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Overview of *Sneha kalpana*: A Timely Appraisal

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ABSTRACT

In today's era *Sneha Kalpana* has its peculiar contribution to our traditional system of medicine. According to Ayurvedic classics *Sneha Kalpana* may be defined as "the medicament prepared by using one part of Kalka dravya (paste of indicated herbal ingredients), four parts of oil/ghrit(butter) and sixteen parts of Drava dravya (liquid media mostly kwatha –decoction of herbs).It ensures the fat soluble and water soluble properties of dravya on the basis of their nature (*swabhav*), effect (*prabhav*), and absence (*abhava*). This mainstay confers active principles of the ingredients to the medicament. It is a very effective process and has various advantages like it enhance the absorption of drugs, when used topically in fat media. Usually Ghrita (ghee) or *Sneha* (oil) are used as media of extraction where as in rare case Vasa and Majja are used. It also has extra benefits of specific *Sneha/Ghee* (Nutritive) which is used to preserve the drug for longer time as it increases the bioavailability of drugs due to its *Sukshma, Vyavayee* Gunas. This modality has the preparations which are pertinent to both for internal as well as external use.

KEYWORDS

Kalka, Kwath Sukshma, Vyavayee, Bioavailability



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INTRODUCTION

Historical Review

Historical review of *Sneha* is further quantified into following parts

1. Vedic Period 4. Medieval Period

2. Samhita Period 5. Modern Period

3. Samgraha Period

1. Vedic Period

Prime Vedas were the source of knowledge and Ayurveda was a part of it. Athervaveda mentioned about *Pivas* & *Snehaa paka*, where *Visha dravyas* were used in the processing. In remaining three vedas there were no references about *Sneha kalpana*.

2. Samhita Period

Samhita kala is considered as the golden period for *Sneha kalpana*. In *Brihtrayee Sneha Kalpana* flourished due to its immense use for different purposes ranging from external applications to internal administration through different routes.

Charak samhita –Systematic method of preparation, types of *Sneha paka*, proportions and *Siddhi lakshana* of *Sneha kalpana* with its use discussed in this Samhita¹. Charak has mentioned about *Sneha siddhi lakshana*² separately in the 7th Chapter of *Viman Sthana*. Acharya Charaka has told 70 sneha kalpanas.

Susruta samhita – *Sneha kalpana* is elaborately described in *Susruta Samhita*. *Susruta* first mentioned about *Sneha kashayas*. Specific preparations like *Shatdhauta ghrita*, *Sahastrapaka Snehaa* etc. are also highlighted in this treaty. In *Sushruta Chikitsa Sthana* enumerates types of *Sneha*, process of preparing *Sneha Kashaya*, *Sneha siddhi Lakshana*, types of *Sneha paka*, uses of *Sneha* and evil effects of *Sneha*³. Acharya *Sushruta* was the foremost who described the six types of medicinal formulations (*Shadkalpana*). *Kshir Kalpana* was the additional one apart from the *Panchavidh Kashaya Kalpana*⁴. Acharya *Sushruta* has told about 30 sneha kalpanas.

3. Samgraha Period

Acharya *Vagbhatta* mentioned the same *Kalpanas* as previously provoked in *Charak* and *Sushruta Samhita*. *Astang Hridaya* depicted *Panch Kashaya Kalpanas*⁵ in Ch./6th of *Kalpa Sidhi Sthana*. Acharya *Vagbhatta* in *Astanga Hridaya* has told about 40 sneha kalpanas.

4. Medieval period (9th to 16th century)

Chakradatta - Clinical uses of *Snehas* and *Ghritas* are mentioned in this text.

Sharangadhar samhita –Acharya *Sharangdhar* has discussed *Sneha*



Kalpāna in a separate chapter⁶. This treaty deals with method of preparation, proportions, uses, types of *Pakas* and *Sneha Siddhi Lakshana* etc.

Gadanigraha – Separate chapters of *Sneha kalpāna Snehaadhikāra*, *Ghritadhikāra* are included by *Acharya Shodhala*.

Sahastrayoga –The treaty owned by the Kerala *Vaidyas* also elaborated the ratios and different *Ghrita* and *Snehaa* preparations.¹³⁵ *Ghritas* & 96 *snehas* are mentioned in it.

5. Modern period (after 16th century)

Bhishajya Ratnavali, Brihad Yog Tarangini, Yoga Ratnakar - These treatises clearly described about *Sneha murchhana*. Descriptions about *Sneha murchhana* are available in *Bhishajya Ratnavali* fifth chapter and *Vaidyaka Paribhasha Pradeepa Pratama khanda* 3rd chapter.

DERIVATION OF SNEHA KALPANA

Sneha kalpāna holds two words: *Sneha* and *Kalpāna*. *Sneha* is “*Snih Preetau*” which elucidate acquisition of fatty or oily fraction. *Kalpa* is “*Krup samarthyē*” *kalpayate vidhiyate asav vidhi* (*Shabdhakalpadruma*)

□□ *Prakalpam samskaranam iti* (Chakrapani)

□□ *Kalpānam yojanamityarthaha* (Arunadutta)

COMMON CONCEPT OF PREPARATION

According to *Sharangdhar Samhita*, In *Sneha Kalpāna* medicament, *Sneha: Kalka dravya: Drava dravya* remains as 1:1/4:4 ratio respectively⁷.

Rules for preparation of Sneha

1. During *Sneha* preparation process if *Snehapaka* occur in *Jala*, *Kwatha*, and *Swarasa*, then amount of *Kalka* used should be one-fourth, one-sixth, and one-eighth of *Sneha*, respectively.
2. In case of number of *Drava dravya*, if these are more than five then each will remain equal as of *Sneha* quantity and if less than five then their sum quantity will be four times as of *Sneha*.
3. When *Paka* is mentioned by only *Kalka Dravyas*, then water should be added four times of *Sneha* to replace the *Drava*. When *Paka* mentioned by only *Kwatha Dravya*, then *Kalka* should be prepared by drugs of *kwatha* and should be used.
4. In case of flower as *Kalka Dravya*, then their amount will be one-eighth as of *Sneha*.



Sneha kalpna is followed for two major steps namely⁸.

1. *Sneha* *Murchana*

2. *Snehapaka*

1. *Sneha Murchana*⁹ :

The description of *Sneha Murchana* is only available in modern text like *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*. There is no evidence of it in texts *Charaka*, *Sushruta*, *Astanga hridaya*, *Sharangdhara Samhita* and even the commentary of *Acharya Dalhana*.

2. *Snehapaka*:

It is the second step of *Sneha Kalpna* in which *Murchita sneha* is taken for *Snehapaka*. According to *Shastra* in this process *Drava* along with *Kalka* is mixed completely and *Sneha* is added and subjected to mild heat till the *Snehapaka Siddhi Lakshanas* are seen, such as *Phenodgama* or *Phenasanthi* for *oil* and *Ghrita* respectively, *Nirjalatvam*, *Varthivah* and appearance of good colour, smell and taste.

Stages of *Sneha Kalpna*

The entire pharmaceutical process is classified into three main stages :

Stage 1 or *Poorvkarma*

(i) Collection of drugs:

○ It is imperative to procure *Dravyas* from proper habitat and season.

○ *Dravyas* procurement should be after pertinent *poojan karma* and substantial mantras as told in classics.

○ Solely washing required to remove the physical impurities.

(ii) Selection of *patra* (vessel)

○ Inert vessel should be used.

○ Cleaned, sterilized and the high temperature bearing vessel should be used.

(iii) Selection of *Darvi*

○ The *Darvi* should be made of strong metal, inert, be long enough with broad end at one side to stir.

(iv) *Murchana of Sneha*

It is the preliminary treatment of *sneha*. So the *Lakshanas* such as *Nirjalatvam*, *Nirmalatvam* and other *Sneha sidhi Lakshanas* should be tested to confirm the *Murchana* of *sneha*. A clear cut description about the method of *Murchana* is explained by *Govind Das Sen* in his text *Bhaishajya Ratnavalli*. The herbs used in *Sneha Murchana* are –*Haritaki*, *Amalaki*, *Vibhitaki*, *Musta*, *Haridra*, *Ketaki*, *Lodhra*, *Vatankur*, *Nalika*, *Hriber*, *Manjistha*.

Objectives of *Murchana*

Murchana may be accomplished as:-

○ *Amadosaharatwa*¹⁰ – elimination of ‘*Ama*’ can be compared as the moisture content.



- Abolish the odour of raw sneha¹¹.
- *Sneha* will acquire the capability to receive more active principles and becomes more potent¹².
- Impart appealing colour to the *Sneha*¹³.
- May alter the solubility and absorption of the finished product.

Table 1 Preparation of *Drava Dravya*

Author	Nature of drug	Rati o of dru g	Rati o of wat er	Reducti on
Sharangadh ara	<i>Mridu</i>	1	4	1/4 th
	<i>Madhyama</i>	1	8	1/4 th
	<i>Kathina</i>	1	8	1/4 th
	<i>Atyantakath ina</i>	1	16	1/4 th

Stage 2 or Pradhanakarma

(i) Maintainence of Agni

○ *Agni* is very essential for **processing sneha**. Usually *Mriduagni* and *Madhyam agni* are maintained for *Snehapaka*. *Teevraagni* is not at all needed for *Snehapaka*, because it results in the carbonization of *sneha Dravyas*.

(ii) Method of preparation of *Sneha*

In *Snehapaka* process the *Murchitta sneha* is taken first then *Drava dravya* and *Kalka* is added. This is the order for addition of basic ingredients to prepare a formulation. *Acharya Susruta* and *Vagbhata* have followed the method of adding all basic ingredients simultaneously. At the end *sneha sidhi lakhsans* are considered that is formation of wicked form of *Kalka* if

scrolled between the fingers. and does not have any crackling sound on fire. Likewise, such as *Phenodgama* (appearance) or *Phenasanthi* (disappearance) for *tailpaka and Ghrita* respectively^{14,15}. *Gandha, Varna* and *Rasa* are also considered. *Snehapakas* are of three types based on therapeutic use¹⁶ i.e *Mridupaka, Madhyampaka & Kharapaka*.

Table 2 Therapeutic use of different stages of *Snehapaka*

Name of classics	Ama paka	Mri du/ Chi kan a	Madh yama	Khara	Dagdha /visesh
<i>Charak samhita</i> ¹⁷	Not descri bed	<i>Nas ya</i>	<i>Basti</i>	<i>Abhya nga</i>	Not descri bed
<i>Sushrut a samhita</i> ¹⁸	Not descri bed	<i>Pan a</i>	<i>Nasya Abhya nga</i>	<i>Basti karanp urana</i>	Not descri bed
<i>Ashtan g hridaya</i> ⁹	No use	<i>Nas ya</i>	<i>Pana, Basti</i>	<i>Abhya nga</i>	No use
<i>Sharan gdhara samhita</i> ²⁰	No use	<i>Nas ya</i>	<i>Sarva karma</i>	<i>Abhya nga</i>	No use
<i>Bhavpr akash</i>	No use	<i>Nas ya</i>	<i>Sarva karma</i>	<i>Abhya nga</i>	No use
<i>Bhaish aja ratnava lli</i> ²¹	No use	<i>Nas ya</i>	<i>Sarva karma</i>	<i>Abhya nga</i>	No use

Table 3 Time duration of *Snehapaka* depends upon *Dravadravya*²²

Nature of dravadravya	Time duration in days
<i>Mamsa rasa and vrihidhaanya</i>	1 night
<i>Ksheera</i>	2 nights
<i>Swarasa</i>	3 nights
<i>Takra and aranala</i>	5 nights



*Kwatha of moola & 12 nights
valli*

Stage 3 or Paschaatkarma

After the *Sneha Siddhi Lakshanas* the vessel should be removed from fire or the fire should be put off and filtered immediately by double layered cotton cloth.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of details given in every section here following conclusion have been drawn. *Sneha* has been the constitutive part in Indian civilization since the age of *Vedas*. *Murhchana* being the very important procedure to remove impurities, *Ama Doshas* and enhancing the properties of the *Sneha*. Hence should be performed as pre procedure to prepare any *Snehik* formulation. It is first described by *Acharya Govind Das Sen* in 18th Century A.D. in the text *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*. *Snehapaka* is a very specific process to perform and needs keen observation right from the beginning. Slight low heat or extreme heat may lead to complications like *Mridu Paka*, *Khara Paka* etc. which have limited medicinal use. Hence *Sneha Paka* should be performed on mild heat for several hours in on off heat pattern.



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