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A short Ayurvedic review on morphology based nomenclature of plants from *Nighantus*

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda *Samhita's* and *Nighantu's*, knowledge about so many herbs are documented in a very systematic and scientific manner. For proper identification of a particular plant, so many synonyms are given which indicate all the silent features of plants. This multinomial nomenclature methodology shows the intellectual power of our ancestors as each name describes a particular feature of plant. In *Dravyaguna Vigyan* there is a major importance of identification of plants because until and unless we are unable to identify plant properly, further studies cannot be carried out. So with the help of synonyms assigned to plants based on their morphological characters, identification can be done at first step.

Key words: Ayurveda, Nomenclature, Synonyms, Nighantu.

INTRODUCTION

Dravyaguna Vigyan can be correlated to pharmacology of modern science. *Naamrupagyan* is a basic sub-topic under which it constitutes detail knowledge of drug. A particular plant can have a group of synonyms but among that too, each name will give a good picture on the various aspects of plant like morphology, habit, habitat, qualities, biological actions, therapeutic uses and so on. Primarily naming system was designed to select a plant for medicinal purpose as in *Samhita* period. In this period names pertaining to qualities, specific actions, therapeutic actions were stressed out. From *Dravyaguna* point of

view the nomenclature which deals with the taxonomical identification of drug is taken into consideration for this review article.

In *Vedic Kala* there was less number of known drugs (*Rig-Veda 67, Yajurveda 81 and Atharvaveda 289*) which get increased in *Samhita Kala*. In this medieval period nomenclature based on therapeutic uses was in practice. Thereafter in *Nighantu Kala* various synonyms based on morphology, therapeutic uses, pharmacological actions etc. were assigned to a particular plant.^[9]

METHODOLOGY

Study of this review article is compiled from various Ayurvedic texts, scientific journals and research papers and all available literatures related to the subject.

Here some of synonyms of some plants are described here;

1. *Shankpushpi* ^[1]

- *Shankpushpi* - Its flowers has a shape like conch shell.
- *Ksheerpushpi* - Color of flowers is as white as milk.

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2. Jyotishmati^{[2],[5]}

- *Parawatpadi* - It has spots on its stem same as pigeon has it on it's legs.
- *Kakandaki* - Its fruit resembles with an egg of crow.

3. Vacha^[3]

- *Shadgrantha* - It has 6 knots at its root
- *Golomi* - It is hairy same as of cow.

4. Jatamansi^{[1],[4]}

- *Jatamansi* - Fleshy tuber with matted hairs.
- *Sulomsha* - Too much hairy
- *Tapaswani* - Because of matted hairs like saints.

5. Rasana^[5]

- *Rasna* - Its leaves has shape like tongue

6. Guggulu^[1]

- *Kaushik* - Because of developing in the axis of tree.
- *Mahishaksha* - Resembles like an eye of buffalo.

7. Eranda^[4]

- *Panchangula* - Its leaves has five fingers like structure
- *Vyaghrapuchha* - Its flower spica resembles like tail of tiger.

8. Tagar^[6]

- *Nat* - It will grow up and bow down back towards earth.
- *Kutil* - Its stem will not grow straight but will be tilted from every angle.

9. Muchkunda^[7]

- *Kshatravriksha* - Have leaves like armor

10. Bhurjpatra^[8]

- *Bahuput* - Bark which has so many layers.
- *Lekhya Patrak* - Barks which is like paper to write.

11. Vatsanaabha^[1]

- *Vatsanaabha* - Its roots resembles like umbilical cord of calf.

12. Ketaki^[2]

- *Krakacchhad* - Leaves are dentate like axe.
- *Suchipushpa* - Flower is pointed like a needle.

13. Karanja^{[1],[4]}

- *Guchapushpaka* - Flowers which originates in bunch.
- *Snigdhapatra* - Leaves which are smooth and shine.

14. Khadir^{[3],[7]}

- *Shuknasa* - Spines are like beak of parrot.
- *Baalpatra* - Leaves are very small.

15. Kakoudumbara^[1]

- *Jaghnephala* - As fruits grows at lower side of tree.
- *Moolkarkati* - Fruits grow near roots like cucumber.
- *Kasthoudunbara* - Fruits are hard as wood.

16. Aaragwadh^[8]

- *Deerghaphala* - Which has long fruits.
- *Swarnabhushana* - Having yellow colored gold like flowers.
- *Chaturangula* - Having nodular dimension of four fingers.

17. Sairaiyaka^[1]

- *Sahchara* - Plants will be grown in a group.
- *Jhinti* - Herb with spines.

18. Chakramarda^[1]

- *Aidgaja* - Small in shape.
- *Padmaat* - As it grows in rainy season or near water.
- *Meshlochana* - Leaves will have shape like eyes of sheep.

19. Priyaal^{[1],[7]}

- *Kharskandha* - Its stem will be rough.
- *Bahuvalkala* - Having thick bark
- *Sannakadru* - Tree will be bow downwards

20. Arjuna^{[8],[9]}

- *Dhawala* - Outer bark is white in colour.
- *Veervriksha* - Wood will be very hard and heavy.

21. Taambula^[1]

- *Naagvallari* - It will grow like a snake.
- *Saptashira* - Have seven veins on leaves.

DISCUSSION

With the help of above some examples it is tried to explain that how keenly our *Acharyas* has observed everything and how we can utilize their knowledge. If some confusion arises at any place in identifying any drug then with the help of morphological synonyms we can differentiate our confused drugs.

In *Dhanwantari Nighantu* synonyms are assigned to a plant on the basis of their habitat, form, colour, potency, taste, effect etc. and in *Raaj Nighantu* there are 7 basis on which synonyms are assigned i.e. *Rudhi*, *Prabhava*, *Desha*, *Lanchana*, *Upama*, *Veerya*, *Itarahavya*.

But among this entire basis being familiar with the synonyms based on plant morphological characteristics is important from identification point of view. Because, when ever we do a survey or moves out in search of plants, microscope and other tools cannot be carried along with.

CONCLUSION

If we are aware of the synonyms which are given in our classics about morphological characteristics, we could be able to identify various known and even though some of plants which we see usually but unaware of its proper identity.

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