

AYURVEDA PROPERTIES OF RARE DRUGS AND THEIR THERAPEUTIC IMPORTANCE

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, "rare drug" (*Durlabha Dravya*) would imply medicinal drugs which are difficult to obtain, which occur in minute amounts due to ecological or geographical constraints, or which are marked by their unusual therapeutic action. *Kakoli*, *Kshirkakoli*, *Jeevak*, *Meda*, *Mahameda*, *Rishbhak* and *Ridhhi*, etc. are some examples of rare drugs described in Ayurveda texts. These drugs have been mentioned in ancient texts such as, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Bhavaprakasha* and *Charaka Samhita* as *Ati Durlabha Dravyas* and *Prayogashunyanam Dravyas*. In Ayurveda, some of them are employed as a *Medhya Rasayana*, tranquilizer that induces mental clearness, *Hridaya* and *Vajikarana*, etc. These drugs also offer *Balya* effect thus improve general strength and longevity. With their stimulant and antimicrobial action, these drugs also help to increase vitality and fight against infections. This article explores Ayurveda properties of rare drugs and their therapeutic importance.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Rare Drug*, *Durlabha Dravya*, *Prayogashunyanam Dravyas*.

INTRODUCTION

The uncommon drugs are classified as rare drug in Ayurveda which occurs rarely and difficult to obtain from their sources. These uncommon drugs may be categorized on the basis of various factors as mentioned below.

- ✓ Geographical uncommonness
- ✓ Certain herbs occur in specific climatic conditions
- ✓ Seasonal uncommonness
- ✓ Pharmacological Uniqueness

As mentioned above there are some drugs that are seasonally rare and are available only in a particular season, restraining their collection and usage. For instance, *Kakoli* is found in the Himalayas and are available only in a specific season. Some of the medications are also pharmacologically unique by nature due to their rarity and exceptional therapeutic characteristics, thus proving to be invaluable for certain diseases.^[1-4] A good example is *Kasturi* which is a powerful *Medhya* and *Hridaya Dravya* from the musk deer. Over-extraction, though, has threatened some

Ayurvedic medicines to extinction and thus requires conservation strategies and application of alternative materials. For example, *Agaru* a scented wood in skin diseases and *Vata-Kapha* conditions; is endangered today, and *Vanshlochan* which has traditionally been an all-purpose tonic, is short of supply because of deforestation. In addition, the unavailability of some drugs is affected by religious or moral taboos. Ayurveda suggested various strategies for managing availability of rare drugs, these strategies is depicted in **Figure 1**.^[4-6]

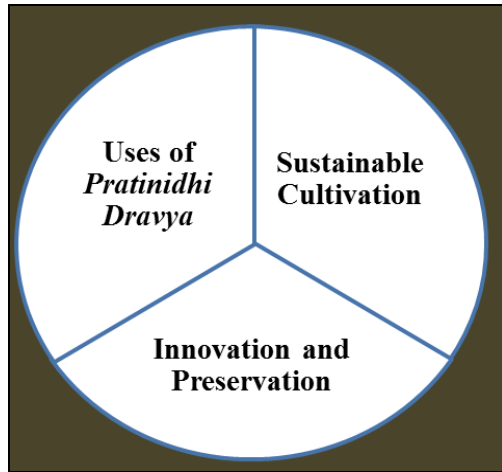


Figure 1: Approaches to manage availability of Durlabha Dravya.

As mentioned above the uses of *Pratinidhi Dravya* in case a rare drug is not available is one of the vital aspects to manage availability of rare drugs. Sustainable cultivation is another approach; in which most of the rare medicinal plants are being cultivated under conservation schemes. Innovation and preservation also recommend to improving availability of expensive and rare drugs. **Table 1** depicted some common examples of rare drugs as described in Ayurveda science.^[5-7]

Table 1: Common examples of rare drugs.

| Dravya (Drug) | Scientific Name |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Jatamansi</i> | <i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i> |
| <i>Kasturi</i> | <i>Moschus spp.</i> |
| <i>Swarna Bhasma</i> | <i>Gold Calx</i> |
| <i>Karpura</i> | <i>Cinnamomum camphora</i> |
| <i>Jeevaka & Rishabhaka</i> | <i>Malaxis spp.</i> |
| <i>Chandana</i> | <i>Pterocarpus santalinus</i> |

Therapeutic Application of Rare Drugs

- ✚ *Kakoli* is famous for its rejuvenating qualities, is an excellent tonic that enhances life energies and prolongs age. It also sustains general health and makes the body strong.
- ✚ *Kshirkakoli* helps in the rejuvenation of the body and is particularly used for its ability to increase strength and vitality as well as the immune system.
- ✚ *Jeevak* is highly effective plant that boosts the immune system and enhances vitality; *Jeevak* is particularly used for its rejuvenating properties. It helps in overall health by nourishing the body tissues and enhancing cellular regeneration.
- ✚ *Meda* improves physical vigor and immunity, *Meda* is also used to induce metabolic activity and general well-being. *Meda* and *Mahameda* are also believed to increase strength, improve digestion and right disharmony of the energies in the body, offering powerful rejuvenating effects.
- ✚ *Rishbhak* is known for its restoring and stimulating effects, particularly for returning the body to its vitality and vigor and inducing cell growth also.

- ✚ *Ridhhi* gives energy and longevity; it also utilized to stimulate immunity and reduces tension.
- ✚ *Vridhii* is a powerful adaptogen, it activates health and longevity, feeds the immune system, and helps to induce anabolic processes that maintain energy.

As mentioned above rare drugs are greatly renowned for their *Medhya* property, also used as potent nervine tonic that calms the mind, alleviates stress, and enhances mental functions. They also offer *Vajikarana* and *Hridaya* properties, increasing energy and fortifying the heart. Some of them gives *Balya* effect, neuroprotective activity and boost the immune system. Their stimulant, *Deepana-Pachana* and *Krimighna* actions are considered beneficial in the management of respiratory congestion and gastrointestinal disorders. *Jeevaka* and *Rishabhaka* are rare herbs mentioned in Ayurveda, which increases overall vigor and reproductive health. *Chandana* is very valuable for its *Pittashamana*, *Raktaprasadaka* and *Sothahara* properties, hence indicated in skin diseases and burning pain.^[6-8]

CONCLUSION

Durlabha Dravya suffers with ecological, geographical and seasonal limitations. The pharmacological actions of such drugs like *Kshirkakoli*, *Kakoli*, *Jeevak*, *Kasturi* and *Meda* include *Hridaya*, *Medhya*, *Balya* and *Vajikarana* effects. Their rarity presents a problem, yet Ayurveda has the solution in terms of strategies like uses of *Pratinidhi Dravya*, sustainable cultivation and conservation efforts that facilitate their sustained usage. The medicinally valuable properties of these uncommon drugs, such as their neuro-protective, adaptogenic, and immunomodulatory activities, highlight the requirement of increased research and preservation activities to safeguard these rare drugs. These drugs in Ayurveda are extremely valuable but must be preserved with care.

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