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A Detailed Guide To Snuhi Kshara Extraction: Traditional Method

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda depends largely upon the medicinal plants for the therapy. Kshara is the herbal extract of plants. According to Sushruta, in Ksharapaka Vidhi Adhyaya he has mentioned, Kshara is considered superior to all the Shastra karma and Anu-shastra karma because Kshara performs the work of chedana, bhedana, lekhana at a time and is tridoshagna. It is one among 25 Upayantra and one among 14 Anushastras. Acharya Sushruta is pioneer of Kshara Kalpana. Kshara has both therapeutical and pharmaceutical use that it can be used both internally and externally. He also mentioned 23 plants from which Kshara can be prepared. Kshara can be prepared from combination of many herbs or may be from single herb. Kshara is useful as internal medicine in different formulation. i.e., Kshara Gutika (tablet), Vati, Kshara-Ghrita and is also useful in external application directly as Kshara Pichu, Kshara Sutra, Ksharavarti. This alkaline preparation has many therapeutic usages and used in many surgical procedures. Kshara is useful as the substitute of surgical instruments, because it can be used safely on the patients who are afraid of surgery. It has been proved to be effective in treating many disorders like Dushta Vrana, Bhagandara, Arsha, Charmakeela, Ashmari, Gulma, Udara, Kushtha, Rohini etc. External application of Kshara is indicated in children, weak persons and decrepiti. In this paper we have described the preparation of Snuhi Kshara.

Key words: Snuhi Kshara, Tridoshaghna, Upayantra, Anushastra

INTRODUCTION

Kshara is a caustic chemical, alkaline in nature obtained from the ashes of medicinal plants. Acharya Sushruta has described in detail regarding Kshara by dedicating a separate chapter in Sutrasthana i.e., Ksharapaka Vidhi Adhyaya. The prepared drug substance is called Kshara because it causes Ksharana (destruction) and Kshanana (torment) of Mamsa and other Dhatu¹. Kshara is described as one among the Anu-shastras² and one of the Upakrama for Vrana (Wound)³. It is the superior most among the sharp and subsidiary instruments because of performing Chedana (excision), Bhedana (incision), Lekhana (scraping) and Tridoshaghna⁴. Ksharakarma is more effective than the other modalities of treatment, because they can be administered both internally and externally. The classification of Kshara can be done in various ways on the basis of administration i.e., Paneeya and Pratisaraneeya kshara⁵, on the basis of concentration i.e., Mrudu, Madhyama and Tikshna⁶. Sushruta mentioned different plants as: Mushkaka, kutaja, Palasha, Ashwakarna, Paribhadra, Bhibitaka, Aragvadhya, Tilwaka, Arka, Snuhi, Apamarga, Patala, Naktamala, Vrusha, Kadali, Chitraka, Putika, Asphota, Ashwamaraka, Saptachhada, Agnimantha, Gunja, Koshataki⁷. It has been proved to be effective in treating many disorders like Dushta Vrana, Bhagandara, Arsha, Charmakeela, Ashmari, Gulma, Udara, Kushtha, Rohini etc⁸. In Harita Samhita, Kshara karma is included in the eight important types of treatment. Kshara is not too sharp, not too mild, too white, smooth, slimy, non-spreading, wholesome and quickly acting. Because of its whiteness it is prominent in soma inspite of its potency for burning, digestion, tearing etc. It is antagonized due to prominence of properties of igneous drugs, it is Katu, Ushna, Teekshna, Krimi, Ama, Kapha, Visha and Medas. Excessive use may lead to impotency.

Acharya Sushruta emphasizes on the fact that, when the Kshara administered by an ignorant physician can harm the body like Agni, Shastra and Vajra or death itself. While the same Kshara when administered by an intelligent and well skilled physician can prove potent enough to subside all serious and most troublesome disease rapidly in which it is indicated. Thus, Kshara karma has been considered as a wealth and a strong weapon in Ayurvedic Pharmacopeia.

Further Sushruta observes that Kshara may be ineffective, if used in Kshara Asadhya vyadhi if it is complicated by edema, pain in the bones, aversion for food, pain in pericardial region and joints.

Gunas of kshara mentioned by Acharya Sushruta

SL.NO	Qualities
1	Na-atiteekshna
2	Na-atimridu
3	Shukla
4	Slakshna
5	Picchila
6	Avishyanda

7	Shiva
8	Sheeghrakaari

Doshas of kshara mentioned by Acharya Sushruta

SL.NO	Doshas
1	Ati mruduta
2	Ati ushnata
3	Ati shweta
4	Ati teekshna
5	Ati picchila
6	Ati visarpita
7	Saandrata
8	Apakwata
9	Heenadravyata

Preparation of Snuhi Kshara

The physician who prepares the Kshara should have bath early in the morning of Sharad Ritu (Autumn season) on auspicious day.



He should fast on that day and go the farm and look for **Snuhi** plants that are middle aged and free from insects.



The Panchangas of plants should be collected, cut into small pieces and dried under the shade.



Then these are burnt. While burning the dispersed parts of the plants are kept with the help of Tilanala.



When the ash of Snuhi cools down, it should be separated from the residue of Bhasma Sharkara.



The collected ash should be mixed well with six times of water or cow's urine and kept for overnight, then filtered twenty-one times in a big vessel through a piece of cotton cloth.



The residual portion is thrown away and the filtrate (Ksharodaka) should be kept on Mandagni and stirred continuously well until it reduces to 1/3rd.



The obtained powder is **Snuhi** kshara

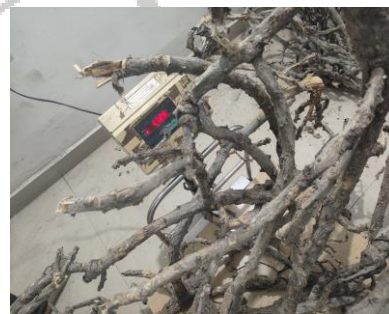
Collection of Snuhi



Dried under shade



Weighing of dried Snuhi



Burning of Snuhi

Ash collected

Ash soaked in 6parts of water



Filtration

After filtration

Kept for boiling



Thickening of filtrate

Snuhi kshara



Classification of Kshara

<p>On the basis of Administration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pratisaraneeya (External application) 2. Paneeya (Oral administration)
<p>On the basis of concentration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mrudu 2. Madhyama 3. Teekshna

Indication of Pratisaraneeya Kshara

Pratisaraneeya kshara is indicated in many diseases such as, Kushtha, Kitibha Kilasa, Mandala kushtha, Bhagandara, Dushtavrana, Nadivrana, Bahyavidradhi, Arbuda, Charmakeela, Tilakalaka, Nyachha, Vyanga, Mashaka, Saptamukhroga i.e., Upajivha Adhijivha, Upakusha, Dantavaidarbha, Vataja, Pittaja and Kaphaja Rohini.

Indication of Paneeya Kshara

Garavisha, Gulma, Udararoga, Agnisanga, Ajirna, Arochaka, Aanaha, Sharkara, Ashmari, Aabhyantara vidhradhi, Krumi and Arsha.

Contra-indication of Kshara

Before the Kshara using it is necessary to observe the fitness of the patient. The contraindications of Kshara can be classified into following groups.

According to diseases	Raktapitta, Praviddha Jwara, Trishna, Udararoga, Murchha, Hridroga, Prameha, Shiroroga, Panduroga, Sarvaanga Shopha and Raktajagulma.
According to physical and mental state of the patient	Children, phobic persons, aged, menstruating women, pregnant women, Durbala, Ruksha persons, Shukra-ksheena persons
According to sites	Arteries, joints, vital parts, cartilages, veins, ligaments, throat, umbilicus, penis, insufficient musculature, nailed, testis, all parts of the eye except eye lid.
According to seasons	Summer, autumn and cloudy weather.

Note: The above contraindications are applicable both for Paneeya and Pratisaraneeya Kshara.

Kshara Matra:

Paneeya Kshara: ½ Pala- 1 Pala (Chakrapani)

Pratisaraneeya Kshara: Nakhotashedha (Sushruta)

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION:

Snuhi Kshara is unique formulation of Upavisha Snuhi mentioned in classical texts. Though the raw drug seems to be uncommon, but it can be made available by inspecting local fields and hilly areas. As Snuhi is xerophytic plant it contains latex in bulk quantity due to which it takes more time to get dried up in shade. In this study we have collected 108 kgs of fresh snuhi and kept it for drying. After six months of time the snuhi was completely dried. The dried snuhi when weighed was 16 kgs. In the present work final product obtained was 400gm. The total duration required to obtain Kshara from Ksharajala was 6hrs. The observation made from this study is that it takes more time to prepare snuhi kshara as it takes more time to get dried up when compared to other plants. Data evolved from physico-chemical analysis can be incorporated for laying down standards for manufacturing, processing and ascertaining the authenticity of Snuhi Kshara for further studies.

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