



THERAPEUTIC UTILITY OF KSHARA IN SHALYA TANTRA

Dr. S. V. Shailaja*¹ and Dr. Madhuri G. Hegde²

¹Professor, HOD Department of Shalya Tantra Sri Kalabhyraveswaryaswamy Ayurvedic Medical College, Bangalore.

²PG Scholar, Department of Shalya Tantra Sri Kalabhyraveswaryaswamy Ayurvedic Medical College, Bangalore.

Corresponding Author: Dr. S. V. Shailaja

Professor, HOD Department of Shalya Tantra Sri Kalabhyraveswaryaswamy Ayurvedic Medical College, Bangalore.

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ABSTRACT

Kshara is considered as one of the important medication in *Shalya tantra*. *Kshara* is one of the *anushastra* which can be applicable in most of the *vyaadhis* where *shastra karma* can be avoided. *Kshara* is considered superior to *shastra* as it has the capacity to perform actions similar to *shastra*. Patient who are unfit for surgery or who are not willing to undergo surgical procedure *kshara* can be used to get the desired effect of *shastra karma*. *Kshara* is a medicinal preparation which involves combination of various drugs by which the action of *kshara* is initiated. *Kshara* has innumerable actions when used judiciously in various conditions good results are noted.

KEYWORDS: *Kshara, anushastra. paaneeya kshara, pratesaraneeya kshara.*

INTRODUCTION

Kshara as a medicament is used for treatment of various diseases from the time of *vedas*, where people using *kshara* for *chikitsa* were popularly known as *kshara vaidyas*.

Sushruta has mentioned in detail the definition, preparation, *gunas*, types, mode of administration of *kshara* in detail.

The mention of *kshara* later is noted in *laghutrayees* where certain modifications are done in the method of preparation and the use of *kshara* both internally and externally for various conditions where *shastra karma* can be avoided, has been explained reference of *kshara* are also found in other books like *Vaidya chintamani*, *Rasaratna samuchaya*, *Bhaishajya ratnavali*, *Rasa tarangini*, *Haritha samhita*, *Kashyapa samhita* with indications.

Derivation

The term *kshara* is literally derived from the root '*Kshar*' which means to melt away or to perish (*shabda kalpadruma*)

Definition

Susrutha defines *kshara* as follows:^[1]

'*Tatra ksharanat kshananat va ksharaha*'

Ksharana- means cleansing of the excessive *doshas*

Kshananat- which means to disintegrate or destroy the skin and other abnormal tissues

Charaka defines *kshara* as the one which scrapes away the excessive *doshas* and *dhatu*s from its place ^[2]

Importance of *kshara*

Kshara is superior to *shastra* and *anushastra*, since it performs many fold actions such as *chedana* (excision), *bhedana* (incising), *lekhana* (scraping away the unhealthy tissues) and *darana* (opening a completely suppurated abscess).^[3]

Kshara can be used in patients who are contraindicated for surgery and in those individuals who are very sensitive and afraid of surgical procedure.^[4] The other importance of *kshara* mainly lies in the mode of administration which can be used internally as oral medication and externally as a local application.

Properties (*gunas*) of *kshara*^[5]

Kshara possess some specific properties by which it performs many fold actions which is obtained through various means. The *vishesha guna* of *kshara* is by the method of preparation and by processing with different drugs at different stages.

- *Tridoshagnata*- *Kshara* is prepared by combination of various drugs in a concentrated form, hence it possess property of *tridosha hara*.
- *Sowmyata* - This *guna* is attributed to *kshara* by its action wherein even though it is *teekshna* in nature it acts only on the unhealthy and overgrown

tissues which are of no use to system. The *kshara* when prepared is *shweta* in *varna* which indicates *soumyata* and predominant in *satva guna*. Hence *kshara* when used in a proper manner desired action is noted.

- *Dahana* - This property is by the *aagneyata* by which it obtains during the preparation. *Kshara* applied externally in conditions of *vidradhi*, *granthi* in the stage of *vidagdha avastha* (stage of suppuration) helps in early formation of *pooya* thus reduces the suppurative stage.
- *Pachana* - It is the dual action of *kshara* which acts both internally and externally. Externally it hastens the inflammatory process. Internally when administered helps in the stimulation of digestive enzymes, resulting in proper digestion of the *ahara*, *ama pachana* and *sroto shodhana*.
- *Daarana*- The special property of *kshara* is that it opens out a completely suppurated abscess for drainage of pus. It performs the action of the *shastra* thus resolving the condition.
- *Shodhana*- When used externally over an ulcer it helps in debridement of the slough in cases of *dushta vrana* and removes unwanted necrotic tissue over the ulcer by which the *vrana* becomes *shuddha*. *Teekshna guna* of *kshara* facilitates *shodhana*.
- *Ropana* - The healing process of *vrana* is initiated by *kshara* in case of *shuddha vrana*. *Kshara* helps in vascularisation and formation of granulation tissue which is necessary for healing process. This is because of the *soumya guna* of *kshara*.
- *Shoshana*- Healing of *vrana* is delayed because of excess of moisture, which may be one of the reasons for infections. *Kshara* applied externally absorbs excess of moisture by its *shoshana guna* which is essential for wound healing.
- *Stambhana* - *Kshara* acts as a very good haemostatic agent when applied in bleeding conditions.
- *Lekhana* - *Kshara* by *teekshna guna* helps in removing the unwanted tissues in *vrana*s presenting with elevated wound margins.
- *Vilayana* - It means liquification or dissolving the *doshas* in consolidated form when administered internally.

Kshara Bhedas

Based on the mode of administration *kshara* is of two types^[6]

- *Paaneeya Kshara*
- *Prateesaraneeya kshara*

Based on the action or potency^[7]

- *Mrudu*
- *Madyama*
- *Teekshna*

Preparation of *kshara*^[8]

The selected plant for preparation is taken i.e whole plant (*panchanga*) and dried. The dried plant is ignited using

tilanala and burnt until ash is obtained. This ash is mixed with 6 parts of water or *gomutra* and the mixture is allowed to settle down.

It is later filtered 21 times through a cloth to obtain a clear liquid. This liquid is heated on low fire to get a fine powder which is known as *Mrudu Kshara*.

When *shukthi*, (oyster shell) is heated to red hot and mixed to the above *kshara* the powder obtained is *Madyama Kshara*.

When the powders of *danti*, *dravanti*, *chitraka*, *langali*, *hingu* are added to the mixture and heated the powder thus obtained is *Teekshna kshara*.

The prepared *kshara* should be stored in tight containers to restore its potency.

Therapeutic uses of *kshara*

Kshara can be used in different forms in different conditions. It can be used in form of *kshara sutra*, *kshara varti*, *kshara pichu*, *kshara taila*, external application as *prateesaraneeya kshara*. Internally *kshara* is used in the form of *choorna*, *vati*, *avaleha* etc.

Uses in different conditions.

Pratisaraneeya kshara^[9]

1) *Parikartika* (anal fissure)

Kshara when applied to chronic anal fissure acts by its *chedhana*, *shodhana* and *ropana gunas*. *Kshara* helps in excising the fibrous tissue, remove unhealthy fibrous tissue, controls bleeding thus promoting wound healing. *Kshara* applied relieves anal sphincter spasm which in turn reduces pain.

2) *Nadi vrana* (pilonidal sinus)

Kshara is applied after excision of the sinus, curettes all the lateral sinuses by *lekhana guna* thus preventing re-occurrence.

3) Rectal prolapse

Kshara applied at the lower most part all around the healthy mucosa of 3 cm area of anal canal which becomes fibrosed and prevents prolapse.

4) *Bhagandara* (Fistula-in-ano)

Kshara applied to the fistulous tract after excision burns out the fibrous tract which initiates growth of fresh healthy granulation tissue and the wound heals with healthy scar.

5) *Bahya vidradhi* (Abscess)

Kshara applied to a completely suppurated abscess opens out the abscess without the use of surgical instruments. *Darana guna* of *kshara* plays a vital role in drainage of pus.

6) *Charma keela* and *kadara* (Warts and Corn)

The manifold action of *kshara* relieves the condition. *Dahana guna* burns out the excess tissue, *chedhana guna* and *lekhana guna* helps in slow cutting of *charma keela* (wart) and the hard tissue in *kadara* (corn).

Vilayana guna dissolves the *doshas*, *shodhana guna* causes *vrana shuddata*, *ropana* helps in wound healing.

7) *Kushta rogas* (Skin disorders)

Kshara applied on the skin surface the active principles enter the *romakoopas*, gets absorbed through the *swedhavaha srotas* and *sira mukha* by which the action of *kshara* is initiated. *Kshara* further acts on *brajaka pitta* by which the local action is noted. The *ushna* and *teekshna guna* is *kapha vatagna* which reduces *shoola* and *shotha*. *Lekhana guna* removes the debris and the healing property causes *ropana*.

8) *Dushta vrana* (Chronic non healing ulcers)

Kshara applied over the *vrana* removes the slough, cleanses the discharge, and absorbs excess of moisture. Locally reduces oedema and considered as antimicrobial due to its *krimighna guna*. The *uttana* and *katina mamsa* is removed which gives way for formation of granulation tissue thus promotes healing.

Kshara is *sheegrakari* (quick in action) by which it penetrates deep into the tissues, scrapes out the slough (*lekhana*), cleanses the wound (*shodhana*) facilitates wound healing (*ropana*).

9) *Abhyantara arshas* (Internal Haemorrhoids)

Kshara applied over the *arshankura* (pile mass) penetrates the mucosa, destroys the tissues causes necrosis of the pile mass, controls bleeding further leading to fibrosis. The antibacterial action (*krimighna*) of *kshara* prevents infection by which the healing is noted.

- ***Kshara varthi***

Kshara is used in the form *varthi* prepared by using different *oushadha dravyas*. *Varthi* is introduced into the *Nadi vrana* (sinus) does *lekhana* of the sinus, removes the unhealthy fibrous tissue (debridement) and drains out the *puya* (*shodhana*) thus helps in healing the sinus.^[10]

- ***Kshara sutra***^[11]

Kshara is coated over a thread, dried, sterilized and used in different conditions.

1) *Nadivrana* (Sinus) - *Kshara sutra* is ligated to a *nadivrana* (pilonidal sinus) through the external opening. *Sutra* exerts pressure over the *nadi*, scrapes out the epithelial tissues, removes the *shalya* (foreign body) and further healing of the tract is noted.

2) *Bhagandara* (Fistula in ano) - *Kshara sutra* ligated to the fistulous tract cuts the tract by pressure exerted on ano-rectal tissues. *Kshara* applied over the thread sloughs out the epithelial lining allowing the tract to heal. The *kshara* is in constant touch with the tissues

which prevents infection by which the healing of the tract is noted after cutting.

3) *Arshas* - (Haemorrhoids) - *Kshara sutra* ligated to the pile mass causes necrosis of the mass by pressure exerted by ligation. *Kshara* penetrates in to the cells of the lesion, achieving haemostasis. The necrosed pile mass falls off which relieves the condition.

- ***Paneeya Kshara***

Internal administration of *kshara* has been mentioned in different conditions.

Dose of *Paneeya Kshara* is 1/2 to 1gm.^[12]

Anupana - *grutha*, *sheetala jala*, *ksheera*, *madhu*, *goomutra* or *kwatha*.

- Ashmari*- *Kapha* is the main *dosha* for the formation of *ashmari*. *Kshara* administered internally does *lekhana*, *chedhana* of the *ashmari*, i.e it disintegrates the stone, dissolves the stone. *Vata shamana guna* normalises the function of *apanavayu*, the *ushna guna* acts mainly on *kapha dosha*, the acidic media is neutralised which prevents the further formation of *ashmari*.
- Mootraghata* and *mootrakruhrata* - *Paneeya Kshara* relieves the condition by its *teekshna* and *vilayana guna* which removes the *srotorodha*, *tridosahara* property acts on the *dushita doshas* where in the condition is relieved.^[13]
- Gulma* - *Vilayana guna* of *kshara* dissolves the *doshas* in the consolidated form, *ushna guna* acts on the *vata dosha* and *tridosha hara* property resolves the condition.
- Ashteela* - *Lekhana guna* of *kshara* reduces the size of the hypertrophied prostate gland causes *srotovivarana* and *sroto shodhana* thus relieves incomplete emptying of urinary bladder.
- Agni mandya* and *ajeernata* - *Kshara* administered internally acts as *deepana*, *pachana*, stimulates production of digestive enzymes, protects gastric mucosa and restores the digestion.
- Abhyantara vidradhi* - *Kshara* administered internally by its *vilayana guna* dissolves the *doshas* in *amaavasta*, *tridosha hara* property prevents further progress of the condition.

CONCLUSION

Kshara has an important role in treatment of various diseases when administered externally or as internal medication. It can be used as a safe substitute for surgical instruments, which minimises complications and reduces reoccurrence of diseases. It is cost effective method with minimal resources required for preparation. The therapeutic action of *kshara* is based on the special properties which are obtained by different methods of processing. *Kshara* can be used in various diseases like *Kushta*, *gulma*, *mootraghata*, *arshas*, *bhagandara* with least complications. The *vishesha gunas* of *Kshara* plays an important role in the treatment of various diseases with negligible complications.

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