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A Review on *Ashwagandha Ghrita*

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ABSTRACT

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera* (L) Family - Solanaceae) known as Indian ginseng is an effective immunomodulator, aphrodisiac, sedative and adaptogen. *Ashwagandha Ghrita* is a ghee based Ayurvedic formulation which is available in the market, but *Ashwagandha Ghrita* containing *Rasasindura* and *Tamra Bhasma* along with *Ashwagandha* and *Musta Churna* is also mentioned in classical text which many of us are not aware of. As we all know that the action of *Rasaushadhis* are quick and require very less dose the one mentioned by *Vagbhatacharya* (author of *Rasaratnasamuchaya*) is the need of the hour for the immunomodulation.

Key words: *Ashwagandha*, *Withania somnifera*, *Immunomodulation*.

INTRODUCTION

Sneha Kalpana is the sum of words *Sneha* and *Kalpana*,^[1] where *Sneha* means fat or fatty material and *Kalpana* stands for pharmaceutical process of medicaments. *Sneha Dravyas* will have *Gunas* such as *Guru*, *Sita*, *Sara*, *Snigdha*, *Manda*, *Sukshma*, *Mridu*, *Drava Gunas*. Ayurveda mentions *Ghrita Kalpana* and *Taila Kalpana* under *Sneha Kalpana*. *Sneha* is obtained from two *Yonis* i.e. *Sthavara* and *Jangama*. *Tila*, *Priyala*, *Abhisuka*, *Danti*, *Haritaki*, *Eranda*, *Madhuka*, *Sarshapa*, *Kusumbha*, *Bilwa*, *Aruka*, *Mulaka*, *Atasi*, *Nikocaka*, *Aksoda*, *Karanja* and *Shigru*, these are *Sthavara* sources of *Sneha*.

As regards to *Jangama Yoni*, fish, quadruped animals and birds come under this group. *Ghrita*, *Taila*, *Vasa*,

Majja are the best *Sneha Dravyas* of all. Amongst them *Ghrita*^[2] is the *Sneha Dravya* par excellence because of its power to assimilate effectively the properties of the substances. *Sneha Kalpana* can be defined as a pharmaceutical procedure which is followed to produce an oleaginous medicament from substances such as *Kalka* and *Drava Dravyas* (like *Kwatha*, *Swarasa*, *Ksheera*, *Dadhi*, *Takra* etc.). The *Kalpana* involves boiling or cooking them with drug, decoction or juice. *Ashwagandha Ghrita* is an important formulation mentioned in various textbooks like *Rasaratnasamuchaya*, *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*, *Bharata Bhaishajya Ratnakara* in context of different diseases.

Ashwagandha Ghrita is easily available in the market. But, *Vagbhatacharya* in *Rasa Ratna Samuchaya*, has told a unique formulation of *Ashwagandha Ghrita* which contains *Ashwagandha Churna*, *Musta Churna*, *Rasasindura*, *Tamra Bhasma* and *Goksheera* which many of us are not aware of, and also it is not available in the market. Here he emphasizes that the *Ghrita* prepared in *Sucha* way will be having *Balya* actions which is nothing but immunomodulatory action. Among them *Ashwagandha*, *Goksheera*, *Ghrita* has *Rasayana* properties. *Rasasindura* is having *Yogavahi*, *Nadibalya*, *Rasayana* and *Vajeekarana* properties, increases the strength of *Snayu*. *Tamra Bhasma* is *Hrudya*, *Nadi Balya* and *Vishaghna*.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the preparation of *Ghrita* there are three essential components required *Kalka* (paste made into bolus out of drugs) - 1 part, *Sneha* (here *Ghrita*) - 4 parts, *Dravadravya* (a liquid which can be either *Kashaya*, *Swarasa*, *Ksheera* etc.) - 16 parts. The *Paka* duration will depend upon the *Dravadravya* used. So for *Ksheera* - 2 days, *Swarasa* - 3 days, *Takra*, *Aranala* - 5 days, *Vrihidhanya* and *Mamsarasa* - 1 day *Paka* should be done. Depending upon the nature of *Dravadravya* used the *Paka* duration may vary as each *Dravadravya* has its own properties, concentration and also releasing capacity of active ingredients into *Sneha*. Hence *Acharyas* mentioned different time duration according to the *Drava Dravya*. The following table shows the different references of *Ashwagandha Ghrita* mentioned in the classics.

S N	Kalka Dravya	Drava Dravya	Indication	Reference
1.	<i>Ashwagandha Churna</i> , <i>Musta Churna</i> , <i>Rasasindura</i> , <i>Tamra Bhasma</i> (1 part total)	<i>Godugdha</i> - 4 parts <i>Jala</i> - 16 parts	<i>Balya</i> , <i>Pushtivard hhanam</i>	<i>Rasa Ratna Samuchaya</i> ^[3]
2.	<i>Ashwagandha Churna</i> (1 part)	<i>Godugdha</i> - 10 parts <i>Jala</i> - 40 parts	<i>Balya</i> , <i>Pushtivard hhanam</i>	<i>Bhaishajya Ratnavali</i> ^[4]
3.	<i>Ashwagandha Churna</i> (1 part)	<i>Godugdha</i> - 8 parts <i>Jala</i> - 32 parts	<i>Balya</i> , <i>Pushtivard hhanam</i>	<i>Bharata Bhaishajya Ratnakara</i> ^[5]

In *Ashwagandha Ghrita*, the *Pakakaala* will be 2 days as here *Dravadravya* is *Ksheera*. In *Rasaratnasamuchaya*, *Acharya* has mentioned all the four *Kalka Dravyas* i.e., *Ashwagandha*, *Mustachurna*, *Rasasindura* and *Tamra Bhasma* should be done *Paka* together. So it can be inferred that he had told it because of the actions happening with the *Ksheera* and other *Kalka Dravyas* including during the two days of heating to make the metals and minerals bio-

compatible and easily absorbable in the body.^[6] *Withania Somnifera* belongs to the family Solanaceae, popularly known as "*Ashwagandha*" which is a herbal tonic and health food. It has been used in Ayurveda as well as other indigenous medicines for a very long period to treat various ailments. *Ashwagandha* holds an important place in *Ayurvedic Rasayana* herbs. *Rasayana* (Immuno modulation and anti ageing property), *Yogavahi* (ability to target drugs to the respective site) are characteristics of a properly made herbo - mineral/ metal/non-metal preparations. These preparation are also non - toxic, gently absorbable, adaptable and digestible in the body.^[7] *Tamra Bhasma* and *Rasasindura* are two such formulations which has rejuvenating as well as immunomodulatory action. Many reasearches including animal and clinical experimentations are going on in the area of immunomodulation.^[8]

Ashwagandha is widely claimed to have immunomodulatory, hepatoprotective, anxiolytic, antidepressant, nootropic, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antistress, anticonvulsant, cardioprotective, antitumor, antigenotoxic, antiparakinsonian properties. *Ashwagandha Ghrita* is an excellent formulation for the treatment of weakness, gynaecological disorders, general debility, infertility,^[8] and immunomodulation.^[9] It has constituents such as alkaloids and steroidal lactones namely - withanine, withananine, somnine, somniferine, somniferinine, pseudo withanine tropane, peudotropine, choline, anaferine, anahydrine and isopelletierine.

During the process of *Paka* due to the *Vishaghna* properties of *Goghrita* and *Godugdha* the toxic elements are removed and all the properties of the ingredients combine, thereby making the preparation a fast acting potent drug.

The confirmative tests for completion of *Sneha Paka* - 1) *Sneha Kalka* attains perfect wick shape when rolled between thumb and index finger, 2) If a part of *Sneha Kalka* is put on fire, no sound is produced indicating loss of moisture in it, 3) Foam disappears during completion of preparation.

DISCUSSION

It can be found that there are 3 reference of *Ashwagandha Ghrita* in our classics. In the *Ashwagandha Ghrita* mentioned in *Bhaishajya Ratnavali* and *Bharata Bhaishajya Ratnakara* the ingredients are the same. The only differences which can be noted is the difference in the proportion of the ingredients, i.e. according to *Bhaishajya Ratnavali Ashwagandha Churna* - 1 part, *Godugdha* - 10 parts and *Jala* - 40 parts and according to *Bharata Bhaishajya Ratnakara Ashwagandha Churna* - 1 part, *Godugdha* - 8 parts and *Jala* - 32 parts. So we can infer that there might be a mild difference in the properties of both the *Ghritas* due to the difference in proportion but the indication in both the formulations are the same.

But when it comes to *Ashwagandha Ghrita* according to *Rasa Ratna Samuchaya* there is a huge difference in the ingredients due to the presence of *Rasasindura* and *Tamra Bhasma* in it. The action of drugs might be faster when compared with the herbal formulations resulting in quicker results. All the ingredients here possess properties of *Nadibalya*, *Balya*, *Pustivardhanam* and Immunomodulatory action.

There are many such formulations in our classics mentioned where in *Rasaushadhis* are added but they are not available in the market. Even though many of the *Acharyas* have mentioned about such preparations there is no clear cut mentioning about the time of addition of *Rasaushadhis* in it.

CONCLUSION

Ashwagandha Ghrita is commonly available reference in the textbooks of Ayurveda. Though the ingredients are available, *Ashwagandha Ghrita* (acc to *Rasaratnasamuchaya*) is not available in the market which may be because of the presence of *Bhasmas* in it. But using modern instrumentations the time duration taken for the preparation can be brought

down along with man power. In the present era immunomodulation is the need of the hour. So, after the necessary trials such a potent and fast acting drug should be brought into the market for the benefit of the society. Also, many other formulations containing *Rasaushadhis* should be brought to the market by which we can prove that Ayurveda also have fast acting drug formulations resulting in the betterment of the society.

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