CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Indian history of literature is traced back to the Vedas, Upaniṣads and such other literature. The Vedas are the great repository of knowledge catering to the needs of human being. The Vedas have helped the over all growth of social, medicinal and such other fields. Therefore for any information we have to go back to the ancient literature that is the Vedic age and the Vedic literature. “Ancient man, being mostly dependent on plants for living, specially during the period, when forests were in abundance, were principally scavenger in Nature. Just as man's dependence on Biosphere, the Biosphere too affected human culture to a great extent. Living in harmony with Nature was the basic philosophy underlying ancient culture.

With the progress of civilization, increasing growth of industries and urbanization there has been a tendency to modify Nature to suit man's needs and in this process, destroy the very eco-system which sustains life. A large number of species, both explored and unexplored are vanishing from the face of the earth. It is imperative to record the plants and their uses as food, shelter and medicine, as practised from time immemorial. Such records provide with an understanding of the history of the development of economic uses of plants and the factors influencing the evolutionary process.

Keeping this in view P. Sen Sarma a scholar on Medicinal plants states as follows—“Since time immemorial, man has been using plants. The plants not only provide materials, in regenerating cycles, to make the living of man more comfortable, but they also influence considerably the
Psyche, aesthetic sense, and literary expressions of man. The importance and use of plants, however varied from time to time as also from human society to society, as the knowledge about plants, their parts and contents, varied. The divergence of Ecological surroundings and difference in the aesthetic sense are also important factors contributing to the said variation. The science and technology about the minerals, chemicals and other non living objects have affected the Natural relation of man with plants. With the advancement of physical science and technology, man started depending more and more on the non-living resources. Man became indifferent about the plants. Forests were failed to accomodate industrial and urban centres. But the unrestrained exploitation of non-living resources has raised the alarm about non-availability of the non-regreenable resources in the non-distant future. Being haunted by this bleak possibility, man is again looking to the plants – the Naturally regreenable resources. Efforts are on, in different parts of this planet, to tap man's heritage of Ethno botanical lore, with a view to finding out Herbal resources of the requirements of modern life.¹

The ancient Indian civilization was basically Āranyaka – primarily dependent up on and intimately related with forests and fauna. This trend continued during the medeival period. Thus it seems essential that to comprehend the relationship between plants and the people of ancient and medieval India, the authentic Indian literature of those periods, which generally contain wealth of information in all branches of human knowledge. Sanskrit prose and poetical works are replete with reference to flowers, foliage, trees and shrubs. Even the Epics and the Purāṇās not

¹. P. Sen Sarma – “Plants in the Indian Purāṇas” - P.P. 1, 2
only contain descriptions of many plants and flowers, but also many directives about the different uses of various plants and plant materials."\textsuperscript{2}

**Botanical Observations in Literature**

P.V. Sharma another scholar in this literature explains as follows—

"The period of Bāṇa Bhaṭṭa is a definite and important land mark in Indian history. It is the mile stone of the ancient India and is popularly known as the post Gupta period. Bāṇa Bhaṭṭa who was attached to the court of King Harshavardhana [606-648 A.D]. He has contributed two great works: Harshacharita and Kādaṁbari, the former being a narrative and the latter a story. He has narrated the life of the King in his famous work Harshacharita which is a valuable document of the contemporary history. While dealing with life of the King. He has also described Nature from different angles and with minute details. He was a keen observer of Nature and this he did during long travels from one corner to other corner of the country. During this period he came to direct contact of the plants and gained first hand information regarding peculiarities of size, shape etc.... of the different parts such as flowers, fruits, leaves, roots etc.... Surprisingly enough he was able to catch the delicate sensation of the sound, touch, colour, taste and smell from the vast expense of Nature."

"He has also seen the Nature in different seasons with open eyes and acute vision. In Kādaṁbari as it is a story, he has played with some imaginations which is mostly based up on the observation acquired in Harshacharita.\textsuperscript{3} By that time the plants were well defined and well

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid - P.P. 2,3
\item \textsuperscript{3} Dr. P.V. Sharma - 'Indian Medicine in the Classical Age', Pub - Chowkhamba Sanskrit series, Varnasi. 1972, P - 6
\end{itemize}
described. There was also inquistiveness on the part of the gentry [people of the class next below the nobility] men towards the plants. King Dilipa and queen Sudakṣinā are seen enquiring about the names of plants in the people they met.

Śaṅkarācārya has described the various parts of the plants in an allegory. In another, context he has mentioned three major parts – Sakha, Skanda and Mula. The plant stands on the root. During the growth of the plant, it develops into reverse directions, the root goes down towards and sprout upwards. Skanda is that where the main branches arise from. Plants either grow from seed or stem and are called ‘Bija ruha’ and ‘Kandaruha’ respectively.

**What is Veda?**

W.I. Wilkins a scholar in Veda has given the definition about Vedas in this way – The word Veda means ‘knowledge’ and then knowledge for excellence that is the sacred and the religious knowledge. The root vid in Sanskrit means ‘to know’. The books composed of the knowledge from ‘Veda Samhita’. The aim of Vyāsa was to bring uniformity in the religious observance by performing rites, religious ceremonies, such as sacrifices.
etc..., without any flow, following this very wide 'Vedic literature' grew up. The study of Vedas is nothing but connection between mantras and tantras [chants and rituals], Grammar, etymology and etc....

The books composed of the knowledge of the Āryans, collected and compiled were called the 'Vedas'. Vedas are the religious books. They are also referred as 'Śruti' because they give the information regarding the knowledge of Brahmā. Even it signifies the knowledge that was heard, but according to popular belief were communicated to a number of Rṣis or saints, who in their turn transmitted then to their disciples. The instruction contained in these writings is said to have been breathed forth by God himself. Their origin though differing form, agree in teaching that they were the direct gift of God to man and hence they are regarded with the greatest veneration. These are the special property of Brāhmaṇa as.

Parts of Vedas:

In Agni Purāṇa, chapter 150 states as – "Mahā Viṣṇu incarnated as in Dvāpara-yuga and divided the Vedas. The first Veda consisted of four pādas and a hundred thousand granthas. Vyāsa divided into four parts known as Rgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda and Atharvaveda. Thus, he created Rgveda – 'Hotra' – a collection of lyrics in praise of different Gods, to be recited by the priest styled the 'hotra', By yajus 'Adhvairya' a book of sacrificial prayer of prose formulas to be uttered by the Adhvairyu priest, who performed the manual work involved in a sacrifice, by sāman. 'Udgātra' songs meant to be sung at the soma sacrifice by a special class of

priests ‘Udgātra’ and by Atharva ‘Brahmatva’, a collection of songs, spells and in-cantations, for the healing of disease, the restoration of harmony, the exorcism of evils, spirits and to celebrate the power and omni science of God. Paila, a scholar in Ṛgveda and a disciple of Vyāsa gave the original Veda to Indrapramiiti and its saṃhitā to Baskala as gifts. Baskala divided the saṃhitā in to four and gave each of them to Bahudhya and others.

Yajurveda was divided into twenty four branches. They were composed by Vaiśampāyana, a disciple of Vyāsa. Kāṇḍas [chapters] such as Vājasaneya etc., were composed by hermits such as Yājñavalkya and others in the form of Smṛtis. Jaimini the disciple of Vyāsa, divided sāmaveda into different branches. Sumantu and Sukarma compiled separate saṃhitās from them. Sukarma, the disciple of Vyāsa, composed thousand saṃhitās. Sumantu was also the disciple of Vyāsa took, Atharvaveda and taught it to thousands of Paippalāda disciples. By the blessings of Vyāsa, Śūta made the Purāṇa saṃhitā [the collection of Purāṇas].

**Branches of Vedas:**

It has already been mentioned that the Vedas are four in number called Ṛg, Yajus, Sāma and Atharva. Each of these Veda has branches called ‘Samhitās’ [collections] and Brāhmaṇas [treatises relating to prayer and sacrificial ceremoney]. Āraṇyakas are appendices to the Brāhmaṇas. Upaniṣads [secret doctrines] are appendices to the Āraṇyakas. Thus each of the Veda has saṃhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. All these are taken together are called ‘Vedic Literature’. The chart of Vedic literature has been shown here:

---

VEDIC LITERATURE

a) Vedas Four in Number
   - Rgveda
   - Yajurveda
   - Sāmaveda
   - Atharvaveda

b) Up-Vedas Four in Number
   - Āyurveda
   - Arthaśāstra
   - Dhanurveda
   - Gandharvaveda

c) Vedāṅgas six in Number
   - Śikṣā
   - Vyākaraṇa
   - Jyotiṣa
   - Niruktam
   - Kalpa
   - Chandas

d) Darshanas six in Number
   - Nyāya
   - Vaiśeṣika
   - Sāṅkhya
   - Yoga
   - Pūrvamīmāṁsa
   - Uttaramīmāṁsa

e) Purāṇas – 18 Upa-Purāṇas

f) Upaniṣads – 108

g) Epics – Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Bhagavadgītā

h) Dharma Śastras
Gangaram Garag has given in the detailed description of Vedic literature in the following way—"In the Samhitās there are lyrics in praise of different Gods. All these are the spells and incantations [mantras] in the form of songs. Generally speaking the Brahmaṇas contain prose contexts giving practical observations on sacrifice. Which are mentioned in the songs of praise. Here and there stories from Purāṇas and Epics occur. The Āraṇyakas [Forest texts] got that name, because they are books of instructions to be given in the forest or writings meant for wood dwelling hermits. As they contained estoric spells and incantations which might cause injury even to those who were not concerned with them, instruction in them was not given in towns or villages. The contents of Āraṇyakas are the allegorical significance of the rites and sacrifices and the mystic meaning of the Vedas. It has been mentioned that the Upaniṣads are appendices of the Āraṇyakas. Still there is not much difference between the two and hence they cannot be seperated from one another so easily. The Upaniṣads are called Vedāntas, because they are the end of the Vedas. The Vedāntas belong to later period of the Vedic age. Instruction in Vedāntas was given only after completing the study of mantras and the Brahmaṇas. The Upaniṣads contain philosophical specializations about the conception of Brahman and the Vedas. The word Veda includes Vedāṅgas also. Vedāṅgas are Śikṣa [phonetics], Vyākaraṇa [Grammar], Chandas [metrics], Nirukta [etymology], Jyotiṣa [astronomy] and Kalpa [ritual]. In course of time Brahmaṇas and Āraṇyakas which contain discussions and expositions of the Vedas. Became independent branches of study under these names that is why they contain mainly prose texts.14

There are one lakh of mantras or spells and incantations in all the four Vedas taken together. They are for blessings everybody and to make the four objects of life easily attainable. Sāṅkhāyana and Aśvalāyana sorted and grouped the mantras. Accordingly there are two thousand one hundred and ten mantras known as Brāhmaṇas. Dvaipāyana and other hermits have stated the number of granthas [verses] in Rgveda. It is said that there are one thousand nine hundred and ninetynine mantras in Yajurveda. There are one thousand eightysix branches also. The branches in Yajur, are known by the names Kaṇvi, Madhyandini, Kathi, Madhyakathi, Maitrayāni, Taitiriya, Vaiśampāyanika and so on. In Sāmaveda there are branches such as Kauthmi, Atharvanayini and so on. The number of samavedic verses are nine thousand four hundred and twenty five. Sumantu, Jajala, Ślokayani, Šaunaka, Pippalāda, Mauda and such others were responsible for the sorting and grouping of mantras in the Atharva Veda. All together there are one thousand six hundred upaniṣads.15

Vedic literature mainly consists of different classes of literature and to each of these three classes belongs great number of separate works. Some have been preserved. Many lost some of them showed through the chart given here:

Maurice Winternitz has given the information regarding different classes of Vedic literature as below –

**Brāhmaṇas** : Extensive prose text which contain theological discussions, especially observations on the sacrifice and the practical or mystical significance of the individual sacrificial rites and ceremonies.\(^{16}\)

**Āranyakas** : [Forest texts] and Upaniṣads [secret teachings] which are partly included or appended to the Brāhmaṇas themselves and partly are supposed to be independent works. They contain meditations of hermits in forests and ascetics on God, world and man. Samhitās – that is collection of hymns, prayers, magic songs, benedictory words, sacrificial formulas and litanics.\(^{17}\)

A fairly large number of saṁhitās which originated in several schools of priests and singers have been handed down from them. Many of these

---


17. Ibid - P - 50
collections were however nothing but slightly different recensions – śākhas [branches]. There are four Samhitas which sharply differ from each other and which are preserved to us in one or more recensions. They are –

a] Rgveda samhitā – ‘the collection of Rgveda’. It is the Veda are the knowledge of praise songs.

b] Atharvaveda samhitā – ‘the collection of Atharvaveda’ that is the knowledge of the magic formulas.

c] Sāmaveda samhitā – ‘the collection of Sāmaveda’ that is the knowledge of the melodies (sāman).

d] Yajurveda samhitā – ‘the collection of the Yajurveda that is the knowledge of the sacrificial formulas’.18

Based on four different samhitās four different Vedas distinguished namely Rgveda, Sāmaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda. Each one of the works of the class of the Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas or the upaniṣads is attached to one or the other of the samhitās and belongs to one of the four Vedas. Not only Samhitās, but also Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads of the Rgveda as well as the Atharvaveda, Sāmaveda and Yajurveda. Example : Aitareya Brāhmaṇa belongs to the Rgveda. Thus the whole Vedic literature present itself to us a large number of works of religious content collections of prayers, songs, theological and theosophical treatises.19

Vedas are also called as ‘Kalpasūtras’ or text book of rituals, which are written in peculiar aphoristic prose style among them are :

18. Ibid - P - 50
19. Ibid - P - 50
Śrauta Sūtras – contain the rules for the execution of the great sacrifices of ten, lasting for many days during which several sacrificial fires burn and a large number of priests must be employed.

Gṛahya Sūtras – contain rules for the simple ceremonies and sacrificial acts of every day life at birth, wedding, death etc.

Dharma Sūtras – Text books of spiritual and worldly law in the oldest books of the Indians. Just like Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads, these works append to the one of the four Vedas - Śrauta, Gṛahya and Dharma, which belong to Ṛgveda others, belongs to the Sāmaveda, to the Yajurveda or Atharvaveda. These do not belong to the Vedas, but to the Vedāṅgas belong in addition to the works on the rituals also number of works on phonetics, grammar, etymology, prosody and astronomy.20

Ṛgveda:

Is the oldest recorded work of the human race. Ṛgveda is the work that form basis of Hindu religion of the four Vedas Yajur, Sāma and Atharva were composed after Ṛgveda. The Ṛgveda sūtras were interpreted for first time in Yaskas Nirukata and Sāyaṇas Vedārtha Prakāśa. The most important of four Vedas is Ṛgveda divided into ten maṇḍalas. There are 1117 sūtras and 10,472 mantras in it. Although there are 11 more sūktas called ‘khilas’. They are included in Ṛgveda. Maṇḍalas 227 of the Ṛgveda were composed in different riskulas. The second maṇḍala was of Bhārgava kula, third of the Vishwamitra, fourth Vāmādeva, fifth Athri, sixth Bhāradvāj and seventh Vaisistha. Eight maṇḍala of the first 56 sūktas of

20. Ibid - P - 51
first maṇḍala were composed by Kaṇvakula. The general view is that the tenth maṇḍala was written by some one at later period. Most of Rgveda sūtras are phrases, but some of the sūktas in tenth maṇḍala are of different types. Most of scholars believe that Rgveda composed during the period of 25000 and 2000 B.C.21

**Ancient Belief about Rgveda:**

The four Vedas emerged from four faces of Brahma. In Kṛta yuga Brahma gave all these Vedas to his sons. In Dvāpara yuga the Rṣhis got these Vedas. Mahā Viṣṇu incarnated on the earth for the preservation of Dharma in the person of Vedavyāsa. Vedavyāsa distributed Vedas among his son Sankalya and his disciples. Sankalya recieved Rgveda, he communicated to his disciples.22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divisions of Rgveda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aṣṭakas [अष्टकः - 8]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>each divided into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhyāya [अध्यायः - 64]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>each divided into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vargas [वर्गः - 2024]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totally – 10,552 Mantras**

**Yajurveda:**

Vaiśampāyana, the disciple of Veda Vyāsa divided Yajurveda into twenty-seven branches and taught them to his disciple. Among these disciples there was Yājñavalkya the son of Brahmaratha. It was Vyāsa who divided Vedas into four Vedas. After dividing them the sage Vyāsa taught Rgveda to Paila. Yajurveda to Vaiśampāyana, Sāmaveda to Jamini and Atharvaveda to Sumantu. The rules for japa, homa etc... of Yajurveda were taught to Vyāsa by Agni Deva. If all the rules of Yajurveda are correctly observed all desires will be fulfilled. There are special rules for observance of homa for fulfillment on particular desires.23

Mantras which are for the purpose of ‘Adhvairyu’, they are present in Yajurveda. Mantras which are in the prose is known as “Yajus”.24

**Branches of Yajurveda:**

Again Yajurveda divided into two forms that is Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda and Śukla Yajurveda. Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda has got eighty-five branches. Among them only four are available. They are – Taittriya, Maitrayāni, Kathā, Kapila. In Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda Brāhmaṇas are combined with the Mantras. Śukla Yajurveda related to the Darshapourna sacrifices of māsa of mantras. Again it is divided into Vājasneya and Yājñavalkya.25

---

Sāmaveda:

"Among the four Vedas Sāmaveda one of them". This statement said by Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa in Bhagavadgītā. The word sāman used for denoting the text made and meant for singing, means originally from 'human tune' or melody. The sāmaveda divided into two divisions. They are ‘Pūrvarācika’ and ‘Uttararācika’. Both the parts consists of verses all which are written in the Rgveda. Totally there are one thousand eight hundred and ten verses in which one thousand five hundred and forty nine verses, both parts contained together, seventy five are found in the Rgveda and that are largely in the VIIIth and IXth books. Most of the verses are composed in Gāyatri metre. The purpose of the both the parts to teach melodies. The first part that is ‘Pūrvarācika’ consists of five hundred and eighty five individual stanzas, to which the various hymn melodies [sāman] belong, which were used during the sacrifice. The Uttararācika, second part of sāmaveda samhitā consists of four hundred songs. Mostly three stanzas of each form in which the sūtras are sung at the main sacrifice are formed. In the Ārṣika the stanzas appear arranged partly according to the metres and Gods and that in the order Agni, Indra,

Soma etc... The songs of Uttararācika are arranged in the order of the chief sacrifices. Melody taught in Āracika and it should known in Uttararācika. Sāmaveda is certainly valuable to the history of Indian concept of sacrifice and magic and its gānas are certainly very important for the history or music.27

Atharva Veda:

Atharva Veda means the Veda of the ‘Atharvans’ or the knowledge of ‘magic spells’. Originally work Atharvan meant for fire priest and it is perhaps the oldest Indian name for priest, for the word can be traced back to Indian-Iranian times. The word Atharvan was also used to mean the spells of the Atharvans or the magic of the priests that is the magic spells and formulas itself. There was a Ṛṣhi by that name. The mantras in the Atharvanveda were brought to light by this Ṛṣhi, called ‘Atharvan’. The oldest name however by which this Veda known in Indian literature as “Atharvangirasah” that is the “Atharvans and Angiras”.

The Atharvans are similarly a class of fire priests of pre-historical times and the word acquired the atharvan, the meaning of the word ‘magic formulas and spells’, but the two words Atharvan and Angiras described two different kinds of magic formulas. Atharvan ‘sacred’, auspicious magic, where Angiras means ‘hostile’, a black magic. The magic formulas that serve to cure diseases. For example - Belong to the Atharvans, while curse

on enemies, on rivals in love and on wicked magicians etc..., belong to the Angiras, later literature we also meet the terms 'Bhrugvangirasah' and 'Bhruguvisatra' for Atharvaveda. Bhrugus were also ancient priests.28

Atharva in Purāṇās:

We get the references of 'Atharva' word in purāṇas...... Atharva was muni referred in Mahābhārata as professional chanter of Chandadeva. One under the curse of Bhrugu Mahārṣi, Agni hid himself under sea at that time it was Atharva, who had the suggestion of the Devas, went under the water and discovered Agni. Atharva recovered Agni and recreated words, which were lying dormant owing to the absenses of the fire.29

Birth of Atharva:

Atharva was born from Brāhmaṇas face. His wife was Santi, the daughter of Kardama. Citi was another name for Santi. But there are some Purāṇās, which refer to citi as another wife of Atharva. Some of Purāṇās say that Atharva was Angiras himself.30 Atharva name has been used Synonym of Śiva.31

28. Ibid - P.P - 109,110
29. छैदासि नाममहानिविवातन्त्यज्ञा पुरा जगो महार्षिः प्रस्थात ।
छड्न्देविदेया ये उत्तत्तबोद्वेजो न वेदवेध्य विदुर्लितत्वम् ||
30. अथवात्सुक्तलोकानामस्मिनाभेदस्य शास्त्रमपि पावकम् ॥
मिश्रतां सूक्तव्यायामायाय महार्षिवम् || Ibid - Vanaparva, - 222, Shloka - 19, P - 641.
31. गान्धा मेधामा च देवधैर्यपरिवेर च ।
अवस्थापि सामायः अवस्थाहृतमिति शास्त्रम् ||
References in Rigveda:

In Rigveda another Atharvan may be seen. It is that he was the author of 'Atharva veda'. After learning Brahmavidya from Brahma, it was this Atharva who first brought fire to the earth from heaven. Atharva had two wives namely Sati and Citi. This person was the same person as 'Atharvan', son of Vaśiṣṭha.\(^{32}\)

Atharva Veda is also known as 'Atharvangirasa'. The oldest name however by which this Veda known in Indian literature. Then suddenly a doubt may arise that is who is Atharvangirasa?..... He is a hermit born from the mind of Brahma [Mānasputra] were born to Brahma as Marichi, Angiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu. All the six of them became great hermits.\(^{33}\)

Several Nomenclature of Atharva-Veda:

Atharvaveda is addressed with number of names such as - Atharva veda, Amrtaveda, Ātmaveda, Amgiroveda, Atharvāngirasa, Bhṛguvāngirasa, Bhaiṣajya and Chandoveda etc...

Interpretation of the term 'Atharva' states that - 'Tharva' root is applied in the meaning of rudeness, curvy, dynamically, violence etc.... Hence the term 'Atharva' is meant by attainment of the stability of the mind with the exercising modesty and non-violence.\(^{34}\)

\(^{32}\) P.S. Sheshagiri Acharya - 'Bhāgavatha', IVth Skanda, Adhyāya - 1, P - 163.


\(^{34}\) L. Sarup - 'The Nighantu & the Nirukata', Motilal Banarasidas Publishers, Delhi, P - 11,12,18.
It is also addressed as 'Brahmaveda'. This Veda is determined for the use of Brahma. It has been prescribed that Brahma should be well learned with four Vedas. But outstanding knowledge in Atharvaveda is unavoidable for his as Brahmaveda contains all that which is separately found in four Vedas.35

Ancient name of Atharva is Atharvāṅgirasa Veda too. This composite word seems containing the two words that is Atharva and Angirasa. Two clans of Rṣhis as the sage Atharvan born in the family of Angira had given this Veda in present form, it is called ‘Atharvāṅgirasa Veda’. According to Bloom field, Atharvan mantras are for the good purpose, while Angirasa are for the evil.

Bhṛgavāṅgirasa too – This application seems to bring out the importance of two priests Bhṛgu and Angirasa. Bhṛgu was the disciple of Angira. Rṣhi Bhṛgu played an active role in propogation and publicity of Atharvaveda. Therefore Bhṛgavāṅgirasa, some more names also given to the Atharvaveda. This fact is perhaps unknown to many Vedic scholars, Atharva itself shows in the text. For example – ‘Chandamasi Atharva, Rcahsama Yajurmahi Atharva - Mahiveda and Kṣtra Veda, Bhaiṣajyaveda and before Atharvāṅgirasaḥ - Atharva Veda and the Atharva’. Finally Bhṛgu replaced it, shortened convinient handy tittle ‘The Atharvana Veda’. This explanation is given by great scholar “William Dwight Whitney”.36

Atharva-Veda deals with – Many scholars of Vedic literature categorised the hymns in the Atharvana Veda in different classes as the –

35. Gopatha Brāhmaṇa - 1.5.15.
a] Āyuṣya Sūktāṇi [to secure long life].
b] Pustikāṇi [to get good wishes of the deities in many house hold manner].
c] Mṛgara Sūktāṇi [toward off misfortune].
d] Prāyaścittāṇi Sūktāṇi [to pardon mis deeds].
e] Rājakarmanī Sūktāṇi [to obtain Kingship]

Abhicārakāṇi sūktāṇi Bhaiṣajya sūktāṇi

Besides all these, a class of consomogonic and the osophic catagory occupies a good place in the Atharvan Veda as per Kauśika Sūtra, fourteen topics worth description of Atharvan Veda.

Branches of Atharva Veda:

Atharva has got more branches like other Vedas. But regarding Atharva Veda, there are two opinions – fifteen branches and Nine branches [Pāتاnjalis Mahābhāṣya]. Majority of scholars have considered the nine branches by Sāyaṇa. They are – Pippalāda, Tauda, Mauda, Saunakiye, Jajala and Jalada, Brahnavada, Devadarsin, Caranaavaidya. As much as nine branches of Atharva Veda are popular but a Saṁhitā related to two branches is only available at present. But of these two, only Śaunaka saṁhitā is presently prevailing saṁhitā and other one is Pippalāda saṁhitā.37

Pippalāda Saṁhitā:

As per the information regarding Pippalāda Saṁhitā is embedded with a volume namely ‘Prapancachradayā’. Only a single copy of this

samhitā containing twenty kāṇḍas has been found in Kashmir. It was in Śāradā script.

Śaunaka Saṁhitā:

Gopatha Brāhmaṇa and Atharva Veda samhitā as prevailant presently pertains to this Śaunaka branch. It is divided into Anuvākas and later into sūktas in all about 730.38

Subject Matter of Atharvaveda:

It is a collection of seven hundred and thirty one hymns which approximately six thousand verses. It is divided into twenty books. Of these tenth has been added later on, and also ninetenth book did not original belong to the samhitā. The twentieth book consists almost entirely of hymns that are literally taken from the Rgveda samhitā. Moreover 1/7th of Atharvaveda is also taken from Rgveda. The Atharvaveda can be divided into four parts from the angle of composition:

First division from one to seven kāṇḍas:

There are small sūktas in this section. In every sūkta first kāṇḍa, there four hymns, five hymns in second, six hymns in the third kāṇḍas, seven hymns in the ninth kāṇḍa and eighth hymns in fifth kāṇḍa. There are atleast three hymns in each sūkta of seven kāṇḍas. Majority of sūktas in seventh kāṇḍa have only one or two hymns.

Second division from eight to twelve kāṇḍas:

All these kāṇḍas have large sūktas, but the topics of each kāṇḍas and sūktas bear difference in subject. Prthvi sūkta is existed at the begining

38. N.S. Anantha Rangacharya. P.P - 328,331.
of twelve kāṇḍas. There are sixty three hymns and the geographical sites and political principles have been described.

Third division from thirteen to eighteen kāṇḍas:

Uniformity in subjects like in all sūktas in each kāṇḍa of this part. There are hymns related to metaphysics in thirteen kāṇḍa, fourteenth kāṇḍa bears hymn related to the marriage. There are metaphysical hymns relating to the offerings of vrātyas in fifteenth kāṇḍa. The sixteenth kāṇḍa bear hymns of removing the night mares. The seventeenth kāṇḍa a sūkta and thirty hymns in which sammohana hymn is also existed. There are hymns relating to funeral and offering for the appeasement of incestors in eighteenth kāṇḍa.

Fourth division ninteeth to twenty kāṇḍas:

The ninteeth kāṇḍa contains the hymns relating to the cure, medicine, growth of nation and metaphysics. The twentieth kāṇḍa bears the hymns relaing to the Soma yāga. A majority of hymns from Ṛgveda.³⁹

Importance and utility of Atharvaveda

The Vedas are the most important records of the religion and the institutions of the Āryans. The last and latest Veda is the ‘Atharvaveda’. This Veda is not included in the ‘trayīvidya’, which prove its late origin. A like segment of Veda, Atharva Veda has its some characteristics on the basis of which a number of Veda learned persons consider its unique. The branches of the Vedas have their own particular directions. But when we talk of Atharva Veda, it appears as it has embedded the corpus of life with

all meanings in its ambit. The most cryptic mysteries of universe the
divine prays, applications of offerings, cure for ailments, marriage
reproduction, family, social pattern and self protection with it. Pure
science with cryptic knowledge is include with other streams of the
knowledge and science, Atharva Veda is applied science too.

There are two different routes for executing the offering, first is Vāka
[speech] and second is Mānasa [Mind]. Three Vedas Rg, Yajus and Sāma
processes one part of the offering through the speech and other part is
proceeded by Brahma through Brahmaveda [Atharvaṇa Veda], applied
through the Mind. It mainaly contains mantras used in witchcraft or
sorcery, in the curing of diseases, for destruction of enemies etc. Actually
Atharva Veda describes the application of both type ceremonies viz.,
peaceful affirmation and witchcraft [Abhicārika] ceremonies. Perhaps a
certain in number of Ācāryas have accepted it as the first Veda on the
premise of this very significance that Atharva Veda holds - Jayanth
Bhatta says in his "Nyāyamañjari" - Atharva Veda is the first Veda
because Atharvaṇa is mainly used for accomplishment of all worldly acts.
The other three Vedas having physical blessings and fruits, they come
in second number. While Atharva Veda is for both worldly and higher
purpose. But the other three Vedas for spiritual end.40

The literature related to the Atharvan Veda:

The Brahma texts, upaniṣads, pratiśākhyaś, śikṣā, kalpa sūtras etc.,
all components of Atharva Veda are available. They are classified under:

a) Brāhmaṇas – Gopatha, Pippalāda.

40. Ibid - P - 112.
b) Upaniṣads – Prasna, Mundaka, Maṇḍukya, Athavasiras, Atharvásikha, Brhat, Jābala, Nrisimhatapani, Nārada Paribrajaka, Sita, Sarabha, Mahānarāyana, Ramarahasya, Ramdatapani, Śāndilya, Paramahansa Paribrajaka, Amapurna, Surya, Ātman, Pasupata, Parabrahma, Tripuratapani, Daivi, Bhāvanā, Brahma, Jabāla, Ganapati, Mahāvakyā, Gopalatapani, Kṛṣṇa, Yagriva, Dattātreya, Garuḍa.

c) Pratiśākhya:
   a] Atharva pratiśākhya.
   b] Atharva Veda pratiśākhya sutra.
   c] Śikṣā – mandoki śikṣā.
   d] Śraurta – sutra – vaitana sutra.
   f] Anukaranani – etc.
   g] Upaveda – Sarpaveda, Asuraveda, itihāsa Veda, Purnaveda, Piśāca Veda.⁴¹

Veda and Medicinal Plants:

Prof. V. Muralidhar Sharma a scholar in this particular topic states in this way – Ever since the dawn of civilization India has been known in world for her ‘Nature consciousness’. Indian life has ever parted the lap of Nature. Indians like in particular to maintain kinship with trees and creepers. Hence all the hill and date of this ancient are in green robes with thousands of species of plants. The Indian intellect has classified the plant kingdom into convinient classes, found life and senses in plants and also identified the medicinal service of the trees to the mankind. All this

⁴¹ Ibid - P - 112.
has been in a very systematic manner preserved in the written records beginning from the Vedas.42

In Vedic age, man had intimate contact with the environment particularly plants as he depended on them not only for his day to day requirements, but also for necessary appliances and instruments for domestic use and agriculture. In rites, ceremonies and sacrifices, plants played a great role in various forms. They defined a group of trees which were useful in sacrifices [Yajñiya vrksa]. More over, plants were also used as Bheṣaja [drug] for alleviation of the diseases of man and animals.

The ancient sages identified the plants and classified them from various angles. According to form and size, they were initially divided into two - Auṣadhi [herbs] and Vanaspati [trees]. Later each of these again sub divided, Auṣadhi into virudha and vanaspati into vanaspatya or vrksa. Thus for division of plants were made – vanaspati, vanaspatya, auṣadhi and virudha. The same has continued in post-Vedic texts.43

The Rgveda considered the oldest manuscript dealing with relationship of environment and human beings, but Atharva Veda has dealt meticulously and showed more concern for ecology. Even the Āryans of the Vedic period were aware of the flora and fauna. In support of this the Rgveda has thrown light on this aspect. Many other hymns were also written in which people wanted to maintain equilibrium of Bhuloka, Suryaloka and

42. Prof. V. Muralidhar Sharma, Dr. Rani Sadasiva Murty etc... - ‘Ancient Indian Science and Its Relevance to the Modern World’, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupathi. 2003 P - 61.
Antarikshaloka that is earth and other astronomical objects. As stated in various, ancient sanskrit literature, example Gitā, Vedas, Manusmriti. Mind of human being is always restless, the more it gets more it wants, resulting into vicious circle of greed and temptations without any need. People go on cutting trees, do excessive mining, kill animals causing polluted environment. Vedic Rṣhis had always stressed the planting of trees Dyaurvana giravourkoa kesah and avioding of cutting trees.  

The ausadhi sūkta of Rgveda [10.97.1-23] is the authorative document of the knowledge about the plants in Vedic age. It says that plants came in existence much earlier from the gods and have innumerable places of origin and habitat. They were flowering and non-flowering and fruiting as well as non-fruiting. Their morphological characters are various [satalicaksanah] and they have various actions [satakratvah]. They have potency like horse by which they conquer diseases in the patient on circulating all over the body. Soma was the king of herbs. Which were collected from far and near out of which soma were cultivated and others wild. They were also mixed together and helped each other. Plants were used to make man and animals free from diseases. Aśvattha and Parna among trees and asvavati, somavati, urjayanti and udojas among herbs are the important plants, when a physician having complete knowledge of plants administers them, they surely exhibit favourable results. To such, expert, the herbs offer themselves to be used and thus the vipra [learned physcian] destroys both rases [accidental cause] and amiba [disease caused by innate factors]. To such qualified physcians, the patient

completely surrenders himself with all his belongings. Plants are like mother which protect the people and wish their all round welfare.\textsuperscript{45}

In the Taitriya samhita of yajurveda various parts of ausadhi and vanaspathi are mentioned as - Mula [root], Tula [shoot], Kāṇḍa [stem], Valsa [twig], Skāṇḍa [trunks], Śākha [branches], Pāṇa [leaf], Puṣpa [flower], Phala [fruit], Daru [inner wood] and Majja [pith].\textsuperscript{46}

Atharva Veda extols the excellence of medicinal herbs very often. In Atharva Veda, there is more developed classification of plants, they have been classified according to colour morphological character, habitat [growing in plants, hills and watery places] and use [Atharvani, Angirasi, daivi and Manu syaja used in beneficial rites, sorcery, godly remedies and general].

They experienced life in plants and compared the parts of plants with corresponding parts of man such as loma, twak, rakta, mamsa, snāyu, asthi and majja are compared with pāṇa [leaves and hairs] bahirupatika [Epiderm] niryasa [exudation], sakara [mesoderm], kinata [Endoderm], abhyantara kastha [heart wood] and Majja [pith].

Use of plants in various diseases was based on experience and observation of the effects of plants particularly on animals like boars, mongoose, snakes and cows. Another basis was doctrine of signature such as such of haridrā in jaundice. Lakṣa in hamorrhage and asikni in Palitha etc...\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{45} Priyavrat Sharma - "History of Medicine in India", P - 37.
\textsuperscript{47} Priyavrat Sharma - P - 37.
The love for the earth is recorded in the Atharva-Veda specially in Prthvi sūkta. It is said that the mother earth bestows love to all the creatures living on it.\(^{48}\)

“Āyurveda was regarded as one of the four up-VEDas connected with Atharva Veda.”\(^{49}\) It is also mentioned as ‘veda’ and ‘vidya’.\(^{50}\) Āyurveda has been mentioned as authority by Pulinda Bhatta in the later portion of Kādambari.\(^{51}\) There also mention of the actions which promote long life.\(^{52}\)

The Āyurveda was modified to a great extent. Mani, Mantra and Auṣadha were main instruments of treatment of diseases.\(^{53}\) Vaidyas using roots of plants in the treatment were called ‘Maulika Bhiṣak’\(^{54}\).

The scholar P.V. Sharma states in the following way— “The knowledge of Āyurveda was hereditary and transmitted from father to son apart from one hand to go through a methodical training in Gurukulas and in Universities. For example—In Kādambari, there is description of Gurukulas

\(^{48}\) यत्तैः भूमिविख्यनाति शिष्य तदपि रोहतु।
मा ते मर्म विभुग्नारि मा ते हर्वार्धयिम्॥

\(^{49}\) इतिसासो धृतुसंद गायत्रिश्रमयं संजितः।
बेदोपेदेशाम तथा विज्ञाव भरतु ते॥ विष्णु धर्मशास्त्रा - 2.22, 30

\(^{50}\) आतुर्वंद धुतुसंद गायत्रिश्रमयं वेदार्थाम।
स्वापले चास्त्विद्वद्वेदं क्रमातु पूर्वविधिमयौ॥ Dr. Sharada Shukla - Viṣṇu Purāṇa P - 396.

\(^{51}\) तथा चातुर्वेदिं उपिं शृष्टेऽ॥ कादम्बरि - 7.1.4.9.

\(^{52}\) आचार्यं कर्म निवर्णितम्। कादम्बरि - uttaraśhāgī 191

\(^{53}\) मनोवधायं कुलक्ष्योपगीः। भवति दोषा बहवो न शर्म।
Brahata saṃhitā - 75.5.

\(^{54}\) मे नेत्रं ज्ञातरिः ज्ञेताः।
वैष्णवसां च भवन्तिः।
Brahata Saṃhitā - 9.32.
where kings son studied and where Ayurveda was one of the subjects of study.”

Ayurveda is accepted to be the oldest treatises on medicinal system, which came into existence in about 900 B.C. The word Ayurveda derived from ‘Ayur’ meaning of life and Veda meaning science literally means “Science of Life”. The Ayurveda speaks of self-character, pleasure and sorrow, comfort and discomfort limited time and unlimited time etc. Hence, one can know the life span of a person, matter quality and action.

It is called Ayurveda wherein the Nature and characteristics of animate and in animate objects. It is explained it is Ayurveda. The Ayu consists of body and limbs like eye etc., mind knowledge through mind and other senses and their relation with Atman. Ayu, Cehana, Anuvrtti, Jivitam, Anubandha and Dhari are synonymous with Ayurveda.

**History of Ayurveda**:

Bhāradvāja performed severe penances and desired long life. Guided by the sages he approached Indra, the monarch of the immortals. For

---

55. Dr. P.V. Sharma - “The Plants in the Indian Purāṇas”, P - 42.
56. तदायुर्लक्ष्मीपु्रुषोद्विवंद || कर्मसिद्धि भेदूचाचाच ||
   स्वल्पाश्रयं गुरुसुयुक्तोरं हिताण्हितं प्रमाणाध्यावान्तर ||
   तत्त्वावधिकारं नात्मकाणि च इत्य - गुण कर्मचिति वेदविश्वायुरुषवं ||
57. आयुर्लक्ष्मिन्प्रिरीति, अनेन वात्तुवर्त्तीतिवादिवं || Ibid., p-9
58. श्रीरिवर्धिष्मलासत्संस्कृतो धारि जीवितम ||
   नित्यावधिकारायं पवित्रार्युषवं || Ibid., p-9
59. तत्रायुर्लक्ष्मिन्प्रिरीति, अनेन वात्तुवर्त्ती , धारि जीवितम || Ibid., p-11
Indra had obtained the ‘Science of Life’, (Āyurveda) in its entirely from the Aśvins, who had got it from Dakṣa who in turn had heard it from Brahman himself.60

Then after Kṛtayuga, by giving up Candrayāna penance and evil feelings like anger etc., accepting merits like fasting etc. learning Vedas having controlled senses for fulfilling desired fruits through performing various Vṛtas etc., all the sages assembled in the Himalayan Mountain. They were Áṅgiras, Jamadagni, Vasiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, Bhrugu, Atreya, Vāmadeva, Mārkaṇḍeya, Āśwalāyana, Parīkṣita, Bhikṣu, Bhāradvāja, Kapiṇijala, Viśvāmitra, Asharathya, Bhārgava, Cavana, Abhijit, Gargya, Śāṇḍilya, Kounḍinya, Vaijavapi, Kushika, Bādarāyana, Badisha, Sharaloma, Kapya, Kātyāyana, Kaikasheya, Dhaumya, Mārica, Sharkarakṣa, Hiranyākṣa, Maitreya, Lokaksha, Paingi, Shaynaka and Sakuneya. Maimatmsaini, Vaikhana, Valakhilya. All the sages assembled to-gether and discussed about the welfare of human beings.

They invoked God Indra through their meditation. Indra enlightened them about the remedies for the diseases.

Then a question arose as to who should enter the palace of Indra. Being requested by other sages Bhāradvāja approached Indra who further conveyed this lore of Āyurveda in brief to the great sage Bhāradvāja.

---

60. १४२. शीर्षकवितमच्छत्र भर्ताज उपागमत्।
इत्युपनम् बुद्धव सरण्यमरोधरम्॥
श्राध्रश्च हि यथाप्रक्ष्टमुवृद्ध प्रजायाति॥
ज्ञात्र निषिद्धनामवशिचिनी तु पुनस्तः॥
अविभेघ्यं भगवाच्च दृष्टिप्रदेह हि केवलम्॥
अविप्रत्येकों भर्ताजस्तस्माच्छत्रमुपागमत्॥ Ibid., 22
All the sages came to know about this Āyurveda through Bhāradvāja, for the welfare of the people. They came to know general treatment. Special treatment, action and reaction of the medicines. The Punarvasu, the sage who got this lore from the other sages, taught this care to his six students for the welfare of the world. Those six students were Agnivesa, Bhela, Jatukarna, Parasara, Harita and Ksarapani.  

Agnivesa composed ‘Tantra Saṁhitā’. Then Bhela composed ‘Bhelatantra’ and conveyed it to Punarvasu etc. All ancient texts in Āyurveda divided the medical knowledge into eight sections, which are called ‘Aṣṭāṅga Ayurveda’ as follows:

1. Kāya Cikitsa [Medicine].
2. Śalya Cikitsa [Surgery].
3. Śalakya Cikitsa [ENT treatment].
4. Bāla Cikitsa [Pediatric treatment].
5. Jara Cikitsa [Treatment related to genetics].
6. Rasāyana Cikitsa [Treatment with rejuvenation and aphrodisiacs].
7. Graham Cikitsa [Planetary effects].
8. Viṣa Cikitsa [Toxicology].

---

61. अन्यत्वं भद्रागामनगुणायं प्रजापतिः।
   दीर्घमाधुर्यर्कीर्त्तीति केवदं वर्णमाधुर्यं।
   महत्वस्ते युद्धाप्रमाणाय चतुष्पतिः।
   सामवेः च विशेषं च गुणां इत्ययः कर्म च।
   समवायं च ताजात्वा तन्तोत्तरं विचिन्तिताः।
   लेखिषे परम मर्म जीवितं भावनिलिङ्गं।

Ibid., p-23

62. अव मैत्रीरथपुर्णवसुवर्त्ते पुनर्वाहु।
   शिववर्गे दत्तवर्ग च दर्शितानुतुम्कर्मर्था।
   अन्वितेशंशशेषेईव जातुर्विर्धिः परशाकरं।
   हारीताः क्षारपाणिश्च जातुर्विर्धिः।

Ibid., pp-23, 24
Kāvyaka Cikitsa :

Compromised of seventy percent Āyurveda, remaining all the systems are also actually rooted from Kāya Cikitsa.

Perceptors of Āyurveda

Brahma

↓

Dakṣa-Prajāpati

(According to version in Suśruta saṁhitā)

↓

Aświns

(According to version in Kaśyapa Saṁhitā)

↓

Indra

(According to version in Caraka Saṁhitā)

↓

Dhanvantri

Bhāradwāja

↓

Divodasa

Suśruta

↓

Aupadhenava

| Bhela

↓

Kaśyapa, Vasiṣṭha

and Atri, Bhṛgu

Their son and
disciple Bhoja

and others.

Atreyā

| Punarvasu

| Jatukarna

| Parāśara

| Harita & others

Vaitarana — Ksharapāni — Aurabhra — Gopurarakshita

63. Prof. Subhash Ranade and Dr. Rajendra Deshpande, 'History and Philosophy of Āyurveda'. International Academy of Āyurveda, 1998, p-17
The concept of Daśa Dhātu Māla theory is the basical philosophy of Āyurveda, which deals with tridoṣa [Vāta, Pitta, Kapha], sapta doṣas [Rasa, Rakta, Mansa, Medo, Asthi, Majja, Sukra], trimālas [Puruṣa, Mootra, Sweda]. The imbalance of three and a parasama ātmendriyamanas are results in diseases. Diseases according to Āyurveda can rise from the body or the mind because of internal factors or intrinsic causes Āyurvedic treatment is aimed at the patient as an organic whole and treatment consists of salubrious use of drugs, diets and practises. Āyurvedic medicines are complex mixtures including plant and animal derived products, minerals and metals.64

Sources of Āyurveda:

According to Indian tradition of the four Vedas - Rgveda, Sāmaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda. The Rgveda is considered to be the oldest. The Āyurveda is said to be Upaveda of the Atharva Veda where as the 'Charaka Samhitā', is the (1900 B.C.) first recorded systematic treatise fully devoted to the concept of practise of Āyurveda. This describes three hundred and forty one plants and plants products from medicine use.

The 'Suśruta Samhitā' (600 BC) has special emphasis on surgery. It describes three hundred and ninety five medicinal plants, fifty seven drugs of animal origin, sixty four minerals and metals as therapeut agents. Suśruta has been recognised as father of surgery lived and practised surgery in Varnasi, 2500 years ago.

Another important authority of Āyurveda is 'Bagbhatta' belonged to sindh the present day Pakistan. He practised Āyurveda around 17th

64. Dr. M.N.Joshi and Dr. G.N.Joshi, 'Āyurveda Hitopadeśah', pp-12, 13
century A.D. and his work ‘Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya’ is considered unrivalled for the principles and practises of medicine.

‘Mādhava Nidana’ [800-900 A.D.] is the most famous work on diagnosis of diseases as per Āyurvedic concept. Bhāyamishra of Magadha is the last author on Hindu medicine whose treatise Bhāvaprakāśa, written around 1550 which is held in high esteem by modern Āyurvedic practitioners for approximately four hundred and seventy medicinal plants. Other than these works some other are there related to Āyurveda as follows:

Aṣṭāṅga Sangraha, Śṛṅgadhara Śamhitā and etc.65

Preservation of Environment in Vedas:

The spiritual and disciplines life style of the ancient Indian people was useful for the preservation of the environment. Every house holder has been advised to perform the daily five great sacrifices. [महायज्ञ] They are :

a)  ब्रह्मयज्ञ (Brahmayajña) – The sacrifice offered to Brahma that is teaching and studying Vedas.

b)  पितृयज्ञ (Pitrayajña) – The sacrifice offered to the manes that is offering of food and waters.

c)  देवयज्ञ (Devayajña) – The sacrifice offered to the Gods that is the burnt oblations.

d)  भूतयज्ञ (Bhūtayajña) – The sacrifice offered to all the members of creation.

65. Prof. Subhash Ranade and Dr. Rajendra Deshpande - ‘History of Philosophy of Āyurveda’, p-35
Medical Data in Epics and Purāṇas:

The two great epics, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata, and the Purāṇas are valuable treasures and records of Indian culture which, because of their encyclopaedic character, contain a lot of information on medicine prevalent in those days.⁶⁷

As regards medicine, the first change noticed in the kāmayana is the emergence of Dhanvantri as personified Āyurveda and later on as god of Health who replaced the Vedic twin god physicians Aśvins reducing them only as handsome faces. The word 'vaidya' was generally used in the sense of learned but was being transferred gradually to denote physician.⁶⁸

The basic concepts of Āyurveda were rationally established and the Āyurveda which was divided long back into eight branches was again being converted into a composite whole comprising all the branches, the movement culminating in appearance of the Astāṅgahṛdaya. The Vedic Aśvins represented the fragmentation of Āyurveda in specialities themselves symbolising the two chief specialities of medicine and surgery. Where as Dhanvantri assimilated all the knowledge in one.⁶⁹

---

68. Priyavrat Sharma - "History of Medicine in India", P-88.
69. Ibid - P-88.
In Rāmāyaṇa the pathological effects caused by aggravated vayu are allegorically described as (1) deformation in body (2) obstruction in passage of urine and faces (3) Respiratory distress (4) pain and immobility in joints. At the end, the importance of vāyu.

Quite a few travelogues across India are given so clearly including the directions, their relative distance, the places covered such as individual forests, their extents, names and relative orientations and also of mountains and rivers etc. A few examples apart from that of Rama himself, are of: Viśvāmitra with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa from Ayodhyā to Mithala ultimately. Bharata’s travel to Kekaya and back to Ayodhyā on a shorter way and Rāvaṇa’s aerial journey with his Marricha from Laṅkā to Panchavatī during which he saw forests of coconut, arecanut and also forests of many an aromatic tree along the western sea coast of south India.

Vālmiki also gives occasionally wholly new plant names that need to be identified. A few such names are: Kuuta, shaalmali, gajapushpi, rilaaśoka, hemaasoka, timi, mahaa taru and nikuula vrksha.70 Susena, the physician-surgeon accompanying Rama in his military expedition treated Rama, Lakshmana and other injured soldiers medically as well as surgically. For this, he applied some herbs having miraculous powers, the main four were mrtasanjivani, visalyakarani, savarnakarani, and sandhani.

Apart from the above main herbs, a number of plants are mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa in different contexts like description of forests, hermitages, seasons etc. One of the peculiar plant is ‘nilaśoka’. Botanically Aśoka is well identified and is very commonly known plant. But what is meant by

'Nilāsoka' is not clear because Aśoka [saraca indica] has no any blue variety. Kovidara was used as flag in chariots. Ingudi [Balanites aegyptiaca] was a common tree in vindhya a region under which Rāma set his camp. Sthagara, probably an aromatic plant is mentioned along with kusthā while describing citrakuta.\textsuperscript{71}

\textbf{Mahābhārata:}

Mahābhārata, in the present form, is an encyclopaedic work which has developed in a long course of time. Initially it was 'Jaya', then 'Bhārata' and lastly 'Mahābhārata' containing 8,800, 2,400 and 1 lac verses respectively. This development took centuries in which various materials – legends and stories were added to it which gave it the present size. Its greatness lies not only in its size but also in the valuable contents.

There are references of Atreya [Ksnatereya], Divodasa and Nagnajit which proves that these names were quite familiar in the society. Many points of similarity are observed with respect to the sushruta saṁhitā. Aśvins are reffered for their medical and surgical skills.

Apart from medicine and surgery, other specialities of Ayurveda were also prevelant. The discourse between taksaka and kāśyapa is evidently proof of the later's expertise in toxicology by which he revived the Banyan tree which was reduced to ashes by Taksaka, the king of serpents. Rasāyāna is already defined in the legend of Cyavana, the legend relating to Skānda and his attached women [Matrs] and grahas point to the status of Pediatrics, the instances of other specialities are also found here and

\textsuperscript{71} Priyavrat Sharma - "History of Medicine in India", P-90.
there. A beautician [sairandhri] is figured in Draupadi disguised as Mālīni in the place of virata. She knew hair-dressing and cosmetics.\textsuperscript{72}

In treatment of diseases, both mantra and oshadha [drug] were used but the latter was gradually establishing its hold. Drugs were collected and preserved in stores along with oil, ghee and honey. Dhūpa is described as of three types – niryasa [exudation], sarin [heart wood] and krtrima [artificial], guggula and aguru were the best ones in the former two groups.

Existence of life with five Bhūtas in plants has been proved with reasons. Vṛkṣa [tree], gulma [shrub], latā [weak plant], valli [twinner], twak sara [having tough integument] and tṛṇa [grasses] – these are different forms of plants. Among plants palāśa, tilaka, cuta, campaka, pārībhadra, tamāla, tāla, madhūka, nipa, kadamba, sarja, arjuna, karnikara etc. are mentioned. plāksa, sata, nyagrodha, śālmali and aśvattha were very common. Flexibility of vetasa is well described. kimpaka, though sweet in taste, is harmful in consequence. A big tree kalamra is described the juice of which was quite saturating and nourishing. It grew in bhadrasva varsa. There is mention of soma - vikrayi which means that there was some plant prevelant in the name of soma which was sold the market.\textsuperscript{73}

\textbf{Purāṇas :}

Purāṇas are so called as they described old traditions. These are eighteen in number. Besides there are upa-purāṇas. The purāṇas has come into existence by 1030 A.D. Medical material in them seems belong to the Gupta period.\textsuperscript{74}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{72} Ibid - P - 90,91
  \item \textsuperscript{73} Ibid - P - 91,92.
  \item \textsuperscript{74} Shri B.K. Srivathsa & M.A. Narasimhan - P-146.
\end{itemize}
Often purāṇa is placed with Itiḥāsā and is called as the fifth Veda which emerged simultaneously with the four Vedas or even earlier. The Atharva Veda mentions purāṇa along with other Vedas. Thus it is natural that Āyurveda which is intimately connected with the ‘Atharva Veda’ should have acquaintance with the purāṇas. Both purāṇas and Āyurveda developed together in post-Atharanic period, thus creating an ideal environment for interaction between them. Many things came from purāṇas in Āyurveda and vice verse. Mythological origin of diseases and recitation of stotras like ‘Viṣṇu sahasranāma’ in treatment of diseases are direct impacts of purāṇas. The ‘Caraka-samhitā’ recommends appointments of courtiers to the king in the hospital who should be well versed in Itiḥāsa-purāṇa besides other arts.

_Brahma purāṇa_

“Soma is described allegorically as husband of herbs”. The religious importance of Aṣvattha is highly praised. It is also said, that the power of amulets, mantras and herbs is beyond human comprehension.

_Padma purāṇa_

It enumerates seventeen domestic and fourteen sacrificial herbs which were both cultivated and wild. By churning of ocean, Dhanvantri appeared clad in white and bearing the water port. He is said as ‘Vaidyarāja’. From which it is evident that Dhanvantri was the symbol of an ideal physician removing disease, decay and death. ‘Vaidya’ is used in the sense of physician. Āyurveda is mentioned first among the upavedas probably

75. Priyavrat Sharma - “History of Medicine in India”, P-104.
because of its attachment to Rgveda. Medical treatment, diet and drugs were costly.

Soma is king of herbs. Plants are mentioned in many contexts. Plākṣa is described as the chief of the trees. In the context of vrksāropana [plantation] too, a number of plants are mentioned. Nygrodha is exemplified for its extensive growth and kadali for its want of heart-wood. Tulasi is given prominence for its important place in vaisṇava worship and so the glorification and uses of āmalaki are described in a separate chapter. Guggulu is said the best among inceses. So is the importance of kuśa. There is a group named ‘Saptakuśa’ which consists of kuśa, kāśa, dūrva, yava, vrihi, balvaja and puṇḍarīka.\textsuperscript{76}

\textit{Matsya purāṇa}

The plants growing in Himalayas are enumerated. In a similar way while describing the palace of Hiraṇyakaśipu. There are also trees which are fit and unfit for making icons of gods. Mahāusadhyastaka [a group of eight great herbs] was used in great bath. It consists of sahadevi, vaća, vyāghri, balā, atibalā, śaṅkhapuṣpī, simhi and suvarcalā.\textsuperscript{77}

\textit{Markandeya purāṇa}

The legend of the origin of Āśvins is there. There is mention of offering to Dhanvantari. Brahmamitra, an Atharvanic Brähmaṇa studied Āyurveda which was divided in eight branches and also the text having 13 chapters. He taught this to students, invisibly a demon also learnt it in eight months who was refused, on formal request, the delivery of whole

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid - P-94.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid - P-95.
Āyurveda to him. Thus he became quite conversant with the entire Āyurveda and helped with Āyurveda, the two girls to recover from leprosy and consumption. He was well-versed in the subject and administered auṣadha [herbal drug] and rasa to eradicate the disease. Domestic and sacrificial cereals are enumerated as else where. Plants are mentioned in various contexts.

**Vāyu purāṇa**

Candrama is soma and is the self of plants, he is the king of all plants. Initially plants grew wild in rural areas and forests. Later on varta [cultivation & distribution] was started. Auṣadhi is the term for the plants which end on ripening of fruits. The domestic cereals [Gramya auṣadhi] are seventeen in number including sana. Sacrificial cereals are wild as well as domestic and fourteen in number.

Origin of plants is mythologically described. Irā has three daughters – latā, vallī and vīrudha. Latā and Vallī gave birth to vanaspati and vrksa respectively. Virudha delivered gulma, tvaksara, trṇa [auṣadhi]. In the context of the tree, parts of plants such as seed, trunk, bud, branches, leaf, flower and fruits are mentioned. Vrksa, auṣadhi and virudh are often mentioned. Here ‘Vrksa’ includes ‘Vanaspati’ as well. Once virudh is replaced by gulma shining herbs are mentioned which are the symbols of the powerful plants which preserve living beings and eradicate diseases. In Drona mountain, existence of visalyakarani and mṛtasanjivani is mentioned. Plāksa got the important place among trees. Plāksa, nyagrodha, aśvattha, vikankata, udumbara, bilva, candana, sarala, devadāru and khadirā are sacrificial trees used as fire wood. Other plants are also mentioned.

---

78. Ibid - P-95,96.
which includes Nilaśoka and kalamara. In srādhā, 'vartaku' [Brinjal] is to be avoided.\textsuperscript{79}

\textbf{Viśṇu purāṇa}

It is one of the earliest purāṇas. It contains many materials which indicate the established position of ancient medicine. Here ocean was churned after putting a number of herbs in the same which came out as nectar providing a strength and immortality to gods. Dhanvantri emerged with a pot of nectar in his hand, offerings were also presented to him. Āyurveda is mentioned among upa-Vedas. Domestic and sacrificial herbs are mentioned as else where. Among dietary preparations saktu, vatya, apupa, samyava, payasa etc are mentioned.

Among plants, Nyagrodha, Kadali, Plāksa, [king of trees], Kuśa, Kāśa, Isikā etc.... are mentioned. The parts of plants which remain un manifest in the seed are mūla [root], nāla [stalk], patra [leaf], ankura [bud], kāṇḍa [stem], kośa [receptacle], puśpa [flower], kṣīra [latex] and tandula [fruits].\textsuperscript{80}

\textbf{Bhāgavata purāṇa}

Dhanvantari is mentioned as the twelth incarnation of Viśṇu. He is the god of medicine and immortality and teacher of Āyurveda. He is prayed to protect from harmful things. He is a direct manifest of Viśṇu and is called, Āyurvedadrk [seer of Āyurveda]. Śantana is said as ‘Mahābhīsaṅk’ and transforms the old to the young. Perhaps he was expert in Rasāyana.

Among plants, kāraskara and kākatunda are important as they are not mentioned in ancient Ayurvedic texts. Other plants are kuśa, kāśa,

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid - P-97.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid - P-98.
arjuna, bilva, kumbha, ämalaka, īśika and eraka were commonly found. Aśvattha and yava are regarded as the best one among trees and herbs respectively. Aśvattha is also said as ‘Pippala’. Apart from these, long lists of plants are given in other contexts. Parts of plants are also mentioned such as patra, puṣpa, phala, mūla, valkala, latex, seed, sprout, stem, trunk and branches. 

**Brahmavaivarta purāṇa**

Rasāyana was held as the best among ausadhis [drugs]. Here it means probably mercurial preparations which might be the drug of choice in those days. Plants are mentioned in various contexts. Aśvattha is said as the best among fruiting trees and so tulasi among flowers. Dūrvā is the best among herbs and kuśa among grasses, Fruit, Flower, leaf, trunk, bud and seed are mentioned as parts of plant.

**Vāmana purāṇa**

Origin of some plants is traced to gods such as ‘kadamba’ is originated from kāmadeva [Love-God] and dhattura from siva and so on. Plāksa is said as the source of the river Saraswatī.

**Nāradīya purāṇa**

Plants are mentioned in various contexts. The fruits are also mentioned. In pañcapallava are included panasa, āmra, vāta, aśvattha and vakula. Similarly, pañcadhānyas are godhūma, tila, māsa, mudga and taṇḍula. Oils of lin seed, mustard, rājikā, bibhītaka, karaṇja and madhuvṛkṣa are used for different magical charms. Some aromatic substances like Ela, Lavaṅga, Karpura and Kastūri are also mentioned.

81. Ibid - PP-99,100.
82. Ibid - P-100.
83. Ibid - PP-100,101.
The growth of plant right from seed is traced mentioning various parts such as root, sprout, leaf, stem, bud and flower. Out of the flowers some bear fruit others do not.\textsuperscript{84}

\textit{Agni pur\={a}na}

Contains verses similar to those of charaka samhita. It mentions veterinary medicine also: treatment of horses and elephants.\textsuperscript{85} Plants and animals are described with synonyms which are based on the ‘vana\={u}\,sadhivarga’ of the Amarako\={s}a.\textsuperscript{86}

\textit{Garu\={d}a pur\={a}na}

Describes different types of precious stones, their recognition and their influence on the person who wears them. It also mentioned A\={s}\={t}\={a}\={n}ga Hr\={d}aya of V\={a}gbha\={t}a.\textsuperscript{87} A number of plants are mentioned in the context of tooth-brush.\textsuperscript{88}

As has been the history of literature regarding the medicinal plants in the Veda epics & in the pur\={a}\,\={n}as as has been seen is very vast and he read. In particular the literature of medicinal plants in the Atharvaveda has been found more emphasised. To identify the technical and traditional significance of the medicinal plants referred to in the Atharvaveda, it is however necessary to deal with their socio religious importance. Hence this element is planned to focus in the second chapter.

\textsuperscript{*}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{84} Ibid - P-101.
  \item \textsuperscript{85} Shri B.K. Srivathsa & M.A. Narasimhan P-146.
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Priyavrat Sharma P - 103.
  \item \textsuperscript{87} Shri B.K. Srivathsa & M.A. Narasimhan - P - 146.
  \item \textsuperscript{88} Priyavrat Sharma P - 104.
\end{itemize}