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A Critical Review of Logical Aspects Related to *Dravya Sangrahana* (Collection of Drugs) w.s.r to *Audbhida Dravyas* (Herbal Drugs)

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ABSTRACT

Human beings are in the constant effort to live their life free of diseases. Diseases are dreadful not only in the physical level, but also extend adding to psychological stress. *Ayurveda* plays key role in eradicating diseases of the sick and maintaining the health of healthy individuals. It is mainly fulfilled with the aid of *Dravyas* in the form of *Oushadha* and *Ahara* which are administered carefully. *Dravya Sangrahana*- the collection of drugs finds significance with respect to its utility in preparing various medicinal preparations or formulations. An extensive description of principles and methodologies related with collection of drugs is available in Ayurvedic classics. Here an attempt is made to review the logical aspects related with primary collection of drugs, emphasizing those of *Audbhida Dravyas*.

KEYWORDS

Dravya, Dravya sangrahana, Audbhida dravyas



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INTRODUCTION

Dravyas in the form of *Ahara* and *Oushadha* are mainly used in *Ayurveda* to treat the sick and to maintain the health. *Dravyas* can be divided into *Jaangama* (animal origin), *Audbhidha* (herbal origin) and *Paarthiva* (minerals and metals)¹. While collecting these *Dravyas* for various medicinal preparations our *Acharyas* advise certain norms. *Ayurveda* highlights the importance of *Desha* (land) from where these *Dravyas* are collected. Also, it emphasizes the proper method and perfect conduct of the person who procures *Dravyas* for medicinal uses.

Desha Pareeksha:

Prashasta Desha gives account of suitability of the *Desha* (land) intended for *Dravya Sangrahana* (collection of drugs)².

- ✓ *Dravyas* which have got their origin in *Jaangala* or *Saadharana Desha* are suitable for various medicinal preparations.
- ✓ *Desha* should be unploughed, plain, endowed with fertile soil and clean.
- ✓ These particular *Deshas* should be well exposed to sunlight, cold and rain according to various *Ritus*.
- ✓ Availability of ample quantity of water and sufficient wind is indispensable for proper growth of the plants.

✓ Soil should be blackish, whitish, golden or reddish in colour with dominance of *Madhura Rasa*.

✓ *Deshas* which are having the growth of *Kusha, Rohisha*, etc are ideal.

Aprashasta Desha- *Deshas* unfit for *Dravya Sangrahana*.

- *Deshas* which are having *Shmashaana* (burial/cremation ground), *Chaitya* (Buddha Devalaya/sacred place/ sacred tree), *Devalaya* (worship place), *Sabha* (a crowded/gathering/public place), *Shwabhra* (pits/holes), *Aarama* (garden), *Vatmeeka* (Anthill), *Aaghata Bhoomi* (slaughterhouse) etc³.
 - *Deshas* which are surrounded with *Sikata* (sand), *Ooshara* (salty soil), big trees, etc.
 - *Deshas* having scarcity of water resources (irrigation)².
- Bheshaja/Dravya Pareeksha:***
- Prashasta Bheshaja/Dravya*** gives account of *Dravyas* having desired qualities for medicinal uses.
- ✓ *Dravya* should have all qualities w.r.t the *Kaala* (season)³.
 - ✓ It should attain sufficient growth and to be excelled with proper *Rasa, Veerya, Gandha*, etc².
 - ✓ Root of the plant should be deep and thicker³.



✓ Preferably *Oushadha Dravyas* are to be collected from northern regions².

Aprashasta Bsheshaja/Dravya- *Dravyas* unfit for medicinal uses.

- *Dravyas* whose *Rasa, Varna, Gandha, Prabhava*, etc. got deteriorated by the effects of unwholesome seasonal variations, sunlight, forest fire, water, wind, insects/pests, poison, weapon, etc.^{2,3}.
- *Dravya* dominant of a particular *Rasa* should be discarded³.

Dravya Sangrahana Vidhi- Method of collection of *Dravyas* for medicinal uses:

For medicinal uses the collection of *Dravya* also should be in accordance with certain norms. Despite having desired qualities (*Prashasta Bsheshaja*) and got its origin from an ideal land (*Prashasta Desha*), a *Dravya* becomes unfit for medicinal purpose if it is collected in a faulty way by a ***Dravya Sangrahaaka*** (the person who collects *Dravya*).

✓ *Dravya Sangrahaaka* should be bounded with good conducts and practice of hygiene².

✓ Prior to *Dravya Sangrahana* he should follow *Upavaasa* (fasting as the part of rituals/ free from sins), offer salutation to *Devata, Ashwins, Gow* (cow), *Brahmanaas*, etc².

✓ While collecting *Dravya*, he should face either towards East or North directions,

wearing white clothes².

DISCUSSION

Acharya appeals *Jaangala* or *Saadharana Deshas* for *Dravya Sangrahana*. As *Aanoopa Desha* is marshy and its inhabitants are also prone to get affected by contaminated water and microbes, he might have excluded *Aanoopa Desha*. Distribution of equal amount of water, wind and sunlight can be ensured for plants living in *Samabhoomi* (plain land). Same is impossible for plants living in *Shwabhra* (pits). Praise for the quality of the soil is evident from the description of various *Acharyas*. Quality of soil signifies its consistency which ensures proper plant growth without compromising its fertility. Contrary to this the plant parts from plants inhabiting in damper and decayed soil should be discarded because of the tendency to quick perish of the plant part is alarming. Desert lands are dry in nature due to scarcity of water and subsequent nutritional deficit can be made out easily. Such malnourished plant parts collected from desert lands become unfit for medicinal uses⁴.

Possibility of microbial contamination can be suspected in the plants dwelling in the vicinity of burial/cremation grounds and slaughterhouse. Irrational collection of



plant parts inhabiting the worship places, *Chaitya* (Buddhist temple/sacred tree), etc is totally against the sanctity maintained in such places. Sacred places up to an extent preserve natural resources including the inhabiting plant species. Moreover, the purpose of maintaining plant species in such sacred lands is for rituals. Plant parts collected from public places and crowded areas are more exposed to pollution. Their medicinal values reduce drastically due to contact with various chemical pollutants and by unhygienic human activities. Plants growing near anthills (*Vatmeeka*) are deteriorated badly by ants or insects. Dominance of *Madhura Rasa* in the soil enhances the suitability of plant part to the human body⁵. Compared to other *Rasas*, *Madhura Rasa* is considered as best for enhancing strength of the body⁶.

Adequate amount of qualitative and quantitative water can be drawn out from the description of '*Pradakshina Jala*'. *Acharya Arunadatta* interprets the same as '*Anukoola Jala*'⁷. Indubitably contaminated water produces ill effects to the plant and thereby makes the plant part unfit for medicinal use. Proper traversal of roots can be aided by the unctuousness and softness of the soil. It gives light to consider alluvial soil for productive growth of plants. Optimum level of soil fertility can be

ensured by the presence of *Kusha*, *Rohisha*, etc. grass varieties⁸.

Unless the surface soil gets proper sunlight, shade and rain water it cannot yield proper nourishment to the plants. Altered *Varna*, *Rasa*, etc. of *Dravyas* and those affected badly by insects, poison, weapon, over exposed sunlight, forest fire, flood, etc. pertinently reduce their medicinal values. Seasonal norms pertaining to *Dravya Sangrahana* resolve supreme potency of collected plant part. *Dravya Sangrahana* from the northern regions is appreciated. It can be comprehended from *Acharya Vagbhata's* description of glorifying *Soumya* and *Pathya Gunas* of *Dravyas* belong to Himalayan regions⁹. These *Gunas* bestow strength to the body.

Good conducts and moral values of *Dravya Sangraha* have been emphasized. If he lacks these qualities, he may tend to collect *Dravyas* having inferior qualities and from doomed areas. Devotion to the God and observances attributed to him help in maintaining the ethical values related with *Dravya Sangrahana*. Similarly his hygienic practices are also crucial with respect to human utilization for betterment of health. It is believed that, the eastern direction belongs to Sun and Northern to Moon¹⁰. Both Sun and Moon can be understood as two governing factors of the entire universe¹¹. Thus it may be advised to



collect Dravyas facing their directions as a token of devotion.

CONCLUSION

Dravya Sangrahana described in *Ayurvedic* literatures paves an excellent way to collect Dravyas for their successful administration in the form of various formulations. As we are living in the era witnessing deforestation all around, human efforts should definitely be inculcated to facilitate indiscrete availability of herbal drugs. This can be fulfilled to a larger extent by selecting lands which is in accordance to the desired qualities (*Prashasta Desha*) and to promote cultivation of medicinal plants. Thus the plant parts having desired qualities (*Prashasta Bhesaja*) can be collected following the related norms.



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