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Conceptual review of *Ghrita* w.s.r. to its *Medhya Karma*

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ABSTRACT

"*Ghrita*" obtained from *Ksheera* and *Dadhi* is considered to be *Snehottama*, having many good effects on human body and mind. One among being the *Medhya Karma* which is considered to be power of grasping and retention. *Ghrita* is being considered as *Ajasrika Rasayana* can be consumed on daily basis, therefore nourishing the *Saptadhatu* and *Ojas* which is important for proper functioning of body and mind. The effects are said to increase many folds when processed with other specified *Dravyas*. *Ghrita* is also known best for its *Medhya Karma* where the fat crosses the blood brain barrier thus helps in better absorption of *Dravyas* which will help in improving the higher mental functions.

Key words: *Ghrita*, *Goghrita*, *Medhya Karma*.

INTRODUCTION

Ghrita (Ghee) which is said to be one among the *Ajasrika Rasayana* i.e., if it is used on daily basis has an effect as *Rasayana* which nourishes all the *Dhatus* and enriches the body with nutrients is also said to possess the *Medhya* property. One who is willing to improve *Dhi*, *Dhruti* and *Smriti*, *Ghrita* is the best source.^[1] *Ghrita* assimilates the properties of the drugs which accompanies it. It carries active principles of drugs, intensifies the potency of the compound drug thousand times and develops manifold utilities.^[2] Drugs given in the form of ghee are rapidly absorbed and distributed in the target areas of the body. Power

of acquisition or grasping *Medhya Karma*.^[3] Drugs which are responsible for *Medhya Karma* are called as *Medhya*.^[4] That which enhances the *medha* is *Medhya*.

Intelligence^[5] can be defined as a general mental ability for reasoning, problem solving and learning. It is something that helps us plan, reason, solve problems, quickly learn, think on our feet, make decisions and ultimately, survive in the fast, modern world. To compete in this present competitive world, one should be physically and mentally fit. Mental health can be maintained by taking drugs which enhances the higher mental functions, which can be achieved by *Medhya Dravyas*. *Medhya Dravyas* processed with ghee is the best medicine to improve to the intelligence, memory and other cognitive functions.

Types of *Ghrita*

There are about 8 types of *Ghrita* based on the source of milk; they are *Goghrita*, *Mahisha*, *Aja*, *Avika*, *Hasti*, *Ushtra*, *Vadava* and *Stri Ghrita*.^[6]

Among them *Goghrita* is considered to have *Medha Vardhaka* property and to have the action of *Rasayana*.

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Properties and functions of Goghrita^[7]

- Rasa : Madhura Rasa
- Guna : Guru
- Virya : Sheeta Virya
- Vipaka : Madhura
- Karma : Rochaka, Chakshushya, Vrushya, Agnivardhaka, Tridosahara, Medha, Varnya, Kanta and Tejo Vruddhikara, Balya, Vayasthapaka, Pavitrya, Ayushya, Mangalakara and Rasayana .

Based on method of preparation, Ghrita is of two types Dugdha Nisruta and Navaneeta Nisruta

- a) **Dugdha Nisruta Ghrita** : In this type Butter is obtained from churning the cream of the milk and subjecting to heat processing gives Dugdha Nisruta Ghrita.
- b) **Navaneeta Nisruta Ghrita** : This is general method of preparation where Butter is obtained from churning the curd and heating this butter yields in Ghrita.

Properties of both Ghrita are tabulated below.

Table 1: Showing the properties of Ksheerottha and Navaneetottha Ghrita

Properties	Ksheerottha Ghrita ^[8]	Navaneetottha Ghrita ^[9]
Rasa	Madhura	Madhura
Guna	Guru	Guru
Virya	Sheeta	Sheeta
Vipaka	Madhura	Madhura
Karma	Tarpana, Sukumarakrut, Grahi, Pitta Rakta Roga Hara, Vatahara	Jivana, Brahmana, Vrushya, Varnya, Agnidipana, Smriti Mati Medha Kanti Oja Balakara, Ayushya, Medhya Rakshoghna, Vishahara, Vayasthapaka, Shleshakara

Rogagnata	Daha, Mada, Murcha, Bhrama	Unmada, Apasmara, Shula, Jwara, Anaha, Vatapitta Shamana,
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Purana Ghrita i.e., old ghee kept for about 1-100 years is said to possess Medhya property.^[10]

Medhya Rasayana Yogas

Acharya Charaka explained Four Medhya Rasayana Yogas which enhances the intellect; they are Manduka Parni Swarasa, Yashtimadhu Choorna with Ksheera, Guduchi Swarasa and Shankapushpi Kalka.^[11]

According to Acharya Sushruta, Satata Adhyayana, Vaada, Paratantra Avalokana, Tadvidhya Patina and Acharya Seva all these are considered as Buddhi and Medha Vardhaka Gana.^[12]

Commonly used Medha Vardhaka Dravyas mentioned in Samhitas are Shweta Bakuchi, Mandukaparni, Brahmi, Vacha, Yashtimadhu, Guduchi, Shankapushpi, Haritaki, Matulunga, Gambhari, Rasona, Bhallataka, Shatavari.

When Ghrita Kalpana prepared with the Dravyas possessing the entity responsible for Medhya Karma, such a Ghrita can be administered to enhance the intellect. Eventhough Go-Ghrita is said to be Medhya in general the properties of its Medhya Karma increase when processed with other drugs such as Vacha, Suvarna, Yastimadhu etc.

Acharyas give many numbers for formulations which have Medhya Karma such as Hingwadi ghrita.^[13] Panchagavya Ghrita,^[14] Kalyanaka Ghrita,^[15] Martyamruta Ghrita,^[16] Mahapaishachaka Ghrita,^[17] Brahmi Ghrita,^[18] Phala Sarpi,^[19] Saraswata Ghrita,^[20] Ashtamangala Ghrita,^[21] Ashtanga Ghrita.^[22]

DISCUSSION**Probable mode of action of Ghrita as Medhya****Role on Doshas**

Vata Dosh governs general outlook on life, upbeat mood and enthusiasm for life. According to Kashyapa Samhita equilibrium of Vata Dosh yields in Medha Vruddi and its imbalance results in its deterioration.^[23]

Medhya is *Prakruta Karma* of *Pitta Dosha*.^[24] *Ashu* and *Teekshnatwa* of *Pitta Dosha* stimulates *Satwa Guna* and helps in grasping and recalling the information. *Vagbhatacharya*^[25] while explaining the *Sthana* and function of *Sadhaka Pitta*, explains *Hridaya* is the seat of *Sadhaka Pitta* and *Buddhi*, *Medha*, *Utsaha* and *Abhiprethartha Sadhana* are its functions.

Dharana and *Sthiratwa*^[25] is *Prakruta Karma* of *Kapha Dosa* responsible for retention of the information.

Ghrita having the *Karma Vata-Pittahara*, alleviates *Pitta Dosha* and regulates *Vata Dosha*, thus helping in controlling the mind and helping in retention of the information.

Role of Rasa in Medhya Karma

Acharya Vagbhata under the context of individual *Rasa* properties and its functions, he mentioned *Medhya Karma* as function of *Tikta Rasa*.^[26]

Pitta Dosha is responsible for *Medhya Karma* and equilibrium of *Pitta* is maintained by taking *Ghrita* which is specially processed with *Tikta Rasa* like *Guduchi*, *Brahmi*, *Shankapushpi* acts as *Pitta Hara*.

Role of Vaya with Medha

From the birth there are many *Yogas* mentioned to improve the *Medha* of the new born.

Vagbhatacharya mentioned *Hemaraja* (gold powder) in less quantity to be administered with *Vacha*, *Churna*, *Madhu* and *Ghrita* for the duration of one year to improve *Medha*.^[28]

Sushruta mentioned four methods to improve *Medha*, *Varna* and *Bala* of the child immediately after explaining *Garbhini Chikitsa*.^[29]

1. *Suvarna Churna* with *Kushta*, *Vacha Churna*, *Madhu* and *Ghrita*
2. *Suvarna* with *Matsyaksha*, *Shankapushpee*, *Madhu* and *Ghrita*
3. *Suvaran*, *Arkapushpee*, *Madhu* and *Ghrita*
4. *Hemachurna*, *kaidarya*, *Shweta Durva*, *Madhu* and *Ghrita*

5. *Vasamula Kwatha Siddha Taila*,^[30] *Shweta Bacuchi Churna*,^[31] and *Vacha Yogas* are single drug formulations used to improve the *Medha*.

Researches have shown the Lipid-soluble substances can cross blood brain barrier easily, whereas non lipid soluble substances and proteins reach the brain much more slowly. Ghee being a fat can cross blood brain barrier which acts on the brain cells and increases the receptive power, cognitive power and memory. Hence being effective as *Medhya Dravya*.

Sharangadhara Samhita^[32] mentions about depletion of physical and physiological functions of the body, where *Medha* decreases in fourth decade, there by impairing the power of grasping, which can be considered as a result of *Dhatu Kshaya*. *Goghrita* considered as *Rasayana* nourishes the *Dhatu* and improves the cognitive power. When this *Ghrita* is processed with *Dravyas* which enhances the intellect and memory, which intensifies the action of compound drug. Administration of such processed *Ghrita* due to its medicinal ingredients facilitates the distribution and assimilation of processed *Ghrita* by brain cells, which in turn results in the improvement of *Medhya Karma* and able to postpone the depletion age.

Medha can be assessed by using *Anumana Pramana*, by Grasping capacity or retention of the textual knowledge.^[33] *Tadvidya Sambhasha* is considered as *Buddhivardhaka*.^[34] so indulging in reading and discussion also increases the intellect along with the intake of processed *Ghrita*.

CONCLUSION

Medha can be concluded as a grasping and retention power. Factors like *Dhi*, *Dhriti*, *Smriti* and *Buddhi* are interrelated and play a major role in the process of acquisition of knowledge. Along with the *Medhya Rasayana Yogas*, *Ekamulika Prayoga*, its combination yielding different dosage forms and *Medhya Vardhaka Gana* plays a major role in nourishing the brain cells. Among them *Ghrita* prepared with *Medhya Dravyas* are beneficial in carrying the active principles of the drug to the target areas to obtain required action.

Ghee being lipid soluble substance can cross blood brain barrier which acts on the brain cells and increases the receptive power, cognitive power and memory. *Ghrita* processed with drugs which enhances the *Medha*, Get assimilated and absorbed by brain cells and improves the cognitive functions. Hence being effective as *Medhya Dravya*.

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