



DIFFERENT METHODS OF *KSHARA KALPANA* PREPARATION ADOPTED IN CLASSICAL TEXTS – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the science of healing being practice from time immemorial. Ancient sages treated the present dreadful diseases using herbal and mineral formulations. Herbal formulations were being the easy part of treatment as the fresh plant parts or dried drugs were used. Ancient sages had the knowledge not only of these herbal plant materials but also of the minerals extracted from the earth. Many formulations were being developed depending upon the need of the patient and according to the diseases encountered, *Swarasa* (juices), *Kalka* (paste), *Kwath* (decoction), *Hima* (cold infusion), *Phanta* (hot infusion), *Kshara* (alkali), etc. In our present study we have focused upon the *Kshara Kalpana* (alkaline formulation) emphasised by the sages for treatment. *Kshara* is a strong alkaline, white powder formed by burning the dried plant parts and converting it to ashes which later on are transformed into *Kshara*. Classical texts from ancient times till the date now have given different methods in its formulation,

which modify the clinical aspect and especially the efficacy of the drug. *Kshara Kalpana* is made priorly from the plants containing latex or milk oozing plant as they contain more salts in them.

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, *Kshara Kalpana*, formulations, alkaline.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has been serving the mankind since its incarnation on to the motherland. No such disease has ever been encountered which this science couldn't treat. About 1000 single drugs and more than 8000 compound formulations are seen in various classical books of *Ayurveda*. From time to time many medicines have been introduced which generally are being called *Kalpanas* and from such *Kalpana* one such is *Kshara Kalpana*. *Kshara* is a medicament obtained from the ash of one or more plants, animal and mineral products. It is said that the diseases which are difficult to treat can be cured by *Kshara* therapy. *Kshara* therapy not only minimizes the complications but also reduces the recurrences of the diseases. *Kshara* is being said to be at the topmost place in all surgical and para surgical measures. According to *acharya Charaka*, *Kshara dravya* has *Ksharanatwa* (corrosive) in nature. *Acharya Dalhana* the commentator of *Sushruta Samhita* explained the word *Ksharana* as one which mobilizes and removes the deformed flesh, skin etc, or which removes the vitiated *Doshas*(humors) from their location. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned two types of *Kshara* preparation and has also mentioned the use of *Kshara* according to the diseases in the chapter of *Arsha Chikitsa* (piles treatment). *Chakradutta* has also described method of preparation of *Kshara Sutra* and its application. In *Sharangdhara Samhita* quality measures of *Kshara* is mentioned various and utensils are described for the preparation of *Kshara*. In *Ayurvedic* formulary of India a separate chapter/ monograph on *Lavana* (salt) *Kshara* has been included. In this formulary *Kshara* is defined as an alkaline substance. In drugs and cosmetic rule 1945, the list of machinery, equipment and minimum manufacturing premise required for the manufacture of *Kshara* are described. Studying all the classical and latest texts, the methods adopted while making *Kshara* is somewhat different from each other

which we have compiled in this study and showed the relevance of the difference.

Aim & Objective

In this review study we have focussed on the different methods the classical texts have specified and differentials in the methods adopted in the formulation of *Kshara Kalpana*.

Materials & methods

Literature of *Kshara* and *Kshara Kalpana* was collected from *Rasatarangini*, *Yogratnakar*, *Sharangdhar Samhita*, *Sushrut Samhita*, *Ayurveda Saarsangrah*, *Rasa Tantrasaar* and *Sidha prayog sangrah*.

Definition of Kshara

Kshara is a strong alkaline substance capable of *Chhedan* (excision), *Bhedan* (incision) and *Lekhan* (scraping) by its special properties it has the ability to culminate all the three humours in the body. According to *Acharya Sushrut* any substance having the capability of *Ksharan* is called *Kshara*.

Importance of Kshara

It is mentioned in the classics that the diseases which are difficult to treat can be cured by *Kshara* therapy. Various types of skin diseases can be cured easily by *Kshara* due to its *Lekhana* (Scraping) property. *Vrana Shodhana* (purification of wound) and *Ropana* (healing) properties of *Kshara* are helpful in the healing of discharge wounds.

Classification of Kshara

Ayurvedic texts described classification of *Kshara* on various bases. In *Brihtraya* (three foremost texts of *Ayurveda* viz. *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtang Hridaya Samhita*). *Kshara* are classified on the basis of their mode of application. These are *Pratisarniya* (external use) and *Paneeya* (internal use) *Kshara*. The *Pratisarniya Kshara* has been further sub classified according to its potential in to *Mridu* (mild), *Madhya* (moderate) and *Tikshna* (intense). This classification is entirely based on the strength or concentra-

tion of *Kshara* and applicable in the external use. Some other classifications of *Kshara* on different basis are also given in different texts:

On the basis of origin

1. *Vanaspatijanya* (plant origin): obtained from the plant sources e.g. *Apamarga Kshara*, *Yava Kshara*.
2. *Pranijanya* (animal origin): Obtained from the animal sources e.g. *Shankh*, *Kapardika*, *Pravala*, etc.
3. *Khanijanya* (mineral origin): Obtained from the mineral origin e.g. *Tankan* (borax), *Sarji Kshara*, *Surya Kshara* etc.

On the basis of season of preparation:

1. *Uttam* (best)- Prepared in *Greeshma* (summer season)
2. *Madhyam* (better)- Prepared in *Sharada* (autumn season)
3. *Adhama* (good)- Prepared in *Varsha* (rainy season)

Methods of preparation

In the classical texts from earlier 1500 B.C. till now, different methods have been incorporated for its formulation. All the methods being used basically first the drug whose *Kshara* has to be made is collected in *Sharad Ritu* (autumn season) and dried. Once it gets dried it is burned in a vessel or in an open place to get ashes. This ash is then mixed with water and left over for a particular time and the supernatant water is collected and filtered through a cloth and subjected to heat till all the water evaporates leaving behind whitish salt, the *Kshara*.

The above particular method is common in every text but the amount of water used, the time for sublimation, cloth and heating process are different in the various texts which we have compiled in this study and which follows this way-

1. According to *Acharya Sushrut* the dried plant is burned with *Til naal* and the ashes collected is mixed with 6 times of water or *Gomutra* (cow urine) and then filtered with a cloth 21 times and then placed on the heat for evaporation. Once the liquid starts getting denser it is removed from

flames and according to the need, drugs are added to make it *Mridu*, *Madhya* and *Tikshna Kshara*.^[1]

2. According to *Sharangdhar Samhita*, the dried plant is burned to form ashes and mixed with 4 times of water and left over for a night. Next morning carefully supernatant water is collected and subjected to heat till all the water evaporates and we get white *Kshara* in the vessel. Above method is also being proposed by *Yogratnakara*.^[2,3]
3. According to *Rasatarangini* the dried plant is burned till ashes and mixed with 4 times of water and left over for a *Yaam Kaal* (3hours). After that it is filtered through a three-layered cloth and subjected to heat till all the water gets evaporated leaving behind white coloured *Kshara*.^[4]
4. According to *Ayurved Saar Sangrah*, the dried plant is burned till ashes and mixed well with 8 times of water and left over for 2- 3 days for settle down of extra debris. After 2- 3 days the supernatant water is taken carefully and filtered through a four folded cloth seven times and filtrate is placed on flames till drying. At the end white coloured *Kshara* is obtained.^[5]
5. According to *Rasatantra saar* and *Sidha prayog sangrah*, the ashes formed after burning the dried plant parts are mixed with 16 times of water and left for over a night and next morning supernatant water is filtered and heated till all the water gets evaporated and white coloured *Kshara* is obtained in the vessel.^[6]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From the above compiled information, it is cleared from time to time different methods were being adopted for making *Kshara*. In the earliest period acharya *Sushrut* used *Til naal* with the dried drug for better ash formation as *Til naal* helps in burning, no other *Acharya* has used *Til naal* in their methods. Later *Acharya Sushrut* told to use 6 times of water or *Gomutra* for mixing it with ashes while *Sharangdhar*, *Yogratnakar* and *Rasatarangini* has used 4 times of water, *Ayurved saar sangrah* has told 8 times and *Rasa tantra saar* has used 16 times of water. After mix-

ing the ashes with water only *Acharya Sushrut* has told to filter the mixture instantaneously with a cloth 21 times while others proposed to settle the debris and ashes from 3 hours to 2- 3 days. After which the supernatant water is taken and filtered through a cloth. From the above discussion it is cleared that *Acharya Sushrut* and *Rasatarangini* does not let the ashes to settle instead they filter the whole mixture with a cloth. Both the above methods do usually affect the quality and quantity of *Kshara* formed at the end. Lastly each of the classical texts specifies to heat the liquid on flames and collect the white *Kshara* formed at the bottom, in this last step only *Acharya Sushrut* has added few more drugs accordingly to make the *Kshara Mridu, Madhya* and *Tikshna Kshar*.

CONCLUSION

Kshara Kalpana is an easy to make and rapid acting formulation with lower amount of dosage. It is used in both ways for internal ingestion and external application. From time to time the methods which *Acharya* used was being modified accordingly to the need of the *Vaidyas*. *Acharya Sushrut* method provides more elaborative way of making *Kshara* and it seems to be that this *Kshara* has the property to culminate the diseases for which it has been used, moreover the different variants of *Kshara Mridu, Madhya* and *Tikshna* shows its uses according the degree of diseases and also to the ability of the diseased person to withstand it. Other methods described elsewhere are now being adopted at the pharmaceutical levels due to its easy to make process.

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