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### Classification of Plants in Ancient Indian Science

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Classification of the plants is called as Taxonomy and when we refer the history of classification according to the modern or western science then we find that this branch is originated only since 200-250 b.c. And always credit is given to Theophrastus and Aristotle as the beginner in this branch. With this origin we find that the taxonomy was changing its concepts and basis and hence the classification was also changing. It traveled from herbs, shrubs, tree, to oil yielding, fiber yielding etc. Then it came on artificial system from that to natural system and today its base is phylogenetic which is only imaginary, unpractical and no utility. Much more voluminous works are being done to the western and modern science and the use of it to the mankind is very less. But for each subject we must also refer to the eastern and ancient Indian science. In ancient India much more literature was available on the various sciences. But because of the colonization of the western people much more 01 is destroyed. Very few is available and in that we can get the ample/ knowledge more advance and useful than the todays. Vedas are the oldest books in the world's library and the only source of perfect knowledge and this is the admitted fact. The period of Vedas goes back to the origin of the universe or the earth and it is shown as 1,97,29,39,079 in 1980 according to Dayananda on the basis of Vedas and vedic literature. This is also supported by the geological findings. So if we get the reference of plants and classification of plants then the credit should be given to them being older and ancient. In Vedas there are so many names of the plants, classification, and use. Atharv Veda is full of the knowledge of plants and their use specially on human diseases. In Yajurveda also the names of the plants originated from veda only and deals with the plants, their contents, their use in the human diseases, their collection, preservation, and classification. Their basis of the classification was the morphology but much more trace was given to the contents which they call it Dravya. And these dravyas are having their properties and hence can be used as medicine (Aushadhi)

**Classification based on Morphology:-** In Yajurveda the plants are broadly classified on the basis of morphology of the flower and fruits.

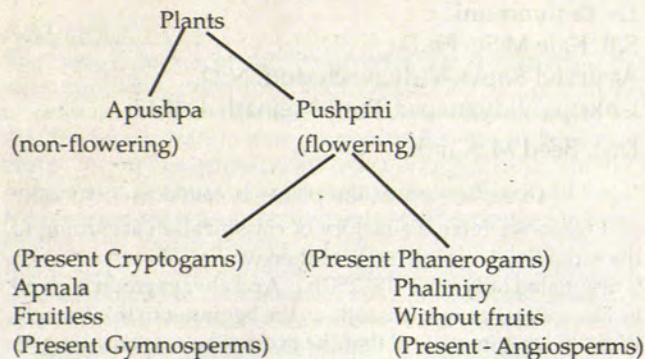
In this - it is clearly stated that the Bruhaspati (God) has created the various types of plants for the animal kingdom and they can use the mas the food aswell as medicin. The types of the plants or the goupes of the plants mentioned in this mantra are as follows.

1. Apuspa :- Non - flowering.



2. Pushpini :- Flowering, With flowers.
3. Aphala :- Fruitless, without fruits.
4. Phalinirya :- With fruits.

So on this basis plants can be classified as follows



So in the vedic period they were knowing the flower, the fruit and the various plants and their use. They also gave that these plants are created or produced by the God for the animals and these are not evolved and not originated automatically from the non-living things.

**Other references from Vedas:-**

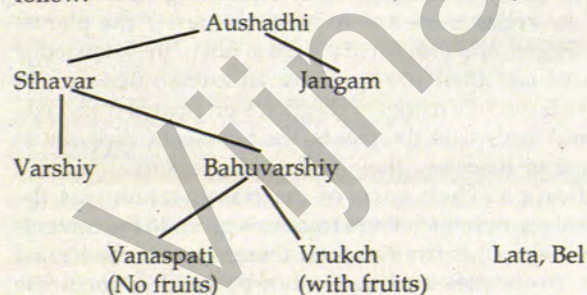
On Colour Swarup Gun, Utpattisize medicinal use the plants are classified in Athraveda 8-7-1,4,6,7,10,9,17,12,13,27,20

All these clearly indicate that the plants, their places, contents and uses were known to the ancient Indian science. The plant is called as Taru means which helps in overcoming or curing the diseases.

The plants are used as because of the contents that are present and that is called as Dravya and hence the dravya itself is called as medicine.

In the later period Charak and others added much to this branch.

classification of Aushadhi:- The aushadhi are classified as follow.



So here the period of life and habit is also considered for classification

Inter relationship with Panchmahahoor:- In ancient Indian science the attempt was also made to show the inter relationship of the so called the contents of the plants to the Panch maha bhoot which are present in the universe or around the plants and also showed the relationship with properties. Panchmahabhoota are Ap, Tej, Vayu, Akash and pruthavi.

Classification of the dravya and plants:- The draya are hav-

ing their own properties and characters hence they may differ from each other.

In modern science we consider the chemical contents and know the physical and chemical properties but in ancient Indian science the study was more deep than today's. According to them dravya are having five properties i.e. 1) Ras 2) Gun 3) Virya 4) Vipak 5) Prabhv (Shakti)

- 1) Ras:- Ras are six 1) Madhur  
2) Khata 3) Namkin 4) Tikha  
5) Kadava 6) Kasaila ( Turat)

These Functions in two directions According to their Properties separately or in combined state.l

Increases decreases	Rases	Removes
Kaf	Madur, Amla and Kharat	Vat and Pitt.
Vat	Tikt, Katu and Turat	Kaf and Pitt.
Pitt	Amla Kharat and Katu	Vat and Kaf.

From this it is clear that they were Knowing that rasas can increase or decrease the Tridosh i.e. Vat, Kaff and Pitt.

2) Gunas:- They are having the relation with the Panchmahhootas of the nature and accordingly the plant will be showing the properties. The Panchmahhootas are having Laghu, Guru, Snigadh, Rukkch, Tikchan gunns of the Akash, pruthvi, Jal, Vayu and Agni respectively. That is why the plants or the contents(Dravya) are having these gunas.

Gunas:-

Sr. No	Gun kark	Relation to Panch mahbhoot	Functions	Nashak
1.	Laghu	Akakh	Kafnashak	
2.	Guru	Pruthvi	Vatnashak	Kafkark
3.	Snigad	Jhal	Vat	kaf
4.	Rukkch	Vayu	kaf	Vat
5.	Tikchar	Agni	Vat/and Kaf	Pitt.

Apart from these the other guns are dipan, panchan, Vaman, Stambhan, chedan Shaman, anuloman, malanam, bhedan, rechan etc, (20 by Sushrut)

3) Virya:- The energy or power, which carries out the actions is called as virya.

Kinds of virya:- There are only two types of the virya.

- 1) Ushna 2) Shit

Virya	Nashak	Karak increases
Ushna virya shit virya	Vat and Kaf Pitt	Pitt Vat and Kaf



4) **Vipak:-** Vipak is the end Product in the digestion of shad ras.

Sr. No.	Ras	Vipak	Functions Karhk, Vardhak	Nashak
1.	Madhur	madhur & Sltly	Kaf	Vat, Pitt.
2.	Amla	Amla	Pitt	Vat, Kf.
3.	Katu, Tikt Turat	Katu	Vat	Kaf, Pitt

The viapak are three only Madur, Amla, Katu.

5) **Prabhv:-** Prabhav is beyond the ras, gun, Virya and vipak. The plants or dravyas having same rasas may not have same prabhav. So prabhav is on's speciality. For example Danti and Chitrak is not virechak. This is because of the prabhav. The root of sahdevi when kept in head removes jwar is because of prabhv.

**Interactions of the Ras, Gun, Vipak, virya and Prabhav:-** The aushdhi having opposute Gun, When mixed, The stronger will surpass the weaker as Vipak supresses ras and prabhav to virya, ras, and vipak. virya supresses ras, vipak.

So plants are having these properties and hence they are classified on the basis of the properties in to the various groups. The plants coming in the same group will be having generally the same characters hence in the absence of one plant in a particular place the other plant available in that area and coming from the same group can be used. Description of the plants according to Ayurveda:- apart from morphology.

**Degree of action towards tridosh:-** Any plant, aushdhi or dravya may have the three degrees of action towards the tridosh such as shamak, nashak and karak. So the plant will be described in this terms. as follow.

Aushadhi	tridosh vat pitt kaf	degree of action. Shanak, nashak karak
Susbania gradiflora.	vat Pitt Kaf	Karak Nashak Nashak

Apart from these the dravya or aushadhi can decrease or increase the various pathological troubles such as Shoth, Kas, Shwas, Kust, trushna, krimi, bharam, shram etc. So all these points are taken into account in the ancient Indian science and hence the plants are also classified into the group like virechan gan, vaman gan, paoshtik gan, jivaniya fan, kafnashak gan, prasaraniya gan, vatarak gan, sarivadi gan, shamadi gan, dipaniya gan, pitt nashak gan etc. Nearly 42 ganas are described. charak classified in 50 ganns or varg. Sushrut classified into 37 ganas. Wegbhat described the gundharm. Nighantu before more than 1000 years b.c described the plants and their properties and ganas.

Dhanwantari also contributed to this and the contibution is Dhanwari Nighantu. In this the plants or aushadhi are grouped in 10 vargas. These are as 1. Guduchadi varg 2. Shatpupadi varg 3. Chandanadi varg 4. Karbiradi varg 5. Amradi varg 6. Kanchanadi varg 7. Mishrakandi varg 8. Mishrak varg 9. Vishopvish varg 10. Vishpra varg. Bhavmishra also contributed to this knowledge and gave Bhavprakash in this aushadhi are classified into various varg. Later on Raj Madanpal has written Madn vinot nighantu

(Kosh granth) and classified in 14 vargas. These classifications clearly show that they were taking into account the locality, habit, morphology, habitat, the contents of it, the gunas and the midicinal use of the same. They gave less importance to the mere mopholohgy and gave much importance to the gunnas and the properties. They also were knowing that the gunas are because of the God or Natural and no body should try to test these. Some properties are beyond the properties of the chemical substances in it. Hence the idea of chemotaxonomy which is supposed to be modern is still primitive and can not serve the mankind. The Ayurveda taught the knowledge of collection, identification, and use of the plants as medicine. Not only that but Ayurveda also taught the priciple of prevention is better than cure to the people and so as to bring the same into practic Pakshashtra is developed. Hence the Knowledge of the Ancient Indian people is still far ahead of the modern Botany.

#### Summary.

In Aciend Indian literature including Vedas, and the books on Ayurveda the knowledge of plants and their medicinal use is present. Today's broad classification is also seen in vedas. Here the plants are classified into the Apushpa, Pushpa, Aphala and Saphala. Which is e uivalent to the cryptogams and Phanerogams and further Gymnosperms and Angiosperms. The Athrva veda and the books on Ayurved are full of the description of plants, their contents and their use in the arradication and control of diseases. They also considered the habit and the age or the life period for the classification. They plants contain the dravya which is also called as medicine or Aushadhi. Dravya are having Ras, Gun, Vipak, Virya and Prabhav. Each one of these is having its own properties. It is also showed that the Dravyas are having interrelationship with the Panchmahabhootas and carry out the functions related to the panchmahabhootar. The dravyas of the plants can remove or increase the tridosh i.e. Vat, Pitt and Kaf. Not only this but dravyas are also having other gunas such as dipan, pachan, virechan, vaman, etc. The ancient Indian people were also knowing about the prabhav which is not the subject of today's chemistry. They also declared that nobody should try to test these gunas or properties in the laboratory because these are natural and all can not be tested in laboratory. With this knowledge and keeping in view the medicinal properties the plants are also classified in to the various groups or the ganas or vargas. in the absence of any plant from that particular group any other plant from the same group. Plants are also described as laghu, guru, snigd, rukkch and tikchan on the basis of panchmahabhootiya relation. From this it is quite clear that the knowledge of the ancient Indian people about the plants, their contents, their use as medicine and the classification was much ahead of the today's Botany and its aystems of classification. Their classification is more correct minute, useful and perfect and more usevfl than any systems. The idea chemotaxonomy is also nothing before the nciend classification.

Hence they use to serve more to the human kind.

#### REFERENCES:-

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