



Vrikshayurveda – A Review

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Abstract

Vrikshayurveda is the ancient Indian science of plant life. It has been systematically explained in various texts of *Vrikshayurveda*. The knowledge of *Vrikshayurveda* has its roots in Vedas especially *Rigveda* and *Atharvaveda* has lots of references regarding plants and environment. Ancient India had achieved a level of agricultural technology is equal to what the knowledge in modern times. The various procedure explained in *Vrikshayurveda* clearly indicate that level of knowledge was high and equivalent to modern agriculture. In today's scenario the importance of understanding *Vrikshayurveda* has also increased because several crores are being spent every year on pesticides to control pest. A detailed study of *Vrikshayurveda* would provide us with information on pest management based on sound ecological principles.

Key words - *Vrikshayurveda*, *Kunapajala*, Nature.

Introduction

Long back itself Indian had remarkable awareness and knowledge of the richest biodiversity resources of its flora and its uses. It was not a peripheral knowledge at the level of plant identification. There is a deep rooted Asrayasrayi relationship of plants with other plants and animals.

Ayurveda the knowledge of life is to restore proper balance of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. In *Vrikshayurveda* these concept are applicable to plant as well. According to *Vrikshayurveda* the various plant conditions are viewed through the prism of Ayurveda. *Vrikshayurveda* is the ancient Indian science of plant life. It has been systematically completed in the form of 325 *Sanskrit slokas* in a text named *Vrikshayurveda* by Surapala approximately 1000years ago. The verses in Surapala's *Vrikshayurveda* quoted that ten wells are equal to one pond, ten ponds equal to one lake, ten lakes are equal to one river, and ten sons are equal to one tree. This clearly describes the importance of plants in human life.¹

The knowledge of *Vrikshayurveda* has its roots in Vedas especially *Rigveda* and *Atharvaveda* has lots of references regarding plants and environment. *Brihatsamhita* of *Varahamihira*, *Sarangdhara Paddathi* by *Sarangdhara*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Susrutha Samhita*, *Manusmriti*, *Arthasasthra*, *Nithisara*, *Puranas* etc has many valuable information regarding life of trees. As per *Acharya Charaka*, a good physician is one who acquainted with plant names external features and uses them properly according to their properties²

Contents in *Vrikshayurveda*³ *Vrikshayurveda* classified plant disorders in to two types- *Nija* and *Aganthu*. The *Nija* disorders are caused by the disturbance of three *dosas*- *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*.and *Aganthu* disorders are caused by pests, hail, lightening.

According to *Vrikshayurveda*, plants are also having *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* characteristics. Various procedures like rules for sowing seed, process of planting also explained in various *Vrikshayurveda* texts. *Vrikshayurveda* also praises a pesticide cum fertilizer called *Kunapajala* made from fish and animal waste. The experimental outcome of *Kunapajala* has been proved in various plants like *Senna*, *Langali* and *Brinjal*.

Various horticultural wonders like flowering in all season, making seedless fruit, various Bonsai technique also explained in detail.

Materials and Methods

Source of Data- *Surapala Vrikshayurveda*, *Upavanavinoda* of *Sharangdhara* and internet sources. Surpala's *Vrikshayurveda* is an exclusive texts for Plants. *Brihatsamhita* of *Varahamihira* also contains a chapter titled *Vrikshayurveda*. But it also contains chapters on allied subjects. The *Sarangdharapaddathi* by *Sarngdhara* which in its chapter *Upavanavinoda* allied topics like planting soil, plant diseases and remedies. Various other texts like *Grhyasutras*, *Manusmriti*, *Arthasathra* also have reference regarding *Vrikshayurveda*.

Few practices in Agriculture

Use of Arka to control weed - Cut branches of *Calotropis* are kept at the entrance of rain water channel. This practice minimizes weed population if repeated for several times during rainy days.

Use of Cactus milk for paddy pest control- Cactus milk is poured into the water inlets in the paddy field.

Use of Asafetida- Asafetida is applied on the rotten portion of the bottle gourd and a fine bandage cloth is tied around it. The disease will cure within a week. It is also used to prevent flower and fruit dropping.

Discussion

Ancient India had achieved a level of agricultural technology is equal to what the knowledge in modern times. The seed selection , selection of soil, classification of diseases, management for various diseases, techniques like bonsai, production of seedless fruits , alteration in fruits and flowers clearly indicate that level of knowledge was high and equivalent to modern agriculture. Depth of pit and spacing between trees is almost same as we follow today. *Kunapajala* the manure explained in *Vrikshayurveda* is of great relevance in agriculture and horticulture. It contain aminoacids, sugars, fatty acids, keratins,macro and micronutrient. The usage of organic manures is safe and increase water holding capacity and increases the microbial bio mass⁵ . The usage of white mustard also been explained in *Vrikshayurveda* and it contains enzyme *sinalbin*. This enzyme help pest colonization and it act as antifungal. Moreover white mustard is low volatible and pungent and has longer effect. Various usage of honey also mentioned in *Vrikshayurveda*. Honey is antimicrobial in action and it contains proline which induces systemic resistance in plants. It also contains increased contents of cytokinin which protects the plants from drought and stress. Milk also contains aminoacids like proline which induce general disease resistance in plants. The usage of cow dung is explained in many places. Cow dung contains bile pigments, Nitrogen, Phosphorous,Potassium which are the micronutrient essential for plant growth. Conclusion In today's scenario the importance of understanding *Vrikshayurveda* has also increased because several crores of rupees are being spent every year on pesticides for the control of pest. Apart from being expensive the chemical pesticides have proven to be environmentally disastrous⁶ . A detailed study of *Vrikshayurveda* would also provide us with information on pest management based on sound ecological principles. The place of trees in environmental maintenance and food chain is well understood. The verses like person is honored in heaven for many thousand years indicate that ancient saints and philosophers had promoted the people to grow more trees which are a slogan that rediscovered during the past few decades.

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