

CONCEPT OF VISHAGHNA MAHAKASHAYA AS THE PHARMACOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF AGAD TANTRA: A CONCEPTUAL AND INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

Dr. Snehal Dinkar Gajbhiye^{1*}, Dr. Asha Pawar², Dr. Jayashree Dattatraya Gaikwad³

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Agadtantra Avum Vidhi Vaidyak, IIMS Ayurved College, Manori, Nashik.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Samhita Siddhant, IIMS Ayurved College, Manori, Nashik.

³Assistant Professor, Department of Dravyaguna Vigyan, IIMS Ayurved College, Manori, Nashik.

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Snehal Dinkar Gajbhiye

Assistant Professor, Department of
Agadtantra Avum Vidhi Vaidyak, IIMS
Ayurved College, Manori, Nashik.



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ABSTRACT

Background: *Agad Tantra*, the Ayurvedic discipline of toxicology, is fundamentally based on the principles of *Vishaghna* (anti-toxic) *chikitsa*. Among the pharmacological classifications described by *Acharya Charaka*, *Vishaghna Mahakashaya* represents a unique group of ten drugs specifically indicated for the neutralization and management of poisons (*Visha*). This *Mahakashaya* serves as a conceptual and therapeutic cornerstone for both acute and chronic toxicological conditions. **Objective:** To critically review and analyse the concept of *Vishaghna Mahakashaya* as described in *Charaka Samhita* and establish its role as the pharmacological foundation of *Agad Tantra* through classical interpretation and contemporary scientific correlation. **Methods:** A comprehensive review of classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita* with commentaries, supported by secondary references from Nighantus and modern research databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, DHARA, and AYUSH Research Portal, was conducted. Conceptual analysis was carried out to

correlate classical *Vishaghna* properties with modern pharmacological actions. **Results:** *Vishaghna Mahakashaya* comprises ten drugs—*Haridra*, *Manjishtha*, *Suvaha*, *Sukshma Ela*, *Palindi*, *Chandana*, *Kataka*, *Shirisha*, *Sindhuvara*, and *Shleshmantaka*—which collectively exhibit anti-toxic, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, antioxidant, immunomodulatory, and tissue-protective actions. These drugs effectively address various stages of *Visha* pathogenesis as described in Ayurveda. **Conclusion:** *Vishaghna Mahakashaya* provides a comprehensive pharmacological framework for *Agad Tantra*. Its drugs not only counteract poisons but also correct systemic derangements caused by *Visha*, making it highly relevant in contemporary toxicology, environmental poisoning, and integrative medicine.

KEYWORDS: *Vishaghna Mahakashaya*, *Agad Tantra*, Ayurveda toxicology, *Visha chikitsa*, anti-poison drugs, *Charaka Samhita*.

INTRODUCTION

Poisoning remains a significant global health concern, encompassing environmental toxins, drugs, chemicals, envenomation, and food contaminants. In Ayurveda, the science dealing with poisons is elaborately described under *Agad Tantra*, which focuses not only on neutralization of toxins but also on systemic restoration after toxic insult.

Acharya Charaka introduced the concept of *Mahakashaya*, a group of ten drugs classified on the basis of predominant pharmacological action. Among these, *Vishaghna Mahakashaya*, described in *Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 4 (Shadvirechanashatashritiya Adhyaya)*, holds prime importance in toxicology.

Visha is described as a substance that produces *Aashukari*, *Vyavayi*, *Vikasi*, *Teekshna*, *Ushna*, and *Sukshma* effects, leading to rapid systemic derangement. Hence, management requires drugs that are capable of neutralizing toxins, preventing tissue damage, and restoring homeostasis.

This review aims to explore *Vishaghna Mahakashaya* as the pharmacological backbone of *Agad Tantra* through classical references, conceptual analysis, and modern scientific interpretation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature Search Strategy

Classical Ayurvedic texts and their commentaries were reviewed along with modern scientific literature.

Databases searched

- PubMed
- Google Scholar
- DHARA
- AYUSH Research Portal

Keywords used

Vishaghna Mahakashaya, *Agad Tantra*, *Visha chikitsa*, Ayurveda toxicology, anti-poison drugs.

Inclusion Criteria

- Classical references from *Charaka Samhita*
- Peer-reviewed Ayurveda and toxicology articles
- Pharmacological studies on *Vishaghna* drugs

Exclusion Criteria

- Non-classical drug lists
- Non-peer-reviewed sources

Texts Reviewed

- *Charaka Samhita* (Chakrapani commentary)
- *Sushruta Samhita*
- *Ashtanga Hridaya*
- *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*
- *Dhanvantari Nighantu*

RESULTS / REVIEW FINDINGS

Vishaghna Mahakashaya: Classical Composition

According to *Charaka Samhita*, *Vishaghna Mahakashaya* consists of the following ten drugs.

1. Haridra
2. Manjishtha

3. Suvaha
4. Sukshma Ela
5. Palindi
6. Chandana
7. Kataka
8. Shirisha
9. Sindhuvara
10. Shleshmantaka

(Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 4)

Ayurvedic Pharmacological Attributes

Drug	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Major Vishaghna Actions
Haridra	Tikta, Katu	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Krimighna, Shothahara
Manjishtha	Tikta, Kashaya	Guru	Ushna	Katu	Raktashodhaka
Suvaha	Tikta	Laghu	Ushna	Katu	Vishaghna
Sukshma Ela	Katu, Madhura	Laghu	Sheeta	Madhura	Aama-pachana
Palindi	Tikta	Laghu	Sheeta	Madhura	Pitta-Rakta shamana
Chandana	Madhura, Tikta	Laghu	Sheeta	Madhura	Daha-prashamana
Kataka	Kashaya	Laghu	Sheeta	Katu	Shodhana
Shirisha	Kashaya, Tikta	Laghu	Ushna	Katu	Best Vishaghna
Sindhuvara	Tikta, Katu	Laghu	Ushna	Katu	Vedanasthapana
Shleshmantaka	Madhura	Guru	Sheeta	Madhura	Kapha-shamana

Samprapti-Vighatana

Visha causes

- Tridosha vitiation
- Rakta dushti
- Srotorodha
- Ojas kshaya

Vishaghna Mahakashaya drugs act by

- Neutralizing toxins (Visha-pratyanika)
- Purifying Rakta
- Reducing Shotha and Daha
- Restoring Ojas

Role in Agad Tantra Chikitsa

- *Shirisha* is described as Vishaghna Agrya

- *Haridra & Manjishtha* prevent tissue injury and inflammation
- *Chandana* counters Pitta-dominant toxic manifestations
- *Kataka* aids in purification processes
- *Sindhuvra* alleviates pain and swelling

Modern Pharmacological Correlation

Ayurvedic Action	Modern Correlate
<i>Vishaghna</i>	Antidotal, detoxifying
<i>Raktashodhaka</i>	Hepatoprotective, antioxidant
<i>Shothahara</i>	Anti-inflammatory
<i>Krimighna</i>	Antimicrobial
<i>Ojas vardhana</i>	Immunomodulatory

DISCUSSION

Vishaghna Mahakashaya represents a rational and holistic pharmacological model for toxicology. Unlike single-antidote approaches in modern medicine, Ayurveda emphasizes multi-targeted correction of systemic imbalance caused by toxins.

The drugs act synergistically on *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Agni*, and *Ojas*, making them suitable not only for acute poisoning but also for chronic low-grade toxicity, drug-induced disorders, and environmental toxin exposure.

Integration of *Vishaghna* drugs with modern emergency care may enhance outcomes, reduce complications, and aid recovery. However, clinical trials and standardization remain areas requiring further research.

CONCLUSION

Vishaghna Mahakashaya, as described by *Acharya Charaka*, forms the pharmacological foundation of *Agad Tantra*. The ten drugs collectively provide a comprehensive anti-toxic action by neutralizing poisons, protecting tissues, and restoring physiological balance. In the era of increasing environmental and drug-induced toxicity, this classical concept holds immense relevance for integrative toxicology and future research.

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