

## Veterinary Ayurveda and its Relevance: A Scientific Outlook from Past to Present

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### Abstract

The present study explores the scientific relevance of Veterinary Ayurveda from past to present. Ayurveda the science of life which was theorized thousands of years back and is practiced till date, evolved for humans and all. With time it had specialized and developed for animals as Pasu Ayurveda. Also known as Veterinary Ayurveda; Its' mainly traditional Indian System using natural herbs, minerals, diet and lifestyle management to treat animal diseases, aiming at balancing Tri-dosha (*Vata Pitta Kapha*). The main text of Ayurveda, Charaka Samhita & Sushruta Samhita laid guidelines on animal care, and they were the foundation for the branch Pashu Ayurveda, which has its rich literature heritage documenting many a disease condition, diagnosis and treatment. Many a treatise forgotten with time, some rediscovered and some to explore further. The present-day challenges to stay healthy, challenges animals too, and Veterinary Ayurveda can be a ray of hope. In recent time many studies have been done and good result is found. There is growing interest in scientific community and commoners, equally. There are new policies adopted (to adopt) by authority bodies which can be good for upcoming future. Healthy animals are not only themselves good, they are equally good to get healthy products-outcome and is need best for ecology and world environment.

**Key words :** Veterinary Ayurveda Medicine Scientific Outlook  
Research trends

**P**asu-Ayurveda is a Sanskrit term meaning Ayurveda for Pasu or Animals. It is ancient Indian branch, an applied medical science for Animals – Horses, Elephants, Cows, Canine, Wild Animals, Birds and others' health with holistic fundamentals and

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measures. Nowadays its famously also called Veterinary Ayurveda. The term Veterinary, refers to Veterinary medicine focus on animal health. Veterinarians (Dr./Experts) diagnose, treat, and prevent diseases in pets, livestock, wildlife and more. They also manage reproduction, nutrition, control animal diseases and ensure food supply support. The Veterinary Ayurveda is Ayurveda for Vet; though origin ancient, but is advance with regard to time. Ayurveda Veterinary Medicine are termed as AVM commonly when use by contemporary science experts and many physicians.

During various stages of evolution, we see the association between man and animal. Care for health of animals keeping them fit and healthy, have been aim of mankind for his direct and indirect interest. Domestication and care of animals is known since long, archeological evidence in Mohenjodaro, Harappa civilization. Aryans laid emphasis on protection of animals (cows and other) worshipped them as respect. Other civilization Babylonian, Hebrew, Arabs, Greek, etc. also have reference of veterinary science, somewhere they may have inter-connection. Before the advent of modern allopathic system of medicine, it seems possibility that the healing art was natural almost the same throughout the world. The term ethno-medicine (implied to human treatment) and ethno-veterinary medicine (in the context of animal treatment). In India, ethno-veterinary practices were in vogue since time immemorial. The Vedic literature, particularly starting from *Atharva ved* are repository of traditional medicine including prescriptions for treatment of animal diseases.<sup>10</sup>

In ancient time, there were use of

animals in wars beside farming, livestock. So, health of animal was priority not only to farmers or rears, but to kings - rulers. The great fights in history were fought on animal back, horses-elephants. And the animals injured were treated with Ayurveda herbs and medicine, even surgical process was well developed with regard to time. History of good production of milk and milk items since Krishna time also indicate the special daily care to cows' food and lifestyle.<sup>8</sup>

In history dated to Greek-Roman invasion, Alexander, there is mention in book Indica of Megasthenese. It is noted the Ashoka the great (300 BC) established the first and many developed Pasu Chikitsalaya or Animal Hospital (said to be in hundreds) where the trained experts were recruited. He encouraged cultivation of medicinal plants for production of good medicines. Chandragupta Maurya under Kautilya Chanakya have also laid down many important rules for care of animals.<sup>6</sup>

Hansdeva, a Jain scholar was highly mentioned on animals and birds' care. King Bhoja and beside there were many historical figures references. This science spread not in India, but to neighboring countries, the Boudha and other preachers, experts took too far and wide Asian and other countries.<sup>7</sup>

Salihotra (2-3 century BC) was first known Veterinarian of world. The word Saluri was used in ancient India to denote Veterinary experts/healers and derived in regards to Salihotra, the father of Veterinary science

Like human development this science also developed with time. Indians were animal

lovers and carers, and this scientific knowledge- Pasu Ayurveda is another glory of IKS – Indian Knowledge System, aptly *Bharatiya Gyan Parampara*.

***Pasu Ayurveda in Ancient Literature:***

The literature or matter related to Pasu Ayurveda is found, seen in Agni Purana, Matsya Purana and Garuda Purana text. In Arthasastra Kautilya described treatment for animals and birds. Epic like Mahabharata, Pandava brothers Nakula-Sahadeva described as specialists in treating cows and horses. Their text availability is not clear, further edition or lineage is mentioned of in later text.

Stone/rock manuscripts show development of veterinary science in Ashoka's road edicts. Beside many Sanskrit texts of IKS, like kavya shastra quotes of. There is reference in all the three primary text of Ayurveda (Brihat trayi) – Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Vagbhata's Ashtanga. Other Ayurveda text like Harita Samhita, Bhava Prakash and others has reference to treatment of animals – Pasu Ayurveda.

Specialized texts like Ashwa Shastra (on Horses), Gaja Shastra (on Elephant), Go Ayurveda (on Cows) etc came into writings. Many text lost or incomplete available as Manuscripts, its high time to be decoded printed. Palm leaf and other manuscripts are available in Nepal library, Oriental Institutes, Asiatic Society and other centers. Certain good works on MS are being done in Gujarat Ayurveda University (Jamnagar), National Institute of Ayurveda (Jaipur), etc. And with time the imperial science of Pasu Ayurveda can be explored further through its unexplored rich literatures.

Table-1. Books of Pasu Ayurveda Experts.<sup>9</sup>

<i>Book Name</i>	<i>Authors Name</i>
<i>Ashwa Shastra</i>	Prince Nakula
<i>Ashwayurveda</i>	Acharya Shalihotra
<i>Gaja-lakshana</i>	Brihaspati
<i>Gajayurveda</i>	Ācharya Palakapya
<i>Gaja Darpana</i>	Hemadri
<i>Gavyayurveda</i>	Prince Sahadeva
<i>Hastayurveda</i>	Ācharya Palakapya
<i>Manasollasa</i>	Someshwara
<i>Matanga-lila</i>	Nilakantha
<i>Mrugpada Shastra</i>	Hamsadeva
<i>Nakula Samhita</i>	Prince Nakula
<i>Shalihotra</i>	Bhoja
<i>Siddhopadesha Sangraha</i>	Gana

On contextualizing, we find classical texts of Pasu Chikitsa are mainly divided into four sections (sthana), namely Maharoga (major diseases), Kshudraroga (minor diseases), Shalya sthana (surgery) and Uttara sthana (breed, lifespan and other details).<sup>4</sup>

Diseases are discussed by different names with regard to practice and understanding of etiology and condition. For example, fever in different animals discussed by different names even, *e.g.* Pakal (in elephant), Alarka (in dog), Abhitap (in birds), Ishwar (in cows), etc.

*Few more salient features from texts :*

- Categories of pasu/animals explained of systematically.
- Type or breed of specific animals eg. Elephants' types mentioned in Gajashastra
- Many a common disease to its treatment discussed in detailed.
- Challenging diseases suggestive guidelines are said of.
- Wound treatment and surgery are discussed.
- With regard to season disease predominance

- and diet is discussed
- Sattva (Mind) – Behavioral patterns of animals discussed
  - Lifespan of animals are said, prognosis in condition is even said.

All this shows observative and intellectual intelligence of learned scholars/writers. With regard to lifestyle, they were even specific to mention sleeping place guidelines of animals.

Some insightful statement from verse shared as further interest-

‘Due to carrying heavy load, the horses have to work hard to move forward... and are prone to suffer respiratory disorders, become physically weak’. There are many such in Sanskrit languages.<sup>5</sup>

**Some common disease and herbs** to mention of: Skin disease – neem, tulsi, haldi, *Aloe vera*; mouth disease – peepali, gokshura, amlaki, haldi; krimi (worms), kushtha (skin diseases), infectious diseases are mentioned in details on basis of dosa predominance and specific herbs preparation in the texts.<sup>2</sup>

Tropical, oral, inhalation and suppository were used routes to administer drugs. (Intravenous route was not used in AVM). Process for preparing drugs were decoction, infusion, fermentation, paste-juice, confectionery, medicinal lump, and oils. Some special treatment modalities like lepa, massage, leech therapy, Panchakarma (Shodhana) treatment for rejuvenation detoxification, also said of. Dose adjustment in basic Ayurveda has been through patient constitution (prakruti), with regard to dosa Vata, Pitta and Kapha, age, agni (digestion

compatibility), stage severity of disease time, season, etc.

It's to be noted the core principle of Ayurveda are same whether treating humans or animals. The decline and shortcoming in last few centuries, could be due to foreign invasion leading to close way of learning, Sanskrit and Indian Knowledge. The present-day revival needs understanding the text and bringing into practice following the authentic principles of Ayurveda.

Despite all drawbacks, many traditional healers and families have continued the practice, preserved it, to name, Kerala Vaidya paramparas. There have been also regional excellence Mahawats (elephant keepers) in Tamil Nadu and other places. With traditional healers, the Dairy Development in Karnataka had integrated approach. Of regard to Ayurveda traditional practice and its effectivity, Kerala University of Health Sciences includes veterinary Ayurveda in courses. The incident of Lumpy skin disease epidemic (2022) and its improvement through a Vaidya effort, the Rajasthan government officially recognizing Ayurvedic medicine for treatment in Vets.<sup>1</sup> Today we have many Gaushala feeds cows with herbs like Satavari, Jeevanti, etc. as galactagogue. Then the Pancha-gavya product of Cow and its importance both way in treatment is recognized. New wildlife centre life Vantara (Jamnagar, Gujarat) implements Pashu Ayurveda extensively.

A work on herbs and its superior anti-infective activity in animal wounds published in Journal of Veterinary Medicine 2025 have drawn much interest. There has been a comprehensive study on 105 ethno-veterinary practices used for livestock and wildlife in a

comprehensive study in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal published in Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge (Vol. 20, July 2021). Few collaborative study showed promising results, Bacterial pyoderma in dog is very common in Kolkata, India. It causes severe discomfort to dogs. A study was planned to detect the occurrence and effect of commonly used antibiotics systemically and *Gandhaka Druti* topically for the canine pyoderma treatment of *Staphylococcus aureus* origin in Kolkata, West Bengal, India.<sup>3</sup>

Today's India sees growing integration of Pasu Ayurveda with conventional veterinary care through Government of Ayush initiatives. The One Health Revolution and scientific research in collaboration with DAHD (Dept of Animal Husbandry and Dairying) have been applaudable.

There is proposal for new curriculum to include Pasu Ayurveda in syllabus by board. An introduction in regular Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (B.V.Sc. & A.H.) 5.5-year undergraduate professional degree program focused on animal health, medical diagnostics, surgery, and live stock production. Many Vet. University are coming up with medicinal plants herbal garden as per need. In professional Ayurveda Doctor course, BAMS subject is upon inclusion in Electives by NCISM. Short courses are run by many Ayurveda institution.

From a practitioner point of view present practical scenario when pets are common and treated as family member, many an Ayurveda consultant would have in collaboration seen result with Ayurveda medicine. Experiences of many practicing Ayurveda doctors have been encouraging and should be further

documented. In field, there are many Ayurvedic products in veterinary use, from raw herbs to company products. Many pharma has come with good formulations, to name few Himalaya, Aimil, Vital Care, etc. has exclusive Veterinary divisions.

With regard to researches on plant drugs uses many are available. Many potential veterinary research studies are also available on databases. Animal study of herbal drugs to see effect herbal even indirectly proves safety and benefits.

Coming to a commoner point of view, Ayurveda is always closer to nature, and natural. And is widely used knowingly or unknowingly. Even Animals themselves use. If we observe, if dogs are unwell due to indigestion, they eat specific grasses to induce vomit. A curious observation was read, a monkey attach with camera, was cut little to bleed and left in wild to see what it does, interestingly it was found to rub to specific plant only which had wound healing property.

Today, beside basic there is increase Antibiotic Resistance which have been big concern in Veterinary, and AVM can be solution. Increase pollution and environmental changes, the diet-lifestyle and other guidelines could be inclusive.

Many a Scientific studies and practice validate herbs benefits, anti-inflammatory and anti-infective effect, supporting its wide uses. Review to analytical and clinical study is laudable.

*Few good Scientific Articles/Research publication related to Pasu Ayurveda :*

1. Acharya R. Research in Pashu Ayurveda:

Future prospect. *Journal of Drug Research in Ayurvedic Sciences*. (2023) Apr 1; 8(2): 95-6.

This study aims into future prospects of integration, standardization and validation of Pashu Ayurveda.

2. Dohmen L. Ayurveda for Animals. *Veterinary Clinics: Small Animal Practice*. 2025 Nov 1; 55(6): 1103-16.

This study prospects Veterinary Ayurveda into inclusion and mainstreaming.

3. Prasad GP, Narayana A. Ayurvedic treatment for cattle (Pasu Ayurveda) w.s.r. to Sahadeva Pasu Ayurveda. *J Indian Med Herit*. 2011; 41(2): 207-220.

This study with special reference, highlights, many simple effective formulations of Veterinary Ayurveda.

4. Prasad RD, Prasad RJ, Shrivastav RK, Charmode N, Mamidpelliwar PM, Shrivastav OP, Prasad SR, Tamboli U, Banga S, Nazeruddin GM, Shaikh YI. A review on concept of veterinary biotechnology and livestock products in medicine. *ES Food and Agroforestry*. 2023 Oct 31;14: 1004.

This study explores intersection of modern biotechnology and Veterinary Ayurveda.

5. Schuetze C. India's Ayurvedic veterinary medicine-ancient medicine to modern boom. *Proceedings of Vet Fest*. 2020.

This study highlights ethno-Veterinary history and future prospects advancement of AVM.

Pasu Ayurveda and in its specific as for animal type, is indeed a super speciality branch of Ayurveda. There are many documented text and research studies which have provided benefitting reply, so, the development through Pasu Ayurveda will be beneficial for future. The integration in healthcare is welcome even from ecology, environment point of view. Need of time is to further research and establish rather re-establish many a principle and treatment laid down in Veterinary Ayurveda. Further advancement, standardization and revival of basic principles, concepts in understanding and practice, offers this traditional equally modern, Indian Medical Science as the hope forward. And its definite with evidence by adopting Pasu Ayurveda we can improve the quality of animal life, protect them and in turn human development progresses.

*Author contribution :*

Author 1 drafting & final writing.  
Author 2,3 Proof reading & guidance.

*Conflict of interest :*  
None.

*Source of financial support :*  
None.

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Author 1 (Dr. Jayesh Thakkar), expresses deep gratitude to all mentors and colleagues in Faculty of Ayurveda, Basic Principles Dept. Parul University. And heartfully dedicates this

work to pets of his patients whom he had the privilege to treat in collaboration. Special mention to, Shera, Simba, Pixie, Pablo, Adi... Their resilience and good response to Ayurveda treatment provided the primary inspiration for this review and further work in Veterinary Ayurveda.

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