

## STUDIES ON SOME SOUTH INDIAN MARKET SAMPLES OF AYURVEDIC DRUGS - III

**K. VASUDEVAN NAIR, S. N. YOGANARASIMHAN, K. GOPAKUMAR,  
K. R. KESHAVAMURTHY and T. R. SHANTHA**

*Regional Research Centre (Ay.), Jayanagar, Bangalore – 560 011, India.*

---

**Received: October 4, 1983**

**Accepted: November 10, 1983**

---

**ABSTRACT:** *The South Indian market sample sources of the drugs Sariva, Prasarani, Dusparsa and Agaruru are evaluated; the herbarium specimens and crude drugs for all the plants involved are provided to facilitate identification.*

### INTRODUCTION

The importance of studies on crude drugs in the markets is evident in the previous papers (Vasudevan Nair *al*, 1982, 1983); the present paper, third in the series attempts to collect, identify, provide the therapeutic properties, applicable synonyms, accepted source, and different botanical and market

sources with uses and chemical constituents on the four drugs viz., Sariva, Prasarani, Dusparsa and Agaruru sold in S. Indian markets and used in the ayurvedic pharmacies of S. India, besides by many local physicians. The data will enrich the ayurvedic material medica.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The crude drug samples for the present study have been collected from the various S. Indian markets and the authentic herbarium specimens during the medico – botanical programmes of the centre. The pertinent literature for each drug is gathered based upon *The Wealth of India* (Anonymous 1950, 1952, 1959, 1962, 1976), Anonymous (1979, 1980, 1981,

1981a), Chopra *al.*, (1956), Chunekar and Pandey (1969), Sharma (1969a), and Singh and Chunekar (1972). The accepted source is given following *The Ayurvedic Formulary of India* (Anonymous 1978). The crude drugs samples and the herbarium specimens are preserved in the museum and herbarium respectively of the RRCBI.

### Elucidation of Drugs

1. Sariva: The reddish – brown, slender roots with a narrow woody portion of *Hemidesmus indicus* (Asclepiadaceae) is the accepted source for this drug. The black roots of *Cryptolepis buchanani*

(Asclepiadaceae) and brownish roots of *Ichnocarpus frutescens* (Apocynaceae) are also used as Sariva in North India. The authors have found in S. India a root which has similar aroma, taste, chemical

constituents but more stouter and with a wider woody central portion which is sold and used as Sariva; this has been identified as the roots of *Decalepis hamiltonii* (Asclepiadaceae). The other two *C.buchanani* and *I. frutescens* are rarely marketed and used in S. India.

Sariva is known for its *stanyasodhana*, *dahaprasamana*, *rakthapitta samana*, *madhura rasa*, *madhura vipaka*, *seethe veerya* and *snigdha guna* properties. It is used as one of the ingredient of *Sarivadi*, *Vidaryadi gana* of Vagbhata (Gupta 1962a).

### Botanical description

- a. **Decalepis hamiltonii** Wt. & Arn.: Large woody climbing shrubs with woody aromatic roots and purple stems; flowers yellowish; fruits woody (Figure 1).

Roots have *Sarsaparilla* like taste and is considered as a good appetizer and blood purifier. Root contains 4 – 0 – methyl – resora laldehyde, inositol, saponins, tannins, crystalline sterols.

Distributed in Peninsular India.

- b. **Ichnocarpus frutescens** (L.) R. Br. : Climbing shrubs with brownish roots; flowers greenish-white in panicles; fruits of 2 divaricate follicles (Figure 3).

Roots are used in similar to *Hemidesmus indicus*, possess demulcent, alterative, tonic diaphoretic and diuretic properties; used in fevers, dyspepsia and skin troubles; root powder with milk given in diabetes, stone in bladder and as blood purifier. Stem contains triterpene glycoside.

Distributed throughout India.

- c. **Cryptolepis buchanni** Roem. & Schult : Climbing shrubs with deep black roots; leaves with a mucro and flowers in axillary cymes, greenish (Figure 2).

Leaves are toxic; plant used in preparations given to children as a cure for rickets. Plant yields latex; stem contains alkaloid Buchananine, sterols, fat, fatty acids, carbohydrates and glycosides.

Occurs throughout India.

2. **Prasarani**: The drug Prasarani derives its accepted botanical source from the whole plant of *Paederia foetida* L., (Rubiaceae). In S. India, a slender creeping herb of Convolvulaceae member is dried, sold and used as prasarani. This plant is identified as *Merremia tridentate* (L. f.) Hall., ssp. *tridentate* and the drug is found often mixed with the allied sub-species *M.tridentata* ssp. *Hastate* (Desr.) Oostr., which also occurs in S. India.

*Prasarani* is used in *vata roga*. The acceptable synonyms for this plant are *pratanini*, *suprasara* (spreading on the ground), *bhadraparni*, *charupani* (small and attractive leaves), *sarani* and *sara* (laxative effect). *Thikta rasa*, *guru-sara guna*, *katu vipaka* and *usna veerya* are the properties of this drug. Some of the preparations like *prasaranyadi taila*, *prasaranyadi kashya* and *mashadi taila* constitute *Prasarani* as one of the ingredient.

### Botanical description:

1. **Merremia tridentate** (L. f.) Hall. ssp. **tridentate**: Much branched, slender

herbs with linear hastate leaves; flowers pale yellow, funnel shaped (Figure 4).

Plant is used in rheumatism, hemiplegia, piles, swellings and urinary disorders; it has bitter astringent and tonic properties.

Found throughout India.

3. Dusparsa: This drug also known as *Dhanvayasa* consists of an erect shrub, *Fagonia cretica* L., (Zygophyllaceae) as the accepted source (whole plant). Our studies in S. Indian markets have revealed that a twining herb with stinging hairs is used as *Dusparsa*. The drug is identified as the whole plant or sometimes the roots of *Tragia involucrate* L., (Euphorbiaceae) which is also known as *Vrscikali* (Anonymous 1978). The synonyms like *Dusparsa* (difficult to touch), *yasa*, *yavasa* (to be careful during collection), *kachoor* (causes itching) are suitable to *T. involucrate*. It is *vatasamana* and the properties *thikta rasa*, *katu vipaka*, *seeta veerya* and *laghu sara guna* are found in this drug. Some of the important preparations made out of this drug are *cavikadigritham*, *pataduralabha kashyam* (Gupta 1962a), *manjishtadi kashyam* and *maharasanadi kashyam* (Kurup 1972 a).

### Botanical description

**Tragia involucrate** L. : Twining herbs with stinging hairs; flowers and fruits axillary (Figure 5).

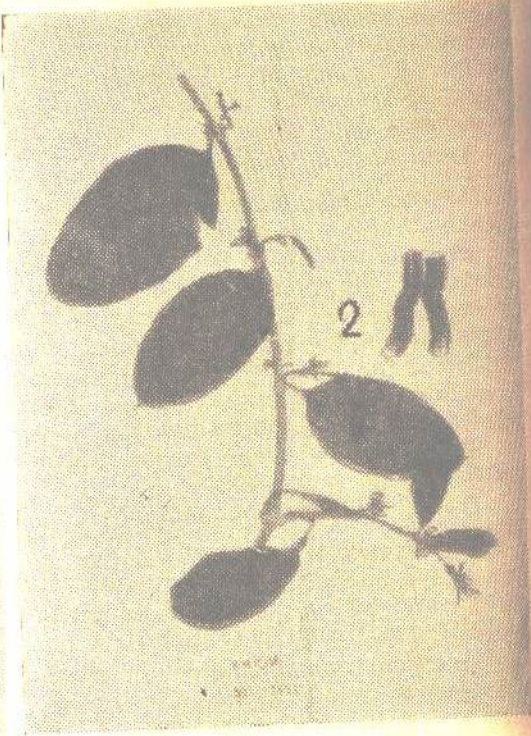
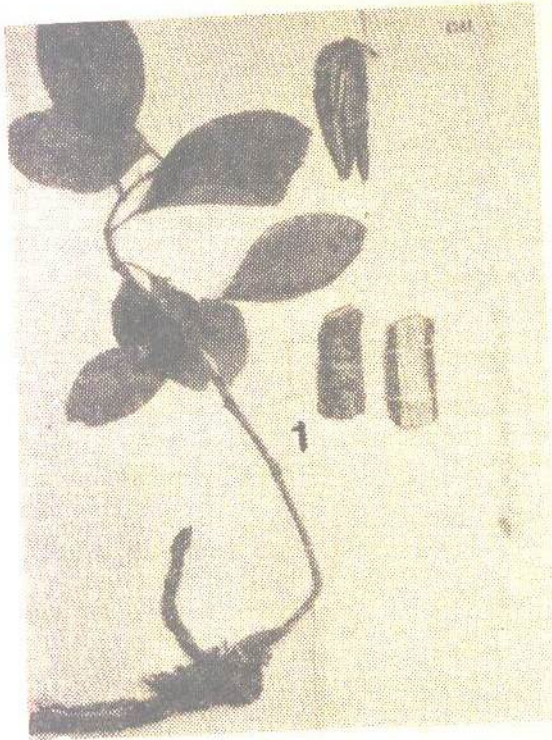
Roots possess disphoretic, alternative properties, given in fever, also for pains in legs and arms; infusion given in itching of the skin; leaves in headache; root useful in venereal complaints and as blood purifier, useful in leprosy; fruits is an ingredient of *ksharaguda*, used in enlarged spleen.

Distributed throughout India.

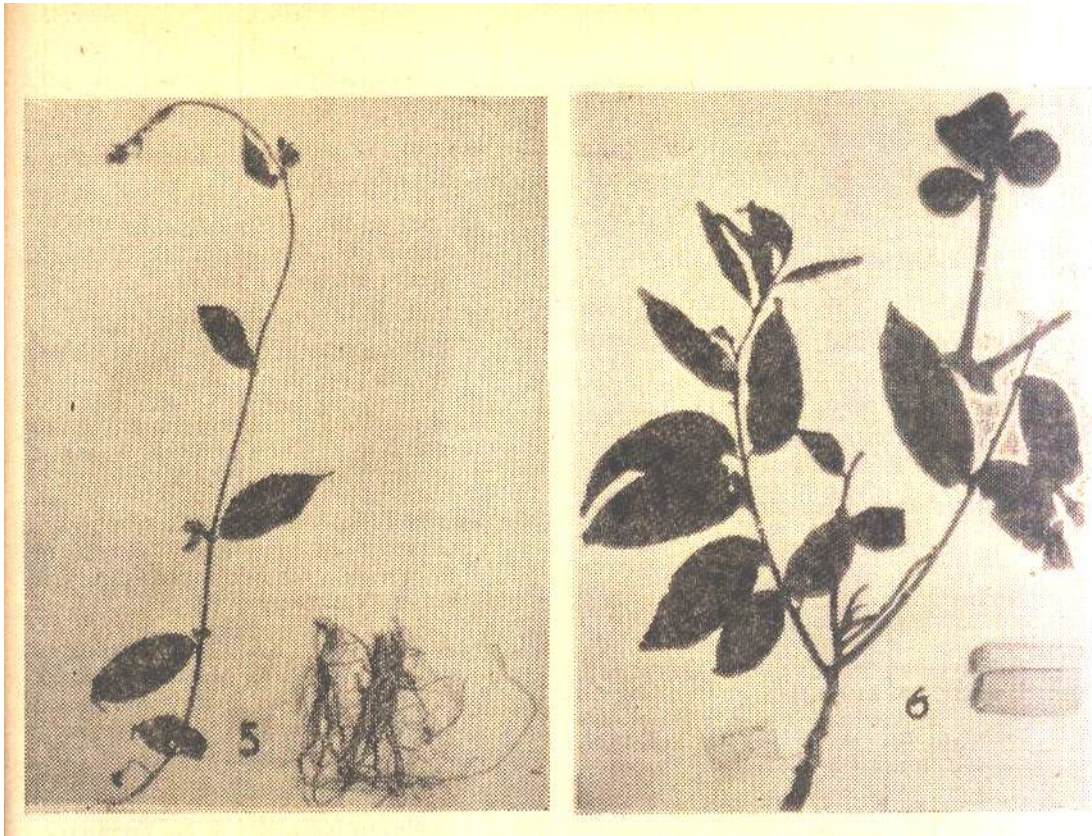
4. Agaru: The black coloured heartwood pieces of *Aquilaria agallocha* Roxb., (Thymeleaceae) is the accepted source. In S. India, small sandal wood coloured pieces having aroma are found to be widely used under the name *vellakil* (Malayalam) as *Agaru*. The source of this has been identified by the authors as the heart-wood of Meliaceae member, *Dysoxylum malabaricum* Bedd.

The properties of this drug are *laghutheekshna guna*, *katu –thikta rasa*, *ushna veerya* and *katu vipaka*. It forms one of the ingredients in *Eladi gana* and *Brahma rasayna* (Gupta 1962 a).









### Botanical description

**Dysoxylum malabricum** Bedd. : Large trees with flowers in panicles; fruits globose, bright yellow, verrucose (Figure 6).

Decoction of wood used in rheumatism; fixed oil used in ear and eye diseases.

Distributed in W. ghats of S. India.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are thankful to the Director, C. C. R. A. S., and to Dr. B. V. Holla of RRC, Bangalore for evincing interest in this work.

### REFERENCES

1. Anonymous, *The Wealth of India*, CSIR, New Delhi, 1950, p. 385.
2. Anonymous, *ibid*, 1952, p.24, 120.
3. Anonymous, *ibid*, 1959, p. 162
4. Anonymous, *ibid*, 1962, p. 347.

5. Anonymous, *ibid*, 1976, p. 272.
6. Anonymous, *The Ayurvedic Formulary of India* (First Ed.), Manager of Publications, Delhi, 1978, pp. 241 – 259.
7. Anonymous, *Med. Arom, Pl. Abstr.*, 1979, 1 (2) : 24, abstr. No. 7903 – 0811.
8. Anonymous, *ibid*, 1980, 2 (6) : 406, abstr. No. 8006 – 1850.
9. Anonymous, *ibid*, 1981, 3 (1) : 18, abstr. No. 8105 – 0115.
10. Anonymous, *ibid*, 1981 a, 3 (2) : 29, abstr. No. 8102 – 9261.
11. Chopra, R. N., S. L. Nayar and I. C. Chopra, *Glossary of Indian Medicinal Plants*, CSIR, New Delhi, 1966, pp. 82, 91, 103, 139, 166, 246.
12. Chunekar, K. C. and G. S. Pandey, *Bhavaprakash nighantu* (Commentary), Chowkambha Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1969.
13. Gupta, A. D., *Astangahridaya* (Commentary), Chowkambha Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1962a.
14. Kurup, V., *Sahasrayoga* (9<sup>th</sup> edition), Sreeramavilasam Press, Quilon, 1972 a.
15. Sharma, P. V., *Dravyaguna vijñana* (pt. II), Chowkambha Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1969 a.
16. Singh, T. B., and K. C. Chunekar, *Glossary of Vegetable Drugs in Brhatrayi*, Chowkambha Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1972.
17. Vasudevan Nair, K., S. N. Yoganarasimhan, K. R. K. Murthy and Z. Mary; *Studies on Some South Indian Market Samples of Ayurvedic Drugs – I*, Ancient Science of Life, 1982, 2 (2), pp. 71 – 78.
18. Vasudevan Nair, K., S. N. Yoganarasimhan, K. R. K. Murthy and T. R. Shantha : *Studies on Some South Indian Market Samples of Ayurvedic Drugs – II*, Ancient Science of Life, 1983, 3 (2), pp. 60 – 66.