A REVIEW ON RAVANA SAMHITA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ARKA KALPANA
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ABSTRACT

Ravana Samhita is one of the Indian critics dealing with various aspects of life. This text is in the form of conversation between Ravana and his wife Mandodari. Apart from his negative side Ravana was a great intellectual faculty. He obtained expertise in Astrology, Architecture, Music, Yoga, Pulse diagnosis and Ancient medical sciences. In his text he mentioned 7th part as ‘Arkaprakash’, where he discussed the Arkakalpana and its therapeutic uses in detail. In Arkaprakash, various types of Arka (Distilled extracts), its therapeutic use and method of preparation are mentioned in detail than in any other text of Ayurveda. Ravana states that Arkakalpana is most potent and quick effective preparation. As per expertise of Ravana, it is necessary to study Arkakalpana for its Pharmacotherapeutic utility in the treatment field.

KEY WORDS: Ravana Samhita, Arkapraksh, Arkakalpana, Arka.

INTRODUCTION

By studying a single scripture one does not know the conclusive essence of the same, hence the physician should try to understand the scripture after having knowledge of several disciplines.¹

Importance of studying different text:
1. Learner will gain contemporary knowledge.
2. One will be exposed to different areas of knowledge of the text.
3. Presentation of same subject with different point of view of the author. As a result of this, one will get command on the subject.

Hence, a different text other than classical Ayurvedic text has been selected here.

Let’s have bird’s eye view on Ravana Samhita.

RAVANA SAMHITA

Author –

Exact author is not known as author has not revealed his identity throughout the text. This text is in the form of conversation between Ravana and his wife Mandodari.

Period –

Exact period is not known. It is assumed that Ravana Samhita is written in Treta Yuga.

But on the basis of internal evidence - The definitions of Dravya, Virya and their respective examples are given same as that of Charak Samhita.² The types of Aushadhi are also same as of Charak Samhita.
Text is in the form of conversation as that of Charak Samhita. Considering above evidences it can be said that its period is near about same of Charak Samhita -2000 to 1000 B.C.

**MAERIALS AND METHODS**

**MATERIALS**

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A Manuscript of Ravan Samhita is available at Bhandarkar Institute SenapatiBapat road Pune. In this present study, the above mentioned publication of Ravana Samhita have been used.

**METHODS**

**METHOD FOR CRITICISM**

1. **EXTERNAL CRITICISM**
2. **INTERNAL CRITICISM**

**EXTERNAL CRITICISM**

Structure of RavanaSamhita is studied for external criticism. Externally Ravana Samhita is divided in 7 part called as ‘KHANDA’.  
1. RavanajivanaVruttanta
2. GrahaRashiPhaladesh
3. RashiNakshtraPhaladesh
4. JatakKundaliPhaladesh
5. UddishTantra
6. KriyoddishTantra- It is divided in 19 sub parts called as ‘Patal’
7. Arkaparakash- It is divided in 10 sub parts called as ‘Shatak’ means the collection of 100 verses.

**INTERNAL CRITICISM**

For internal criticism content of each part of Ravan Samhita is observed and criticized.  
1. In first part the past life of Ravana is mentioned.
2. Second, third and fourth part is mostly concerned with Astrology.
3. Fourth part is related with Hypnotism. Here ancient method of hypnotism is given. Various principles related to hypnotism are given in this part.
4. Sixth part is concerned with practical aspects of Hypnotism. Practical method of Hypnotism is given. Mantra treatment for various disorders are mentioned. This part is Subdivided in 19 parts called as ‘PATAL’. It is in the form of conversation between Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati.
5. Seventh part called as ‘Arkaprakash’ is the most important applied aspect of Ravana Samhita. The conceptual part mostly coincides with Ayurvedic basic principles. Here various types of Arka(Distilled extracts), its therapeutic use and methods of preparation are mentioned in detail than any other text of Ayurveda.

Ravana states that Arkakalpana is the most potent and quick effective prepara-
tion as compared to other Panchavidhakshayakalpana. Ravana says that this knowledge of Arka was inherited to him by Lord Shiva. This part is subdivided in 10 parts called as ‘SHATAK’ as each SHATAK contains collection of 100 verses.

First and Second SHATAK -

Here the basic principles regarding Arkakalpana are given. As Arkakalpana is based on plant source here he has given 4 types of plant as explained in Charak sanhita. Then the applied aspects of plants are based on its Rasa, Virya, Vipaka. Definitions of Rasa, Virya, Vipaka are given which are exactly same as that of classical Ayurvedic texts. Six Rasa (Tastes) with their properties are mentioned, out of which Kashyra is mentioned as Sukshma and Vatavayadhihara. This opinion is exactly opposite to classical Ayurvedic reference.

Five types of drug preparations are mentioned – Kalka, Churna, Rasa, Taila and Arka. Out of which Churna, Taila and Arka are different.

Taila means oils and Arkameans distilled extracts which are obtained from drugs.

Detailed method of Arka preparation is given here. It is same as that of today’s fractional distillation method. Which can be shown diagrammatically.

ARKAYANTRA BY ARKAPRAKASH

Considering time required to extract Arka from a substance of medium hardness, Arkas are categorized in 3 types.

1. Shrestha (Best quality) – Obtained in 9 hours
2. Madhyam (Medium quality) - Obtained in 6 hours
3. Hina (Low quality) - Obtained in 3 hours
   - Qualities of best Arka:
     1. White in color resembling to concha, Moon.
     2. Remain same even if kept in other container means it does not react with the substance of container.

3. Gives the same taste as that of the substance from which it is extracted.

The process of converting unpleasant smelling Arka in pleasant smelling by using some pleasant smelling flowers is given here.

- Anupana of Arka

After consuming Arka one can feel nausea, so common anupan for digestion of Arka is told as Tambula or Clove. Ravana clearly says that Taila(oils) are for external use and Arka are for internal use.

Third SHATAK -

In this part uses of single drug extracts are given e.g.
Amalaki (Embilicaofficinalis)9- used in Rakatapitta, Prameha (diabetes)  
Ardak (Zingibarofficinalis)10- used in Fever, loss of appetite  
Lakshmana11 - Infertility  
Fourth SHATAK-  
Here the use of combined or mixed drug extracts are given e.g.  
TriphalaArka12 – Prameha (Diabetes), skin disorders,  
TrikatuArka13 - Heart disease, obesity.  
Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth SHATAK-  
Different Arka according to disorders are explained.  
Tenth SHATAK-  
Here concepts regarding Rasashastraare explained. Shodhahan and Marana process of Rasa aushaudhi are explained.

DISCUSSION  
There are conceptual similarities as well as differences in Ravana Samhita and Ayurvedic texts. Still utility of Ravana Samhita in today’s era is of great benefit with respect to Arkakalpana.  
Practical utility of various Arkapreparations as described in particular diseases can be verified and proved by practioner or at institutional level. Now a days Arka can be prepared in dry, solid and liquid form are used in practice.

CONCLUSION  
Ravana Samhita is of great practical utility in today’s era for different methods of preparations of Arka in various disorders.  
Now a days the Arkakalpana is used to increase the potency of other preparations that further results in reduction of dose.

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