycosides (sympracemoside), phenolic compounds, tannins	Antioxidant, nitric oxide inhibitory activity, anti-inflammatory, free radical scavenging, mild antimicrobial activity
Roots	Tannins, glycosides, triterpenoids, phenolic compounds (reported in lower quantity than bark)	Anti-inflammatory, astringent, antimicrobial, supportive wound healing activity
Fruits	Anthocyanins, sugars, flavonoids, phenolics	Anti-inflammatory, Nutritive action, Wound healing activity
Seeds	Fixed oils, fatty acids, alkaloidal traces, phenolic compounds	Mild antimicrobial and antioxidant activity
Whole Plant	Plant Polyphenols, flavonoids, tannins, triterpenes, glycosides	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-ulcer, gynecological therapeutic effects

Important Pharmacological Activities Reported for Lodhra: -

Pharmacological Action	Responsible Constituents / Mechanism
Anti-inflammatory	Flavonoids, tannins, triterpenoids inhibit inflammatory mediators
Antimicrobial	Alkaloids and phenolic compounds inhibit bacterial and fungal growth
Antioxidant	Antioxidant Polyphenols and flavonoids scavenge free radicals
Uterine tonic / Gynecological use	Astringent tannins and alkaloids help reduce excessive bleeding and leucorrhea
Wound healing	Tannins promote tissue contraction and healing
Anti-diabetic	α-glucosidase inhibitory glycosides and triterpenoids
Hepatoprotective	Antioxidant flavonoids and triterpenoids protect liver tissue
Anti-cancer	Betulinic acid and related triterpenoids show cytotoxic activity
Anti-ulcer / Anti-diarrheal	Astringent tannins reduce intestinal secretions

General Description of Vata

VATA

Plant *Ficus benghalensis* is a laticiferous tree, up to 30m in height with widely spreading branches bearing many aerial prop roots. The bark is greenish white. Leaves are simple, alternate, and arranged often in clusters at the ends of branches. They are complete, elliptic to ovate in shape, stipulate, 5–12 cm broad, and 10–18 cm long. Fruits are achenes, which are tiny, crustaceous, and have a red exterior appearance.

The bark is pink to flesh-colored on its freshly cut surface and it is very latex exuding. The innermost, virtually white, fibrous portion of the bark next to the wood.

Taxonomic Classification:

Kingdom	Plantae
Subkingdom	Tracheobionta
Super division	Spermatophyta
Division	Magnoliophyta
Class	Magnoliopsida
Subclass	Hamamelidae
Order	Urticales
Family	Moraceae
Genus	Ficus
Species	Benghalensis, indica

Botanical Name	*Ficus benghalensis* Linn.
Common Name	Banyan tree
Part Used	Bark, Roots etc
Habitat	Found abundantly in Indian forests, usually in north-east India
Synonyms	Nyagrodha, Raktaphala, Skandhaja, Vaisravana, Srngi, Bahupada, Dhuva, Ksheeri.

Vernacular Names of Vata

- Hindi name – Bad, Bargad, Baragad
- English name – Banyan tree
- Kannada name – Alada mara, Aala, Vatavruksha
- Assamese name – Vat, Ahat, Vatgach
- Bengali name – Bat, Bat Briksh
- Gujarati name – Vad

Rasapanchak of Vata-

- **Rasa** - Kashaya
- **Guna** - Guru, Ruksha
- **Virya** – Sheeta
- **Vipaka** - Katu
- **Karma-**Vedanasthapana Vranaropana, Raktarodhaka, Shothahara, Stambhana, Mootrasangrahaneeya, Dahaprashamana

Classical Categorization-

- Caraka- Mūtrasangrahanīya
- Suśruta -Nyagrodhādi gana
- Vagbhata- Nyagrodhādi gana

***Ficus benghalensis* (Banyan) - Part-wise Chemical Composition & Pharmacological Actions**

Plant Part	Major Chemical Constituents	Pharmacological / Therapeutic Actions
Bark	Tannins, flavonoids (quercetin), sterols (β-sitosterol), triterpenes (lupeol), phenolic compounds, furanocoumarins	Anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, antimicrobial, astringent, antioxidant, wound healing, anti-ulcer
Leaves	Flavonoids, tannins, rutin, saponins, phenolics, sterols	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, hepatoprotective, antimicrobial
Latex (Milky sap)	Proteolytic enzymes (ficin), proteins, alkaloid traces, rubber-like compounds, phenolics	Wound healing, anti-wart activity, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, proteolytic (tissue-digesting) action
Roots / aerial prop roots	Tannins, flavonoids, sterols, glycosides	Anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, astringent, antimicrobial
Fruits (figs)	Sugars (glucose, fructose), flavonoids, phenolic acids, vitamins, minerals	Antioxidant, nutritive, mild laxative, immunomodulatory
Seeds	Fixed oils, fatty acids, proteins, sterols	Nutritional, antioxidant, mild antimicrobial activity
Whole plant	Polyphenols, flavonoids, triterpenoids, sterols, tannins	Antidiabetic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, wound healing

Pharmacological Highlights of Vata-

Pharmacological Action	Responsible Constituents	Notes
Antidiabetic	Flavonoids, tannins, β-sitosterol	Improves glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity
Anti-inflammatory	Quercetin, lupeol, tannins	Reduces inflammatory mediators
Antioxidant	Phenolics, flavonoids	Scavenges free radicals
Antimicrobial	Tannins, latex enzymes (ficin)	Effective against bacteria and fungi
Wound healing	Latex enzymes, flavonoids	Promotes tissue regeneration and cleansing
Anti-ulcer	Tannins, sterols	Protects gastric mucosa
Astringent action	Tannins	Constricts tissues and reduces secretions

4. DISCUSSION

The present review mainly highlights the pharmacological, therapeutic, and classical importance of Lodhra and Vata as described in Ayurvedic classical texts and research literature. Both drugs are widely used in gynecological disorders, wound healing, inflammatory conditions, and disorders related to Rakta and Kapha dosha.

According to Ayurvedic classics, Lodhra is considered one of the best drugs for Stambhana (checking excessive discharge or bleeding) because of its Kashaya Rasa (astringent taste). Acharyas such as Charaka, Sushruta, and Vagbhata have mentioned Lodhra in different formulations related to Yoniroga, Raktapitta, Vrana, and Pradara. It has been included in groups like Sonitasthapana Mahakashaya due to its hemostatic action. The Kashaya guna and Sheeta virya of Lodhra help in reducing Pitta and Kapha dosha, thereby controlling inflammation, secretions, and bleeding disorders.

Similarly, Vata (*Ficus benghalensis*) occupies an important place in Ayurveda due to its Kashaya rasa, Guru guna, and Sheeta virya. Classical texts describe Vata as useful in Vrana, Prameha, Raktapitta, and Yonidosha. Different parts of the plant such as bark, aerial roots, latex, and leaves are therapeutically important. The bark is especially known for its wound-healing and anti-diabetic activities. The latex has been used traditionally in disorders related to teeth, skin, and female reproductive health.

Research studies on Vata indicate the presence of flavonoids, sterols, tannins, and phenolic compounds which contribute to its antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and hypoglycemic effects. Experimental studies suggest that extracts of Vata possess significant wound healing and anti-ulcer activity. These findings correlate with the Ayurvedic description of Vata as a Vrana shodhaka and Ropaka dravya.

Both Lodhra and Vata possess Kashaya predominant properties, which make them effective in controlling excessive secretions, inflammation, and bleeding. Their combined use in various Ayurvedic formulations indicates synergistic action in gynecological and wound-related disorders. Classical references and modern scientific studies together establish the therapeutic potential of these medicinal plants and justify their continued use in Ayurvedic practice.

5. CONCLUSION

Lodhra and Vata are important medicinal plants extensively described in Ayurvedic literature and supported by traditional practices. Both drugs predominantly exhibit Kashaya rasa and

significant stambhana, ropana, anti-inflammatory, and raktastambhana actions, making them valuable in gynecological disorders, wound healing, bleeding disorders, skin diseases, and inflammatory conditions. Modern pharmacological studies have validated several traditional claims by demonstrating antioxidant, antimicrobial, antiulcer, hepatoprotective, wound-healing, antidiabetic, and anti-inflammatory activities. The present review establishes an important scientific correlation between classical Ayurvedic concepts and contemporary pharmacological evidence. Further experimental, phytochemical, and clinical studies are required to standardize regional varieties, confirm therapeutic efficacy, and explore their potential role in haematological and chronic inflammatory disorders.

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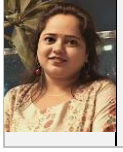

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