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# Contributions of *Sharangdhar* in the Field of *Dravyaguna Vigyan*

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### **ABSTRACT:-**

*Sharangdhar* represents the clinical traditions of medieval India. At that time, the effect of *Mughal* tradition was visible at every aspect Indian tradition including medical science. Many new drugs like opium and therapeutic techniques were introduced by them. Use of *Rasayan* (rejuvenator) and *Vajikaran* (aphrodisiac) drugs became frequent. Apart from that *Sharangdhar* also documented medicinal uses of folklore drugs. Although *Sharangdhar* contributed a lot to Ayurveda in the form of *Nadi Pariksha*, concept of *Vishnupada Amrita* (oxygen) etc. but in the present paper the contributions of *Sharangdhar* in the field of *Dravyaguna* will be dealt.

Keywords- Sharangdhar, Medieval Period, new drugs etc.

#### **INTRODUCTION-**

India has a rich heritage of wisdom and knowledge. *Vedas* are the most ancient documented literature and the source of all kind of Indian knowledge. Science and technology, mining, medicine, surgery, civics, religion etc. got nourishment from *Vedas*. Ayurveda, the ancient Indian science of life originated mainly from *Atharva Veda*. The other *Vedas* had also described the methods of maintaining healthy state and elimination and prevention of onset of diseases.

In the developmental stream, after *Veda, Samhita* came with elaborated description of different branches of Ayurveda in a systematic manner. *Samhita* had been divided into *Brhittrayi* and *Laghutrayi*. *Charak Samhita, Sushrut Samhita* and *Astang Hridya* constitute *Brhittrayi* whereas *Madhav Nidan, Sharangdhar Samhita* and *Bhavprakash* are considered as *Laghutrayi*.

Samhita word with Sharangdhar authenticates the treaty, as treaties which cover the wide aspect and area of subject with full authenticity are considered as Samhita<sup>1</sup>. Sharangdhar being a treaty of early 13<sup>th</sup> century reflects the clinical tradition of medieval period. In this period Rasa-Shashtra was developed and many mineral and metallic preparations came in frequent use. Those were incorporated by Sharangdhar in his treaty. After the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. influence of Mughals also became frequent in India. Many new drugs like opium and therapeutic techniques were introduced by them. Use of Rasayan (rejuvenator) and Vajikaran (aphrodisiac) drugs became frequent. Sharangdhar standing in the 13<sup>th</sup> century combines both these aspects and thus, Sharangdhar Samhita may be taken as representative work of medieval period.

*Sharangdhar* itself quotes that in this book, he has compiled the formulations specified by the ancient *Acharyas* along with many new formulations which are practiced by physicians as per their rationality<sup>2</sup>. Thus, although, *Sharangdhar Samhita* specifically deals with formulations but various concepts about *Dravya* (drugs) has been introduced in this text. *Sharangdhar* had contributed significantly in *Dravyaguna Vigyana* right from introduction of new drugs to basic concepts, *Guna Karma* (pharmacodynamics) and *Prayog Paksha* (Pharmacotherapeutics).

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF SHARANGDHAR IN DRAVYAGUNA VIGYAN-

- **Basic Principles of** *Dravyaguna Vigyan- Sharangdhar* had significantly contributed to basic principles of *Dravyaguna Vigyan. Sharangdhar* had incorporated various principles enriching the basic principles of *Dravyaguna Vigyan.* Contributions of *Sharangdhar* in basic principles are-
  - Use of fresh and dry drugs- Sharangdhar had stated that generally dry drugs should be used for medicinal purpose. In case of unavailability of dry drug, fresh drug can be used but the amount of fresh drug should be double of dry drug. This indicates that the dry drugs are more potent in comparison to fresh drugs. Sharangdhar had also quoted some exceptions for this general rule i.e. Guduchi, Kutaja, Vasa, Kushmanda, Shatavari, Ashwagandha, Sahchari, Shatpushpa and Prasarini should always be used fresh<sup>3</sup>.
  - 2. Properties of drugs according to place of origin- *Sharangdhar* stated that drugs growing in *Vindhya* region are hot in potency while the drugs growing in *Himalaya* region are cold in potency. Plants growing in other regions will have the qualities of that place<sup>4</sup>.
  - **3. Time for drug collection-** Drugs should be collected in *Sharad Ritu* (October-November) for all uses but specially for emesis and purgation drugs should be collected in the end of *Basant Ritu<sup>5</sup>* (February-March).
  - 4. Part to be used- Sharangdhar mentioned about the part to be used for medicinal purpose<sup>6</sup>
    - a) Plants having thick root- root bark
    - **b**) Plants having tender roots- entire root system
    - c) Big trees like *Nyagrodha* outer bark
    - **d**) Trees like *Beejaka* pith/ heartwood
    - e) Trees like *Talisha* leaves
    - **f**) For drugs like *Triphala* fruit
    - g) Trees like *Dhataki* flowers
    - h) Plants like *Snuhi- Ksheera* (sap)
  - 5. Five Bhaishajya-Kaal- Sharangdhar confined the number of Bhaishajya-Kaal to five. The five Bhaishajya-Kaal as per Sharangdhar are Suryodaye, Divas Bhojane, Sanyante Bhojane, Muhurmuhu and Nishi. Sharangdhar only described first Bhaishajya-Kaal i.e. Suryodya for Shodhan, all other Bhaishajya-Kaal are for Shaman Chikitsa<sup>7</sup>.
  - **6.** *Aushadha Karma* (Pharmacological definitions)- *Sharangdhar* described various terms related with the drug action like *Deepan*, *Pachan*, *Sanshamana*, *Anulomana*, *Sansrana*, *Bhedana* etc.
- Introduction of new drugs- *Sharangdhar* introduced a number of new plants that were not popularly used as drugs e.g. *Rudanti, Babbula, Sthula Babulika, Mahanimba, Jwalamukhi, Kuthaaracchinna, Patalagarudi, Aileya* and *Suvarnapushpi*.
  - Rudanti- Sharangdhar had described Rudanti as Rasayan (rejuvenator) along with Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia Miers ex Hook.f.& Jhoms), Guggulu (Commiphora mukul Engl.) and Haritaki<sup>8</sup> (Terminalia chebula Retz.). Aadhmala has commented that it is a very famous drug of western region. Raja Nighantu had described that leaves of Rudanti are similar to leaves of Bengal gram and in Shishir Ritu oozing of water droplets occur from this plant. On the basis of these characteristics, Rudanti is botanically identified as Cressa cretica Linn. family Convolvulaceae<sup>9</sup>.
  - 2. Babbula- Sharangdhar had used Babbula in the formulations namely Babbulaarishta, Lauh Rasayan and Babbula Rasakriya. The parts used are bark, Phala Rasa (fruit juice) and leaves<sup>10</sup>. The pharmacological actions of Babbula as per Sharangdhar are Kshaya (emaciation), Kasa (cough), Kustha (skin disorders), Atisar (diarrhea), Prameha (~diabetes), Netrasrava (~epiphora). Botanically, Babbula is identified as Acacia nilotica (Linn.) Delile subsp. indica (Benth).

- **3.** *Sthula Babbulika- Sharangdhar* had mentioned *Sthula Babbulika* at one place only mentioning use of juice of its leaves in diarrhea<sup>11</sup>. Botanical identity of *Sthula Babbulika* is not clear till now.
- **4.** *Mahanimba- Mahanimba* word although had been used in *Sushrut Samhita* once in the *Pippalyadi Gana* but in *Samhita Kaal, Mahanimba* was the synonym of *Aralu (Ailanthus excels* Roxb.) while in the *Madhyakaal* (8-16<sup>th</sup> century), *Mahanimba* stands for *Bakayana*<sup>12</sup> (*Melia azadirachta* Linn.). As the medicinal uses of *Bakayan (Melia azadirachta* Linn.) were augmented by *Sharagdhar* in the name of *Mahanimba*, thus, these are the original contributions of *Sharangdhar*. *Sharangdhar* used *Mahanimba* in *Brhita Manjisthaadi Kwatha, Mahanimba Kalka, Dhatura Taila, Kusthakuthara Rasa, Mehabaddha Rasa* and for *Pindika*. The part used are *Jata Kalka* (root paste), fruit and *Beeja*<sup>13</sup> (seed).
- 5. Jwalamukhi- Sharangdhar had mentioned Jwalamukhi in context of Swarnmarana and as content of Jwarankusha Rasa, Mrigankapotali Rasa and Sannipatabhairava Rasa<sup>14</sup>. Leaf juice is the part used.
- 6. Kuthaaracchinna- Sharangdhar has used Kuthaaracchinna in context of Lauh Maran and Lauh Rasayana. Aadhmala has commented that the vernacular name of Kuthaaracchinna is Tipani. The botanical source of Kuthaaracchinna may be Allophylus serratus (Roxb.) Kurz., family Sapindaceae<sup>15</sup>. Aadhmala opines that Jambu Twak (bark of Syzygium cumini Skeels) can be used as a substitute for Kuthaaracchinna<sup>16</sup>.
- 7. **Patalagarudi-** Sharangdhar had mentioned Patalgarudi in context of Lauh Marana and Lauh Rasayan. The botanical source of Patalgarudi is Cocculus hirsutus (Linn.) Diels.<sup>17</sup>
- 8. Aileya- Sharangdhar had used the term Aileya as a content of Jwarghni Gutika. The commentators Aadhmala and Kashirama Vaidya had the used the word Aileeya. Aadhmala stated that Aileeya is the Niryas derived from juice of Aloevera and leaf juice of Aloe vera can be used as its substitute. Kashirama Vaidya opines it to be Elbaluka. Aadhmala had discarded this opinion<sup>18</sup>. Niryas derived from juice of Aloe Vera seems to be appropriate as all other drugs in the formulation are also purgative in action.
- **9.** Suvarnapushpi- Sharangdhar had used Suvarnapushpi as a content of Shivtra Lepa. Aadhmala had commented that its vernacular name is Soni and Brihat Bala can be used as its substistute<sup>19</sup>.
- New Therapeutic Uses of Indigenous Drugs- *Sharangdhar* introduced various new therapeutic uses of indigenous drugs-
  - 1. *Shakhotaka* (*Streblus asper* Lour)- *Sharangdhar* advised use of decoction of bark of *Sterblus asper* Lour. admixed with cow urine in case of *Shalipada*<sup>20</sup> (elephantiasis).
  - **2.** *Mahanimba* (*Melia azadirachta* Linn.)- *Sharangdhar* used root paste of *Melia azadirachta* Linn. for treatment of *Gridhrasi*<sup>21</sup> (sciatica).
  - **3.** *Vishnukranta (Evolvulus alsinoides* Linn.)- Root paste of *Vishnukranta* is advised in *Parinama Shoola* (peptic ulcer) admixed with *Sita* (sugar), *Kshodra* (honey) and *Ghrita* (butter). It will cure peptic ulcers in just seven days<sup>22</sup>.
  - **4.** *Kunkuma* (*Crocus sativus* Linn.)- *Kunkuma* fried in *Ghrita* (butter), pasted with milk and mixed with *Sita* (sugar) is for nasal administration in neuralgia particularly migraine<sup>23</sup>.
  - **5.** *Tilaparani* (*Gynandropis pentaphylla* **DC.)-** Juice of *Tilaparani* is advised for ear dropping in ear ache<sup>24</sup>.
  - 6. Dronapushpi (Leucas cephalotes Sperng.)- Juice of Dronapushpi admixed with powder of Maricha (Piper nigrum Linn.) is advised in Vishamjwara<sup>25</sup> (~malaria).
  - **7.** *Aardraka* (*Zingiber officinale* Rosc.)- Juice of *Aardraka* combined with honey alleviates *Vrishana Vaat* (~scrotal pain) and respiratory disorders<sup>26</sup>.

- Use of Animal Products- *Sharangdhar* frequently used the animal products like urine, bile etc. *Sharangdhar* had used powder of tooth of elephant, pig, camel, horse and goat as a content of *Dantavarti* indicated in eye disease namely *Shukra*<sup>27</sup> (corneal opacity). The bile of goat was used by *Sharangdhar* for the purification of *Manhashila*<sup>28</sup> (Realgar, Red Arsenic).
- Introduction of New Therapeutic Techniques- In ancient days too, drug was introduced directly into blood to bypass gastrointestinal tract. *Charak* had prescribed administration of drug through incised wound in the head of the patient in case of poisoning<sup>29</sup>. *Sharangdhar* had elaborated it further. He had advocated the use of *Suchikabharan Rasa* through wounds incised in the head. The medicine is to be rubbed there for a while so that it comes in contact with blood sufficiently. *Sharangdhar* had emphasized particularly on *Rakta-bheshaj Samparaka*<sup>30</sup> (contact of blood and drug). Similarly, he had prescribed the use of *Gunja (Abrus precatorius* Linn.) in sciatica by the similar technique<sup>31</sup>.
- **New Groups of Drugs-** *Sharangdhar* had contributed to *Dravyaguna Vigyan* not only by adding single drugs but also by formulating new groups of drugs.
  - Sushrut's Varunaadi Gana had been modified by dropping Darbha (Imperata cylindrica Beauv.) and Putika (Holoptelia integrifolia Planch.) and adding Kirattikta<sup>32</sup> (Swertia chirata (Roxb. ex Flem.) Karst.)
  - 2. Panchkashaya- a specific formulation of five drugs namely *Tinduka* (*Diospyros embruopteris* Pers.), *Abhaya* (*Terminalia chebula* Retz.), *Lodhra* (*Symplocos racemosa* Roxb.), *Samanga* (*Rubia cordifolia* Linn.) and *Aamlaki* (*Emblica officinalis* Linn.) for *Karnasrava* (otorhoea) had been described by *Sharangdhar* as *Panchkashaya*<sup>33</sup>.
- Use of Poisonous and Psychotropic Drugs- use of poisons like Vatsnabha (Aconitum ferox Wall) and Vishamushti (Strychnos nux vomica Linn) and psychotropic drugs like Vijaya (Cannabis sativa Linn) and Dhatura (Datura metel Linn and other species of Datura) is seen frequently in Sharangdhar Samhita. Although, the use of poisons is seen first in the work of Vagbhatta but it developed under the patronage of alchemists and Tantariks. Cannabis became more popular than Dhatura. Cannabis along with opium has been given as an example of Vyavayi<sup>34</sup> (which is absorbed quickly through mucus membrane). Sharangdhar has mentioned the use of cannabis in insomnia, loss of appetite, diarrhea and dysentry<sup>35</sup>.
- *Vajikarana Aushadha Vajikarana* is the part of *Ayurveda* from ever since. *Sharangdhar* had contributed in this field in the following ways-
  - 1. By classifying the drugs acting on *Shukra Dhatu* in detail- *Sharangdhar* has classified the drugs acting on *Shukra Dhatu* (~semen) as follows<sup>36</sup>
    - a. Vajikaran- Kapikacchu Beeja (seeds of Mucuna prurita Hook)
    - b. Shukrala- Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera Dunal), Mushli (Curculigo orchioides Gaertn), Shatavari (Asparagus racemosus Willd), Sharkara (~sugar)
    - c. Shukra Janak & Pravartak- Dugdha (milk), Masha (Phaseolus mungo Linn), Bhallatak Phala Majja (kernel of Semecarpus anacardium Linn)
    - d. Shukra Pravartaka- Stri (women)
    - e. Shukra Rechana- Brhatiphala (fruits of Solanum indicum Linn and Solanum surattense Burm.f.)
    - f. Shukra Stambhaka- Jatiphala (Myristica fragrance Houtt)
    - g. Shukra Shoshaka- Haritaki (Terminalia chebula Retz)
  - 2. **By prescribing formulations for allied purposes-** apart from main sexual performance, *Sharangdhar* suggested many formulations for *Yoni Sankocha* (contraction of vagina), *Linga Evam Stan vriddhi Yoga* (enlargement of penis and breasts) etc<sup>37</sup>.

3. By prescribing treatment for venereal diseases- *Sharangdhar* suggested many formulations for venereal diseases e.g. Karveer Moola Lepa (paste of root of Nerium odorum Soland) and *Triphala Mashi Lepa* (paste of ash of three myrobalan) for *Upadansha*<sup>38</sup>

## **Conclusion-**

Sharangdhar was a doyen in the field of Indian medicine during the medieval period. Sharangdhar & its commentators made significant contributions in the field of *Dravyaguna Vigyana* by adding many new drugs, new therapeutic uses and modes of drug administration. Sharangdhar revolutionized the practice of Indian medicine and paved the way for barefoot physicians working in rural areas.

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