

Ayurvedic Perspective in Glaucoma and Its Preventive Strategies

**Dr. Pranjali Dubey¹, Dr. Rajendra Singh Patel², Dr. Jagruti Richhariya³,
Dr. Shubhangi Lohakare⁴**

¹P.G. Scholar, Department of Shalaky Tantra, Mansarovar Ayurvedic Medical College Hospital & Research Centre, Bhopal (M.P)

²Associate Professor, Department of Shalaky Tantra, Mansarovar Ayurvedic Medical College Hospital & Research Centre, Bhopal (M.P)

³Assistant Professor, Department of Shalaky Tantra, Mansarovar Ayurvedic Medical College Hospital & Research Centre, Bhopal (M.P)

⁴Professor Department of Shalaky Tantra, Mansarovar Ayurvedic Medical College Hospital & Research Centre, Bhopal (M.P)

ABSTRACT

Adhimantha refers to an intense, throbbing, or churning type of ocular pain. In *Ayurvedic* texts, it is described as a severe eye disorder, and to some extent, it can be correlated with glaucoma in modern medicine. The clinical features of *Adhimantha* vary depending on the involvement of the *Doshas*, and the *Acharyas* have classified it into four distinct types. Glaucoma is currently recognized as the second leading cause of blindness worldwide. Although glaucoma cannot be completely cured, it can be effectively managed through *Ayurvedic* therapeutics. Treatments such as *Shodhana Chikitsa* - including *Virechana* and *Raktamokshana* — along with *Kriyakalpas* like *Akshi Tarpana*, *Seka*, *Anjana*, *Aschyotana*, *Pindi*, and *Bidalaka*, help maintain ocular health. The use of *Chakshushya* (eye-strengthening) herbs also aids in managing the condition and preserving vision.

Keywords: Adhimantha, Glaucoma, Shodhana Chikitsa, Kriyakalpa

INTRODUCTION-

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, is a holistic science that emphasizes the balance of body, mind, and spirit for maintaining health and preventing disease. Among its eight branches, *Shalaky Tantra* is a specialized field that deals with the diagnosis and management of diseases occurring above the clavicle, primarily focusing on the *Netra*, *Karna*, *Nasa*, *Mukha* and *Shira*. The *Netra/eye* holds special importance in *Ayurveda*, as it is regarded as the most vital and delicate sense organ, described as “*Pranaayatana*”—the seat of life. Among all the faculties of living beings, vision stands as one of the most precious possessions. The classics emphasize that loss of vision is one of the greatest impairments to human life, making the care and preservation of eye health a priority. In *Shalaky Tantra*, detailed descriptions of ocular anatomy, physiology, and pathology are provided along with preventive and curative measures. Conditions such as glaucoma (*Adhimantha*) are discussed in *Ayurvedic* texts as disorders involving increased intraocular pressure leading to severe pain and

progressive loss of vision. According to studies, the clinical presentation of *Adhimantha* shows similarity to glaucoma: “blurring of vision, pain in the eye, headache, raised intra-ocular pressure, optic disc cupping and visual field changes.” Epidemiological studies on glaucoma involving adults aged 40 years and above have estimated glaucoma prevalence between 2.7 and 4.3% among Indians¹. The main reason for this high prevalence is that glaucoma often develops silently and without early symptoms, causing gradual damage to the optic nerve before vision loss becomes noticeable. Many people remain undiagnosed until the disease has reached an advanced stage. Research on glaucoma is therefore extremely important to improve early detection methods, understand genetic and molecular causes, and develop new treatments beyond simply lowering eye pressure.

DEFINITION-

According to *Acharya Sushruta Abhishyandas* will lead to respective *Adhimanthas*, if not treated properly and neglected. The word *Adhi-mantha* indicates excessive churning type of pain. The pain is very severe as the patient feels that his/her eye is being extracted from its socket and churned along half of the head. The loss of vision is one of the characteristics of this disease (*vyadhi swabhav*)². Glaucoma is a chronic, progressive optic neuropathy caused by a group of ocular conditions, which lead to damage of the optic nerve with loss of visual function³. IOP is the most common factor but not the only risk factor for development of glaucoma⁴.

TYPES OF ADHIMANTHA

There are four types of *Adhimantha* : *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja* and *Raktaja*- all these are *Vyadhana sadhya vyadhi*⁵.

1. *Vataja Adhimantha*- In *vataja* type of *Adhimantha* the eye become cloudy and seems as if being torn out and churned with an ‘*Arani*’ attended with an irritating, piercing and cutting pain as well as with a swelling of the local flesh⁶. In *Vataja Adhimantha* vision is lost within six nights.
2. *Pittaja Adhimantha*- The symptoms of *Pittaja* type of *Adhimantha* are the blood streaked eye attended with a sensation therein of being burn as well as swelling, perspiration and yellowish vision⁷. Due to improper conduct or treatment in *Pittaja Adhimantha* vision is lost immediately (within three days).
3. *Kaphaja Adhimantha*- In the *Kaphaja* type of *Adhimantha* the eye is swollen with a slight congestion (inflammation). Discharges with a sensation of itching, coldness and heaviness in the localities set in, and there is horripilation⁸. In *Kaphaj Adhimantha* vision is lost within seven nights.
4. *Raktaja Adhimantha*- A pricking pain and a blood-streaked secretion from the affected organ which looks (bright red) like a *Bandhujiva* flower, are the symptoms which mark the type of *Raktaja Adhimantha* (due to the vitiated blood). The eye becomes painful and incapable of bearing the least touch or contact, and the objects of vision seem as if enveloped in flames⁹. In *Raktaja Adhimantha* vision is lost within five nights.
5. *Hatadhimantha*- When *Vataja Adhimantha* is neglected it leads to an *Hatadhimantha*, there will be severe pain associated with shrinking of eyes. It is an incurable disease.

ETIOPATHOGENESIS / SAMPRAPTI FROM AYURVEDIC VIEW

From the *Ayurvedic* standpoint, *Adhimantha* arises when the *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*) become

vitiated, particularly in the *Shira* (head) and *Pakṣma, Netra* (ocular region), disturbing the *Srotas* (channels) and *Dhatus* (tissues) related to vision. Aggravation of *Kapha* or *Pitta* in the ocular region may lead to swelling (*Abhishyanda*) which if persists transforms into *Adhimantha* – involving structural damage of ocular tissues such as *Drishti Dhatu, Sira, Mamsa, Meda*. The modern correlation of raised intra-ocular pressure and optic nerve degeneration aligns with the *Ayurvedic* idea of “*Sarvagata Netra Roga*” (disease affecting the whole eye) and hence *Adhimantha* is often considered the *Ayurvedic* analog of glaucoma.

The *nidana* include wrong diet and lifestyle i.e. *mitthyachara*, excessive screen-use or reading under improper light (leading to eye-strain), systemic conditions like hypertension/diabetes which in *Ayurvedic* view aggravate *Pitta & Kapha* in the head, and injuries/trauma to the eye. When these aggravations persist, the ocular channels and tissues lose their vitality and structural integrity, leading to progressive irreversible damage.

PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES IN AYURVEDA

Prevention holds a central place, especially given that conditions like glaucoma are often asymptomatic until advanced. From an *Ayurvedic* vantage, the following measures are crucial:

- ***Nidana Parivarjana (Avoidance of causative factors)***: Avoid habits that aggravate *Kapha* and *Vata* in the head/eye region — e.g., sleeping late, watching digital screens in dark rooms, exposure to bright glare without protection, undue strain on eyes, heavy headgear or trauma. Control systemic imbalances (hypertension, diabetes) which in *Ayurvedic* terms reflect *Pitta/Kapha* vitiation.
- ***Dincharya & Ritucharya (Daily & seasonal regimen)***: Maintain proper sleep, avoid daytime naps in excess, protect the eyes from dust, wind and bright light, practice ocular hygiene. Moderation in screen time and regular breaks during reading/computer work helps maintain ocular health.
- ***Brimhana & Rasayana for Netra***: In *Ayurveda*, *Brimhana* and *Rasayana Chikitsa* are considered essential for nourishing and rejuvenating the body and sense organs, especially after purificatory therapies. In the management of *Netra Rogas* such as *Adhimantha*, these therapies play a vital role in strengthening the optic structures and preventing further degeneration. *Brimhana Chikitsa* focuses on nourishing and replenishing depleted *Dhatus* (tissues), particularly the *Majja Dhatu* and *Snayu* associated with the optic nerve. This approach is especially beneficial in chronic or *Vata*-predominant glaucoma where degenerative changes are evident. Nutrient-rich formulations like *Ghrita* preparations (e.g., *Triphala Ghrita, Jeevantiyadi Ghrita*), *Ksheerapaka* (medicated milk), and *Chakshushya* dravyas such as *Amla, Yashtimadhu*, and *Shatavari* are used to nourish ocular tissues and enhance vision.

Rasayana Chikitsa, on the other hand, aims at rejuvenation, improving *Ojas*, and delaying the process of aging and degeneration. It enhances the strength of *Indriyas* (sense organs), improves ocular microcirculation, and protects the optic nerve from oxidative stress and neurodegeneration. Drugs such as *Amalaki Rasayana, Triphala Rasayana, Chyavanaprasha, Shilajit*, and *Brahmi Rasayana* are commonly used to improve vision and overall ocular health. These therapies not only help preserve remaining vision but also improve the patient’s quality of life by enhancing visual endurance and nerve vitality. When administered after *Shodhana Chikitsa*, *Brimhana* and *Rasayana* measures provide comprehensive management by both cleansing and rejuvenating the ocular system.

- ***Shodhan Chikitsa***- In *Ayurveda*, *Shodhana Chikitsa* (purificatory therapy) is considered one of the most effective approaches for eliminating vitiated *Doshas* from the body and restoring the balance of

Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Since *Adhimantha* is a *Tridoshaja Netra Roga* with predominance of *Vata* and *Pitta Doshas*, *Shodhana* plays a vital role in its management. *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting), through *Siravyadha* or *Jalaukavacharana*, helps to remove vitiated blood and relieve local inflammation, pain, and redness of the eyes. *Nasya* (nasal administration of medicated oils) aids in clearing the channels of the head and pacifying *Vata* and *Kapha Doshas* that may obstruct ocular pathways. In the *purva rupa* stage of *Adhimantha*, *Tikshna Gandusha* and *Nasya* are advised¹⁰. Similarly, *Basti* (medicated enema) is useful in *Vata*-predominant conditions for nourishing the nervous system and supporting optic nerve health. Collectively, these *Shodhana* measures help in detoxifying the body, maintaining ocular homeostasis, and preventing the progression of vision loss when used along with other supportive therapies such as *Kriyakalpas* (*Akshi Tarpana, Seka, Aschyotana*, etc.) and *Chakshushya* (eye-strengthening) medications.

- **Kriya Kalpa:** When doshas are early aggravated, external therapies like *Tarpan, Aschyotana, Anjana* and *Seka* may be employed to maintain health of ocular channels.
- **Regular Monitoring & Eye Check-ups:** Although not explicitly stated in ancient texts, an integrative view recommends that because glaucoma is a “silent thief of sight,” regular ocular evaluation (intra-ocular pressure, optic nerve assessment, visual fields) is complementary to Ayurvedic preventive care.

Table: Treatment Principle and medication according to type of *Adhimantha*

Type of <i>Adhimantha</i>	Treatment Principle	Important Medicines & Procedures
<i>Vataja Adhimantha</i>	To pacify <i>Vata</i> , give oleation and warmth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ghrita:</i> <i>Sahcharadi Ghrita</i>¹¹, <i>Saptamrita Ghrita, Maha Triphala Ghrita</i> • <i>Nasya & Basti:</i> <i>Ksheerabala Taila, Dashamoola Taila</i> • <i>Anjana:</i> <i>Srotanjana Anjana</i> • <i>Seka:</i> <i>Warm decoction of Dashamoola or Bala</i>
<i>Pittaja Adhimantha</i>	To cool and pacify <i>Pitta</i> , purify blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ghrita:</i> <i>Tiktaka Ghrita, Jivantyadi Ghrita, Saptamrita Ghrita</i> • <i>Virechana:</i> <i>Trivrit Lehya, Avipattikara Churna</i> • <i>Seka:</i> <i>Cold decoction of Chandana, Usheera, Padma, Musta</i> • <i>Anjana:</i> <i>Gulikanjan, Churna Anjana, Rasakriya anjana</i>¹² • <i>Internal:</i> <i>Kamdudha Ras, Pravala Pishti</i>
<i>Kaphaja Adhimantha</i>	To remove <i>Kapha</i> , drying and cleansing therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vamana:</i> <i>Madanaphala Yoga, Ikshvaku Taila</i> • <i>Anjana:</i> <i>Triphala Anjana, Haridra Anjana, Saindhava Anjana</i> • <i>Seka:</i> <i>Warm decoction of Triphala, Pippali, Haridra</i> • <i>Internal:</i> <i>Trikatu Churna, Punarnava Mandura</i> • <i>Dhumapana:</i> <i>Haridra, Guggulu, Ela</i>
<i>Raktaja Adhimantha</i>	To purify blood and pacify <i>Pitta</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Raktamokshana:</i> <i>Jalauka (leech therapy)</i> • <i>Ghrita:</i> <i>Mahatiktaka Ghrita, Tiktaka Ghrita</i> • <i>Virechana:</i> <i>Trivrit Lehya, Avipattikara Churna</i> • <i>Seka:</i> <i>Cold decoction of Usheera, Chandana, Padmaka</i> • <i>Internal:</i> <i>Brihat Kushmanda Avaleha</i>¹³, <i>Vasakadi Kashaya, Phala trikadi Kashaya, Patoladi Kashaya</i>¹⁴

CONCLUSION

Adhimantha, described in classical *Ayurvedic* literature as a severe and vision-threatening ocular disorder, closely parallels the modern understanding of glaucoma in its symptomatology, pathogenesis, and progressive nature. The *Ayurvedic* concept emphasizes *Dosha* vitiation, obstruction of ocular Srotas, and degeneration of vital ocular *Dhatus*, which aligns with the modern pathology of increased intraocular pressure and optic nerve damage. Early recognition of *nidana*, along with preventive measures such as proper lifestyle practices, ocular hygiene, and systemic balance, plays a crucial role in delaying progression. *Ayurvedic* management including *Shodhana* therapies, *Kriyakalpa* procedures, *Chakshushya* herbs, and rejuvenative *Rasayana* regimens- offers a holistic approach aimed at reducing symptoms, preserving optic nerve function, and maintaining remaining vision. While glaucoma cannot be completely reversed, an integrative *Ayurvedic* approach holds significant promise in slowing disease progression and enhancing overall ocular health, thereby improving the patient's quality of life.

References

1. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10229968/>
2. Textbook of Salakya Tantra, Prof. Udaya Shankar, Vol-I, Chaukhabha Visvabharati, 2022, Page No. 476
3. Parson's Diseases of the eye, Ramanjit Sihota, 23rd edition, Page No. 261.
4. Comprehensive Ophthalmology, AK Khurana, sixth edition : 2015, Page No. 224.
5. Kaviraja Ambhikadutta Shastri, Sushruta Samhita published by chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan Varanasi 2021 vol-3, Chikistha Pravibhaga vijnaniya, slok no-9 Uttara sthana Hindi commentary Page No. 49.
6. An English translation of Sushruta samhita, Vol 8 Uttartantra by Bhisagratna and Kunja Lal, Page No. 21
7. An English translation of Sushruta samhita, Vol 8 Uttartantra by Bhisagratna and Kunja Lal, Page No. 21
8. An English translation of Sushruta samhita, Vol 8 Uttartantra by Bhisagratna and Kunja Lal, Page No. 21
9. An English translation of Sushruta samhita, Vol 8 Uttartantra by Bhisagratna and Kunja Lal, Page No. 22
10. Textbook of Salakya Tantra, Prof. Udaya Shankar, Vol-I, Chaukhabha Visvabharati, 2022, Page No. 483.
11. Textbook of Salakya Tantra, Prof. Udaya Shankar, Vol-I, Chaukhabha Visvabharati, 2022, Page No. 484
12. Textbook of Salakya Tantra, Prof. Udaya Shankar, Vol-I, Chaukhabha Visvabharati, 2022, Page No. 486
13. Bhavaprakash Madhyam Khanda, Chikitsa Prakran, Jaykrishna Das, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Prakashan, Verse 69-71, Page No. 130
14. Textbook of Salakya Tantra, Prof. Udaya Shankar, Vol-I, Chaukhabha Visvabharati, 2022, Page No. 486