ABSTRACT

The word '*Veda*' originates from the *Sanskrit* root '*Vid*' means 'to know' with the suffix '*ac*'. The word '*Veda*' literally means knowledge. It refers to the sacred, religious and revealed knowledge. *Veda* in its wider sense denotes the literature of a particular epoch extending over a long period of nearly two thousand years.

There are four *Vedas*, namely the *Ṛgveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. The *Ṛgveda* was the earliest among all dealing primarily with religious ritual and worship of Gods and Goddess. The *Sāmaveda* and the *Yajurveda* deal with prayers and religious ritual. Though the *Atharvaveda* was somewhat different from others in content yet the *Vedic* literature could set up a religious base which is not seen in any literature of the world. As such some scholars have come across four broad categories of the same—*Mantras, Brāhmaṇa, Āraṇyaka* and *Upaniṣad*. In the first category, the word *Mantra* refers to the *Saṁhitā* (from '*saṁ*-together, and *hitā*-put'), which means, literally, a collection of hymns or *Mantras* used in the sacrifices. The second category known as *Brāhmaṇa* contains discussion in details of the ritualistic performance, theosophical matters, mystical significance of the separate sacrificial rites and ceremonies along with the explanation of the *Mantras*. The scholars include *Āraṇyaka* (Forest text) and *Upaniṣad* (secret teaching) into this category.

Next, the general characteristics of the *Veda Saṁhitās* are discussed.

The *Ṛgveda* is the most important among all the four collections or *Saṁhitā,* being indisputably considered as the oldest and the most detailed in nature. The *Mantras* from *Ṛgveda* have also found place in other *Vedas*. The chapters in *Ṛgveda* are divided in two different ways these are, *Aṣṭaka*, *Adhyāya*, *Varga*, *Mantra* and *Maṇḍala*, *Anuvāka*, *Sūkta* and *Ṛk*.

The *Sāmaveda*, a song book of *Vedic* rituals is next in sanctity and liturgical importance to the *Ṛgveda*. According to *Patañjali*, there are one thousand schools in the *Sāmaveda*, but at present only three recensions, namely *Kauthumiya, Rāṇāyaṇīya* and *Jaiminiya* recensions are available to us. According to *Kauthumiyaśākhā, Sāmaveda* consists of two parts- *Purvārchika* and *Uttarārchika*.

Yajurveda means the knowledge of sacrifice or sacrificial texts or sacrificial formulae. It is divided into two distinct *Saṁhitās* called *Śukla Yajurveda* or *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* and the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* or *Traittirīya Saṁhitā*. It consists of two traditions—*Brahma* and *Āditya*. *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* represents the *Brahma* tradition and the *Śukla Yajurveda* represents the *Āditya* tradition.

The *Atharvaveda* is completely different from the other three *Vedas* and is next in importance to the *Ṛgveda* with regard to history and sociology. The other three *Vedas* show the path to attain goals of the other world through various religious rituals and *Yajñas*, whereas the *Atharvaveda* shows the path to attain goals of both this and the other world. The *Atharvaveda* has religious, social, educational, scientific and economic importance, because it contains subjects related to living, food habits, medicine and entertainment of the contemporary Indian people.

After the *Saṁhitās* or *Mantras* there stand the *Brāhmaṇas*. These are the second great class of works that belong to the *Vedas*. The word *Brāhmaṇa* (neutral) means primarily an 'explanation or expression of a learned priest, a doctor of sacrificial science on some point of the ritual'. Not only the four main *Saṁhitās*, but also each *śākhā* or recension of them possesses one or more *Brāhmaṇas*. Two *Brāhmaṇas* namely *Aitareya* and the *Kauṣitaki*, also known as *Śāṁkhāyana*, are attached to the *Ṛgveda*. The *Sāmaveda* includes the *Tāṇḍya* or *Pañchaviṁśa* or *Prauḍha Brāhmaṇa*, the *Sadviṁśa* which includes *Adbhuta*, *Jaiminīya* or *Talavakāra*, *Satyayana Ārṣeya* and *Vaṁśa*. Another *Brāhmaṇa* attached to the *Tāṇḍya* School is the *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa*. The Black *Yajurveda* has the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*. To the White *Yajurveda* is attached the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* is a kin to the *Atharvaveda Saṁhitā*.

The word *Āraṇyaka* means the text which is delivered in the forest or to be read in the forest. *Āraṇyakas* were meant to give a preliminary training to those who aspired for relief from the bond of birth and rebirth. It is intended mainly for the *Vānaprasthis* only. The main contents of these *Āraṇyakas* are the sacrificial mysticism, sacrificial symbolism and the priestly philosophy. The *Āraṇyakas* are given over to secret explanations of the allegorical meaning of the ritual and to discussion of the internal, meditative meaning of the sacrifice, as contrasted to its actual, outward performance. Many *Āraṇyakas* are lost and only six are available at present: *Aitareya*, *Śāṁkhāyana*, *Talavakāra*, *Taittirīya*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Maitrāyaniya Āraṇyaka*.

The *Upaniṣads* are generally the last portions of the *Āraṇyakas*. Of the existing *Upaniṣads*, those which are stated to belong to any particular portion of the *Vedas*, all form part of the *Brāhmaṇas* and often of their *Āraṇyaka* section, except one. This exception is the *Īśa Upaniṣad*. It forms the last chapter of the *Śukla Yajurveda*. The *Vedas* fall into two distinct portions based on their theme: one deals with performance of rituals (*karma kāṇḍa*) and the other is mainly devoted to knowledge (*jñāna-kāṇḍa*). The *Upaniṣads* come under the *Jñāna-kāṇḍa*. The word '*Upanisad*' is derived from the prefixes *upa* (near) and *ni* (perfectly). The verbal root '*sad*' is used in three senses namely to shatter, to attain and to destroy. Thus the word means the knowledge of Reality. The *Upaniṣads* are also called *Vedānta*, literally meaning 'the end of the *Veda'*. We have different *Upaniṣads* connected to the four *Vedas*. Conventionally, fourteen are considered as the principal *Upaniṣads*.

Some scholars also categorise the *Vedas* as— *Saṁhitā*, *Brāhmaṇa* and *Sūtra*. *Saṁhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* have already been discussed. *Sūtra* literature or *Sūtra* period is the connecting link between the *Vedic* and post *Vedic* or later *Saṁhitā* literature. The *Sūtras* were the manuals of instruction in brief but definite language. The word '*Sūtra*' means a string. The *Sūtra* literature contains some works which are nothing but some uninterrupted string of short sentences, put into the most concise form as per as practicable.

The important works of the *Sūtra* literature are the *Vedāṅgas* or the parts of the *Veda* that the auxiliary sciences of the *Veda*, which are divided into six parts and are necessary for reading, understanding and proper sacrificial employment of the *Veda*. The six *Vedāṅgas* are *Śikṣā* (phonetics), *Kalpa* (ritual), *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Chandas* (metrics) and *Jyotiṣa* (astronomy).

Besides these, there are some other secondary works which are not generally considered as *Vedic* literature. There are the '*Anukramanis*' or the indexes containing the list of contents of the *Vedic Saṁhitās* with reference to the sages, the deities and the meter.

The *Atharvaveda* is the last of the *Vedas*. It consists of spells and charms prevalent at its time, and portrays a clearer picture of the *Vedic* society. In the *Vedic* literature, the *Atharvaveda* has other titles *Amṛtaveda*, *Ātmaveda*, *Aṁgiroveda*, *Atharvāṅgirasa*, *Bhṛgvāṅgirasa*, *Kṣatra*, *Bhaiṣajya*, *Mahīveda* and *Chandoveda*. The *Atharvaveda*

presents its own name as *Atharvāngirasaḥ*. The *Atharvaveda* is also addressed as *Brahmaveda* after *Brahmā*. The *Atharvaveda* is compiled in 20 *Kāṇḍas*—books, comprising 750 *Sūktas*—*Vedic* hymns, which in turn have about 6000 *Mantras*. About one sixth of these mantras are in prose, the rest in the various *Chandas* related to the *Vedas*.

Brahmā is the *Ṛtvija* of the *Atharvaveda*. The two main post-*Saṁhitās* texts associated with the *Atharvaveda* are the *Vaitāna Sūtra* and the *Kauśikasūtra*. The *Atharvaveda* has one *Brāhmaṇa* that is *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*. It has no any *Āraṇyaka*. There are three main *Upaniṣads* of the *Atharvaveda*, these are *Praśna*, *Muṇḍka* and *Māṇḍukya*. *Śaunakiya Chaturādhyāyikā*, *Māṇḍūki Śikṣā*, *Atharvaveda Prātiśākhyasūtra*, *Atharva Prātiśākhya* are *Prātiśākhya* of the *Atharvaveda*. *Vaitāna Śrautasūtra*, *Kauśika Gṛhyasūtra* and *Paṭhināsī Dharmasūtra* are *Atharvavedic Kalpasūtras*.

The contents of the *Atharvaveda* appear to be complementary to those of the *Ṛgveda* and are very important for proper understanding of the *Vedic* religion and the culture. The *Atharvaveda* is generally known for its magical charms, which are broadly divided into two parts—Black and White. The contents of the *Atharvaveda* can be classified into fourteen heads—Charms to cure diseases and possession by demons (*bhaiṣajyāni*), Prayer for long life and health (*āyuṣyāni*), Imprecations against demons, sorcerers and human enemies (*abhicārikāni* and *kṛtyapariharānāni*), Charms pertaining to the various kinds of relationship with women (*strīkarmāṇi*), Charms to secure harmony in domestic, social and political spheres (*sāṁmanasyāni*), Charms pertaining to the royalty (*rājakarmāṇi*), Prayer and imprecations in the interest of the *Brāhmaṇas* (*brāhmaṇyāni*), Charms to secure prosperity and freedom from danger (*pauṣṭikāni*), Charms in expiation of sin (*prāyaścittāni*), Cosmogonic and theosophic hymns, Ritualistic and general hymns, the books dealing with individual themes (books 13-18), the twentieth book and the Kuntāpa hymns.

According to a tradition represented by the *Charaṇavyūha*, *Pāṇini*, *Patañjali*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Atharvaveda* has nine schools. They are *Paippalāda*, *Tauda*, *Mauda*, *Śaunaka*, *Jājala*, *Jalada*, *Brahmaveda*, *Devadarśa*, *Chāraṇavaidya*. Of these, the text of only two—*Śaunaka* and *Paippalāda* are available.

Āchārya Sāyaṇa had written commentary on the entire *Atharvaveda*. R.T.H. Griffith, W.D. Whitney and M. Bloomfield translated into English. C.R. Lanmann edited it in

1905. A. Ludwig and J. Grill translated some of the text of *Atharvaveda* into German. Its Hindi translations can be found by Śrī Śrīpāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara and Śrī Jayadeva Śarmā Vidyālaṁkāra.

The *Atharvaveda* ranks quite high among the *Vedas*. It has cultural, philosophical, spiritual and sociological significance. It presents a detailed discussion of the culture and civilization. It is replete with valuable material on all the aspects of culture. The chief characteristic of *Atharvaveda* lies in the variety of its subject-matter, enunciation of broadest to minutest elements and the admixture of the practical and the academic.

The objective of the present study is to find an account of the cravings for wellbeing and welfare of mankind as found in the *Atharvaveda*. A study of the healing devices and a survey of the medicinal plants is also an added objective of this study.

In the second chapter we discussed about humane welfare and wellbeing craved in the *Atharvaveda*. The *Ṛgveda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Sāmaveda* are described only in ritualistic terms but non-ritualistic thought has creeped up in the *Atharvaveda*. It is the first Indian text dealing with medicine and spells. It consists chiefly of a variety of spells and incantation, intended to curse as well as bless. In the *Atharvaveda* we find charms of a positive character to obtain benefits, happy family life, health and longevity, protection on journey, all beneficiary of human life.

Welfare is a typical term that denotes various kinds of social spending (in the form of assistance for the underprivileged) allocated by government following industrialization in some nations. 'Welfare' is defined as 'providing assistance to those who are otherwise unable to feed, house or cloths themselves'. It includes redistributive policies and programs that enable the disadvantaged to reach a minimal level of existence within a national state. Welfare may come in various ways—housing assistance, income supplementation, in-kind goods and service provision, and public education. However, the programs and policies to provide these aspects of a minimal human existence may vary contextually. Some governments provide more generous and comprehensive welfare programs while some other countries have less generous and comprehensive welfare programs. Human welfare is a very broad and universal term incorporating many aspects of human life.

The second chapter of the study aims at presenting various areas of human welfare and wellbeing craved in the *Atharvaveda*. In the *Atharvavedic* society, people prayed and seek blessings for welfare for harvest, grain stores, ploughing of the field, sowing the seed, good business and even for success at dice. There were charms related to welfare of cattle. Education for knowledge of self or spiritual knowledge was also emphasized for human welfare as it helps man to attain knowledge of self or the *Brahman*. Educational welfare was related to the qualities and duties of the students, which was dealt with in the *Atharvaveda* in the *Brahmacāryasūkta*. The *Atharvaveda* also deals with penance and initiation with a view to promoting human welfare, national progress, strength and vigour. A celibate was charged with an immense responsibility to ensure national and public good.

The *Atharvaveda* used words like *Vṛtāvṛtā*, *Abhīvāra*, *Āvṛtā*, *Parīvṛtā* to denote environment. Apart from other *Vedas,* the *Atharvaveda* specially has dealt in detail about various aspects of environment and showed more concern for ecology. Holy magic for securing wellbeing, and spells for causing various types of harms to the adversary are also found in the *Atharvaveda*. There are hymns of cosmogenic and theosophic character, hymns addressed to the earth (*Bhūmisūkta* or *Pṛthivīsūkta*), water (in *Paippalāda Saṁhitā* of *Atharvaveda*), air, *Ākāśa* or ether and for the glorification of the Sun, to *Kāl* (time) to *Prān* that is the life principle.

The knowledge about the origin and significance of plants can be traced out from *Vedic* literature. Plants are considered as the saviours of humanity in the *Vedic* literature. The *Atharvaveda* mentions that the plants and the herbs possess qualities of all deities and have the power to cure diseases and destroy poisonous effect of the atmosphere. The *Atharvaveda* talks about the relation of plants with earth. The *Atharvaveda* prays for continuous growth of herbs. Plants were studied as a part of environment and their protection.

The sacrifice or the *Yajña* is considered as an important concept of *Vedic* philosophy. *Yajña* helps in minimizing air pollution, in increasing crop yield, in protecting plants from diseases, as well as in providing a disease free, pure and energized environment for all. It implies that our ancient texts are much more relevant today because science alone cannot be successful to save human beings from the horrible impact of environmental pollution. Thus, the welfare element is very much clearly evident in the *Vedic* literature in general and particularly in the *Atharvaveda*.

The *Atharvaveda* mentions about the establishment of the institutions *Sabhā* and *Samiti* for the welfare of the public. The *Atharvaveda* considers *Sabhā* as a wider power and not as a local institution. According to *Sāyaṇa*, decisions are taken in a *Sabhā* on the basis of majority which cannot be denied. Showing the importance of *Sabhā* and *Samiti*, the *Atharvaveda* describes the *Sabhā* as *Nariṣṭā*. *Nariṣṭā* may mean something conducting to public good. The *Atharvaveda* states that the members of the *Sabhā* (*Sabhāsadaḥ*) of *Yama* were *Rājānaḥ* and who shared the sixteenth part of the merit accumulated from the good deeds of the people. Though there are some evidences that *Sabhā* and *Samiti* are the same. But there is an *Atharvavedic* passage which clearly mentions that the *Sabhā* and *Samiti* were two different bodies. *Sāyaṇa*, in his commentary on *Atharvaveda*, has explained the meaning of the word *Samiti* as *Saṁgrāmīṇajanasabhā* suggesting that *Samiti* was an assembly of the people which was called in times of the war. The *Atharvavedic* passages seem to confirm that *Samiti* was a political institute.

The *Atharvavedic* society was ruled by a systematic government. The king was regarded as the originator or supreme head of these institutions who was selected by the king makers known as *Rājakṛtaḥ*. These kingmakers were the representatives of the common people. An *Atharvavedic* passage indicates that kingship in *Vedic* times depended upon the acceptability of the king by the *Viśaḥ* that is the subject. Passages from the *Atharvaveda* and the *Ṛgveda* also confirm that the members of the *Sabhā* and *Samiti* required harmony and peace among themselves. The reference of common people in the same group of king intelligentsia leads to the fact that in that period common people got equal place in politics. The king is the maintainer and protector of his subjects. It was the duty of the members to observe the rules of the assembly and protect its dignity. Discussion and debates were held on various public issues for public welfare in the *Sabhā* and *Samiti*.

The main function of the *Sabhā* was to ensure justice. The most important function of the *Samiti* was the election of the king. It was represented by all the sections of the society. It undertook for discussion all matters pertaining to state administration. It kept safety and prosperity of the nation and its people as the utmost goal. Besides *Sabhā* and *Samiti*, the *Atharvaveda* mentions another institution named as *Āmantraṇa*. It took up counselling at higher level. Thus there were three forms of national organization these were *Sabhā*, *Samiti*, and *Āmantraṇa*.

The *Atharvaveda* mentioned the seven *Saṁsad*. This shows that the central government was divided into seven departments, each having one separate minister. But the names of the departments were not mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. Thus it can be seen that the ancient political system had a welfare system for the common people. Their problems were taken note of seriously and were taken care of through the institutions like *Sabhā, Samiti, Āmantraṇa* and *Saṁsad*.

Women are accorded great respect in *Vedas*. The *Atharvaveda* held the education of girls important by saying that girls too should train themselves as students and only then enters into married life. The *Brahmacārya Sūkta* specifically emphasizes that girls should receive the same level of training as boys. Parents should gift their daughter a dowry of intellectuality and power of knowledge when she leaves for husband's home. When girls ignore external objects and develops foresight and vibrant attitude through power of knowledge, she becomes provider of wealth of skies and earth. The *Atharvaveda* emphasizes that the knowledge and noble qualities of the bride may please everyone at her husband's home. It also regards women to be the protector of children, having definite knowledge, worth thousands of prayers and impressing all directions. The women are pure, sacred and *Yajñīya* (as respected as *Yajña*); worth being worship, worth being served, of great character and scholarly. The *Atharvaveda* ensures that women should be kept away from sorrow and diseases. The *Atharvaveda* equalizes man with woman in regard to knowledge.

The *Atharvaveda* comprises a good number of charms pertaining to the women. There are love charms aimed at men exercised on behalf, hymns which belong to the peaceful sphere of conjugal life as well, charms to secure birth of a child and charms to protect the embryo of the womb.

The *Atharvaveda* is such a text which may be considered to be dedicated to the welfare of the people. It discusses various problems related to the health, their remedies, long life. In the *Atharvaveda*, a large number of charms are directed towards expelling demonic beings. The *Atharvaveda* appeals to the plant *Ajaśṛṅgi* to drive *Rākṣasas, Apsaras* and *Gandharvas*. The *Rakṣas* and fits are driven out of a possessed person with an amulet made from ten different kinds of holy wood.

Āyuṣyāni hymns of the *Atharvaveda* are supposed to be capable of bestowing long life and good health. These hymns are similar to the medicinal hymns of the *Atharvaveda*.

There are prayers for the cure of diseases, exemption from death, secure life unto the ideal old age with good health, liberation from 100 or 101 kinds of death and for protection from all sorts of diseases. The *Āyuṣya* hymns gives special prominence to *Agni* including other divinities.

The *Atharvaveda* also referred to the use of some amulets which are considered as life-bestowing and life protecting. It is recommended that an amulet of pearls and gold secures and lengthens one's life without any disease. The sacred girdle (*Mekhalā*) is also considered as an *Āyuṣyam*. *Agni* is adored for salve (*Āñjana*), which has the power of protecting life and limbs, destroying various diseases. It is said that one who bears *Āñjana* is protected from curse, sorcery, burning pain and *Viṣkandha*. Likewise, the *Atharvaveda* also refers to *Āñjanamaṇi, Śaṅkhamaṇi, Paraṇamaṇi* in order to ensure prosperity, long life, virility. Moreover, to make their life lengthened the *Vedic Āryans* used '*Rakṣāsūtra*' in the right hand. For the same purpose, an amulet of *Jaṅgiḍa* is also used.

The *Atharvaveda* also contains a number of spells for the restoration of harmony. These stand mid way between the expiatory formulas and benedictions and are known as the *Sāṁmanasyāni Sūktani*. These hymns are used to achieve peace and harmony in the family affected by discord as well as in preserving harmony in an assembly.

The *Pauṣṭikāni* hymns include prayers and rites about house, home, field, grain, river, rain, cattle, horses, trading, gambling, journey, returning, serpents, vermin, wealth, progeny, and exemption and protection from calamity and danger. In this class, benedictory stanzas are found for the uplifment of the farmer, the shepherd, the merchant, the gambler. It consist more than one fifth of the whole *Sūktas* of the *Atharvaveda* excluding the *Sūktas* of the 20th book. The *Atharvaveda* also contains prayer for building a new house. There are some exorcisms against serpents in the *Atharvaveda*. The rest of the hymns of this class can be divided into two classes, one class of which is to procure health, wealth and prosperity and other is to ward off danger and calamity. An amulet of *Udumbara* tree is seen used to secure prosperity (xix.31). *Anumati* (vii.20), *Sinīvātī* (vii.46), *Kuhū* (vii.47), *Rākā* (vii.48) are prayed for wealth and offspring.

In the third chapter diseases mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* and their accounts have been discussed.

The *Atharvaveda* depicts God of Rain, *Varuṇa* as creator as well as protector from all common diseases such as dropsy (*Jalodara*). It describes that man suffers from ailment due to his falsehood. Moreover, it mentions that diseases are also caused by demons. However, the *Atharaveda* is common with the other three *Vedas* in religious elements.

It is a peculiarity of the charms of the *Atharvaveda* that they have grouped together a variety of unrelated diseases, have not drawn a line of demarcation between the cause of diseases and the possession by demons, have used symbolism to play an important part in the cure of a disease and the medicine recommended is mostly in the form of amulets derived from the vegetable kingdom. A large number of diseases, both major and minor, have been mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*, but somewhere they are in clear terms and somewhere vaguely. Classification of the diseases based on etiological factors is not found in *Atharvaveda*. It also did not mention about the symptoms of the diseases.

In our study we have found mentions of a few common diseases in the *Atharvaveda* along with their healings which includes *Takman* (fever), headache, and cough, jaundice, *Balāsa* (muscle disease), pain (colic), dropsy, paralysis, heart-disease, diarrhoea, consumption, leprosy, abscesses, scrofulous swelling, wounds and fractures, flow of blood, poison of all kinds, worms and some hereditary diseases. The *Atharvaveda* not only described about the human diseases but also about the diseases of cattle.

Alaji: *Alaji* is the name of a disease in the *Atharvaveda* (ix.8.20). Its symptoms are burning and paining eye. They are small pimples of red colour.

Amīvā: The *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* mentions about the disease *Amīvā*. The word *Amīvā* has its root in the word ‘am’ which means pain or grief. In the *Atharvaveda*, *Amīvā* is associated with the committed sins attached with the body.

Apacit: The word *Apacit* is mentioned several times in the *Atharvaveda*. The commentator *Sāyaṇa* directly identifies the *Apacits* with the *Gaṇḍamālā* meaning scrofulous swellings of the gland of the neck.

Apvā: *Apvā* is described in the AV.iii.2.5 and ix.8.9. The commentator *Sāyaṇa* commented on *Apvā* as '*Pāpadevatā*'. According to the etymologist *Yāska*, '*apvā*' means a disease.

Atīsāra: The *Sāyaṇa*'s commentary of the *Atharvaveda* mentions about the *Atīsāra*.

Āśarīka: A disease *Āśarīka* is mentioned in the AV.xix.34.10. Its name is not found anywhere else. The commentator regards it as a name of specific disease which means 'wholly injurious'. Bloomfield calls it 'breaking diseases'.

Āsrāva: It denotes a disease mentioned in the AV.i.2.4, ii.3.2, vi.44.2. The commentator explains it *Mūtrātisāra* 'difficulty of urinating' or 'painful urination'. Bloomfield considers it as diarrhea.

Balāsa: In this disease, the bones and joints dissolve (AV.6.14.1). Its causes may be love, disgust and heart disease (9.8). *Sāyaṇa* described it as *Yakṣmā* (AV.19.34) *balasya asanakartāram balakṣyakārakam*. *Balāsa* is the brother of *Takman*.

Durṇāma: This disease is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* and *Ṛgveda*. According to *Yāska* in the *Nirukta* it is a *Krimi*.

Grāha: *Grāha* the seizer is the name of a disease in the *Śa.Br* (iii.5.3.25; 6.1.25). In the *Atharvaveda* it perhaps means 'paralyses' of the thigh.

Grāhi: The word appears in the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. Its meaning is 'to seize'. It is stated as a female demon of disease and sleep (*swapna*) is considered to be her son.

Hṛdyota and *Hariman*: The other internal diseases *Hṛdyota* and *Hariman* are described in the *Atharvaveda*. *Hṛdyota* means heart-affliction or chest pain and *Hariman* means yellowness and naturally suggests jaundice.

Hrūḍu: The *Atharvaveda* contains the word *Hrūḍu*. Its meaning is unknown but is applied to mean *Takman* in the *Atharvaveda* (i.25.2, 3). So it can be considered as a type of fever. This disease makes the life agonized by heating the whole body and thus punishes the sinner. It turns the whole body of the person into yellow colour and therefore, it is known as the God of sickly yellow.

Jalodara: This terrible disease is mentioned in *Sāyaṇa*'s commentary of the *Atharvaveda*. It is caused by the wrath of *Varuṇa*. In this disease the entire blood of the body is changed into water. For the cure of this disease, sincere prayers are offered to God *Varuṇa*.

Jambhu: In the *Atharvaveda* the word *Jambhu* is a disease or a demon of disease. *Sāyaṇa* explain *Jambha* is a evil sorcerer or a lockjaw.

Jāyānya: This disease is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. There are variant forms of the name of a disease. *Sāyaṇa* also considers it as a disease in *Atharvaveda*.vii.76.3. He explains it as '*Kṣayaroga*' in the next stanza (vii.76.4).

Kāhābāha: This disease is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. It is a rumbling noise in the bowels.

Kāsa: The disease *Kāsa* is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. This word is onomatopoetic for cough. It is closely associated with *Takman*. With headache, she is looked as one of the harmful effects of thunder and lightning. The resemblance of deep hackling sound of cough with thunder justifies its sympathetic and symbolic association with *Takman* and thunder and lightning.

Kilāsa and *Palita*: The two kinds of skin diseases, *Kilāsa* and *Palita*, 'white leprosy' are mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* (i.23 and i.24) and the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*. In the *Atharvaveda*, the word *Palita* indicates a grey and white (*śukla*, *śveta*) coloured spots on all over the skin, closely related to *Kilāsa* and is perhaps merely a characterization of it.

Kṛmi: *Kṛmi* is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. It designates any type of parasitic and crawling vermin which enters either man or animal. It is divided into two basic types: those which are seen, that is visible, diurnal and those which are unseen that is invisible, and nocturnal.

Kṣetriya: The disease *Kṣetriya* is mentioned several times in the *Atharvaveda*, *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā* and the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*. The commentators of the *Atharvaveda* agree it to be a hereditary disease.

Kunakhāni: This disease is mentioned only once in *Atharvaveda* along with its cure. It is related to the nails. This disease causes the nails to fall. The *Atharvaveda* mentions that the plant *Apāmārga* has the curing ability of this disease.

Nirāla: *Nirāla* occurs once in the *Atharvaveda,* where *Sāyaṇa* regards it as the name of a disease. Bloomfield explains it as two words, understanding *nir* as an elliptical imperative, '(go) out', with the vocative *āla,* a kind of weed.

Pāman: *Pāman* occurs in the *Atharvaveda* as the name of a skin disease. The derivative adjective, *Pāmana*, 'suffering from skin disease', is found in the later *Saṃhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. It is probably a coetaneous eruption or scab consequent on fever is meant.

Pṛṣṭya-āmaya: This disease is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. It denotes a pain in the sides or ribs. *Sāyaṇa* explains it as a wholly injurious.

Pra-mota: This disease '*Pra-mota*' is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* (ix.8.4). The St. Petersburg Dictionary explains the word '*Pramotam*' as a certain disease. Bloomfield also thinks it to be an adjective meaning 'dumb'.

Rapa: *Rapa* is a disease which is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* and *Ṛgveda*. It was a bodily affliction which often attacked the foot.

Rāja-yakṣmā: *Rāja-yakṣmā*, 'royal sickness', is mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* (i.161.1) and several times later on. Bloomfield suggests 'king's evil', or syphilis, as the sense, but this is not probable.

Śiraroga: This disease is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. *Śirṣakti, Śīrṣāmaya, Karṇaśūla* and *Vilohita* are other head diseases.

Śroṇa: The name of this disease gets mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* as Aśloṇa. *Sāyaṇa* states the word *Aśroṇaḥ* instead of *Aśloṇa* in *he deva tvāṁ uddiśya asroṇaḥ sroṇākhyavyādhiviśesaḥ*.

Saṁskandha: *Saṁskandha* (having the shoulders together) is mentioned as a disease with *Viṣkandha* in the *Atharvaveda*. *Sāyaṇa* explains *saṁnataḥ saṁlagno bhavati sa rogaḥ saṁskandhaḥ*.

Takman: This disease is repeatedly mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*, but later on not known under this name. *Takman* is the name of the fever imagined as a demon in the *Atharvaveda*. Different types of *Takman* are mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*.

Unmādita: *Unmādita* or madness is a disease mentioned at the *Atharvaveda*. According to *Sāyaṇa* it is sin of God.

Vidratha: *Vidratha* denotes a disease 'abscesses', in the *Atharvaveda*. It is a tumore.

Viklindu: *Viklindu* is the name of a disease in the *Atharvaveda*. It is mentioned in the verses where it is said mostly about the sterile cow, cow's disease. However, it is also mentioned that it may occur both in the cattle and the owner.

Vilohita: *Vilohita* is the name of a disease mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. By this word Bloomfield means 'flow of blood from the nose'.

Viśara: *Viśara* is found as the name of a disease in the *Atharvaveda*. It is a tearing pain.

Viṣa (*poison*): *Atharvaveda* gives a vital place to the treatment of *Viṣa*. It can be understood from some of *Atharvaveda* that the treatment of *Viṣa* was ancient and traditional.

Viṣkandha: *Viṣkandha* occurs several times in the *Atharvaveda* and *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*. As remedies against it a lead amulet or hemp (AV.ii.4.5) or a salve (AV.iv.9.5) or the *Jaṅgiḍa* plant are recommended for use (AV.ii.4.1.5, xix.34.5; 35.1). Bloomfield thinks that it is rather the name of a demon.

Visalpaka: The disease *Visalpaka* is found in the AV.vi.127, ix.8, xix.44.2. According to *Sāyaṇa* it is a kind of boil. Bloomfield renders it neuralgia.

Viṣūchī (*Cholera*): This disease is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*, *Ṛgveda*. This term means cholera. It is also known as *Visucica*. *Soma* and *Rudra* are recommended for the relief from this disease. Moreover the plants like *Yava, Durvā, Darbha, Kuṣṭha* are also prescribed as having medicinal qualities for curing this disease.

Yakṣmā: *Yakṣmā* in the *Atharvaveda* frequently denotes 'illness'. A hundred kinds of *Yakṣmā* are referred to in the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*. (xii.97) *Yakṣmā* causes disintegration

of the limbs, fever in the limbs, heartache and pain in all parts of the body. The AV.iii.11.1 mentions about the unknown *Yakṣmā* (*Ajñāta Yakṣmā*) and the *Rājayakṣmā*. The external diseases like broken bones, fractures, wounds were discussed in the AV. 2.3; 4.12; 6.44; 6.109.

In the fourth chapter the researcher endeavours to describe the magico-religious healing devices found in the *Atharvaveda*. Some healing devices like the amulets, charms come under magico-religious devices. In order to have a clear idea about this, it is essential to define magic, religion and magico-religious devices.

Magic: The word 'magic' is understood by Gourdriaan and Gupta as the performance of certain ritual acts and the belief in the efficacy of such acts—with a view to making use of certain natural laws of cause and effect which are supposed to exist, in order to enforce some results in the mundane sphere desired by the performer or his instructor. This also includes exorcism or the compelling of benevolent Gods and spirits (especially *Yakṣas* and *Yakṣiṇis*), excluding 'witchcraft'. Magic is the practice of malevolent arts which involve the use of religio-magical power, with perhaps a secondary idea of the use of private arts. These practices are meant to benefit not the community as a whole but a single individual. If it is asked what elements of primitive institutions correspond most nearly to later conceptions of magic, it can be said that the forbidden and private arts are the prototypes of the magic of later times. The uncivilised people universally regard death and disease to be caused by so-called magic. That is they attributed these to some kind of non-natural causes. After this, the rituals and beneficent rites were originally regarded as magical. In the present days, magic represent itself to most of the people of the world as a thing of gradual growth. In the later periods, the magicians were associated with demons—the spirits of the dead, or of animals, or unattached spirits—upon whose cooperation the powers of magicians are often now held to depend.

Religion: The term 'religion' is derived from the Latin word 'religio'. However, its ultimate origins are obscure. According to the philologist Max Muller, the root of the English word 'religion', the Latin 'religio' was originally used to mean only 'reverence for God or the Gods, carefully pondering of divine things, piety'. What is called ancient religion today, they would have called it only law. The *Sanskrit* word '*Dharma*' is sometimes translated as 'religion'. The typical dictionary definition of religion refers to

a ‘belief in or the worship of, a God or Goddess or the service and worship of God or the supernatural’. There are a number of theories regarding the subsequent origins of organised religious practices. According to anthropologists John Monaghan and Peter Just, many of the great world religions appear to have begun as some sort of revitalization movements. These religions developed as the vision of an influential prophet captures the imaginations of the people. It happens when they cannot find comprehensive answer to some of their problems provided by everyday beliefs.

Magico-Religious Devices: Both the terms magic and religion are intertwined and therefore difficult to distinguish. Some scholars/societies have the tendency to mix the two concepts and others give a sharp distinction between them. The meaning of both the terms has greatly changed in the course of their existence. Religion seems to have meant originally magical spell. An examination of the ideas of primitive people shows that there is a widely found notion of a power which manifests itself both in religion and magic. Anthropologists have realized that in many primitive societies a fairly well-defined idea of magico-religious power exists.

In the *Atharvaveda*, there are indirect mentions of magico religious power or device. The amulets and charms mentioned in it definitely come under magico-religious devices. In the *Atharvavedic* period, many diseases were cured by using amulets made of plants which are to be used with particular *Mantras*.

Abhivarta: The *Abhivarta* is tied on the body for overcoming and overriding the enemy. It kills rivals and thus leads the wearer to royalty. *Savitar* and *Soma* strengthened and exalted this amulet so that whoever wears this amulet is being exalted. This amulet is to be made of the rim of a chariot wheel.

Arkamoṇi: The *Atharvaveda* mentions that *Arkamoṇi* is made of *Arka* tree. It is used for sacrificial ceremonies. The *Arka* amulet is invoked to make the generative organ fit for enjoyment. This is compared with the spreading of a black snake at pleasure, making wonderful forms by the magic of the *Asuras*.

Astṛtamaṇi: The *Atharvaveda* mentions that the *Astṛtamaṇi* is tied by *Prajaapati* first for becoming invincible. It is tied for long life, splendor, strength and energy, protection from rivals, haters and enemies. It is invoked to protect the wearer of the amulet ceaselessly so that neither the *Paṇis* nor the sorcerers can ever harm him.

Darbhamaṇi: The amulet made of *Darbha* grass is bind for long life and brilliancy (xix.8.1, 4). This amulet is also the destroyer of enemy. It cleaves the rivals, the men who fain would fight with the wearer, all who wish wearer's evil and the men who hate the wearer.

Daśavṛkṣa: It is an amulet made of ten holy trees such as *Palāśa*, *Audubar*, *Jmbu*, *Kampala* and is coated with lac of the trees. This amulet is used against diseases caused by *Piśāca* and *Grāhi*, who catch the joints of a person. As a result of this amulet, found by the Gods the patient comes to the world of the living, amongst his relations and becomes a lucky man. He possesses the hundred healers and worth a thousand plants.

Hiraṇyamaṇi: The amulet of *Hiraṇyamaṇi* is worn for longevity, for glory, for long life lasting through a hundred autumns. Those who wear this amulet can conquer fiends and *Piśāca* because it grows before the Gods.

Jaṅgiḍa: The *Jaṅgiḍa* amulet is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. The amulet of this plant is worn for longevity, great joy, taking no harm, all time capable. It protects from distress cures from all diseases like *Takman*, *Balāsa*, *Āśarīka*, *Viśarīka*, *Pṛṣṭyāmaya*, *Viṣkandha* and *Saṃskandha*, *Jambha*, *Viśara*, *Viśvaśārada*. Therefore, it has earned the epithet *Viśvabheṣaja* which means 'all-healing'. *KS* mentions that the amulet of *Jaṅgiḍa* is tied for long life. There are two amulets of *Jaṅgiḍa*, the one brought from the forest, the other from the juice of ploughing. It gives all round protection from heaven, earth, atmosphere, plants, past, future and all directions. It is a spoiler of witchcraft and of niggardly.

Oudumbara maṇi: The amulet of *Oudumbara* is made of an *Oudumbara* tree. The amulet of *Udumbara*, helps him who longs for wealth. Those who wear it he gets quadrupeds and bipeds, juice and food of every sort. It is the heavenly amulet, foe-quelling and riches-winning. It confirms abundance of beasts, food and kine of wearer. It is the virile lord of all amulets. Those who wear it are kept far away from the niggard, misery and hunger. It is troop-leader, anointed, brilliancy, prosperity and house-sacrificer. It is fastened for abundance of wealth and to destroy enemy.

Parihasta: *Parihasta* is a ring or bracelet. It was apparently placed first on one hand or arm and then on the other, or there were two connected rings, regarded as one amulet. It is put on both hands to drive away the demons and to secure health. The amulet is

invoked to hold apart the womb for the concept of a male child. *Tvasta* tied it on *Aditi* for securing the birth of a son.

Parṇa Amulet: *Parṇa* is a beautiful sacred tree with large leaves and fine red flowers. The great ladle with which clarified butter is poured into the fire, and other sacrificial utensils, are made of its wood. It wears for strength, wealth, long life (AV.iii.5.1, 2, 4). This talisman is tied on for securing splendor, for securing wealth, domain and superiority, in the sphere of kingdom, for long life, of hundred autumns, and for becoming superior patronage and knowledge.

Phālamaṇi: The *Atharvaveda* mentions about the *Phālamaṇi*. This amulet is made of strong *Khādira* wood. It was tied to *Bṛhaspati* for strength and swift *Vāta*. *Indra* fastened it for strength and heroism, *Soma* for perfect hearing and seeing and *Sūrya* for conquering the directions of space. After wearing this amulet *Candramas* (the moon) conquered the golden cities of the *Asuras* and the *Dānavas*. *Aśvins* guard the plough-land, *Savitar* won the lucid heaven and water flow eternally inviolate with it. King *Varuṇa* wore it for welfare. Gods conquered all the worlds in battle with its help. It also fastens seasons, divisions of seasons, directions, *Atharvans*, *Dhātaras*.

Śaṅkha: It is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*. *Śaṅkha* is the amulet of shell, that means it is a pearl. It makes the wearer's enemy weak and protects the wearer from sin, the missiles of the Gods and the *Asuras*. This amulet enables the wearer to slay the *Rākṣas* and conquer the *Atriṇas* (devouring demons). It keeps him away from disease and poverty. It is the universal remedy and life-prolonging amulet. It is fastened for long life, luster, strength and for lasting a hundred autumns.

Śatavāramaṇi: *Śatavāramoṇi* banishes fiends and consumption by his own power (AV.xix.36.1). It also keeps away from fiends, *Gandharvas*, *Apsaras*, dog-mated nymphs. Hundred-tailed or Hundred-haired, a powerful amulet made, apparently, of a great number of fibres of some magical plant, perhaps the *Darbha* grass (AV.xix.36.1). It is impossible for the sinners to escape it. It generates hundred heroes.

Saktu: This medicine is mentioned in the *Sāyaṇa*'s commentary of the *Atharvaveda*. This is a medicine against jealousy. It is brought from folk belonging to all kinds of people, from *Sindhu* (Indus) and from a distant country.

Sīsa: The *Sīsa* is a piece of metal. The amulet was made of this metal. *Kauśika Sūtra* explains *Sīsa* as lead or river-lead, iron-filing or the head of a lizard. The amulet smites *Viṣkandha*, *Atrins* (devourers) and the host of the *Piśāca*. It affords protection against danger to the life of a cow or horse or man in the family of the person, who wears this amulet.

Sraktya: It is a name of the tree. The amulet made from this tree is also known as *Srāktya*. According to *Sāyaṇa* the amulet of *Sraktya* as *Tilaka*. It is a *Pratisara*, a charm to revert the witchcraft of others. The amulet is a wise patron, protection of the body and bestower of splendor. It is full of source, slays enemies, makes heroes of men, powerful, lusty, victorious, and strong. It furnishes shelter and provides good luck. This talisman of *Sraktya* assails and attacks, cures disease and keeps secure an every side. *Agni*, *Soma*, *Bṛhaspati*, *Savita* and *Indra* declared that those who tie this amulet get all types of wealth. He cannot be slain by the *Apsaras*, nor the *Gandharvas* or by mortal men. He rules all regions. *Kaśyapa* has created and produced this amulet. *Indra* wears it for killing *Vṛtra* and won in the wrestling match with man. The Gods made the talisman armour of thousand fold strength. It also protects the offspring and wealth and brings luck.

Trivṛta: The amulet *Trivṛta* is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*.

Varaṇa: Varaṇa is a plant or small tree. Amulets made from this tree works as a medicine for all diseases. It crushes enemies and frees from sin. It protects from human danger and from all evil, from *Arāti* (grudge), *Nirṛti* (misfortune), from sorcery and from danger of death and over strong weapons. It also protects from sin committed by mother, father, brother, sister and itself. It is worn for long life, a hundred autumns. It bestows kingdom and rule, cattle and strength. It breaks rivals formerly born and the later born.

Vaiyāghramaṇi: It protects from sin like disease. It also keeps away diseases and demons.

In the fifth chapter the medicinal plants (*Bhaiṣajyāni*) mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* have been discussed.

In our study we have found mentions of a few common plants in the *Atharvaveda*. The main constituent of the *Atharvaveda* are the songs and charms for healing diseases which belong to the magico-healing rites. These classes of hymns have been conveniently described as *Bhaiṣajyāni*. The term *Bhaiṣajyāni* is not found in the *Atharvaveda* itself but the term is used in the *Kauśika-Sūtra*, to denote the medicinal and remedial charms found in the *Atharvaveda*. These are directed largely against various diseases and demons. Some of these charms are also invocation and praises of the medicinal plant that shall serve to cure the disease. It is to be mentioned here that all these hymns for curing diseases have been scattered here and there in the whole *Saṁhitā*.

Besides, there are hymns in praise of herbs and amulets having curative qualities. Here in the *Atharvaveda* we have find prayer to herbs namely *Kuṣṭha* or *Kuttha, Jangiḍa, Viṣāṇakā, Rajanī, Śyāmā, Arundhatī, Lākṣā* or *Silāci, Ābayu, Nitatnī, Ajaśṛṅgī, Pṛśniparṇī, Pippali, Āñjana, Rohiṇī, Oṣadhaya*. Water is believed to posses the curative qualities and the fire which is believed to be the powerful frightener of demons is also praised.

According to Luis Renou, the medicinal hymns of the *Atharvaveda* give us the first outline of Indian medicine. *Caraka Saṁhitā* and *Suśruta Saṁhitā* admit importance of the *Atharvaveda* as the source of medicinal science.

In the hymn no.v.4; xix.39, *Kuṣṭha*, a medicinal plant is regarded as the best medicine for curing fever and other reactions of fever like head disease, evil eye, evil of the body. Besides, the plant *Kuṣṭha* and *Jangiḍa* furnish amulets against it. As for instance when one is attacked by the violent fever he is believed to be cured by an amulet of *Daśabṛkṣa Kabaca* (Av.ii.9). The *Daśabṛkṣa Kabaca* is made of ten different plants. However, the commentator of the *Atharvaveda, Sāyaṇa* mentions only about two plants, these are *Palāśa*, *Udumbara*.

The hymn ii.8 is addressed to the *Vicṛtas*, dawn, plant of Arjuna, straws of brown barley which are endowed with white stalks and the blossom of sesame to remove the *Kṣetriya* disease. Another remedy prescribed by hymn iii.7 is the horn on the head of the swift-running antelope. The skin of the antelope is also used in the medicine

(Av.iii.7.1, 3). Water, the healer of all diseases, is also prayed for the cure of *Kṣetriya* (Av.iii.7.5).

In the treatment of *Āsrava*, the patient tied a stalk of *Muñja* reed with a cord made from the same plant, as an amulet. The plant like *Haridrā*, *Rāmā*, *Kṛṣṇā*, *Asiknī* or *Nīli* are to be used for removing the white spots from the body and restoring it to the original colour. A paste prepared from these plants or their leaves would give black colour to the skin. Another plant named *Āsuri* or *Śyāmā* is also mentioned as a cure against leprosy (AV.i.24). The plant *Ābayu* (Av.vi.16.1) is directed against ophthalmia. *Arundhatī* is the plant celebrated in several passages of the *Atharvaveda* as possessing healing properties in case of wounds, as a febrifuge and as inducing cows to give milk. The plant was a climber which attached itself to trees like the *Plakṣa*, *Aśvattha*, *Nyogrodha* and *Parṇa*. It was of golden colour (*hiraṇya-varṇa*) and had a hairy stem (*lomasavaksana*). It was also called *Silāci* and *Lākṣā* appears to have been a product of it.

Pippali the feminine form of the word *Pippala*, appears denoting berries used as a remedy for wounds, like *Arundhatī*. The plant *Nitatnī* is dug out of the round to be used in medicine to strengthen old hair, grow new ones and to promote a luxuriant growth of hair. This healing herb is also used in sprinkle, the hair which drop off and have broken roots. The plant *Śamī* is asked to be gracious to the hair (AV.vi.30). In the hymn vi.21 of the *Atharvaveda* is found a plant *Haridrā* is the found, which cause of strengthening and increasing of hair.

In the AV.iv.37 the plant *Ajaśṛṅgī* (goats' horn) is celebrated as a demon-destroyer. Its other name is *Arātakī* (Av.iv.37.6). *Pṛśni-parṇi* (having a speckled leaf) is a plant mentioned in a hymn of the *Atharvaveda* (ii.25) as a protection against evil beings procuring abortion, called *Kaṇvas* (presumably a sign of hostility to the *Kaṇva* family).

The plant *Āñjan* (AV.iv.9; vi.102, 3; ix.6,1; xix.44,45), which came from mount *Trikakubh* in the *Himālaya* and was used to massage the eyes. The ointment is declared as potent to remove Jaundice, *Yakṣmā*, *Jāyānya* and other diseases. A plant *Apāmārga* (AV.iv.17, 6; 18, 7) is used frequently in witchcraft practices and for medical purpose, especially against *Kṣetriya*.

The plant *Viṣāṇakā* is used as a remedy against the disease *Vātīkāra* (AV.ix.8.20; *Vātīkṛta*; vi.44, 3; 109, 3). *Cīpudru* designates some substance mentioned in a hymn of the *Atharvaveda* (vi.127.2), which is used in healing against *Balāsa*.

The AV.viii.7 gives a detailed classification of the plants as—plants classified according to colour (Av.viii.7.1) and growth (viii.7.4), their varieties according to properties (viii.7.6,7,10), origin (viii.7.9,17) and form (viii.7.12,13,166,27).

The *Atharvaveda* has given not only a number of plants (*Oṣadhi*) in general (viii.7; vi.59; ṚV.x.9; VS.xii.75) but has given us a number of families of the plant such as *Aśikni, Kṛṣṇā, Prśni, Prastrnati, Stambini, Ekasuṅgā, Pratanvati, Amsumati, Kandini, Viśākhā, Vaiśvadevī, Ugra, Avākā, Ulva, Tikṣṇaśṛṅgi*, as also *Puṣpavati, Prasumati, Phalini, Aphala*.

The sixth chapter discusses the concluding observations of the research work entitled 'A Study of the Charms and Spells of the Atharvaveda with Special Reference to The Medicinal Discourses and Human Welfare'. Following are the findings of the study:

Atharvaveda is completely different from the other three *Vedas* and is next in importance to the *Ṛgveda* with regard to history and social life of the *Vedic* age. *Atharvaveda* means the *Veda* of the *Atharvans* or the knowledge of the magic spells. It has many other names like *Brahma-Veda, Aṅgirā-Veda, Atharvāṅgirasa, Kṣatra-Veda, Bhṛgvāṅgira-Veda, Chando-Veda,* which is not found in respect of the other *Vedas*.

The *Ṛgveda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Sāmaveda* are described only in ritualistic terms but in the *Atharvaveda* non-ritualistic thought has creeped up. It is the first Indian text dealing with medicine and spells. It consists chiefly of a variety of spells and incantation, intended to curse as well as bless. In the *Atharvaveda* we find charms of a positive character to obtain benefits, happy family life, health and longevity, protection on journey, all beneficiary of human life. It mentions many internal and external diseases, namely *Alaji, Āśarīka, Balāsa, Gaṇḍamālā*-scrofulous swelling, *Hṛdyota, Hariman*- jaundice, *Hrūḍu, Jalodara*- dropsy, *Jāyānya, Takman*-fever, diarrhoea, consumption, *Kilāsa*-leprosy, *Kṛmi*, abscesses, *Pra-mota, Saṁskandha, Viklindu, Vilohita, Viśara, Visalpaka*, wounds and fractures, inherited disease, flow of blood, poison of all kinds, worms and many others as well as protective measures against

them, *Atharvaveda* deals with that coverage of human life which is full of mysteries and miseries and took into the human life as full of hurdles and happiness as well.

Many names of the diseases as well as of plants mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* could not have been worked out in present context. A large number of diseases have been mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*, but they are not always in clear terms. However, classification of the diseases based on etiological factors is not found in *Atharvaveda*. It also did not mention about the cause of the diseases.

In the *Atharvaveda*, there is indirect mention of magico religious power or device. The amulets, charms mentioned in it may come under magico-religious devices. In the *Atharvaveda* period, many diseases were cured by using amulets made of plants which are to be used with particular *Mantras*, these are amulet of *Jaṅgiḍa*, *Darbha*, *Parṇa*, *Varaṇa*, *Śatavāra*.

We have found many hymns in praise of herbs, plants and amulets having curative qualities. The *Atharvaveda* contains prayer to herbs namely *Kuṣṭha* or *Kuttha, Jaṅgiḍa*, *Viṣāṇakā*, *Rajanī*, *Śyāmā*, *Arundhatī*, *Lākṣā* or *Silāci*, *Ābayu*, *Nitatnī*, *Ajaśṛṅgī*, *Pṛśniparṇī*, *Pippali*, *Āñjana, Rohiṇī*, *Oṣadhaya*. Water is believed to posses the curative qualities and the fire which is believed to be the powerful frightener of demons is also praised. The influence of the Atharvanic medical charms on the later Hindu medicine literature went to the extent that *Āyurveda*; the Indian first medicinal treatise started its journey there from and is in practice in India even today.