



REVIEW ARTICLE

ANUKTA DRAVYA, LET THEM NOT REMAIN ANUKTA (UNDOCUMENTED): A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Medicinal plants are scientifically documented in *Ayurvedic* literature based on sound fundamentals of *rasa* (Taste), *guna* (Property), *virya* (Potency), *vipaka* (Metabolism) and *prabhava* (Specific action). *Vedic* to *Samhita* and *Samhita* to *Nighantu kaal* (Lexicon period) evidenced the chronological up gradation of medicinal plants. Inclusion of new *dravyas* (Drugs) has been the tradition of *Ayurveda*. *Nighantukaras* especially played a great role in this respect e.g. Introduction of *Chopchini* (*Smilax china* Linn.) by *Bhavmishra* for *firanga roga* (Syphilis) etc. However, many folklore and exotic plants existing in India have yet not been stated in *Ayurvedic Samhitas* or *Nighantus*, such are termed as ‘*anukta dravya*’. These may include *dravyas* like *Balamkheera* (*Kigellia pinnata* (Jaeq.) DC.), *Nagphani* (*Opuntia elatior* Mill.), *Paniya Gambhara* (*Trewia nudiflora* Linn.), *Dandotpala* (*Tridax procumbens* Linn.) etc. Day by day important medicinal plants are depleting but fortunately we have dense folklore herbs which should be thoroughly explored, studied and included in *Ayurvedic* pharmacopoeia.

Key words: *Anukta dravya, Ayurveda, Nighantu, Ethno-botany*

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of *Ayurveda* is “*Prayojanam chasya swasthasya swasthya rakshanam aturasya vikarprashmanam cha*” i.e. to protect the health of the healthy and to alleviate disorders in diseased ^[1]. *Ayurveda* has many unique means to maintain the health and to cure the diseased conditions like plant preparations, animal products, mineral preparations etc. Relatively plant preparations are maximally used in *Ayurveda*. Hence the knowledge of medicinal plants becomes essential in *Ayurveda*. Since the *Vedic* times medicinal plants were properly documented. *Atharva Veda* documents the use of about 100 plants around. The number exponentially increased in *Sushruta samhita* period where the number of medicinal plants jumped to 573. The tradition was obeyed in *Nighantu* (lexicon) period too. Infact *Nighantu* period added a great number of valuable exotic as well as folklore plants. Inclusion of *Chopchini* (*Smilax china* Linn.), *Anjir* (*Ficus carica* Linn.), *Akarkarambha* (*Anacyclus pyrethrum* DC.), *Jayapala* (*Croton tiglium* Linn.) etc. are some of its example. Until 17th A.D. the number went to more than 700 on an average. However 21st century lacked behind in this journey.

The word *anukta* literally means unsaid or unstated. In context of *Ayurveda* anything which is not mentioned in classics of *Ayurveda*

is *anukta* (unstated or undocumented). It can be a disease or *dravya* (drug). According to *Charaka* there is no any such substance in this world which cannot be used as medicine i.e. each and every thing existing in this world work as medicine if used rationally ^[2]. As such we shouldn't confine ourselves in the periphery of knowledge of medicinal plants available in *Brihatrayi*, *Laghutrayi* etc. rather expand it by studying *anukta dravyas* surrounding us.

It is estimated that up to four billion people (representing 80% of world's population) living in the developing countries rely on herbal medicinal products as a primary source of healthcare needs ^[3]. WHO has appreciated the importance of medicinal plants for public health care and has framed guidelines to support the developing nations in their efforts to formulate national policies on traditional medicines and to study their potential usefulness as therapeutic agents ^[4]. This has increased the responsibility of *Ayurvedic* experts. It is the high time to work on *anukta dravya* when the whole world is looking at us primarily because of our knowledge of medicinal plants.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

It is a conceptual research. For this study various texts of *Ayurveda* including *Samhitas*, *Nighantus* and books on medicinal plants have

been consulted. Internet has been explored for recent research activities.

Definition

“**N – UKATAM – ANUKTAM**” i.e. which has not been said or stated or documented (*ukta*) in *Ayurvedic* texts. Thus *anukta dravya* means all those folklore plants which do exist in India but are not mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classical literature which include *Brihatrayi*, *Laghutrayi* and *Nighantus*.

Need

- Many important medicinal plants have been red listed and many are on the way. *Anukta dravyas* may **solve the problem of scarcity of medicinal plants**.
- We are in era of newly emerging diseases, *anukta dravyas* may help in finding their solution.
- *Anukta dravya* can pave a way to the discovery of novel compound.
- Ethno-botanical studies carry a great importance in *Ayurveda*. *Charak* clearly directs to collect information about known and unknown *dravyas* from forest dwellers, shepherds, tribes etc. ^[5]. Their serious studies may expand our knowledge of herbs.
- Above all, it is our duty to keep introducing new *dravyas* in *Dravyaguna Vigyan* so as to maintain the *sashwata* (everlasting) feature of *Ayurveda*.

Probable methods to study and include *anukta dravya* in ayurvedic pharmacopoeia

1. Collecting primary information about the *anukta dravya* through folklore and extensive study of literature.
2. Identification with the help of botanical and pharmacognostical studies.
3. Nomenclature as per criteria laid down by different *Nighantus* esp. *Raj nighantu*.
4. Evaluation of *rasa* (Taste), *guna* (Property), *viryas* (Potency), *vipaka* (Metabolism) and *prabhava* (Specific action) in healthy volunteers.
5. Toxicity studies in animals.
6. Pharmacological studies.
7. Clinical studies.
8. Evaluation and validation of ethno-botanical claims.
9. Inclusion in *Ayurvedic* pharmacopoeia of India.

Example of some *anukta dravya*

Hundreds of plants are existing in our country which surely are therapeutically important though yet not been included in our classics. Folklore usage of plants in day to day life and for minor as well as major ailments can prove of immense help to medical science. Table: 1 provides a list of examples of some *anukta dravyas* as reported by Kusuma and Joshi (2010).

Table no. 1: Examples of some *anukta dravyas*

S.no.	Local name	Botanical name	Family
1.	<i>Raat ki rani</i>	<i>Cestrum nocturnum</i> Linn.	Solanaceae
2.	<i>Khogar, Kaikar</i>	<i>Garuga pinnata</i> Roxb.	Scrophulariaceae
3.	<i>Arogyappacha</i>	<i>Trichopus zeylanicus</i> Gaertn.	Trichopodiaceae
4.	<i>Poinsetta</i>	<i>Euphorbia pulcherrima</i> Wild.ex Koltzsch.	Euphorbiaceae
5.	<i>Ban tambaku</i>	<i>Solanum erianthum</i> D. Don.	Solanaceae
6.	<i>Jonkmari</i>	<i>Anagallis arvensis</i> Linn.	Primulaceae
7.	<i>Nagphool</i>	<i>Gmelina asiatica</i> Linn.	Verbenaceae

Important works on *anukta dravya*

- Kusuma and Joshi (2010) have done nomenclature of 10 *anukta dravya* present in the peripheries of Varanasi, U.P. Principles of *Naamrupagyanam* (basonyms and synonyms) have been followed in nomenclature [6].
- Haristha and Niteshwar (2013) conducted a pilot study on *rasa* (taste quality) determination of *anukta dravya Bulbophyllum neilgherrense* Wight [7].
- Pushpan and Nishteshwar (2014) conducted a preliminary study in healthy volunteers to assess the *rasa* (taste) of *Leonotis nepetifolia* (L.) R. Br. [8].
- Kulkarni et al (2016) conducted a conceptual review of olive oil properties and *panchbhotic*

composition as per *Ayurveda* considering it as *anukta dravya* [9].

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda describes usage of many medicinal plants. Multiple medicinal plants are in folklore use with satisfactory results. Hence to tackle newly emerging diseases study of *anukta dravya* becomes essential. Table 1 shows some important *anukta dravya*. Experts of *Ayurveda*, taxonomy and traditional healers should come together to give a proper place to *anukta dravya* in *Ayurvedic pharmacopoeia*.

CONCLUSION

India is blessed with dense plant population carrying medicinal importance. Most of them are well documented in *Ayurvedic classics*. Growing civilization and urbanization has threatened the plant wealth. Many important species are declared endangered now. Scientific study and documentation of folklore and exotic plants of medicinal importance

becomes the need of hour not only to remove the problem of their scarcity but also to get a deeper insight of their knowledge.

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