Review Article

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A BOOK REVIEW ON "ONE HUNDRED USEFUL DRUGS" BY DR. A LAKSHMIPATHI AS A PORTABLE GUIDE

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ABSTRACT

This review presents a critical evaluation of a book entitled 'One Hundred Useful Drugs' by Dr. A. Lakshmipathi, published by Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan in 1973. The author of this book has provided a brief description of one hundred medicinal drugs that are widely accessible across the country and are often used in medical treatments. In just 222 pages, this succinct and educational book contains a wealth of information. The author expertly condensed the essence of Ayurvedic medicine in 100 drugs description and six appendices providing readers with a convenient and approachable reference manual. The book offers an introduction to the topic, making it a priceless tool for anybody with an interest in Ayurveda. According to the author, the purpose of this book is to assist Ayurvedic physicians in making their own medication using available natural sources so that patients can receive genuine quality and reasonably priced medication.. This work aims to offer a quick evaluation of the book, emphasizing its value and relevance for academics, professionals, and readers in general.

Keywords: Ayurvedic Medicine, Mahakashaya, Medicinal Plants, Tridosha Siddhanta

Book Name: One Hundred Useful Drugs
Author: Late Dr. A. Lakshmipathi, Founder of Arogya Ashramam Samithi, Madras
Published by: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, New Delhi.
Edition: 1973
Pages: 222
Reprint: Dr. Mrs. Indira Ramamurthi, Managing Director, Arogya Ashramam Samithi, Madras, India

OVERVIEW

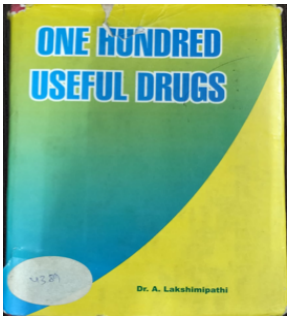
Ayurveda has captured the hearts of many seeking a more sustainable, natural and balanced approach to healthcare. Traditionally prepared natural ingredients including plants, minerals, metals, and animal origin are the raw materials utilized in Ayurvedic medicine. Dr Achanta Lakshmipathi was captivated by this holistic approach and went on to become a renowned scholar and devotee of ayurveda despite having a degree in contemporary medicine. His greatness stems from his efforts to popularize Ayurveda and its various facets, from classical Sanskrit publications to regional languages like Telugu and English to preserve the heritage. One Hundred Useful Drugs, published in 1937, is one of the sixteen books in his 'Ayurveda Siksha Series' of publications. The most widely used and easily accessible drugs in the area are included. Emphasizing practicality and quick access to knowledge for healthcare professionals, the aim of this book is to provide readers and students a concise, reliable summary of the most important drugs. The book was out of print following the author's death in 1966, but it was reprinted in 1973 by Dr. Mrs. Indira Ramamurthi, the managing director of Arogya Ashramam Samithi, making its wisdom once again available to the general public.

AUTHOR PROFILE

Dr. Achanta Lakshmipathi was born on 3 March 1880, Village Madhavaram, Tadepalli taluk, West Godavari District and graduated from the Faculty of Arts (F.A) in 1899. He enrolled in Madras Medical College in 1904 and completed his studies there in 1909. He opened a medical practice in Madras in 1910. His journey into Ayurveda began while studying for his B.A. at Raja Mahendravaram, influenced by Vaidya Sitaramayya, who treated his mother with Ayurvedic principles. After meeting Pt. Devi Gopalacharyulu, Principal, Ayurvedic college, Madras, he became an enthusiastic Ayurvedic practitioner, pursued further Ayurvedic studies, and abandoned up on contemporary methods entirely. He took up the administration charge of Ayurvedic college, Madras in 1920 after the death of Pt. Devi Gopalacharyulu. He authored around 100 books, with 63 focused on Indian medicine, and published numerous volumes in both English and Telugu. His work was organized under a series titled 'Ayurveda Shiksha', which collected information from various ancient classics. In order to provide authentic medicine to practitioners in rural areas, he founded Andhra Ayurveda Pharmacy. The author was a prolific writer who authored a great deal about Ayurveda and its associated medicines, publishing multiple books and articles. He made numerous and varied contributions to the realm of Ayurvedic medicine. He also established the 'Aarogya Ashramam', a facility in Madras devoted to the study and practice of Ayurveda. Dr. Lakshmipathi organized 'Arogya Yatras,' where he, along with about 100 physicians, traveled to villages to teach and promote Ayurvedic principles. His efforts were recognized by Mahatma Gandhi, who invited him to conduct these yatras from Sewagram. Throughout his career, he was honored with several prestigious titles,

including Ayurvedodharaka, Bhishagratna, Ayurveda Brihaspati, Pranacharya, and Ayurveda Vachaspati, reflecting his significant contributions to the field of Ayurveda. He ensured that his work and legacy would continue to benefit future generations by giving his whole property to the Ashramam in an incredible act of charity. He lived up to his teachings, and when he passed away in 1966, he left the following message for ayurvedic doctors[2].

"The first and foremost duty of the physician is to protect and preach the maintenance of good health, the treatment of the diseases by giving medicines comes only next"[3].



BOOK HIGHLIGHT

The book opens with a thoughtful introduction that provides the idea for the wealth of information to come. The author's emphasis on the importance of understanding drugs, their properties, preparation and applications are clear from the outset. The book comprises 222 pages and contents are divided into two sections: the first portion has descriptions of 100 drugs, and the second part consisting of six appendices. The book concludes with an index, which is arranged alphabetically, includes information on plant names in Sanskrit, Hindi and other languages, names of diseases, pharmacological activities and their therapeutic qualities. As a result, this index helps the readers to quickly search and locate material[4].

The author has gathered one hundred medications that were commonly used by ancient intellectuals such as Acharya Charak, Vagbhata and Bhavmishra. These medications such as Vasa *(Adhatoda vasica* Nees.*) and* Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula* Retz.*)*, were chosen based on practical experience because they are readily available, useful in treating a variety of ailments and easy to cultivate too. The author has emphasised extensive understanding of each drug, primarily to assist Indian physicians in preparing their own medicine and clinical use in order to provide better patient outcome[5].

A unique addition to the book is a pamphlet named 'Tridosha Siddhanta' (The Principle of the Three Humors), which is a review piece of book written by Dr. A. Lakshmipathi and published in May 1945. This paper, which was first published in the Journal of the Indian Medical Association, Calcutta, offers more details on the core ideas of Ayurvedic medicine and how it is used in clinical settings. The author's skill and contributions to the field of Ayurveda are demonstrated by this uncommon and priceless paper[6]

BOOK INSIGHT

As mentioned earlier the contents of book divided two sections. The first section has drug listings, each of which is succinctly and methodically described, and second section comprises six appendices. The drugs are arranged alphabetically, starting with their Sanskrit names followed by their Latin names as well as names in other Indian languages (Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Urdu). References in the book are taken from the classical work of Bhavprakasha Nighantu[7] and Dhanwantari Nighantu[8] further bolster these entries. A summary of every drug is also given, encompassing its active ingredients, therapeutic indications, doses, clinical action, home remedies, and conventional practices.

The drug discussed in this book can be classified into three main categories: plant-origin, animal-origin and mineral-derivative. Four categories of plant-origin drugs can be distinguished: climber (nine species) such as Draksha *(Vitis vinifera* L.*)*, Guduchi *(Tinospora cordifolia* Miers.*)* and Trivrit *(Operculina turpethum* L.*)*; herbs (thirty-eight species) such as Ajmoda *(Carum copticum* L.*)*, Akarkarabha *(Pyrethrum radix* L.*)*, Arka *(Calotropis procera* W.T.Aiton*)*; shrubs (twelve species) such as Ashwgandha *(Withania somnifera* L.*)*, Bharangi *(Clerodendrum siphonanthus* L*)*, Datura *(Datura fastuosa* L.*)*; trees (twenty-seven species) such as Amalaki *(Emblica myrobalan* Gaertn.*)*, Arjuna *(Terminalia arjuna* Roxb.*)*, Ashoka *(Saraca indica* Willd.*)*[9]. There are five animal-origin Kasturi (Musk), Laksha (Lac), Ghrita (Clarified Butter), Madhu (Honey) and Madhuchista (Beeswax) and nine mineral-derivative drugs Gandhak (Sulphur), Hingulam (Asafoetida), Kasisa (Green Vitriol), Tutha (Blue Vitriol) etc[10]. This classification serves to emphasize the wide variety of sources that the book draws upon. However, the botanical names of some plants have changed over time for example Amalaki (formerly *Emblica myrobalan* Gaertn, now *Phyllanthus emblica* L.) would all need to be updated to ensure that it remains relevant[11].

Although there are 102 drug entries, the title indicates that there are 100 drugs. The reason for the disparity in the figure is due to repeated entries of Jatiphala *(Piper longum* L*)*. Pippali *(Myristica fragrans* Houtt.*)*, on page number 53-54 and 92-93 respectively. These two entries; Jatiphala-Jatipatri and Pippali-Pippalimool represent various part used of the same plant[12, 13]. As a result, the total number of drugs mentioned are 100. Refer: Table 1.

Table 1: List of drugs mentioned in book

Type of Drugs	Number	Name of Drugs
Climber	10	Draksha, Guduchi Madhusnuhi, Maricha, Patola, Pippali, Pippalimool, Sariva, Shatavari, Trivrit.
Herb	36	Ajmoda, Akarkarabha, Aaphenam, Arka, Bala, Brahmi, Bhringraja, Chitrak, Dhanayak, Ela, Gokshura, Hingu, Haridra, Ikshuraka, Jatamansi, Kocharam, Kantkari, Katurohini, Kiratikta, Jeerak Krishnajeerak, Kumari, Khurasani yavani, Kushtha, Lankesha, Manjishtha, Musta, Parpatak, Punarnava, Rasona, Revalchini, Shunthi, Vacha, Vakuchi, Vidari, Yashtimadhu.
Shrub	12	Ashwgandha, Bharangi, Dadima, Danti, Daruharidra, Dhatura, Guggulu, Rasna, Swarnamukhi, Ushira, Vasa, Vidanga.
Tree	28	Amalaki, Arjuna, Ashoka, Ashwatha, Bhallataka, Chandana, Devdaru, Eranda, Haritaki, Jatiphala, Jatipatri, Karpura, Khadira, Kutaja, Lodhra, Lavanga, Nagkesaram, Nimba, Nirgundi, Patrakam, Twak, Raktachandana, Shalmali, Talishpatra, Tuvaraka, Vanshlochana, Vishmustika, Vibhitak
Others	16	Gandhak, Ghrita, Hingulam Kasisa, Kasturi, Laksha, Madhu, Madhuchishta, Navsardara, Saindhav Lavan, Sarkara, Surakshaara, Tankan, Tutha Tiltaila, Yavakshara
Total	102	

Six appendices that provide more resources and information to supplement the text are included in the second section. Appendix 1 offers a useful inventory of drugs and the preparations that go along with them, highlighting the useful uses of the listed drugs in different forms. As a short reference guide, this appendix makes it simple for readers to recognize the drugs and how they are used in various preparations[14]. Appendix 2 includes, a brief glossary of 51 medical terms related to pharmacological action, including galactagogues, laxatives, vermicides mydriatics etc. This appendix serves as a valuable reference guide, providing readers with a clear understanding of important medical terminology[15]. Appendix 3 provides, a list of 170 medical ailments, including those related to the heart, gynaecological disorders, gastrointestinal problems, skin conditions, and more together with the appropriate drug required for the respective treatment. It serves as a convenient and practical reference guide for healthcare practitioners, providing a comprehensive list of diseases and their corresponding treating drugs[16]. Appendix 4 offers a comprehensive summary of the 50 Mahakashaya according to the Charak Samhita, along with a current terminology correlation. This facilitates a greater grasp of drug classification and its applications in clinical practice by providing a special bridge between traditional Ayurvedic knowledge and modern understanding[17]. The Sushruta Samhita and Ashtanga Hridya provide a traditional system of classifying pharmaceuticals into different ganas' (groups). These systems are presented in last two appendices. Appendix 5 presents the Sushruta Samhita's classification of drugs, a comprehensive system of categorizing medications into 37 distinct groups. This appendix provides a meticulous listing of drugs within each group, along with their corresponding actions and properties[18]. Appendix 6 offers a comprehensive presentation of the Ashtanga Hridya classification of drugs, an esteemed system that categorizes medications into 31 distinct ganas'. This appendix provides a clear and well-organized listing of drugs within each group, along with their applications in addressing specific dosha imbalances[19]. The detailed list of medications in each group, as well as the attributes and actions of each, as reported in traditional Ayurvedic scriptures, is provided in these appendices

STRENGHTH AND LIMITATION

The strength of this book lies in its selection of hundred easily available and commonly used drugs, many of which are integral to various Ayurvedic formulations addressing a wide range of diseases. This practical based book allows practitioners, particularly in rural and resource-constrained settings, to concentrate on self-preparation of medicines. By presenting the plant names in multiple Indian languages—Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Urdu, the book caters to a diverse regional healthcare professionals, preserving both the linguistic and medicinal heritage of Ayurveda. Its systematic organization, with alphabetical drug listings accompanied by Latin names, dosage, therapeutic uses, and references to classical texts enhances the manual's clarity, reliability. Additionally, the inclusion of six comprehensive appendices serves as quick-reference tools, effectively bridging traditional Ayurvedic principles with contemporary clinical practice.

The main constraints of this book are outdated botanical nomenclature which may require revision to align with current academic and pharmacological standards. The absence of illustrations or visual aids also limits its utility for beginners for visual identification of medicinal plants. Description of drug and has limited pharmacological details like pharmacodynamics or pharmacokinetics, which modern readers may find essential. The formulations provided, do not include variations in dosage forms tailored to different age groups or disease-specific dosage requirements. The book's current unavailability and out-of-print status pose a barrier to its broader academic and clinical utility, highlighting the need for updated reprints or digital editions.

CONCLUSION

A simple and systematic approach to comprehending the concepts and practices of traditional Indian medicine, this book is a veritable gold mine of Ayurvedic knowledge. Due to the author's painstaking efforts to gather and arrange this vast amount of data, a seminal work that will continue to inspire and educate upcoming generations of Ayurvedic scholars and practitioners. Despite being out of print at the moment, is a highly valued resource for researchers and practitioners as this book promotes the concept of self-prepared traditional medication and serves as Vade mecum for students and clinicians. Editing and wide publication of this book would be a wise move, since it would assure that its timeless legacy is still available to everyone.

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