INTRODUCTION

The Indian system of Ayurvedic Medicine is one of the oldest ones, having many sources of drugs such as indigenous plants, minerals, and animal products. Though, the practice of Ayurvedic Medicine has developed a lot in this century, still there are many investigators working entirely on the knowledge described in ancient text. It has been unreservedly admitted by all unbiased Eastern and Western scholars that Ayurveda in all its aspects is the fountain source or mother of many other medical systems of the world.

There are numerous first grade manufacturers in India who manufacture efficacious combinations of Ayurvedic medicines having synergistic actions showing better effects.

Claims for these multiple action preparations are very high, but very often they lack a scientific basis for the therapeutic effects observed or claimed.

All such Ayurvedic medicines are claimed to be devoid of toxicity, which may not be true. As they are all xenobiotics (i.e. substances foreign to the body) and any xenobiotic is bound to have some adverse effect on the healthy human body. Hence it is necessary to explore the probability of such adverse effects in detail, if a drug is to be used widely. Such studies are carried out for drugs used in the modern (allopathic) system of medicine routinely. In Indian system of medicine they are not so frequently observed. Today's need is that different systems of indigenous medicines should not remain in isolation but seek the improvement in therapeutic value of their medicines by research.
After all, patients need effective and safer drugs, they are not bothered about the sources of drugs.

Commercial or Proprietary Ayurvedic preparations have expanded their feet in Indian and Western market, with high claims, ranging from adaptogenic effects to cosmetic values for the entire body from hair (head) to toe. It may be unscientific to claim that they are very safe.

The Ayurvedic preparations are claimed to be cheap, which may not always be true. Collecting the correct plants from different places and subjecting them to a number of processes and preparing the drugs, had become too costly. There are fabulous advertisements including the claims that they are effective in treating sterility and reducing all sorts of physical and mental troubles. Interestingly these ingredients individually are also claimed to be effective in multiple disorders, which raises a point or question in our mind.

What is the exact action of the preparation with so many diversified ingredients? and what is the exact utility?

One such preparation from an Ayurvedic pharmaceutical institute "The Hari Parshuram Aushadhalaya, Pune" managed by a renowned Vaidya, P.Y. Vaidya Khadiwale, has been taken to screen for its pharmacological actions. This preparation used, is known by the name "Suvarnamakshikadi- wati" and contains the
following different ingredients.

1) Suvarnamakshik Bhasma 5) Pure Shilajit
2) Abhrak Bhasma 6) Shringa Bhasma
3) Loha Bhasma 7) Arjuna sal
4) Genuine Vanshalochana

This is claimed to be effective in following conditions for which presently it is routinely prescribed. (vaidya Khadiwale, 1992: 75)

1) Heart trouble 8) Tachycardia
2) Chest pain 9) Psychosis (Confusion)
3) Hypertension 10) Depression
4) Paralysis 11) Weakness
5) Anaemia 12) Karshya (Leanness)
6) Rajayakshama (T.B.) 13) Dryness of mouth
7) Breathlessness 14) Disease of Valves of Heart

Hence this preparation was taken for the study with following objects in mind...