



Review Article

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Concept of *Dravyasangrahana* in Ayurvedic literatures with special reference to *Brihatrayis*

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ABSTRACT

Collection of medicinal parts for therapeutic preparations is known as *Dravyasangrahana*. For collecting different opinions about *dravyasangrahana*, literatures about *dravyasangrahana* in different ayurvedic texts *Charakasamhitha*, *Susruthasamhitha*, *Ashtangahridaya*, *Shaarngdharasamhitha* and *Raajanighantu* were reviewed. Ayurveda details many factors to be considered during drug collection. To attain desired therapeutic result it is mandatory to collect the drug having optimum *rasaveeryaadi* qualities. In Ayurvedic literature, drug collection has been mentioned according to different criteria like *desa*, *bhoomi*, *kaala*, nature of *dravya* collected and person collecting drug. Basic concepts of Ayurveda like *tridosha* and *panchamahaabhotha* were given importance in deciding drugs on the basis of quality of *desa* and *bhoomi*. Season of collection, properties of drug, method of collection, *veerya* of drug also have given importance. There are some references in *shaarngdharasamhitha* regarding collection of drugs like *cares* to be taken when drugs in wet and dry state are collected.

Keywords: Collection of drugs, *Dravyasangrahana*, *Brihatrayis*.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 75-80% of the world population, mainly in the developing countries, depend herbal medicines for primary health care [1]. Ayurveda therapy has got increased acceptability and it attracts a lot of tourists to the country. There is a hike in the foreigners studying Ayurveda. Number of manufacturing units is increasing day by day. These all are visible signs of Ayurveda is globalised. Success of a health care system depends up on availability, purity, genuity and safety of drug. So ensuring quality and purity of herbal medicines is important.

There are many factors which contribute in quality of drugs. Care should be given from the stage of collection of raw material because it has direct effect on the potency of raw materials and ultimately on the finished products. So the collection should be with proper care otherwise physician cannot get expected result for a medicine prescribed for a disease. We come across a detailed description about collection of drugs in ayurvedic literatures. Collection of drugs for the purpose of preparing medicines is known as *Dravya Sangrahana*. Ayurveda details many factors to be considered during drug collection like *desha*, *bhoomi* and *oushadha sangrahana kaala*. These references indicate that our great Aacharyaas have given prime importance to quality of drug in treatment. According to modern science, drugs possess highest potentiality during its collection period. Now it is clear from different studies that the climate, rainfall, temperature, altitude, duration of day light, methods of cultivation, effect of lunar cycle, area of collection, condition of soil, collection methods, processing and storage have impact on the secondary metabolites of the plant ultimately which affect the therapeutic efficiency of the drug. It is evident that Ayurvedaachaaryaas had knowledge about the influence of these factors even before centuries. The views of aachaaryaas have some differences with the contemporary views. Description of *dravyasangrahana* in Ayurveda literature has its own uniqueness in many things. According to aachaaryaas even the mental state of person collecting drug can influence efficacy of medicine. More researches are to be taken up in this field to compare various views and to find methods for improving the quality of raw materials and finished drug.

METHODOLOGY

This article reviews the concepts about *dravyasangrahana* in Ayurvedic literatures mainly in *Brihatrayis*. For this purpose various *samhithas* like *charakasamhitha*, *susruthasamhitha*, *ashtangahridaya*, *shaarngdharasamhitha* and *raajanighantu* were reviewed.

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- **Factors to be considered during *Dravya sangrahana***

There are many factors to be considered during *dravyasangrahana*.

1. *Desha*: Geographical area
2. *Bhoomi*: Soil
3. *Kaala*: Season
4. *Oushadha*: Nature of *dravya* to be collected.
5. *Sangraahaka*: Person collecting drug.

- ***Bheshaja pareekshavidhi* according to *charaka vimaana sthaana***

Charakaachaarya explained briefly about what are the factors to be examined when collecting a drug. According to *charakaachaarya*, drugs should be examined with reference to their characteristics as follows- Nature, *Guna*-Qualities, Specific actions, Place of growth, Season of collection, Mode of collection, Method of preservation, Method of processing, Dosage in which employed and Quantity of doshas eliminated or alleviated from various types of patients suffering from particular types of diseases [2].

- **Classification of *Desha* and *Bhoomi***

Desha means a part of the country or geographical area. *Bhoomi* means the area which allows different creatures to survive.

Ancient Ayurvedic texts mention about three types of *deshas* depending up on geographical conditions and natural flora of the respective places. They are *Jaangaladesha*, *Aanoopadesha* and *Saadhaarana desha*.

According to *Vaagbhataachaarya*, *jaangaladesha* is *vaathadosha* predominant and *aanoopadesha* is *kaphadosha* predominant. *Saadhaarana desha* is *desha* having moderate *dosha* [3].

According to *Charakaachaarya*, *jaangaladesha* is *vaathapitha* predominant. *Aanoopadesha* is *kaphavaatha* predominant [4].

Table 2: Properties of *desha* types

	<i>Jaangala</i>	<i>Aanoopa</i>
Land	Clear sky, even land Very few & small hills Young trees dance due to dry & strong winds. Occurance of mirages	Uneven land Large mountains Rivers long and reach oceans River banks are decorate with vanjula, vaaneera. Thick forests and flowering palnts.
Soil type	Rough, sandy, mixed with gravel.	
Water / Rain	Less rainfall Less water in lakes, well etc.	Lot of water resources Heavy rainfall
Air	Harsh and hot air Dry & strong wind	Mild winds
Plants	Few, small, thorny trees. Kadara, khadira, asana, aswakarna, dhava, thinisha, sallaki, saala, somavalka, badari, tinduka, aswatha, vata, shami, kakubha, simsapa, amalaki.	Many large, soft trees Hintala, tamala, narikela, kadali.
Animal/birds	lava, thittira, chakora.	Hamsa, chakraavaaka, baalaka
People	With sthira, krisha body. Stable, strong men.	With Mridu, sukumara, well built body.
Dosha	vathapitha	kaphavatha

Different opinions regarding relation *desha* and *dosha* relation is given in table no 1.

Table 1: *Desha* and predominant *dosha*

<i>Desha</i>	<i>Dosha acc.to Vaagbhata</i>	<i>Dosha acc.to Charaka</i>
<i>Jaangala</i>	<i>Vatha</i>	<i>Vaathapitha</i>
<i>Aanoopa</i>	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Kaphavaatha</i>
<i>Saadhaarana</i>	Moderate <i>dosha</i>	

Plants growing in a specific *desha* will be influenced by characters of the *dosha* predominant in that *desha*. So consideration should be given for that also.

In *charaka samhitha vimaanasthana*, some features are explained for each type of *desha*.

1. *Jaangala desha*

It is with less water and trees and told as best *desha*. Cause minimum number of diseases [5].

2. *Aanoopa desha*

It is with bundance of water and trees, scarcity of air and sunshine. It is not good for health [6].

3. *Saadharana desha*

Does not have extreme climate. Plants from both *jaangala* & *aanoopa* grows in this region [7].

Characteristics of different types of *desha* is explained in *charaka kalpasthana* [8].

Charaka when describing *para&apara guna*, says that *jaangala* is favourable when compared to *aanooopa* [9].

Aanoopa desha will be marshy, uneven, with elevations and excavations; no sufficient sunlight for growth and development. These properties adversely affects the medicinal property. Damp weather and soil enhance microorganisms and insects. In *vrikshaayurveda*, *vanavargasootreeya adhyaaya*, there is reference to forests and their deviation in the country.

Bhoomi

General description is given by *Vaagbhata* which include features of good *desha* and *bhoomi* ideal for drug collection.

Prashasthabhoomi

According to *Vaagbhata*, drugs ideal to be used as medicines are those grown in desert regions, temperate regions, regions which are even, which has good soil, are clean, regions apart from a burial ground, Buddhist monastery (or place near a big tree), roads, ravines and anthills, of soft mud, with source of water located on the right side, area covered with *kusa* and *rohisa* grasses, not tilled by plough and not occupied by big trees [10].

Even level land and fertile soil shows equal distribution of sunlight which helps to get required active ingredients. If recently ploughed, plants will be new. Growth of grasses shows fertility of soil and water availability. In burial ground, there may be contamination with microorganisms. Places of worship are designed for special purpose, so they are not desirable for collection of drugs. If pores and anthills are present, developed root system may be absent. Ants may cause damage to root and trunk. Examination of characters of soil is important because *paarthiva*, *jaangama* and *oudbhida* dravyas are related to soil. *Aachaarya susrutha* while describing the examination of *bhoomi*, refers to two types of *bhoomi pareeksha*. They are *Saamaanya* and *Vishesha* pareeksha. Medicinal plants grown in the soil with following characteristics should be collected.

Saamaanyapareeksha [11]

One should look for the land, for collection of medicinal plants, which is free from ditches, gravels, stones, unevenness, anthills and sand; not attached to cremation ground, killing place and temple; not unfertile, fragile and with distant water sources; smooth, sprouty, soft, firm, even and black, fair or red in colour. Even grown therein, the plant to be collected should be unaffected by insects, poison, weapon, sun, wind, fire, water oppression and thoroughfare, with excellent rasas, fully mature, having stout and deep root and situated in northern quarter. This is the examination of land in general.

Vishesha pareeksha [12]

Based on *Aakaashaadi bhoota*, *bhoomi* can be divided into five. Particularly, the land is known as predominant in *prithwi mahaabhootha* which is stony, firm, heavy, blackish or black and has big trees and vegetables. That predominant in *ap mahaabhootha* is smooth, cold, white, with adjacent water and marshy smooth crops, grasses and delicate trees. That predominant in *agni* is of various colours, light, stony, with sparse, few pale trees and sprouts. That with

predominance of *vaayu* is rough, in colour similar to ash and ass and has mostly small trees and those with scanty sap and cavities. That predominant in *aakaasha* is soft, even, with ditches, water with unmanifested taste, has all around trees without pith and big mountains and trees. Based on *rasa*, *bhoomi* is classified into six. They are *Madhura*, *amla*, *lavana*, *katu*, *thiktha* and *kashaaya*. If all six *rasa* are present, that is considered as *saadhaarana*.

Soil can be divided into four based on texture. Silt- soil with high silt content, Clay-soil with high clay, Sand-soil with a high sand percentage, Loam- soil which does not exhibit the dominant physical properties of any of the three groups.

Importance of soil:

Soil influences a number of plant activities besides being a source of anchorage, water and minerals. They are ability of seeds to germinate, size and erectness of plants, woodiness of stem, vigour of vegetation parts and extent of root system. Under similar climate conditions, a loose porous soil that retains little water will support only grassland or desert vegetation, where a deep, fertile loam, clay, may support trees, shrubs and vines of the type found in savannah or even monsoon forests. The soil P^H decides favourable growth of plants and presence of microorganisms as soil P^H greatly affects the solubility of minerals. The maximum availability of plant nutrients is between the P^H ranges of 6.5 to 7.5.

Ideal soil Contains about 50% solid space and 50% pore space. Mineral matter & organic matter occupy the total solid space of soil by 45% and 5% respectively. The total pore space of the soil is occupied by air and water on 50:50 basis that is 25% water and 25% air.

• **Kaala: Season / time of collection**

Morning time is selected for collection of medicinal plants in general. *Aachaaryas* explained different seasons for collection of different parts of medicinal plants. Seasons for collection of different parts is given in table no. 3.

Table 3: Seasons for collection of different parts

<i>Prayojyanga</i>	<i>Charaka</i> [13]	<i>Susrutha</i> [14]	<i>Raajanighantu</i> [15]
<i>Moola</i>	<i>Greeshma Sisira</i>	<i>Praavrit</i>	<i>Shishira</i>
<i>Palasha</i>	<i>Varsha Vasantha</i>		
<i>Sakha</i>	<i>Varsha Vasantha</i>		
<i>Pushpa</i>	<i>Flowering season</i>		<i>Vasantha</i>
<i>Twak - bark</i>	<i>Sarat</i>	<i>Sharat</i>	
<i>Ksheera</i>	<i>Sarat</i>	<i>Hemantha</i>	
<i>Saara - heartwood</i>	<i>Hemantha</i>	<i>Vasantha</i>	
<i>Phala</i>	<i>Fruiting season</i>	<i>Greeshma</i>	<i>Vasantha</i>
<i>Kanda (stem, root tubers, bulb)</i>	<i>Sarat</i>		<i>Hemantha</i>
<i>Patra</i>		<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Nidaghakaala-summer</i>
<i>Pravaala</i>			<i>Nidaaghakala-summer</i>

Their branches and leaves should be collected in rainy and spring season, roots in summer or late winter when the leaves have fallen down or are fully matured; bark, tubers and latex in autumn; heartwood in early winter and flowers and fruits according to their season [13].

Susruthaachaarya quotes opinion of some scholars like- Root, leaf, bark, latex, heartwood and fruit should be collected in early rains, rainy season, autumn, early winter, spring and summer respectively [14].

The bulbous roots in winter season, other roots in cold season and flowers during spring season are supposed to contain better properties. The new leaves or shoots in summer and the drugs which grow in mud like lotus should be used in autumn season [15].

- ***Oushadha /Swaroopa of sangrahaneeya dravya***

After identifying ideal *desha* and *bhoomi*, the drug is next to be examined. Physical characters like colour, external morphology, smell and taste are to be confirmed for identification. Those which are bitten by animals, burnt in fire or infected by organisms should be excluded. Drugs used should be well nourished. Deep rooted, grown in *Udeechi* (northern direction) should be collected. North is the Direction of *soma* which is God of *Oushadhi* [16].

In *ashtaangahridaya*, *vaagbhataachaarya* describes that herbs endowed with properties like good colour and taste, not eaten by insects, not burnt by forest fire, not spoiled in any other manner, not abnormal in any aspect, which have been nourished well by bhuthas, shade, sunlight and water. Drugs collected at appropriate seasons, those which are spread wide, with big roots spread in the northern direction are ideal [16].

According to *susrutha* in *saamaanyapareeksha*, explains about specifications about the plants to be collected [11].

In *shaarngdharasamhitha*, it is told that herbs growing in anthills, dirty places, marshy land, burial ground, salty soil, roads and those which have been infested with worms, affected by fire and snow will not yield the desired effect [17].

- ***Sangrahana vidhi (method of collection)***

Even though cares are taken in *bhoomi*, *desha*, *kaala* and properties of drug to be collected, care is not completed without taking care in the qualities of *sangraahaka* (person who is collecting drug). This special concept shows the uniqueness and peculiarity of views of Ayurveda.

According to *shaarngdhara*, The physician who is pure in mind and clean in body should collect the herbs during sunshine praying to Lord *Shiva* in silence, herbs growing in northerly direction are to be collected [18].

According to *Vaagbhata*, the physician should collect the drug uttering the following hymns – “ You benoalent herb, relieve the sufferings of *Mahendra, Rama, Krishna*, the *Brahmanas*, the cows, by your power and radiance and do them good.” Then the physician after performing auspicious rites, with devotion in mind, clean (in dress etc) having

fasted (the previous night) should collect the drugs which are found in good places, and at the proper season [19].

It is clear that good mind and purity is important when selecting a drug which is used for saving a life. Carelessness and bad thoughts may cause false selection of drugs. Now we are aware of importance of reflection of positive energy in everything we do. Good mind and prayers help in increasing *satwaguna* to attain desired qualities for *dravyasangraha*. This concept is very relevant in present scenario of adulteration and misleading advertisements about quality of drugs in Ayurveda drug industry.

Apart from specifications about *desha, bhoomi, kaala, oushadha* and *sangrahanavidhi* some special things are there which are related to *dravyasangrahana*.

- **If useful part is not mentioned**

If part of plant to be used in *yoga* is not mentioned, root is to be collected [20].

- ***Shushka & Aardra dravyas***

Generally drug which is dry and *nava* is used as medicine. If wet drug is used, taken in double dose compared to dry drugs [21].

- ***Nava & puraana dravyas***

On all occasions, fresh drugs only should be used except *vidanga, krishna, guda, dhaanya, aajya* and *maakshika* [22].

Guduchi,

kutaja, vaasa, kushmanda, shataavari, ashwagandha, sahachari, shatapus hpi and *prasaarini* – these should always be used in green state but need not be taken in double the prescribed quantity [23].

- **Collection of different parts**

In *Annapaanaadi vidhi* of *susrutha samhitha sootrasthaana*, different parts of plants to be collected is explained. Amongst fruits, the fully ripe fruit is regarded as possessing good quality except *bilva* which is superior in qualities when unripe [24].

All fruits which are diseased, infested with insects, overmature, born untimely and immature should be discarded [25].

Leafy vegetable which is rough, very old, infested with insects, grown in improper land and out of season should be avoided [26].

Tuber which is young, unseasonal, old, diseased, infested with insects and does not grow well should be avoided [27].

Cereals grown out of season, afflicted with diseases, immature, cultivated in improper soil and fresh are not of good quality [28].

- **Collection of *Jangama dravyas* (drugs of animal origin)**

According to *Vaagbhata*; milk, dung and urine of a cow which is in its youth and in good health should be collected for use. Tissues like blood, muscle, fat, feathers, horns and hoof of animals and birds, which are in their youth and in good strength should be collected [29].

According to *Susrutha* blood, hairs and nails should be collected from adult animals. Milk, urine and faeces should be collected after food is digested [30].

- **Different *prayojyaanga* (useful parts)**

Various parts of the plants are used in therapeutics. Even the properties & effects will vary from one part of the plant to another eg: *pippali* and *pippali moola, gunja beeja* and *gunja moola*. *Charakacharya* quoted these among *oudbhida gana* [31].

Moola-root, Twak-bark, Saara-heart wood, Niryaasa-exudate, Naala-stalk, Swarasa-juice, Pallava-tender leaves, Kshaara-alkali, Ksheera-latex, Phala-fruit, Pushpa-flower, Bhasma-ash, taila-oil, Kantaka-thorns, Patra-leaf, Shunga-buds, Kanda-tuber, Praroha-vertical roots.

Charaka categorised drugs on the basis of useful parts [32].

Among these, *Moolini* are plants with useful roots which are sixteen. *Phalini* are plants with useful fruits which are nineteen. *Shodhana* are trees useful for evacuation which are six.

Shaarngdhara gives clarification about useful part [33].

In the absence of specification of useful part, following rule has to be followed. The root bark is to be collected in case of big roots whereas in case of tender ones the entire root system is collected. In case of big trees like *nyagrodha* their outer bark is to be collected, in case of trees like *beejaka* their pith; in case of *thaaleesa* their leaves; in case of *triphalala* their fruits; in case of *dhaathaki* their flowers and in case of *snuhi* their sap.

Drugs from animal source are: Honey, milk and milk products, bile, muscle fat, marrow, blood, flesh, faeces, urine, skin, semen, bone, ligament, horn, nail, hoof, hairs including smaller ones, bile concretions are used from animal sources [34].

- **Period of collection according to *veerya***

Soumya plants should be collected in *soumya* season and while *aagneya* in *aagneya* season [35].

Relation between *dravyas, ritu* to collect *dravya* and *gunas* of *dravya* are explained in table no: 4.

Table 4: Relation between *dravyas, ritu* to collect *dravya* and *gunas* of *dravya*

<i>Dravya</i>	<i>Ritu</i>	<i>Bhoomi</i>	<i>Dravya guna</i>
<i>Soumya</i>	<i>Varsha</i> <i>Hemantha</i> <i>Shishira</i>	<i>Soumya</i>	<i>Madhura</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Sheetha</i>
<i>Agneya</i>	<i>Sharat</i> <i>Vasanta</i> <i>Greeshma</i>	<i>Agneya</i>	<i>Katu</i> <i>Rooksha</i> <i>Ushna</i>

According to *shaarngdhara*, herbs grown in *vindhya* mountains are *aagneya* while those growing in *himaalaya* are *saumya*, hence they should be so chosen as are suited to the person. Plants growing in other forests will have the qualities of the place [36].

- **Period of collection according to *karma***

According to *shaarngdhara, sharat ritu* is best time for collection of herbs for all types of preparations, but for herbs which are for *vamana* and *virechana*, the best time is the end of *vasantha ritu* [37].

As a part of documentation in *Ayurveda*, there are many researches in this field not only to prove views of this unique science but also to increase efficacy of ayurvedic medicine.

Rohit Sharma et al studied seasonal variations in physico-chemical profile of *gudoocheesatwa* and found that maximum yield of *satva* was obtained in *shishira ritu* (January-February) while the minimum in *grishma* (May-June). Variation in taste and colour was found in *satva* prepared in *varsha Ritu*. All functional groups were found to be same in each season. Total alkaloidal contents found bit higher in *varsha* and *vasanta*. Findings in study shows that season of drug collection has influence on contents of drug [38].

Samples collected in different lunar phases and different *ritus* have influenced the phytoconstituents of *aswagandha* root [39].

CONCLUSION

The various opinions available in Ayurvedic literatures can be compiled as follows. To attain desired therapeutic result it is mandatory to collect the drug having optimum *Rasaveeryadi* qualities. In Ayurvedic literature, drug collection has been mentioned according to different criteria like *Desa, bhoomi, kaala*, nature of *dravya* collected and person collecting drug. Basic concepts of *Ayurveda* like *Tridosha, panchamahaabhootha* were given importance in deciding drugs on the basis of quality of *desa* and *bhoomi*. Season of collection, properties of drug, method of collection, *veerya* of drug also have given importance. There are some references in *shaarngdharasamhitha* regarding collection of drugs like cares to be taken when drugs in wet and dry state are collected.

Aacharyaas considered quality of drugs, safety, conservation and uses according to purpose. Understanding and adopting these, will be helpful to enhance the result and high treatment success rate which will help in increasing acceptance of Ayurveda in world.

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