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Medicinal plants as food - An Ayurvedic preventive healthcare

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ABSTRACT

The sages of Ayurveda explained about the *Aushadha Dravyas* as well as *Ahara Dravyas* elaborately. They listed many medicinal plants along with the vegetables as *Ahara Dravyas* but the use of those are becoming rare now-a-days. We have to collect, identify and analysis these *Dravyas* and implement in present scenario as preventive and curative purpose from every corner of the globe. During the folklore survey conducted in the costal Karnataka, we observed that people are using medicinal plants as food in their daily life in the form of *Tambali* or *Chutney* routinely. They use locally available plant species like *Alternanthera sessilis*, *Eclipta alba*, *Cassia occidentalis*, *Cassia sophera*, *Centella asiatica*, *Bacopa monnieri*, etc. according to its seasonal availability. The selection of these species on every day acts on different tissue systems of the body and prevents the disease. Here we will discuss about such medicinally useful plant species, their properties and preventive aspects, method of collection, preparation, cultivation and propagation in detail.

Key words: Medicinal Plant, Food, Tambali, Chutney, Preventive Healthcare.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the science of life is the longest unbroken health tradition and complete system of medicine based on nature. In Ayurveda, the beautifully explaining about *Ahara* and *Aushadha Dravyas* and *Pathyakalpana* for prevent the disease.^[1]

Pathya is an important concept in Ayurveda and it is beneficial in the maintenance of health of healthy individuals and to manage the diseases. Plants origin sources consider medicinal plants as well as vegetables. Even now traditionally people of costal

belts of Karnataka are using these plants as *Tambali* and *Chutney* along with food routinely.

Ayurveda gives important to collection methods of seasonally available medicinal plants. If we consume these particular plants as food, it will pacify the *Doshas* which are increased in particular season. Everyone can grow some of these medicinal plants near their vicinity and they can prepare *Tambali* and *Chutney* as preventive aspect.

*Hitaasheesyaanmitaasheesyaat
kaalabhojeejitendriyaha |*

*Pashyannoganbahukastan
budhmanvisamaashanaat || (Cha.Ni.6/11)*

Medicinal plants have been identified and used throughout human history. Plants have the ability to synthesize a wide variety of chemical compounds that are used to perform important biological functions and to defend against attack from predators such as insects, fungi and herbivorous mammals. At least 12,000 such compounds have been isolated so far; a number estimated to be less than 10% of the total. Here we discuss about important medicinal plants in

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detail. These are useful in *Tambali* and *Chutney* preparation. Ex -*Eclipta alba*,^[2] *Ficus racemosa*, *Boerhavia diffusa*, *Solanum indicum*, etc.

Name	Parts used	Cultivation and Propagation	Uses
<i>Eclipta alba</i>	whole plant	Seed	hairfall, grayish hair, disease of eyes and head
<i>Ficus racemosa</i>	tender fruit and leaves	stem cutting	wound healing, increase complexion
<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i>	whole plant	stem cutting	urinary disease, anemia, swelling
<i>Hibiscus rosasinensis</i>	Flower	stem cutting	hair tonic, anemia, metrorrhagia, menorrhagia,
<i>Cassia tora</i>	whole plant	Seed	skin diseases, eczema, asthma, antihelminthic
<i>Centella asiatica</i>	Whole plant	Stem cutting	immunomodulator, psychological diseases
<i>Cassia sophera</i>	Tender leaf	Seed	asthma, cough, skin diseases

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Method of preparation

TAMBALI

This is a recipe mostly prepared in rainy season. Usually this is made of different medicinal plants in the surrounding area. It is Very good for health. *Tambali's* are of medium consistency and not as dry as *chutney's*. So, water can be added if required.^[3]

Method

There are 3 different methods for making of *Tambali*.

1. Take healthy part of drugs and make paste of particular drugs and add it into butter milk without frying. Then we should add searing ingredients and salt.
2. In second method, we should take fresh, healthy parts of plants fry them in shallow iron pan with ghee (don't use oil.), make paste and add searing ingredients with salt and mix with buttermilk.
3. In third method we can prepare *Tumbali* without adding buttermilk. The useful part of medicinal plants grinded and then fry with little ghee. Then add some water and searing ingredients and salt.

Searing ingredients

1. Black gram
2. Gram
3. Cumin
4. Asafoetida
5. Curry leaf
6. Indian mustard
7. Black pepper
8. Long pepper

Chutney

Chutneys may be highly spiced or bland and may be prepared from fruits, vegetables or herbs. *Chutney* is normally prepared in a thick consistency. No special seasoning is required for the *Chutney*. But you can season it with mustard seeds, cumin and curry leaves if u wish to.

Chutney goes well with *Dosa*, *Idly* or even *Chapatti* and is a great accompaniment especially when you carry food while travelling.

Method

Take healthy leaf of the medicinal plants and triturate it in *Khalvayantra* or grinder. Then add searing ingredients with salt and Q.S. water.

DISCUSSION

Anenopadeshena Naanausadhi Bhootam Kinchit dravyam Upalabhyate | Taamtaam Yuktimarhamcha Tamtam Abhipretya || (Ch.Su. 26/12)

In Ayurveda medicinal plants have been explained as food. Traditionally people are used to have these medicinal plants as food routinely and prevent from diseases. The plants which are locally available of particular region have to be taken for preparation.

According To Ayurveda explaining about *Rutucharya*. In that the *Doshas* are aggravated or subsided or accumulated in particular season. On the basis of that the plant grows and we should take those plants as preparation.^[4]

The medicinal plants acts on *Dosha, Dhatu, Mala, Srotas* (channel) in a different condition. An instant,

- Rasadhatu - Zingiber officinale.*
- Raktadhatu - Eclipta alba, etc. acts on Dhatu.*
- Mutra - Boerhavia diffusa, etc. acts on Mala.*
- Annavaha Srotas - Zingiber officinale.*
- Pranvahasrotas - Cassia sophera etc. acts on Srotas.*

We should take these medicinal plants on the basis of different system of human body. An example:

- Circulatory system Ex. Eclipta alba
- Integumentary system Ex. Cassia tora
- Musculo Skeletal system Ex. Antidesma menasu
- Reproductive system Ex. Ficus racemosa
- Digestive system Ex. Emilia sonchifolia
- Urinary system Ex. Boerhavia diffusa
- Respiratory system Ex. Solanumtorvum, Cassia sophera
- Nervous system Ex. Centella asiatica

We can take *Tambali* or *Chutney* daily in different days resembles *Saptadhatus* of body. It will

nourishes *Dhatu*s and protect from disease and helping for healthy life. An example:

- Sunday - *Boerhavia diffusa - RasaDhatu*
- Monday - *Solanum torvum - Rakta Dhatu*
- Tuesday - *Centella asiatica - Masa Dhatu*
- Wednesday - *Zingiber officinale - Meda Dhatu*
- Thursday - *Hibiscus rosasinensis - Asthi Dhatu*
- Friday - *Eclipta alba - Majja Dhatu*
- Saturday - *Ficus racemosa - Shukra Dhatu*

CONCLUSION

Uchitoyasyayodeshastajantasyausadhamhitam | Deshenyatraapivasatattattulya Gunajanmacha || (A.S.Su. 23/28-29)

The plants which are locally available of particular region have to be taken for preparation. As it is said, Prevention is better than cure. Here is an attempt to preventive health by using medicinal plants but other things ex. *Vihara*, etc. are also important. Concept of *Ahara* is well established in Ayurveda. Medicinal plants are using in the form of food. It will acts as preventive aspect as well as nourishment to the body. Maintenance of equilibrium of *Doshas* affected by seasonal impact and prevention of the diseases can be regulated by an appropriate use of locally available seasonal medicinal plants.

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