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Pharmaceutical Study of *Gandhaka Rasayana* and its Medicinal Importance

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ABSTRACT:

Ayurveda aims to achieve a healthy, long, and prosperous life through the maintenance of bodily equilibrium and prevention of disease. Among its fundamental frameworks, *Ashtanga Ayurveda* forms the core of classical medical practice. *Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana*, which evolved prominently from the 8th century onwards, represent the pharmaceutical branch of Ayurveda and encompass the preparation and therapeutic application of herbo-mineral formulations, including metals, minerals, *Bhasmas*, and *Kalpas*. Certain drugs described in *Rasashastra* are of mythological origin, such as *Parada* derived from *Shivabija* and *Gandhaka* from *Shivangiraja*, emphasizing their revered status in Ayurvedic literature. *Gandhaka* (Sulphur) is considered a potent *Rasayana* drug due to its multifaceted therapeutic properties, particularly its role as *Raktashodhaka* (blood purifier) and *Twaka Roganashaka* (curative for skin disorders). *Gandhaka Rasayana* is a well-established classical herbo-mineral formulation extensively used in clinical practice for the management of various *Twaka Vikaras* such as *Kushtha*, *Vicharchika*, and other chronic dermatological conditions. The efficacy and safety of *Gandhaka Rasayana* largely depend on proper *Shodhana* (purification) of *Gandhaka*, which can be carried out using different media such as *Dugdha* (milk), *Guduchi Swarasa*, and other herbal liquids, as described in classical texts. The present study aims to review and elaborate upon the pharmaceutical aspects, methods of *Shodhana*, preparation procedures, and therapeutic properties of *Gandhaka Rasayana*. Emphasis is given to its pharmacological actions, clinical utility, and relevance in contemporary Ayurvedic practice, highlighting its significance as a safe and effective *Rasayana* formulation when prepared according to classical guidelines.

KEYWORDS: *Gandhaka Rasayana*, Pharmaceutical, Therapeutic uses.

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INTRODUCTION:

The aim of *Ayurveda* is to achieve healthy and prosperous life. *Ayurveda* has various principles and treatment modalities, in which it includes 'Ashtanga Ayurveda'¹. *Rasashastra* and *Bhaishajya Kalpana* is one of the important medicinal principle, which has pharmaceutical branch since from 8th century. It includes various minerals, *Bhasmas*, *Kalpas*, etc. which also includes mythologically drugs originated like *Parada* from *Shivabija* and *Gandhaka* from *Shivangiraja*². *Gandhaka* is also known as Sulphur. It is one among *Uparasa Varga* in *Rasa Shastra*. It was used in different formulations in *Ayurveda*. Also used in various diseases³. *Gandhaka* stands next to *Parada* in the field of *Rasa shastra*. *Gandhaka* is one of the *Rasayana* drug, *Raktashodhaka* and *Twachya*. *Gandhaka Rasayana* is one of the Herbo-mineral formulation used in the therapeutics. Here, the term *Rasayana* stands for longevity. *Rasayana* is unique concept of *Ayurveda*. *Gandhaka* having *Guṇa-dharma* like *Kṛumighna*, *Kuṣṭhaghna*, *Kaṇḍughna*⁴. *Gandhaka* has wide range of applications in *Twaka Vikaras* like *Kushtha*, *Vicharchika* etc. There are various modes for the *Shodhana* of *Gandhaka* like *Shodhana* with the help of *Dugdha*, *Guduchi Swarasa* etc. In this study, we include Pharmaceutical and medicinal properties of *Gandhaka Rasayana*.

Aim & Objectives of the study –

Aim – Medicinal properties & preparation of *Gandhaka Rasayana*.

Objectives –

- To prepare *Gandhaka Rasayana* as per *Rasatarangini*.
- To study the medicinal properties of *Gandhaka Rasayana*.

Materials & methods –

Review of *Gandhaka* –

Symbol : S

English Name : Sulphur

Synonym⁵: *Gauripushpa*, *Kushthari*, *Bali*, *Kitaghna*, *Pamari*, *Lelitaka*, *Navanita*, *Rasagandhaka*.

Physical properties of *Gandhaka*⁶ :

Sulphur is a yellow solid with no taste and odour. It is freely soluble in carbon disulphide but insoluble in water and sparingly soluble in alcohol and ether. Its vapours are poisonous for bacteria and fungi but not for animals or human beings. Sulphur is soluble in *Tila Taila* (Oil of *Sesamum indicum*) in the Ratio of 1:16, when heating it at low temperature.

Pharmacological and therapeutic properties⁷ :

Rasa : *Katu, Tikta*

Guna : *Snigdha, Sara*

Virya : *Ushna*

Vipaka : *Katu, Madhura*

Karma :

- ❖ **Doshika** - *Kapha Vatahara* and *Pittajanana*
- ❖ **Systemic-** *Dipana, Pachana, Amajirna Prashamana, Sara, Vishaghna, Balya, Yogavahi*.
- ❖ **Therapeutic-** *Kandu, Kushtha, Visarpa, Dadru, Krimi, Kasa, Shvasa* etc.
- ❖ **Pharmacological⁸** - may be used for disinfectant, destroying bacteria fungi and insects.

Characters of Sulphur⁹:

Atomic number : 16

Atomic weight : 32.064

Boiling point : 444.6 °C

Melting point : 119.0

Matra of *Shodhita Gandhaka*¹⁰ –

The *Matra* of *Shuddha Gandhaka* according to the *Rasa Tarangini* is – 1 *Ratti* to 8 *Ratti*.

Shodhana of *Gandhaka*^{11,12} –

Procedure:

- 1) Hot milk was poured in a vessel and a Ghee smeared cloth was tied covering its mouth.
- 2) Now, *Gandhaka* was powdered with the help of *Khalva yantra*.

- 3) Put the *Gandhaka* over the tied cloth covering the mouth of the vessel.
- 4) The mouth of the vessel is covered with another vessel or *Kharpara* of *Mruttika*.
- 5) Then vessel was poured into the pit.
- 6) Above the poured vessel burn the *Vanyotapala*.
- 7) Due to this the *Gandhaka* presented in the vessel was melted and collected in the vessel which is already poured with the milk.
- 8) When the *Gandhaka* was cooled down; then it was washed with the help of *Koshna Jala*.

Organoleptic parameters of *Gandhaka Rasayana*¹³ –

Parameters	<i>Gandhaka Rasayana</i>
<i>Shabda</i>	-
<i>Sparsha</i>	Soft, smooth
<i>Rupa</i>	Brown
<i>Rasa</i>	Sweet, astringent, sour
<i>Gandha</i>	Like <i>Ardraka</i>

Preparation of *Gandhaka Rasayana*^{14,15} –

Shuddha Gandhaka was taken and subjected to first *Godugdha* for 3 times, followed by *bhavana* with *Chaturjata Kwatha*, *Guduchi Swarasa*, *Triphala Kwatha*, *Shunthi Kwatha*, *Bhringraja Swarasa*, *Ardraka Swarasa* for 8 times each. Then the *Gandhaka* was collected and mixed with equal quantity of sugar.

DISCUSSION:

Gandhaka Rasayana has been explained in various texts using different ingredients like *Rasa Sindura*, *Su.Gandhaka*, *Tamra bhasma*, *Louha bhasma*, *Pippali* with *bhavana* by *Nimbu Swarasa* and taken in the dose of 4 *Ratti* with *Madhu* and *Ghrita* as *Anupana*. But most of the texts explain to prepare it by using *Shuddha Gandhaka* giving *bhavana* with *Godugdha*, *Chaturjata Hima*, *Triphala Kwatha*, *Guduchi Swarasa*, *Ardraka Swarasa* and *Bhringaraja*. As per *Ayurveda Prakasha*, *Gandhaka Rasayana* should be administered

after *Shodhana* of the body. *Gandhaka* is one of the *Uparasa varga* in *Rasashastra*. It stands next to *Parada* in importance. Regarding its origin there is mythological story where it is said to be the menstrual fluid of Goddess *Paravathi* or *Balivasa*. Various synonyms of *Gandhaka* convey different meanings, denoting its action, origin, colour and smell etc. *Gandhaka* which is *Peeta varna*, shiny resembles ripe *Aamalaki* is *Grahya*.

CONCLUSION:

Gandhaka Rasayana is one of the *Herbo-mineral* preparation with *Shuddha Gandhaka* as it is processed with various *Bhavana Dravyas*. It is an *Khalviya Rasayana* as it has only *Gandhaka* ingredient. The *Bhavana Dravyas* enhanced the properties of *Gandhaka*. It contains the alkaloids derived from the *Bhavana Dravyas*. It has antifungal activity, used for various skin diseases, acts as *Raktashodhaka*, *Krumighna*, *Kushthaghna*.

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