

AN APPLIED ASPECT OF PRABHAVA AS PER BRIHATRAYEE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda 'The science of life' is also known as Indian system of medicine. It is important to realize that, Ayurveda is not confined to medicines only, it tackles the whole subject of 'Life' in its various ramifications. In other words ayurvedic system of medicine gives importance to the involvement of patients well being. The basic fundamentals of Ayurveda are to be understood and thoroughly implemented to achieve the target of 'promotion of health' in its true sense and complete cure from disease. According to Ayurvedic pharmacology the drug action is attributed to certain principles namely *Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka* and *PRABHAVA*. It was observed that both the drugs as well as the living body have *Panchabhutika* composition

in common and if the drugs are used sensibly, they can alter the body components accordingly. Although many Ayurvedic concepts described in the *Samhitas* seem very easy, but they are actually very difficult to understand, as the *Samhitas* presented everything in a concise form. There are certain concepts which need to be explored and evaluated through their practical applicability. In one of such concepts is the concept of *PRABHAVA*. In Ayurvedic pharmacology, like *vipaka*, *PRABHAVA* is also debatable topic and demands further research. In a nutshell there is an urgent need to develop a process and scientific method to understand these principles. This review is an attempt to highlight the concept of *PRABHAVA as per brihatrayees* and its significance in present era.

KEYWORDS: *Prabhava, Achintya, Anavadharaniya, Amimansya, Specific action.*

INTRODUCTION

Prabhava refers to a specific action or biotransformation or post digestive effect of the drug. It is defined as the specific property of a dravya, which is responsible for action contrary to those related to rasa, guna, veerya and vipaka. This concept of prabhava clearly demonstrates that why the ayurvedic concept of drug as a whole is more efficacious and safer as compared to isolated constituents.

- Two drugs may be similar in taste, attribute, potency and Vipaka, but their action might vary from each other. This is because of the PRABHAVA or specific action of the drug.^[1]
- PRABHAVA can be considered under different synonyms like: Shakti, Vichitra Pratyayabdhya, Vikriti Visham Samveta, Achintya Virya or Achintya, Anavadharaniya, Swabhava etc.^[2]

DEFINITION OF PRABHAVA

Charak defines PRABHAVA as “Rasaviryavipakanam samanyam yatra lakshyate Viseshah karmanam caiva prabhavastasya sa smritah” (C.Su.26/67)

PRABHAVA is the property which is characterized by specific actions of substances which cannot be explained in terms of pharmacological actions of various constituents of Dravya when they are considered individually in relation to each other.^[3]

Sushruta did not mention about prabhava directly. However he indicated prabhava through the concept of “Achintya virya”. He is of the opinion that the prabhava Janya karma is Achintya (unpredictable) and Amimansya (un-questionable). One has to follow the classical texts in their understanding. For example: we cannot make the Ambashtadi gana to act as purgative in any form.^[4]

Vagbhata mentioned about Prabhava as.

“Rasadi samye yat karma visishtam tat prabhavajam” (A.S.Su.17/52)

PRABHAVA may also be defined as the special property which produces actions which are different from and contrary to those attributed to Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka.^[5]

LAKSHANA OF PRABHAVA

“Sarvatishayi dravyasvabhavah prabhav ityamanatah”

This specific power is based on the specific nature (bhautika composition) and exerts specific action. It is known from the specific nature initiated by specific combination (of bhutas) as said by *Vridhdha Vagbhata* that prabhava is **Svabhava** (nature) exceeding all. This specific

nature leads to specific action like emesis, purgation etc. For instance, the specific natural composition comprising of the specific bhautika composition of the active fraction of Danti causes specific action e.g. purgation whereas Chitraka devoid of it does not possess that power. Some dividing power as of two types based on explicable and inexplicable actions say that the power behind explicable action is virya while that causing inexplicable one is prabhava.^[5]

This is not correct because in scriptures, power is said as of two types according to generality or specificity. General power is known as virya while the specific one is PRABHAVA. This has been stated by **Charaka** clearly as follows ‘where there is similarity of rasa, virya and vipaka but specific difference in action it may be taken as caused by PRABHAVA.

Vagbhata also follows the same line.

“Rasadi samye yat karma visishtam tat prabhavajam”

‘The specific action in spite of similarity in rasa etc is caused by prabhava. In these definitions there is no mention of explicable or inexplicable. Wherever there is some case like that it can be included in prabhava because of its specific action as has been said by Charaka in case of wearing of gems. Here the word ‘achintya’ has been used in the context of wearing of gems and not as a part of the definition of prabhava.

CHAKRAPANI COMMENTS ABOUT PRABHAVAS

Chakrapani considered prabhava as Achintya since its effect is not comparable to the effects expected generally from the constituents of a Dravya. He also quoted Virya as Chintya and Achintya. The “Achintya Virya” is considered as prabhava.^[6]

ARUNDATTA COMMENTS ABOUT PRABHAVA AS

“Rasaviryavipakadigunatisayivanalam /

Dravya svabhavo nirdishtah yah prabhavam sa krititah //”(A.H.SU. 9)

Prabhava is said to be that attribute of the drug which overwhelms other principles of drug actions like Rasa, Guna, etc.

INDU COMMENTS ABOUT PRABHAVAS

Indu also opinions the same that the peculiar action of one dravya seen even when the rasa, virya, vipaka are similar with those of another dravya. Because of this inexplicable nature the action is said to be Prabhavjanya.^[7]

DALHANA COMMENTS ABOUT PRABHAVA AS

“Swabhavo atra sahajo dharmah” || (SU.SU 1/24 DALHANA)

Dalhana elaborating the word swabhava and said that swabhava is sahaja dharma as such swabhava is innate property /inherent activity.

“Yada dravya PRABHAVA visesena kharjura matulunga souvarchaladi snehabhyanga adi bhi prasmameti” || (SU.CI.4/7 DALHANA)

Actually prabhava is the short term of the dravya prabhava.^[8]

“Kanjikaseyava PRABHAVA adharPRABHAVAcha sakhayam hanti (vata), kosthekaroti” || (SU.SU 45/56.DALHANA)

It is also considered as adhara prabhava as sour gruel eliminates vata of extremities, whereas increases in bowel due to prabhava (specific potency & specific location).

“Atra prakritih, swabhavah, shakti vishesah, prabhavo, viryam iti anarthantaram” |

“Tena prakritiya viryena anytha gada murdhwo gatam, satyapi saratwadi virechana guna samye vamanasya urdhwagamitwam prabhavavibhavitam”|| (SU.CI.33/33. DALHANA)

He mentions prakruti, swabhava, shaktivishesha, prabhava and virya as synonymous. The upward movement of emetic drug is due to prakruti(by force of nature), which is known as prabhava.^[9]

FEW EXAMPLES OF PRABHAVA

- ***Chitraka and Danti***

Here both Chitraka and Danti have Katu rasa, Katu vipaka and Usna virya but Chitraka act as Dipaka where as Danti acts as Virechaka. The Virechana karma exhibited by Danti is considered as prabhavajanya karma.

- ***Yastimadhu and Mridwika***

Here both Yastimadhu and Mridwika are having Madhura rasa, Madhura vipaka and Sheet virya Dravya but their actions are different. Mridwika cause Virechana, whereas Yastimadhu won't. Here the karma of Yastimadhu, which doesn't cause Virechana is an example of prabhava.

- **Kshira and Ghrita**

Even though both Kshira and Ghrita are having Madhura rasa, Madhur vipaka and Sheet virya, but Kshira will act as Agnimandya kara where as Ghrita increases Agni.

- **Kaphavatahara karma of Lasuna**

Lasuna because of its Katu rasa and Katu vipaka act as Kaphashamak and owing to its Snigdha and Guru gunas does Vata Shamana. Even though it is having Katu rasa and Katu vipaka won't aggravate Vata and Snigdhatwa and Gurutwa won't aggravate Kapha. Here the Karma Vatakaphahara is considered a prabhava.

- **Vishaghna Karma of Shirisha**

Shirisha and Haridra are considered as Vishaghna Dravyas (one which reduces poisonous effects) and Swapana (sleep) and Megha (cloudy atmosphere) are aggravating the poisonous condition. Here both Vishaghna and Vishvardhaka Karmas are said as prabhavajanya Karma.

- **Vamana and Virechana**

If a Dravya is having Vamana karma, then it is attributed to Urdhwabhaghara prabhava. Eg. Vamana Karma by Madanphala. Virechana Karma done by the Dravya is attributed to Adhobhaghara PRABHAVA of that Dravya. Eg. Virechana karma of danti.

- **Raktashali and Yava**

Here both Raktashali and Yava have similar properties i.e both are Madhur in Rasa, Snigdha and guru in Guna and Sheet Virya Dravya but Raktashali is Vatahara and Yava is Vatakara. Raktashali has Vatahara action on the basis of its properties, but Yava is not. Vatakara action of Yava is prabhava.

- **Manidharana**

Sometimes wearing precious stone will yield good effects.

- **Shalyaharana**

Removal of foreign body by certain Dravyas are also an example of prabhavajanya karma.^[10]

NATURE OF PRABHAVA

In the context of Virya, *Shivdas Sena* has mentioned two types of potencies found in Dravyas – Chintya and Achintya to exert actions. The former is Virya while latter is called prabhava which cannot be explained as effect of Rasa, Virya and Vipaka.

- **Chakrapanidatta** in this context states that prabhava is Shakti (power or potency) of the substance which is the same as the particular associated with the generic attribute, as Shakti is nothing but the own nature of the substance and not any characteristics.
- In opinion of **Gangadhara**, prabhava is the specific natural character which cannot be explained with Rasa, Vipaka etc. and as dissimilar and inexplicable effect where prabhava has been taken as ‘Karma’ not the cause of karma. In this concern there appears three aspects of prabhava as.
 - Natural character
 - Specific potency
 - Dissimilar effect
- **Sushruta** has not mentioned prabhava directly but has used the word ‘*Amimamsya*’ and ‘*Achintya*’ for few Ausadha Dravyas that seems to be an indication for prabhava. According to him the drugs which have evident characters and effects and are popularly well known by nature should not be subjected to the arguments and further discussion but should be used as prescribed by the scripture because even by thousand arguments their nature cannot be comprehended. So, they are ‘*Amimamsya*’ and ‘*Achintya*’. For example – Ambasthadi gana of drugs cannot cause purgation, liquidity of water and hotness of fire etc.(su.su.40/5chakrapani bhasya)
- **Nagarjuna** has mentioned the words ‘*Achintya*’ and ‘*Anavadharaniya*’ for prabhava in the explanation of Virya.

On the basis of above discussion it is clear that the followers of *Atreya* school (Charaka, Vagbhatta etc.) have accepted prabhava as Dravya swabhava (nature of the Dravya) while of Dhanvantari school (Sushruta, Nagarjuna etc.) do not accept prabhava as a separate entity but have included in the context of Virya as ‘*Achintya*’ and ‘*Anavadharaniya*’. The possible reason behind this is that both are ‘Shakti’ where one is general (Samanaya shakti) and the other is specific one (Vishishta shakti).^[11]

- **P.V Sharma** in this context gives his view that prabhava is the specific potency based on the specific natural (Bhautika) composition of the substance. So it is called as “*Dravyasvabhava*”, which means that the natural chemical composition of the Dravya responsible for exerting specific action. On this basis the mode of action of Vamana, Virechana Dravyas can be explained. In this condition how can it would be treated as ‘*Achintya*’?

Some Acharayas and commentators of ancient time have stated prabhava as Achintya because of inexplicability of the nature of the Dravyas. On account of subduing Rasas etc. prabhava has been mentioned as “Sarvatishyayi” (exceeding all properties) as has been advocated by Vagbhata. (A.S.SU.17/15. INDU BHASYA)

FUNCTIONS OF PRABHAVA

According to **Charak**, drug action is possible by means of three aspects viz.

- **Dravya prabhava** – drug action independent of the constituents (i.e., Achintyatwa).
- **Guna prabhava** – drug action depending up on the constituents (i.e., Chintyatwa)
- **Dravya- Guna prabhava** - drug action depending up on the Dravya as well as Guna. The following actions may be exhibited through prabhava.
 - ❖ Agadiya karma (Antidotal activity) e.g. Shirisha
 - ❖ Virechna karma (Purgative property) e.g. Danti
 - ❖ Rakshoghna karma (Antimicrobial activity) e.g. Guggulu, Jatamansi
 - ❖ Mansa karma (Psychotropic activity) e.g. Kushta, Rakta-chitrak
 - ❖ All the examples of non-specific activity may be considered as prabhavajanya karma¹².

The actions can be categorized by modern classification as follows:

- **Pharmacological** – Danti (*Baliospermum montanum*), Dravanti (*Croton tiglium*), Madanphala (*Randia dumetorum*)
- **Antidotal actions** – Shirish (*Albizia lebbeck*)
- **Antibacterial effects** – Guggulu (*Commiphora wightii*), Ral (*Shorea robusta*), Vacha (*Acorus calamus*) etc.
- **Psychodynamic effects** – Action of ratna, mani, etc on mania.
- **Physical actions** – The effects are due to a physical property e.g. Drawing of iron particles by a magnet.^[13]

BASIS OF PRABHAVA

PRABHAVA can be discussed on the basis of Bhautika composition of the drug. Drugs having similar composition of itself and its dependent properties act by virtue of Virya while those having difference in composition between itself and its properties act in a different way by its specific composition in respective of properties which are subverted. The former and the latter groups of Dravyas are known as Samanaya-pratyayarabdha (composed of similar Bhutas) and Vichitra-pratyayarabdha (composed of dissimilar Bhutas) respectively.^[14-18]

Kaviraja Gangadhara mentions that Dravya, Guna and Karma will have similarity in genesis usually. This is because similar will produce similar. However it need not be compulsory always. Whenever there is similarity then Sajatiya karma will occur (Samanaya-pratyayarabdha). Otherwise, Vijatiya karma will occur (Vichitra pratyayarabdha). Among the three (Dravya, Guna and Karma); the dravya produces similar dravya, guna produces similar guna but in case of karma it is not so because there is no such indication regarding karma that can produce another karma. Thus in the situation where Dravya, Guna, Karma are similar; karma produced is said to be on account of Virya, on the other hand if karma is dissimilar, is accepted to be due to prabhava . (C.Su.26/67- GD).

SAMANAYA-PRATYAYARABDHA (REGULAR CAUSE EFFECT) AND VICHITRA-PRATYAYARABDHA (ANOMALOUS CAUSE EFFECT)

“Iti samanayataha karma Dravyadinama punashcha tata | Vichitra-pratyayarabdha Dravyabheden bhidhyate ||” (A.H.Su. 9.27)

On the basis of Pancha-bhautika composition, Dravyas are of two types.

- a) *Samanaya-pratyayarabdha*
- b) *Vichitra-pratyayarabdha*

Pratyaya mean cau se. The effects and results generated by a Dravya are dependent on the Gunas of that Dravya as causes. This means that the Mahabhootas and their Rasas etc. which constitute the Dravyas are primal causes. When the effects of a Dravya are congruent with the properties of its constituent, Mahabhootas then it will be called Samanaya-pratyayarabdha.

But eventually this is a concept. On the contrary, it is Vichitra-pratyayarabdha when a Dravya having Madhur rasa constituted by Prithvi and Jala mahabhootas does not have the effect of Madhura Rasa but different and of other Mahabhootas. Dravyas which have effects as per their Rasa are said to have Samanaya-pratyayarabdha but when an effect is different from the Rasa, Vipak etc. that is Vichitra-pratyayarabdha.

The distinction between Vichitra-pratyayarabdha and Prabhava is that, for the latter cause effect connection cannot be made. Whereas for Vichitra-pratyayarabdha Dravyas that is made possible by the very adjective. Samanaya-pratyayarabdha and Vichitra-pratyayarabdha are relative terms as to the results. Those Dravyas, as per Rasa-veerya-vipak have comparable results then the term Samanaya is used for them and for those not comparable, the term Vichitra is used. But the connection is not applicable in all instances.

PRAKURTI SAMSAMVETA & VIKRUTI VISHAM SAMSAMVETA

When two or more than two drugs are combined with each other, then they leave their general attributes. This is called as *vikriti visham sam samveta*.^[19]

Reason Behind Concept of Vikruthi Vishama Samavetha

Perverted combination of Rasas and Doshas.

- Nanatmakam
- Parasparenaupahatanam
- Anyoshcavikalpnairvikalpitanam

Effect of Dravya in Vikruthi Vishama Samavetha Rasas are the Samavayi Karana of Dravya, however action of Dravya does not occur in line with the causative Rasa. The unpredicted effect is explained with the following reasons.

- ❖ Difference in proportions of Rasa (Nanatmaka).
- ❖ The individual Rasas in a Dravya may suppress one another (Paraspereuauphata).
- ❖ Due to nature of various Samskaras (processing) like Svarasa etc (Anyaishevi kalpana irvikalpit).

Understanding the Mechanism of Drug Action

1. Madhura Rasa in Tanduliyaka illustrates the perversion in combination. Normally Madhura Rasa Dravyas having Snigdha and Vrushya properties. But this taste in Tanduliyaka does not produce any such effect in the body.
2. Kashaya, Tiktha, Katu, Madhura Rasa of Tila also illustrate the irregular combination. When these Rasas are combined in equal proportion, then Tila should normally alleviate Pitta and Kapha. But actually it aggravates Pitta and Kapha.
3. Varthaka acts as Vatahara even though it is having Katu, Tiktha Rasas. These indicates that there is some irregularity in the combination in as much as some of these rasas are manifested while others or not. [C.VI.1/10.]

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRABHAVA & VICHITRA PRATYAYARABDHA PREDOMINANCE OF PRABHAVA

Prabhava is the most important amongst drug constituents like *Rasa*, *Guna* etc. belonging to the *Dravya*. *Prabhava* can supersede all these drug constituents (*Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*) but none of these can supersede *prabhava*. Therefore, *prabhava* assumes the most important place among all. A few *Dravyas* have their action through their *Rasas*. These *Dravyas* can be

substituted by other *Dravyas* having the same *rasa*. In case sugar is not available, tea can be prepared by using jaggery also. Some act through their *Vipaka*.

Here also, another *Dravya* having the same *Vipak* can be used as a substitute. While obtaining the actions of *Ushna* and *Sheet virya*, another *Dravya* having the same *Virya* can be used as substitute. The same is true for the various *Gunas*. But when a substitute does not have the desired action, then the original *Dravya* is must. Such an action of the *Dravya*, which cannot be substituted, is brought about by the *prabhava* of the *Dravya*. It should be said that *prabhava* can be produced by that specific *Dravya* only. It is imperative to have the original *dravya* for obtaining its *prabhava*.^[20]

• ACCORDING TO VAGBHATA

“Apradhana pritahk tasmad rasadya sanshritastu te / Prabhavasch yato drabvayay, Dravyam shresthamato matam” || (A.S.Su.17/51)

Vagbhata concluded that the drug action is ultimately controlled by *prabhava* and it is superior among the drug constituents.

• ACCORDING TO NAGARJUNA

Badhanata Nagarjuna proposed the following factors to high-light the superiority of *Achintya Virya (Prabhava)*.

Achintayata, daivapratighata, vishapratighata, darshanata, shravanata, tulyarasaguneshu visheshata, darshanachadhbhutaadinaam karmana, aagamaach || (R. V.Su. 1/132-140)

- *Achintyata* (unpredictable): Its effects are quite unpredictable and therefore it is considered as superior.
- *Daiva Pratighata* (Super natural power): It exhibits super natural power. Hence it is important.
- *Visha Pratighata* (antidotal effects): It helps in antidotal activity irrespective of drug constituents. Hence it is superior.
- *Darshana* (practically visible): Its extra-ordinary effect is practically seen.
- *Sravana* (praise): Many scholars praise its efficacy and superiority.
- *Tulya Rasa Guna Vishesha* (non-specificity): It will exhibit very special action independent of other drug constituents or their qualities.
- *Adbhuta Karma* (magic effects): Using precious stones, hypnotism, etc., will yield some magic effects. Hence *prabhava* is superior.

- **Agama** (classical treatises): All the classical texts high-lighted prabhava as the main quality of a *Dravya*. Therefore prabhava is considered as superior.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VIRYA AND PRABHAVA

On the basis of above descriptions there exists a clear line of demarcation between *Virya* and *Prabhava* as has been on the following grounds.^[21]

- **Sadhya (effect):** The effect exerted due to *Virya* is general while that of *prabhava* is specific one. Some of the scholars accept cause of *Chintya karma* (explicable action) is *Virya* and of *Achintya karma* (inexplicable action) is *prabhava*. In real sense these are included into *Samanaya* and *Vishishta* karmas respectively, for example the *Sadhya karma* of *Nirgundi* is *Vata* pacifying due to *Virya (Ushna)* and *Vishishta karma* of *Shankpushpi* is *Medhya* due to *prabhava*.
- **Aushadiya Swarupa (Pharmacological aspect):** A *Dravya* exerting effect due to *Virya* is called *Dosha pratyanyika* i.e., *Shatavari* pacifies *Pitta* due to *Sheet virya* is *Doshapratyanika*. But those *Dravyas* who exert their effect due to *prabhava* on a specific *Vyadhi* are called *Vyadhipratyanika*, for example, *Kriminashak - Vidanga* and *Kusthagna - Khadira*. Etc
- **Adhara (criterion- basis) :** The criterion of action due to *Virya* is '*Guna-vaisheshya*' (property or quality excellence) while that of *prabhava* is '*Dravya-vaisheshya*' (*Dravya*-substratum excellence), for example : the *Pitta* pacifying effect of *Chandana* is due to excellence of sheet *Guna (Virya)* while *Nidrajanana* (hypnotic) *karma* of *Sarpagandha* is due to specificity of *Dravya* itself .So, it is *prabhavajanya*.

PRABHAVA IN THE PRESENT ERA

Many of the *prabhavajanya karmas* which are quoted to be *Achintyas* shall be explicable today with the advent of scientific technology. Therefore the emphasis to prabhava should be reduced than the earlier days. The following are the substantiating factors.^[22]

- ❖ **Mani dharana:** Diamond which is a C5 isotope emits certain radiations which may help in various disease conditions including cancer. (*Cancer treatment with nano diamonds- Charu gupta et al. Front Biosci, 2017*).
- ❖ **Pumsavana:** Human fetus is bisexual till 2-3 months of intrauterine life. Though sex is genetically predetermined, a substance called 'differentiator' is finally deciding the sex of the human fetus before 3rd month. (*Pumsavana sanskar : myth or science – Hetal Amin & Rohit Sharma, 2016*)

❖ **Virechanopaga:** These are prodrugs and analogues. Prodrugs are used to improve pharmacological or biological properties. Analogues are used to increase potency and to achieve specificity of action.

❖ **Ubhayabhaga:** The dosage of *Virechana Dravyas* and *Vamana Dravyas* is different. Therefore their actions, emesis and purgation are dose dependent.

In spite of all these facts still there are many pharmacological properties mentioned in modern pharmacology which result in the non-specific activity of the drugs. Usually it is believed that drugs with similar chemical structure will have similar pharmacological actions. But it is not possible to predict their activity on the basis of chemical structure alone.

- Sometimes drugs with similar chemical structure may have entirely different actions. Example; Morphine and Papavarine are structurally similar but their pharmacological action is different. The former is narcotic and CNS depressant while the later is non-narcotic and muscle relaxant. There are certain drugs like phenobarbitone, chloral hydrate, paraldehyde, etc., which are structurally different but they all are CNS depressants. In pharmacology the drug activity can be classified as (a) structurally non-specific or (b) structurally specific.^[23]

It is said in the scriptures that the *Dravya* acts through its *Rasa, Guna, Vipak, Veerya, or Prabahava*. The cause-effect relationship can be elicited in *rasa* etc., but the action in which the cause-effect relationship cannot be elicited is called "*Prabhava*". Precisely for this reason, *prabhava* has been called "*Achintya*". It is not only Ayurveda that has concept of *prabhava*. It is wrong to assume that medicine is faced with such situations where in it is impossible to demonstrate the cause-effect relationship; such situations arise in other fields of knowledge as well. This is so because the evident is limited while that which is not evident is very vast. Even in modern medicine there are instances where it is not possible to totally explain the pharmacological actions of certain drugs. The cause-effect relationship of the drug and its action has been indirectly established.

FOR EXAMPLE

- Ergot is not included in the group of analgesic drug. Yet, the pain in migraine is alleviated by it. Explanations such as the vaso-constricting property of ergot may be given to explain this phenomenon, but the fact remains that it has no direct analgesic action.

- Colchicine is extremely useful in pain related to gout, but it is ineffective in other types of pain and arthralgia related to osteoarthritis. Its effectiveness only on gout can be thus related to *Pravbhava*.
- Chlorthiazide is used to increase the production of urine so that the extra fluid is drained off, reducing oedema. But in diabetes insipidus, the same medicine causes a reduction in the quantity of urine. This has to be considered as its prabhava.
- Modern medicine has admirably absorbed the discipline of phytochemistry. It is possible that we might find some explanation for prabhava through such analyses. Until and unless the cause-effect relationship can be demonstrated scientifically, the unexplained action should be considered as being produced by prabhava. Once the explanation is found, then there is no reason to call it *Prabhava*.

Thus, prabhava is a relative term. Unless the tricks of a magician are understood, it remains magic. But once the mechanism underlying the trick is understood, it ceases to be magic. The same can be said about prabhava.^[24]

SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION OF CONCEPT OF PRABHAVA

In ancient times, it was not possible to link the cause-effect relationship through disciplines like phytochemistry. Certain actions, in which the cause-effect relationship was not known despite its being present, were included under prabhava. This classification should not be considered unchangeable. Demonstrable causes must be sought first. Even if such demonstrable causes are not found, there has to be some cause to which that particular action can be attributed. Such a cause is called as undemonstrable cause, meaning “not found”, invisible. Once found, its undemonstrability ceases to exist. Same is the case with prabhava. It is true that *Haritaki* and *Dhataki* are both examples of *Dravyas* having *Kashayaya rasa* but *Haritaki* acts as a laxative whereas *Dhataki* causes constipation. It is the natural property of *Kashyaya rasa* to cause constipation; but chemical analysis of *Haritaki* revealed the presence of anthroquinone which has laxative properties. Thus, laxative action of *Haritaki* could be explained. It is possible to obtain similar explanations in case of *Danti* and *Chitraka*.^[25]

To identify the main cause of *prabhava*, *Dravyas* have to be tested in many ways viz,

- ✓ Their identification
- ✓ Their chemical composition
- ✓ Their in-vivo action on the body and various organ of the body

- ✓ Their use as medicine in diseases
- ✓ Two plants may have a single chemical component in common and yet the remaining chemicals may be slightly different. Even then, the required changes in the analytical tests have to be made.
- ✓ These advances in analytical tests will have an invaluable role to play in standardization, determination of efficacy of active components and prevention of adulteration.^[26]

CONCLUSION

The drug's power to act (*Shakti*) is two-fold: That which can rationally be understood (*Chintya*); and that which cannot be so understood (*Achintya*). The former is known as 'potency' (*Virya*), while the latter 'specific power' (*Prabhava*). The specificity in the latter is something which cannot be inquired into (*Amimamsya*), which cannot be thought about (*Achintya*). Therefore, this factor must be understood by the physician, and utilized by him only by traditional wisdom (scriptural authority, agama) or oral instruction by competent authority (*Aptopadesa*). But in modern era with the development of phytochemistry various active fractions have been isolated and their specific actions are ascertained. So, once the explanation is found, then there is no reason to call it *Prabahava*. Therefore it may be concluded that due to limitations of knowledge about drug action and effect, term 'prabhava' is being used to explain specific actions and effect produced by some drugs which remained unexplained normally. So, proper identification, standardization of the drug and pharmacognostical and phytochemical study of the drug is most important to explain the action of drug. So, there is a need for further research.

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