



Review Article

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A REVIEW OF BHUMI DESHA [GEOGRAPHICAL LAND] AND ITS EFFECT ON DIFFERENT PARAMETERS

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, desha refers to bhumi desha [geographical land] and atura desha [patients]. Both of them are interrelated and have been extensively described in the classics. A geographical land is characterized by the type of soil, which plays a vital role in climate, water cycle, rainfall etc. These are a few essential factors needed for the survival of humans. Bhumi Desha is one such factor which influences the health and disease of an individual. Knowledge of the place in which a person is born helps in determining its strength, while knowledge of the place where the person is living determines the susceptibility to disease occurring. Understanding the geographical land gives an extensive idea about the properties of drugs. Desha plays a vital role in the causation of epidemic, endemic or pandemic disease. Three types of geographical lands are described in Ayurveda jangal desha [dry lands], anupa desha [wetlands] and sadharana desha [mixed dry and wet land]. The three biological entities Vata, Pitta and Kapha dosha of an individual have an extensive relationship with these lands. bhumi desha and atura desha are interrelated, affecting the latter in many areas.

Keywords: Bhumi Desha, Atura Desha, Geographical land

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, desha is described in various contexts. Desha refers to habitat. It determines the properties due to procreation or their acclimatization to that region.¹ Desha refers to geographical land as well as the patient's body.² Nature of land is examined to ascertain the specific features of individual patients and medicinal plants in different localities. For the study of medicinal plants, three types of land are described- jangal desha [dry lands], anupa desha [wetlands] and sadharana desha [mixed dry and wet land].³

Characteristics of Deshas

Anupa Desha

This type of land is rich in water resources and has a variety of fauna. It is rugged terrain, full of small hillocks with a vast expanse. The air is cool due to the waterfall. The colour of the soil is copper colour. Rice is mainly produced in this region.⁴ People inhabiting this land have tender bodies and are generally dominated by Vata and Kapha.⁵ Anupa desha is of three types- mukhya (primary having all the typical features), madhyam (having the average characteristic of lands) and kaniya (least geographical characteristic). Mukhya anupa desha has marshy

lands, numerous flowing streams, and thick vegetation shadows. Madhyam anupa desha has comparatively less water, and kaniya anupa desha has the least water.

Jangala Desha

It is warm and good land. It has a sufficient amount of water in the well. Cows and goats yield more milk in this region. It abounds in thin, dry and rough sands and gravels, giving rise to mirages.⁶ People inhabiting this type of land are sturdy and hardy and are generally dominated by Vata and Pitta.⁷ Jangala desha also has three types. Mukhya jangala desha is the leading dry land, while madhyam jangala desha has scanty vegetation and trees. Kaniya jangala desha is where one gets water quickly by digging a well.

Sadharan Desha

It has mixed characteristics of wet and dry land. It is pleasant for all living beings.⁸ People inhabiting this type of land are sturdy, tender, and endowed with strength, complexion and compactness.⁹ Sadharan desha is of two types anupa sadharan is one where characteristics of wetlands predominate, and jangala sadharan is one where characteristics of dry land predominate.

Table 1: Description of Desha

Desha	Soil colour	Crops grown	Effect on dosas	Disease
Anupa	Copper	Rice	Pitta shamaka	Gastrointestinal tract and Vata-Kapha dominant
Jangala		Leguminous grains (Mudga)	Pitta vardhak	Disease-related to Pitta
Sadharan		Wheat/Barley/Maize	Mild vitiation of Pitta	Disease free ¹⁰

Different types of soils in these three lands are

- Urvara Bhumi (Fertile land)- The land that can produce all sorts of grains and crops is fertile.
- Usara Bhumi (Wastelands/desert)- A saline soil is usar bhumi. Dhanva and maru are synonyms.
- Sharkara Bhumi- The soil consists predominantly of gravel.
- Saikata Bhumi- (Sandy soil)- Soil made up of sand.

- Pandu Bhumi (Yellow soil)- This type of soil is found in jangal desha. The colour of the soil is yellow.
- Krishna Bhumi (Black soil)- The colour of the soil is black.¹¹

Another four types of soil are also being mentioned, i.e., Brahma, Kshetra, Vaishya, Shaudra .¹²

Table 2: Features of different types of soils

Soil type	Features
Brahma ¹³	Good vegetation, rich in trees, enough water. Delightful soil with white earth
Kshatra ¹⁴	Devoid of animals, copper colour, and thorny shrubs are grown in abundance. This type of land keeps diseases away and saves from baldness and greying of hair.
Vaishyas ¹⁵	Soil is shining like gold. Helpful in Loha siddhi-conversion of lower metals to higher.
Shaudra ¹⁶	Black-coloured soil alleviates all diseases. Different variety of grasses grows here.

Acharya Sushruta describes characteristics of land based on Mahabhutas-

- Prithvi- The land is stony, firm, heavy, blackish and has big trees and vegetables.
- Jala- The land is smooth, cold, and white with adjacent water and smooth marshy crops, grasses and delicate trees.

- Vayu- The land is rough in colour, similar to ash and has small trees.
- Agni- The land is of various colours, light, and stony, with sparse, pale trees and sprouts.
- Akasha- The land is soft and even, with ditches, water with unmanifested taste, has tall trees around.¹⁷

Table 3: Properties of dravyas grown in panchbhautik soil

Mahabhuta	Dominance of rasa	Effect
Prithvi	Madhura	Alleviate disease and enhance vitality. They have a steady effect.
Apya	Katu, kashaya	Sita [cold] potency and Pittashamka
Agni	Tikta, Lavana	Ushna [hot] potency increases appetite.
Vayu	Amla	Sita and Ushna both ¹⁸
Akasha	Devoid of Rasa	

Features of land suitable for culture of medicinal plants or herbs

- The surface of the ground should not be broken.
- It should not have holes, gravel, ditches and stones.
- Ant hills should not disfigure it.
- It should not be used for cremation or execution ground.
- It should not occupy the site of the temple.
- The soil should be glossy, firm, steady, black, yellowish or red and contain no sand, potash or other alkaline substance. This type of land is favourable to the germination of plants.
- The land should be supplied with moisture from adjacent streams or water.¹⁹

Acharya Charaka opines that four factors are common for all country inhabitants while describing epidemics. They are polluted air, water, land and time²⁰.

Characteristics of polluted land

Land with abnormality in natural colour, smell, taste and touch, excessive stickiness, serpents, wild animals, mosquitoes, jungles of grass and weeds, and dried destroyed crops are polluted. These lands have frequent occurrences of meteorites, thunderbolts and earthquakes. The land with constant agitation and overflow of water reservoirs is also considered polluted.²¹

Importance of Knowledge of Bhumi desha in various aspects

Strength of person: Geographical land has a strong influence on the immunity of a person. Inhabitants of certain places like Sindh are strong by nature because of the characteristic of that place. It is described under bala vriddhikara bhava.²² [Factors responsible for the promotion of strength]

Prognosis of disease: Desha has a strong influence on disease also. While examining the patient, Acharya Charaka opines that the place of birth and growth and the manifestation of the patient's disease should also be examined. There are specific features concerning food, exercise, customs, strength, and mental condition, homologation by habit, which are related to disease and are helpful. This is called atura parijyan.²³ [knowing features of patient]

Prevention of exogenous disease: Exogenous disease can be prevented by avoidance of intellectual errors, restraint of sense organs, good memory, knowledge of place, time and own capability and good conduct²⁴. The person who knows local features would avoid moving to a solitary house, forest and countries where there are calamities etc.²⁵

Collection of drugs: The drugs should be collected from jangal [dry land] and sadharan desha [normal land]. The soil should be unctuous, black in colour, and sweet in taste. The medicinal plants collected from these places produce excellent therapeutic effects.²⁶ Acharya Charaka considers maru bhumi [deserts] healthy, while anupa desha [wet areas] is unhealthy. He also opines that the Himalayas are the natural habitat of medicinal plants²⁷.

Property of food articles: Desha refers to habitat. It determines the properties due to procreation or their acclimatization to that region. Drugs grown in the Himalayan region are very efficacious, and those in deserts are laghu. Animals which graze light food, live in deserts and are active by nature are laghu [light]²⁸. The meat of animals born or living in water and marshy lands is heavy for digestion, and the meat of animals born in the desert or living in dry areas is light to digest²⁹.

The properties of ahara change according to the types of land cultivated. Rice grown in burnt land are kashaya [astringent] in taste and is light to digest³⁰. It is dry and reduces Kapha. On the other hand, rice grown in tilled land enhances Kapha and is heavy to digest³¹.

Cereals grown in alkaline soil are suitable for diseases due to Kapha. The grains grown in snigdha land are good in providing strength and immunity, while those grown in sandy soil reduce strength and energy³².

Prevention of disease: The people living, in particular, desha, should eat a diet and consume drugs opposite to the qualities of the habitat to maintain homology. This is called desha satmaya.³³

All drugs and diets which dislodge the doshas but do not expel them from the body are called virudha ahara. If this is done with respect to desha, then it is called desha viruddha³⁴.

CONCLUSION

Land resources are vital for human health, well-being and overall life. Bhumi desha and atura desha are interrelated, affecting the latter in many areas. Geographical land provides knowledge about the type of soil, water, air and other climatic factors required for humans' survival. Knowledge of geographical land plays an essential role in knowing the properties of dravyas. It also plays a substantial role in diagnosing the disease, as it determines the strength of the patient, its adaptability and food habits. There is a detailed description of bhumi desha in Ayurved in relation to many parameters.

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