

CRITICAL REVIEW OF *AGRAYA DRAVYA*

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ABSTRACT

The ancient Indian medical text *Charaka Samhita* introduces the concept of *Agraya Dravyas*, substances considered superior for treating specific diseases. The *Agraya* or *Agrya* is the most superior or best material when it comes to many attributes, functions, and outcomes. *Agraya Sangraha*, as used in Ayurveda, refers to a grouping of primary or leading components. In Ayurveda, *Agraya Ausadhis* are used to keep one well and prevent diseases. One hundred fifty two *Agraya Aushadhis* are mentioned in *Charak Samhita Sootrasthana*. *Agraya Samgraha* is mentioned in *Ashtanga Hridayam Uttarthana*, and *Agraya Aushadhis* are mentioned in *Astanga Samgraha Sootrasthana*. While treating illnesses, *Agraya Dravyas* are the first medications prescribed. They are affordable, practically safe and easy to use. *Agraya Prakarana* is primarily contains *Ekala Dravyas*, as a single medication administered in a single form. In their respective classes of action, the *Agraya Dravyas* are listed in the classical scriptures of Ayurveda are the best. The fact that *Agraya* are the greatest medications can be inferred from the fact that they have multiple uses. For example, *Erand Moola* can treat *Vrushya*, *Vatharanam* on its own; this eliminates the need to prescribe two separate medications in order to achieve the desired result. This critical examination aids in the appropriate design of a treatment plan and in prescribing a healthy and unhealthy diet. This article explores *Agraya Dravyas*, their classification in different Samhitas, examples, and their continued relevance in modern times.

KEYWORDS- *Agrya dravya*, *Ekala Dravya*, Ayurveda, Foremost substance,

INTRODUCTION

Our planet earth is gifted with Ayurveda so that humans could live long and healthy lives.¹ In Ayurveda; various kinds of principles have been described. A human interacts with a variety of things, such as other living or non-living *Panchabhautik* (manifested) creatures. It is known that there is nine *Dravya* (causative factors) at the foundation of all creation.² that is, *Mana* (mind), *Atma* (soul), *Kala* (time), *Disha* (directions), and *Panchamahabhoota* (space, air, fire, water, and earth). The fundamental

framework for all manifestations, known as the universe, is provided by *Panchamahabhuta*. The cosmos is contained inside *Kala* and *Disha*'s bounds in a clockwise direction. Among all the *Dravya*, *Kala* is the most important and potent, as it includes all creation in itself as well as it affects all creation in a clockwise manner, and human beings are no exception.^{3,4} The time span during which *Kala* interacts with a human from conception to death is known as *Ayu* (lifespan). The body goes through a number of natural, unchangeable changes during the *Ayu* period as a result of *Kala*'s contact. The lifespan has been split into three sections, sometimes called *Vaya* (different phases of life), based on the kinds of changes that take place: *Jirna or Vriddhavastha* (latter stage of life), *Madhya* (middle stage of life), and *Bala* (early stage of life). The major changes carried out in the body during these stages are, growth, achievement, maintenance and decay. *Agrya* means *sarvottam* i.e which is best among all. Ayurveda gives importance to *Ekala dravya chikitsa*. Which main motto is to maintain health of healthy person and cure diseases from its root.⁵ Ayurveda is very vast science, so ancient *acharyas* classified the Ayurveda into eight branches, collectively known as *Ashtang Ayurveda*.⁶ It contain *Kaya chikitsa*, *Shalya Tantra*, *Shalakya Tantra*, *Kaumarabhritya*, *Bhuta vidya*, *Dravya guna*, *Rasayana evam Vajikaran*. In *Bruhatrayee Agrya Dravyas* are mentioned, where *Charaka Samhita sutrasthan* chapter 25 includes 152 *Agrya Dravyas*,⁷ in *Ashtang Sangraha Sutrathana Chapter* 13 includes 155 *Agrya Dravyas*,⁸ and in *Ashtang Hridayam Uttartantra* chapter no 40 includes 55 *Agrya Dravyas*.⁹ Every *Agrya Aushadhi* *Dravya* operates according to its own inherent qualities, such as *karma*, *vipak*, *guna*, *rasa*, and its chemical composition. The most effective medication for that specific illness is all of these *Agrya Aushadhi Dravyas*. The *Sarvottam Ahar Dravya*, *Srvottam Vihar Dravya*, *Sarvottam Aushadhi Dravya*, *Sarvottam Bhav*, and *Ahitkar Bhav* are all discussed under a general topic in the *Charaka Samhita Agrya Dravya*. According to *Charaka*, *Agrya* is *Shrestha*; he explains this as "*Jyayastwa*" (superior). He refers to it as "*Karyakaraka*" in accordance with *Ashtang Samgraha*. *Shrestha aushadhi* can be administered in *vikalpa/yoga* based on *kala*, *bala*, and *desha*, according to *Astang Hridayam*. Utilising an *agrya dravya* for treatment is more cost-effective and efficient than utilising several medications. *Agrya ayushadhi dravya (Sarvottam Aushadhi)* of *Charaka Samhita* are attempted to be categorised herein into various groups, including Action on *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, respiratory system, cardiovascular system, reproductive system, urinary system, skin diseases, haemorrhoids, and Action in *Panchakarma*.¹⁰

CRITICAL REVIEW

Agrya Dravya

The drugs that having same action, and in those drugs that is best in *Pathya* and *Apathya* is considered as *Agrya aushadhi*. For *Vrutikar* means things that are needed for sustaining daily life are *Jala*, *Anna* (food), *Ahaara*, *Vihara*, *Swapna*, *Brahmacharya* from all of these *Anna* i.e. food is best, so food is *Agrya* (best) as *Vrutikar*.¹¹

Need of *Agarya Dravya*

- **Easiness-** For disease it's easy to use the best drug rather than using a lot of drugs for making formulation, *Agrya* can be used instantly. Ex. *Khadir (Acacia catechu)* is single drug mentioned for *kushtha*.
- **Unavailability of Drug-** In formulations many drugs are used for particular disease but

most of them are unavailable, so it's difficult to make formulation as described. Eg. *Shirish (Albizzia lebback)* is *Ekala drug* used for *Vishaghna* whereas *Mahagandhhastiadi Agad*, 89 different drugs are mentioned and some of them are unavailable.

- **Cost Effective:** Single drug is not as much as costly as compound formulation as it has lots of drugs.
- **Identification:** *Agrya Dravya* which are mentioned are mostly single drug or two, three drugs in combination are easy to identify whereas when formulation reach to doctor, it's difficult to know that drugs in the formulation are pure and authenticate or not.
- **Pharmacological Action:** Individual medications have demonstrated their promise on contemporary measures, and their pharmacological effects are widely recognised. In Ayurveda, verifying the karma (activity) of a single medication is simple. Conversely, we can understand activity in compound formulations, but it is impossible to determine which medicine is executing which action. For *krimi* (worms), or *Krumighna*, the best *Agrya* is ex- *Vidang (Embelia ribes)*. It contains *katu, kashay in rasa, ushna in virya, Teekshna guna, Laghu,* and *Rooksha*. It is Prabhava's *Krimighna*. By using contemporary metrics, it has also been demonstrated to have the best effect on worm infestations (anti-helminthic). It is pungent in flavour, light in texture, and quite potent. Major chemical components found in it include quercitol, *vilangine*, embelin, *homoembelin, christembine* (an alkaloid), volatile and fixed oils, and phenolic acids such as cinnamic acid, vanillic acid, and caffeic acid. In most cases, a laxative is given along with a medication to help remove dead worms from the intestines during deworming; however, since *Vidanga* is a moderate laxative, no additional laxative is needed while using *Vidanga* for deworming. The term "*Krimighna*" does not refer solely to intestinal worms; it also refers to microbial infections, which detoxify blood and are beneficial in treating a variety of skin conditions. It also has anti-microbial properties, enhances skin permeability, and its decoction is used to treat dental cavities and bad breath.

***Agrya Aushadhi* In Different Classical Texts –**

- *Bruhatrayee* includes *Agrya aushadhi* used as an *Ekal Dravya* in various diseases and to maintain health. In *Charak samhita Sutrasthana 25/40*, includes 152 *Agrya aushadhi*.⁷
 - In *Ashtanga Hridayam Uttar sthana.40*, includes 55 *Agrya aushadhi*.
 - In *Ashtanga sangraha. Su.13*, *Agrya sangraha Adhyaya 155 Agrya aushadhi* are described.
 - In *Ashtanga hridayam Agrya Dravyas* are focused to cure the diseases while in *Charak samhita* they are explained as preventive measure.

Table no 1 . *Agrya Dravya* mentioned in *Charak Samhita* ¹²

<i>Anna (food)</i>	<i>Vrittikaranam</i>
<i>Sura</i>	<i>Shramaharanam</i>
<i>Ksheer</i>	<i>Jeevan yam</i>
<i>Mansam</i>	<i>Brihaniam</i>

<i>Rasa tar</i>	<i>Paniyanam</i>
<i>Lavan Dravya</i>	<i>Aruchikaranam</i>
<i>Amlam</i>	<i>Hridayanam</i>
<i>Kukkuto</i>	<i>Balyanam</i>
<i>Madhu</i>	<i>Shleshmapittaprashamana</i>
<i>Sarpi</i>	<i>Vatapittaprashamana</i>
<i>Til Taila</i>	<i>Vatashleshmaprashamana</i>
<i>Vamana</i>	<i>Shleshmaharanam</i>
<i>Virechan</i>	<i>Pittahara</i>
<i>Basti</i>	<i>Vataharanam</i>
<i>Sweda</i>	<i>Mardavkaranam</i>
<i>Vayayama</i>	<i>Steryakaranam</i>
<i>Kshara</i>	<i>Punsatvaghatkar</i>
<i>Aam kaapittha</i>	<i>Akanthyanama</i>
<i>Avi Sarpi</i>	<i>Hrudya</i>
<i>Gavhedhukam</i>	<i>Karshyaniyam</i>
<i>Yava</i>	<i>Purishjananma</i>
<i>Kullathha</i>	<i>Amlapittajananam</i>
<i>Masha</i>	<i>Shleshmapittajananam</i>
<i>Madan phal</i>	<i>Vamanasthapananuvasanupyoginam</i>
<i>Trivrutta</i>	<i>Sukhavirechana</i>
<i>Ikshu</i>	<i>Mutrajananam</i>

Table 2: Agrya Dravya Mentioned in Ashtang Hridayam ⁹ –

AGRYA (BEST DRUG)	DISEASES
<i>Mustaka (Cyperus rotundas)</i>	<i>Fever (Jvara)</i>
<i>Hot soil cooled in water</i>	<i>Trushna (Excessive thirst)</i>
<i>Laja</i>	<i>Vamana (Relieving vomiting)</i>
<i>Shilajeet</i>	<i>Basti (Urinary) disorder</i>
<i>Amla (Emblica officinale), Hirda (Curcuma longa)</i>	<i>Prameha (Diabetes)</i>
<i>Loha</i>	<i>Pandu (Anaemia)</i>
<i>Haritaki (Terminalia chebula)</i>	<i>Vat, Kapha shamaka</i>
<i>Pipali (Piper longum)</i>	<i>Pleeha Roga (Spleen disorder)</i>
<i>Laksha</i>	<i>Uro-Kshat (Chest injury)</i>
<i>Shirish (Albizzia lebback)</i>	<i>Vishaghna (Anti-Poison)</i>
<i>Guggul (Commiphora mukul)</i>	<i>Med (Fat) and Vayu Shamaka</i>
<i>Vasa (Adhatoda vasica)</i>	<i>Rakta-Pitta</i>
<i>Kutaj (Holarrhena anti dysentrica)</i>	<i>Atisaara (Dysentery)</i>
<i>Bhallatak (Semi carpus anacardium)</i>	<i>Arsha (Piles)</i>
<i>Swarna (Gold)</i>	<i>Gara</i>

<i>Rasanjana</i>	<i>Sthulya (Obesity)</i>
<i>Vaayvidanga (Embelia robusta)</i>	<i>Krimighna (Anti-helminthic)</i>
<i>Sura (Alcohol), Goat's milk and meat</i>	<i>Shosha</i>
<i>Triphala (Haritaki, Bibhitaka, Amla)</i>	<i>Netra Roga (Eye disorder)</i>

Relevance in Modern Times

While the concept of Agrya Dravyas originated in ancient India, the underlying principles of selecting potent substances for specific health conditions remain relevant today. Modern scientific research is increasingly exploring the therapeutic potential of many plants and minerals mentioned in Ayurveda, including some Agrya Dravyas.

It's important to note that using Agrya Dravyas should be done under the guidance of a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner. While these substances hold promise, their safety and efficacy can vary depending on the individual and the specific condition.

Classification of Agrya Dravyas according to modern science

Charaka Samhita does not provide an exhaustive list of Agrya Dravyas. However, it offers a framework for their classification based on their therapeutic action. Some common categories include:

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Hridya (Cardiac tonic)	These Dravyas are believed to promote heart health and are often used in conditions like heart palpitations and edema.
Jwarahara (Antipyretic)	As the name suggests, these Dravyas are used to manage fever and associated symptoms.
Deepaniya (Appetizers)	These Agrya Dravyas stimulate appetite and address digestive imbalances.
Pachana (Digestive)	These Dravyas support healthy digestion and are used in conditions like indigestion and constipation.
Vamaka (Emetic)	These Agrya Dravyas induce vomiting, a therapeutic practice in Ayurveda for eliminating toxins in certain cases.

Few Examples of Agrya Dravyas

Several herbs, minerals, and other natural substances find mention as Agrya Dravyas in various contexts throughout Charaka Samhita. Here are a few examples:

- Amalaki (*Embllica officinalis*)- This fruit is a well-known source of Vitamin C and is considered an Agrya Dravya for its cardioprotective and digestive properties.
- Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*)- This herb is revered for its immune-modulating properties and is an Agrya Dravya in managing fevers and infectious diseases.
- Shunthi (*Zingiber officinale*)- Ginger, a common spice, is an Agrya Dravya due to its digestive and carminative properties.

Discussion

The most promising medications for a variety of diseases are those that Acharyas have clinically demonstrated to be effective—*Agrya aushadhi*. They are becoming more significant; just as one medicine can be used to treat several ailments, so too can numerous medications be used to treat a single ailment. The word "*Agrya*" is used to demonstrate the effectiveness of *Dravya*; some are mentioned to treat illnesses or preserve *swasthya* (health); some *Agrya Dravyas* are also Hetu for illnesses or poor health, for example, *Ekaras abhyas - Daurbalyakar, Upwas - Jwa-rahara, Kutaj- Arshakar*. Additionally, these *Aushadhi*, like *Vishad-Rogvardhak and Kalbhohan-Arog-yakar*, must play a part in preventive measures.¹⁴ Various Acharyas have explained *Agrya dravya* using varying approaches. Therefore, no. differs according to Acharya. *Aushadi dravya* is particularly important to Charaka Acharya. The majority of ailments can be cured with just this *Dravya*. It also assists practitioners in choosing the right medication to treat medical issues and in determining the drug's availability. Choosing the *Agrya Dravya* ensures that the treatment has the intended effects.

CONCLUSION

The ancient Acharyas discuss many treatments for various ailments, various *dravyas* for various diseases, and the role of mental emotions in disease causation and prevention in the *Agrya dravya* section. This will support appropriate treatment protocol planning and the recommendation of a healthy and unhealthy diet for various illnesses. *Agrya Dravyas* represent a unique concept in Ayurveda, highlighting the importance of selecting specific substances for optimal therapeutic effect. Understanding this concept and its practical applications can contribute to a more holistic approach to health and wellness.

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