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SudhaVarga and its medicinal utility; A Critical Review

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Abstract:

Ayurveda is one of the most primitive health care system known to mankind. It enlists the use of various herbs and their procedural remedies as medicines in various diseases conditions. Rasashastra a later offshoot of Ayurveda mentions the use of organic as well as inorganic raw drugs as medicines. There are various drugs mentioned in a systemic classified manner with their medicinal uses. Thereafter many formulations of these drugs are also included in the classical text and are been used for the prescribed disease till date. One such group is SudhaVarga–calcium group of drugs. Although the chemical composition of all these drugs is same, still the therapeutics and its utility in number of diseases vary considerably. Here a critical study of these group along with its medicinal utility is been discussed.

Keywords: Rasashastra, SudhaVarga, Ayurveda

Introduction:

Ayurveda is known for its all natural way of treating any disease condition. Various Ayurveda texts had mentioned the use of herbs as well as ores in the form of medicine. Along with ores the metals are also been used for the treatment purpose. The *Brihatrai – Charaka, Sushruta* and *Vagbhata* had seldom mentioned the internal use of metal powder – *Bhasma* in the treatment part. Although they have mentioned its external uses in form of *Lepa* and other preparations for treatment. In medieval period with the dawn of a special branch of Ayurveda – *Rasashastra*, the specified use of all the inorganic ores and metals along with poisons as medicine was practiced. This branch of medicine primarily deals with preparation and utility of various forms of medicine in day to day

treatment. Drugs are been classified in a very peculiar manner. As the name suggests, *Rasashastra* – it is the science based or having mercury – *Parada* – *Rasa* at its center place. And the classification might be based on the utility of the respective drug and also the relevance of that drug while making medication along with *Parada* – *Rasa*.

Classification of *Rasashastra* drugs;

<i>Rasashastriya</i> drug classification	Group of drugs
<i>Maharasa</i>	<i>Abhraka, Vaikranta, Makshika, Vimala, Adrija, Sasyaka, Chapala and Rasaka</i>
<i>Uparasa</i>	<i>Gandhaka, Gairika, Kasisa, Kankshi, Hartala, Manashila, Anjana and Kankushta</i>
<i>Sadharan rasa</i>	<i>Kampilla, Gauripashana, Navsadara, Kaparda, Agnijara, Girisinsur, Hingula and Mruddarshringa</i>
<i>Dhatuvarga</i>	<i>Gold (Suvarna), Silver (Raupya), Copper (Taamra), Iron(Loha), Lead (Naaga), Tin (Vanga), Zinc(Yashada), Bronze (Pittala)</i>
<i>Ratnavarga</i>	<i>Ruby (Maanikya), Pearl (Muktaa), Coral (Prawaala), Emerald (Taarkshya), Topaz (Pusparaaga), Diamond (Heeraka), Sapphire (Neela), Zircon (Gomeda), Cat's Eye (Waidurya).</i>
<i>Uparatnavarga</i>	<i>Tourmaline (Vaikraant), Sunstone (Suryakaant), Moon stone (Candrakaant), Lapis Lazuli (Raajaawarta), Garnet (Laala), Turquoise (Perojaa) etc.</i>
<i>Vishavarga</i>	<i>Vatsanaabha (Aconite), Arka (Calatropisprocera), Snuhi (Euphorbia nerifolia), Datura (Daturastramonium), Langali (Gloriosasuperba), Karaveera(Neeriumindicum) Gunjaa (Abrusprecatorioius), Ahiphena etc.</i>

<i>Sudhavarga</i>	<i>Sudha (Lime), Shankha (Conch-shell), Shukti (Oyester shell), Khatika (Chalk), Godantai (Gypsum), Kukkutandatwak (Egg shell), Hastidanta (Elephants tusk)</i>
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Here we can clearly see the drugs having alike properties chemically or having potent medicinal value are been placed in a group.

In context to present review, the *SudhaVarga* will be discussed in details. As time advancement, the *Rasashastra* texts had mentioned this specific group of drug. These classification is made purely on the basis of modern lines. The main ingredient in this group of drug is calcium, hence called as calcium group – *SudhaVarga*. It includes both mineral as well as animal origin calcium products.

Mineral origin calcium drugs mentioned in *Rasashastra* text;

Sudha, Khatika and Godanti.

Animal origin calcium drugs;

Shankha, Shambuk, Shukti, Praval, Mukta, Mrigashringa, Samudraphena, Kurmaprishta, Kukkutandtwak and Hastidanta.

Shodhana – Purification

If we go through the *Rasashastra* literature, the *Shodhana* of *SudhaVarga* drugs are based on a common line of methodological procedures. These drugs are subjected to washing or some specific procedures with weak acids like citric acid present in lime juice. This is the pre procedure to reduce the burning sensation if ingested unprocessed.

Marana – Incineration

Thus processed and purified drugs are further subjected to a special procedure of incineration in an assembly called *Putayatra*. Thus obtained ash is then called *Bhasma* of respective drug. When examined chemically, all the *SudhaVargaBhasma* shows the chemical composition of Calcium Carbonate. (CaCO₃).

According to modern science, these all drugs can be used as potent source of calcium as all final medicine obtained contain calcium carbonate. But if we study the *Rasashastra* literature thoroughly we can find the clinical utility of each drug differ vastly due to *Bhavana* (levigation procedure) and *Dravya* (material) used for *Bhavana*. This can be briefed as follows;

<i>SudhaVarga</i> drug	Dosage and Clinical utility
<i>Sudha</i> – Lime	30 – 60 drops of <i>Churnodaka Amlapitta, Atisara, Dugdajirna, Shool, Grahani, Krimi.</i>

<i>Shankha</i> – Conch shell	250 mg <i>Gulma, Amlapitta, Agnimandya, Yuvanpitika, Sheet, Grahi and Varnya</i>
<i>Shambuk</i> – Pila	250 mg <i>Deepana, Pachana, Netrya</i>
<i>Shukti</i> – Oyster shell	250 mg <i>Snigdha, Mashura, Deepana, Shwashara, Hrudya, Ashmarinashan, shool</i>
<i>Khatika</i> – Chalk	300 – 600 mg <i>Sheshira, Tikta, Shothanashana, Vranaropana, Raktadhoshahara</i>
<i>Godanti</i> – Gypsum	250 – 500 mg <i>Sheeta, Pittajjwara, Shira shola, Kshaya, Kasa, Pandu</i>
<i>Mrigashringa</i> – horn of deer	100 – 200 mg <i>Hridshoola– cardiac tonic, Parshava shola, Kphahara</i>
<i>Samudraphena</i> – Cuttlefish bone	200 mg <i>Lekhana, Pachana, Chashusha, Shrutistravahara</i>
<i>Kurmaprishta</i> – tortoise shell	200 mg <i>Kshaya, Atisara, in lactating women</i>
<i>Kukkutandatwak</i> – egg shell	200 – 400 mg <i>Prdara, Mutravikara, Hridya, Balya</i>
<i>Hastidanta</i> – Elephants tusk	Used locally in <i>Khalitya–Palitya</i>

We can also brief the formulations of each and their use in various diseases.

<i>SudhaVarga</i> drug	Formulation	Indications
<i>Sudha</i>	<i>Churnodaka</i>	<i>Amlapitta, Ajirna</i>
<i>Shankha</i>	<i>ShankhaBhasma</i>	<i>Shool, Pitika</i>
	<i>ShankhaVati</i>	<i>Grahani</i>
<i>Shambuka</i>	<i>ShambukaBhasma</i>	Along with rock salt and honey in <i>VataGrahani</i>
<i>Shukti</i>	<i>ShuktiBhasma</i>	With <i>Vasa</i> in <i>Shwasa</i> , with <i>Kanyasara</i> in <i>Pradara</i>

<i>Khatika</i>	<i>Mugdharasa</i>	<i>Phiranga</i>
<i>Godanti</i>	<i>GodantiBhasma</i>	<i>ShiraShoola, Jwara</i>
<i>Kukkutandatwak</i>	<i>KukkutandatwakBhasma</i>	<i>Kshaya, Pradara, Balya</i>
<i>Pravala</i>	<i>PravalPanchamruta</i>	<i>Pitta grahani, shool</i>
<i>Mukta</i>	<i>MuktaPishti</i>	<i>Manasrog, Daha</i>

Inference:

Though the chemical composition of all *SudhaVarga* drugs are same, the medicinal utility has wide scope. The formulations further prepared from it are been mentioned in various texts under different *RogaAdhikara*. They exhibit their properties on their medium of *Shodhana* used, its potency – *Virya, Guna* and *Prabhava*. Thus we have to study each drug separately owing to its properties and final medicinal utility.

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