A Critical Review On Therapeutic Uses Of Shankha Bhasma

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Abstract- Shankha is one of the Calcium-enriched animal origin marine materials used in Ayurvedic practice in form of Shankha bhasma, known by the Indians since vedic period, but its internal application as a medicine has been recognised from Charak Samhita period. Rasa Tarangini (a classical 20th century book on Ayurvedic pharmaceutical medicine) has detailed elaborative description of the pharmaceutical processing of Shankha to derive its Bhasma. It is used since ancient Indians to treat various ailments like Ajirna (indigestion), Agnimandhya (decreased enzymatic secretion), Amlapitta (acidity), Grahani (irritable bowel syndrome) etc. The present study is designed to compile and accesses all the relevant and standard work done related to Shankha bhasma preparation in addition to standardization in terms of its pharmaceutical and analytical parameters. Relevant literatures of ancient India related to ayurvedic pharmaceutics for preparation of SB along with contemporary research databases and various other appropriate contents on the internet were thoroughly searched. This work may provide an insight into its potential effect in characterization and therapeutics, eventually leading to betterment of human life.

Keywords- Shankha, Bhasma, Ajirna, Agnimandhya, Amlapitta, Grahani.

Introduction- Shankha bhasma is one of the extensively used ayurvedic formulation constituting the calcinated conch which was placed in the Sudha Varga in Classical Rasa text. In Rasa Tarangini, two types of Shankha are mentioned: Dakshinavarta (Dextrorotated) & Vamavarta (Levorotated). Dakshinavarta Shankha has been used in the worship of God, whereas Vamavarta Shankha is very common and found the world over\(^1\). So it is therapeutically useful for preparing Shankha bhasma. Classical Rasa Text mentioned about pharmaceutical processing of Shankha bhasma, such as Shodhana and Marana.
Table 1: Shankha at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Synonyms</th>
<th>English Name</th>
<th>Chemical Name</th>
<th>Varna (color)</th>
<th>Grahya Swarupa</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Shodhana</th>
<th>Marana</th>
<th>Dose</th>
<th>Guna</th>
<th>Karma</th>
<th>Anupana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Shankha, Shankhaka, Kambu, Trirekha, Samudraja, Sunada, Dirghnada, Kamboja(2); Kshudra, Shankhanaka(5).</td>
<td>Conch Shell</td>
<td>Calcium carbonate (CaCO₃)</td>
<td>Shweta varna looks like Moon(4)</td>
<td>Golakara (round), Snigdha (smooth), Suksha Mukha, Guru (5)</td>
<td>(a) Dakshinavarta (Right faced is best for yoga and spiritual work) (b) Vamavarta(Left faced is used for medicinal purposes)(6)</td>
<td>Svedana in dola yantra containing Amla Rasa (Jambiri Swarasa for four prahara) &amp; (Jayanti Swarasa, Tanduliya Swarasa, Kanji for one prahara) (7).</td>
<td>Shuddha Shankha is set into small pieces and kept inside the sarava, fire in Gaja puta system of heating, after self cooling subjected to bhavana with Ghrita kumari swarasa, made into pillets and kept inside the sarava, sealed then dried and fired in Gaja puta. Finally after self cooling white color Shankhabhasma obtained (8).</td>
<td>2 Ratti(9)</td>
<td>Kshariya, Sheeta, Grahi, Sangrahani nashaka, Netrapushpahara, Varnya, Yuvanapidikahara etc.(10)</td>
<td>Nimbu swarasa, Trikatu churna, Amalaki churna, Haldi churna(11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Formulations containing Shankha Bhasma and their Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Formulation</th>
<th>Ingredient Metals/Minerals</th>
<th>Ingredients Herbal/Others</th>
<th>Processed in</th>
<th>Indication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Rasa Name</td>
<td>Ingredients</td>
<td>Ativisha Kwatha</td>
<td>Smriti, Indriyabalapada</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Lekhanajana (S.S.U.K.13/106)</td>
<td>Shell of Hen’s egg, Manahsil a, Kachha, Shankha, Saindhavalavana</td>
<td>Chandan</td>
<td>Pushpa (Scar), Arm (Pterygium)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Rasa Name</td>
<td>Ingredients</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Mriganka Pottali Rasa (R.R.S. 14/18-20)</td>
<td>Shankha Churna, Rasa Sindoor, Shuddha Gandhaka</td>
<td>Godugdha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
   Shankha Churna, Haratala, Manahshila, Swarjika Kshara  
   Water  
   Prevent the Growth of Hair

20. **Sarvangasundarara rasa** (B.R. 14/195-201)  
   Shu. Parada, Shu. Gandhaka, Shu. Tankana, Shu. Hingula, Mukta, Pravala, Swarna, Tikshna Lauha & Shankhabhasma  
   Nimbu swarasa  
   Rajyajashka ma, Arsha, Prameha, Gulma, Bhagandara

21. **Shankha Vati** (B. R. 10/187)  
   Shu. Parada, Shu. Gandhaka, Shu. Tankana, Shu. Haratala, Lauha, Tamra, Tuttha, Vanga & Shankhabhasma, Lavanga churna, Dantimula churna, Nishotha churna, Ajamoda churna, Sudha vatsanabha Ajvayien, Yavakshara churna, Sarjikshara churna, saindhava, Maricha churna Panchalavana  
   Ardraka swarasa, Panchakol a phanta, Guduchi swarasa  
   Plee havridhi Pandu roga, Prameha, Visthambha, Grahan i, Arsha, Kasa, Swasa, Pratishyay, Yaksha, Amlapitta, Shoola, Bhagandara, Udararoga

22. **Sankha Dravaka Rasa** (B.R. 41/167-174)  
   Shankha bhasma, Shu. Sphatika, Yava Kshara, Sarji Kshara, Tankana Kshara, Panchalavana  
   Udara roga, Gulma, Plihodara, Ajirna, Grahan i, Vishuchika

23. **Shankha Dravaka** (R.T. 12/35-42)  
   Shu. Shankha churna, Tankana, Alum, Suhaga, Swarjika Kshara, Yaya kshara, Nauvsadara, Panchalavana  
   Agnimandya, Visuchika, Udararoga, Gulma, Pliha, Arsha, Mutrakricch a

24. **Shankha Kalpa** (R.T. 12/30-34)  
   Kajjali, Varatika & Shankhabhasma, Pippali churna  
   Nimbu swarasa  
   Sangrahani, Shula, Gulma, Udararoga

25. **Shankheswar a Rasa** (R.R.S. 14/24-25)  
   Rasa Sindoor, Tankana, Shu. Gandhaka, Varatika, Tuttha, Naga & Shankhabhasma,  
   Goat Milk  
   Rajyaksham a

26. **Shankha Varti** (R.T. 12/16)  
   Shu. Shankha churna, Saindhavalavana, Samudraphena  
   Shigrubeja churna  
   Water  
   Netraroga

27. **Trirekha Vartika** (R.T. 12/12-14)  
   Shu. Manahshila, Shu. Shankha churna  
   Pippali Churna, Kali Maricha Churna,  
   Water  
   Timir, Netrarjuna
Discussion

Quality control and standardization is an important step in drug development. Several herbal or metal-mineral based drugs are being developed in the past decades apart from classical medicines\(^{[12-31]}\). Shankha (Conch Shell) is known since Vedic period, but its internal application as medicine has recognized from Samhita period. Specific description about its therapeutic use has not been made available during Vedic period. However in Samhita period Shankha has been used as a ingredient in few formulations. But during the Nighantus period systemic and detailed description about identification, verities, Shodhana, Marana, physical properties and therapeutic indications of Shankha bhasma are mentioned. In this study, it is found that Shankha Bhasma is a therapeutic agent with high pharmacological and therapeutic properties. In Rasa Shastra literatures so many formulations of Shankha Bhasma are described in the context of treatment of diseases like Udara roga, Grahani, Gulma, Agnimandya, Amlapitta, Parinamashoola, Swasa, Yamana, Vishuchika, Arsha, Kushtha, Prameha, Netraroga and other chronic disease.

Conclusion

Shankha is one of the calcium enriched animal origin material used in Ayurvedic practice and have a wide range of therapeutic efficacy in acute and chronic diseases. It is frequently used in the form of bhasma with other herbomineral drugs mainly in the treatment Udara roga, Gulma, Rajyakshma, Kasa, Swasa, Arsha, Ajirna, Grahani etc. It was observed in this review study that maximum number of above mentioned formulations having Shankha bhasma mainly indicated in Udara roga, Gulma, Ajirna, Arsha & Grahani.

Reference


