

**SHANKA PUSHPHI: A SHORT REVIEW**

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**ABSTRACT**

Shanka pusphi is a natural product. Shanka pusphi is indicated as Medhya (brain tonic), digestive, appetite stimulant and carminative for digestive system. It has cardio-protective, heart strengthener and controls hypertension. Though various indications are in use, controlled trials are needed to determine its real efficacy. The shanka pusphi plant, its properties, mechanism of action and clinical uses are briefly reviewed in this article.

**Key words:** Shanka pusphi, medhya, appetite stimulant.

**INTRODUCTION**

**Common Name:** Shankpushpi

**Hindi Name:** Shankpushpi

**Sanskrit Name:** Mangalya kusuma

**Latin Name:** Convolvulus pluricaulis Chois.

**Habit and Habitat:** Plant of Shankpushpi is found everywhere in India in sandy and stony areas and prefers dry climate.

**Part Used:** The whole plant is used in Ayurvedic system of medicine.

**Effect on Dosha:** Pacifies Tridoshas especially In Vata and Pitta dominating disorders.

**Botanical Name(s):** *Convolvulus pluricaulis*

**Kingdom:** Plantae

**Division:** Magnoliophyta

**Class:** Magnoliopsida

**Order:** Solanales

**Family:** Gentianaceae

**Genus:** *Convolvulus*

**Species:** *Microphyllus*

**Popular Name(s):** Sankh Pushpi, Shankhini, Kambumalini, Samkpushpi, Sankaphuli



Shanka pusphi flowers

**Description**

Shanka pusphi is a perennial herb that seems like morning glory. Its branches are spread on the ground and can be more

than 30 cm long. The flowers are blue in color (5mm) and the leaves, which are elliptic in shape (2mm), are located at alternate positions with branches or flowers. Known as Aloe weed in English, the herb is commonly found in India, especially in the state of Bihar. All the parts of the herb are known to possess therapeutic benefits. It is believed to be the only herb that is capable of enhancing all the aspects related to brain power, such as learning, memory and the ability to recall. However, its popularity stems from its ability to treat insomnia effectively.

**Chemical constituents**

Various chemical compositions, such as glucose, sucrose, glycosides, alkaloids and various acids etc, are found in the plant.

**Medicinal properties in Ayurveda**

Shankpushpi is indicated as Medhya (brain tonic), digestive, appetite stimulant and carminative for digestive system. It has cardio-protective, heart strengthener and controls hypertension. It is used in Ayurvedic formulations for chronic cough as it has mucolytic properties thus helps in chest congestion. It is a proved spermetogenic and strengthens urogenital system. It is a common ingredient of Ayurveda based herbal hair oils as it helps to stimulate hair growth. It is used in Ayurvedic formulations meant for sleeplessness, epilepsy, hallucinations and anxiety. In Ayurveda it is indicated for general debility and is a known Rasayana herb.

**Main classical uses**

Shankpushpi is used in many formulations in Ayurveda. Main formulations containing Shankpushpi are: Shankpushpi panaka, Medhya kashay.

**Clinical studies / Clinical justification**

The herb Amalaki is well supported with research papers published all over the world in renowned medical research journals of recent times. Summary of some of the research papers is given below to support its inclusion in NEEROGA Capsules.

**Shankpushpi General Information**

Shankpushpi is a morning-glory like perennial that grows on the plains of India. It has been widely used in Ayurvedic medicine to treat the nervous system, the same way kava-kava and valerian are prescribed by American herbalists. It is only recently that Shankpushpi has been brought to American stores for medicinal use. Herbalists believe that Shankpushpi calms the nerves by regulating the body's

production of the stress hormones, adrenaline and cortisol. When those hormones are out of balance it is easy to become hyper-alert and anxious. In Ayurvedic medicine, it is also believed that Shankhpushpi is an anti-aging remedy called Rasayan.

#### Scientific Evidence For

Even though Ayurvedic practitioners have used Shankhpushpi for centuries, there is no hard scientific evidence as to the positive effects of this herb, outside of a few Indian studies performed in the 1970s and '80s. In those studies, people suffering from anxiety were given Shankhpushpi for six weeks and claimed to have slept better, have more energy and better concentration. Today this herb is still a preferred method for reducing symptoms associated with anxiety, panic attacks, nervousness and insomnia. The leaves of Shankhpushpi are used in treating chronic bronchitis and asthma. The root is used for childhood fever, and the oil stimulates the growth of hair. Using the whole plant in the form of a decoction with cumin and milk is used to treat fever, debility, memory loss, syphilis, and scrofula.

#### Uses & Benefits

- Primarily, shankhpushpi is used as a brain tonic. It is one of the best and prominent natural medicines that help in improving memory. The whole plant of shankhpushpi is used in medical treatment. Its consumption also prevents memory loss.
- The herb is also used as one of the most important ingredients in the treatment of disorders/syndromes, such

as hypertension, hypotension, anxiety neurosis, stresses etc.

- It is also beneficial in rejuvenation therapy and works as psycho-stimulant and tranquilizer.
- The extract from shankhpushpi helps in reducing the level of cholesterol in blood, including triglycerides, phospholipids and fatty acids.
- The herb is helpful in fighting ulcers that are formed in the body due to glycoproteins and mucous secretions, improving the nerve tissues and bone marrow quality.
- The studies on shankhpushpi have also put forward that it is beneficial in remedying hypothyroidism.
- It is also one of the best herbs that are used for enhancing beauty and helps in nourishing all the layers of skin.
- The herb serves to induce a feeling of calm and peace, promotes good sleep and brings relief in anxiety and mental fatigue. It brings a significant reduction in anxiety levels and neuroticism occurring due to varied stress levels.
- Shankhpushpi has an invigorating effect on overall health and promotes health and weight gain.
- It also helps in removing certain types of fatty acids that are harmful for the body.
- Not much research has been published in the western medical literature on shankhpushpi. There is one study on the herb, which throws light on its anti-ulcer properties and its helpfulness in alleviating the symptoms of hyperthyroidism, by reducing the activeness of a liver enzyme.

#### Reported Changes in Health and Well-Being

| Effect on:                | Much Worse | Worse | No Change | Better | Much Better |
|---------------------------|------------|-------|-----------|--------|-------------|
| Appetite                  | 25%        | 0%    | 62.5%     | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Balance/Equilibrium       | 12.5%      | 25%   | 50%       | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Blood Pressure            | 25%        | 12.5% | 50%       | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Breathing                 | 12.5%      | 12.5% | 62.5%     | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Confidence                | 0%         | 25%   | 75%       | 0%     | 0%          |
| Coordination/Motor Skills | 12.5%      | 25%   | 50%       | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Digestion                 | 12.5%      | 37.5% | 37.5%     | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Emotional Well-being      | 25%        | 12.5% | 62.5%     | 0%     | 0%          |
| Energy                    | 25%        | 25%   | 37.5%     | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Eyesight                  | 12.5%      | 25%   | 50%       | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Memory                    | 12.5%      | 25%   | 62.5%     | 0%     | 0%          |
| Mental Clarity            | 0%         | 25%   | 75%       | 0%     | 0%          |
| Pain                      | 12.5%      | 25%   | 50%       | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Patience                  | 12.5%      | 37.5% | 50%       | 0%     | 0%          |
| Sexual Health             | 12.5%      | 25%   | 50%       | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Skin Complexion           | 12.5%      | 25%   | 37.5%     | 12.5%  | 12.5%       |
| Sleep                     | 25%        | 25%   | 37.5%     | 0%     | 12.5%       |
| Stress Level              | 25%        | 25%   | 50%       | 0%     | 0%          |

**Commonly Reported Shankha pushpi Side Effects**

| Effect on:             | None  | Mild | Moderate | Strong | Severe |
|------------------------|-------|------|----------|--------|--------|
| Allergic Reaction      | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 20%    | 0%     |
| Anxiety                | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 20%    | 0%     |
| Appetite Loss          | 75%   | 0%   | 0%       | 25%    | 0%     |
| Blurred Vision         | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 20%    | 0%     |
| Breathing Difficulties | 60%   | 20%  | 0%       | 0%     | 20%    |
| Change in Sex Drive    | 75%   | 0%   | 0%       | 25%    | 0%     |
| Change in Weight       | 75%   | 0%   | 0%       | 25%    | 0%     |
| Cold Symptoms          | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 20%    | 0%     |
| Confusion              | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 0%     | 20%    |
| Depression             | 83.3% | 0%   | 0%       | 16.7%  | 0%     |
| Diarrhea               | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 20%    | 0%     |
| Dizziness              | 83.3% | 0%   | 0%       | 16.7%  | 0%     |
| Drowsiness             | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 20%    | 0%     |
| Dry Mouth              | 75%   | 0%   | 0%       | 25%    | 0%     |
| Fatigue                | 83.3% | 0%   | 0%       | 16.7%  | 0%     |
| Fever                  | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 0%     | 20%    |
| Gas                    | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 20%    | 0%     |
| Headache               | 83.3% | 0%   | 0%       | 16.7%  | 0%     |
| Insomnia               | 83.3% | 0%   | 0%       | 0%     | 16.7%  |
| Irregular Heartbeat    | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 0%     | 20%    |
| Mood Swings            | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 0%     | 20%    |
| Muscle Cramping        | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 0%     | 20%    |
| Nausea                 | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 20%    | 0%     |
| Nervousness            | 75%   | 0%   | 0%       | 25%    | 0%     |
| Sensitivity to Light   | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 0%     | 20%    |
| Sexual Dysfunction     | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 0%     | 20%    |
| Stomach Ache           | 80%   | 0%   | 0%       | 0%     | 20%    |

**CONCLUSION**

Thus, though shanka pushpi has wide spectrum of the properties and uses, some of them could myths and some of them could be real magic. In future, controlled studies are required to prove more effectiveness of shanka pushpi under various conditions.

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