



## A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON AGNIKARMA: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

'Ayurveda' the science of life is time tested science which does not require experimental evidences & its entire field to compare with modern era. It's all principles are universally applicable to each individual to have a long healthy life first and then treating the disease, for that fight superior branches are explained. Shalya tantra is one among them. Sushruta known as father of surgery has described various surgical procedures along with some parasurgical measures. 'agni karma' is one amongst these parasurgical procedures. In agnikarma therapeutic burning with special tools are done on specific sites. Agnikarma has been given special place in surgery by sushruta and it is believed that disease treated by agnikarma never reoccurs. In modern time also it is used and it is termed as therapeutic burns or cauterization. This paper deals with details of various aspects of agnikarma and its use in present context.

**KEYWORDS:** Agnikarma, Cauterization, Dagdha, Parasurgical Measures.

### INTRODUCTION

'Ayurveda' the science of life is time tested science which does not require experimental evidences & its entire field to compare with modern era. It's all principles are universally applicable to each individual to have a long healthy life. for this there are eight branches on the basis of there individual specialities shalya tantra is one amongst those supreme branches.

Acharya sushruta is the pioneere of the field of surgery. Sushruta has mentioned different methods of management of diseases, such as Bsheshaja karma, Kshara Karma, Agni karma, Shastrakarma and Raktamokshana. In that Agni karma means application of Agni directly or indirectly with the help of different materials to relieve the patient from disease. The word *Agnikarma* comprises *Agni+karma*. The procedure in which *SamyakDagdhaVranap* produced by *Agni* with the help of various *Dravyasis* called as *Agnikarma*. In moderterminology, "*Agnikarma*" therapy can be termed as "*Intentional therapeutic heat burns*".

Dalhana, commentator of Sushruta Agni karma is classified as Agni krita karma or the karma or action carried out by Agni. Sushruta indicated 'Agni karma' in various disorders of skin, muscles, vessels, ligaments joints and bones. He has also explained that the diseases

treated with Agni karma modality don't reoccur. The approach of Agni karma has been mentioned in the context of diseases like Arsha, Arbuda, Bhagandar, Sira, Snayu, Asthi, Sandhigata Vata Vikar`as and Gridhrasi.

**Definition:** The most important procedure "Agnikarma" is one of the ShalyaChikitsa (surgical treatment). It comprises of two words i.e Agni and Karma. The derivation and description are as follows.

#### AGNI

The word Agni is a masculine gender. The word Agni has been derived from the Dhatua.

#### Niruktti

The word Agni is having two kind of niruktties depending upon its Swarupa and Swabhava.

- According to Swarupa- which spreads to various parts or organs, is called Agni.
- According to Swabhava- which moves in upward direction, is called Agni.

#### Synonyms of Agni

Asayasha, Shikhe, Shochishkesha, Shuchi, Sukra, Sushika, Sushma, Teja, Udarchi, Vahi, Vahni, Agira, Anala, Kapila, Pachana, Pavaka etc.

**KARMA**

**Vyutpatti:** The Karma is derived from the dhatu 'Du KriyaKriKarne' and formed as 'Karma'. Nirukti: Which acts that is called as Karma. Through which the action takes place is called Karma.

The word Agnikarma consists of Agni + Karma i.e. Heat + Procedure.

“When SamyakaDagdhaVrana produced by Agni with the help of various Dravyas called as Agnikarma”.

**HISTORICAL VIEW****Vedas**

- In Atharvaveda, Agni is accepted as God and Bhesaja in the reference of Krimi.
- In RugvedaAgnikarmaChikitsa available in the reference of obstetric disease.
- In Yajurveda as a treatment of Sheeta. In Samavaeda, importance of Agni is proved by the presence of the chapter known as Agneykanda.

**CHARAK SAMHITA**

Charaka explained the AgnikarmaChikitsa in the reference of ShastraPranidhana in 11th chapter of Sutra sthana. Charaka also explained AgnikarmaChikitsa in Divarniyaadhyaya Chikitsa as a treatment of Vrana. In reference of treatment of MansajaRoga in Vividhashitapitiya Adhyaya. In GulmaChikitsa, at reference of KaphajaGulma. In Shvayathu Chikitsa, in reference of GranthiRoga and BhagandaraChikitsa. In UdaraChikitsa, in reference of PleehodaraRoga and YakritodaraChikitsa. In ArshaChikitsa, in reference of Arshashastra Karma, Kshara Karma and Agnikarma. In VisarpaChikitsa, in reference of Granthi Visarpa Chikitsa. In VishaChikitsa, in reference of Visha Vega Chikitsa. In Vatavyadhi Chikitsa, in reference of GridhrasiRogaChikitsa. In Siddhistan, in context of Trimarmiya Chikitsa and in reference of ArdhavabhedakaRoga Chikitsa. Acharya Suṣṛta has given great contribution to Ayurveda regarding Agnikarma Chikitsa.

**SUSHRUTASAMHITA**

Many references are available in SushrutaSamhita regarding Agnikarma. In Sutrasthana, in context of Yantravidhi Adhyaya as an Upayantra. A detailed Agnikarma Vidhi Adhyaya has described separately. In Pranasta ShalyaVigyaniyaAdhyaya as a ShalyaniraharanaVidhi. In Vatavyadhi Chikitsa, in reference of Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, AsthigatVyadhi. In ArshaRoga Chikitsa. In AshmariChikitsa, for management of Vrana. In BhagandaraChikitsa, for management of Vrana. In reference of Granthiapachaya-Arbuda Chikitsa. In reference of Vridhiupadhansha Chikitsa. In Kshudra Roga Chikitsa

**ASHTANGAHRIDAYA**

In Ashtanga HridayaSutrasthana chapter 30 deals with Agnikarmavidhi and there are many other references of

other disease. In HaritaSamhita, Agnikarma indicated as important types of treatment out of eight types of treatment. In the context of Vatavyadhi, Chakradatta has explained the Agnikarma regarding the disease Gridhrasi. In the context of Vatavyadhi, Yogaratnakara has explained the Agnikarma regarding the disease Gridhrasi.

**MATERIALS USED FOR AGNIKARMA**

Pippali, AjaShakrut, Godanta, Shara, Shalaka, Jambavastha, Dhatu, Madhu, Madhuchista Guda, Vasa Ghruta, Taila, Yashtimadhu, Suchi, Varti, Suryakanta.

**These dahanupkarana are distributed in 3 categories.**

1. Useful in AgnikarmaChikitsa of Twakdhatu (skin). Pippali, Ajashakrut, Godanta, Shara, Shalaka.
2. Useful in AgnikarmaChikitsa of Mamsadhatu. Jambavastha, Other Loha.
3. Useful in AgnikarmaChikitsa of Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, Asthidhatu. Madhu, Guda, Sneha.

**Classification of Agnikarma****1) According to Dravya**

- a) **Snigdha Agnikarma:** Madhu, Ghrita, Taila etc. are used for Sira, Snayu, Sandhi, Asthi type of Agnikarma.
- b) **Ruksha Agnikarma:** Pippali, Shalaka, Godanta are used for Twak and MamsaDagdha.

**2) According to Site**

- a) **Sthanika (local):** Kadara, Arsha, Vicharchika
- b) **Sthanantariya (systemic):** Apachi, Gridhrasi

**3) According to Disease**

- a) In the disease like Arsha, Kadara etc. it should be done after surgical excision (Chhedan).
- b) In the disease like fistula, sinus etc. it should be done after surgical incision (Bhedana).
- c) In the disease like Krimidanta, it should be done after filling by the Guda.

**4) According to Akriti**

As described earlier in DahanaVishesha.

**5) According to Dhatu:** Sushruta gives the meaning Twak Dagdha, MamsaDagdha, Sira-snayuDagdha and AsthiDagdha. But in practice, many Chikitsaka are giving their own opinions regarding Dhatu i.e. Suvarna, Rajata, Loha, Tamra, Kansya, Panchdhatu etc.

**Agnikarma Vidhi**

**Pre-operative Measures** - Before going for agnikarma proper assessment should be made. Instruments required for agnikarma like pippali, shalaka and plot, pichu, grita, madu, source of Agni should be kept ready. Patient should be empty stomach in cases like obstructed labour, urolithiasis, fistula, in different abdominal diseases, piles and diseases of oral cavity. Pichhila anna should be given before the procedure in all the other conditions.

**Operative** - Before performing Agnikarma chanting of mantras should be done. Minutely examine the site where agnikarma has to be performed. Proper cleaning of the area should be done. Agnikarma is performed at the site until samyak dagdha lakshana appears.

**Post Operative Measures** - Gritha and madhu should be applied over the wound for proper healing. After agnikarma proper diet should be taken.

#### Indication of Agnikarma

*Vatakanṭaka, Shiroroga, Ardhavabhedaka, VratmaRoga, Pakshmakopa, ShlistaVratma, Vishavratma, Alaji, Arbuda, Puyalasa, Abhiṣyanda, Adhimantha, LaganaMedoj Oshtharoga, DantaNadi, Krimidanta, Adhidanta, Shitadanta, Dantavruddhi, Jalarbuda, Arsha, NasaArsha Karnarsha, Lingarsha, Yoniarsha, Bhagandara, ChipaKunakha, Kadara, Valmika, Jatumani, Mashaka, Tilakalaka, Charmakilai, VatajashulaVishwachi, Galagand, Gandamala, Apachi, Granti, Antravruddhi, Shlipada, Nadivrana, Upadvansha, Gulma, Vilambika, Sanyasa, Unmada, Yakruta & Plihodara, Shonita Atipravrutti, Shira Sandhi Cheda, Visarpa*

#### Contraindications of Agnikarma

*PittaPrakruti, BhinnaKostha, Daurbalya, Vruddha, AntahShonita, AnuddhrataShalya, Bala, Bhiru, Multiple Vrana, Balaka* Who is contraindicated for *Swedana* (sudation) therapy *Swedana* is contraindicated for the person and suffering from :-*Pandu, Atisara, Kshaya, GudaBhrumsha, Udararoga, NasaSanga, Chhardi, Shoshita OjaKshaya, Vigadha, RaktaPitta, Sthula, Ajirna, Kroddha, Trushna, AdhyaRogi, Garbhini Prameha, Ruksha, Daurbalya, Visha, Kshudha, Timira, Kshata*, According to *Charaka Agnikarma* should not be done in the *Vrana* of *Snayu, Marma, Netra, Kushtha* and *Vrana with Visha* and *shalya*.

#### Features of proper agnikarma<sup>[7]</sup>

**Twak dagdha**- Production of crackling sound, bad odour and contraction of skin are signs of proper agnikarma.

**Mamsa dagdha** - Color like that of pigeon i.e. ashy, dark grey, mild swelling, mild pain, dry contracted wound are the signs of proper mamsa dagdha.

**Sira snayu dagdha** - Black colourations, elevation of site, stoppage of discharge are signs of proper sira snayu dagdha.

**Sandhi asthi dagdha** - Dryness, dark red coloration, roughness and stability of part are the signs and symptoms of Sandhi asthi dagdha.

#### Agni karma kala<sup>[8]</sup>

According to Acharya Sushruta, Agni karma can be done in all seasons, except Sharad ritu (autumn) and Grishma ritu (summer). It is because in Sharad season there is a Prakopa of pitta and Agni karma also aggravates Pitta

which may lead to Pitta prakopa, leading to production of various disorders due to vitiated Pitta. Agnikarma is contraindicated in Grishma ritu as it is the hot season which will again cause Pitta aggravation. But in emergency, Agni karma can be done in any seasons.

#### DISCUSSION

Agnikarma will do instant relief of chronic pain, tissue cutting, coagulation, blending, fulguration or wound healing. The actual mechanism of action of agnikarma still remains unknown to the medical community. Some theories can be adopted to explain these mechanisms but their action varies according to the condition. The theory of pro- inflammation-according to which the induction of an acute inflammation will gather more amount of lymphocytes, neutrophils, histamines and prostaglandins to the site and rectifies the chronic inflammation present at the site. The theory of thermodynamics applied upon a biological system-suggests that when thermal energy is transferred from an instrument to a tissue its internal energy increases and the heat energy gets transferred to the cells. The thermostatic centre of the body immediately gets activated to distribute this localized rise in temperature throughout the body. As a result vasodilatation occurs and blood flow increases. According to Vant Hoff's principle the basal metabolism of the body increases by certain percentage for every 10rise in body temperature ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van't\\_Hoff\\_Equation](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van't_Hoff_Equation)). Rise in temperature induces relaxation of muscles & hence muscles spasm with inflammation and pain gets reduced. Muscles relaxes most readily when tissues are warm which in turn reduces the spasm, inflammation and pain.

#### CONCLUSION

The Agnikarma deals with the action of thermal energy in the human body. It is a potent and minimally invasive parasurgical procedure which has wide application in chronic conditions as well as in emergency management. Its applications are widely practiced in modern surgical practice-viz. cauterization, laser, radiation etc. It has a wide number of applications which may be substantiated with numerous theories. New vistas of research should be opened up in this topic for achieving a crystal clear validation of its applications in ayurveda.