

CONCEPT OF SHODHANA – A REVIEW BY RASA SHASTRA**Vir Kirti^{1*}, Rinky Jatav², Chandra Bhan Singh³, Yogesh Kumar⁴ and Ajay Kumar⁵**

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ABSTRACT

Shodhana, which means cleansing and converting the poisonous medicine into the purified form. Shodhana is a procedure necessary for every drug before taking it for adding in any compound or subjecting it for further processes. In Ayurvedic system the name shodhana occurs in different contexts. In Kayachikitsa the word shodhana signifies the treatment aspect by which doshas are eliminated from the body. In Rasa Shastra, it is purification or washing out the unwanted or undesired impurities of the substance and is the basic procedure. Shodhana is a swatantravidhi and is the very first step of aushadha samskara. Shodhana in Ayurvedic Rasashastra plays a major and powerful role through which increases the therapeutic efficacy of a drug. Though the concept of shodhana is in practice since ancient

times, its importance has enhanced after the development and incorporation of Rasa Shastra in Ayurvedic system of medicine. The process of shodhana to be adopted depends upon the material for which shodhana to be done. This relies upon the source of material, its chemical composition, impurities and its natural properties. By shodhana process many material changes are elicited both physically and chemically. Hence an attempt has been made to recollect all the evidences related to the shodhana procedure.

KEYWORDS:- *Shodhana, Procedure, Importance.*

INTRODUCTION

Shodhana, means purification and making drug fit for further procedure. **Shodhana** is procedure necessary for every drug before taking it for adding in any compound or subjecting it for further processes. In Ayurvedic system the name **shodhana** occurs in different contexts. In Kayachikitsa the word **shodhana** signifies the treating aspect by which doshas are eliminated from the body. In **Rasa Shastra**, it is purification or washing out the unwanted or undesired impurities of the substance and is the basic procedure. **Shodhana** is a Swatantra Vidhi and is the very first step of aushadha samskara. **Shodhana** in Ayurvedic **Rasa shastra** plays a major and powerful role through which enhance the therapeutic efficacy of a drug. Though the concept of shodhana is in practice since ancient times, its importance has enhanced after the development and incorporation of Rasa Shastra in Ayurvedic system of medicine. Ayurveda refers to Ayur = life and Veda = science. Ayurveda is concerned with the prevention rather than cure of diseases. Materials from the three natural sources of herbal, mineral/metal and animal origin have been chosen in Ayurveda. The present review is mainly dealing with mineral/metals used in the formulation of a medicine. Rasashastra is a branch of Ayurveda, dealing with the formulations involving drugs of metal/mineral origin. The various aspects covered under this branch are their origin, varieties, physical and chemical characteristics, therapeutic properties and their uses. Hence this branch is also described as 'Ayurvedic Pharmaceutics'.^[3] The study of Rasashastra, deals with metals like Gold, Mercury, Silver, Copper, Iron, Tin, Lead, Zinc etc. These have their traditional names as Swarna, Parada or Rasa, Rajata, Tamra, Lauha, Vanga, Naga, Yasada. These metals play a vital role in human physiology and form the essential components within the human body.^[1] According to Ayurvedic Formulary of India, mercury and lead are reported to be the widely used heavy metals.^[2] From the fact that the name of this branch has been given after Parad (Rasa in Rasashastra) indicates the emphasis laid by the then health care professionals on the use of Parad or Rasa in the use of therapeutics. Rasashastra is existing since vedic period. It has also been reported that Buddhist sages were the first to use mercury and believed to be one of the creators of treatment by using metals and minerals in their appropriate form. Many drugs used for rasayana chikitsa (Rejuvenation therapy) contains Parad (rasa) with other metals. These are classified as rasaousadhies. Since rasaousadhies are effective in small doses and gives quick relief as compared to pure herbal formulations, they have gained significance tremendously.^[3]

Sodhana

It is the purification and detoxification process wherein toxic materials are eliminated and substances are subjected to further processings.^[4] In this process, metals/minerals after mixing with drugs used for certain purpose, they are treated with various peshanadi (grinding, etc.) karmas. The main aim of this process is to enhance its physic-chemical properties to increase its availability in our body and to remove malas (toxins) from the drugs. Also reducing the particle size enhances absorption and all the chemical changes makes the material friendly. The procedures followed for the purpose of shodhana are Abhisheka (sprinkling), Achushana (absorption), Atapa/Agni shoshana (drying), Bharjana (frying or roasting), Bhavana (levigation), Dhalana (melting and quenching), Galana (melting and straining), Mardana (trituration eg. Paradshodhana), Nimajjana (dipping), Nirjalikarana (evaporation of water), Nirvapa (heating and quenching), Parishravana (straining), Patana (sublimation), Prakshalana (washing), Prithakikarana (separation), Swedana (boiling under liquid bath) and Vilayana (elutriation).^[5] Human body is a complex entity, and the understanding of its organization is done in several ways such as structural, biochemical, functional, etc. Allopathic system of medicine orients itself towards the structural perspective of the human body whereas the ancient Ayurvedic system considers the perspective of functions / tridoshas (vata, pitta and kapha). The separate branch of Ayurveda i.e., Rasashastra has been designated following the use of metals/ minerals. Nevertheless, these must undergo various types of pre-treatments to lose their toxicity and increase their potency. In the recent past, some research publication indicated that these preparations are antioxidants, fighting free radicals and diseases causing organisms and help in developing immunity. One of these important metal/ minerals is mercury – Rasashastra/ Parad. The very fact that the branch Rasashastra has been named after Rasa/ Parad indicates its effectiveness. The description, role, purification of Parad along with the various examples of formulation, safety concern and toxicity determination have been discussed in the review.^[6-8]

Types of shodhana

1. Samanya shodhana (General)

It is generally applied for the drugs which are come into one category like Maharasa, Uparasa, Ratna, Dhatu. The drugs of one group having some similar types of impurities. So that with the help of Samanya shodhana general impurities can be removed. Eg Dhatu-Samanya Shodhan

2. Vishesh shodhana (Specific)

It is specifically applied for the drugs which contain high concentrated chemicals. Each drug of the group may have different types of impurities. Which are vary from substances to substances & are removed by Vishesh Shodhana. Both the above procedures are further classified into Saagni and Niragni.

1. Saagni (With fire): Nirvapa, Dhalana, Bharjana, Puta, Swedana, Patana

2. Niragni (Without fire): Bhavana, Prakshalana, Shoshana, Sinchana, Nimajjana, Gharshana The use of specific media has its own importance. The ancient Ayurvedic scholars has very wisely used it, it is furthermore drug specific. It helps in breaking down or altering the chemical constituent that is not required. It is remarkably interesting that specific media is used for specific substance. Various techniques along with different media are referred in Ayurvedic texts for the shodhana, knowing different nature of impurities. The media acts like a solvent to dissolve the material for easy separation from the insoluble impurities to eradicate toxic chemical substances from the drugs and helps in physical transformation of some of metals and minerals. There are abundant examples of ancient scholars of Rasa Shastra using different media and material of different sources in the process of shodhana depending on the Drug and purpose.

DISCUSSION

After going through all we can see, Shodhana is the first samskara and it is necessary to understand the concept of shodhana properly. It is purification not by physical means but also by chemically. The literature published and clinical evidence of shodit dravyas confirms there is a strong rationality between the method, duration, instruments and the drugs which are being used in the process of Shodhana. The ancient Ayurvedic science recommends that these drugs should be administered in purified form. Shodhana is a prerequisite for all Rasa dravyas. Shodhana helps in sanghatabheda of a drug, removing dravya gata and aushadhagata doshas and makes it more marana upayogi and helps in achieving guna vriddhi of the drug. Apart from removing the impurities shodhana treatments of Rasa Shastra also impregnate organic materials and their properties in the inorganic drugs/ products to facilitate their utilization by the body tissue and organs.^[9-10]

CONCLUSION

The concept of Shodhana (processing or purification) in Rasashastra is not merely a process of purification/detoxification but also a process resorted to enhance the potency and efficacy of the drug. That is why the shodhana plays an important role in Rasashastra.

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