

A Conceptual Review of Kshara (Alkaline) Prepration and It's Medicinal Usages

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Abstract

Kshara Preparations adopted within the treatment of many ailments for both internal and external usages because of its convenience, easy adoptability, cost effectiveness and curative results within a short period of time. Kshara as an alkaline substance is an important constituent in many ayurved formulations. The present study is intended to review in a brief a concept of preparation of kshara and its medicinal usage.

Keywords - Kshara, Alkaline.

Introduction

In present era herbal drugs are been widely used because of their medicinal values in health care within developed and developing countries. Kshara are alkaline substances obtained from the water soluble ashes of herbal drugs. Several kshara preparations and its medicinal usages have been explained within many Ayurved literatures like Sushruta Samhita, Sharagadhara Samhita, Rasatarangini, Dravyaguna Vigyana and Ayurveda Sara Samgraha. Kshara are also mentioned in different pharmaceutical processes to prepare formulations of metals and minerals in different text of Rasa Shastra for purification process and also to increase the potential medicinal values of metallic preparations. Kshara preparations are also been mentioned within Agadatantra to treat the effects produced by the poisonous substances as an antidote.

Kshara Definitions

- Kshara are derivatives of plant drug ashes in the form of solutions, powder or crystals, all of which have the basic quality of being alkaline.
- The prepared drug substance is called Kshara, because it causes Ksharana to Mamsa & other Dhatus¹.
- The term Kshara is derived from two root i.e. Chana“ Char” means destroyer because of its capability to destroy the substance like an unhealthy tissue of the body and vitiated flesh etc.
- In Amarkosha, Kshara term is denoted as “Kach”. This gives the meaning of movement (Sanchalan)².
- In Sabadakalpadruma, “Kshara” is derived from Dhatu “Kshara” and give the meaning of movement (Sanchalan)³.

- Analysing the derivation the word Kshara means Spandana, Hinsra and Ksharana. The root meaning of Kshara gives the meaning of violence which destroys the skin, tissues etc. from the body by cutting or destroying them⁴.
- In Sushruta Samhita, the substance that expel out the “Dusta Tvag Mamsadi” by its Ksharana action is called Kshara.
- Dalhana comments that the substance which produces Shodhana of bodily Dosha, Dhatu and Maladi because of its Ksharana action is called Kshara⁵.
- Due to its corrosive nature (Ksharanat) it is known as Kshara (alkali). Kshara is having many rasas and is dominated by katu followed by lavana as anurasa⁶.

Kshara Varga

a) Kshara Dvaya⁷

Swarjikshara and Yavakshara

b) Kshara Traya⁸

Swarjikshara, Yavakshara and Suhaga

c) Kshara Panchaka⁹

Mushkaka Kshara, Yavakshara, Palasha Kshara, Swarjikshara and Tilakshara

d) Kshara Shastaka¹⁰

Ksharas of Tila, Palasha, Vacha, Apamarga, Kutaja and Mushkaka are called as Kshara shastaka.

e) Kshara Saptaka¹¹

Ksharas of Swarji, Yava, Tankana, Suvarchika, Palasha, Gaurya and Shikhari are named as Kshara Saptaka.

f) Ksharashtaka

In Rasatarangini - Ksharas of Sudha (Snuhi), Palasha, Apamarga, Chinchu, Arka, Tila, Swarji and Yava are called as Ksharashtaka.

In Bhavaprakasha - Apamarga, Vahni, Shikhari, Chinchu, Arka, Tila, Yava and Swarjika.

In Dhanvantari Nighantu- Apamarga, Palasha, Arka, Tila, Mulaka, Yava, Swarjika and Tankana.

g). Kshara Dashaka

In Rajanighantu- Shigru, Mulaka, Palasha, Chukrika, Chitraka, Ardraka, Nimba, Ikshu, Shikhari and Mochaka.

In Rasahridaya Tantra- Tila, Apamarga, Kadali, Palasha, Shigru, Mochaka, Mulaka, Adraka, Chinchu and Ashwattha.

Types of Kshara

As per text various classifications of Kshara are available. All such classifications are based on some fundamental factors.

As per given below-

On The Basis of Application

- Sushruta¹² : Pratisaraniya (External application)
Paniya (Oral administration)
- Charaka¹³ :Pratisaraniya (External application)
Paniya (Oral administration)

- Vagbhatta¹⁴: Bahya Parimarjana, Antaha Parimarjana

On the Basis of Potency

The Pratisaraniya Kshara has been further sub classified in to tri folds¹⁵

- Mridu (Mild) - without additional drug.
- Madhyama (Moderate) - Contains Avapa dravyas.
- Tikshna (Acute) - Contains Avapa, Prativapa and some other dravyas.

This classification is entirely based on the strength or concentration of Ksharas and use for the external use.

On the Basis of Origin¹⁶

- Vanaspatija
- Praniya
- Khanija

Properties of Kshara -^{17&18}

All Ksharas are very penetrating in nature, very hot in potency, destroy worms, easily digestible, vitiate Pitta and Asruk and help digestion of other substance, help in breakup of hard masses, not good for heart, puncture the tissues. Being pungent and salty in taste they are not good to semen, ojas, hair and eye.

Kshara is Teekshna, Ushna, Laghu, Ruksha, Kledana, Paachana, Vidarana, Dagdhakarma, Dipana and Chedana.

Rasapanchaka of Kshara-¹⁹

Rasa	:	Katu
Anurasa	:	Lavana
Guna	:	Tikta
Virya	:	Ushna
Vipaka	:	Katu

Preparation

According to Acharya Sharangadhara²⁰

Dried parts of trees which exude milky sap are burnt into ash form in fire, the ash thus obtained is dissolved in four times of water in a mud pot and kept overnight, next day morning the clear supernatant water is decanted out into a clear vessel and boiled till all the water evaporates, leaving of a fire white powder at the bottom, this is known as Kshara.

According to Yadavji Trikamji²¹

Kshara Vruksha Panchangas are collected and dried, then they are burnt (burning should be done until all matter get burnt) to ash form and that ash is dissolved in six times of water in an earthen pot and kept for one night, next day morning contents should be rubbed with hands and filtered for 21 times and obtained liquid is heated, till total water content get evaporated. The heating should be over mandagni, then Kshara is obtained which is similar to the colour of Sita.

According to Rasatarangani²²

Kshara Vruksha Kaasta are dried and burnt into ash form (fine powder). The ash thus obtained is dissolved in four times of water and rubbed with hands properly and contents are kept without any disturbance for 3 hours, then contents are

filtered with three folded cloth for many times, this filtered liquid is boiled in an earthen pot till total water content get evaporated, the soft form of Kshara is obtained.

Kshara as a Treatment Modality

Almost all classics mention that Ksharas are to be used externally or internally according to the ailments of the body. Kshara has been told to be having the top most place among all surgical and parasurgical measures in Ayurveda, due to its Chedya, Bhedya, Lekhya qualities. The diseases which are difficult to treat can be cured by proper application of Kshara therapy²³. Various types of skin diseases can be cured easily by Kshara due to Lekhana property. Vrana Shodhana (purification of wound) and Ropana (healing) properties of Kshara are helpful in the healing of discharge wounds²⁴. The doses of Kshara to be applied will depend according to mode of application, i.e. for Paneeya Kshara: Uttama Matra (best quantity): 1 Pala (48 ml), Madhyama Matra (better quantity): 3 Karsha (36 ml), Heena Matra (bad quantity): ½ Pala (24 ml) and Pratisaaraneeya Kshara: as per requirement.²⁵ Kshara as an internal use dose is 250mg to 1gm.²⁶

Conclusion

Kshara therapy not only minimizes complication but also reduces recurrence of diseases.

It is mentioned in the classics, that 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 Lekhana property. Vrana Shodhana (purification of wound) and Ropana (healing) properties of Kshara are helpful in the healing of discharge wounds. Kshara in various diseases can be used as either in single medicine or in combination.

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