



A STUDY OF KSHAR KALPANA IN BRIHATRAYS: A REVIEW

Sharma Deepa*¹, Sharma Usha², Rawat Shushma³ and Sharma Khemchand⁴

¹PG Department of Rasashastra & Bhaishajya Kalpana, UAU, Rishikul Campus, Haridwar.

²Associate Professor PG Department of Rasashastra & Bhaishajya Kalpana, UAU, Rishikul Campus, Haridwar.

³Assistant Professor PG Department of Rasashastra & Bhaishajya Kalpana, UAU, Rishikul Campus, Haridwar.

⁴Professor (HOD) PG Department of Rasashastra & Bhaishajya Kalpana, UAU, Rishikul Campus, Haridwar.

*Corresponding Author: Sharma Deepa

PG Department of Rasashastra & Bhaishajya Kalpana, UAU, Rishikul Campus, Haridwar.

Article Received on 06/06/2019

Article Revised on 27/06/2019

Article Accepted on 17/07/2019

ABSTRACT

All medicinal products are classified in different categories of dosage forms in Ayurveda Pharmaceuticals. Acharya Charak has mentioned 18 parts of herbal plants which can be used for medicinal purpose and Kshara (alkaline preparation) is one of them. Acharya Susruta has propagated external as well as internal use of Kshara which has been referred as Pratisarniya and Paaniye Kshara respectively. Kshara are the substances obtained from the ashes of drugs of animals (conch shells, coral etc), minerals (borax) and plants (mulaka: Raphenus sativus etc) origin, where alkaline portion is extracted from the ashes of these substances. According to the acid-ash hypothesis, acidic ash is thought to make us vulnerable to illness and disease, whereas alkaline ash is considered protective. Food components that leave an acidic ash include protein, phosphate and sulphur, while alkaline components include calcium, magnesium and potassium. The present paper is aimed to bring out the existing knowledge on kshara kalpana in Ayurvedic classics w.s.r brihatrayi.

KEYWORDS: Kshara Kalpana, Kshara in Brihatrayi.

INTRODUCTION

Kshara is a medicament obtained from ash of one or more plants, animals and mineral products. The process of preparation of Kshara involves the extraction of alkalies from ash of dried plants. Acharya Vagbhat narrates that the diseases which are difficult to cure can be treated by Kshara therapy.^[1] Kshara therapy not only minimizes complication but also reduces recurrence of disease. Kshara can reduce the chances of post-surgical infections due to its alkalinity. Kshara has the top most in all surgical and para-surgical measures.^[2]

The process of making formulations involved crude extraction,^[3] dependent on the nature & solubility of active components from plants to achieve desired action. Masi (black coloured formulation prepared through incomplete oxidation) and Kshara (white colored residue obtained after evaporation of filtrate of plant ash dissolved in water) is mainly prepared to get carbon dominant organic material,^[4] and alkali dominant material^[5] respectively from plants by using open and close burning of plant material.

Kshara Kalpana is mainly prepared through five unit operations 1. Open pan burning, 2. Maceration of ash

with specific quantity of water, 3. Sedimentation, 4. Filtration, 5. Evaporation of filtrate.^[6]

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

It includes review of kshara in samhitas w.s.r. to brihatrayi.

3. Kshara in Samhitas Charak Samhita (2ND A.D.)

Acharya Charaka places Kshara in Audbhida gana as one of the medicinally important 18 plant parts.^[7] However, a few Acharyas even suggested including Kshara among types of Rasa in the sambhasha parishad.^[8] Ultimately it was denounced by Atreya who proposed kshara as Dravya. It contains many rasas with the predominance of katu and lavana rasa. It causes ksharana i.e, erosion of mansa dhatu. Hence *ksarannaat ksarah* is mentioned for its action.^[9] Kshara has been again counted as one of the three deleterious substances whose excess is to be avoided, other two being pippali and lavana^[10]. In this context, its properties are enumerated well by the Acharya. Kshara is Usna, Tikshna and Laghu. It is mainly employed for Paachan (digestion), Dahan (cauterization) and Bhedan (incision).^[11] Its excess intake may lead to deleterious effects on hair, eyes, heart and potency. Strikingly Acharya has also mentioned not

to use Kshara in *Prachya Desha*. He says the people residing there already suffer from diseases caused by excess Kshara.^[12] This might be attributed to the more alkaline nature of their daily diet.

Formulations containing Kshara are described in illustrious number in Chikitsa Sthana. They are of two types:

1) **Vanaspati Ksara** - such as Kshara derived from Bilva, Agnimanth, Ashwagandha, Vyosh, Kadli, Vidanga, Til, Palash, Bala, Yava, Utpal, Madhu and Priyangu as mentioned in the treatment of Grahani.

2) **Prannija Ksara** - such as Kshara derived in the form of Mayurpiccha bhasma, Shahi Kantaka bhasma, Neelkantha bhasma and bhasma of the animal parts like their horns, skin and bones.^[13]

Table 1.1: A brief overview of such Kshara-formulations is given as.

Ksara preparation	Indication
Kamal naal ksara	Kafanubandhi Raktapitta ^[14]
Madhuka ksara	
Priyangu ksara	
Palash ksara	
Pippalimuladya Ksara	Vat-Kafaja Roga, Visha Roga ^[15]
Bhallataka Ksara	Hrid-Pandu-Grihini-Gulma-Udavritta-Shula ^[16]
Duralabhadi Ksara	Grihini ^[17]
Bhunimbadi Ksara	Agni Vardhan ^[18]
Haridradi Ksara	Agni Vardhan ^[19]
Chaturtha Vatsakadi ksara	Grihini-Shotha-Arsha ^[20]
Pancham Trifladi ksara	Arsha-Grihini-Pandu ^[21]
Ashwagandha Ksara	Kasa Shwasa Hikka ^[22]
Mayurpada Ksara	
Matsya twak Ksara	
Shahi Kantaka Ksara	
Dwikhuraka Pranni astthi ksara	
Ksaraagad	Visha Vikaar ^[23]
Ksar Taila	Karna Roga ^[24]

Susruta Samhita (2ND A. D.)

Susruta has propagated external as well as internal use of Kshara which has been referred as “Pratisarniya” and “Paaniya” Ksara, respectively.^[25] He has counted Kshara in Anushastra, Upayantra, Agropaharaniya and as one among sixty upakramas of Vrana.

Sutra Sthana 11 deals with Kshara manufacturing. Different types of Kshara on the basis of potency are mentioned. 21 plants have been enumerated for obtaining Kshara namely, Kutaja, Palash, Ashwakarna etc.^[26] Their panchaang along with roots, fruits, leaves, branches and stem is to be taken and converted to ash form. The Kshara prepared is indicated in a variety of diseases like

Ashmari, Arbudh, Gulma, Arsha, Bhagandar etc.^[27] Kshara is prescribed for lepa as well as paan (local application and drinking) in these diseases.

Acharya has mentioned using Krishna Sarpa Kshara in the treatment of Switra Roga.^[28] In Chikitsa sthana, Acharya mentions Paaniya kshara, it's preparation as well as use is given elaborately with indications.^[29] Kshara has been used by Acharya Susruta for purification of water as well.^[30]

Thus the text advocates various modified versions of Kshara with respect to preparation, processing, and consumption. It can be concluded that the knowledge and indications of Kshara were well known since centuries before, as old as 2500 years.

Astanga Samgriha (6th A.D.)

Sutra Sthan 33 is devoted to the Kshara manufacturing for internal as well as extrenal use. The chapter also deals with medicinal indications of Kshara. Kshariya dravya (plants with alkaline nature) are well enumerated. The text also advocates consumption of Kshara within 7 days of preparation. Beyond this period the potency of Kshara undergo considerable declination. So it is rejuvenated by the addition of Kshara jala.^[31]

Vagbhatta compares Yavaksara and Sarjikaksara for the first time. He clearly states that Sarjikaksara is inferior to Yavaksara in properties. Still it is superior in alkali action. It is best among all Kshara in being tiksna, ushna, krimi-har and laghu. Sarjikaksara vitiates pita and rakta, causes paak (suppuration), chedan (excision), and vidarana (tearing). Being katu and lavana, it is apathya and not suited for shukra, oja, kesh (hair) and chakshu (eyes).^[32]

Astanga Hridaya (7TH A.D.)

The text also follows Charaka and Susruta in description of Kshara. However, Kshara vidhana in Sutra sthana 30 indicates to collect mature plants of Kalmushka, Amaltas, kadli, Paribhadra, Ashwakarna, Mahavriksha, Palash, Indravriksha, Arka etc. They are cut into pieces while still moist and burnt using lime stone, dried yava shuka and tilnala. Thus material to start ignition is clearly stated here.^[33]

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Acharya Charak proposes kshara as a separate entity of treatment modality thus naming kshara Tantra.^[34] The use of kshara require dexterity as well as correct knowledge regarding application & administration. So it is left to the jurisdiction of followers of Dhanwantari Sampradaya. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned the indication of Kshara to treat many diseases like vrana, bhagandara, arsha, Ashmari etc. which shows its importance in Shalya Tantra also. The procedure is simple, very safe, effective and with minimal or no complications, unshazardous and easily acceptable by the patients. Kshara is useful as a medicine externally and

internally in different formulations. Kshara is indicated in children, weak persons and decrepit. Kshara has important role in medicine, surgical and para-surgical practice. Kshara therapy has been considered as a wealth and a strong weapon in Ayurvedic Pharmacopeia.

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