



APAMARGA: AN ESSENTIAL HERB OF SHALYA TANTRA

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ABSTRACT

Apamarga (*Achyranthes aspera* Linn.) is an essential and easily available Ayurvedic drug grows all over India. All the parts of this plant are utilized like *Beeja*, *Moola*, *Patra* and *Panchanga*. In *Atharvaveda*, it is called as lord of all plants and in *Yajurveda* it was used for hawan purpose due to its *Rakshoghna* property. It is best for *Shirovirechana* and also used in diseases like *Karnaroga*, *Krimi*, *Pandu* etc. *Apamarga Kshara*, an alkaline preparation obtained from ashes of *Apamarga* plants, is widely described in *Sushruta Samhita*. *Kshara* has a lot of therapeutic uses and has an important place in surgical procedures. It is proved to be very effective in various diseases like *Arsha*, *Bhagandara*, *Vrana*, *Vidrathi*, *Kushtha*, *Gulma* etc. Details about *Apamarga* with its properties, actions, uses as well as its important formulation (*Apamarga Kshara*) and its preparation have been presented in this article.

KEYWORDS : *Apamarga*, *Achyranthes aspera*, *Kshara*, *Apamarga Kshara*.

INTRODUCTION

The word *Apamarga* is derived from AP + Ā + Mrj + Karane Ghaj which wipes that means it cleanse the body by removing diseases. It is available abundantly all over India. Description of *Apamarga* is found in *Yajurveda*, *Atharvaveda* and *Ayurveda*. Description of *Apamarga* is available in *Brihatrayi* i.e., *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya*. It is also mentioned in *Ashtanga Samgraha* and *Bhavaprakasha*. *Apamarga* is said to be lord of all plants as it removes all the diseases.

Apamarga in Samhitas

- 1. Charaka Samhita-** Acharya Charaka has considered *Apamarga* in *Shirovirechana Dravyas*. It is mentioned in *Vamanopaga* and *Shirovirechanopaga Mahakashaya*. *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Uttarabasti Dravyas* in *Pippalyadi Varti* and *BaladiYapan Basti*.
- 2. Sushruta Samhita-** Acharya Sushruta has mentioned *Apamarga* in preparing *Pratisarniya Kshara*. It is mentioned in *Vrana Utsadana Dravyas*. He has considered it in *Arkadi Gana*, *Shirovirechana Dravyas* and *Tikta Varga*.
- 3. Ashtanga Samgraha-** Acharya Vagbhata has mentioned *Apamargadi Yoga* for *Dhoompana* to cure diseases caused due to burning food containing *Visha*. He has mentioned *Apamarga* in *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Shodhanadi Gana* as *Sirovirechana Dravyas*, *Krimighna Mahakashaya*, *Arkadi Gana*, *Shyamadi Gana* and *Tikta Dravya Skandha*. It is used in preparation of *Madhyam Kshara* and *Phalpippaliadi Kashaya*.
- 4. Sharangadhar Samhita-** Acharya Sharangadhar has mentioned *Apamarga* in *Varunadi Gana*, used *Apamarga* as a *Bhavana Dravya* of *Grahanikapata Rasa* and mentioned in diseases like *Ashmari*, *Raktarsha*, *Nasarsha*, *Badhira* etc.
- 5. Bhava Prakash-** *Apamarga* is mentioned in *Veertarvadi Gana* in *Bhava Prakash*. It is used for *Dantdhavan* which increases *Dhriti-Medha*. It is mentioned that in the deficiency of *Chitraka*, *Danti* or *Apamarga Kshara* should be used.

Latin name- *Achyranthesaspera* Linn.

Family- *Amaranthaceae*

English name- Chaff Tree, Prickly-chaff Flower, Rough-chaff Tree

Hindi name- *Chirchita*, *Chichrha*, *Latjira*, *Apamarg*

Synonyms of Apamarga- Important synonyms of *Apamarga* mentioned in *Samhitas* are given in Table no. 1.

Table no. 1: Synonyms of Apamarga in various Ayurvedic Samhitas

S. No.	Synonyms	Charaka Samhita	Sushruta Samhita	Ashtanga Hridaya	Ashtanga Sangraha	Bhava Prakash
1.	<i>Pratyakap ushpi</i>	+	+	+	+	-
2.	<i>Durgraha</i>	-	-	-	-	+
3.	<i>Kharamanj ari</i>	-	+	-	+	+
4.	<i>Mayuraka</i>	+	+	+	+	+
5.	<i>Kinihi</i>	-	-	-	+	+
6.	<i>Vasir</i>	-	+	-	+	-
7.	<i>Shikhari</i>	+	-	+	+	+
8.	<i>Adhahshal ya</i>	-	-	-	-	+
9.	<i>Nandi</i>	-	-	-	+	-

Other synonyms of *Apamarga* are *Saikharika*, *Kandakanta*, *Markati*, *Markati Pippali*, *Dhamargava*, *Kharamanjari*, *Parakapushpi*, *Ghanta*, *Marga*, *Kanti*, *Vasiraha*, *Durabhi Graha*, *Katurmajjarika*, *Ksavak*, *Pankti Kantakah*, *Malakanta* and *Kubja*.

Table No. 2: Properties of Apamarga

Rasa	<i>Katu</i> , <i>Tikta</i>
Guna	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Tikshna</i>
Virya	<i>Ushna</i>
Vipaka	<i>Katu</i>
Doshaghata	<i>Kaphavatashamaka</i> , <i>Kaphapittasamshodhaka</i>
Rogaghata	<i>Kandu</i> , <i>Kushtha</i> , <i>Visha</i> , <i>Vrana</i> , <i>KarnaRoga</i> , <i>NetraRoga</i> , <i>Aruchi</i> , <i>Chardi</i> , <i>Agnimandya</i> , <i>Shoola</i> , <i>Udararoga</i> , <i>Arsha</i> , <i>Krimi</i> , <i>Hridroga</i> , <i>Pandu</i> , <i>Gandamala</i> , <i>Amavata</i> , <i>Kasa</i> , <i>Shvasa</i> , <i>Mutraghata</i> etc.
Karma	<i>Shothahara</i> , <i>Vedanasthapana</i> , <i>Lekhana</i> , <i>Vishaghna</i> , <i>Twakdosahara</i> , <i>Vranashodhana</i> , <i>Shirovirechana</i> , <i>Deepana</i> , <i>Pachana</i> , <i>Krimighna</i> , <i>Raktashodhaka</i> , <i>Raktavardhaka</i> , <i>Hridya</i> , <i>Swedajanana</i> , <i>Kushthaghna</i> , <i>Vishaghna</i> etc.
Chemical composition	<i>Saponin A</i> , <i>Saponin B</i> , <i>tannin</i> , <i>Potash</i> , <i>oleanolic acid</i> , <i>amino acids</i> and <i>hentriacontane</i> . Seeds contain <i>10-octacosanone</i> and <i>4 tritriacontanone</i> .

	Leaves contain pbenzoquinone, hydroquinone, spathulenol, nerol, asarone, and eugenol. Whole plant contains betaine.
Pharmacological Action	Immunomodulatory activity, Wound healing activity, Anti-allergic activity, Anti-oxidant activity, Antimicrobial activity, Nephroprotective activity, Analgesic activity, Antipyretic activity, Anti-arthritis activity, Antiparasitic activity, Spermicidal activity, Hypoglycaemic activity, Diuretic activity, Cardioprotective activity and Bronchoprotective activity.

Part used- Moola, Tandula, Patra, Panchanga. Tandula (seeds) have Shirovirechana effect.

Specific Formulations- Apamarga Kshara, Apamarga Ksharaitaila

Kshara (alkaline ash) is prepared from ashes of many plants containing Potash and Apamarga is one of them. Kshara prepared from Apamarga is used in different diseases in different form.

Classification of Kshara

On the basis of mode of administration Kshara is classified into two types i.e., Pratisaraniya Kshara (for external use) and Paniya Kshara (for internal use). Pratisaraniya Kshara is further divided into three types i.e., Mridu, Madhyam and Tikshna. This categorization is based on the concentration of Kshara. The classification of Kshara is shown in figure no. 1. The Rasa, Guna, Virya and other properties of Kshara are mentioned in Table no. 2.

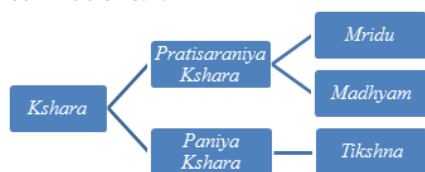


Figure no. 1: Classification of Kshara

Table no. 2: Properties of Kshara

Rasa	Katu
Guna	Ushna
Virya	Shukla
Varna	Saumaya, Tikshna, Agneya
Doshaghната	Tridoshaghната
Karma	Dahana, Pachana, Darana, Vilayan, Shodhana, Ropana, Shoshana, Stambhana, Lekhana

Importance of Kshara in Shalya Tantra

Acharya Sushruta has described in detail about Kshara and has given a separate chapter on it. It is:

- Pradhana among Shastra and Anushashtara
- having Ksharana and Kshanana properties
- has Chedana, Bhedana and Lekhana properties
- has Tridoshahara property

Indications for external use of Kshara:

Kushtha, Kitibha, Dadru, Mandala Kushtha, Kilasa, Bhagandara, Arbuda, Arsha, Dushtavrana, Nadivrana, Bahya Vidradhi, Krimi etc.

Indications for internal use of Kshara:

Gulma, Udara, Agnisanga, Ajirna, Arochaka, Visha, Anaha, Krimi, Visha etc.

Contraindications for internal use of Kshara:

Persons with haemorrhagic conditions, Pitta Prakriti, Bala, Vriddha, Durbala, Bhrama, Mada, Murcha and having Diminished vision.

Preparation of Apamarga Kshara

Apamarga Panchanga is to be collected in Sharada Ritu, dried and burnt to ash. The ash is now collected which is devoid of mud and stones. One Drone of Ash should be dissolved in 6 Drone of water and the mixture is left overnight. Then it is filtered 21 times using a cotton cloth the residue should be thrown out. Amber coloured filtrate (Ksharajala) will be obtained. This Ksharajala is heated over an iron pan in mild to moderate flame with intermittent stirring and is reduced to half. One and half Kudava Jala should be kept separated.

Then lime stone, Bhasmasharkara, Shankhanaabhi should be made red hot, dipped in the alkaline water and kept apart in an iron vessel making a paste of them. It should be mixed to the Kshara Jala and further treated and stirred constantly. It should be so processed that it neither should be too thick nor too thin. Now it should be taken out of the flame and preserved in a vessel. This is Madhyam Pratisaraniya Kshara. If the same Kshara is prepared without adding Shankhanaabhi etc. Dravyas it is called Mridu Kshara.

For Tikshna Kshara 8 Tolas of fine powders of Danti, Chitraka, Langali, Putika, Pravala, Vida, Swarchika, Kanakaksheeri, Hingu, Vacha and Ativisha may be added. Later it is dried and Shweta Varna Kshara is obtained.

Other formulations of Apamarga Kshara

Apamarga Kshara is used in the form of Churna, Kalka and Svarasa. Various formulations prepared from Apamarga Kshara are mentioned in table no. 3 which is given below:

Table no. 3: Other Formulations of Apamarga Kshara

S.No.	Name of Preparation	Disease	Reference
1.	Apamargakshara Tila	KarnaRoga	Cakradatta Karnaroga Chikitsa
2.	Apamargaksharadi Taila	Warts of penis	Chakradatta Arsha Chikitsa
3.	Apamarga Navanita	Suryavarta	Chakradatta Shiroroga Chikitsa
4.	Apamarga Swarasa	Raktasrava in Vrana	Chakradatta Vranashotha Chikitsa
5.	Apamargadi Taila	Krimi	Chakradatta Shiroroga Chikitsa
6.	Agasthya Rasayana	Rasayana, Hridyaroga	Ashtanga Samgraha Chikitsa Ch. 5

CONCLUSION

On comprehensive review of Ayurvedic literature description of Apamarga is found in Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Ashtanga Samgraha etc. By the virtue of its Katu, Tikta Rasa, Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna Guna, Katu Vipaka and Ushna Virya it is Kaphavatashamaka and Kaphapittasanshodhaka. Many researches have been carried out on phytochemical and pharmacological properties of every part of Apamarga plant that reveals its multidisciplinary usage. Apamarga Kshara which is an alkaline preparation of Apamarga Panchanga obtained after treating it in water. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned the indications of Kshara in many diseases which show its importance in Shalya Tantra. It has a wide range of therapeutic uses. Kshara is used in essential dosage forms in various diseases like Kushtha, Gulma, Arsha. Kshara Sutra is an important Shalya Tantra procedure for the treatment of Bhagandara.

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