



# Review Study On Dhupana Karma (Fumigation) In KaumARBhritya.

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## ABSTRACT-

After birth, an infant is immediately exposed to the external environment, which contains billions of microorganisms. While the majority of these microbes are harmless, some can cause serious health risks—especially to newborns with compromised immunity. Therefore, maintaining a sterile environment in neonatal care units like Kumaragara (Infant's Abode and NICU) is essential to minimize microbial proliferation. Ayurveda emphasizes Raksha Karma (protective practices) for both wound management (Vrana Upakrama) and neonatal care (Navajaata- Shishu -Paricharya). Within this framework, Dhoopan Karma—a traditional fumigation method—is recognized for its disinfectant properties and potential in preventing and managing infectious diseases in newborns.

Given the constant changes in microbial populations and the increasing resistance to conventional agents, Ayurvedic fumigation offers a promising alternative to formaldehyde-based sterilization, which may be used in hospitals despite its known health hazards. Some studies have reported the antimicrobial efficacy of bioactive compounds found in Dhoopan formulations. However, the lack of comprehensive scientific validation, standardized dosage forms, and well-defined methodologies limits its formal acceptance as a sterilization protocol.

This paper aims to explore the advantages and limitations of implementing Dhoopan Karma as a sterilization strategy in neonatal care settings.

**Keywords-**Rakshakarma ,Dhoopana, Fumigation, Sterilization.

## INTRODUCTION-

### 1. Dhoopana in Newborn Care-

Several classical Ayurvedic scholars highlight Dhoopana (medicated fumigation) as a key element in the postnatal care of newborns. It is traditionally categorized under Rakshakarma, a protective regimen intended to ensure the health and stability of infants. Rakshakarma includes various practices like using clean clothing, sanitized bedding, and fumigation with Rakshoghna dravyas (protective herbs) to shield the baby from infections. Dhoopana offers numerous benefits such as promoting wound healing (vrana shamana), purifying the environment by eliminating harmful microbes, and reducing foul smells, discharges, and general discomfort. By creating an aseptic atmosphere through fumigation, it helps prevent the onset of infections in newborns.

### 2. Respiratory and Allergic Conditions-

Airborne infections are among the most common causes of respiratory illnesses. These diseases often spread through aerosol droplets released by infected individuals via coughing, sneezing, or nasal secretions, contaminating the surrounding air. Hence, it becomes essential to disinfect the area, either with chemical solutions or through fumigation. Although rarely used today, Dhoopana serves as a traditional yet effective method of fumigation. Specific formulations known as Dhoopkalpas are used for this purpose, offering a safe and quick means to reduce the spread of airborne pathogens. Herbs such as Tulsi (Basil), Nilgiri (Eucalyptus), Kapoor (Camphor), and essential oils like Clove oil (Lavang tail) are commonly used in such practices.

### 3. Balgraha and Spiritual Protection

Ancient Ayurvedic texts describe various Balgrahas, believed to be subtle or invisible forces responsible for sudden illnesses in children. These entities are thought to disrupt the child's health and cause a range of ailments. Protection from such influences was managed through spiritual and ritualistic means, including mantras, havan, yadnya, and Daivavyapashraya chikitsa (faith-based therapies), in addition to conventional treatments. Fumigation, along with prayers and offerings (like homa, poojas), was considered essential. Herbs such as Karanja, Sarshapa (mustard seeds), Vacha, Ajmoda, and ghee were often used in the fumigation process to ward off these negative influences and ensure the child's well-being.

**4. Nabhiroga:** The navel (nabhi) is considered the root and origin of life in a child. In the treatment of Nabhiroga (navel disorders), dhoopana (medicated fumigation) is commonly used due to its antifungal properties. Herbs such as Guggulu, Haridra (turmeric), and Lodhra are typically utilized for this purpose. In cases of Nabhipaka (umbilical abscess), Sarshapa (mustard) is applied for vrashodhana (wound cleansing), followed by vranaropana karma (wound healing measures). When pus is present in the umbilical area, rock salt is applied to aid in drying the affected region.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD-

This review article is based on a comprehensive analysis of classical Ayurvedic texts, including Kashyap Samhita, Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, and Ashtanga Sangraha. In addition, relevant information was gathered through systematic searches of online databases such as PubMed, Scopus, AYUSH Research Portal, DHARA, and Google Scholar. The collected material was carefully compiled, organized, and critically reviewed to ensure thorough and accurate interpretation.

**1)Charaka Samhita-** It offers detailed guidance on newborn care under the concept of Raksha Karma, emphasizing hygiene and protective measures against environmental infections. It advises antiseptic practices involving clothing, bedding, and the surrounding space. In the Sutikagara—the postnatal room where the mother resides—branches of plants like Adani, Khadira, Karakandhu, Pilu, Parushaka, yellow mustard (Sarshapa), flax (Atasi), and rice particles (Tandulakan-kanika) should be hung. Sarshapa and Atasi seeds are to be spread across the floor. A fire ritual called Tandul Bali Homa should be performed twice daily—once in the morning and once in the evening. Near the entrance, a pestle (musal) should be placed at an angle. The fire in the room should be sustained using woods such as Tinduka and Ingudi (kana-kantaka).

Medicinal substances with protective qualities, including Vacha, Kushtha, Hingu, Sarshapa, Atasi, Lasuna, and Guggulu, should be bundled and placed at the door, and similar protective bundles should be tied around the necks of both mother and baby. Trustworthy and skilled women are tasked with staying alert and caring for the newborn around the clock during the initial 10 to 12 days. The postnatal room should be enriched with auspicious items and gifts. The atmosphere should be joyful, with chanting, blessings, music, and the presence of cheerful and devoted individuals. A knowledgeable person, preferably trained in the Atharvaveda, is responsible for performing the Homa or Shanti Patha (a ritual of peace and protection) each morning and evening for the well-being of both mother and child.<sup>(1)</sup>

**2)Sushruta Samhita** - the infant should be wrapped in a soft linen cloth (kshauma) and laid on a bed covered with similar soft fabric. Twigs from trees such as Pilu, Badar, Nimba, and Parushaka should be used to gently fan the child. Each day, an oil-soaked cotton swab (Taila Pichu) should be applied to the baby's head. The postnatal room should also be fumigated. The hand, feet, head, neck, and other vital parts of the body should be protected using specific Rakshoghna (protective) herbal applications. Ingredients like Tila (sesame), Atasi (linseed), Sarshapa (mustard seeds), and Tandul(broken rice) are traditionally scattered throughout the maternity room (Sutikagara) to maintain a spiritually and physically clean environment. A constant fire source (Agni) should be present, and care should follow the principles outlined under the management of wounds (Vranitopasniya).

Sushruta, a pioneer in surgery, outlined sixty distinct approaches for wound care, known as Shashti Upakrama. Among these, Raksha Karma or Rakshavidhan plays a crucial role in protecting the wound site. The practice includes fumigation using medicinal and protective herbs to relieve pain and prevent infection, accompanied by the chanting of protective mantras. Sushruta specifically recommends fumigating wounds with a blend of powdered Guggulu (Commiphora mukul), Nimba (Neem) leaves, Agaru (Aquilarria), Sarjarasa (resin), Vacha (Acorus calamus), mustard seeds (Sarshapa), Saindhava (rock salt), and clarified butter (Ghrita). Any leftover medicated ghee is to be applied over critical areas (Marma points) of the patient. Mantras should be chanted to guard against malevolent forces such as Rakshasas (demons), Nagas (serpent spirits), Pishas (ghouls), Yakshas (nature spirits), and Nishacharas (night spirits).<sup>(2)</sup>

**3)Acharya Vaghbata** -has echoed similar Raksha Karma practices as outlined by Charaka. He further emphasizes the use of herbs like Brahmi, Indrayana, Jivaka, and Rishabhaka to be tied around the neck or wrists of newborns. Additionally, Vaghbata prescribes the use of Balvacha, which enhances intellect (Medha), memory (Smriti), health (Swasthya), and longevity (Ayu) in infants.<sup>(3)</sup>

**4)Ashtanga Samgraha-** cotton pouches filled with ingredients like Hingu (asafoetida), Vacha, Turushka, and mustard seeds should be tied to the upper frame of the door, near the infant's bed or cradle, and also around the mother's and baby's necks for protection.

Fumigation (Dhupana) of the baby's living space is also recommended, using materials such as dried crow feathers, Trivrit (Operculina turpethum), Vacha, Kustha, mustard seeds, and ghee. Vaghbata also stresses the significance of the sixth night after childbirth. On this night, it is advised that family and well-wishers stay awake to safeguard the newborn. Ancient Ayurvedic scholars have emphasized that the early neonatal period—up to six days post-birth—is highly vulnerable to infections. Once this critical phase passes, the risk of complications decreases, improving the infant's chances of survival.<sup>(4)</sup>

**5) Arogyakalpadruma-** it is suggested that the nursery (Kumaragara) be purified through fumigation. Substances like the horns and hooves of animals such as Krishna Mriga (black deer), Saralu, Laya, and Avi (sheep/goat), along with Gandhaka (sulfur), Gojihva (Leucas aspera), and white mustard seeds (Sweta Sarshapa), are ground with butter and heated to release protective fumes.<sup>(5)</sup>

**6)Kashyapa Samhita** -places significant emphasis on the practice of Dhupana, dedicating an entire chapter titled Dhupa Kalpa Adhyaya to it. This section details various fumigation preparations and their therapeutic uses. Ayurveda recommends multiple preventive practices such as Sadvritta (ideal conduct), Ritucharya (seasonal regimens), Rasayana (rejuvenation therapy), and Dhupana (fumigation), among others. Of these, fumigation is especially crucial in preventing hospital-acquired infections and ensuring community health. Kashyapa notes that proper fumigation can bring success to the physician, ensure the well-being of offspring, and aid in disease prevention.

Fumigation is classified into three types based on its purpose: Dhupa (main fumigation), Anudhupa (subsequent fumigation), and Pratidhupa (counter-fumigation). Intense fumigation (Dhupa) is employed in severe conditions, but since it may cause side effects, it should be followed by Anudhupa to balance the effects.<sup>(6)</sup>

## DISCUSSION-

Dhoopan Chikitsa is a traditional practice known for its dual ability to purify and sanitize the environment. It is simple to perform, safe, cost-effective, and increasingly popular as a natural method of fumigation. When prepared using appropriate herbs and formulations, Dhoopan has demonstrated various therapeutic effects, including antiseptic, antimicrobial, antifungal, antiviral, antibacterial, and antipyretic properties. Such effects make it highly effective in preventing the spread of infectious diseases, especially during epidemics.

Dhoopan serves as a potential method to limit transmission. The substances used in this practice are often readily available in households, making it convenient to carry out Dhoopana Karma for disinfection purposes in day to day life. Ayurvedic texts detail numerous Dhoopan formulations, suggesting its significant role in managing infectious conditions.

## CONCLUSION-

To maximize its public health impact, Dhoopan should be made accessible for patient care. As a natural, eco-friendly, and low-cost tool against harmful microbes, the current need lies in the standardization, specialized formulation, and effective promotion of these traditional preparations. The Brihatrayi highlights a variety of Dhoopana Kalpanas, which aim to enhance health, combat disease, and purify the surroundings. These preparations have been widely utilized for generations.

Beyond therapeutic applications, Dhoopan also offers environmental benefits such as insect control and air purification. Unlike modern sterilization techniques—such as formalin gas fumigation—which pose health risks and may be carcinogenic, traditional Dhoopana Karma presents a safer, more sustainable alternative. Given this context, a deeper exploration and integration of this ancient Indian practice into modern health care is both relevant and necessary.

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