



REVIEW ON ANCIENT METHODS USED FOR IDENTIFICATION OF MEDICINAL PLANTS W.S.R. TO RAJ NIGHANTU.

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Abstract:

In Ayurveda a number of herbs are used for treatment of various diseases as well as for maintenance of health. Many years ago plants were like family members to the people. The plants were essential part of their life. As they were so close to the plants there was no need to develop special identification methods. There was no system of morphological description of plants as done in now a day.

But they used many synonyms for one herb to describe its habitat, morphology, properties and therapeutic uses. The method of description of plants is very impressive. In a two to four lined shlokas a whole medicinal plant is described with its all aspects. These shlokas were written after keen observation and practical findings.

In order to understand and to take the benefits of the various medicinal plants one should study the synonyms keenly.

The present paper deals with the review of ancient methods of used for identification of medicinal plants w.s.r. Raj nighantu.

Key words: Ayurveda, herbs, shlokas, therapeutic uses, Raj Nighantu.

Introduction:

The use of herbal drugs is increasing day by day because of their amazing medicinal properties. In the ancient Ayurvedic literature many herbs are described. As that time the people were very close to the plant there was no need to explain their morphology in detail. They identified and described the plants with the help of synonyms. The synonyms indicate the specific feature of plant. For instance the name karbudara for kanchanar indicates the variegated character of one of the petal.

Synonyms are in use since the period of vadic nighantu. Synonyms were the only tool the ancients used to describe plants so we observe that synonyms assigned to plants are very meaningful.

They meant a lot. The synonyms indicate the plant's traditional name, habitat, potency, effect, trade or commercial transaction. The synonyms served the purpose well for which they used.

It is observed that many synonyms indicates original source of plants. For example Dravidi for ela , Kairat for kiratatikta. Some indicate commercial transaction. For example Balhika is the synonym used for hingu as Balhika was important trade centre at ancient times.

Some synonyms indicate the potency of the drug while some indicate its therapeutic use. For instance synonym shitavalkal indicates the cooling property of udumbara. Krumighna For vidang indicates its use in worms.

Some synonyms are based on simile. synonyms based on simile helped them to identify the plants. For example swarnang for aaragwadha indicates the golden yellow colour of flowers.

According to Raj. Nighantu names and synonyms given to plants on the following seven basis.

1. Rudhi (traditional use)
2. Prabhav (effect)
3. Desyokti (habitat)
4. Lanchana (Morphological characters)
5. Upama (simile)

6. virya (poency)

7. Itarahvaya (names prevalent in other regions or due to othr factors).

In order to understand and to take the benefits of the various medicinal plants one should study the synonyms keenly.

Here for this article synonyms of about 150 plants are studied and divided on seven basis mentioned in Raj nighantu. For synonyms based on simile pictures are used to explain the similarity. Efforts have done to review and study the texts keenly.

Synonyms based on rudhi (traditional use).

Sr. No.	Name	Plant.
1	Aatarushak	Adhatoda vasica
2	Guduchi	Tinospora cordifolia
3	Tuntuk	Oroxylum indicum
4	Kinihi	Albizia procera
5	Bandhuka	Pentapetes phoenicea
6	parish	Thespepsia populoides
7	Karvi	Nigella sativa
8	Somavalli	Sarcostemma brevistigma

Synonyms based on prabhav (effect)

Sr. No.	Synonym	Sanskrit Name	Plant	Effect
1	Vranari	Agastya	Sesbania grandiflora	Useful in wounds
2	Varnaprasadanam	Aguru	Aquilaria agallocha	Used as cosmetic
3	Rechi	Ankota	Alangium salvifolium	purgative
4	Dipyaka	Ajamoda	Trachyspermum roxburghianum	Stimulates digestive fire
5	Kruminashini	--	--	Useful in wormisidal
6	Vrushya	Atibala	Abutilon indicum	promotes sexual potency.
7	Shisubhaishajyam	Ativisha	Aconitum heterophyllum	Remedy of children diseases
8	Apamarg	Apamarg	Achyranthes aspera	Cleanses channels
9	Tintidi	Amlika	Tamarindus indica	sailagogue
10	Kharjughna	Arka	Calotropis procera	Remedy for itching and
11	Hridrogvairi	Arjun	Terminalia arjuna	
12	Stripriya	Ashok	Saraca asoka	Useful in gynecological disorders
13	Putrada	Ashwagandha	Withania somnifera	promotes sexual potency Promotes strength Useful in disorders of
14	Vrusha			
15	Balada			

16	Marutaghni			vata
17	Plihari	Ashvatha	Ficus religiosa	Useful in splenomegaly
18	Karshya	Asana	Pterocarpus marsupium	Reduces obesity
19	Asthisamyojakam	Asthisamhari	Pterocarpus marsupium	Promotes Union of fractured bones
20	Amruta	Aamalaki	Emblia officinalis	rasayana
21	Vayastha			Maintens youthfulness
22	Vrushya			Promotes strength
23	Aamha	Aaragvadha	Cassia fistula	Removes ama
24	Aarevat			Mild and safe purgative
25	Kusthasudan			Used in kustha
26	Jvarantak			Useful in fever
27	Aarogyashimbi			Provides well being
28	Anilantak	Inguda	Balanites aegyptiaca	Useful in vatic disorders
29	Vatari	Eranda	Ricinus communis	Remedy for vatic disorders.
30	Shulshatru			Remedy for pain
31	Tuttha	Ela	Elettaria cardamom	Relieves pain
32	Aamaghni	Katuka	Picrorrhiza Kurrooa	Removes ama
33	Dravani	Kantakari	Solapum Surattense	Liquifies kapha
34	Kasaghni			Allevates cough
35	Vrushabhi	Kapikacchu	Mucuna prurita	Potent aphrodisiac
36	Rechana	Kampilla	Mallotus Phillippinensis	Purgative
37	Rochanak			Appetizer
38	Vranashodhan			Wound cleaner
39	Shlipadari	Karanj	Pongamia Pinnata	Effective drug for filaria

Synonyms based on Deshyukti (habitat)

Sr. No.	Synonym	Sanskrit Name	Habitat	Plant
1	Kedarajam	Padmakam	Himalayan region, dry mountains	Prunus cerasoides
2	Marudbhav			
3	Himpadmakam			
4	Parvatiya	Akshot	Hilly regions.	Juglans regia

5	Parvatipilu			
6	Shrungajam	Aguru	Hilly regions	Aquilaria agallocha
7	Jongak			
8	Nadeyi	Agnimanth	River side.	Premna mucronata
9	Kashmira	Ativisha	Places of high altitude	Aconitum heterophyllum
10	Madri			
11	Nadisarja	Arjun	In vicinity of water streams	Terminalia arjun
12	Marusambhava	Indravaruni	Deser area	Citrullus colocynthis
13	Korangi	Ela	South India	Elettaria cardamomum
14	Dravidi			
15	Dravid	Kachura	South India	Curcuma zedoaria
16	Marudbhava	Karpasi	Dry area	
17	Kirat	Kirat	High altitude of Himalaya in north east region	Swertia chirata
18	Anary tikta			
19	Haim			
20	Kashmiram	Kunkuma	Grows in Kashmir & available in Bahlika.	Crocus sativus
21	Balhikam			
22	Kashmir Jiraka	Krushnajiraka	High altitude in the region of Kashmir.	Carum carvi
23	Marudeshya	Guggul	Arid zone	Commiphora mukul
24	Malayaj	Chandan	The western ghats	Santalum album
	Vanaprastha	Palash	Grows wild	Butea monosperma
26	Prachina	Patha	Mostly eastern parts	Cissampelos pareira
27	Malavi			
28	Magadhi			
29	Vaidehi	Pippali	Damp regions of Magadha and Videha	Piper longum
30	Upkulya			
31	vindhyajata			
32	Vanaprastha	madhuka	Grows wildly	Madhuka indica

Synonyms based on Lanchana (morphological character)

Sr. No.	Synonym	Sanskrit Name	Latin name	Morphological character
1.	Chitraptra	Kantakari	Solanum surattence	Fruits variegated
2.	Jyotishmati	Jyotishmati	Celastrus paniculatus	Stem with shining dots
3.	Chitra	Danti	Baliospermum montanum	Plant with mottled seeds
4.	Chitraparni	Prusniparni	Uraria picta	Leaves striped
5.	Shashilekha	Bakuchi	Psoralea corylifolia	Seeds with streaks within
6.	Somaraji			
7.	Chitraparni	Manjistha	Rubia cordifolia	Leaves arranged in a circle
8.	Chitratandul	Vidanga	Embelia ribes	Seeds white spotted
9.	Chitra	Indravaruni	Citrullus colocynthis	Fruits variegated
10.	Chitrabija	Eranda	Ricinus communis	Seeds mottled
11.	Rajiphalgu	Kakodumbar	Ficus hispida	Fruits with fine streaks

Synonyms based on Upama(simile)

Muktaphala-Slesmatak

Cordia diachotoma



Fruits are pearl shaped



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Swarnanga -Aargvadha

Cassia fistula



Golden yellow flowers



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Atibala-petarika

Abutilon indicum



Fruits resembling round basket



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Nagapuspa-Nagkesara

Mesua ferrea



Flowers with hooded



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Lambakarna-Ankota

Alangium salvifolium



Long ear shaped leaves



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Kankatika - Atibala

Abutilon indicum



Frutis resembling



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Mahisaksa-Guggulu

Commiphora mukul

Gum resin reddish black in

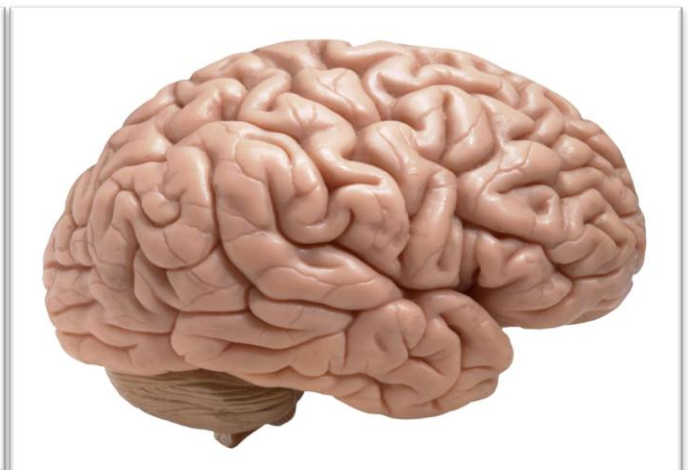


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Karparala-Aksota

Juglans regia

Fruits with brain like oily kernel

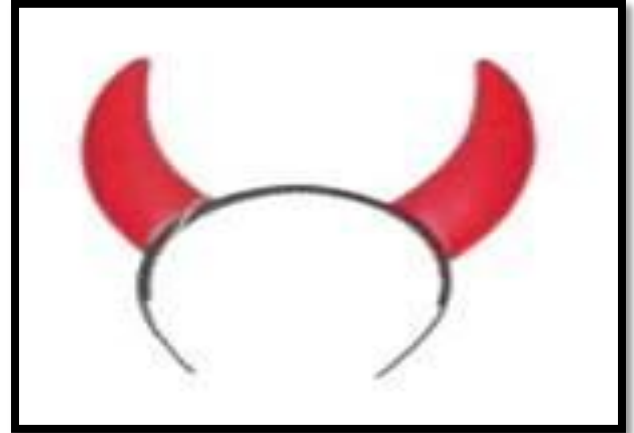


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Srngi - Ativisa

Aconitum heterophyl-

Tuber is horn like

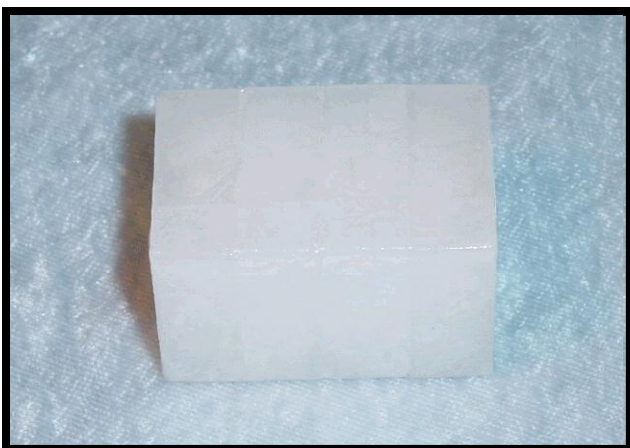


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Himanama - karpura

Cinamomum campho-

Plant exudation re-



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Balarka -Arka

Calotropis procera



Flower of the colour of



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Agnimukhi - Bhallataka

Semecarpus anacardi-



Fruits seated in fleshv

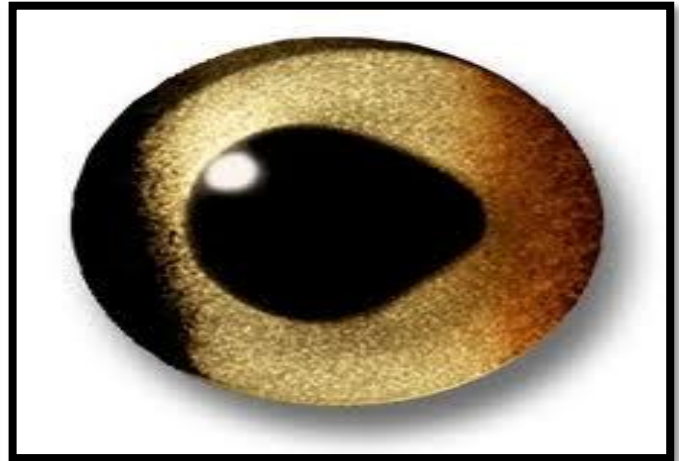


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Matysa-akshi

ALTERNANTHERA SES-

SEED RESEMBLING LIKE FISH



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Dvajadrum-tala

BORASSUS FLABELLIFER

LEAVES WITH CLUSTER AT THE TOP



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vanhishikham

KUSUMBH- CARTHAMUS TINCTORIOS



FLOWER PETALS LOOKS LIKE FIRE FLAMES



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AGARIS CAMPESTRIS



LOOKS LIKE UMBRELLA



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Lingini

BRYONIA LACINIOSA

SEEDS LOOKS LIKE SHIVA LINGA



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Vrukkabeeja

ANACARDIUM OCCIDENTALE

FRUIT SHAPE LOOKS LIKE KID-



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Osthopamaphala

COCCINIA GRANDIS

FRUIT SHAPE LIKE LIP



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Kanchani

CURCUMA LONGA

ROOT COLOUR LIKE GOLD



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Gojivha

ELEPHANTOPUS SCABER



LEAF LOOKS LIKE COW



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Gostani

COCCINIA GRANDIS



FRUIT LOOKS LIKE COW BREAST



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Nimbaptra

BOSWELIA SERRETA



LEAVES LIKE NIMBA



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Ashwakhura

CLITORIA KLCIO



FLOWER LIKE HORSE



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Chitrapatra

BETULA UTILIS



PAPERY BARK WITH



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Kanchan

MUSEA FERRA



GOLDEN YELLOW



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Kampillaka

MALLOTUS



BRICK POWDER



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Girimallika-kutaj

HOLARRHENA ANTI



FLOWERS LOOKS LIKE



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Ashoka-

SARACA ASHOKA



INFLORESCENCE LOOKS



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Synonyms based on Veerya (potency)

Sr. No.	Synonym	Sanskrit Name	Latin name	Potency
1	Uma	Atasi	Linum Usitatissimum	Potent remedy for vatic disorders.
2	Shitaphalam	Aamalaki	Embllica officinalis	SShita veerya phala
3	Shitavalakal	Udumbar	Ficus Glomerata	Shita Veerya bark
4	Chandrasandnya			
5	Shishir	Karpur	Cinnamomum camphera	It is cooling
6	Shishiram	Chandana	Santalum album	It is cold in touch as well as systemic affect
7	Agnik	Chitrak	Plumbago zeylanica	Extreme hot & pungent properties
8	Analnama			
9	Ushana			
10	Agnik	Tumburu	Zantho xylum alatatum	Intensely hot and irritant
11	Saura			
12	Utkat	Twak	Cinnamomum tamala	Bark is highly aromatic.
13	Shatvirya	Durva	Cynodon dactylon	Efficacions in a no. of ailment
14	Katvang	Aralu	Aiplanthus excelsa	Bitter & unpleasant taste
15	Pratap	Arka	Calotropis procera	Hot & irritant properties
16	Viravrksa	Arjun	Terminalia arjuna	Is a potent drug.

Synonyms based on Itarahvya (Names due to other factors)

Sr. No.	Synonym	Sanskrit Name	Latin name	Morphological character
1.	Yadnik	Ashvatha	Ficus religiosa	Used in sacrifices
2	Bodhivruksha	Ashvatha	Ficus religiosa	Goutama attained eulightement under this tree
3	Mrugervaru	Indravaruni	Citrullus colosynthis	Fruits eaten by Cows & wild animals
4	Gavadani			
5	Yadnyang	Udumbara	Ficus glomerata	Used in sacrifices
6	Varanabusa	Kadali	Musa paradisiaca	Used as fodder for elephants
7	Patad	Karpasi	Gossypium berbaceum	Fruit is the source of cotton cloth
8	Samudranta			It is exported
9	Yadnabhushan	Kusha	Desmostachya bipinnata	Used mostly in religious rites
10	Vastraranjakam	Kusumbh	Carthamus tinctorius	Used commonly for dying clothes
11	Jambuk	Kataka	Pandanus odoratissimus	Fruits liked by jackals
12	Yadniya	Khadir	Acacia catechu	Used in sacrifices
13	Devadhapa	Guggul	Commiphora mukul	It is used as incense in god's worship
14	Lekhyapatra	Tala	Borassus flabellifer	The leaves were used for writing manuscripts
15	Rathadru	Tinish	Ougenia oojensis	Heartwood used for making parts of cart
16	Shivapriya	Dhattura	Datura metel	Favorite of lord shiva
17	Shakataksha	Dhava	Anogeissus latifolia	It is used to make axis of carts & chariots
18	Dhurandhar			

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