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Clinical utility of *Neem Ghanvati*; a critical review

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Abstract:

There are many herbs described in Ayurveda which has widespread uses. Neem is one of such drugs. Highly cost effective, easily available, known by all and having multiple health benefits makes Neema very effective drug of choice for several ailments. Here a Ghankalpana i.e. Rasakriya of Neem is studied critically for its various clinical utility. As described in Ayurveda classics and also in modern pharmacology, it exhibits anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, immune-modulatory and antifungal activity. Apart from it the Ghan Kalpana improves its spectrum of action and also makes it palatable. Here a brief attempt is made to discuss the Ghan Kalpana procedure in context to Neem and to throw light on its utility.

Keywords: Ghankalpana, Rasakriya, Neem.

Introduction:

As the science advances, there are number of research ongoing to develop and design better and more potent drugs which are effective in multiple conditions such as inflammation, microbial infestation, fungal infestation, hampered immunity etc. To the other end, the earliest health science known to mankind – Ayurveda had described many solutions for the above mentioned problems. Very efficacious drugs and procedures by which the clinical utility is improvised and we can use it in number of day to day ailments are nicely elaborated in Ayurveda classics. *Neem* is one such drugs mentioned in Ayurveda which has widespread utility when used internally as well as externally. It is used as a single drug therapy or along with other drugs in form of formulations. The pharmacognosy of *Neem* as mentioned in various Ayurveda texts can be briefed as follows;

Ayurvedic name – *Nimba, Arishta*

Latin name – *Azadirachta indica*

Rasa – Tikta

Virya – Sheet

Vipaka – Katu

Doshagnhta – Kaph-Vaat

Guna –

निम्बः शीतोलघुर्ग्राही कटुपाकोटग्निवातनुत् |

अहृद्यः श्रमहृत्कासज्वरारुचिकृमिप्रनुत् | |

व्रणपित्तकफच्छर्दिकुष्ठहृल्लसमेहनुत् |

निम्बपत्रं स्मृतं नेत्र्यं कृमिपित्तविषप्रनुत् | |

वातलंकटुपाकश्च सर्वा रोचककुष्ठनूत् |

निम्बफलं रसेतिक्तं पाके तु कटुभेदनं | |

स्निग्धं लघुष्णं कुष्ठघ्नं गुल्मार्शः कृमिभेदनुत् |

- **Bhavprakasha**

As mentioned by *Bhavprakasha*, the properties of *Neem* plant, its leaves and fruit differ in their applications. It is *Laghu* in nature i.e. easy to digest, has *Katu Vipaka* and is useful in *Kasa, Jwara, Aruchi, Krumi, Kushtha, Meha, Visha, Gulma and Arsha*. The *Panchamahabhut Sanghatan* or makeup of this drug make it *Parthiv* and *Agneya Pradhana*. Owing to this makeover of the raw drug, it is then subjected to *Panchavidh Kashaya Kalpana* of *Kalka – Churna* and *Ghan Kalpana*. According to modern research and various studies the properties of *Neem* can be enlisted as follows, leaf and bark shows antimicrobial, antifungal, antihelmentic, insecticidal, antiviral, antipyretic, antimalarial, anti-inflammatory, spermicidal and hypoglycemic effects. Aqueous extracts of leaves shows antiulcer and anti-inflammatory activities.

Keeping in view both the properties mentioned in Ayurveda and modern research, we can derive and use *Neem* in various forms on several diseases. One such form described by *Sharangdhara Samhita* in the form of *Rasakriya* i.e. *Ghan Kalpana* can be used effectively.

Rasakriya–

क्वाथादीनां पुनः पाकाद्घनत्वं सारसक्रिया |

- **Sharangdhara S. Madhyam k. 8/1**

Kwathi.e. decoction of respective drug is made according to *Sharangdhara Samhita*. One part of raw drug is boiled with 16 parts of water. Then it is boiled till we get 1/4th of the taken quantity. This is then filtered and according to *Rasakriya* definition, it is heated further to get thick paste like

final product. Then this final product thus obtained is then rolled with fingers to make small equal pills of 250 to 500 mg approximately. Apart from this classical preparatory method, some old *Vaidyas* tend to add fine powder of the parent drug to the *Rasakriya* and make pills accordingly. Also some *Rasavaidyas* add *Kajjali* (mercuric sulphate) in 1/10th part to increase its potency and increase its shelf life.

Apart from having *Krumighna* activity and so useful in skin disorders, the *Ghanvati* can be used in following conditions along with possible mode of action;

Uses	Probable mode of action
Skin infection – bacterial/ fungal	Antimicrobial and antifungal activity
<i>Raktashodhak – Raktaprasadan</i>	<i>Katu – Tikta Rasa</i> and <i>Katu Vipaka</i> – acts on <i>Moolsthan</i> of <i>Rakta Dhatu</i> i.e. <i>Yakrut</i>
<i>Meha</i>	Due to <i>Kapha –Vaata Doshagnata</i> it acts on <i>Dushya Samgraha</i> of <i>Meha</i>
<i>Vranropana – Vranashodhana</i>	Antimicrobial activity along with <i>Raktaprasadana</i> helps in infective wound conditions
Urinary infections	Antimicrobial and <i>Keldanashan</i> activity
Aid digestion	<i>Katu – Tikta Rasa</i> and <i>Katu Vipaka</i> it acts on digestive fire – <i>Jatharagni</i>
Common cough and cold	Antimicrobial activity and <i>Kaphaghna</i> properties
Dental care – as tooth brush	Sticks are used for tooth brush owing to its <i>Katu – Tikta Rasa</i> and antimicrobial properties.
<i>Gandamala</i>	<i>Nasya</i> of <i>Neem tail</i> is done
<i>Chardi</i>	<i>Kaphaghna</i> action
<i>Arsha</i>	<i>Katu – Tikta Rasa</i> and <i>Katu Vipaka</i> of <i>Neem Phala</i>
<i>As Rasayana</i>	<i>Neem Phanat</i> is used as <i>Katu Poushtika</i> which increases the metabolism
Immunomodulation	Helps cell mediated immunity against antigen antibody reaction
Malarial fever	It acts on <i>Rakta Dhatu</i> and its <i>Mool Sthana</i> – <i>Yakrut</i> , hence effective against <i>Visham Jwara</i>

Pyogenic infections	Antimicrobial activity and strong cleansing action removes the pus and pus forming organisms
Acid peptic disorders	Balances <i>Pitta</i> and helps protect gastric mucosa

Inference:

Neem tree is used in many medicinal treatment like blood detoxification, skin care, hair health, fever conditions, cough and cold, asthmatic conditions, piles, ulcers, intestinal worms, urinary disorders etc. It is also said to be hepato-protective in nature and thus exhibits antioxidant properties. It can also be used as anticarcinogenic agent. The procedural modification of making *Neem Ghan* in pill form enhances the efficacy in above mentioned ailments and thus helps us to improve palatability in low dose.

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