Ayurveda Perspectives on Visha & Upavisha Dravyas as Rasaushadhi:
A Review

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REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is science of long and healthy live which focuses on treatment of diseases. Ayurveda works around management of physical and mental health using various medicines involving herbs, metals and minerals. Ayurveda encompasses different stream including Rasashastra which utilizes Rasa drugs for therapeutic purposes. Many mineral, metal and plant based compounds involved in the preparation of formulations belong from Rasa category. These compounds may possess some toxic effects and utilizes only after proper purification process. Therefore it can be stated that Upavisha Dravyas can be used for health benefits after purification measure. Rasa-shastra involves utilization of many poisonous herbs, metals and minerals. Considering the therapeutic significance of such compounds this article exploring critical aspects of Upavisha Dravyas in Rasa-shastra.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Visha-Upavisha, Rasa-shastra, Agad-tantra

1. Introduction

Upavisha varga are considered beneficial for since these compounds offers excellent properties like: good absorption, high efficacy in low dosing, minimal adverse effect and high potency, etc. Ayurveda suggested that manufacturing processes, standardization of quality and dosing of these drugs need to be taken in great care for avoiding any health consequences. Many ancients’ literatures explained therapeutic perspective of Upavisha Dravyas. In this regards uses of Upavisha dravyas in Rasa karma has been explained under the theoretical principle of Rasashastra. Upavisha dravyas not only possess advantage of quick effectiveness even in small dose but also provides therapeutic benefits in many chronic health ailments. However these drugs can imparts fatal and harmful effects inside the body if not prepared and used in proper manner. Similarly consideration of dosing of such drugs is very important aspect since at higher dose these drugs can leads toxic effects. The poisonous used as drugs in Ayurveda depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Common example of Upavisha used in Ayurveda

Descriptions of Upavisha Varga as per Classical Literatures:

Many poisonous drugs have been studied during 3000 BC even the Indian mythology also mentioned concept of Visha and Amrutha.

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Concept of Vishachikitsa is mentioned in Brahmavaivarta puran while Sthavara and Jangama poisons were described in Atharvaveda. Classification of poison also described in Kalpa Sthan of Sushruta. Vagbhata described Visha as; Sthavara, Jangam and Garvisha. As per Rasatarangini on the basis of origin Visha Dravya are two types i.e. plant and mineral origin (Sthavara) and Jangama (Animal origin). Rasashastra literatures described Vihsa and Upavisha as category of poisonous substances. Mula, Phala, Twak, Niryas, Kanda and Puspha, etc. are considered as Sthavar Visha while Shwas, Nahka, Drusti, Purisha and Mutra are considered as Jangama Visha.

Visha Guna
- Ruksh Guna responsible for Vaat Prakopa
- Tikshna Guna responsible for Sarva Dosh Prakop
- Sukshma Guna responsible for Sharer Avayay Avayay
- Ushna Guna responsible for Pitta Prakopa
- Laghu Guna responsible for Dushchikitsya
- Anirdeshya Rasa Guna responsible for Kapha Prakopa

Utilization of Upavisha in Rasa-shastra:

Upavisha Dravyas employed in Rasashastra due to their specific qualities like Rasa Dravyas. The Shodhana procedure utilized in Rasashastra not only reduces toxicity but also improve qualities of Upavisha dravyas by reducing their size. Upavisha being utilized in Rasa-shastra after Shodhana procedures; the measures of purification utilized in Rasa-shastra for toxic materials are as follows:

- **Swedana & Gomutra Nimajjana:**
  Boiling of toxic substances with different liquids like; cow milk, cow urine & vegetable extracts.

- **Bharjana:**
  Frying of toxic substances with or without Ghee.

- **Kshalana:**
  Washing of toxic materials with hot water.

- **Nistvachikarana:**
  Removal of harmful covering by the process of decortications.

- **Bhavana:**
  Triturating of substances to be purified with vegetable juices.

Upavisha Dravya used in Rasa-shastra for specific purposes like; Raskarma & Rasbandhan. These Dravys used for particular health benefits as mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1: Specific Role of Visha Dravya in various Health Problems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Therapeutic Purpose</th>
<th>Recommended Visha Dravya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To relives Kapha ailments</td>
<td>Danti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To prolonging labour</td>
<td>Langli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To pacify Kapha</td>
<td>Snuhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>For Dhoopan purpose</td>
<td>Bhallatak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ingredients of poisonous plants are considered equally competent to react with Rasa Dravya. These drugs exert effects within short time periods due to their competent qualities; impart prolonged therapeutic effect and offers benefits of long shelf life. The Visha & Upavishas as Rasaushadhi helps to promote health, boost immunity, resist symptoms of early aging, acts as rejuvenators and improves physical as well as mental strength.

The principle of treatment through Visha Dravyas works around concept of “Samanya-Vishesha Siddhanta” which resembles therapeutic significance of opposite properties. It is also advocated that such types of Rasaushadhis should not be used continuously means interval or gap need to be maintained.
during therapy to neutralizes effect of accumulated Visha Dravyas.

Therapeutic Role of Visha & Upavishas as Rasaushadhi:

- *Kushta* can be treated when Kakodumbara mula kwatha used with Visha
- *Visha* in Aindra rasayana offers health benefits
- *Sannipatodara* can be managed using Sarpa Visha
- *Shhavara Visha* also used in Sannipatodara

Mode of action of common Visha & Upavishas Formulations

The tonic & stimulant effects of some Dravyas, Tribhvanakirti Rasa offers Amavatahara effect since it affects circulation helps to eliminate accumulated Ama. This formulation relive pain by suppressing activities of sensory nerve terminal thus reduces sensation of pain and inflammation. Shwasakuthar Rasa helps in Kasa & Shwasa, the hot potency of ingredients stimulate appetite, clears respiratory passages and acts as expectorant thus provides relief in respiratory problems. Similarly other Upavishas Dravyas used in asthma acts by removing spasm in bronchial smooth muscles.

Advantages of Upvisa dravya as Rasaushadhi:

1. Upvisa dravya circulated throughout body immediately after administration.
2. Palatability and formulation compatibility.
3. Low dosing frequency.
4. Effective against many chronic diseases.
5. Some poisonous drugs can be used as antidote against other poison after purification.

Conclusion

The ancient texts of Ayurveda suggested clinical applications of *Vishas* and *Upavishas* in *Rasa Dravyas* thus these toxic substances can be used as *Rasaushadhi* after purification process. It is believed that *Sukshma*, *Laghu* and *Vishada Guna* of these drugs offers quick response, reaches through minute channels, absorbed easily and exerts therapeutic response even in minimal dose.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

References