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# Pancha Shirishanama Agad - An Ethno-Ayurvedic Formulation for Insect Bite

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## ABSTRACT

Agad Tantra is one among the branches of Ayurveda that deals with sign, symptoms and management of poisoning resulting from the bites of animal origin (*Jangam Visha*) like snakes (*Sarpa*), insects (*Keet*), spiders (*Loota*), rodents (*Mooshika*) etc as well as various toxic combinations of plants (inanimate) and mineral (*Dhatu*) poisons. To neutralize the effect of *Visha* (poison), administration of different *Vishaghna* (anti-toxic) formulations has been mentioned in classical texts. *Pancha Shirishanama Agad* is an ethno-Ayurvedic formulation indicated to be useful in the treatment of all types of *Keet Visha* (insect bite poison) and their associated symptoms. *Pancha Shirishanama Agad* consists of five parts of *Shirish* (seed, root, stem bark, flower and leaves), *Trikatu* (*Shunthi*, *Maricha*, *Pippali*), *Pancha Lavana* (*Saindhav Lavana*, *Sauvarchal Lavana*, *Samudra Lavana*, *Vid Lavana*, *Audbhidha Lavana*) and *Madhu*. Almost all the ingredients are having *Vedana Sthapana* (analgesic) and *Shothaghna* (anti-inflammatory) properties as *Vedana* (pain), *Sopha* (swelling), *Kandu* (itch) and *Jwara* (fever) are the primary symptoms of *Keet Visha Damsha* (insect bite poison). Through this paper, an attempt has been made to understand the properties of all the ingredients of *Pancha Shirishanama Agad* in detail.

**Key words:** Agad Tantra, Pancha Shirishanama Agad, Keet Visha, Insects, insect bites, Shirish, *Albizia lebeck*, *Vishaghna*.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science of life that aims at mitigating the diseases of diseased and maintenance of health of the healthy person. Agad Tantra is one among the

branches of Ayurveda that deals with sign, symptoms and management of poisoning resulting from the bites of animal origin (*Jangam Visha*) like snakes (*Sarpa*), insects (*Keet*), spiders (*Loota*), rodents (*Mooshika*) etc. as well as various toxic combinations of plants (inanimate) and mineral (*Dhatu*) poisons.<sup>[1]</sup>

Insects are called *Keet* as they are produced from the *Keeta* or waste products like semen, excreta, urine, decomposed carcass and eggs of the snakes. *Keet* possess features (qualities) of air, fire and water and are of many kinds. *Keet* (insects) are classified into different categories based on their *Dosha Prakriti*. Hence there are four types - *Vayavya* (*Vatika*), *Agneya* (*Paittika*), *Soumya* (*Kaphaja*) and *Pranahara* (*Sannipatika*).<sup>[2]</sup> According to *Vachaspathya*, it is defined that *Krimibhyah Sthoole Kshudra Jantu Bhede* i.e., *Keet* is a variety of *Krimi* with macroscopic body. According

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to the definition, these may or may not be seen with naked eye. Therefore, they can even be interpreted as insects, worms and even microbes.<sup>[3]</sup>

In contemporary view, insects are arthropods belonging to the class Insecta. Insecta comprise the most diverse and numerous species of flies, bees, wasps, ants, lice, butterflies, dragonflies, mosquitoes etc. Insect represents more than half of all known living organism and potentially represent more than 90% of the differing life forms on earth.<sup>[4]</sup> Insects play vital roles in our environment, contributing to the balance and well-being of ecosystems in numerous ways. Insects form the base of many food chains. They are beneficial in cases of honey production, pollination, and decomposition by acting as scavengers and decomposers, aerating the soil, silk production, lac production, carmine red dye and many more. Their role in sustaining wildlife is invaluable.<sup>[5]</sup> So, their contact with human is very common and after bite of the insects, various types of symptoms appear in the body due to their poisoning effect. Some common symptoms are pain in the affected area or in the muscles, swelling, fever, redness, itching, numbness or tingling in the affected area. The venom injected into the body from the bite or sting of an insect will cause immune system to respond. Often, human body's immediate response will include pain, redness and swelling at the bite or sting site. Minor delayed reactions include itching and soreness. If a person is very sensitive to an animal's venom, bites and stings can cause a potentially fatal condition called anaphylactic shock.<sup>[6]</sup>

Acharya Sushrut has mentioned 67 types of Keet (insects) under the category of Jangam Visha (animate) in Keet Kalpa Adhyaya of Kalpastana along with their signs and symptoms.<sup>[7]</sup> Acharya Charak and Acharya Vagbhatta also described in detail about Keet (insects) and Keet Visha Damsha Lakshan (insects bite associated symptoms) in their treatise.<sup>[8,9]</sup> Vedana (pain), Sopha (inflammation), Kandu (itching) and Jwara (fever) are some of the main common symptoms of Keet Visha Damsha (insects bite poison).<sup>[10]</sup> All the Acharyas mentioned about use of various types of medicinal plants and Agad formulations specially for

the treatment of Keet Visha (insect bite poison) and their associated symptoms in the Samhitas. One such Agad is Pancha Shirishanama Agad described in Sarpa Dashta Visha Chikitsa Kalpa Adhyaya chapter 5 in the verse 81 that is said to be useful in the treatment of all kinds of Keet Visha (insect bite poison) and their associated symptoms. Later, the name of this particular Agad has been mentioned by Acharya Dalhan in his commentary on Sushrut Samhita.

समूलपुष्पाङ्कुरवल्कबीजात् क्वाथः शिरीषात् त्रिकटुप्रगाढः ॥

सलावणः क्षौद्रयुतोऽथ पीतो विशेषतः कीटविषं निहन्ति ॥ (सु. क 5/81)

[अयमगदः पञ्चशिरीषनामा ॥ डल्हण टीका निबंध संग्रह सु.क. 5/81]

### AIM AND OBJECTIVE

Through this paper an attempt has been made to understand the properties and Rasa Panchak of all the ingredients of Pancha Shirishanama Agad in detail.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Acharya Sushrut has described Keet in his treatise after the chapters on snakes (Sarpa Damshta Visha Vigyaniya) and rodents (Mooshika Kalpa) as Keet are born from semen, excreta, urine, foul smelling, and eggs of snakes. Hence, Pancha Shirishanama Agad has been indicated especially in Keet Visha as one of the potent formulations to treat all the modalities related to insect bite poisoning and their associated symptoms.

Pancha Shirishanama Agad consists of five parts of Shirish (seed, root, stem bark, flower and leaves), Trikatu (Shunthi, Maricha, Pippali), Pancha Lavana (Saindhav Lavana, Sauvarchal Lavana, Samudra Lavana, Vid Lavana, Audbhidha Lavana) and Madhu.

Many drugs and formulations have been described as Vishaghna (anti-poisonous) among which one of the most important and commonly used drugs is Shirish and it is said to be best among all the Vishaghna (anti-poisonous) drugs.<sup>[11]</sup> Shirish and its parts are used in various Agad Yogas to overcome Visha Prabhav (poisonous effect). Acharya Charak kept Shirish under

Vishaghna Gana, Vedana Sthapana Gana, Shirovirechana and Kshaya Skanda. Acharya Sushrut kept Shirish under Salsaradi Gana. Acharya Vagbhatta kept it under Asanadi Gana. Acharya Bhavprakash has mentioned its use in Shotha (inflammation).<sup>[12]</sup>

Under contemporary parameters the plant Shirish (*Albizia lebbek (L.) Benth*) shows Analgesic, Anti-inflammatory, immune-modulator, Anti-rhinitic, free radical scavenging and mast cell stabilizing property.<sup>[13]</sup>

**Ingredients**

The ingredients of *Pancha Shirishnama Agad* are mentioned in the Table 1.

**Table 1: Ingredients of Pancha Shirishanama Agad<sup>[14]</sup>**

Ingredients	Botanical / Latin name	Family	Chemical constituent	Part used
Shirish	<i>Albizia lebbek (L) Benth</i>	Fabaceae	Phenolic glycoside, Tannin, Albizin, Flavanols, Saponins	Root, Flower, Leaf buds, Stembark, Seed
Shunthi	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Rosc	Zingiberaceae	Zingiberene, Shagol, Zingiberol, Gingerol, Gingerin, Paradols	Rhizome
Maricha	<i>Piper nigrum linn</i>	Piperaceae	Piperine, Piperidine, Piprettin, Chavicine	Fruit
Pippali	<i>Piper longum linn</i>	Piperaceae	Piperine, Piplartine, Sesamin, Piplasterol	Fruit

**Pancha Lavana (Five salts)<sup>[15]</sup>**

Ingredients	Chemical composition
<i>Saindhava Lavana</i> (Chloride of Sodium)	Sodium chloride (NaCl) - 97.6% Sodium Bicarbonate (NaHCO3) - 0.07% Insoluble matters - 0.031%

<i>Sauvarchal Lavana</i> (Sochal salt)	Sodium Chloride (NaCl) - 97.8% Total sulphide (Na2S) - 0.981% Iron (Fe) - 0.03% Insoluble matters - 0.07%
<i>Samudra Lavana</i> (Sea salt)	Sodium Chloride (NaCl) - 91.3% Total Sulphide (Na2S) - 0.121% Iron (Fe) - 0.0089% Calcium Sulphate, Magnesium Sulphate, Magnesium Chloride etc. - in little quantities.
<i>Vid Lavana</i> (Ammonium salt)	Sodium Chloride (NaCl) - 93.7% Total Sulphide (Na2S) - 0.121% Iron (Fe) - 0.0089%
<i>Audbhida Lavana</i> (Reha salt)	Sodium Chloride (NaCl) - 94.10% Total Sulphide (Na2S) - 0.042% Sodium Bicarbonate (NaHCO3) - 0.049%

**Madhu (Honey)<sup>[16]</sup>**

Ingredient	Chemical constituent	Pharmacological actions
Honey	Fructose, Glucose, Sucrose, Minerals, Carbohydrates etc	Anti-inflammatory, Anti-oxidant, Anti-bacterial, Anti-microbial

**Method of Preparation<sup>[17,18]</sup>**

All the five parts of *Shirish* are to be taken in equal quantity, cleaned individually, dried and then subjected for *Yava Kuta* (Coarse powder). Coarsely powdered form is then boiled with 16 parts of water and reduced to 1/8th part and to be filtered to obtain a decoction (*Kwatha*). 2 *Pala* (96 ml) is taken in a container and mixed with 1 *Shana* (5 gms) of each *Trikatu Choorna*, *Pancha Lavana* and *Madhu*.

**Method of Administration<sup>[19]</sup>**

This *Agad* can be administered in the form of decoction (*Kwatha*).

**Dose of Pancha Shirishanama Agad<sup>[20]</sup>**

Reference regarding the dosage of *Pancha Shirishanama Agad* is not seen in *Ayurvedic* literature.

As per *Sharangdhar Samhita*, dosage and time of administration of the human dose of *Kwatha Kalpana* is said to be 2 *Pala* (96 ml) per time in a day.

#### Probable Action of Pancha Shirishanama Agad

It is having indication as *Visheshtah Keetvisham Nihanti* i.e., it relieves the poisoning effect of insect bite and

their associated symptoms. This property may be due to the *Prabhava* of the formulation as *Shirish* is said to be the best as *Vishaghna* (anti-poisonous) *Dravya Shirisha Vishaghnanama Shreshtham*.<sup>[21]</sup> The properties of the formulation can be understood by properties of individual ingredients.

**Table 2: Properties of ingredients<sup>[22]</sup>**

Drug	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Karma
<b>Shirish<sup>[23]</sup></b>	<i>Madhur</i> (sweet), <i>Tikta</i> (bitter), <i>Kashaya</i> (astringent)	<i>Laghu</i> (light), <i>Ruksha</i> (dry), <i>Teekshna</i> (sharp)	<i>Ishat Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i> (pungent)	<i>Tridosha Shamak</i> (vitiates <i>Vata Pitta Kapha</i> humor), <i>Vishaghna</i> (anti-poisonous), <i>Shothaghna</i> (anti-inflammatory), <i>Jwaraghna</i> (anti- pyretic), <i>Vedana Sthapana</i> (analgesic), <i>Rakta Shodhak</i> (blood purifier), <i>Kushthaghna</i> (skin disorders), <i>Kandughna</i> (anti- pruritis), <i>Shirovirechak</i> (head purifier)
<b>Shunthi<sup>[24]</sup></b>	<i>Katu</i> (pungent)	<i>Laghu</i> (light), <i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous)	<i>Ushna</i> (hot)	<i>Madhur</i> (sweet)	<i>Kapha-Vata Shamak</i> (vitiates <i>Vata</i> and <i>Kapha</i> humor), <i>Shoola Prashamana</i> (analgesic), <i>Shothaghna</i> (anti-inflammatory), <i>Jwaraghna</i> (anti- pyretic), <i>Rakta Shodhak</i> (blood purifier), <i>Panduhara</i> (Prevent anaemia),
<b>Maricha<sup>[25]</sup></b>	<i>Katu</i> (pungent)	<i>Laghu</i> (light), <i>Teekshna</i> (sharp)	<i>Ushna</i> (hot)	<i>Katu</i> (pungent)	<i>Kapha-Vata shamak</i> (vitiates <i>Kapha Vata</i> humor), <i>Vishaghna</i> (anti- poisonous), <i>Shoola Prashamana</i> (Analgesic), <i>Visham Jwaraghna</i> (anti-pyretic), <i>Rakta Shodhak</i> (blood purifier), <i>Yakrita Uttejak</i> (prevents liver disorder), <i>Krimighna</i> (anti- helminthic), <i>Kushthaghna</i> (prevents skin disorder)

<b>Pippali</b> <sup>[26]</sup>	<i>Katu</i> (pungent)	<i>Laghu</i> (light), <i>Teekshna</i> (sharp), <i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous)	<i>Anushna</i> <i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhur</i> (sweet)	<i>Vata Kapha Shamak</i> (Balance <i>Vata</i> and <i>Kapha</i> humour), <i>Visham Jwaraghna</i> (anti-pyretic), <i>Rakta Shodhak</i> (blood purifier), <i>Yakrita Uttejak</i> (prevents liver disorders), <i>Pliha Vriddhiha</i> (prevents spleen disorders), <i>Jantughna</i> (anti- helminthic), <i>Rasayana</i> (rejuvenation)
<b>Pancha Lavana (five salts)</b> <sup>[27]</sup>					
<b>Saindhava Lavana</b>	<i>Lavana</i> (salty)	<i>Laghu</i> (Light), <i>Snigdha</i> (Unctous), <i>Teekshna</i> (Sharp)	<i>Sheeta</i> (cold)	<i>Madhur</i> (sweet)	<i>Tridosh Shamak</i> (Vitiates <i>Vata Pitta Kapha</i> Humor), <i>Agnideepak</i> (gastrostimulant), <i>Pachana</i> (digestive), <i>Hridya</i> (prevent heart), <i>Shothaghna</i> (anti-inflammatory), <i>Vibhandhaghna</i> (prevents constipation), <i>Vrana Ropana</i> (wound healing)
<b>Sauvar-Chal Lavana</b>	<i>Madhur</i> (sweet)	<i>Laghu</i> (Light), <i>Vishada</i> (Clearness) <i>Snigdha</i> (Unctous), <i>Sukshma</i>	<i>Ushna</i> (Hot)	<i>Madhur</i> (sweet)	<i>Vatashamana</i> (balance <i>Vata</i> humor), <i>Agnideepak</i> (gastro-stimulant), <i>Pachana</i> (digestive), <i>Anuloman</i> (prevents gastritis), <i>Jantughna</i> (anti-helminthic), <i>Shoolaghna</i> (analgesic)
<b>Samudra Lavana</b>	<i>Lavana</i> (salty)	<i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous) <i>Laghu</i> (light), <i>Avidaahi</i>	<i>Na-ati ushna</i> , <i>Na-ati sheeta</i>	<i>Madhur</i> (sweet)	<i>Kapha-Vata Shamak</i> (vitiates <i>Kapha Vata</i> humor), <i>Agnideepak</i> (gastrostimulant), <i>Ruchikar</i> (prevents fainting)
<b>Vid Lavana</b>	<i>Lavana</i> (salty)	<i>Laghu</i> (Light), <i>Ushna</i> (Hot), <i>Teekshna</i> (Sharp), <i>Vyavayi</i> , <i>Sukshma</i>	<i>Ushna</i> (hot)	<i>Madhur</i> (sweet)	<i>Kapha Shamak</i> (vitiates <i>Kapha</i> humor), <i>Vatanuloman</i> (prevents gastritis), <i>Agnideepak</i> (gastrostimulant), <i>Shulaghna</i> (analgesic), <i>Jwaraghna</i> (anti-pyretic)



<b>Audbhida/ Reh Lavana</b>	<i>Tikta</i> (Bitter), <i>Katu</i> (Pungent), <i>Kshara</i>	<i>Kshareeya</i> , <i>Teekshna</i> (sharp)	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha Shamak</i> (vitiates <i>Kapha</i> humor), <i>Vatanulomak</i> (prevents gastritis), <i>Agnideepak</i> (gastrostimulants)
<b>Madhu<sup>[28]</sup></b>	<i>Madhur</i> <i>Ras</i> (sweet), <i>Kashaya</i> <i>Anuras</i> (astringent)	<i>Guru</i> (heavy), <i>Ruksha</i> (dry),	<i>Sheeta</i> (cold)	-	<i>Kapha-Pitta Shamak</i> (vitiates <i>Kapha Pitta</i> humor), <i>Vishaghna</i> (anti- poisonous), <i>Krimighna</i> (anti-helminthic), <i>Rasayana</i> (rejuvenating), <i>Vrana Shodhak</i> (wound healing), <i>Yogvaahi</i>

## DISCUSSION

Acharya Sushrut indicated *Pancha Shirishanama Agad* especially in *Keet Visha* as one of the potent formulations to treat all the modalities related to insect bite poisoning and their associated symptoms. As per different *Ayurvedic* texts, the common symptoms due to *Keet Visha* (insect bites) includes *Shoola/Vedana* (pain), *Shotha* (swelling), *Toda* (pricky and knotty pain), *Daha* (burning sensation), *Kandu* (Itching) and *Jwara* (fever).

As per contemporary texts, after bite of the insects, various types of symptoms appear in the body due to their poisoning effect. Some common symptoms are pain in the affected area or in the muscles, swelling, fever, redness, itching, numbness or tingling in the affected area. The venom injected into the body from the bite or sting of an insect will cause immune system to respond. Often, human body’s immediate response will include pain, redness and swelling at the bite or sting site. Minor delayed reactions include itching and soreness. Though, we can assume that the formulation can be used in conditions like pain, inflammation, skin disease, pyrexia, gastro intestinal disorder, etc.

*Shirish* works due to its *Prabhav* that act as a potent *Vishaghna* (anti-poisonous) and *Vedana Sthapana* (analgesic) ingredient. Under contemporary parameters the plant *Shirish (Albizia lebbek (L.) Benth* shows Analgesic, Anti-inflammatory, immune-modulator, Anti-rhinitic, free radical scavenging and

mast cell stabilizing property. *Shunthi* acts on swelling due to *Shothaghna* (anti-inflammatory) and *Kapha Shamak* (vitiates *Kapha* humor) properties. *Shunthi* and *Pippali* helps to reduce fever and purifying blood due to their *Jwaraghna* (anti-pyretic) and *Rakta Shodhak* (blood purifier) properties. *Trikatu*, *Sauvarchal Lavana* and *Vid Lavana* acts on pain due to *Vatahara* (vitiates *Vata* humor) and *Shoolaghna* (analgesic) properties. *Saindhav Lavana* act as a wound healing ingredient due to *Shothaghna* (anti-inflammatory) and *Vrana Ropana* (wound healing) properties. *Shirish*, *Pippali*, *Maricha*, *Saindhav Lavana* and *Madhu* have *Vishaghna* (anti-poisonous), *Rakta Shodhak* (blood purifier), *Jantughna* (anti-helminthic) and *Vrana Ropana* (wound healer) actions which helps to combat poisoning condition and its complications. Almost all the ingredients are having *Vedana Sthapana* (analgesic) and *Shothaghna* (anti-inflammatory) properties as *Vedana* (pain), *Shotha* (swelling), *Kandu* (itch) and *Jwara* (fever) are the primary symptoms of *Keeta Visha Damsha* (insect bite poison). This formulation will help in relieving the symptoms of poisoning due to its numerous and varied properties and actions.

Symptoms	Karma	Pancha Shirishanama Agad
Toxic reaction	<i>Vishaghna</i>	<i>Shirish</i> , <i>Maricha</i> , <i>Madhu</i>
Pain	<i>Shoolaghna</i> , <i>Shoola</i> <i>Prashamana</i>	<i>Shirisha</i> , <i>Trikatu</i> , <i>Sauvarchal Lavana</i> , <i>Vid Lavana</i>

Inflammation and oedema	<i>Shothaghna</i>	<i>Shirisha, Saindhav Lavana, Shunthi</i>
Necrosis	<i>Vrana Ropana</i>	<i>Saindhav Lavana, Madhu</i>
Nausea	<i>Deepana, Pachana, Agnideepak</i>	<i>Trikatu, Saindhav Lavana, Sauvarchal Lavana, Vid Lavana, Samudra Lavana</i>
Indigestion	<i>Vata Anulomana, Vibandhaghna, Vishaghna/Gara Nashan</i>	<i>Trikatu, Pancha Lavana</i>
Microbial infestation	<i>Jantughna, Krimighna</i>	<i>Maricha, Pippali, Sauvarchal Lavana, Madhu</i>
<i>Kandu</i> (itching) and skin disorders	<i>Rakta Shodhak</i>	<i>Shirisha, Trikatu, Madhu</i>
Fever	<i>Jwaraghna</i>	<i>Shirisha, Trikatu, Vid Lavana</i>
Fainting ( <i>Moorccha</i> )	<i>Hrudya, Ruchikar, Shirovirechak</i>	<i>Shirisha, Shunthi, Pippali, Samudra Lavana</i>
Hepatopathy	<i>Yakritta Uttejak</i>	<i>Maricha, Pippali</i>
Debilitation	<i>Rasayan</i>	<i>Madhu, Pippali</i>

## CONCLUSION

Insects play vital roles in our environment contributing to the balance and well-being of ecosystems in numerous ways. Their role in sustaining wildlife is invaluable. So, their contact with human is very common and after bite of the insects, various types of symptoms appear in the body due to their poisoning effect. *Pancha Shirishanama Agad* is one of the *Vishaghna* (anti-poisonous) *Yoga* said to be very effective in the management of *Keet Visha* (insect bite poisoning) and their associated symptoms. Pain (*Vedana*), Swelling (*Sopha/Shotha*), itching (*Kandu*) and fever (*Jwara*) are the primary symptoms of insect bite (*Keet Damsha*). So, we can assume to cure these symptoms by the use of *Pancha Shirishanama Agad*. All parts of *Shirish* are extensively used as a general and universal antidote in traditional medicines. The

ingredients of the formulation are easily available and method of preparation is also simple. Majority of the drugs are *Tikta* (bitter), *Katu* (pungent) *Rasa Pradhan* that acts as *Kapha-Vata Shamak* (pacifies *Kapha & Vata* humor). Most drugs are *Ushna Veerya* (hot potency) and *Katu Vipaka* hence they will quickly act as a *Prativisha* (antidote) in *Keet Visha* (insects bite poison). The multifield pharmacological properties and actions of the ingredients will make it worth of use not only in insects bite conditions but also in other conditions like pain, inflammation, skin manifestation, gastroenteritis, indigestion, fever etc. Further research must be needed to explore its efficacy in poisoning and to treat its associated symptomatic conditions.

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