



REVIEW OF APAMARGA (*ACHYRANTHES ASPERA* LINN.) IN VEDIC VAANGMAYA & SAMHITA GRANTHS

Rupesh Kumar Sanger^{1*}, D.C. Singh², Anup Kumar Gakkhar³, Suresh Chaubey⁴

¹P.G. Scholar, ²Professor and Head, ⁴Associate Professor, Department of Dravyaguna, Rishikul Campus Haridwar, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Uttarakhand, India.

³Professor and Head, Department of Samhita Sanskrit & Siddhant, Rishikul Campus Haridwar, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Uttarakhand, India.

ABSTRACT

Apamarga, a well known herb is found as a weed throughout India. It is important to note that number of herbs gradually increased from *Rigveda* to *Atharvaveda*. This very fact indicate towards metamorphosis of a system of medicine which was earlier based on Hymns (*mantras*) later accepted more and more interventions/ herbal drugs. This trend continued in *Samhita* period and reached its extreme during *Nighantu* period. Therefore it is necessary to know about the *Vedic* herbs. *Apamarga* is one of them. In *Atharvaveda* it is said to be *Kshetriya roga nasak* and *Yatudhan Krimi nasak*. In *Yajurveda* it is said to be used for *Hawan* purpose due to its *Rakshoghna* property. No other plant has got better water removing property than *Apamarga*. It has also got property like *Kushthaghna*, *Paaproga nasak*, *Duhsvapnashana*. *Apamarga* is considered as lord of all plants because it posses hundreds of properties and wipe away all the diseases. In different Ayurvedic treatise it is indicated in *Arsha*, *Kushtha*, *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Ashmari*, *Hikka-Swaas*, *Vish Chikitsa* etc. Traditionally each and every part of the plant is used in different diseases like dysentery, asthma, piles, stomatitis etc. It is also used as anti diabetic, anti inflammatory, abortifacient etc. The present article gives the literary information regarding the different uses of *Apamarga* in *Vedic Vaangmaya* and *Samhita Granths*.

KEYWORDS: *Apamarga*, *Rakshoghna*, *Kushthaghna*, *Paaproga*, *Kshetriya roga*, *Yatudhan Krimi*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the science of life is one of the ancient and comprehensive systems of health care. An analysis of Ayurvedic treaties signifies that the different aspects of Ayurveda were evolved from time to time. Generally we neglect the importance of herbs which grows wildly around us and *Apamarga* is one of them. It has got number of medicinal uses and is extremely beneficial to us. Right from the *Vedic* period it is considered to be a boon to humans and is being used for different purposes from the *Vedic* period.

1. Apamarga in Veda

(a) Rigveda- In *Rigveda* while describing medicinal plants, origin of medicinal plant dated back 3 Yuga prior to life became existence on earth. This shows the importance of medicinal plants¹. In *Rigveda* no reference of *Apamarga* was noticed.

(b) Yajurveda- In different *Samhitas* of *Yajurveda*, *Saktu* i.e., the powder of *Apamarga* is used in *Hawan* for the purpose of *Rakshoghna* property. It should be used after removing the water content from it. This represents that it should be used after drying or no other plant has got such property of removing water content from our body. It has got property like *Papanashan*, *Mritunashana* and *Duhsvapnashana*. *Kushtha* is known to be *paaproga*. This indicates towards the *Kushthaghna* property of *Apamarga*. *Duhsvapnashana* indicates its *Medhya* property².

(c) Saamveda- In *Saamveda* no reference of *Apamarga* was noticed.

(d) Atharvaveda- *Atharvaveda* is the fourth and last *veda* of Hindu literature. Its oldest name was '*Atharvangirasa*', because it was contributed by two sages, ATHARVAN and ANGIRA. It is also known as '*Bhaisajyaveda*'. The Ayurveda is said to be the *Upaveda* of *Atharvaveda*, whereas according to *Acharya Kashyapa* Ayurveda is considered as fifth *veda*³. *Atharvaveda* extensively quoted *Apamarga* and according to the etymology provided by *Sayana*, this plant drives away the vitiated *Doshas* from the body. *Paippalada* school of *Atharvaveda* describes it as *Dourbhagyanasana* and *Anapatyanasana*. This indicates towards its *Kushthaghna* property⁴.

Apamarga is considered as lord of all plants because it posses hundreds of properties and wipe away all the diseases⁵. *Apamarga* is used to treat diseases caused by thirst, hunger, sterility etc⁶. *Apamarga* wipe away diseases like *Kshetriya roga* and prevent *Yatudhan Krimi*⁷. *Sayana* and the native tradition consider it to be an anomalous word signifying a disease beginning with consumption, skin disease and epilepsy, derived from the limbs of father or mother, curable in the body of grandson or son⁸. *Apamarga* wipe away the diseases which occur due to sitting together with person having black teeth, diseased nails, or one who is deformed⁹. This *mantra* indicates towards the *Sansargaja Kushtha*.

Synonym of Apamarga in Atharvaveda representing its property¹⁰

- *Satyajit*

- *Sahmana*
- *Shapathyavani*
- *Punahsara*
- *Vibhindati*
- *Shatshakha*
- *Pratichinphala* etc.

2. Apamarga in Brahman Granths

(a) Sathpatha Brahman- In *Sathpath Brahman Apamarga* plant is known for wiping away the fiends, the *Rakshas* in the quarters. *Apamarga* grains are asked to be taken in the dipping spoon of *Palasa* (*Butea monosperma*) or *Vikankat* (*Flacourtia sapida*) wood. *Apamarga* is of backward effect, whoso ever does anything to him, he thereby pitches backward¹¹. *Apamarga* is also known for wiping away sin, guilt, witchery, infirmity, dreams¹².

(b) Taitariya Brahman- In *Taitariya Brahman* it is mentioned that *Apamargahoma* is done to eliminate *Rakshasa Krimi*. This indicates towards its antimicrobial property¹³.

3. Apamarga in different Sutra

(a) Sankhayan Grihya Sutra- After having cut off hair ends of the student the hairs are thrown together with rice and barely, with Sesamum seeds and Mustard seed, with *Apamarga* and *Sadpushpi* flowers¹⁴. It is said that in the morning having taken a hand full of *Shami* leaves, And of *Sirisha*, *Udumbar*, *Kusha* shoots, and jujube fruits, on earth clod out a furrow¹⁵.

(b) Gobhila Grihya Sutra- In the morning after the sacrifice of morning oblation, one should have following plants and branches of trees viz. *Darbha* grass, *Shami* (branch), *Virana* grass, *Badari* branch with fruits, *Apamarga* and *Sirisha*¹⁶.

(c) Vishnu Dharm Sutra- In *Vishnu Dharmasutra Apamarga* is one among the plants used for cleaning teeth. Other plants are *Arka*, *Khadir*, *Karanja*, *Badar*, *Nimba*, *Kukubha*, *Bilva* etc¹⁷.

4. Apamarga in Puran

(a) Garun Puran- This *Puran* is mainly divided into 3 *Khand* i.e *Purva Khand* (*Aachar Kanda*), *Uttar Khand* (*Dharma Kanda*) and *Brahma Kanda*. In *Aachar Kanda* of *Garun Puran Apamarga* is mentioned in *Grahshanti nirupan* for *Buddha graha*¹⁸. In the month of *Aashad* during the worship of *Umabhadra*, *dantkashtha* of *Apamarga* is offered to the god¹⁹. The root of *Apamarga* is tied with a red thread on Sunday and rolled seven times around the waist of the patient suffering from *Jwar*²⁰. The root of *Apamarga*, *Sendha namak*, *Sarsap tail*, *Dugdha* and *Kaanji* is crushed in *Tamrapatra* and its *Anjana* is applied in the eyes, which keeps the eyes clean²¹. The root of *Apamarga* along with *Samudra lavana* cures *Ajirna-Shoola*²². *Apamarga* is used as *Dantdhavan* along with other plants like *Kadamba*, *Bilva*, *Khair*, *Kaner*, *Arjun*, *Karanja*, *Arka*, *Jamun*, *Mahua*, *Sirisha*, *Goolar* etc²³.

(b) Brahmvaiivarta Puran- This text is divided in to 4 *Khand* i.e *Brahma Khand*, *Prakriti Khand*, *Ganpati Khand*, and *Shri Krishna janma Khand*. In *Brahma Khand Apamarga* is said to be one of the best *Dantdhavan dravya*.

The other plants used as *Dantdhavan* are *Sinduvar*, *Amra*, *Karvir*, *Khair*, *Sirisha*, *Jati*, *Punnaga* etc²⁴.

(c) Skanda Puran- This text was spoken by Lord *Skanda* therefore it is named *Skanda Puran*. It is available in two forms i.e *Khandatmak* and *Samhitatmak*. In *Khandatmak Skanda Puran* there are 7 *Khand*. They are *Maheswar*, *Vaisnav*, *Brahma*, *Kaasi*, *Avanti*, *Nagar* and *Prabhas*. While in *Samhita* portion there are 6 *Samhitas*. They are *Sanatkumar*, *Sankar*, *Brahma*, *Saur*, *Vaisnav* and *Soota*. In *Brahmottar Khand* during worship of Lord *Shiva Apamarga* is offered to Lord *Shiva* along with other plants like *Bilva*, *Madar*, *Laal Kamal*, *Dhatur*, *Kaner*, *Sanai*, *Tulsi Juhi*, *Champa* etc²⁵. In *Kaasi Khand* it is said that from *Baishakha* to *Phagun* twigs of 11 plants are used for *Dantdhavan* consecutively. They are *Jambu*, *Apamarga*, *Khadir*, *Jati*, *Amra*, *Kadamba*, *Plaksha*, *Udumbar*, *Karjur*, *Beejpur* and *Dadim*²⁶.

(d) Kurma Puran- This text was spoken by Lord *Kurma*. *Apamarga* is said to be one of the twigs used for *Dantdhavan*. The other plants are *Maalti*, *Bilva*, *Karveer* and other trees which secrete latex. Here *Dantkashtha* should be as thick as the middle finger²⁷.

(e) Bhavisya Puran- This text is mainly divided into 4 *Parva*. They are *Brahma*, *Madhyam*, *Pratisarga*, and *Uttar*. *Madhya Parva* is divided into 3 *Khand* and *Pratisarga Parva* is divided into 4 *Khand*. In *Brahma Parva*, *Apamarga* is indicated when *Visha* enters into skin. When our eyes get black out and there is burning sensation in the whole body it means *Visha* has entered skin. In this condition root of *Arka*, *Apamarga*, *Tagara* and *Priyangu* are crushed and used which prevents from ill effects of *Visha*²⁸. *Apamarga* is used for *Budha Grahshanti*. *Arka* for *Surya*, *Palasa* for *Chandra*, *Khadir* for *Mangal*, *Apamarga* for *Budha*, *Aswatha* for *Brihaspati*, *Udumbar* for *Sukra*, *Shami* for *Shani*, *Durva* for *Rahu* and *Kusa* for *Ketu*²⁹.

(f) Matsya Puran- The text was called so because it was related to *matsya avtar* of God *Vishnu*. *Apamarga* is used for *hawan* purpose during worship. Other plants used for the same purpose are *Palasa*, *Udumbar*, *Aswatha*, and *Shami*³⁰.

5. Apamarga in other ancient Granths

In *Saam Vidhan*, *Yagyavalk Siksha* and *Manduki Siksha*, *Apamarga* is used for *Dantdhavan*³¹.

6. Apamarga in different Samhitas

(a) Charak Samhita- *Acharya Charak* has placed *Apamarga* in the *Sirovirechana dravyas* (*Charak Sutrasthana 2/3*). For this purpose seeds which are famous as *Apamarga Tandula* are used. Due to its importance *Acharya Charak* denoted the chapter under the name "*Apamarga Tanduliya*". *Apamarga* seeds are used for the purpose of *Kshudha naas* (*Charak Sutrasthana 2/33*). The drug *Apamarga* has been placed in the *Vamanopaga* (*Charak Sutrasthana 4/23*) and *Sirovirechanopaga Mahakashaya* (*Charak Sutrasthana 4/27*)³². For the purpose of *Sirovirechana* after doing *Vaman* and *Virechana karma* it is advised to use *Shaikharik Kashaya* for the purpose of cooking, drinking, taking bath etc. (*Charak Vimansthana 7/19*). For the purpose of *Sirovirechana* both seeds and roots of *Apamarga* is used (*Charak Vimansthana 8/151*)³³. *Apamarga* is used for *Punsavana karma* in the

form of *Jivakadi kalka*. *Apamarga* is also used as one of the *Uttarbasti dravyas* in *Pippalyadi varti* (*Charak Sidhithana* 9/58) and *Baladi Yapan basti* (*Charak Sidhithana* 12/9)³⁴. For the therapeutic purposes *Charak* has mentioned *Apamarga* in compound formulations which have been

indicated for the treatment of *Kushtha*, *Rajyakshma*, *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Udar roga*, *Hikka*, *Swaas* etc. The different formulations of *Apamarga* described in *Charak samhita* are given below in the table³⁵.

S.No.	Formulation	Indications	Uses (Int./Ext.)	References
1.	<i>Kushthaghna Yoga</i>	<i>Kushtha</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>Ch. Chi. 7/124</i>
2.	<i>Jivantyadi churna</i>	<i>Rajyakshma</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>Ch. Chi. 8/175</i>
3.	<i>Apamargadi varti- Anjana</i>	<i>Unmada</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>Ch. Chi. 9/66</i>
4.	<i>Mahapanchgavya ghrut</i>	<i>Apasmara</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>Ch. Chi. 10/18</i>
5.	<i>Triphaladi tail - Nasya</i>	<i>Apasmara</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Ch. Chi. 10/44</i>
6.	<i>Agnimanthadi tail</i>	<i>Udar roga</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Ch. Chi. 13/171</i>
7.	<i>Muktadya churna</i>	<i>Hikka-Swaas</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Ch. Chi. 17/126</i>
8.	<i>Agastya Haritaki</i>	<i>Kaash</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Ch. Chi. 18/57</i>

Note: (Ch.Chi – Charak Chikitsasthana, Chapter number/ Sloke number)

(b) Sushruta Samhita- Acharya Sushruta has mentioned the drug *Apamarga* in forming *Pratisarniya Kshar* (*Susruta Sutrasthana* 11/12). Sushruta has mentioned *Apamarga* as one of the *Udsadana dravyas* for *Vrana* (*Susruta Sutrasthana* 36/31). He kept *Apamarga* in *Arkadi gana*

(*Susruta Sutrasthana* 38/16), in *Sirovirechana dravyas* (*Susruta Sutrasthana* 39/6), and in *Tikta varga* (*Susruta Sutrasthana* 42/22)³⁶. *Apamarga* is prescribed for the therapeutic use in the number of diseases and is included as an ingredient of following formulations³⁷.

S.No.	Formulation	Indications	Uses (Int./Ext.)	References
1.	<i>Kalyanaka lavana</i>	<i>Vata vyadhi</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Su. Chi. 4/32</i>
2.	<i>Apamarga moola with tandulodak</i>	<i>Arsha</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Su. Chi. 6/13</i>
3.	<i>Tiladi Kshar</i>	<i>Ashmari</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Su. Chi. 7/22</i>
4.	<i>Apamarga Kshar</i>	<i>Plihodar</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Su. Chi. 14/13</i>
5.	<i>Apamarga beeja</i>	<i>Kaphaja Nadi vrana</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>Su. Chi. 17/25</i>
6.	<i>Suvarchikadi tail</i>	<i>Karnapali vardhana</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>Su. Chi. 25/26</i>
7.	<i>Amrit sarpi</i>	<i>Sarp vish</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Su. Ka. 6/12</i>
8.	<i>Agastya avleha</i>	<i>Kaash</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Su. U. 52/43</i>
9.	<i>Panchgavya ghrut</i>	<i>Atishar</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Su. U. 61/34</i>

Note: (Su. Chi – Susruta Chikitsasthana, Su. Ka – Susruta Kalpasthana, Su. U – Susruta Uttartantra Chapter number/ Sloke number)

(c) Ashtanga Samgraha- Acharya Vagabhatta said that *Dhoompana* with *Apamargadi yoga* is done to get rid of diseases caused by burning food containing *vish* (*Ashtanga Samgraha Sutrasthana* 8/22). He has kept *Apamarga* in *Vamana* (*Ashtanga Samgraha Sutrasthana* 14/3), *Virechana* (*Ashtanga Samgraha Sutrasthana* 14/4) and *Sirovirechana dravyas* (*Ashtanga Samgraha Sutrasthana* 14/6), in *Krimighna Mahakashaya* (*Ashtanga Samgraha Sutrasthana* 15/20), in *Arkadi gana* (*Ashtanga Samgraha Sutrasthana* 16/22) and *Syamadi gana* (*Ashtanga Samgraha Sutrasthana* 16/39). He kept it in *Tikta dravya*

skandha (*Ashtanga Samgraha Sutrasthana* 18/23). *Apamarga* is used for making *madhyam Kshar* (*Ashtanga Samgraha Sutrasthana* 39/10)³⁸. *Apamarga* is used for preparing *Phalpippaliadi kashaya* for keeping *Madan phal* in it (*Ashtanga Samgraha Sutrasthana* 1/6)³⁹. He mentioned this drug for the treatment of various diseases like *Kshaya*, *Swaas*, *Kaash*, *hikka*, *Ashmari*, *Gulma*, *Agnimandya*, *Kushtha*, *Vatashonit*, *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Timira*, *Siroroga* etc. The formulations of *Apamarga* are tabulated below⁴⁰.

S.No.	Formulation	Indications	Uses (Int./Ext.)	References
1.	<i>Agastya leha</i>	<i>Kshaya- Kaash</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>A.S.Chi. 5/83</i>
2.	<i>Muktadi leha</i>	<i>Swaas- Hikka</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>A.S.Chi. 6/45</i>
3.	<i>Jivantyadi udvartana</i>	<i>Rajyakshma</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>A.S.Chi. 7/107</i>
4.	<i>Pashanbhedadi ghrut</i>	<i>Ashmari</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>A.S.Chi.13/11</i>
5.	<i>Tiladi leha</i>	<i>Ashmari</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>A.S.Chi.13/17</i>
6.	<i>Yavaniadi churna</i>	<i>Gulma</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>A.S.Chi. 16/15</i>

7.	<i>Parijatadi kwatha</i>	<i>Agnimandya</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>A.S.Chi.17/34</i>
8.	<i>Varshabhruadi kshir</i>	<i>Aamdosh</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>A.S.Chi.19/4</i>
9.	<i>Lakshadi churna</i>	<i>Kushtha</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>A.S.Chi.21/35</i>
10.	<i>Apamargadi tail</i>	<i>Sidhma</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>A.S.Chi.21/64</i>
11.	<i>Sarjarasadi tail</i>	<i>Paalipak</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>A.S.U. 22/51</i>
12.	<i>Saraladi tail</i>	<i>Krimij Siroroga</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>A.S.U. 28/22</i>

Note: (A.S.Chi. Ashtanga Samgraha Chikitsasthana, A.S.U- Ashtanga Samgraha Uttartantra)

(d) Sarangadhar Samhita- Acharya Sarangadhar has advised Apamarga in diseases like Ashmari, Raktarsha, Nasarsha, Badhira etc. He kept Apamarga in Varunadi gana which is kaphameda nashak (Sharangdhar Madhyam Khanda 2/130). Apamarga seeds are used for Parada

marana (Sharangdhar Madhyam Khanda 12/35) and as a bhavana dravya of Grahanikapata rasa (Sharangdhar Madhyam Khanda 12/249)⁴¹. The different formulations of Apamarga are tabulated below⁴²-

S.No.	Formulation	Indications	Uses (Int./Ext.)	References
1.	<i>Virtarvadi gana kwatha</i>	<i>Ashmari</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Sha.Ma. 2/105</i>
2.	<i>Apamarga kalka</i>	<i>Raktarsha</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Sha.Ma. 5/19</i>
3.	<i>Agastyaharitaki avaleha</i>	<i>Kaash</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>Sha.Ma. 8/31</i>
4.	<i>Grihadhoom tail</i>	<i>Nasarsha</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>Sha.Ma. 9/184</i>
5.	<i>Marichadi lepa</i>	<i>Linga- Stana Vriddhi</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>Sha.U. 11/113</i>
6.	<i>Apamarga kshar tail</i>	<i>Badhira</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>Sha.U. 11/145</i>

Note: (Sha. Ma- Sharangdhar Madhyam Khanda, Sha. U- Sharangdhar Uttar Khanda Chapter number/ Sloke number)

(e) Bhavprakash Samhita- In Bhavprakash it is said that Dantdhavan with Apamarga increase Dhriti-Medha (Bhavprakash Purvakhanda 5/33). He also mentioned that in the deficiency of Chitraka, Danti or Apamarga Kshar should be used (Bhavprakash Purvakhanda 6/138)⁴³. He

kept Apamarga in Veertarvadi gana (Bhavprakash Madhyam Khanda 37/17)⁴⁴. Apamarga is prescribed in diseases like Sannipata Jwara, Visuchika, Apasmara, Gulma, Ashmari, Vata Vyadhi etc. The different formulations of Apamarga are tabulated below⁴⁵

S.No.	Formulation	Indications	Uses (Int./Ext.)	References
1.	<i>Sringyadi kwatha</i>	<i>Abhinyash jwara</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>B.P.Ma. 1/654</i>
2.	<i>Apamarga mool</i>	<i>Visuchika</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>B.P.Ma. 6/110</i>
3.	<i>Sidhartakadi lepa</i>	<i>Apasmara</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>B.P.Ma. 23/13</i>
4.	<i>Mahanarayana tail</i>	<i>Vata Vyadhi</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>B.P.Ma. 24/295</i>
5.	<i>Dvipanchmooladya tail</i>	<i>Vata Vyadhi</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>B.P.Ma. 25/38</i>
6.	<i>Dhaturadya tail</i>	<i>Vatarakta</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>B.P.Ma. 29/148</i>
7.	<i>Ksharashtaka</i>	<i>Gulma</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>B.P.Ma. 32/34</i>
8.	<i>Pasanbhedadya ghrut</i>	<i>Ashmari</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>B.P.Ma. 37/13</i>
9.	<i>Kushadya tail</i>	<i>Ashmari</i>	<i>Int.</i>	<i>B.P.Ma. 37/59</i>
10.	<i>Bharangyadi pralepa</i>	<i>Updamsha</i>	<i>Ext.</i>	<i>B.P.Ma. 51/33</i>

Note: (B.P.Ma- Bhavprakash Madhyam Khanda Chapter number/ Sloke number)

CONCLUSION

Apamarga is said to be Paaproganasak which represent its Kushthaghna property. Apamarga is said to be Duhswapnana, Kshetriya roganasa. Apamarga is said to be Duhswapnana which indicates towards its Medhya property. In Ayurvedic treaties as well it is indicated in Unmada and Apasmara. In Ayurvedic texts as well it is used in the number of diseases like Arsha, Kushtha, Unmada, Apasmara, Ashmari, Hikka-Swaas, Vish Chikitsa etc. Apamarga is also used as a folklore medicine in the number of diseases like Obesity, Stomatitis, Piles etc. Thus Apamarga has proved to be one of the most important herbs used right from the Vedic period.

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***Address for correspondence**

Dr. Rupesh Kumar Sanger

PG Scholar,

Department of Dravyaguna

Rishikul Campus, Haridwar

Uttarakhand Ayurved University,
Uttarakhand, India.

Mob- 08423344130

Email- sangerbams1@gmail.com