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THEORETICAL REVIEW OF SHIGRUMOOLADI LEPA: AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Shigrumooladi Lepa is a classical Ayurvedic topical formulation used in the management of inflammatory conditions and anorectal disorders such as *Arsha (hemorrhoids)* and *Shotha (inflammation)*. As a modality of *Bahya Chikitsa* (external therapy), Lepa facilitates localized therapeutic action with minimal systemic absorption. The formulation predominantly includes Shigru (*Moringa oleifera*), characterized by *Ushna* (hot potency), **Tikshna** (penetrating), and *Kapha-Vata shamaka* properties, which contribute to the reduction of pain, swelling, and tissue congestion. This review aims to systematically examine the classical references, pharmacological attributes (Dravyaguna), and the probable mode of action of *Shigrumooladi Lepa* from an Ayurvedic standpoint, while also attempting correlation with contemporary pharmacological insights. The constituent drugs exhibit notable anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and antimicrobial activities, supporting their role in managing localized pathological conditions. The combined effect of these ingredients promotes Dosha pacification, enhances local circulation, and aids in the resolution of inflammation. *Shigrumooladi Lepa* therefore demonstrates considerable therapeutic potential in present-day practice; however, further experimental and clinical evaluation is warranted to establish its efficacy on scientific grounds.

INTRODUCTION

According to classical Ayurvedic literature and contemporary studies, *Bahya Chikitsa* (external therapy) plays a crucial role in the management of localized pathological conditions, particularly those associated with inflammation, pain, and swelling. Among these

modalities, *Lepa*—the topical application of medicated paste—is widely described for its ability to deliver drugs directly to the affected site, thereby minimizing systemic involvement and enhancing therapeutic efficacy.[1]

Conditions such as *Arsha (hemorrhoids)* and *Shotha (inflammation)* are commonly encountered disorders explained in Ayurveda as manifestations of vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*, leading to symptoms like pain, edema, and tissue congestion.[2] The application of Lepa in such conditions has been reported to provide significant relief through its *Shothahara* (anti-inflammatory) and *Vedanasthapana* (analgesic) properties.[3]

Shigrumooladi Lepa is a classical formulation indicated in the management of inflammatory conditions. Its chief ingredient, Shigru (*Moringa oleifera*), is described in Ayurvedic texts as possessing *Ushna* (hot potency), *Tikshna* (penetrating), and *Kapha-Vata shamaka* properties.[4] These attributes make it effective in reducing swelling, pain, and localized pathological changes.

Modern pharmacological studies have also demonstrated that Moringa oleifera contains bioactive compounds such as flavonoids, alkaloids, and phenolic compounds, which exhibit significant anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and analgesic activities.[5,6] These findings support the traditional use of *Shigrumooladi Lepa* and provide a scientific basis for its therapeutic action.

Therefore, considering both classical descriptions and modern evidence, there is a need to critically analyze the pharmacological properties and mode of action of *Shigrumooladi Lepa.* This review aims to bridge the gap between Ayurvedic principles and contemporary scientific understanding, highlighting its relevance in present-day clinical practice.

Concept of Lepa in Ayurveda

In Ayurveda, *Lepa* refers to the external application of medicated paste over the body for therapeutic purposes. It is an important modality of *Bahya Chikitsa* (external therapy) and is widely indicated in conditions involving inflammation, pain, swelling, and skin disorders. Classical texts describe Lepa as a procedure that allows direct interaction of the drug with the affected tissue, thereby producing localized effects with minimal systemic involvement.[7]

Definition

Lepa is defined as the application of herbal paste prepared from drugs triturated with suitable liquids and applied over the affected part of the body.[8]

Types of Lepa

According to classical Ayurvedic texts, *Lepa* is broadly classified into

- **Pralepa** – thin application, mainly for cooling and soothing effects
- **Pradeha** – thick application, used in inflammatory and painful conditions
- **Alepa** – moderate thickness, used for general therapeutic purposes.[9]

Mode of Action (Ayurvedic View)

The therapeutic effect of Lepa depends on the properties of the drugs used. Its action can be understood at multiple levels:

- **Dosha Level:** Helps in pacifying vitiated *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*, depending on the drug properties
- **Dhatu Level:** Acts mainly on *Rakta* and *Mamsa Dhatu*, reducing inflammation and promoting healing
- **Srotas Level:** Clears obstruction in microchannels, improving local circulation
- **Local Effect:** The *Ushna* (hot) and *Tikshna* (penetrating) गुण facilitate deeper penetration of drugs into tissues.[10]

Therapeutic Importance

Lepa is widely used for:

- *Shotha* (inflammation), *Vedana* (pain), *Vrana* (wounds), *Kustha* (skin disorders)

Ingredients of Shigrumooladi Lepa (with Reference)

Shigrumooladi Lepa is described in the management of *Arsha (hemorrhoids)* as an external application aimed at reducing swelling, pain, and local inflammation. According to Rasaratna Samuchaya (*Arsha Chikitsa Adhyaya*), the formulation consists of the following ingredients:

Ingredients

- **Shigru Moola Twak** (*Moringa oleifera* – root bark)
- **Arka** (*Calotropis gigantea*)
- **Aja Mutra** (Goat urine – used as the triturating medium)

Method of Preparation

The above drugs are triturated with *Aja Mutra* to form a smooth paste (*Lepa*), which is applied locally over the pile mass.

Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of Ingredients (with Reference)

The pharmacological properties (*Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka, Karma*) of the ingredients of Shigrumooladi Lepa are described in classical Ayurvedic texts such as Bhavaprakasha Nighantu and Dhanvantari Nighantu.

1. Shigru Moola Twak (*Moringa oleifera*)

- **Rasa (Taste):** Katu, Tikta
- **Guna (Qualities):** Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna
- **Virya (Potency):** Ushna
- **Vipaka (post-digestive effect):** Katu
- **Karma (Action):** Kapha-Vata Shamaka, Shothahara, Vedanasthapana, Lekhana

2. Arka (*Calotropis gigantea*)

- **Rasa:** Katu, Tikta
- **Guna:** Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna
- **Virya:** Ushna
- **Vipaka:** Katu
- **Karma:** Kapha-Vatahara, Shothahara, Vedanasthapana, Krimighna, Lekhana

3. Aja Mutra (Goat Urine)

- **Rasa:** Katu, Lavana
- **Guna:** Laghu, Tikshna
- **Virya:** Ushna
- **Vipaka:** Katu
- **Karma:** Kapha-Vata Shamaka, Lekhana, Shothahara, Srotoshodhana

Mode of Action of Shigrumooladi Lepa

1. Action at Dosha Level-*Arsha (hemorrhoids)* is mainly associated with vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*, leading to pain, swelling, and obstruction.

- The Ushna Virya of Shigru and Arka pacify *Kapha* and regulates *Vata*
- Tikshna Guna helps in breaking *Srotorodha* (obstruction)

2. Action at Dhatu Level-The pathology of Arsha mainly involves *Rakta* and *Mamsa Dhatu*, where there is:

- congestion
- inflammation
- abnormal growth (pile mass)
- Lekhana Karma → reduces excess tissue growth
- Shothahara Karma → decreases inflammation
- Raktashodhana effect → improves local tissue health

3. Action at Srotas Level-Blockage of microchannels (*Srotorodha*) is a key factor in the development of swelling and congestion.

- Tikshna and Ushna properties help in clearing Srotas
- Aja Mutra (Yogavahi) enhances penetration and drug delivery

4. Local (Sthanik) Action

As a form of *Lepa*, the formulation acts directly on the affected area:

- Penetrates through *Romakupa* (hair follicles)
- Reduces swelling and pain locally
- Facilitates faster resolution of inflammation

Modern Pharmacological Correlation (with Reference)

The therapeutic effects of Shigrumooladi Lepa can be correlated with modern pharmacological principles based on the bioactive constituents of its ingredients—*Shigru (Moringa oleifera), Arka (Calotropis gigantea),* and the medium *Aja Mutra*. Various studies have demonstrated their anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antimicrobial, and wound-healing properties, supporting their traditional Ayurvedic use.

1. Anti-inflammatory Activity

Inflammation is a key component in conditions like hemorrhoids.

- *Moringa oleifera* contains flavonoids, phenolic compounds, and isothiocyanates that exhibit significant anti-inflammatory effects by inhibiting pro-inflammatory mediators.
- *Calotropis gigantea* has been reported to reduce edema and inflammatory responses due to the presence of alkaloids and glycosides.

2. Analgesic (Pain-relieving) Activity

Pain in *Arsha* is mainly due to inflammation and tissue irritation.

- Studies show that *Moringa oleifera* possesses analgesic activity by modulating pain pathways.
- *Calotropis gigantea* also exhibits significant analgesic effects in experimental models.

3. Antimicrobial Activity

Secondary infection can aggravate anorectal conditions.

- *Moringa oleifera* shows antimicrobial activity against various bacteria and fungi.
- *Calotropis gigantea* also demonstrates antibacterial properties.

4. Wound Healing Activity

Hemorrhoids often involve tissue damage and inflammation.

- *Moringa oleifera* promotes wound healing through antioxidant activity and collagen synthesis.
- *Calotropis gigantea* has been shown to accelerate wound contraction and epithelialization.

5. Role of Aja Mutra (Medium)

Though limited modern studies are available, traditionally:

- It may act as a **bio-enhancer**, improving drug penetration
- Its alkaline nature may help in reducing microbial load

DISCUSSION

Shigrumooladi Lepa, as described in Rasaratna Samuchaya (Arsha Chikitsa), represents a targeted approach in the management of *Arsha (hemorrhoids)* through *Bahya Chikitsa*. The formulation is composed of *Shigru Moola Twak*, *Arka*, and *Aja Mutra*, all of which predominantly exhibit *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, and *Katu* properties. These गुण are particularly effective in pacifying *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha*, which play a major role in the pathogenesis of Arsha. From an Ayurvedic perspective, the presence of *Ushna Virya* and *Tikshna Guna* facilitates deep penetration into tissues, helping to relieve *Srotorodha* (obstruction) and reduce *Shotha* (inflammation). The *Lekhana Karma* of the formulation contributes to the reduction of pile mass, while its *Vedanasthapana* property alleviates pain. The use of *Aja Mutra* as a medium enhances the potency and penetration of the formulation, acting as a *Yogavahi*. Correlating with modern pharmacology, the ingredients demonstrate anti-

inflammatory, analgesic, antimicrobial, and wound-healing activities. Bioactive compounds present in *Moringa oleifera* and *Calotropis gigantea* support the reduction of inflammation and promote tissue repair. This parallel between classical Ayurvedic concepts and modern findings strengthens the scientific basis of the formulation.

CONCLUSION

Shigrumooladi Lepa is a classical Ayurvedic topical formulation with significant therapeutic potential in the management of *Arsha* and other inflammatory conditions. Its efficacy can be attributed to the synergistic action of its ingredients, which exhibit *Shothahara*, *Vedanasthapana*, and *Lekhana* properties.

The formulation acts at multiple levels—*Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Srotas*—leading to reduction in inflammation, pain, and pile mass. Modern pharmacological findings further support its traditional use by demonstrating anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antimicrobial, and wound-healing effects of its components.

Despite its promising theoretical and pharmacological basis, there is a need for well-designed clinical studies to establish its efficacy and safety on scientific parameters. Thus, Shigrumooladi Lepa holds considerable scope for integration into contemporary clinical practice with proper validation.

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