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A conceptual study on *Trividha Atisevaniya Varjya Dravya* w.s.r. to *Kshara* (Alkali)

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ABSTRACT

Kshara has been used as medicine as well as food since ancient times. In Charaka Samhita it has been mentioned that three medicinal substances viz. *Pippali*, *Kshara* (alkali) and *Lavana* (salt) can be used as emergency medicine, but they should not be consumed in excess (*Ati Upayunjita*). If they are consumed in excess quantity they will cause several adverse effects in the body. There is no specific explanation available for the term *Ati Upayunjita*. However excess use also can be taken in two ways i.e. in high dose and/ or for continuous use for long duration. For the drug *Kshara*, the word *Ati Upayunjita* is mentioned for continuous use for longer duration. What time period considered being a long time to use has not been clarified by the Acaryas. So this present review article highlights the conceptual aspects of *Trividha Atisevaniya Varjya Dravya* w.s.r. to *Kshara*.

Key words: *Trividha Atisevaniya Varjya Dravya*, *Kshara*, *Lavana*, *Pippali*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is one of the most ancient medical sciences of the world. It describes the basic and applied aspect of the process, health, disease and its management in terms of its own principles and approach.

Today's fast moving world has been adapted to a system of consuming of foods which has several adverse effects on human health. Lifestyle modifications and change in food pattern has compelled us so much that, one has so little time to really think what they are eating is a healthy diet.

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Globalization has seriously affected one's eating habits and enforced many people to consume fancy and high calorie fast foods, popularly known as Junk foods.^[1]

There is an old saying that, "We are what we eat" which holds good even today. Ailments like obesity, food poisoning, dehydration, cardiac problems, diabetes mellitus and arthritis have seen a profound rise in developing countries and such unhealthy junk food, processed food, packed food, high fat calorie consumption are the notable factors to its contribution.

This global problem of consuming unhealthy diet on a large scale and its impact on human health need to be emphasized and instill health education which can greatly contribute to its limited consumption and switching over to healthy eating habits for the better living. Knowledge emphasizing about the eating habits, nutritional diet and quality of unhealthy foods, their health impact and preventive measures should be given to create awareness and render health education for a change towards healthy food eating practices.^[2]

A set of fairly satisfactory dietic codes had been identified and prescribed by Ayurveda. Any modifications in diets and even in their preparation style leads to ill health. Various pathological entities stand identified as a result of food habits related as they are to sensory stimuli, which are pleasure giving, or distress giving. Even though Ayurveda has postulated this theory and has dealt in details, only recently a great deal of interest has been focused on the art of dietary factors in the pathogenesis of non-communicable diseases. And there are volumes of scientific data supporting the theory that diet is the underlying key factor in most chronic degenerative disorders and heart ailments.

Ayurveda explains the concept of *Nitya Sevaniya* (consumable) and *Atisevaniya Varjya Dravyas* (non consumable), *Acharya Charaka* has also explained that *Pippali* (*Piper longum*), *Kshara* (Alkali) and *Lavana* (salt) should not be consumed in excess quantity. If consumed it will cause various hazards. Among these three *Dravyas*, *Kshara* (Alkali) will be reviewed in the present study.

Acharya Charaka has told that its excess use produces injurious effects on hair, eyes, heart, virility and people may suffer from blindness, impotency, baldness, grey hair and various heart diseases.

Kshara i.e. Sodium bicarbonate, referred to as baking soda / baking powder, is fairly used in baking of pancakes, cakes, quick breads, soda bread, and other baked food products. Food preparations like Padad, Pickles, Cold drinks and Eno etc. which are commonly consumed has chief ingredient as sodium bicarbonate.

Kshara has been used as medicine as well as food since ancient times. In *Caraka Samhita* it has been mentioned that three medicinal substances viz. *Pippali*, *Kshara* (alkali) and *Lavana* (salt) can be used as emergency medicine, but they should not be consumed in excess (*Ati Upayunjita*). If they are consumed in excess quantity they will cause several adverse effects in the body. There is no specific explanation available for the term *Ati Upayunjita*. However excess use also can be taken in two ways i.e.

in high dose and/ or for continuous use for long duration. For the drug *Kshara*, the word *Ati Upayunjita* is mentioned for continuous use for longer duration.^[3] What time period considered being a long time to use has not been clarified by the *Acharyas*.

TRIVIDHA ATISEVANA VARJYA DRAVYA

Trividha Atisevana Varjya Dravya means that, these three *Dravyas* should not be taken for longer duration. *Acharyas* said that *Trividha Atisevana Varjya Dravya* i.e. *Pippali* (*Piper longum*), *Kshara* (Alkali) and *Lavana* (Salt) should not be used in excess amount for a longer duration. There are many *Dravyas* mentioned, but *Charaka* has quoted only these three *Dravyas* in this context, because these three *Dravyas* are consumed daily with food, these are '*Dosha* and *Vikara Prabhava*' *Karaka*. In *Charaka Samhita* it has been mentioned that three medicinal substances viz. *Pippali*, *Kshara* and *Lavana* can be used as emergency medicine, but they should not be consumed in excess (*Ati Upayunjita*). If they are consumed in excess quantity, they will cause several adverse effects in the body. There is no specific explanation available for the term '*Ati Upayunjita*'.^[4]

The other *Dravyas* i.e. *Chitraka*, *Bhallataka* etc. which are also not to be used in excess amount, but *Pippali*, *Kshara* and *Lavana* has been mentioned because these are commonly used in the routine diet. In ancient time *Pippali*, *Kshara*, *Lavana* are also used in emergency medicine. The fruit of *Bhallataka* are irritant, inflaming and like fire, but become like nector if used methodically. There is no disorder of *Kapha* and obstructive condition which is not ameliorated by *Ballataka* quickly. Moreover it promotes intellect and *Agni*.

In early days the old great sages like *Chyavana* etc. who, desiring vital strength, attained immeasurable lifespan by using this beneficial *Rasayana* formulation after attending longevity they performed, as desire, spiritual penance, celibacy and self meditation and migrated to heaven. Hence those who desire longevity, vital strength and happiness should used the *Rasayana* methodically and carefully.^[5]

REVIEW ON KSHARA

Acharya Charaka has described that excessive use of *Kshara* produce many kinds of diseases. *Kshara* has *Ushna*, *Teekshna* and *Laghu* properties. *Kshara* has specific action, that is *Kleda* (deliquescent) and *Shoshana* (desiccant). *Kshara* is used for *Pachana* (suppuration), *Dahana* (cauterization) and *Bhedana* (penetration) *Karma* in *Chikitsa*.

If *Kshara* is used continuously in excessive amount for a longer duration, it is harmful for hair, eyes, heart and virility. *Acharya Charaka* have mentioned and enlisted the diseases which manifest from excessive intake of *Kshara* as *Khalitya* (Bladness), *Palitya* (Grey hair), *Hridayapakarthina* (Heart disease), *Andhya* (Blindness), *Shandya* (Impotency).^[6]

Historical Review

In Samhita Period - Various references of *Ksharas* are found in the *Samhitas* with detailed description about the preparation and use of the same, both internally and externally in various diseases. *Kshara* is being used extensively and therapeutic and as well as in clinical studies in the management of diseases like *Arshas*, *Bhagandara*, *Vrana*, *Charmakeela*, *Kandara* etc.^[7]

In the period of *Samhita*, detail explanation regarding *Kshara* has been made by *Sushruta*. *Sushruta* has dealt this chapter in details, has narrated *Kshara* considering its scope *Shalya Tantra* due to its action like *Chedana*, *Bhedana*, *Lekhna*. It is also specified that *Kshara* is not an individual *Rasa*, but is a *Dravya* prepared from various drugs having many *Rasas* and some *Dravyas* by nature itself have *Ksharatva* in them. Apart from this it has been mentioned that *Kshara* as *Pradhana* among *Shastra* and *Anushastra*, because of its unique functions like *Chedana* (excision) and *Bhedana* (incision) *Karmas*, relieving the derangement of *Tridoshas* etc.^[8]

According to *Vagbhata*, *Kshara* is very good substitute for surgical operations and they do the function *Chedana* (excision) and *Bhedana* (incision) in the delicate areas and diseases where the *Shastras* can be used with difficulty or in those diseases where *Shastra*

Karma is not possible *Kshara* may be used in very difficult cases very liberally.^[9]

Acharya Charaka has explained varieties types of *Kshara* i.e. *Yava Kshara*, *Sarja Kshara* etc. *Yava Kshara* (an alkali preparation from the plant barley) is useful in *Hridroga*, *Pandu*, *Grahani*, *Pleeha*, *Anaha*, *Galagraha*, *Kasa*, *Kaphaja Arsha* and *Sarja Kshara* is in general are *Tikshna*, *Ushna*, *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Kledi*, *Pakta*, *Vidarana-Daha*, *Dipaniya-Chedana* and also described (*Sarvakshara* - *Sarbvasajji Kshara* and *Tankana Kshara*) which are used in internally and externally.^[10]

Nirukti

Kshara is substance possessing '*Ksharana*' and '*Kshanana*' properties. Due to its corrosive nature (*Ksharanat*), it is known as *Kshara*.^[11]

Classification of Kshara^[12]

1. On the basis of administration

- *Pratisaraneeya Kshara* - External application
- *Paneeya Kshara* - Internal application

Acharya Vagbhata opines the same by considering them as *Bahya Parimarjaneeya* and *Antah Parimarjana*.

2. On the basis of Concentration

- *Mrudu Kshara*.
- *Madhyama kshara*.
- *Teekshna Kshara*.

3. On the basis of origin

- *Vanaspatijanya* - Herbal.
- *Pranijanya* - Animal.
- *Khanijanya* - Mineral.

4. According to season of preparation

- *Uttama* - prepared in *Greeshma Ritu* (Summer)
- *Madhyama* - prepared in *Sharad Ritu* (Winter)
- *Adhama* - prepared in *Varsha Ritu* (Rainy)

5. According to Sarangadhar Samhita

- Dwikshara - Sajra Kshara and Yava Kshara
- Kshara Traya - Sajra Kshara, Yava Kshara, Tankana.
- Kshara Panchaka - Sajra, Apamarga, Yava, Tila, Palasha Kshara.
- Kshara Ashtaka - Sajra, Apamarga, Yava, Tila, Palasha, Sudha Sarkara or Kata Sarkara, Cincha, Arka.
- Yava Kshara - Water soluble ash of barley husk.

Table 1: Kshara Guna according to Bruhatrayi

Charaka (Ca.Su.27/306)	Sushruta (Su.Su.11/16)	Vagbhata (As.Su.39/7)
Tikshna	Naatitikshna	Naatikshana
Ushna	Naatimridu	Naatimridu
Laghu	Shukla	Slakshna
Rukshna	Slakshna	Picchila
Kledana	Picchila	Avishyandi
Pachana	Avishyandhi	Shigragah
Vidarana	Shivah	Shita
Dagdhakara	Sheegra.	Shikari
Dipana		Sukhanirvapy
Chedana		Naatiruk
Agni sannibha		

Neither very strong, nor very mild, white in colour, smooth, slimy, not spreading, acting well and quickly are the eight good properties of alkali.^[13]

Prepared Kshara, being a composite of many drugs alleviates the three Doshas. Being white in colour it is plain. In spite of placidity, this actions like cauterizing, digestion and splitting is carried out as it is made of drugs having the property of pungent, hot, sharp,

digestive and suppurative. When used, it is cleansing, heating, absorbant and scarping. When used internally, it destroys Krimi, Amadosha, Kaphagata Roga, Twak Roga, Gara Visha and Gulma. Further if it used in excess, it can result in impotency.

Kshara Mahatwa

Kshara is most important one among Shastra and Anushastra, because it does functions like Cheedana, Bhedana, Lekhana and mitigate all three Dosas and suitable for special method. Shastra and Anushastra are used in skin.^[14]

Other Anushastra like Agni, Jalauka etc., Kshara is the best among them. Kshara is an alkaline substance obtained by processing the ash of drugs. They are considered as Anushastras because of various actions like Chedana, Bhedana, Lekhana etc., even in the absence of Shastras.

Kshara has been deemed to be superior to Shastras and Anushastras. Because of its action as said above i.e., Chedana, Lekhana, and alleviation of Tridoshas and also being used for specific functions. Kshara is that which cuts off Twak, Mamsadi putrified tissues and removes the vitiating Doshas.

Ksharanat - means by producing injury in skin, muscles etc. Kshara derived from the drug possesses various properties like, it is Sarvarasayukta, Katu, Lavana Rasa Pradhana etc.

Due to Teekshna and Ushna Guna, it has many functions such as Dahana, Pavhana, Vidarana and Vilayana, also does Shodhana & Ropana karma. By the action and it rest the purified issued by carrying it down disintegrating the vitiating twak, mamsadi tissues.

Kshara serves the purpose even in the Shastras and where Shastra Chikitsa is contraindicated and fit to be used in places where sharp instrument can be used with difficulty such as Nasa-Arsha and Arbudha, where treatment with sharp instrument does not succeed and in diseases by 'Ati Prakupita Doshas'.

Anushastra are bamboo, quartz, Kacha, Karuvinda, leeches, Agni, nail, leaves of Gojihva, Sphephalika and Shaka, sprints, hair and Anguli.

The principle behind the preparation of *Kshara* was based as per the need of the study required for clinical trial.

Kshara Dosh

The Physical properties of improperly prepared *Kshara*, described by *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata*.

Table 2: *Kshara Dosh* according to *Bruhatrayi*

<i>Kshara Dosh</i>	<i>Sustruta</i> (Su.Su.11/17)	<i>Vagbhata</i> (As.Su.39/3)
<i>Ati Mruduta</i> (too mild)	+	+
<i>Ati Ushanata</i> (too hot)	+	+
<i>Ati Shweta</i> (too white)	+	+
<i>Ati Teekshnata</i> (too sharp)	+	+
<i>Ati Pitchila</i> (too slimy)	+	+
<i>Ati Visarpita</i> (too spreading)	+	+
<i>Ati Sandra</i> (too thick)	+	+
<i>Apakwata</i> (uncooked)	+	+
<i>Heenadravyata</i> (with less potency)	+	+
<i>Ati Tanu</i> (very thin)	+	+

Kshara Karma^[15]

Ksharas comprise following capabilities.

Orally

- *Tridoshaghna* - pacify all three *doshas* (multifold active constituents).
- *Paachana* - Digestive and carminative (*Agneyatatwa*)

- *Shodana* (Cleansing) - Expel vitiated *doshas/dhatus* from body.
- *Vilayana* (Liquifying) - liquify Phlem and fat and thus clear body channels.
- *Krimighna* - Anthelmintic.
- *Medhoghna* - Lipolytic.
- *Ashmarigna* - Urolithiasis.

Topically

- *Daarana* (To open) - opens the abscess.
- *Shoshana* (To dry) - dries up wounds.
- *Ropana* (To heal) - heal the wouns fast by keeping clean and sterile.
- *Stambhana* - Styptic and astringent.
- *Lekhana* - Scraping and cauterizing.
- *Kushtaghna* - useful in skin ailments (*charamakeela, kilaas* etc.)
- *Dahana* (Burn) - burn the skin/mucous membrane.

Indication of *Kshara Karma* (*Pratisaraniya*)

Kshara Karma has been prescribed in good number of diseases by ancient *Acharyas*.

Table 3: Indication of *Kshara karma* according to *Bruhatrayi*.

SN	<i>Charaka</i>	<i>Sushruta</i> (Su.Su.11/7)	<i>Vagbhata</i> (As.Su.39/8)
1.	<i>Kustha</i>	<i>Kustha</i>	<i>Kustha</i>
2.	<i>Kitibha</i>	<i>Arsha</i>	<i>Arshas</i>
3.	<i>Arbuda</i>	<i>Visarpa</i>	<i>Bhagandara</i>
4.	<i>Kilasa</i>	<i>Vrana</i>	<i>Galaganda</i>
5.	<i>Dusta vrana</i>	<i>Vatarakta</i>	<i>Nadi vrana</i>
6.	<i>Nadi vrana</i>	<i>Bhagandara</i>	<i>Kantha roga</i>
7.	<i>Charma keela</i>	<i>Galaganda</i>	<i>Netraarbuda</i>

8.	Vyanga	Karna roga	Naarbuda
9.	Mashaka	Nasarbuda	Nasaadhimanya
10.	Bahividradhi	Nasaadhimanya	Nasaarshas
11.	Krimi	Nasaarshas	Jattumani
12.	Visha		Mashaka
13.	Upajihwa		Adhijihwa
14.	Upakusha		Valmeeka
15.	Danta vaidara		Upadamsha
16.	Charmakeela		Three types of Rohini
17.	Dadru		
18.	Mandala		
19.	Bhagandara		
20.	Arsha		

Contraindication of Kshara Karma

Before the application of Kshara it is necessary to observe the fitness of the patient, contraindication of Kshara can be classified into following groups.

- **According to diseases** - Jwara, Hrudroga, Shiraroga, Panduroga, Arochacaka, Sarvangashopha, Raktajagulma, Udararoga are contraindicated.
- **According to physical and mental state of the patient** - Children, Phobic people, Aged, Menstruating woman, Pregnant woman, Physically weak persons.
- **According to sites** - Arteries, Joint, Vital parts, Cartilages, Veins, Ligaments, Throat, Umbilicus, Penis, Insufficient musculature, Nail bed, Testis and all parts of the eye except eye lid.
- **According to seasons** - Summer, Autumn and cloudy weather are contraindicated. The above

contraindications are applicable for both *Paneeya and Parataraneeya Kshara*. Apart from these, few anatomical sites and some diseases may also be fit for contraindicated of *Prataraneeya Kshara*.

Excessive use of Kshara leads to *Pumsatva Upagatha*. *Charaka* said Kshara helps in digestion but excessive use of it causes impairment of vision. *Vagbhata* described that due to *Katurasa*, Kshara is injurious to *Hridaya, Kasa, Chakshu, Ojus* and *Shukra*. Further *Shushruta* has observed that Kshara may be ineffective in *Kshara Sadyavyadhi* also if it complicated by oedema, pain in the bones, aversion for food, pain in precordial region and joints. However, external application of *Apamarga Kshara* is indicated in children, weak persons and decrepit.^[16]

Signs of Samyak Dagdha Lakshanas

When the Kshara has been properly applied, the diseases get relieved, the patient feels comfortable and cessation.

Signs of Heena Dagdha Lakshanas

When the Kshara application is inadequate amount, features of pain, irritation, heaviness and aggravation of diseases.

Signs of Atidagdha Lakshanas

When there is excessive application of Kshara, there is burning sensation, inflammation, reddish discoloration, discharge, body ache, fatigue, thirst, fainting or even death.^[17]

Kshara Prayoga

According to Vagbhata - The disease treatable by Kshara should either be cut, scraped or made to exude fluid first and then the Kshara taken in a iron rod is placed on the spot, the other parts (surrounding) of the body kept covered (protected) by cotton swabs and a time (period) of one hundred *Matra* awaited.^[18]

According to Sushruta - The patient who is suffering from a disease which is curable with application of Kshara, should be made to sit at a place devoid of breeze and sunlight and not narrow; all the

equipments and other necessary things being collected and kept ready.

Next, the place for the application of the *Kshara* having been observed should be either scrubbed, scraped or cut (incised), then the *Kshara* held in a rod like instrument should be smeared on the place; after applying, a period of time pronouncing one hundred letters should be allowed to elapse.^[19]

DISCUSSION

“*Trividha Atisevana Varjya Dravyas*” are explained in *Rasavimana Adhyaya* of *Vimanasthana*, so that it provides proposal for the lessons. It is compilation of *Charaka’s* view on *Gunas* of three *Dravyas*, *Pippali*, *Kshara* and *Lavana* and their effect when taken in excess quantity.

All the three *Dravyas* and also their *Gunas* are explained. This indicates that these three *Dravyas* should not be used in excess quantity as *Ahara Dravya*. There are so many *Dravyas* mentioned by the *Acharyas* which are *Ahita* to the body. It is depending upon the *Gunas* described that, it is the duty of the individual to decide what type of *Ahara Dravya* should be selected and major part of it comes when the same in how much quantity it should be consumed and what should be the duration.

“*Trividha Atisevana Varjya Dravya*” is indicative of only *Pippali*, *Kshara* and *Lavana*. But only these three has been told, because the reason is *Pippali*, *Kshara* and *Lavana* have most dangerous effects and these three *Dravyas* are used as food ingredients in routine diet. The other *Dravyas* belonging to the same category like *Chitraka*, *Bhallataka*, etc. are not used as food ingredients in routine diet.

There is no specific explanation available for the term *Ati Upayunjita*. However, “*Ati*” can be taken in two ways i.e. in excess *Matra* and continuous or frequent use for longer duration. What time period should be considered for longer duration has not been clarified by the *Acharyas*. But the duration and ill effects which are mentioned by the *Acharyas* when these *Dravyas* are used in excess and for longer duration may vary from one individual to another depending on their

Prakruti, *Satwa*, *Satmya*, *Vaya*, *Bala*, etc. factors to produce the adverse effects on their body. So the *Acharyas* might have not mentioned the time period / duration for continuous usage of these three *Ahara Dravyas* i.e. *Pippali*, *Kshara* and *Lavana*.

Excessive intake of *Kshara* leads to *Soshana* of *Dhatus* because it has *Ushna*, *Teekshna* and *Laghu* properties. *Ushna*, *Teekshna* and *Laghu* properties are the qualities of *Agni Mahabhutas*. Excessive *Agni* predominance *Dravya* leads to distracting *Dhatus*. *Kshara* has specific action, that is *Kleda* (deliquescent) and *Shoshana* (desiccant). *Kshara* is used for *Pachana* (suppuration), *Dahana* (cauterization) and *Bhedana* (penetration) *Karma* in *Chikitsa*.

It can be used internally as well as externally. It is used to burn body tissue and used in treatment for *Dahana Karma* (cauterization). It penetrates *Vrana* etc. and also expells *Dosha* strongly. But *Kshara* is used continuously in excessive amount for a longer duration, it is harmful for hair, eyes, heart and virility. *Acharya Charaka* have mentioned and enlisted the diseases which manifest from excessive intake of *Kshara* as *Khalitya* (Baldness), *Palitya* (Grey hair), *Hridayapakarthina* (Heart disease), *Andhya* (Blindness), *Shandya* (Impotency).

Kshara is one which scrapes the abnormal tissue from the locating viscera and drags it down after dissolving because of its corrosive nature. This might be the reason that when *Kshara* used in excess as *Ahara Dravya* it is having its action on normal *Doshas* and *Dhatus* as it is having *Ushna* and *Tikshna Guna*. In this modern era *Kshara Pradhana* substances are used prominently as *Ahara*. So people are prone to diseases. So *Kshara* (Alkali) should not be used in excess.

CONCLUSION

People are going in the context of differentiating greed and need to the body in present era. Growing number of Chinese food stall and junk food industry prove that people are liking fast food (spicy and salt food). In the localities rather than *Pippali*, *Kshara* and *Lavana* is used in daily routine diet. *Acharya Charaka*

has mentioned that excessive intake of *Kshara* leads to *Khalitya*, *Palitya*, *Andhya*, *Shandya* due to its *Ushna* and *Teekshna Guna*. In *Vedas* and *Puranas* we don't find much description regarding *Kshara*. Consequently in the period of *Samhitas*, detailed explanation is found. *Sushruta* has dealt in details. He has narrated *Kshara* considering its scope in *Shalya Tantra* due to its action *Chedana*, *Bhedana*, *Lekhana* etc. Charaka has dealt with definition, varieties, properties and application of *Kshara*. It is specified that *Kshara* is not an individual *Rasa*, but is a *Dravya* prepared from various individual drugs.

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