

**“INSIGHTS OF BOTANICAL BLESSINGS OF *DURGA SAPTASHATI* MANTRAS  
HAVING MIGHTINESS OF ENRICHED PHYTOCHEMICALS AND GOD’S GRACE FOR  
EMBRACING SERENITY, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HARMONY AND TO SUBDUE  
MENTAL ILLNESS, A CRITICAL REVIEW.”**

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### ABSTRACT

*Durga Saptashati* is one of the most popular Hindu scriptures and a ceremonial storehouse of spiritual heritage revering spiritual, philosophical, ritualistic significance along with abundance knowledge of medicinal herbs. A complete well-being means to have both sound mental and physical health. A resilient mind, ability to cope up stresses of life, and a sound body have instrumental value and are integral to well-being. In Ayurveda, *Acharya Charaka* stated that treatment can be either *Dravyabhutta* (materialistic) or *Adravyabhutta* (non-materialistic). Perusing *Durga Saptashati* can benefit for acquiring sound mind and body way it be through Mantra meditation, oral administration and knowledge of medicinal plants mentioned therein having mental and physical health benefits. योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः (योगसूत्र पतंजलि) which means Yoga is a practice that cease the fluctuations of mind. Meditation simply means contemplation and self-realization, a practice to achieve mindfulness and inner peace. Enchanting *Durga Saptashati* mantras no doubt connects to spirituality as it is an embodiment of power and courage for personal empowerment and resilient mind. On the other hand, knowledge about the divine flora mentioned in *Durga Saptashati* that illustrate god’s divinity would aid in subduing mental and physical disorders. Further, the intertwining of goddess Durga and medicinal plants has sparked time and again as correlation of Navratri and medicinal plants in accordance to different characters of goddess Durga, *Navpatrika* for worshipping goddess Durga etc. An effort has been made to review those botanical blessings mentioned in *Durga Saptashati* mantras, that possess miraculous health benefits, mainly focusing for mental health and also to spark light upon effects of those plants on brain along with its pharmacodynamic properties.

**KEYWORDS:** *Durga Saptashati*, Mantra meditation, *Achar Rasayana*, *Manashikvyadhi* (Mental health), Medicinal plants, divine.

### INTRODUCTION

Out of 18 puranas of Hindu’s, The *Markandeya Purana* is also one of them written by Maharshi Ved Vyas and *Durga Saptashati* is the most re-known section of *Markandeya Purana* which spotlights divine feminine power and glorifies victories of Goddess Durga over evil forces.<sup>[1]</sup> When we look back to the history and Puranas, it is well highlighted, therein, the fact of human association with plants, vegetations and floras. The devotional importance of plants is mentioned since *Puranic period* as *Pancavrkas Vrich* said to be emerged from *Samudra Manthana* denoted as *five trees of Indra’s Heaven*. In *Matsya Purana*, the Lotus has been extolled as the prime symbol of creation and compared with Earth saying lotus shape Earth has four oceans on the four sides. Likewise, the relationship between almighty Durga and Medicinal plants can be vividly seen in *Durga Saptashati*.<sup>[2]</sup> *Durga Saptashati*, also known as *Devi*

*Mahatmyam*, is a Hindu scripture and is a part of *Markandeya Purana* having powerful texts and mantras that acclaim the divinity and glory about goddess Durga. The composition is called *Durga Saptashati* as the text contains *Saptashata* i.e. 700 verses, 13 chapters and 3 *Charitra* (section).<sup>[3]</sup> Along with the spiritual, philosophical, ritualistic significance it has also touch upon the medicinal plants which seem to possess god’s grace and divinity, and are very potent to subdue different diseases. The relation between almighty Goddess Durga and medicinal plants seems vivid as time and again the correlation of medicinal plants and Goddess Durga can be seen. The biggest festival of Hindu, *Navratri*, wherein nine forms of Goddess Durga are represented by different medicinal plants reinforce the connection between these plants and the goddess’s divine characteristics. God Brahma ji also has called them *Durga Kavach* i.e. the shield that saves from ill

health.<sup>[4]</sup> Further in Bengali traditions *Navpatrika* which represents the distinct form of Goddess Durga are used during worshipping Maa Durga.<sup>[5]</sup> In today's generation, life of many has been hassle and chaos involved which create unsound mental health. Therefore, Mental health is a key component of quality of life. In Ayurveda, health is the perfect harmony of mind, body and soul. *Acharya Sushrut* has mentioned that the complete health is the state of having physical, mental and spiritual well-being means to have harmony amongst bodily humors i.e. *Doshas (Vata, Pitta & Kapha)*, balanced state of digestive fire, *Saptadhatu* & *Malakriya*, and pleasant *Atma*(soul), *Indriya* (sense organs) and *Mana*(mind).<sup>[6]</sup> Ayurveda emphasizes *Chikitsa* into three modalities viz. *Satvawajay Chikitsa* (psychotherapy), *Yuktivyapashray* (rational therapy) and *Daiyapashray* (faith therapy).<sup>[7]</sup> As explained by Acharya Charaka, treatment can be achieved in two ways i.e. either *Dravyabhuta* (materialistic) or *Adravyabhuta* (non- materialistic).<sup>[8]</sup> With that point, *Durga Saptashati* can be employed for both. *Sattvavajaya* correlated with psychotherapy, is a treatment to establish *Dhi*(intellect), *Dhriti* (fortitude), and *Smriti* (Memory) in best condition which can be achieved through spiritual knowledge, philosophy, fortitude and concentration.<sup>[9]</sup> For the same Genchanting *Durga Saptashati* mantras while practicing mantra meditation, connects to spirituality and helps to acquire resilient mind i.e. as in Ayurveda to establish harmony amongst *Manashik gunas* i.e. *Satwa* (mind), *Raja* (Arrogance), and *Tama* (Indolence). In Ayurveda,

Acharya Charaka has mentioned *Acharya Rasayana* (Code of Conduct) which bring about rejuvenation in mind and body and one who implies as stated morals devotion and yogic lifestyle is also mentioned, could assess to all benefits of *Rasayana* therapy.<sup>[10]</sup> Likewise, perusing *Durga Saptashati* also help in spiritual growth as it empowers us to battle against negativity and ignorance and harness our inner strength to overcome challenges. Mantra meditation is a transcendental state of consciousness where rhythmic muttering is practiced for resonating vibration that exhibit "relaxation response" for resilient mind and release blocked energy.<sup>[11]</sup> On the other hand, insights of botanical blessings mentioned in *Durga Saptashati* highlights upon the potent divine floras having potency to subdue *Manashik vyadhi* (mental ailments) and also *Sharirik vyadhi* (Physical ailments). Therefore, considering all these facts, an effort has been made to address upon the importance of *Durga Saptashati* as in both *Adravyabhuta Chikitsa* and *Sattvavajaya* through Mantra meditation & spiritual knowledge and *Dravyabhuta Chikitsa* by enlightening botanical blessings mentioned in *Durga Saptashati* having potency for subduing *Manashikvyadhi*. Furthermore, the plants having correlation to goddess Durga in any which way and having medicinal values are explored.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Plants from *Durga Saptashati* working on Mental health.

S. No	Sanskrit Name	Botanical Name & Family	Rasapanchaka	Phytoconstituents	Effects on Brain
1.	Endri	<i>Bacopa monnieri</i> (Linn.) Pennell Scrophulariaceae	<i>Rasa: Tikta</i> <i>Guna: Laghu</i> <i>Veerya: Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka: Katu</i>	Triterpenoid saponins ( <b>Bacoside A, bacoside b, bacopasaponins, D-mannitol, monnierin</b> ) Alkaloid (Brahmine, Herpestine, Nicotine) Glycosides (asiaticoside, thanakunice) Betulic acid, betulinic acid, Brahmic acid, bhraminoside, isobrahmic acid. <sup>[13]</sup>	<b>Medhya Rasayana.</b> <sup>[12]</sup> <b>Cognition enhancing &amp; Neuroprotective</b> (acetylcholinesterase inhibition, beta-amyloid reduction, choline acetyltransferase activation, increased cerebral blood flow, and monoamine potentiation) <b>Antioxidant activity</b> (Increase in Catalase activity) <b>Sedative action</b> (enhancing GABA production). <sup>[13]</sup> <b>Alzheimer disease</b> <sup>[14]</sup> , <b>Epilepsy</b> <sup>[15]</sup> , <b>Parkinson disease</b> <sup>[16]</sup> , <b>Cerebral ischemia/infarct</b> <sup>[17]</sup>
2.	Brahmi	<i>Centella asiatica</i> (Linn) Urban Umbelliferae	<i>Rasa: Tikta</i> <i>Guna: Laghu</i> <i>Veerya: Sheeta</i> <i>Vipaka: Madhura</i>	Araliadiol, Pentacyclic Triterpenic acid (Asiatic acid, madecassic acid) Hydrocotyline, Asiaticoside, Vallerine, Thankuniside, Thankunic acid, Brahmic Acid, Iso- Brahminic Acid. <sup>[18]</sup>	<b>Cognitive enhancement, Neuroprotective</b> properties (protective effect against glutamate and tunicamycin damage on neuronal cell). <sup>[18]</sup> Cross blood brain barrier (asiaticoside, Asiatic acid, madecossoside confer protection against hippocampal dysfunction) <sup>[19]</sup> <b>AChE inhibitory</b> potential and ability to reduce accumulation of

					amyloid plaques. <b>Alzheimer disease</b>
3.	<b>Kushmanda</b>	<i>Benincasa hispida</i> (Thunb.) Cogn Cucurbitaceae	<i>Rasa: Madhura</i> <i>Guna: Laghu,</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Veerya: Sheeta</i> <i>Vipaka: Madhura</i>	Cucurbitin, mannitol, triacentenol, histidine, rhamnose, pyrazine compounds. histidine, hispidalin. <sup>[22]</sup>	<b>Anti-depressant activity</b> (by inhibiting MAO-A, interaction with dopaminergic, $\alpha$ 1-adrenergic, serotonergic, and GABAergic systems). <sup>[20]</sup> <b>Alzheimer disease</b> (alleviating amyloid pathology by inhibition of Keap1/Nrf2-axis). <sup>[21]</sup> <b>Hispidalin</b> was shown to scavenge DPPH radicals and reduce the ability of lipid peroxidation. <b>Anti-convulsant effects.</b> <sup>[23]</sup>
4.	<b>Aparajita</b>	<i>Clitoria ternatea</i> L. Fabaceae	<i>Rasa: Katu, Tikta,</i> <i>Kashaya</i> <i>Guna: Laghu,</i> <i>Rooksa</i> <i>Veerya: Katu</i> <i>Vipaka: Sheeta</i>	Tannins, phlobatannin, carbohydrates, saponins, triterpenoids, phenols, flavonoids, flavonol glycosides, proteins, alkaloids, anthraquinone, anthocyanins, cardiac glycosides, Stigmast-4-ene-3, 6-dione, volatile oils and steroids. <sup>[25]</sup>	Used as an ingredient of <b>Medhya Rasayana</b> . <sup>[24]</sup> <b>Nootropic effect</b> (significant increase in Acetylcholine (ACh) content in hippocampi and decrease in AChE activity in scopolamine induced amnesia). <sup>[25]</sup> <b>Neuroprotective effects</b> against <b>Cognitive deterioration in Vascular dementia (VaD), Alzheimer's disease</b> (Root extract diminish Chronic cerebral hypoperfusion (CCH) induced neuronal damage in the hippocampal cornu ammonis 1 (CA1) region). <sup>[26]</sup>
5.	<b>Sankhapuspi</b>	<i>Convolvulus</i> <i>pluricaulis</i> Chios Convolvulaceae	<i>Rasa: Tikta</i> <i>Guna: Snigdha,</i> <i>Pichhil</i> <i>Veerya: Sheeta</i> <i>Vipaka: Madhura</i>	Alkaloid (Shankhapushpine, Convolvine, Convolamine, Convolidine, Subhirsine) Scopoline, Beta sitosterol. <sup>[29]</sup>	<b>Medhya Rasayana</b> . <sup>[12]</sup> <b>Neuroprotective effect</b> . <sup>[27]</sup> <b>Anti-depressant effect</b> . <sup>[28]</sup> <b>Anti-convulsant effect</b> (by protecting against the PTZ induced clonic convulsions) <sup>[29]</sup> <b>Hypnotic effects</b> (act as GABA-A agonists which could be attributed to the CNS depressant effect) <sup>[29]</sup>
6.	<b>Vijaya</b>	<i>Cannabis sativa</i> L. Cannabinaceae	<i>Rasa: Tikta</i> <i>Guna: Laghu, Tiksha</i> <i>Veerya: Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka: Katu</i>	<b>Cannabinoids</b> (cannabidiol and cannabinodiol), Tetrahydrocannabinol, Cannab idiolic acid. <sup>[30]</sup>	<b>Anti-epileptic effects,</b> <b>Neuroprotective effects</b> (In disease like neuropathic pain, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, ADHD, ASD through phyto- cannabinoids present having ability of cannabinoids to modulate neuro transmission). <sup>[30]</sup>
7.	<b>Varahi</b>	<i>Dioscorea</i> <i>bulbifera</i> Linn. Dioscoreaceae	<i>Rasa: Katu, Tikta,</i> <i>Madhura</i> <i>Guna: Laghu,</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Veerya: Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka: Katu</i>	Diosgenin, Albuminoide, Carbohydrate, terpenoids, saponins, flavonoids, alkaloids, glycosides, carbohydrates, amino acids, and proteins. <sup>[32]</sup>	<b>Diosgenin &amp; diosgenin-arginine derivatives</b> is steroidal sapogenin found in family dioscoreaceae which is proven to have significant role in treatment of <b>Neurological disorders</b> like <b>Parkinson's disease,</b> <b>Alzheimer's disease, Multiple sclerosis</b> , Spinal cord injury, Stroke, Thrombosis. <sup>[31]</sup> Mild neuro-sedative / <b>CNS depressant agents, anxiolytic- effect</b> (Comparable to diazepam

					without causing motor impairment). <sup>[32]</sup> <b>Memory enhancing properties</b> (STZ and HFD-induced learning and memory deficits along with rise in AchE activity). <sup>[33]</sup>
8.	<b>Jyanti</b>	<i>Sesbania sesban</i> Merrill Fabaceae	<b>Rasa:</b> Katu, Tikta <b>Guna:</b> Laghu, <i>Ruksha</i> <b>Veerya:</b> Ushna <b>Vipaka:</b> Katu	<b>Flower:</b> cyanidin and delphinidin glucosides <b>Dust and dust tubes:</b> alpha-ketoglutaric, oxaloacetic and pyruvic acids. <b>Leaf:</b> ampesterol cholesterol, beta-sitosterol, triterpenoids, proteins and tannins. <b>Bark &amp; stem:</b> glucose, fructose, erithryrol, arabinitol, <b>myo-inositol</b> . <sup>[35]</sup>	<b>Nootropic Activity</b> (increase cognitive function related to memory and learning assessed through Radial Arm Maze test) <b>Anxiolytic Activity</b> (indicating reduced anxiety levels assessed using the Elevated Plus Maze (EPM) test). <sup>[34]</sup> <b>Anti-oxidant effect</b> (due to cyanidin and delphinidin glucosides) <b>Myo-inositol</b> used for panic disorder, insomnia, ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorders) <b>Alzheimer's disease</b> , DPPH scavenging activity. <sup>[35]</sup>
9.	<b>Sugandha</b>	<i>Alpinia galanga</i> Willd. Zingiberaceae	<b>Rasa:</b> Katu <b>Guna:</b> Laghu, <i>Tikshna</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> <b>Veerya:</b> Ushna <b>Vipaka:</b> Katu	Galangin, Alpinin, Methyl cinnamate, Cineole, d-pinene, Kaempferide.	<b>Cognitive enhancement</b> (by decreasing AChE level which improve the cognition by enhancing cholinergic transmission) <b>Anti-oxidant properties</b> (Increment in Na <sup>+</sup> /K <sup>+</sup> -ATPase and antioxidant activity depicts brain membrane integrity improvement and free radical scavenging property) <b>Anti-amnesic effect</b> , <b>Neuroprotective effect</b> (Shows therapeutic protection for Alzheimer's type of amnesia). <sup>[36]</sup>
10.	<b>Shiva</b>	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> L Phyllanthaceae	<b>Rasa:</b> Pancharasa , <i>Lavanarahit</i> , <i>Amlapradhana</i> <b>Guna:</b> Guru, <i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Sheeta</i> <b>Veerya:</b> Sheeta <b>Vipaka:</b> Madhura	Alkaloids ( <b>phyllantidine and phyllantine</b> ), <b>Tannins</b> (including chebulagic acid, chebulinic acid, emblicanin A, ellagic acid, emblicanin B, ellagic acid, ellagotannin, 3-ethylgallic acid) linolenic, linoleic, oleic, stearic, palmitic, and myristic acids. <b>Sugar</b> (D-glucose, D-fructose, D-myo-inositol) <b>flavonoids</b> (kaempferol, rhamnopyranoside, quercetin, acylated apigenin glucoside ). <sup>[37]</sup>	<b>Neuroprotection effect</b> (shows protective function against glutamate induced cellular inhibition analyzed on the human neural cell lines (PC12)) <b>Antioxidant activity</b> , <b>DPPH and hydroxyl radical scavenging properties</b> . <sup>[37]</sup>





1. *Bacopa monnieri* (Linn.) Pennell 2. *Centella asiatica* (Linn) Urban 3. *Benincasa hispida* (Thunb.) Cogn.



4. *Clitoria ternatea* L. 5. *Convolvulus pluricaulis* Chios 6. *Cannabis sativa* L.



7. *Dioscorea bulbifera* Linn. 8. *Sesbania sesban* Merrill 9. *Alpinia galanga* Willd.



10. *Phyllanthus emblica* L

**Mantra meditation:** Meditation derived from Latin word meditari meaning “to engage in contemplation or reflection” and Mantra is derived from the Sanskrit Phrase “*Mananāt trāyatē iti mantrah*” meaning the

sacred texts which protects (*tra*) the mind (*man*) from confusion (*trap*) and so that one is not afraid (*tras*). Meditation is state of “thoughtless awareness” for self-realization and contemplation. Mantra Meditation is a

transcendental state of consciousness where rhythmic muttering is practiced for resonating vibration which release the blocked energy where powerful mantras from *Durga Saptashati* can undoubtedly foster tranquility and redirect negative thoughts from which we are aware of. Various studies show that practicing mantra meditation helps to pacify Anxiety, Depression, Stress and improves Sleep quality. The mantras from *Durga Saptashati*, which can be enchanted for mantra meditation are:

#### Navpatrika

Sanskrit name	Botanical name	Family
<i>Kadali</i>	<i>Musa acuminata</i> Colla	Musaceae
<i>Daruhaldi</i>	<i>Berberis aristata</i> DC	Berberidaceae
<i>Haldi</i>	<i>Curcuma longa</i> Linn.	Zingiberaceae
<i>Jayanti</i>	<i>Sesbania sesban</i> Merrill	Fabaceae
<i>Anaar</i>	<i>Punica granatum</i> Linn	Punicaceae
<i>Ashoka</i>	<i>Saraca asoca</i> Roxb. De Wilde	Fabaceae
<i>Amalatas</i>	<i>Cassia fistula</i> Linn.	Fabaceae
<i>Bilva</i>	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> Corr.	Rutaceae
<i>Dhan</i>	<i>Oryza sativa</i> L.	Poaceae

#### The medicinal plants corelated with Devi avatars

Sanskrit name	Botanical Name	Devi avatar
<i>Haritaki</i>	<i>Terminalia chebula</i> . Retz.	Hailaputri
<i>Brahmi</i>	<i>Bacopa monnieri</i> (L.) Pennell	Brahmacharini
<i>Chandrasoor</i>	<i>Lepidium sativum</i> L.	Chandraghanta
<i>Kushmanda</i>	<i>Benincasa hispida</i> (Thunb.) Cogn.	Kushmanda
<i>Alsi</i>	<i>Linum usitatissimum</i> L.	Skandamata
<i>Machika</i>	<i>Hibiscus cannabinus</i> (kenaf)	Kathyayani
<i>Naagdon</i>	<i>Euphorbia tithymaloides</i> L.	Kalarathri
<i>Tulasi</i>	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> Linn.	Mahagauri
<i>Shatavari</i>	<i>Asperagus racemosus</i> Willd.	Siddadhatri

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The word Durga itself means “*Durita Nivarini*” meaning one who fend off difficulties, obstacles and negativity from the path of her devotees. The *Durga Saptashati* was compiled as a part of *Markandeya Purana* to embark importance of Medicinal plants and their devotional power to subdue various diseases. The Knowledge from *Durga Saptashati* stands tall and vital resource for holistic well-being (Physical, Mental and Spiritual), seamlessly intertwining spiritual practices and medicinal knowledge. The Mantras therein facilitates mental resilience, spiritual growth and stability, and on the other hands, medicinal plants described therein provides tangible remedies for mental and physical ailments. The divine potency of medicinal plants such as *Endri*, *Brahmi*, *Kushmanda*, *Aparajita*, *Shankapushpi*, *Vijaya*, *Varahi*, *Jayanti*, *Sugandha* and *Shiva*, described above are just few drops from an ocean, as there are ample of medicinal plants mentioned in *Durga Saptashati* to indicate God’s divinity and as of today, they are well validated for having incredible health benefits through various research. And different Mantras from *Durga Saptashati* when chanted in rhythmic manner during Mantra meditation can foster inner peace and mindfulness. Therefore, it can be said that this scripture

ॐ सर्वमंगल मांगल्ये शिवे सर्वार्थ साधिके। शरण्ये त्र्यंबके  
गौरी नारायणि नमोऽस्तुते!! शिवा धात्री स्वाहा स्वधा  
नमोऽस्तुते!! भयेभ्यस्त्राहि नो देवि, दुर्गे देवि नमोऽस्तुते!!  
ॐ जयंती मंगला काली भद्रकाली कपालिनी। दुर्गा क्षमा शिवा  
धात्री स्वाहा स्वधा नमोऽस्तुते।<sup>[38]</sup>

not only celebrates the divine mightiness of Goddess Durga but also offers practical insights for overall well-being.

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