CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

Nature always stands as golden mark to exemplify the outstanding phenomenal of symbiosis. The ‘biotic’ and ‘abiotic’ elements of Nature are inter depended. The plants are indispensable to man for his life. The three important necessities of life are food, clothing and shelter and a host of other useful products are supplied to him by plant kingdom. Nature has provided a complete store house of remedies to cure all ailments of mankind.

The history of herbal medicine is as old as ‘Human Civilization’. The documents many of which are of great antiquity reveal that plants were used medically in China, India, Egypt and Greece, long before the beginning of Christ era. A large portion of the Indian population even in the present time depends on the Indian system of Āyurveda, “Ancient science of Life”. The well-known treatises in Āyurveda are Caraka and Suśrūta Samhitā. Science of medicine deals with preventing and curing disease and preserving health. Surprising advances had been made in ancient India in the field of medical science mainly due to the uncanny ability of ancient Indian seers to be close with Nature and also due to the keen observation by them of Natural environmental surroundings including Sun and space. The constant efforts of ancient Indian seers in seeking the Nature’s remedy for rectifying any short comings or illness of humans and work with Nature that made them look for herbs for treating the people. Medical tradition also goes back to Vedic times when the Aświni kumāras, who were practitioners of medicine were given a divine status. Dhanvantari was
called God of medicine specifically the advances were in the areas of Ayurvedic treatment, plastic surgery, extraction of cataracts, dental surgery etc.

The present desertation throws light in showing some references to medicinal plants in the Atharvan Veda and post-Vedic literature. It is here suggested that the Ayurvedic science is out of the facts of the Vedas. In presence, the Veda as a whole in herits spiritual, philosophical, scientific and social features in itself. The scientific feature is embedded with Ayurvedic elements. The Gods Aświns and Nāsatya are spoken of as concerned with the health care and medicare of all living beings in the world. Besides God Rudra, regarded as “Bhiṣak” and “Rokaśa”, Maruts considered as controllers of the neurine and respiratory activities, God Varuṇa as remover of some diseases connected with excess accumulation or loss of water. In this manner in dwelling divine power of these Gods, the medicinal plants ensure the removal of many kinds of diseases. In this way many references from Rgveda, Yajurveda and the Atharva Veda have been traced to show the antique importance of the Ayurvedic science.1

In Nirukta, Yaskacharyya has given definition of the word “Ausadhi”. It has been derived from two words i.e., “Ausat” and “dhayati”.

“Ausat” means temperature of the fever that has spread in the body and “dhayati” means to drink or to destroy. The disease that takes birth in our body and which will be destroyed is known as “Auṣad”.

“या औषधिः पूर्वा जाता देवेयपार्थिकुष्युगं पुराः।
मनैनु बसूरामहम् शतं धामानि सत च॥” (10th Mandala, 97th sukta)

1. Rgveda - 1; 116 and 1; 157, 6
It means “I think of the hundred and seven applications of the brown

tiutued plants which are ancient, being generated for the Gods before three

ges”.

Here we get the information that medicine or Aṣādhi was born before
Kṛta, Treta and Dvāpara yugas. We can also conclude that medicinal plants
took birth before the birth of God, Man and even Animals that is “Satam
dhamani sapta cha”.2

The present work under the title “Medicinal Plants in Atharvaveda :
A Socio-Religious Perspective”. The first chapter deals with ‘Introduction
of vedas’. Among the four Vedas, Atharva Veda has given a prominent
place in this chapter. Even we further study Medical Data in Epics and
purāṇas. Though the topic is related to ‘Atharva veda’ references are found
here and there. But the real utility of these trees is noted at a later date
especially in the treatises of Epics and Purāṇas. Purāṇas are called as the
fifth Veda which emerged simultaneously with the four Vedas3 or even
earlier.4 The Atharva Veda mentions purāṇa along with other Vedas.5
Thus it is natural that Āyurveda which is intimately connected with the

2. Rgveda - mandal. 10, sūkta 97 p - 69-72
3. Śrīmad bhāgavata purāṇa - 1, 4.20; 3, 12.39
4. Vāyu - 1.1.54
5. a) तामितहास्य सुरायं च गायाष्ट्र नारासनीश्चातनुष्य चलन्
   इतिहास्य स द्रव स पुराणय च गायत्रि च.
   नारासनीयां च द्रवं धाम भवति द एवं देव \[\]
   Here with itihāsa [narrative] and the purāṇa [story of eld] and the gathas
   [songs] and narasansis [eulogies].

b) अष्ट जाती महानि चक्षुस्ति सुरायं वज्रया सह |
   उविज्ञानिके सर्व दिवि देवा दिवि भिन्न \[\]
   [The verses, the chants, the meters, the ancient [purāṇa], together with the
   formula [yajus] from the remnant were born etc].
Atharva Veda should have acquaintance with the purānas. It would be logical to say that both purānas and Āyurveda developed together in post-Atharvanic period, thus creating an ideal environment for interaction between them. Many things came from purānas in Āyurveda. Mythological origin of plants has been described. Ira has three daughters - Latā, Vallī and Virudhā. Latā and Vallī gave birth to Vanaspati [Apuspa] and Vṛkṣa [Supuspa] respectively. Virudhā delivered gulmā, tvaksarā, trṇa [Ausadhi].6 In the context of the eternal tree, parts of plant such as seed, trunk, bud, branches, leaf, flower and fruits are mentioned.7 Vṛkṣa, Ausadhi and Virudha are often mentioned.8 Here ‘Vṛkṣa’ includes ‘Vanaspati’ as well. Once Virudh is replaced by gulmā.9 Shinning herbs are mentioned which are symbols of the powerful plants which preserve living

6. वननवीनां वृक्षाणां वीर्यालावै मलारस।
लता चैताय चल्ली च वीर्याय चेति तातु चै।
लता वनस्पतिभज्जे दायुर्यणारु पुराणायतान।
चुव्वातुन्नापलेक्षणात् च वत्ताच समयुक्ते।
अध चल्ली तु गुल्माः समस्तार्थास्तु नासः।
वीर्याय तद्वततानि वेषाशत समाप्त।
Vāyu purāṇa - 8.331-33 [पूर्व]

7. अन्वतावनस्तकावल्यान्तुप्रौद्योगिकता।
बुधंक्रमणयान्ताय विद्याहुर्कोटसी।
महाभासाकाश विशेषं पत्रवालया।
धनोपमपुरुषसहु शुक्लकस्वलयः।
Vāyu purāṇa - 9.106-107 [पूर्व]

8. वृक्षामागीध्याय वीर्यालय प्रक्रियाभिन्नम।
वृक्षारक्रियादानं मन्यताम परिशिष्टान्।
Vāyu purāṇa - 52.8-18 [पूर्व]

9. अपराकृत्याश्चां प्रभवन्तयाश्च पुराणव्यासूदेश।
अप्रदुच्चव्यासैः देशाः गुरुत्वात् बुधविनि।
धामाभिचार वेतनाय नातामीलोकस्य।
तेनिष्ठेन वर्तनीं प्रजापीयापुरोहिताः।
ततः पुनर्स्तानां रागोऽयेशवर्षन सर्वसं।
अवस्थमाविवाहनं वेतनायुर्विक्र्षेतु।
तत्तत्तथा परमहंन नदीस्त्राणि परिष्टात्।
Vṛkṣाय गुणीपौष्टिकैः प्रस्तात् तु यथा बलम।
Vāyu purāṇa - 8.128-131 [पूर्व]
beings and eradicate diseases. And recitation of stotras like ‘Viśṇu sahasraṇāma’ in treatment of diseases are direct impacts of purāṇas. ¹⁰

The meaning of Āyurveda and how Āyurveda and Atharva Veda are related to each other.

The second chapter throws light in showing some references to medicinal plants in the Atharva Veda from the view of socio purposes. Some of the medicinal plants which are socio, all are not referred in Atharva Veda only few of them are there. Others are found at a later date [Epics & Purāṇas]. Here socio means the plants which are useful other than Medicine. For example - food, cloth, industry and helps to reduce the pollution and etc. This chapter supplies a list of important medicinal plants like बहुपाद [भण्डप], बिल्व, चदन, एरण्ड, मुख्य, नारिकेल, विपिली, रविप्रिया, एरण्डकरकिति, वंश etc. In course elucidation of the Nature of these medical actions, therapeutic Hints, benefits and chemical compositions as well as other references are given. Even references given from Atharva Veda, purāṇas, Literature.

The third chapter deals with a study of ‘Sacred Plants’, known as ‘A Garden of Vanadegula’. Vanadegula means seeing incarnation of temple in the greenery. It is an fascinating arrangement of preserving God through Nature, otherwise preserving Nature in the names of God and Goddesses, through a cluster of particular species of plants, creepers and flowers. In this present chapter regarding concept we can say a simple word that is, A message to predict and preserve the cherished trees. It creates Bhakti and exercise remarkable influence on the minds of visitors too. In the types of leaves and flowers used for pooja on

¹⁰. Caraka Samhitā - 1.4.46
different occasions. Here an attempt has been made to mention certain poojas and vṛtas related to the sacred trees.

Not only the 'Sacred trees', but also some of the famous vana's which are present from Epic period to till now. Here some important trees are refer to note the medicinal value. In addition to these their relation to rituals and their utility in the society are also very important in this concept. We have already noted that in Atharva Veda mere references of some of sacred trees. But we will find references in Epics and Purāṇas at a later date. The sacred trees which we are going to deal are: अगस्त्य, आमलक, अमल, अशोक, जम्बू, जम्बीर, पारिजातमु, देवदार, अर्धुन्त etc.

Thus we have to perform some rituals to get the blessings of these deities and to lead a successful advised life with a good health and contended life. Therefore, through the sacred trees and flowers, we can achieve motive of happy life.

The fourth chapter purely deals with the plants which are mentioned in Atharvaveda. The Atharvaveda in all mentions about 110 plants identified and non-identified, used in cure of various body ailments and most of these remedies occupy very significant places in the Āyurvedic literature of later periods in India.

Atharvaveda consists of songs and spells for the healing of diseases which belong to the magic rites of healing. They are either addressed to the diseases themselves imagined as personal beings. As demons are considered to be the creators of diseases. Some of these spells are also invocations and praises of the curative herb, which is to serve as the cure of diseases. The symptom of the various diseases are often described in the songs and they are of great interest in the history of medicine.
The Vedic literature speaks highly of some plants and herbs, for example, we have in a verse from the Atharvaveda –

"मधुमत ् पर्ण मधुमत्तु पुपासांतं मधुमत्र ।
मधुमत्तु पुपासांतं दुहलं शोपुरोरावम् ॥"

The plants which we are going to discuss about are : अपामार्ग, शमी, शिशपा, लाला, कुया, दर्भर, ऊंचरा, उदन्म्र, etc.

From the description of the chapters we may conclude that there is an unbroken continuity of medical tradition in the Vedas. We may even conclude that there were hundreds of medical practitioners and thousands of medicines [i.e., herbs and plants] in effective use since the time of the Vedas.

The research on medicinal plants is wide, deep and continuous pervades all Nature. Therefore, Caraka remarks : "न आयुर्वेदस्य परं पारं तत्सर्वम्
शास्त्रविषयं कुर्यात् ॥" i.e., there is no end to the knowledge of Āyurveda. It is therefore necessary to make it as a life pursuit. The present study helps us to know about the religious plants which gives the knowledge about Hindu festivals [Indian]. What is the purpose of celebrations of festivals and its intention. Even it controls pollution and helps in making ‘Green Revolution’. It preserves God through Nature with a cluster of particular species of plants, creepers and flowers.

The main theme of this work is to show how one can save Nature and maintain balance in Nature. Rgveda is the most ancient text dealing with human beings and their surroundings. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa traces the identification of macro to micro when it says - Hindi the upaniṣadic word

11. Dr. S.D. Kamat – Dhanvantri Nighantu on Medicinal Plants and Drugs, p. xxviii
The oneness of universe. In the thirteenth chapter Bhagavadgītā names it as kṣetra (Field) and in the fifteenth chapter, it is termed as ksara puruṣa - perishable person. Cosmology is governed by law of Nature that is birth, existence and death that is, everything takes birth from the ultimate and merges in it. Last verse of chapter eleven of Bhagavadgītā states he who engages in my pursue, devotional service, free from activities oriented to results, he who works for one and he who is friendly to all living beings he certainly comes to me.

Thus, there is a need of understanding the concept of ecology as explained in our ancient Sanskrit literature. So that we may lead life with right focus and perspective in the present times. The Ancient Sanskrit literature gives us the genuine principles to adjust with our environment and lead a spiritual life full of bliss.

Our environment is a blessing for us, as it provides basic necessities of life. More and more researchers on the flora and fauna of the environment will lead to knowledge for the benefits of human beings. Destroying environment like cutting the branch of a tree on which one sitting. Environment must be made better and better based on the sermons contained in our ancient Sanskrit literature.

Sanskrit literature is full of techniques, methods, rationale and philosophy of saving human beings from the horrible impact of environment.

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12. इन्हि नारीं कृतेन क्षेत्रमिलानितात् ।
एतत्तथेष्ठि स प्रभुव श्रेयस्तर्क इति तदित्त || Bhagavadgītā - II. 1

13. हृदिभी पुरुषी लोके क्रांतिकाल एव च ।
क्षरं सवाचिणि भुतानि कुट्टस्योधरं उष्णे || Bhagavadgītā - 15.16

14. मत्तिम्ब्रूचमात्रभो मद्धेवतः संरक्षितं ।
निवर्तै सर्वपूर्वेन यदं मामेति पापव || Bhagavadgītā - 11.55
pollution. What is required to educate the people in advanced and developing countries to stop exploiting Nature for making buildings huge industries, nuclear plants etc. All this is possible if we develop virtuous people as defined in Gītā, Vedas and other ancient Sanskrit scriptures. Kālidāsa in his ‘Raghuvarṣam’ beautifies and spiritualize the environment—

“शैवेच्चन्तविद्यानां योजने बिषयेरित्राम्।
वाद्यं मुनिवर्जिनां सोमेनाते तनुस्रजाम्।।” (I सर्गं, 8)

This all would lead to pollution free environment as all individuals possesses consciousness.

That Āyurveda is intimately connected with the Vedas is evident from the fact that the former is regarded as an upaveda of Rgveda or upanga of Atharva Veda [because of similarity in approach and the subject matter]. In later period when the Vedas become target of attacks from many corners, Āyurveda was utilized as a powerful instrument for supporting the authoritatives of the Vedas.

In the present research topic, we have discussed about twenty eight plants in Atharvaveda out of hundred and ten plants. Further we get the references of these plants in Atharvaveda are: Abhiroruda [AVS.7.38.1], Avakā [AVS.8.7.9], Aukṣagandhi [AVS.4.37.3], Kalmali [AVS.15.2.1, 13, 19, 25], Apaskambha [AVS.4.6.4], Krṣṇā [AVS.1.23.1], Jangiḍa is found only in Atharvaveda, Jīvanti [AVS.8.2.6], Nalada [AVS.4.37.3] and so on.

We get the references in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Aitareya Brahmana, Jaiminlya Brāhmaṇa, Upaniṣads such as Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Brha-dāraṇyakopaniṣad, Garbhopaniṣad and sūtra literature Śrauta sūtras, Grhya, Dharma and Pitṛmedha sūtras, which refer to the various material of medicine and point to the unbroken continuation of ancient medical tradition.