Astavarga plants are rich in antioxidants

Chyawanprash is an Ayurvedic health tonic which was formulated thousands of years ago by Ayurvedic wonder healers Ashwini Kumars. It could rejuvenate the ill health of Rishi Chyawan and that is how the name of the health tonic is Chyawanprash.

A set of eight medicinal plants, also known as Astavarga plants, namely Kakoli, Kshrikakoli, Jeevak, Rishvok, Meda, Mahameda, Riddhi and Vriddhi are the major ingredients of Chyawanprash. These plants are short lived plants which grow in small patches in particular ecological environments in certain areas of Himalaya at the elevation of 1200 – 4000 m from the sea level (Figure 1).

A team of scientists from Patanjali Yogpeeth Hardwar along with other academicians have been able to successfully identify those eight plants and their botanical names also been proposed. Scientists are now investigating the chemical constituents of the various plants and plant parts. Identification and collection of Astavarga plant samples during August - October is a challenge because of adverse weather conditions (Figure 1, 2).

Usually the rhizome or the pseudobulb are used for the preparation of Chyawanprash. Evidence for the presence of large quantities of antioxidants have already been found in those plant parts. Recent studies have shown that even the other parts of the plants are also rich in antioxidants (DOI: 10.53023/6/p.rasayan-20221218.pdf). The phytochemicals were utilized for the green synthesis of phytochemical conjugated gold and silver nanoparticles. All these newer findings open up newer opportunities for the utilization of the other parts of the Astavarga plants.

Figure 1. A photograph of Barlowganj, Himalaya taken in September, 2022.

Figure 2. Photographs of (a-p) various plants at Barlowganj and Dhanoulti areas of Himalaya including: g: Vrddhi, m-n: Kakoli, o: Rddhi, p: Jeevak; (q-t) the scientists taking part in the expedition in September, 2022: q: Dr. Anupam Srivastava, r: Dr. Jyotish Srivastava, s: Professor Braja Gopal Bag, t: Mr. Aashish Kumar

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December 29, 2022