

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SANSKRIT NAMES OF MEDICINAL PLANTS USED IN AYURVEDA BASED ON MORPHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Synonyms were the only tools for describing the plants the process was continuous and new synonyms were coined from time to time. Synonyms indicate the original source of plants while some are reminiscent source of plants while some are reminiscent of the place of their trade or commercial transaction. Synonyms served the purpose well for which they were coined i.e. indicating specific characters of plants which helped their proper identification. *Charak* used the synonyms strictly for the single item which did not denote any other entity leading to confusion. But in course of time, by the medieval period, a large number of synonyms accumulated which denoted more than one plant and thus lost the accuracy. In Ayurveda, *Nama* denotes the *basonyms* as well the synonyms. *Rupa* is specific character which includes morphology as well

as properties and actions. Study of *Nama* and *Rupa* together constitute the branch known as Pharmacology, which deals with the cognition of medicinal plants.

KEYWORDS: Paryaya, Synonyms, Basonyms, Ayurveda Drugs.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to *Rajanighantu*, The Names and Synonyms are assigned to the plants on the following seven bases- *Rudhi*, *Prabhava*, *Lanchana*, *Upama*, *Virya* and *Itarahvaya*.^[1] *Dhanvantari nighantu* says-names, one or many, are assigned to plants according to habitat, form, colour, potency, taste, effect etc.^[2] The use of synonyms can be traced back to *Vedic*

Nighantu which mentions a number of synonyms for a single item. On the other hand, there are instances where a single synonym is applied to different entities. They are called *niaghantuka* and *aikapadika* respectively. Ancients were keen observers of Nature and coined exact synonyms to designate specific characters of plants. For instance, the name *Karbudara* for the *Kanchanara* coined by *charak* suggests the variegated character of one of the petals on which the Latin name *Bauhinia variegata* is based.^[3]

INTRODUCTION OF SYNONYMS^[4]

Ekaṃ tu nāma prathitaṃ bahūnām ekasya nāmāni

tathā bahūni |

dravyasya jātyakṛtivarṇavīryarasaprabhāvādiguṇairbhavanti || (Dha.Ni.9)

In one side, sometimes the one name of the drug is given for the different drugs and on the other side, the single drugs have the different synonyms. The Synonyms of the drugs are given according to the *Jati, Akriti, Varna, Virya, Rasa, Prabhavadi guna* of those drugs.

Deśe deśe yojanadvādaśānte

bhinnānyāhurdravyanāmāni loke |

kiṃcāmīṣu prāṇinām varṇabhāṣā- ceṣṭācchāyā

bhinnarūpā bibhānti ||

(Rā.Ni.Dharaṇnādi Varga.60)

These synonyms are due to the different locations of these plants. In the 12 Yogan the Varna, Bhasa, action of the Human beings is also varies.^[1]

Gopālastāpasā vyādhā ye cānye vanacāriṇaḥ |

Mulāhārāśca ye tebhyo bheṣajavyaktirisyate ||

(Dha.Ni./12; Su.Sū./37)

Oṣadhīrnāmarūpābhyām jānate hyajapā vane |

Avipākaścaiva gopāśca ye cānye vanavāsinaḥ ||

(Ca.Sū.)

To identify the proper name of the drugs, *Gopala, Vanacharina* and Those people who takes food from the forest as the Basic food diet, from them one's can get proper knowledge of drugs.

Tulyābhidhanāni tu yāni śiṣṭairdravyāṇi yoge viniveśitāni |

Arthādhikārāgamasaṃpradāyaiḥ vibhajya tarkeṇa ca tāni yujyāt || (Dha.Ni./5) after that,

From the Applied aspect of the plants in the medical field it can be proved. In this way, the synonyms of the plants can be proved as the true synonyms, Re-identified and in the controversial drugs there may be the many ways to remove the controversy of the plants. Names of medicinal substances used in the Vedic period as shown in

Table 1.

<i>Vaidika Nāma</i>	<i>Prayukta Artha</i>	<i>Vartamāna Nāma</i>	<i>Latin Name</i>
<i>Araṇī</i>	<i>Agnimanth a Kāṣṭha</i>	<i>Agnimantha</i>	<i>Premna integrifolia Linn.</i>
<i>Karañja</i>	<i>Rākṣasa Nāma</i>	<i>Karañja</i>	<i>Pongamia pinnata Linn</i>
<i>Aralu</i>	<i>Rākṣasa Nāma</i>	<i>Aralu</i>	<i>Ailanthus excelsa Roxb.</i>



Apamarga



Arjun



Ashoka



Ashwagandha



Amalaki



Kantkari



Kapikacchu



Karanja



Khadir



Guduchi



Bhallatak



Palash



Kutaj



Pippali



Kirattikta

IN VAIDHIKA KAAL, NAMING OF THE AUSHADHI ARE IN THE FOLLOWING FOUR TYPES^[5]

1. **Udbhav Bodhak**- *Varshabhū, Manduki, Pushkar, Magadhi*
2. **Swarup Bodhak** - *Ananta, Amula, Trivrit, Shveta, Mahavriksha, Chitraparni*
3. **Gunabodhak Rasa**- *Swadu, Madhuk, Madhu, Madhula*
Veerya - *Sheetika, Som, Agni*
Vipaka- *Sheetapaki*
Gandha- *Ashwagandha, Sarpagandha,*
Gandhavriksha

4. Karmabodhak

Samanya Karma - *Apamarga, Rohini, Balasabhesaja, Vishadushani, Haritabhesaja, Udojas;*
Vishishta Karma - *Kilasanashak, Balasanashini, Keshavardhani, Atibala.*

Raja Nighantu - Nomenclature of the Dravya^[1]

Nāmaani kvachid iha rūdhitah prabhāvād
Deshyoktyā kvachid iha lāñchanopamābhyām
 | *Vīryaṅ kvachid itarāhavyādideshād*
Dravyāṅām iha saptadhositāni ||
(Rā. Ni. Grantha Prastāvanā/13)

1. Nomenclature of the Dravya according to Rudhi

Tuntuk - *Shyonak, Lagud* - *Rakta Karveer, Guduchi* - *Amrita, Dorali* - *Brihati, Atarushak* -

Vasa, Kandir – Gandar

2. Nomenclature of the Dravya according to Prabhav

Krumighna - Vidang, Kushthaghna - Khadir, Hayamar - Karveer

3. Nomenclature of the Dravya according to Deshyukti

Malavi - Patha, Malavi - Upodika, Magadhi - Pippali, Perik - Amrud, Sindhutth - Saindhav, Turusk - Shilaras, Kaling - Tarbuj, Naipali – Manahshila.

4. Nomenclature of the Dravya according to Lanchhan

Chitraparni - Prishniparni, Chitrabeeja - Erand, Upachitra - Danti, Chitratandul –Vidang.

5. Nomenclature of the Dravya according to Upama

Udumbaraparni - Danti, Kumbhabej - Arishtak, Mridangphal - Koshataki, Kokilaksh - Ikshurak, Asipatra - Ikshu, Lajapushpa - Ghritakaranj, Shamipatra – Lajjalu.

6. Nomenclature of the Dravya according to Virya- Ushana, Sheetika.

7. Nomenclature of the Dravya according to Itarahavya

Shakrāvha - Kutaj, Kakāvha - Kakmachi, Devāvha - Devdaru, Manovha - Manahshila, Hemāvha Katupami.

Nomenclature of the Dravya according to Prayojyang

Mool: *Dirghamool - Yavasak, Anantamool -Shveta Sariva, Moolak - Mooli, Shvet Moola - Shvet Punarnava*

Twak: *Twaksar - Vansh, Gudtwak - Twak, Tanutwak - Twak, Twak - Twak, Twaksugandh-Narang*

Saar: *Raktasaar - Khadir, Raktasaar -Raktachandan, Peetasaar - Bijak, Shvetsaar -Shvet Khadir, Ghansaar – Karpur*

Naal: *Nali - Nalika, Nal - Nal, Nalottam -Mahanal, Sthoolnaal – Mahanal*

Niryas: *Shaal Niryas - Shaal, Hinguniryas -Nimb, Suniryas - Jingini, Moch Niryas -Mochras*

Kshar: *Kshar Shreshtha - Palaash, KsharShreshtha - Mokshak, Kshar - Yavakshar, Kshar – Swarjika*

Ksheer: *Payasya - Ksheerkakoli, Ksheerparna - Ark, Ksheera - Snuhi, Ksheeri -*

Vat, Ksheerini - Shvet Sariva, Ksheer Valli -Vidari

Phal: *Gudphal - Peelu, Pushpaphal -Kushmand, Sadafal - Bilva, Pindiphal -Madanphal,*

Chitrafala - Kantakari, Krishnafala - Bakuchi, Gandhaphala -Methika

Pushpa: *Pindipushpa - Ashok, Shatpushpa -Mishreya, Mridupushpa - Shirish, Shukapushpa - Shirish, Vritpushpa - Kadamb, Peetpushpa - Atibala, Kharapushpa - Barbari, Gudpushpa - Madhuk, Tamrapushpa -Kovidar, Tamrapushpi - Dhataki, Hempushpa- Champak*

Bhasma: *Bhasmgarbha - Shinshapa, Bhasmagandha – Renuka*

Taila: *Tailparnik - Chandan, Tailparnak -Granthiparna, Tailphala – Atasi*

Kantaka: *Pushpakantak - Babbul, Tikshnakantak - Ingudi, Adhokantak -Shatavari, Kubjakantak – Khadir*

Patra: *Triparna - Palaash, Hastaparna -Erand, Udumbaraparn i- Danti, Shvetrekhakintachchhada - Shvet Sariva*

Kanda: *Vidarikanda - Vidarikanda, Varahikanda - Varahikanda, Shvetkanda -Palandu*

Indriya (Sense-based Classification)

Shabda (Sound): *Ghosha - Mahakoshataki, Vadaniya – Vansh*

Sparsha (Touch): *Kharapatra - Shaak, Kharamanjari - Apamarga, Mridupushpa -Shirish*

Roop (Appearance): *Meghvarna - Jambu, Mayurgal Kopamam - Tutth, Shashiprabha -Utpal*

Rasa (Taste): *Tiktak - Nimb, Tikta - Katuka, Katubhadra - Ardra k, Tikta - Katuka, Tikt - Patol*

Gandha (Smell): *Ajagandha - Ajagandha, Uragandha - Vacha, Sugandha – Kundaru*

Panchmahabhoot (Based on Five Elements): *Jalaja – Hijjal; Ambu – Balak; Tejohva – Tejovati; Jyoti – Methika; Anala -Chittrak*

Karmatmaka (Function-based Classification)

Ashmaghna – Pashanbhed; Kasamard –Kasamard; Krumighni – Haridra; Garbhada - Shvet Kantakari; Garbha Patan -Arishtak

Vyavaharopayog (Usage-based Classification)

Arthasadhan – Arishtak; Charmaranga –Aavartaki; Dharmapattan - MarichTulini – Shalmali; Rathadru – Tinisha; Yajniya – Khadir; Lekhyapatra – Taal

2. METHODS

A bibliographic investigations were done byanalyzing articles, Classical Text books, Peerreviewed paper, Google Scholar, Hinari, Pubmed, References books, Worldwide accepted scientific databases.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some important medicinal plant description on the basis of *Nama-Rupa*:

Apamarga^[6]

Apamarga (*Achyranthes aspera* Linn.) grows in abundance (Āghāta) and has flowers at the top (Śikhari), deflexed (Pratyakpuṣpa) with spinous bracteoles and pointed perianth (Adhaḥ Śalyaḥ, Kharamañjarī), which make it difficult to handle (Durgrahā). Leaves have close appressed hairs beneath (mārkatī). The plant is predominantly alkaline (Kṣāramadhyah). It induces sneezing (Kṣavaka), cleanses channels (mārga, Apāmārga), particularly the head, and eliminates poison and other disorders (Mayūraka).

Arjuna^[7]

Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna* W. & A.) is a tree like Sarja which grows in the vicinity of water streams (Nadīsarjaḥ) and has spreading branches (Kakubha). It has white outer bark (Dhavala) and flowers with a honey-like aroma (Madhugandhiprasūnakaḥ). It is a potent drug (Indraduh, Vīravṛkṣaḥ) useful in cardiac disorders (Arjuna).

Ashoka^[7]

Ashoka (*Saraca asoka* Roxb. De Wilde) has coppery young leaves (Tāmrapallavaḥ) and bears pleasant (Kaṅkelī), fragrant (Gandhapuṣpaḥ), and golden yellow flowers (- Hemapuṣpaḥ) in dense clusters (Piṇḍapuṣpaḥ) in spring (Madupuṣpa). It allays the grief of women (Aśokaḥ) and is liked by them (Strīpriyaḥ) as it is useful in gynaecological disorders.

Asvagandha^[7]

Asvagandha (*Withania somnifera* Linn. Dunal.) is a herb with leaves resembling pig's ears (Varāhakarṇī) and having a smell like that of a horse (Gandhapatrī). The root, the part used, also emits a horse's smell (Aśvakandaḥ). It promotes sexual potency (Aśvagandhā) and retains semen (Kañcukā). It also enhances complexion (Kāmarūpiṇī).

Amalaki^[8]

Amalaki (*Embllica officinalis* Gaertn.) is a well-known plant, the fruit of which is used. It is purifying (Amalā), (Amṛtaphalam), maintains youthfulness (Vayaḥsthā), sustains and promotes Dhatus (Dhātrī), prolongs life (Vayasyā). It is beneficial in all ways (Śivam).

Eranda^[8]

Eranda (*Ricinus communis* Linn.) is a fastgrowing plant with large leaves (Hastiparnaka)

facing upwards (Uttānapatrakaḥ). It is embellished with flowers arranged in beautiful racemes like a tiger's tail (Vyāghrapuccha). It is a good remedy for Vatika disorders and pain (Vātāriḥ).

***Katuka*^[8]**

Katuka (*Picrorrhiza kurrooa* Royle ex Benth.) grows by stem cutting (Kāṇḍaruhā). The part used, rhizome, has fishy scales (Matsyaśakalā), is circular on section, blackish on breaking, unpalatable, and bitter in taste like fish bile (Śakulādani). It is choleric in action (Kaṭukā), regenerative (Rohiṇī), purgative, and dispels a number of disorders by strengthening the liver and purifying the blood. It removes Ama and safeguards against diseases (Ariṣṭā).

***Kantakari*^[9]**

Kantakari (*Solanum surattense* Burm. f.) is a common plant available everywhere, thorny (Kaṇṭakārī), difficult to touch (Duḥsparśā), in clusters with small and variegated fruits (Kṣudraphalā). It liquifies coating (Nidigdhiḥkā), cures diseases of the nose, etc., and promotes voice (Vyāghrī).

***Kapikacchu*^[10]**

Kapikacchu (*Mucuna prurita* Hook.) is a climber growing wildly in the rainy season. Its legumes are covered with stiff hairs like those of a monkey (Kapirōmaphalā, Mārkatī) and are shaped like a monkey's tail. The plant is naturally protected by hairs (Ātmaguptā) as they produce intense itching. Its seeds are a potent aphrodisiac (Mārkatī, Vṛṣabhī).

***Karnaja*^[10]**

Karnaja (*Pongamia pinnata* Pierre.) is a tree that, when growing on the banks of a stream, imparts a bluish color to the water (Karañja) with flowers scattered therein (Udakīryaḥ), which are shaped like nails or parched paddy in bunches (Gucchapuṣpakaḥ) and bloom at night Naktamālā). Its leaves are glossy (Ghṛtaparṇakaḥ). The seeds yield oil like ghee (Ghṛtapūrṇa).

***Kirata*^[10]**

Kirata (*Swertia chirata* Buch-Ham.) is a small bitter herb (Bhūnimbaḥ) growing at high altitudes of the Himalayas (Haima), particularly in the Kirata (North-East) region (Kirātaḥ, Kirātatiktā). Bitterness is present in the whole plant, including the stem.

***Kutaja*^[11]**

Kutaja (*Holarrhena antidysenterica* Linn. Wall.) is a small tree (Vṛkṣakaḥ) growing wild (Kuṭajāḥ) in the hilly regions of Kalinga and Vatsaka (Kāliṅga, Vatsaka). It bears fragrant jasmine-like flowers (Girimallikā) in the early rainy season. Its fruits have barley-shaped seeds (Yavaphala). It is a potent bitter drug (Varatiktā) efficacious in diarrhea and dysentery (Saṁgrāhī).

***Khadira*^[12]**

Khadira (*Acacia catechu* Willd.) is a wild thorny tree (Kaṇṭakī), with curved spines. Its wood is regarded as holy and used in sacrifices (Yajñiya, Gāyatrī). It has firm and red heartwood (Sāradrumaḥ) and small leaves (Bālapatra). Twigs are used as a toothbrush (Dantadhāvanah). *Khadira* is a specific drug for leprosy (Kuṣṭhaghnaḥ).

***Guduchi*^[12]**

Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia* (Willd.) Miers ex Hook. f. & Thoms.) is a rope-like (Tantrika) perennial climber (Amṛtā) ascending to the host in a circular way (Kuṇḍalī). It is generated from the stem (Kāṇḍodbhavā) and when cut, it regenerates (Chinnaruhā). In transverse section of the stem, a circular structure is seen (Cakralakṣaṇikā). Leaves have viscid juice like honey (Madhuparṇī) and are eaten by calves (Vatsādani). The seeds are semilunar (Candrahāsā), which is the basis of the name 'Moon-seeds'. *Guduchi* is a potent drug efficacious in fever (Jvaranāsinī) and a wellknown rasayana (Vayaḥsthā). It promotes strength and vitality, counteracts poisons, and protects from disorders (Guḍūcī).

***Palasa*^[12]**

Palasa (*Butea monosperma* Lam. Kuntz.) is a sacred tree (Pūtadruḥ) used in religious rites and sacrifices (Yājñikaḥ, Brahmaṁvṛkṣaḥ, Samidvaraḥ). It grows widely (Vānaprasthaḥ), having characteristic leaves (Palāśa, Parṇam) with three rough leaflets (Kharaparṇa, Triparṇa). Flowers are red (Raktapuṣpakāḥ) and curved (Vakrapuṣpakāḥ), typical of Papilionatae, resembling a parrot's beak (Kimśuka). Seeds are oily (Bījasnehaḥ) and make a potent anthelmintic drug (Kṛmighnaḥ). It also pacifies Vata (Vātaharaḥ). The plant is one of the best sources of alkali (Kṣāraśreṣṭhaḥ).

***Bhallataka*^[12]**

Bhallataka (*Semecarpus anacardium* Linn.) is a tree with irritant sap of the bark (Bhallī). Fruits are obliquely ovoid (Dhanurbīja), seated in a fleshy orange cup (Agnimukhī), and with

oily nuts (Tailabīja). The juice of the fruit produces blisters and swelling on touch (Aruskara, Śophakṛt). It is a highly potent (Vīravṛkṣa) and sharp (Bhallātaka) drug that kills worms and organisms (Kṛmighna) and is useful in tumors (Bhedana), Vatika disorders (Vātāri)

Pippali^[12]

Pippali (*Piper longum* Linn.) is a weak plant growing mostly in damp regions of Magadha and Videha (Māgadhī, Vaidehī), particularly alongside water streams (Upakulyā). Fruits are small berries (Kaṇā) adhered in a solid fleshy spike like an elephant's trunk (Śauṇḍī), black when dried (Kṛṣṇā), and pungent (Ūṣaṇā, Kolā, Tīkṣṇataṇḍulā). It is useful in many disorders and also as Rasayana (Pippalī, Capalā). It is also used in distilleries and bars (Śauṇḍī)s a blackening agent (Rañjaka).

DISCUSSION

In the medieval period, a large number of synonyms accumulated which denoted more than one plant and thus lost accuracy. For example, Samanga and Manjistha are enumerated separately in different mahakasayas in the Charaksamhita. Sushruta also reads them together separately, but later on nighantus confused the issue by making the synonyms. Similar is the case of 'Amṛta' which originally denoted Guduchi but gradually was extended to Haritaki and Amalaki also by the Dhanvantarinighantu and Rajanighantu respectively. 'Amṛtadvaya' of Sushruta Samhita is interpreted as Guduchi and Haritaki by Dalhana. Thus, irrational coining of inaccurate synonyms confused the issue of identification rather than solving it which further resulted in creating a group of so-called controversial plants. In this situation, two-pronged strategy has to be adopted- one is modern times, when plant is described in detail botanically, dependence on synonyms is almost over. Thus in order to restore accuracy and to establish global uniformity only the basonyms should be used parallel to the Latin names scraping all synonyms which became superfluous as they are not required for identification of plants now. Other one is, one has to be selective and cautious and choose only those synonyms which are meaningful and significant for identification.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Basic Classification of the Names and Synonyms are best assigned to plant on Rajnighantu. Dhanvantari Nighantu says- Names, one or many, are assigned to plants according to habitat, form, colour, potency, taste, effect. Synonyms indicate the specific characters of plants which help their proper identification. In the modern time, in order to restore accuracy and to establish global uniformity only the basonyms should be used parallel to identify the

characters of the plants. In this way, one has to be selective and cautious and choose only those synonyms which are meaningful and significant for identification.

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