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Classical Review of *Gandhaka* as per *Rasendra Sara Sangraha*

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ABSTRACT

Gandhaka is an easily available and extensively used drug in *Rasashastra*. *Gandhaka* is extensively used as a therapeutic drug in various disorders. Explanation of its varieties, purification methods, therapeutic uses, and dose is explained in *Rasashastra*. Purification of *Gandhaka* mentioned in the classics making it therapeutically more potential. *Rasendra Sara Sangraha* is widely accepted as a comprehensive treatise of *Rasashastra*. *Rasendra Sara Sangraha* explains *Gandhaka* in detail under *Uparasa* along with its two methods of *Gandhaka Shodhana* which is the initial step in the preparation of any *Rasoushadhis*. Reviewing the literary aspect of *Gandhaka* along with its *Shodhana* as described in the *Rasendra Sara Sangraha* is enumerated here.

Key words: *Gandhaka, Shodhana, Laghu Puta, Dhalana*

INTRODUCTION

Gandhaka^[1] comes under *Uparasa varga* which is used as a chief drug in many formulations. *Gandhaka* was used extensively both in *Dehavidya* and *Lohavidya*. Mythologically, it is opined as menstrual blood of Goddess Parvati. In *Rasendra Sara Sangraha*, *Gandhaka* along with the process of *Shodhana* is explained. 'Shodhana' the word which literally means purification, with various methods such as grinding, pounding, heating and mixing them which aimed to make the drug fit for therapeutic application.

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Gandhaka being *Rasoushadhi* should be purified to remove its harmful toxic effects. *Rasendra Sara Sangraha* explains two methods of *Shodhana* respectively to increase the bio-availability and further make the drug more potential.

RASENDRA SARA SANGRAHA

Rasendra Sara Sangraha is the oldest and most exhaustive treatise of *Rasashastra* comprising the compilation of various time tested and therapeutically proved *Rasayoga* medicines penned down by a great erudite scholar in the field of *Rasashastra*. This book was written by Sri Gopala Krishna Bhatt in first half of 16th century A.D. This book contains five chapters. This book contains classification of *Rasadravyas*, its purification and incineration of these drugs in concised manner apart from vivid description of pharmacotherapeutics.

Origin of *Gandhaka*

When goddess Parvathi was amusing herself at *Sweta Dwipa*, she menstruated. With her clothes soaked in menstrual fluid, she took bath in *Ksirasagara* and

washed her clothes. By this, odourous *Gandhaka* was evolved.

Varieties of *Gandhaka*

Gandhaka is of four types based on the colour- Red, Yellow, White and Black. Red variety used in the operations of gold, yellow and White used in *Rasayana*, White is used for healing wounds whereas Black variety said to be the best which is not available.

Synonyms of *Gandhaka*

Gandhapashana, *Sukapuccha*, *Sugandhaka*, *Sougandhika*, *Sulvaripu*, *Pamari* and *Navanitaka* are the synonyms of *Gandhaka*.

Properties of *Shodhita Gandhaka*

The purified *Gandhaka* alleviates all the disease, fatal condition and pyrexia, loss of appetite, generates heat and improves libido. *Gandhaka* is best rejuvenator, sweet to taste, the metabolic end product is pungent, hot in potency which is useful in pruritis, leprotic disorders, erysipelas, increase appetite, digestive, digest the *Amrarasa*, antidote to poisons and potentiates the mercury. It eradicates the parasitic infections, and it is in the form of essence. It is superior over gold in improving the potency.

Harmful Effects of *Ashodhita Gandhaka*

Ashodhita Gandhaka may causes raise of temperature of the body, burning sensation, leprocy, vertigo disorders of *Pitta*, reduces complexion, immunity, libido and health. Therefore, it should be purified and used intermittently.

Gandhaka Shodhana

By nature, *Gandhaka* possesses two impurities - Stony substance & Poison. Hence purification is must before it is added into medicine. (Table 1)

Procedure

Method I

A vessel containing milk and little amount of ghee is taken. The mouth of the vessel is covered with a cloth and tied. Spread evenly the fine powder of the *Gandhaka*. It is covered with an earthen crucible and

sealed airtight. Install it firmly in the shallow pit, dug in the ground, up to the neck deep and apply heat from above using the cow dung cakes and given *Laghu Puta* from the above. Collect and make use of the *Gandhaka* that percolated into the milk through cloth after melting. This purified *Gandhaka* is used for various preparations.

Method II

A molten metal is poured in any liquid which is called '*Dhalana*'. Melt the ghee in an iron pan over heat. *Gandhaka* is added to this melted ghee. The melted *Gandhaka* is poured into the milk through the cloth.

DISCUSSION

Gandhaka an important *Upasara* in *Rasashastra* which has more therapeutic value since time immemorial. The purification of *Gandhaka* told in *Rasendra Sara Sangraha* is very simple and less time-consuming method. Ghee and milk are the media used for the *Shodana* of *Gandhaka*. Ghee^[2] is Cold in nature, Sweet, and has thousand potency in it. It alleviates intoxication, pain in female genital tract, poison, fever and supply required nourishment. Milk^[3] is Sweet in taste, Cold in potency, Softens the tissues, Demulcent. It Acts as vitalizer, increases ojas. It is best among the Life promoting drugs. Purification in these media might have removed *Visha Dosh* present in *Gandhaka* and thus incorporating the unctuous property in it, thus dissolving the fat-soluble impurities of *Gandhaka*. Milk is generally considered as cooling nutritive, strengthening and vitalizing, also demulcent and emollient. These properties might have incorporated into the *Gandhaka* after poring it into the milk thus making it therapeutically more potent. Detailed research-based evaluations and observational studies of *Gandhaka* are necessary to make it scientifically proven drug of choice therapeutically.

CONCLUSION

The *Rasendra Sara Sangraha* not only explains the variety, properties, harmful effects of *Ashodhita Gandaka* but also have given two simple purificatory methods of *Gandhaka* which removes the physical,

chemical impurities and reduces the toxicity making it therapeutically potent drug.

Table 1: Showing of Gandhaka Shodhana in Rasendra Sara Sangraha.

Procedure	No. of methods	Media used for Shodhana
Laghuputa	02	Ghee, Milk
Dhalana		Ghee, Milk

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