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Indigenous Medicinal Plants Scripted in *Amarakosam*

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Abstract: Indigenous medicinal plants are an important component of traditional knowledge. Monumental scriptures provide a unique source for several medicinal plants. This paper reports about the 176 indegenous medicinal plants scripted in the *Amarakosam (Namalingkanusasanum),* an important text, dealing with the synonyms of almost all the living and non living object, written somewhere around 1-6 centuary AD.

Key words: *Amarakosam,* Medicinal plants, Traditional knowledge, Exploration

INTRODUCTION

India is an exquisite example of biodiversity. From time immemorial scholars like Charaka, Barathwaj, Athreyan, Agnivesha, Dhanyandhari, Shushruthan, Wakbadan and Bharathduja etc. have studied and explored the possibility of such a diversity for human welfare and the most conspicuous exploration in this field has lead to the discovery of so many indigenous medicinal plants that were scripted mainly in Vedas (1500 BC) that contain rich materials on herbal lore of that time. Charaka in his medical treaty, '*Charaka samhita'*, dealt with innumerable medicinal plants, their usage and descriptions. Besides the two above said texts, treatise like *Sushruth samhita* and *Ashtangha hridaya samhita* are a few among other precious ancient texts. Thus the gradual accumulations of practical and systematic medical knowledge lead to the formation of Ayurveda.

Ayurveda-the science of life, prevention and longevity, is the oldest and most holistic or comprehensive medical system available. It was placed in written form over 2000 years ago. Ayurveda is said to have been first complied as a text by Agnivesha (*Agniveshtantra*). This text was later revised by Charaka and renamed as *Charaka samhita* (completed by Dhridhabala). The concept of medicines envisaged in the Ayurveda comes from the monumental scripture called *Ashtanga hridaya* and *Sahasrayoga* [1].

Similar to the plant diversity of India the same kind of diversity exist in the world of scriptures delineating the miracle of medicinal plant. One among them is the *Amarakosam. Namalingkanusasanum* or *Amarakosam* was written by Amarasshimhan in between some where in 1-6 century AD. This treaty has three divisions. The first division has 10 chapters, the second division has 11 chapters and the third has 6 chapters. Two chapters of the second division are dealing with plants. Of it the first chapter deals with forest plants. The second chapter deals with medicinal plants, their names and synonyms [2]. Present paper tries to expose the identity of the medicinal plants mentioned in *Namalinkanusasanum* later known as *Amarakosam* by Amarashimhan.

METHODOLOGY

The two chapters dealing with plants in the second division of the text were studied carefully. The plants were recorded. Later these plants were identified with the help of standard literature [3-7]. The herbarium sheets of the collected plants are deposited in the Dept. of P.G. Studies and Research in Botany, Sir Syed College, Taliparamba. The identified plant species are arranged in alphabetical order by their botanical name along with their family.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 270 medicinal plants were mentioned in the chapter. Out of this except 94all other *ie* 176 were properly identified, listed and herbarium were prepared. A good number of these medicinal plants are still in use by Ayurvedic physician for various ailments. They use these plants in different forms such as juice, extract, decoction, paste infusion, powder etc.

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Table 1: List of Plants scripted in *Amarakosam*

Sl. No:	Botanical name	Family
1.	*Abrus precatorious* Linn	Fabaceae
2.	*Achyranthes aspera* Linn	Amaranthaceae
3.	*Aconitum heterophyllum* Wall.ex Royle	Ranunculaceae
4.	*Acorus calamus* Linn	Poaceae
5.	*Adenanthera pavonia* Linn	Fabaceae
6.	*Adhathoda vasica* Nees	Acanthaceae
7.	*Aegle marmelos* Corr	Rutaceae
8.	*Alangium salviifolium* Wang	Cornaceae
9.	*Albizia lebbeck* Benth	Mimosaceae
10.	*Allium cepa* Linn	Liliaceae
11.	*Allium sativum* Linn	Liliaceae
12.	*Alpinia galanga* Willd	Scitaminae
13.	*Alstonia scholaris* R.Br.	Apocynaceae
14.	*Amaranthus viridis* Linn	Amaranthaceae
15.	*Amomum aromaticum* Roxb	Zingiberaceae
16.	*Anethum graveolens* Linn	Apiaceae
17.	*Angelica glauca* Edgeew	Apiaceae
18.	*Areca catechu* Linn	Palmae
19.	*Artocarpus hirsutus* Lan	Moraceae
20.	*Artocarpus intergifolia* Linn.	Moraceae
21.	*Asparagus recemosa* Willd	Liliaceae
22.	*Azardiracehta indica* Juss	Meliaceae
23.	*Baccopa monneiri* (L) Pennell	Scorpularaceae
24.	*Balanites roxburghii* Planch	Simarubaceae
25.	*Baliospermum montanum* (Willd)Muell Arg	Euphorbiaceae
26.	*Bambusa arundinacea* Willd	Poaceae
27.	*Basella alba* Linn	Basellaceae
28.	*Bassia longifolia* Linn	Sapotaceae
29.	*Bennincasa hispida* (Thunb) Cogn	Cucurbitaceae
30.	*Bombax ceiba* Linn	Bombaceae
31.	*Borassus flabellifer*	Palmae
32.	*Buchanania lanzan* Spreng	Anacardiaceae
33.	*Butea monosperma* (Lam) Taub	Fabaceae
34.	*Callicarpa lanata* Linn	Verbinaceae
35.	*Calophyllum tomemtosum* Weight	Guttiferae
36.	*Caloropis procera* (L) R. Br.	Asclepiadaceae
37.	*Canarium strictum* Roxb.	Burseraceae
38.	*Carissa carandas* Linn	Apocynaceae
39.	*Caryota urens* Linn	Palmae
40.	*Cassia absus* Linn	Fabaceae
41.	*Cassia fistula* Linn	Caesalpinaceae
42.	*Cassia tora* Linn	Caesalpinaceae
43.	*Cayratia carnosa* (Waller Wight)	Vitaceae
44.	*Celastrus paniculatus* Willd	Celastraceae
45.	*Cephalandra indica* Naud	Cucurbitaceae
46.	*Chrysanthemum cinerarifolium*	Asteraceae
47.	*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*	Asteraceae
48.	*Cinnamomum verum* J.S. Prasell	Lauraceae
49.	*Citrus medica* Linn	Rutaceae
50.	*Cocos nucifera* Linn	Palmae
51.	*Commiphora mukul* (Hook.ex Stock) Engl	Burseraceae
52.	*Convolvulus gangeticus* Linn	Convolvulaceae
53.	*Cordial dichotoma* Forst	Boraginaceae
54.	*Corypha umbraculifera* Linn	Palmae
55.	*Coscinium fenestratum* (Gaertn) Colebr	Menispermaceae
56.	*Crataeva nurvala*	Caparidaceae
57.	*Cucumis sativus* L	Cucurbitaceae
58.	*Cullenia excella* Wt.	Bombaceae
59.	*Curculigo orchioides* Gaertn	Amaryllidaceae
60.	*Curcuma latifolia* Rose	Zingiberaceae
61.	*Cynadon dactylon* (Linn) Pers	Poaceae
62.	*Cyperus rotundus* Linn	Cyperaceae
63.	*Datura stramonium* Linn	Solanaceae
64.	*Dendrocalamus strictus* Nees	Poaceae
65.	*Desmodium gangeticum* (L) D.C.	Fabaceae

Table 1: Continued

66.	*Desmostachya bipinnata* (L) Stapf	Graminae
67.	*Diospyros peregrina* Gairton	Ebonaceae
68.	*Dregea volubilis* Benth	Asclepiadaceae
69.	*Elettaria cardamomum* Maton	Zingiberaceae
70.	*Embelia ribes* Brum F	Myrsinaceae
71.	*Emblica officinalis* Gaertn	Euphorbiaceae
72.	*Enicostemme axillare* (Lam) Raynal	Gentianaceae
73.	*Ensete superba* (Roxb) Cheesman	Musaceae
74.	*Evolvulus alsinoides* Linn	Convolvulaceae
75.	*Ficus benghalensis* L	Moraceae
76.	*Ficus dalhousiae* Miq	Moraceae
77.	*Ficus glomerata* Roxb	Moraceae
78.	*Ficus religosa* L	Moraceae
79.	*Flacourtia jangomas* (Lour) Raeusch	Flacourtiaceae
80.	*Fritillaria royeli* Hook	Liliaceae
81.	*Garcinia morella* Desr.	Clusiaceae
82.	*Gloriosa superba* Linn	Liliaceae
83.	*Glycyrrhia glabra* Linn	Fabaceae
84.	*Gynandropsis pentaphylla* Dec	Cappridaceae
85.	*Hemidesmus indicus* (L) R.Br.	Asclepiadaceae
86.	*Hibiscus rosasinensis* Linn	Malvaceae
87.	*Holarrhena antidysenterica* Wall	Apocynaceae
88.	*Holoptelea integrifolia* (Roxb) Planch	Ulmaceae
89.	*Hygrophila schulli*	Acanthaceae
90.	*Indigofera tinctoria* Linn	Fabaceae
91.	*Inula racemosa* Hook F	Asteraceae
92.	*Jasminum angustifolium* (L) Willd	Oleaceae
93.	*Jasminum multiflorum* (Burn F) Andr	Oleaceae
94.	*Jasminum sambac* Ait	Oleaceae
95.	*Kydia calycina* Roxb	Malvaceae
96.	*Lippia nodiflora* Rich	Verbenaceae
97.	*Loranthus longiflorus* (G.F) Desr	Loranthaceae
98.	*Mallotus philippensis* (Lam) Muell. Arg	Euphorbiaceae
99.	*Mangifera indica* Linn	Anacardiaceae
100.	*Manikara hexandara* (Roxb) Dubard	Sapotaceae
101.	*Melina arborea* Roxb	Verbenaceae
102.	*Merremia tridentate* (L) Hallier	Convolvulaceae
103.	*Mesua ferrea* Linn	Clusiaceae
104.	*Microstylis muscifera* Ridl	Orchidaceae
105.	*Mimusops elengi* Linn	Saportaceae
106.	*Mitragyna parvifolia* (Roxb) Korth	Rubiaceae
107.	*Mollotus philippiensis* Muell	Euphorbiaceae
108.	*Moringa olefera* Lamk	oleaceae
109.	*Mucuna pruriens* (L) DC	Fabaceae
110.	*Musa paradisiaca* Linn	Musaceae
111.	*Myristica fragrans* Linn	Myristicaceae
112.	*Neolamarckia cadamba* (Roxb) Boser	Rubiaceae
113.	*Nerium indicum* Mill	Apocynaceae
114.	*Nymphaea stellata* Willd	Nymphaceae
115.	*Ochlandra beddomei* Gamble	Graminae
116.	*Oroxylum indicum* (L) Benth.En.Kurz	Bignoniaceae
117.	*Ougeinia oojeinensis* (Roxb) Hochr	Fabaceae
118.	*Oxalis corniculata* Linn	Oxalidaceae
119.	*Pandanus fascicularis* Lamk	Pandanaceae
120.	*Pennisetum typhoideum* Rich	Poaceae
121.	*Pentapetes phoenicea* Linn	Sterculiaceae
122.	*Pterocarpus marsupeum* Roxb	Fabaceae
123.	*Phoenix farnifera* Roxb	Arecaceae
124.	*Phyllanthus amarus* Schum and Thonn	Euphorbiaceae
125.	*Picrorhiza kurroa* Pannel	Scrophularaiceae
126.	*Piper attenuvatum*	Piperceae
127.	*Piper longum* Linn	Piperaceae
128.	*Piper vetel* Linn	Piperaceae
129.	*Plectranthus vettiveroides* (Jacob) Singh and Sharma	Lamiaceae
130.	*Plumbago zeylanica* Linn	Plumbagineceae
131.	*Plumeria rubra*	Apocynaceae

Table 1: Continued

132.	*Poa cynosuroides* Retz Var	Graminae
133.	*Pongamia pinnata* (Linn) Pyre	Fabaceae
134.	*Pseudarthria viscida* (L) Wight and Arn	Fabaceae
135.	*Punica granatum* Linn	Punicaceae
136.	*Randia dumetorum* Lam	Rubiaceae
137.	*Ricinus communis* Linn	Euphorbiaceae
138.	*Saccharum officinarum* Linn	Graminae
139.	*Salix tetrasperma* Rox	Salicaceae
140.	*Salvadora persica* Linn	Salvodoraceae
141.	*Saraca indica* Linn	Caesalpinaceae
142.	*Sarcocephalus missionis* Wall	Rubiaceae
143.	*Sarcostemma acidum* Voigt	Asclepiadaceae
144.	*Saussurea lappa* C.B. Clarke	Asteraceae
145.	*Scindapsus officinalis* (Roxb) Schott	Araceae
146.	*Semecarpus anacardium* Linn	Anacardiaceae
147.	*Sesamum indicum* Linn	Pedaliaceae
148.	*Sesbania grandiflora* Pers	Fabaceae
149.	*Sida rhombifolia* Linn	Malvaceae
150.	*Sida spinosa* Linn	Malvaceae
151.	*Solanum melogena* Linn	Solanaceae
152.	*Solanum surattense* Burn F	Solanaceae
153.	*Solanum torvum* SW	Solanaceae
154.	*Spilanthes acemella* Linn	Asteraceae
155.	*Spondias mangifera* Willd	Anacardiaceae
156.	*Stereospermum chelanoides* (Linn.) DC	Bigoniaceae
157.	*Strobilanthes cusia* (Nees) Imlay	Acanthaceae
158.	*Strobilanthes sp.*	Acanthaceae
159.	*Strobilanthus citiatus* Nees	Acanthaceae
160.	*Symplocos spicata* Rox	Symplocaceae
161.	*Syzygium cumini* (L) Skeel	Myrtaceae
162.	*Tabernaemontana heyneana* Wall	Apocynaceae
163.	*Tamarindus indica* Linn	Fabaceae
164.	*Terminalia bellirica* (Gaertn) Roxb	Combretaceae
165.	*Terminalia chebula* Retz	Combretaceae
166.	*Terminalia paniculata* Roth	Combretaceae
167.	*Terminalia tomentosa* Bedd	Combretaceae
168.	*Tinospora cordifolia* (Willd) Miersen Hook F and Thons	Menispermaceae
169.	*Trachyspermum roxburgianum* (DC) Craib	Apiaceae
170.	*Trichosanthes cucumerina* Linn	Cucurbitaceae
171.	*Trichosanthes palmata* Roxb	Cucurbitaceae
172.	*Vetiveria zizanioides* (L) Nash	Poaceae
173.	*Vitex nigundu* Linn	Verbinaceae
174.	*Vitis vinifera* Linn	Vitaceae
175.	*Vitix alissima* Linnf	Verbenaceae
176.	*Ziziphus mauritiana* Wall	Rhamnaceae

The present investigation throws light on the importance given by Indians in the field of biological science during ancient period. Current findings will contribute to understand the importance of such text, as most of us are unaware of such script and the knowledge in it. There is a need to carry out an in-depth survey and documentation of the medicinal plants in our traditional text. Once such knowledge systems are gone to the oblivion it would be an irrecoverable loss to the society. Hence, the conservation of these scripter and traditional knowledge in it seems to be the need of the hour. Moreover, such information serves as a base for new compounds with active principles for phytochemical, pharmacological, pharmacognostical and clinical research. The steady increase in population and the awareness of the side effects of several synthetic drugs have encouraged the usages of traditional medicines in developing countries. Therefore utmost care must be taken for the maintenance of traditional knowledge and traditional medicines.

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