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# A Critical Review of *Rukshana Karma* in Clinical Practice

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## ABSTRACT

Acharya Charaka explained six unique treatment modalities which are called as *Shadvidhopakramas*. *Rukshana* is one among those *Upakramas*. The Word '*Upakrama*' has several meaning like planning, beginning, remedy and preparation etc. here *Upakrama* refers to planning a suitable treatment modality and working to execute it. *Shadvidhopakrama* includes *Langhana*, *Brimhana*, *Sthambhana*, *Rukshana*, *Snehana* and *Swedana*. These can be broadly classified under two headings as *Santarpana* and *Apatarpana*. *Santarpaniya Upakramas* are *Brimhana*, *Snehana* and *Sthambhana*, where as *Apatarpaniya Upakramas* are *Langhana*, *Rukshana* and *Swedana*. Out of these six types, *Rukshana* is of the same importance as others. The details of *Rukshana* will be dealt in this article.

**Key words:** *Rukshana*, *Apatarpana*, *Upakrama*, *Shadvidhopakrama*, *Langhana*.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda as a science of life not only aims at treating the diseases, but also it emphasises on the disease free living by prevention of manifestation of diseases. In order to cure the diseases and promote the health, *Acharyas* elaborately explained *Shadvidhopakramas*. *Rukshana* is one of the broadly practiced *Upakrama* among the *Ayurvedic* physicians.<sup>[1]</sup> It is a safe and effective modality used both as *Bahirparimarjana* (External purifications) and *Antahparimarjana* (Internal Purification) *Chikitsa*. *Acharya Vagbhata* has explained these six *Upakramas* under only two main headings. 1) *Langhana* and 2) *Bramhana*.<sup>[2]</sup> They include all six *Upakramas* in them. All the treatment

modalities are not apart from these two, as the remaining four *Upakramas* serve these two (*Langhana* and *Brimhana*) purpose only.<sup>[3]</sup>

### *Nirukti* (definition)

According to *Shabdakalpadruma*, *Rooksha* is; *Aprema*, *Achikwana*. The quality which is devoid of stickiness is *Ruksha*.<sup>[4]</sup> The other meaning is, *Snehashoonye*. i.e. devoid of *Sneha* or absence of *Sneha*.

### *Gunas of Rukshana Dravya*

The *Dravya* having the qualities like *Ruksha*, *Laghu*, *Khara*, *Ushna*, *Sthira* and *Apicchila* are *Rukshana* in nature.<sup>[5]</sup>

### *Karmukata of Rukshana Dravyas*

*Rukshana Dravyas* have qualities such as *Laghu*, *Ushna*, *Sthira*, *Ruksha*, *Kathina* etc. as said above. The *Pancha Mahabhoutikata*,<sup>[6]</sup> *Pramukha Karma* (important functions) and therapeutic actions of these qualities are tabulated below. (Table 1)

**Table 1: *Panchabhoutikata* and Important functions of *Ruksha Dravyas*.**

<i>Guna</i>	<i>Pancha Mahabhuta</i>	<i>Pramukha Karma</i>	Therapeutic Action
<i>Rooksha</i>	<i>Prithwi</i> , <i>Akasha</i> , <i>Agni</i>	<i>Shoshana</i>	<i>Kapha</i> – <i>Vatahara</i>

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<i>Khara</i>	<i>Prithwi, Vayu, Agni</i>	<i>Lekhana</i>	<i>Kapha Vatahara</i> –
<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Vayu, Aksha, Agni</i>	<i>Laghuta</i>	<i>Kapha Vatahara</i> –
<i>Kathina</i>	<i>Prithwi</i>	<i>Dridhikarana</i>	<i>Vatakara</i>
<i>Teekshna</i>	<i>Agni</i>	<i>Shodhana</i>	<i>Pittakara, Kapha-Vatahara</i>
<i>Sthira</i>	<i>Prithwi, Vayu, Akasha, Agni</i>	<i>Kshalana</i>	<i>Vatahara</i>
<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Agni</i>	<i>Pachana</i>	<i>Pittakara-Vata Kaphahara</i>

### Rukshaniya Rasa

Among six *Rasa*, Mainly, *Kashaya*, *Katu* and *Tikta Rasa* act as *Rukshana*. *Kashaya Rasa* is said to be best *Rukshaka*, *Tikta* is least and *Katu Rasa* is said to be moderate *Ruksha* among these three *Rasas*.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Ahara and Vihara having Rukshana Properties

#### Ahara

*Sarshapa*, *Pinyaka*, *Yava*, *Takra* ( butter milk), *Madhu* (honey) etc.

#### Vihara

*Madhya Nitya Sevana*, *Vyayama*, *Vyavaya*, *Chinta*, *Shokha* etc.<sup>[8]</sup>

Other *Dravyas* having *Ruksha Guna* are; *Triphala*, *Shunti*, *Maricha*, *Pippalimula*, *Chitraka*, *Jiraka*, *Shatapushpa*, *Kutaja*, *Shigru*, *Shonyaka*, *Bilwa*, *Ela*, *Kiratatikta*, *Chandana*, *Katuka*, *Vidanga*. etc. According to Acharya Charaka, The *Aghraya* (best) *Dravya* for *Rukshana* is *Uddalakanna*.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Yavagu as Rukshana Dravya

Charaka explained 28 types of *Yavagu Kalpanas* among them *Rukshanartha Yavagu* is also one. This *Yavagu* will be helpful for those who are fit for *Rukshana*.

Decoction (*Kwatha*) is prepared with roots of *Krusha* plant and *Amalaki*. *Shyamaka* (a kind of rice grain) is added into it and boiled. This *Yavagu* acts as *Rukshana*.<sup>[10]</sup>

### Lekhaniya Mahakashaya as Rukshana

Acharya Charaka elaborately explained 50 *Mahakashayas* in *Sutra Sthana* 4<sup>th</sup> chapter. Among those *Mahakashayas*, *Lekhaniya Mahakashayas* can be considered here due to the similarity in qualities of *Lekhana* and *Rukshana Dravyas*.<sup>[11]</sup> Therefore *Musta*, *Kushta*, *Haridra*, *Vacha*, *Ativisha*, *Katurohini*, *Chitraka*, *Karanja* and *Hemavati*, the ten drugs which are included under *Lekhaniya Mahakashaya* can be used for the purpose of *Rukshana*.

### Rukshana Yogya

Patients suffering from diseases characterized by the obstruction of *Srotas*. Dominance of excessive aggravated *Doshas*. Diseases involving *Marma Sthana* (vital parts) and person suffering from *Urusthambha Vyadhi*, diseases such as *Adhyavata*, *Prameha*, should also be treated with *Rukshana*.<sup>[12]</sup> Also the person whose body is affected with large amount (*Prachura Matra*) of *Dosha Sanchaya* should be initially treated with *Rukshana Karma* only. *Rukshana* is a prime treatment modality in conditions such as *Aamavata*, *Shvasa*, *Pratishyaya*, *Pidaka*, *Kota*, *Kandu*, *Kushta*, *Arochaka*, *Tandra*, *Pandu*, *Klaibya*, *Ati Sthoulya*, *Alasya*, *Gurugatrata*, *Shopha* etc. In all the *Kleda* dominant disorder *Rukshana* is the main line of treatment.

### Ayoga Atiyoga and Samyak Yoga of Rukshana

*Ayoga Atiyogadi Lakshanas* explained for *Langhana* are to be considered for *Rukshana* also.<sup>[13]</sup> So the symptoms that can be seen in *Ayoga* are; No relief from the disease treatable from the *Upakrama*, Increase in the symptoms (*Roga Vriddhi*) and *Ayoga* of *Shodhana* takes place. In condition of *Ati-Rukshana*; pain in the extremities, malaise, cough, dryness of mouth, loss of appetite, anorexia, thirst, weakness of the ears and eyes (impairment of the power of hearing and sight), loss of memory, frequent upward movement of *Vayu*, bradycardia, emaciation of the

body, decreased power of digestion and loss of strength takes place.<sup>[14]</sup> Where as in *Samyak Yoga* of *Rukshana*, proper excretion of flatus, urine and feces, *Gatra Laghuta* (lightness of the body), *Hrudaya*, *Udgara*, *Kanta*, *Asya Shuddhi* (purity of eructation, throat and mouth), *Tandra* and *Klama Nasha* (disappearance of drowsiness and exertion), Appearance of sweat. Appearance of interest towards food, increased hunger, thirst and contentment are observed.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Mode of administration of Rukshana

*Rukshana* can be introduced into the body in 2 forms;

1. *Abhyantara* (Internal)
2. *Bahya* (External)

#### 1. *Abhyantara Prayoga*

Internal therapies which bring *Rukshana* inside the body are; *Ushnajala-paana*, *Kashaya-paana* like *Amrutottara Kashaya*, *Nimbadi Kashaya* etc. *Arishtas* like *Abhayarista*, *Takrarista* etc. *Churna Kalpanas* like; *Sudarshana Churna*, *Panchakola Churna*, *Vaiswanara Churna*, *Ajamodadi Churna*, *Shaddharana Churna*, *Triphala Churna*, etc.

#### 2. *Bahya Rukshana*

External therapies like *Valuka Sweda*, *Atapa Sweda*, *Udwartana*, *Lepas*, etc.

#### *Udwartana as Rukshana*

Reinforced rubbing of body with *Churna* is called as *Udwartana*. It pacifies *Kapha Dosha* and causes liquification of *Medas*, produce stability, compactness and strength to the parts of the body.<sup>[16]</sup> It is a type of *Rukshana Kriya* which is more specific in *Twak* and *Medo Dhatu*. *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya Rasa* and *Ushna*, *Ruksha Guna Dravyas* are useful in *Udwartana*.

#### *Swedana as Rukshana*

*Swedana* is a treatment procedure in which sweat is induced by application of heat and warmth in the form of steam or by bringing the body / body parts in contact with heated medicaments. In Ayurvedic texts, there are about 13 types of *Sagni Sweda's* and 10 types of *Niragni Sweda* are explained.<sup>[17]</sup> Again

*Swedana* can be done in 2 ways - *Ruksha Sweda* and *Snigdha Sweda*. *Sagni Sweda* can be taken as *Rukshana Chikitsa*.

In conditions where pain and associated symptoms are due to *Aama*, or *Kapha* (morbid *Kapha*) we generally prefer doing *Ruksha Sweda* or dry fomentation.

#### *Valuka Sweda*

*Valuka Sweda* is also a *Ruksha Sweda* in which sand is used for fomentation of painful parts. Especially in diseases like *Amavata*, *Urustambha*, *Medoroga* etc.

Some other *Rukshana* Karmas like;

#### *Valmika Mrttika Utsasadana*

The mud of Ant-hill, the root, fruits and barks of *Karanja* (*Pongamia pinnata*) and bricks is made to powder. This is used for *Utsadana* (dry rubbing) frequently.

#### *Ishtika Choorna Swedana*

The *Ishtika Choorna* (brick powder) is used to do *Swedana* just like in *Valuka Sweda*.

### Application of Rukshana as a main line of treatment in different conditions

#### 1. *Sthoulya*

*Sthoulya* (Obesity) has emerged as a burning health issue globally. In *Sthoulya Roga* there will be obstruction of passage of *Vata* by morbid *Medo Dhatu*. Thus *Vata* moves abundantly in *Koshta* and cause *Agni Dushti*. *Dushti* of *Medovaha Srotas* leading to *Ati Vriddhi* of *Medo-Dhatu* along with *Mamsa Dhatu*.<sup>[18]</sup> The person's buttocks, abdomen and breasts become pendulous. He suffers from the deficient metabolism and energy.<sup>[19]</sup> *Rukshana Dravyas* due to their *Rukshadi Gunas* help to liquefy and clear the stagnant morbid factors, thus clearing the obstruction in *Medovaha Srotas*. *Rukshana* also helps to relieve stiffness and other symptoms caused due to excessive fat accumulation.

#### 2. *Amavata*

Due to the low digestive fire when there is inappropriate formation of *Rasa* (*Apakwa Annarasa*) it

is termed as *Aama*.<sup>[20]</sup> It settles in the *Urdhwa Amashaya*. When this *Aama Dosh* combines along with vitiated *Vata* results in rigidity in the joints, this situation is called as *Aamavata*. It is dreadful and difficult to cure. (If the person is having *Alpa Bala* and *Alpa Dosh*, *Langhana* will be helpful. It causes *Pachana* of *Amadosha*. *Ruksha Sweda* is the next therapy used in newly originated disease which helps in liquefaction of *Aama* and relieving the stiffness. *Dipana* and *Pachana Dravyas* are given to tackle vitiated *Aama* and *Kapha Dosh*. *Ruksha Paana*, *Atapa Swedana*, *Ruksha Bastis* and *Ruksha Virechana* etc. Can also be used based on demand of the condition. Once the *Aama Pachana* is done *Snehana Karmas* to treat *Vata* can be carried out.<sup>[21]</sup>

### 3. *Urusthambha*

*Urusthambha* is a disease affecting the thighs, Acharya Charaka contraindicated *Panchakarma* procedures in this disease.<sup>[22]</sup> Because *Snehana* and *Basti* increase the *Kapha Dosh*, as *Doshas (Aama, Kapha and Medas)* are settled in *Uru-Pradesha*, *Vamana* and *Virechana* are also of no use. Therefore in *Urusthambha*, *Shamana*, *Shoshana*, *Kshapana* and *Rukshana* are useful rather than other *Panchakarmas*. Since *Kapha*, *Vata* and *Aama* are predominant in the pathogenesis of *Urustambha*, the physician should constantly administer appropriate *Rukshana* therapies for their *Kshapana* (complete extraction) and *Shoshana* (Absorption / drying of the liquid fraction). Therapies like *Valuka Sweda* are highly effective in the management of *Urustambha*, just like in *Amavata*. Administration of *Ruksha Paana* like *Kshara Pana* (Alkali preparations), *Arista-pana*, *Haritaki* after added with honey, and *Pippali* cures *Urustambha*.<sup>[23]</sup>

### *Rukshana in Kaphavruta Vata and Medasavruta Vata*

The symptoms of *Kaphavruta and Medasavruta Vata* include, Feeling of cold in the body, Heaviness, Pain, etc. Patient feels better by taking *Katu*, *Ushna*, *Dravyas*, performing *Langhana*, *Aayasa*, *Ruksha-Vihara*, and staying in warm room (*Ushna Kamita*) etc.<sup>[24]</sup>

So in this condition, *Rukshana Chikitsa* like, *Jangala Aahara*, *Tikshna Swedana*, *Niruha Basti*, *Vamana*, *Virechana*, etc. prove useful.

### Importance of *Rukshana* in *Shodhana*

According to *Astanga Hrudhyakara* in case of obese persons, having large amount of *Kapha* vitiation, and irregular digestive fire, initially *Rukshana Karma* has to be performed followed by *Snehana*.<sup>[25]</sup> Such persons will not suffer from diseases caused by excess *Snehana*. *Sneha* administered in such way does not get accumulated in the body and helps in letting out the *Doshas* smoothly. Many of the times during procedures such as *Sneha-Pana* we often come across *Vyapats* (complications). It may be due to not following procedures or improper administration. In such conditions *Rukshana* can be used effectively, especially in *Sneha Vyapats*.<sup>[26]</sup>

### *Ruksha Basti*

*Rooksha Basti* mainly aims to bring *Snehabhava*, there by useful in many *Santarpana-janya Vikaras*. In *Niruha Basti Vidhi Adhyaya* of *Sharangadhara Samhita*, He explained various *Basti* combinations for *Rukshana* effect. For example if we see *Lekhana Basti*; *Triphala Kwatha*, *Gomutra*, *Madhu*, *Kshara*, *Ushakadi Gana Dravyas* as *Prakshepaka*. It's a wonderful combination for the purpose of *Rukshana*.<sup>[27]</sup>

### *Ruksha Virechana*

*Ruksha Virechana* is done using *Ruksha Guna Pradhana Dravyas*. According to *Sushruta*, the person having *Snigdha Shareera*, one whose body has aggravated *Doshas*, are treated with *Ruksha Virechana*.<sup>[28]</sup> Even *Acharya Charaka* opines the same.<sup>[29]</sup>

Indications mentioned in *Sushruta Samhita* for *Ruksha Virechana* are; *Visarpa*, *Pidika*, *Shotha*, *Kamala*, *Pandu*, *Abhigata* and *Visha* etc.<sup>[30]</sup>

### *Ruksha Nasya*

Acharya Kashyapa classified *Nasya* into two types mainly; *Shodhana Nasya* and *Pooranana Nasya*. *Shodhana Nasya* involves *Dravyas* which are having *Karshana properties*. They are mainly having *Prithvi*,

*Vayu and Agni Mahabhoota Pradhanata*. This acts as *Shodhana* and brings *Rukshana* in the *Urdhwa-Jatrugata* area and there by pacifying *Kapha* related disorders.<sup>[31]</sup>

Other than these *Shodhana* therapies, *Rukshana Karma* can be applied in many other conditions based on the *Yukti* of the doctor.

### Rukshana in daily practice (Dinacharya)

*Vyayama* (exercise), *Udvardana*, *Taamboola Sevana*, *Dhumapana* etc. Which are performed in daily routine is also a part of *Rukshana* only.<sup>[32]</sup> *Rukshana* is ideal in *Dakshinayana* which is achieved by *Ahara*, *Vihara* having *Ruksha Guna*. *Rukshana* are achieved by *Dravyas* like *Yava*, *Madhu*, *Madhya*, *Aristha*, *Vyayama*, *Vyavaya* and *Udvardanan* etc.<sup>[33]</sup>

### Difference between Rukshana and Langhana

The characteristics of *Langhana Dravyas* are same as that of *Rukshana Dravyas*. This makes the reader to think that both are one and the same. But it is not so. The major difference between them is, *Langhana* can be done without the help of any *Dravya*, like in case of *Upavasa* (Fasting). But *Rukshana* can only be done by using *Rukshana Dravyas*.

*Rukshana* is absence of *Snehana*, but *Langhana* is the absence of *Gourava* (heaviness).<sup>[34]</sup> *Langhana* is ideal where *Laghu Guna* is desired. But *Rukshana* should be done where *Ruksha Guna* is needed.

### DISCUSSION

*Rukshana Dravyas* have the qualities such as *Ruksha*, *Lagu*, *Khara*, *Teekshna*, *Ushana*, *Sthira*, *Apicchila* and *Kathina*. Among them each quality has its own importance in treatment.<sup>[35]</sup> Each one of them perform vital role; *Ruksha Guna* does *Shoshana* of *Dravamsha* present in *Shareera*. It causes the dryness of *Dhatu*s, decreases the *Bala* (strength) and *Varna* (complexion). *Laghu Guna* causes lightness of the body. It depletes the *Dhatu*s by which there will be *Krushata* of the body. *Laghu Guna* is *Agnideepaka*. *Lekhana Guna* is responsible for the scraping action. It causes *Mala Shodhana* and *Dhatu Kshaya*. *Teekshna Guna* is again responsible for the *Vicchedana* of

morbid *Doshas* adhering to the channels. As *Ushna Guna* is *Pittavardhaka*, by virtue of it, there will be increase in warmth of the body. *Ushna Guna* is *Pravartaka* of *Sweda* (*Swedane Ushna*). By virtue of which the *Dravamsha* (watery portion) will be removed out causing *Rukshana*. *Sthira Guna* is devoid of movements (*Gatiheena*) which causes stability of *Dhatu*s. *Apicchila Guna* reduces the slimy quality of the *Dhatu*s. *Kathina Guna* is responsible for depletion of *Jalaamsha*, causing dryness, hardness and there by *Vata Vrudhi*.<sup>[36]</sup>

Like this the *Dravyas* used in the *Rukshana* does *Shoshana*, *Lekhana*, *Agnideepana*, *Shodhana*, *Swedana*, *Dharana*, *Kshalana* and *Vata Vruddhi* there by completing the *Rukshana Prakriya*.

### CONCLUSION

*Shadvidhopakramas* plan to act by balancing the proportion of *Panchamahabhutas* in the body. *Rukshana* as one among the six *Upakramas*, mainly brings *Sneha Abhava*, Where as *Langhana* brings *Abhava* of *Gourava*. *Rukshana Dravyas* due to their *Ruksha*, *Ushnadi Gunas* help in liquefying and clearing the stagnant morbid factors, thus clearing the obstruction in *Srotas*. *Langhana* can be done without the help of any *Dravya*. Like fasting. But *Rukshana* can only be done by using *Rukshana Dravyas*.

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