Abstract

*Netra Darpanamu* is the only book written exclusively on Eye diseases in Telugu. This *Ayurvedic* book, which is famous in Andhra Pradesh, was first published in 1908 in Eluru. The book is written in chaste Telugu poetry, comprising the types of treatment followed by 36 recipes. This book contains names of various eye diseases, treatment procedures like bandages, plasters, collyriums and regimen of food and behaviour. This article aims to highlight the importance of this book in treating various eye diseases.

About the book and author

It is written in Telugu poetry. The author is Tadipalli Panakalaraya, son of Venkanna and Mahalakshmi. He belongs to Tadepalli Village of Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. The author had mentioned that he had referred many *Vaidya granthas* (Medical books) and written this book “Locana Darpanamu”. This *Locana Darpanamu* became famous as *Netra Darpanamu* in later days. Probably Locana & Netra being synonyms.

Present position of the book:

Akkina Venkata Ratnam of Eluru published it first in the year 1908, reprinted by Korra Venkata Ratnam of Eluru in 1915 and Kashamshetti Sheshagirirao of Eluru in 1926. Krothapalli Sundararamaiah commentary in Telugu was included for lucid understanding by the rural *Vaidyas* (physicians). As there was no reprints from 1926 this book is not available today. Now Achanta Lakshmipati *Ayurveda Library Trust* has one of all these original copies. Managing Trustee of Achanta
Period of Author:

The author has described Kondavidu Kingdom. He has also described that he belongs to Tadepalli Village, which is nearer to Mangalachala (at present famous as Mangalargiri, Narasimha temple place of Guntur (Dt.), A.P.,). Usage of glasses in the treatment of Eye diseases was also mentioned in this book. All above descriptions cannot claim the exact time of the author, but can provide rough idea about the period of the author. This needs further research.

Contents:

The author has mentioned nine treatment procedures of Eye diseases Viz. 1. Bandages, 2. Plasters, 3. Regimen of food and behavior, 4. Collyriums, 5. Snuffs, 6. Oils, 7. Medicines that break the progress of the diseases, 8. Medicines that cure the disease and 9. Glasses for the eye diseases.

Among these nine therapeutic procedures, the author had described first four only. Though the author had mentioned that number of Eye disease were 96; 89 diseases names only were mentioned in this book with few repetitions. Among these diseases majority of diseases were not mentioned in presently available Ayurvedic classics, and can be correlated to probable modern Eye disease conditions.

Importance of the Book

This book contains various important aspects of Eye diseases like 1. Etiology, 2. Pathya (Good diet and behaviors for Eye diseases) and Apathya (Prohibited diet and behaviors for Eye disease), 3. Treatment of various Eye diseases by Bandages, plasters and collyriums.

Etiology of Eye diseases:

Wandering in various lands (different climates), drinking all types of waters, eating foods that unduly cool the body, non-observance of prescribed regimen of food, behaviour & bathing and weeping for long periods are the etiological factors.

It is also described that Eye diseases are mainly caused by vitiation of Vata, Pitta Kapha and Rakta doshas. All these Eye diseases are grouped under 4 categories (Vata, Pitta, Kapha and Rakta) of Abhisyandas.
Good diet and behaviors for Eye diseases

| Plant source                                         | Telugu Name     |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Whole plant of Eclipta alba                       | - Kalagara      |
| 2. Leaves of Glinus lotoides                         | - Cetarasi      |
| 3. Whole plant of Trianthema portulacastrum          | - Galijeru      |
| 4. Whole plant of Amaranthus species                 | - Chirraku      |
| 5. Leaves of Alternanthera sessilis                   | - Ponnaganti Kura|
| 6. Jungle variety of Amaranthus                      | - Koya totakura |
| 7. Tender leaves of Tamarindus indica                 | - Cintapottu    |
| 8. Green gram (or) Phaseolus aureus                  | - Paccha pesalu |

Along with above items Cow’s butter milk; dishes made of with cooked rice are beneficial for the Eye diseases.

3. **Apathya (un wholesome (or) Prohibited for Eye diseases :-**

Dried (or) dehydrated vegetables, curd, Asafoetida (Hingu), Meat, liquors (in regional language known as ‘Kallu’ - Liquors made from secretions of some of Palmae group tree inflorescences like Borasus flabellifer (Tadi), Cocos nucifera (coconut), Phonex doctylifera etc), Sesame seeds (Tila), Excess intake of water, Dishes made from Phaseolus mungo (in regional language known as Burelu), Excessive salt, Tambula sevena (use of Betal leaf, areca nut, calcium hydroxide and other aromatic substances, which is called as ‘Pan’ in Hindi), Exposure to hot sun, anger, traveling, bathing, enjoying sex are prohibited.

**Treatment of Eye diseases:**

1. **Bandages:** - Leaves of piper betle (Nagavalli Dala), Pongamia pinnata (Karanja) Datura metel (Dattura), Ocimun sanctum (Tulasi), Alternanthera sessalis (Matsyakshi), Acacia arabica (Babulla), Cassia occidentalis (Kasa mardha), Aegle marmelos (Bilwa), are warmed after smearing in cow’s ghee and applied externally as bandages on eyes to cure Eye ache, rheum discharges, watering, gritting, shooting pain and burning sensation.
2. Plasters:

Fruits of Terminalia chebula (Haritaki), Mineral pith (Silajit), Red ochre (Gairika) Rock salt (Saindavalanavam), heart wood of Berberes aristata (Daru haridhra) are ground separately and applied as poultice on eyes.

a. Wood of Berberis aristata (Daruharidhra), Red ochre (Gairica), Tubers of Cyperus rotundus (Musta), Goat’s milk (Aja kshira) are ground to make a plaster to cure all types of Eye diseases.

b. Opium (Ahiphena)-one Mada (equal to 8 gms.), Alum (Sphatica)-one Cinnam (equal to 400 mg), seeds of Cannabis sativa (Bhanga)-one Cinnam are cooked in breast milk and applied as a poultice to cure all eye diseases.

3. Collyriums (Anjanas)

Thirty-five varieties of collyriums (Anjanas) have been mentioned. Those are

1. Laksanjanam, 2. Aksanjana, 3. Sudarsananjanam, 4. Sastravallabhanjanam, 5. Amalakyanjanam, 6. Sankanjanam, 7. Abhayyanjanam, 8. Sasisprabhanjanam, 9. Candraprabhavatyanjanam, 10. Arthacandrodayanjanam, 11. Nayananamrtanjnam, 12. Maricanjanam, 13. Tilakanjanam, 14. Sphatikanjanam, 15. Katakjananam, 16. Haridrabhanjanam, 17. Amratanjanam, 18. Vyosanjnam, 19. Vidrumanjanam, 20. Gurudanjanam, 21. Mahagarudanjanam, 22. Netranjanam, 23. Saindavanjanam, 24. Taranjanam, 25. Bhujanganjanam, 26. Tuthanjanam, 27. Lohanjanam, 28. Laghunarikelanjanam, 29. Mahanarikelanjanam, 30. Nisanjanam, 31. Laghumarikanjanam, 32. Triukatanjanam, 33. Sukumaranjanam, 34. Tamranjanam, 35. Rajatanjanam.

Many of the above Anjanas (Collyriums) were unique and not mentioned in available ancient Ayurvedic classics. As the author had mentioned that he has read many books, probably some of these unique collyriums were drawn from those books, which were available during the period of the author. Andhra Pradesh is famous for different collyriums and their use. Hence it can also be presumed that the author made all these collyriums, probably by his own practical experience.

These collyriums were indicated in many eye diseases. Purified bhasmas of many heavy metals like mercury, lead, copper, Iron, silver, antimony etc., were used in these Anjanas. Purified poisonous substances like Talaka (AS₂S₃), yellow orpiment Manahsila (AS₂S₂), Red orpiment, Nabhi (Aconitum ferox), Kasisa (Green vitriol) Tutham (Blue vitriol) etc., were also used.

Sea animal’s products like cuttlefish bones (Samudhra phena), crouch shell bhasma (Sanka bhasma), bhasma of yellow cowries, coral, Ruby, etc were used.

Some peculiar products like Human skull bone, Alum, goat’s urine, goat’s
milk, bhasma of egg shells, tortoise shell, gallbladder or bile juice of goat, nails of elephant, tooth of pig, natural lac, throat bone of cock/hen etc were also used.

Some of the important plant products like seeds of Moringa olifera (Sighru bija) Heart wood of Berberis aristata (Daru-haridhra), Black pepper (Marica), Lemon (Nimbuka), roots of Rubia cordifolia (Manjistha), flowers of sesamum (Tila puspa) seeds of Pongamia pinnata (Karanja bija), Black pepper (Marica), roots of Rubia cordifolia (Manjistha), flowers of sesamum (Tila puspa) seeds of Pongamia pinnata (Karanja bija), Black pepper (Marica), roots of Rubia cordifolia (Manjistha), flowers of sesamum (Tila puspa) seeds of Pongamia pinnata (Karanja bija), Black pepper (Marica), roots of Rubia cordifolia (Manjistha), flowers of sesamum (Tila puspa) seeds of Pongamia pinnata (Karanja bija), Black pepper (Marica), roots of Rubia cordifolia (Manjistha), flowers of sesamum (Tila puspa) seeds of Pongamia pinnata (Karanja bija), Black pepper (Marica), roots of Rubia cordifolia (Manjistha), flowers of sesamum (Tila puspa) seeds of Pongamia pinnata (Karanja bija), Black pepper (Marica), roots of Rubia 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beyond the reach of modern facilities and modern treatment for eye diseases. Majority of modern eye treatments are expensive. Economically poor cannot afford the consultancy fees of those specialized modern physicians. A significant portion of the country’s medical needs can be attended by the indigenous health systems like Ayurveda, Homoeopathy, Unani, Naturopathy and folk medicine.

There are a number of regionally written books in Ayurveda, which can be promoted for throwing light on the ancient regional practices prevalent in various parts of the country. *Netra darpanamu*, one of that kind was popular in Andhra Pradesh and published 3 times in regional language (Telugu). The author feels the need of further research in both preclinical and clinical levels.

Researchers and Ayurvedic faculties should prove the efficacy of many of these formulations as many purified bhasmas of heavy metals, poisonous substance form a part of these formulations. It is the responsibility of the scholars to take proper care in monitoring the unwanted side effects while testing the efficacy of these formulations.

Finally it can be concluded that *Netra darpanamu* is an important book to be read by all Ayurvedic scholars and needs to be propagated.

**Reference : -**

1. Tadipalli Panakalaraya 1908 Netra darpanamu with commentary in Telugu by Krottapally Sundara Ramaiah, published by Akkina Venkata Ratnam of Eluru, Andhra Pradesh.