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Expedition of Kshara Sutra

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Abstract - Kshar sutra in ano rectal disorders has shown miraculous effects and now it's a *Precious gem* in the crown of Shalya Tantra. It is one of the very popular modality of treatment nowadays. It is first described in the scriptures of Ayurveda. Since then, how it come in the today's format; let us know regarding its History....

Key words – Kshar sutra, Sushruta, Chakra-Dutta, Bhavprakash, Vangasena, Rasatarangini, Rasa Kamadhenu.

Introduction - Sushruta the pioneer of *Kshara sutra* treatment has mentioned *Kshara sutra* in the context of *Chikitsa* of the *Nadi-Vrana*. With this reference *Kshara sutra* has been focused for *Ayurvedic* research since 1968. Since then, multi-dimensional use of *Kshara sutra* has been in practice to treat different diseases by extensive research. Keeping in mind this thought, *Kshara sutra* is being used surgically to treat the fistula in ano.

Kshara sutra is defined as a *Surgico-medicament thread* prepared with *Snuhi Ksheera*, *Kshara* and *Haridra*, which is used as a surgical tool in the disease *Bhagandara*. Regarding the thread, in treatment of *Bhagandara*, Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine (460 BC), has given its significance as *Apolinase thread*. Furstenbergh et al (1964) have mentioned the method of Apolinose by which Hippocrates treated Fistula-in-Ano. Hippocrates named the procedure of passing the ligature along the fistulous tract as *Apolinose*.

Many *Ayurvedic* authors have given the direction to use the *Snuhi Kshara Sutra* starting from *Chakradatta* to *Bhavaprakasha*. They have made use of *Haridra* and *snuhi* in *Kshara sutra* preparation but none of them have used *Kshara*.

भावितं रजनीचूर्णैः स्नुहीक्षीरे पुनः पुनः । बन्धनात् सुदृढं सूत्रं भिनत्त्यर्शो भगन्दरम् ॥

(चक्रदत्त –अर्शोधिकार)

However they all have advocated using such type of *Kshara sutra* for the treatment of fistula in Ano. Regarding this view some authors like *Charaka*, *Bhavaprakasha* and *Vangasena* have quoted the name of *Kshara sutra* to use in different diseases without specific guidelines for the preparation of *Kshara sutra*.

Chakrapani has mentioned about the methodology of *Kshara sutra* preparation in his treatise '*Chakradatta*' to treat *Bhagandara*.

In twelfth century, *Vangasena* has enumerated the preparation and application of *sutra* in his treatise that was used for the treatment of both *Arsha* and *Bhagandara*. Later on, *Bhavaprakasha* has also mentioned similar description regarding *Kshara-sutra*. Though *Chakrapani* and *Bhavaprakasha* have mentioned about the methodology of preparation of *Kshara-sutra* but they have not christened it as *Kshara-sutra*. The successive commentators have named it as *Kshara-sutra*. Though the name is *Kshara-sutra* but there is no any ingredient of *Kshara* mentioned as such in the preparation of *Kshara-sutra*.

Sushruta has advised to prepare the *Kshara-sutra* coated with *Kshara* and also paid attention to the necessity of the *Kshara* to eradicate the disease from the root. In addition, some books related to *Rasa Shasta* also have given detailed method of preparation for *Kshara-sutra*.

The description given in "Rasa Chikitsa Vimarsha" is quite similar to that of *Bhavaprakasha*. "*Rasa Kamadhenu*" has mentioned the ingredients of *Kshara Sutra*. According to this text, the threads should be first coated with *Arka* and *Snuhi Ksheera* and dried it out. This procedure should be repeated three times, followed by smearing of *Kshara* but the type of *Kshara* to be used is not mentioned. Descriptions regarding the method of coatings as well as the number of coatings are available in *Rasatarangini* –

सुधादुग्धे वस्त्रपूतहरिद्राचूर्णसंयुते । निषिकतेन तु तूलेन स्वल्पेन खलु यत्नतः ॥

प्रलिप्तं सुदृढं सूत्रं छायायामथ शोषयेत् । विलिप्य सप्तधा ह्येवं शोषयेद् भिषजां वरः ।

सूत्रमेतत्समाख्यातं क्षारसूत्रं तु नामतः । गुदांकुरच्छेदनार्थममोघास्त्रमिदं मतम् ॥

भगन्दरच्छेदनार्थमप्येतद्विनियुज्यते । प्रयोक्तव्यं क्षारसूत्रं सावधानतया सदा ॥
(र.त. 24/527-30)

According to this description, fine *Haridra Churna* should be mixed with *Snuhi Ksheera* and a thin strong thread should be dipped in this mixture and *Chhaya Shushkata* is achieved. This procedure should be repeated for seven times. The final thread thus obtained is named as '*Kshara Sutra*' by the author though it does not contain *Kshara* as a separate entity.

However it was Prof. P. J. Deshpandey at Banaras Hindu University, who took the lead after ancient Acharyas for exploring the technique, and modified and standardized it with the help of modern science and technology.

The treatment was put to clinical trials in patient of *Bhagandara* and many scientific papers published. The scientific research work titled "*Management of Fistula-in-ano, A new technique with review of 200 cases*" of Dr. Deshpande was presented at 24th Annual Surgeons and Teaching Seminar of International Academy of Proctology, San Diego, USA in 1972. Dr. P. J. Deshpande and his associates had done extensive research and had come forward with a scientific and standard method of preparing the *Kshara Sutra* for the management of *Fistula-in-ano*.

The Kshara sutra therapy which was developed by Prof. P. J. Deshpande was scientifically proved its effectiveness in multi centric trials and has emerged as a special treatment in the field of Proctology.

Apart from that, at the Department of Shalya Shalakyas, Gujarat Ayurved University, and Jamnagar many work done on Kshara-sutra treatment for the disease Bhagandara under the guidance of Prof. Kulwant Singh. Later on various other places in India and abroad started Kshara-sutra treatment in Bhagandara (Fistula-in-Ano) and piles patients.

The Kshara-sutra treatment is now a well-accepted Ayurvedic technique for treating the ano-rectal diseases viz. Fistula-in-Ano, Arsha (Piles), Parikartika (Fissures with tags) etc.

The modern surgeons have also accepted and advising this treatment to their patients who suffer from diseases of anus especially fistula- in-ano as a non-surgical management.

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and the site of the fistula track is replaced by a thin line of fibrosis as it is brought down. Some recommend prior internal sphincter division, others incorporation of the internal sphincter within the cutting seton. A variety of seton material has been used, either elastic and 'self-cutting' or non-elastic and tightened at intervals, with the sphincter being divided at varying speeds. In eastern parts of the world the same aim has been achieved by chemical cautery using an Ayurvedic method, known in India as Kshara sutra, in which a specially prepared seton thread burns through the enclosed tissue. This out-patient method has been shown to be equivalent to one-stage fistulotomy in patients with intersphincteric and distal trans-sphincteric fistulae.

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