Chapter-1

INTRODUCTION
1. Introduction

Electronics, space travel and genetic-manipulation have opened new vistas for betterment of mankind, ahead of which our diverse biological resources no doubt constitute the apogee of the evolutionary process. God has created the nature in which he has embedded a well programmed controlling and sustaining mechanism to protect his creation. Age old traditional system of medicines such as Ayurveda based upon biological resources, owes its origin in India since the dawn of civilization.

Ayurveda, the Indian indigenous system of medicine, dating back to the Vedic ages has been an integral part of Indian culture. The term comes from the Sanskrit root, ‘Ayu’ which means life and ‘Veda’ meaning knowledge. As the name implies, it is not only a science of treatment of the ill but covers whole gamut of happy human life involving the physical, metaphysical and spiritual aspects. Over the centuries, Ayurveda has developed into a well-founded, time tested, empirical science of life.

In the Nature it is found that, a single genus has different species. This botanical variation creates confusion among researchers and practitioners regarding the selection of the appropriate species. As Dravyaguna branch is the back bone of Ayurveda treatment, selection of a particular drug is very much essential.

वधाविश्वायथाद्विध्वषायनिर्दिष्टायथा |

लघूपद्विज्ञातिविज्ञातमूलम् यथा || च.मू.११/१२४

औषधं व्यविश्वातन्त्रमूलपुनिशिलिपिम् विज्ञातिविश्वारुद्धमन्त्रमत्वाप्यपद्यते || (च.मू.२/२२५)

Field visit is an integral part of Dravyaguna subject. In Ayurveda, different types of a single drug are explained on the basis of color of the flowers, for example Sahachara. There are four types of Sahachara explained in classical texts viz Shweta, Rakta, Neela and Peeta.
Sahachara has numerous medicinal properties. It is a very good nervine tonic. It is the third largest genus in the family Acanthaceae. The genus Barleria was dealt by Linnaeus (1753) on the basis of specimens collected from India. It is a pan-tropical but predominantly an old world genus, with its greatest center of species diversity in tropical East Africa, followed by South Africa and Asia. There are different species of Barleria in nature having different colors, but only one species is used in clinical practice, i.e. yellow colored variety (Barleria prionitis Linn.). The other three types of Sahachara are also medicinally useful, but due to lack of Research work regarding their analysis, these species are still unexplored. To explore other types of Sahachara with the help of field visits, analysis, pharmacological activity screening and documentation is the need of the era.

In Ayurvedic compendia the four types of Sahachara are mentioned. Out of these types, Peeta Sahachara is most popular in the clinical practice. The Sahachara is classified in Aragvadhadi, Viratarvadi, Varunadi and Kantaka-panchamoola ganas by Sushruta. In the properties of Kantaka-panchamoola, it is recommended as Shothahara.

In this regard, a thorough literary review on Sahachara and its four classical types along with their pharmacognostical, preliminary Phyto-chemical and experimental study for evaluating acute anti-inflammatory activity in animal model had been taken up for the present research study.