

UTILITY OF ABHAVA VIS-A-VIS ABHAVA PRATINIDHI DRAVYADevika. M. L¹, Anand Katti²

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**ABSTRACT**

Shad Padartha Siddhanta is a fundamental principle of *Ayurveda*. This *Siddhanta* is an influence of *vaisehika darshana* on *Ayurveda*. *Tarka Sangraha* and other *Nyaya Vaiseshika* followers add *Abhava* to the list of six and propose *Sapta Padartha Siddhanta*. *Ayurveda* being a science of life and *Swastya Samprakshana and Vikara Prashamana* being its prime utility, it has considered only the six *Padarthas*. Even though as a *Padartha*, *Abhava* is rejected, the concept *Abhava* has different applications and utilities. *Abhava* refers to negation, non-existence or absence. The article critically discusses the utility of *Abhava* concerning its scope in *Abhava Pratinidhi Dravya*. Either in *chikitsa* or manufacturing medicines, if certain *dravyas* are not available, then they have to be substituted. This *Abhava Pratinidhi Dravya Siddhanta* is an applied aspect of *Abhava Siddhanta*.

Keywords: *Abhava, Abhava Pratinidhi Dravya, Samsargabhava, PragAbhava, Pradwams Abhava, Atyantabhava, Anynoy Abhava.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has accepted categorizes everything into six *Padarthas* viz *Dravya, Guna, Karma, Samanya,*

Vishesha and Samavaya. These are also known as *Bhava Padarthas* or *Sat Padartha* as their existence

is evident. those having existence. Along with existence (*Astitva*), Name ability (*Abhideyatwa*) and Knowability (*Jneyatwa*) are the criteria to call anything *Padartha*. *Abhava* (Negation or absence) is reckoned as the 7th category in *Nyaya-Vaisheshika* Philosophy because every individual has an awareness of absence. Hence there is no doubt regarding the existence of negation as is directly experienced by us. Here, word meaning *Abhava*: 'A'+ 'Bhava', 'A' indicates negation and *Bhava* indicates existence so *Abhava* is the negation of any existence. *Nyaya Vaisheshika* and other Indian philosophies serve as the foundation on which principles of *Ayurveda* are built. Concerning *Abhava* *Acharya Charaka* doesn't mention it as a *Padartha*. There arises a doubt on why deliberately *Abhava* is kept out? Does *Abhava* have any role in *Ayurveda*? Why should an *Ayurveda* student study *Abhava*? What is the utility of it? are some of the bothering questions that require critical analysis and interpretation of the concept.

Background

Anupalbdhi which essentially means lack of presence is reckoned to be a synonym with *Abhava*, which is also a valid tool of knowledge according to the *Advaita Vedanta* school of thought. The *Naiyayikas* hold that non-existence is cognized through perception while the Buddhists think that it is cognized through inference. According to *Vedanta-Paribhasha* by Dharmaraja Adhvarindra, the means of valid cognition as *anupalabdi* is the extra-ordinary cause of the apprehension of non-existence which is not caused by the instrumentality of cognition (*Jnanakaranaka*). In other words, *Anupaladhi* is an uncommon cause of the right awareness of absence (*Abhavanubhavasadha-ranakarana*) which is not caused through the instrumentality of another knowledge. The knowledge of absentee (*Pratiyogi*) presupposes the cognition of absence (*Pratiyogijnanasapeksham Abhavajnanam*). This negative fact is known through a separate source of knowing called *Anupalbdhi*. According to *Kumarila* of *Meemansa* philosophy, the absence of an object in a particular locus is not identical with the locus itself (*Adhikaranasvarupa*). It is something more than the mere locus (*Adhishthana-*

triktam Tattva). According to *Acharya Charaka* all substances of universe are classified into two categories; *Sat* and *Asat*, here *Asat* is *Abhavatmaka Padartha*. Thus, the positive (*Bhava*) and absence (*Abhava*) are two different aspects, but not identical. The positive entities are known through positive means of knowing while negative ones are apprehended through *Anupalbdhi*.¹

Abhava

Even though different opinions are available in Indian philosophies the definition provided in *tarka sangrah* appears more robust. That is the knowledge of which depends upon its opponent (*Pratiyoga*). The category which is described as negation /absence/non-existence is known as *Abhava* / non-existence.² *Annambhatta* classifies *Abhava* as 1) *Samsarg Abhava* and 2) *Anyonya Abhava*, where is the absence of anything in comparison with something else is known as *samsargabhava* because *samsarga* refers to combination, and absence one in another becomes *Atyantabhava*. *Samsargabhava* is further categorized into 3 types, viz *Pragabhava*, *Pradhvamsabhava* and *Atyantabhava*

a) **Pragabhava:** *Prag* means prior and *Abhava* means absence. The absence of anything before its production is *Pragabhava*.² This *Abhava* comes with the characters of *Anadi* and *Santa*. That is, the absence doesn't have a beginning however it has an end. For example, there was the absence of Pot before its production, that *Abhava* doesn't have an origin, however, *Abhava* ends the moment pot is produced. The absence of disease, before the manifestation also is *Pragabhava*.

b) **Pradhwamsabhava:** *Pradhwamsa* means destruction. The absence of anything after its destruction is known as *Pradhwamsabhava*. *Saadi* and *Ananta* are the characters. This *Abhava* has a beginning, and it doesn't end³. That is there is the absence of pot after its destruction. This absence does have a beginning but doesn't have an end. Likewise, the absence of diseases after the cure is also an example.

c) **Atyantabhava:** while the previous two varieties were connected to time as past or present, something which is absent all the time, that is past present as

well as future is *Atyantabhava*. That is, Absolute non-existence is the absence of one thing in another at all times, past, present and future⁴. For example, uterus in male, prostate in female, absence of cool nature in the fire. These examples have never happened and will never happen in future. Therefore, it is *Anādi* (beginning less), *Anantha* (endless) and *Shashvat* (eternal).

Atyantabhava as other types of *Samsargabhava* does not define the absence of *Padartha* but defines the absence of two present articles. For example, space and colour are two different articles and both are present but as they do not exist with each other i.e space is colourless in past, present and future.

2) **Anyonyabhava**: Mutual existence is the exclusion of one thing by another, it is the absence of any connection between two things, because of their difference⁴. This makes the distinction between objects. Being a chair excludes being a pot and vice versa. It is beginningless, endless, eternal. Two things that are different from each other exclude each other at all times under all circumstances.

Analytical Discussion on Utility of Abhava in Ayurveda

Abhava as Padartha

Nyaya vaiseshikas, particularly the *navya nyayas* and later philosophers who wrote on *Nyaya* and *Vaiseshika* proposed *Abhava* as a *Padartha*. Their intention to know this *Padartha*, like other *Padartha* was to know the reality of the world and thereby attain eternal salvation. However, *Acharya Charaka* visualized the *Padartha* differently and used them to restore health as *dhatu-samyak kriya*. Hence for giving treatment to an ailing person or elevating the level of fitness to a healthy person, the physician should ponder upon what can be done or what can be given as a part of treatment. In treatment, only six *Padartha* are actively employed and therefore *Abhava* is not a *Padartha* according to *Ayurveda*. As a concept *Abhava* has got many utilities which are discussed hereunder.

1) Abhava and Swabav Upama Vada

Acharya Charaka while narrating about *Swabava Upama Vada* (theory of natural destruction that there is always a cause for the manifestation of be-

ings, but none exists for their annihilation⁵. That is particularly relevant as in humans for disease manifestation etiologies are required. The absence of etiologies is enough for the restoration of health.

2) Abhava and Nidana Parivarjana

If a disease is caused by some *nidanas*, the mere absence of such reasons or *nidanas* will prevent the occurrence and progress of the disease. *Chikitsa* will be incomplete without *Nidana Parivarjana*. So, *Ayurveda* considers *Nidana Parivarjana* as one of the major modalities of treatment and prevention. Therefore, *Nidana Parivarjana* becomes an important contribution towards an effective *Samprapti Vighatana*. However, any treatment without abstinence of disease-causing etiologies cannot yield a complete cure.

3) Abhava in Swasthya and Rogavastha

According to *Acharya Susruta*, *Swastha* is the one who has *lakshanas* like *Sama Dosha*, *Sama Agni*, *Sama Dhatu*, *Malakriya*, *Prasanata* of *Atma Indriya Manas* etc and the absence of these *lakshanas* in a person can be considered as *Aswasthyata* or *Rogavastha*.

4) Abhava and Moksha

Moksha, salvation is stated to be one of the 4 pursuits of mankind. Knowingly or unknowingly, everyone is trying to attain them. According to *Ayurveda*, the definition of *Moksha* is a complete devoid state of influence by *Rajas* and *Tamas* with the dissolution of all karmic actions and detachment from all kinds of unions⁶. That is consciously one should strive for *Abhava* of *Rajas* and *Tamas*.

5) Abhava in Diagnosis of a disease

Roga Pariksha happens through *Nidana Panhaka Viz Nidana*, *Purvarupa*, *Rupa*, *Upashaya* and *Samprapti*. *Upashaya* and *Anupashaya* are among the diagnostic tool in *Ayurveda*. Where is hidden, untraceable or differential diagnosis is achieved by employing either *Aushadha*, *Ahara* or *Vihara* to a patient. It is also said trial-and-error method to know the exact nature of the disease. The concealed symptoms of a disease or in conditions where there is the absence of proper *Lakshanas* of *Roga* found can be examined with the help of *Upashaya* and *Anupashaya*⁷.

6) Abhava concerning Ahara

Abhava of Ahara accounts for undernourishment. Which in turn results in many morbidities like loss of Strength vitality and virility, reduced lifespan, loss of immunity, and the onset of Vataja diseases.

7) Abhava concerning Chikitsa

Langana or Upavasa (abstinence from food intake) is a Chikitsa where Ahara Abahva is seen. This indicates Abhava. Therapeutically many diseases require fasting as a remedy. Fasting is placed in the category of Daiva Vyapashraya Chikitsa in Ayurveda.

Table 1: Some of the indications of Upavasa Chikitsa⁸

Disease	Stage	Duration
Jwara	Sama Avastha	Till Nirama Lakshana
	Vatika Jwara	7 days
	Paithika Jwara	10 days
	Kaphaja Jwara	12 days
Gulma	Kapha Pradana	--
Athisara	Initial Stage	Till Ama gets digested
Ajeerna	Ama Ajeerna	--
Chardhi	Ama Avastha	Till Ama gets digested
Amavatha	Amaja	Till Nirama Lakshana seen

8) Abhava in Dravyaguna.

Dravya is one among the Chatuspada without which treatment is incomplete. The qualities of Dravya as per classics are abundantly available (Bahuta), Fit to be used (Yogyata), ability to prepare different formulations (Aneka Vidha Kalpana) and having adequate properties (Sampath). Among these we are facing a problem in meeting the needs of drug/drug availability and the solution to this problem is substitution. This concept in Ayurveda is known as Abhava Pradinidhi Dravya.

The Abhava Pratinidhi Dravya or herbal substitutes means the Dravya has similar pharmacological activi-

ties as that of the original Dravya but may not have a similar appearance. The concept of Pratinidhi Dravya is not new, many Pratinidhi dravyas (substitutes) are mentioned in Ayurvedic texts, especially in Bhavaprakasha, Yogaratnakar, Bhaishajya Ratnavalli etc. The principle to select Pratinidhi dravyas is based upon Rasa (Taste), Guna (Property), Virya (Potency), Vipaka (effects on digestion) and most significant factor Karma (Action). The main drug in a formulation should not be substituted, only accessory drugs can be substituted.

Table 2: Abhava Pratinidhi Dravyas of Bhava Prakash Nighantu⁹

SL no:	Abhava Dravya	Latin name/English name	Pradinidhi Dravya	Latin name/English name
1	Chitraka	Plumbago zeylanica Linn.	Danti or Apamarga Kshara	Baliospermum montanum Muell-Arg Alkali of Achyranthus aspera Linn
2	Dhanvyasa	Fagonia cretica Linn	Duralabha	Alhagi camelorum Fisch.
3	Tagara	Valeriana wallichii DC.	Kushtha	Saussurea lappa C. B. Clarke.
4	Murva	Marsdenia tenacissima W.&A.	Jingini Twaka	Bark of Odina woodier Roxb.
5	Himsra	Capparis horrida Linn.f	Mankanda	Alocasia indica (Roxb) Schott
6	Lakshmana	Ipomea sepearia	Mayurshikha	Actinopteris dichotoma Bedd.

		Koeing ex Roxb.		
7	<i>Bakula</i>	Mimusops elengi Linn.	<i>Kalhara, Utpala, Pankaja</i>	Nymphaea rubra Roxb. Nymphaea stelletta Wild. Nelumbium speciosum Willd.
8	<i>Neel-Utpala</i>	Nelumbium speciosum Willd.	<i>Kumuda</i>	Nymphaea alba Linn.
9	<i>Jatipushpa</i>	Jasminum officinale Linn.	<i>Lavanga</i>	Syzygium aromaticum (Linn.) Merr. & L. M. Perry
10	<i>Arka Kshira</i>	Latex of Calotropis procera (Ait.) R. Br.	<i>Arka Swarasa</i>	Juice of Calotropis procera (Ait.) R.Br.
11	<i>Pushkar Mula</i>	Inula racemosa Hook. F.	<i>Kushtha</i>	Saussurea lappa C. B. Clarke
12	<i>Langali</i>	Gloriosa superba Linn.	<i>Kushtha</i>	Saussurea lappa C. B. Clarke
13	<i>Sthouneyak</i>	Clerodendrum infortunatum Linn.	<i>Kushtha</i>	Saussurea lappa C. B. Clarke
14	<i>Chavya, Gajapippali</i>	Piper retrofractum Vahl. Scindapsus officinalis (Roxb.) Schott	<i>Pippali Mula</i>	Root of Piper longum Linn.
15	<i>Somrajya</i>	Centratherum anthelmin-ticum Kuntze	<i>Chakramarda</i>	Cassia tora Linn.
16	<i>Daru Haridra</i>	Berberis aristata DC.	<i>Haridra</i>	Curcuma longa Linn.
17	<i>Rasanjana</i>	Solidified extract of Berberis aristata DC.	<i>Darvi Kwatha</i>	Decoction of Berberis aristata DC.
18	<i>Saurashtra Mitti</i>	Fuller's earth	<i>Sphatika</i>	Alum
19	<i>Talisha Patra</i>	Abies webbiana Lindle.	<i>Swarnatali</i>	Talisha variety
20	<i>Bharangi</i>	Clerodendrum serratum (Linn.) Moon	<i>Talisha, Kantkari Mula</i>	Abies webbiana Lindle. Solanum surrattence Burm. F.
21	<i>Ruchaka</i>	Black salt	<i>Panshu Lavana</i>	Salt from Soil
22	<i>Madhuyasti</i>	Glycyrrhiza glabra Linn.	<i>Dhataki</i>	Woodfordia fruticosa Kurz.
23	<i>Amlavetasa</i>	Garcinia pedunculata Roxb.	<i>Chukra</i>	Rumex vesicarius Linn.
24	<i>Draksha</i>	Vitis vinifera Linn.	<i>Kashmari Phala</i>	Gmelina arborea Roxb.
25	<i>Kashmari</i>	Gmelina arborea Roxb.	<i>Madhuka Pushpa</i>	Flowers of Madhuca indica J. F. Gmel.
26	<i>Nakha</i>	Achatina fulica	<i>Lavanga</i>	Syzygium aromaticum (Linn.) Merr. & L. M. Perry
27	<i>Kasturi</i>	Moschus moschiferus	<i>Kankola</i>	Piper cubeba Linn.
28	<i>Kankola</i>	Piper cubeba Linn.	<i>Jatipushpa</i>	Flower of Jasminum officinale Linn.
29	<i>Karpura</i>	Cinnamomum camphora Nees & Eberm	<i>Sugandhi Mustaka</i>	Aromatic rhizome of Cyperus rotundus L.
30	<i>Karpura</i>	Cinnamomum camphora Nees & Eberm	<i>Granthi Parna</i>	Polygonum aviculare Linn.
31	<i>Kumkuma</i>	Crocus sativus Linn.	<i>Kumbh Kusuma</i>	Flower of Carthamus tinctorius Linn.
32	<i>Chandana</i>	Santalum album Linn.	<i>Karpura</i>	Cinnamomum camphora Nees & Eberm
33	<i>Chandana, Karpura</i>	Santalum album Linn., Cinnamomum camphora Nees & Eberm	<i>Rakta Chandana</i>	Pterocarpus santalinus Linn.f.

34	<i>Rakta Chandana</i>	Pterocarpus santalinus Linn.f.	<i>Nava Ushira</i>	Freshly collected Vetiveria zizanioidis (Linn.) Nash.
35	<i>Ativisha</i>	Aconitum heterophyllum Wall.	<i>Mustaka</i>	Cyperus rotundus Linn.
36	<i>Haritaki</i>	Terminalia chebula Retz.	<i>Amalaki</i>	Emblica officinalis Gaertn.
37	<i>Nagakesar</i>	Stigma of Mesua ferrea Linn.	<i>Padmakesar</i>	Stigma of Nelumbium speciosum Willd.
38	<i>Meda, Mahameda</i>	Polygonatum verticillatum (L.) All. Polygonatum cirrhifolium (Wall.) Royle	<i>Shatavari</i>	Asparagus racemosus Willd.
39	<i>Jivaka, Rishabhaka</i>	Microstylis wallichii Lindl. Microstylis muscifera (Lindl.) Ridl.	<i>Vidari</i>	Pueraria tuberosa DC.
40	<i>Kakoli, Kshirkakoli</i>	Roscoeia procera Wall. Lillium polyphyllum D. Don	<i>Ashwaganda</i>	Withania somnifera Dunal.
41	<i>Riddhi, Vridhi</i>	Habenaria intermedia D. Don Habenaria edgeworthii Hook.f ex Collett	<i>Varahi</i>	Dioscorea bulbifera Linn.
42	<i>Varahikanda</i>	Dioscorea bulbifera Linn.	<i>Charamkarau</i>	Charmakar variety of Alu
43	<i>Bhallataka</i>	Semicarpus anacardium Linn. F.	<i>Rakta Chandana, Chitraka</i>	Pterocarpus santalinus Linn.f. Plumbago zeylanica Linn.
44	<i>Ikshu</i>	Saccharum officinarum Linn.	<i>Nala</i>	Arundo donax Linn.
45	<i>Suvarna</i>	Aurum	<i>Suvarna Makshika</i>	Copper pyrite
46	<i>Rajata</i>	Argentum	<i>Shweta Makshika</i>	Iron pyrite
47	<i>Makshika</i>	Pyrite	<i>Suvarna Gairika</i>	Red Ochre
48	<i>Suvarna /Rajata Bhasma</i>	Gold/ silver	<i>Kanta Loha Bhasma</i>	Magnetic iron
49	<i>Kanta Loha</i>	Magnetic iron ore	<i>Tikshna Loha</i>	Wrought iron
50	<i>Mukta</i>	Pearl	<i>Mukta Shukti</i>	Pearl oyster
51	<i>Madhu</i>	Honey	<i>Jirna Guda</i>	Old jaggery
52	<i>Matsyanda</i>	Molasses	<i>Sita Sharkara</i>	Powdery sugar
53	<i>Sita</i>	White Rock sugar	<i>Khaand</i>	Solid sugar
54	<i>Kshira</i>	Milk (cow's)	<i>Mudga Or Masura Rasa</i>	Phaseolus radiates Linn. Lens culinaris Medic.

The possible causes for substitution of herbal medicinal plants are:

1. Non-availability of the drug: The *Ashtavargas* was not available since the 16th century. So, *Pratinidhi dravyas* were coined at that time.
2. Doubtful identity of the drug: For the herb *Bala*, different plants such as *Sida cordifolia* L., *Sida rhombifolia* L., *Sida spinosa* L., *Sida acuta* Burm.f., *Abutilon indicum* (L.) Sweet etc are considered.

3. Price of the drug: *Ativisha* (*Aconitum heterophyllum* Wall. ex Royle) being a costly herb is substituted by *Mustaka* (*Cyperus rotundus* L.)
4. Geographical distribution of the drug: *Rasna* is *Pluchea lanceolata* (DC.) C.B. Clarke in northern India and *Alpinia galangal* (L.) Willd. in southern parts.
5. The adverse reaction of the drug: *Vasa* (*Adhatoda vasica* Nees) is a well-known *Rakta-Pittahara* (cures bleeding disorder) drug, but due to its abortifacient activity its utility in pregnant women is limited, instead of drugs such as *Laksha* (*Laccifer lacca*), *Ashoka* [*Saraca asoca* (Roxb.) Willd.] etc are substituted for a similar therapeutic effect.
6. Seasonal availability of drugs: Some drugs are available in a specific season so other drugs can be introduced, which have the same action. For example, *Trianthema portulacastrum* L. can be used in seasonal absences of *Boerhaavia diffusa* Linn.
7. Shelf life of the drug: In case of non-availability of old jaggery, new jaggery is used after heating in sun rays for 4 hrs.

Substitution of the herbs is the need of the time with more than 300 medicinal plants becoming red-listed. It provided greater scope for the physician to utilize herbs that are easily available, cost-effective and most appropriate for the clinical condition⁹.

CONCLUSION

Even though Indian philosophers have accepted *Abhava* as *Padartha*, *Ayurveda* doesn't acknowledge *Abhava* as *Padartha*. This is because *Abhava* does not have a direct or active role in treatment. However, the utility of the concept of *Abhava* is very much appreciated in many contexts. With the changing ecology, biodiversity and needs of mankind, the sparse or endangered medicinal plants can be substituted with readily abundantly available, equally efficacious plants. This concept of *Abhava Pratinidhi Dravya* is a major application of the concept of *Abhava*.

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