

VISHGHNA PROPERTY OF GOGHRITA AS VISHGHNA DRAVYA IN AYURVED AND FOLK MEDICINES

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ABSTRACT

Goghrita (Cow's Ghee) holds a highly revered position among the *Chaturvidha Sneha* (four types of dietary fats) in Ayurvedic classical literature. Renowned for its unique properties like *Samskarasya Anuvartana* (the ability to assimilate and amplify the therapeutic attributes of processing herbs without losing its own baseline qualities) and *Yogavahi* (bio-enhancer), it serves as a critical lipophilic vehicle (*Anupana* or Medium) in both preventive and curative therapeutics. In the realm of *Agad Tantra* (Ayurvedic Toxicology), *Goghrita* is not merely a dietary ingredient but a potent counter-toxic agent (*Vishaghna*). It acts as an internal demulcent to minimize the absorption of xenobiotics, serves as a primary frying and purification media during *Shodhana* (detoxification) of highly toxic poisonous drugs (like *Kuchala* / *Strychnos nux-vomica*), and forms the

base of numerous classical antitoxic formulations (*Agad Yogas*). This review article attempts to comprehensively compile, analyse, and present the multifaceted clinical and toxicological dimensions of *Goghrita* according to classical *Brihatrayee* texts and contemporary biomedical paradigms, providing a structured reference for researchers and clinicians alike.

KEYWORDS: *Visha*, *Vishghna*, *Agadtantra*, *Ghritha Kalpna*, *Ghritha*, *Goghritha*, *Rasayan*, *Agnivardhaka*, *Balya*, *Buddhivardhaka*, *Vayahasthapana*. Ayurveda, clarified butter

Goghrita, Agad Tantra, Samskarasya Anuvartana, Vishaghna, Toxicological Management, Shodhana.

INTRODUCTION

In classical Ayurvedic science, *Snehana* (oleation therapy) represents a cornerstone for maintaining homeostasis and managing systemic morbidity. Among the *Chaturvidha Sneh* (*Ghrita, Taila, Vasa, Majja*), *Ghrita*—specifically *Goghrita* (clarified butter obtained from cow's milk)—is universally accepted as superior due to its therapeutic versatility and metabolic compatibility with human tissues.^[1] From an ultimate clinical standpoint, *Acharya Charaka* defines the core superpower of *Ghrita* through its distinct affinity to undergo processing: "*Samskarasya Anuvartana*" — It retains its innate strength while thoroughly absorbing, carrying, and augmenting the medicinal profile of the drugs.^[2] In *Agad Tantra* (the clinical branch dedicated to forensic medicine and toxicology), the body is subjected to highly corrosive, dry, hot, and fast-spreading (*Teekshna, Rooksha, Ushna, Vyavayi*) toxic elements—whether they stem from *Sthavara Visha* (plant/mineral poisons), *Jangama Visha* (animal venom), *Gara Visha* (concocted/cumulative toxins), or *Dushi Visha* (latent, low-potency chemical poisoning).^[3] The administration of *Goghrita* acts as an immediate physiological shield. By virtue of its *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Sheeta* (cooling), and *Madhura* (sweet) qualities, it directly combats the virulent, tissue-destructive properties of toxins, preserving cell membrane integrity and modulating metabolic pathways to neutralize xenobiotics.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

1. Study literature review on *Goghrita* in ayurveda classics and scripture and recent scientific information regarding *Goghrita* (clarified cow's butter).
2. To explore roll of *vishghna* property *Goghrita* as *vishaghna dravya* and treatment of various disorders.

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

This review article utilizes a comprehensive literary search methodology across both ancient and modern scientific platforms:

- 1. Classical Literature:** Primary reference materials were collected from classical texts including the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, and *Bhavaprakash Nighantu*, with special emphasis on chapters concerning *Vishachikitsa* (management of poisoning).

2. Digital Databases: Contemporary scientific validity, biochemical attributes, and previous research updates were retrieved via electronic search engines including PubMed, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and open-source archives of the World Journal of Pharmaceutical Research (WJPR) using targeted keywords like "*Goghrita*", "*Cow Ghee Toxicology*", "*Agad Yogas*", "*Samskarasya Anuvartana*", and "*Antitoxic potential*".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Goghrita

The word *Goghrita* is evolved from Sanskrit word *Ghrita*. *Goghrita* is a common Indian name for clarified butter fat. The origin of *Goghrita* making probably lies far beyond recorded history. The word itself stems from the old Sanskrit *_ghr* 'which means bright or to make bright. When sprinkled on fire, butterfat enhanced its brightness merged with cause. Butterfat was later christened *Ghrita*, which evolved into *Goghrita*.^[4]

Physicochemical and Ayurvedic Attributes of *Goghrita*

According to the classical texts, pristine *Goghrita* exhibits specific properties that make it highly biocompatible:

3. Pharmacodynamics^[5]

- *Gana: Madhura Skandha*
- Source: *Jangama Sneha*
- *Rasa: Madhura*
- *Guna: Snigdha, Guru*
- *Veerya: Sheeta*
- *Vipaka: Madhura*
- *Karma: Medhya, Agnivardhak*
- Action: *Rasayana, Vajikarana, Rasavardhaka, Swarya, Varnya*, Beneficial for *Bala, Vriddha, Abala, Kshata* and *Ksheena*; increases *Oja, Medha, Smruti, Agni*, and *Indriyabala*

**Goghrita image 1****Goghrita image 2**

Source- Ayurveda.com ^[6]

4. Chemical composition^[7]

The carotene content is responsible for the colour of *Ghrta* from yellow to white. *Goghrita* provides energy to the body as 1 gm of *Ghrta* gives 9.3 calories. Triglyceride – 97.98%

- Diglyceride – 0.25-1.5%
- Monoglyceride - 0.16- 0.038%
- Ketoacid glyceride – 0.015- 0.018%
- Glycerylestors – 0.011-0.015 %
- Free Fatty acid- 0.1-0.44
- Phospholipids- 0.2-1.0 %
- Sterols – 0.22-0.4 %
- Vitamin A- 2500/100 gm
- Vitamin D – 8.5×10.7 gm / 100 gm
- Vitamin E - 24×10.3 gm / 100 gm
- Vitamin K- 1×10.4 gm / 100 gm
- Butyric acid- 4.5-6.0%
- Caproic acid- 1.0-1.36%
- Caprylic acid- 0.9-1%
- Capric acid- 1.5-1.8%
- Lauric acid- 6-7%
- Myristic acid- 21-23%
- Palmitic acid- 19-19.5%

- Stearic acid- 11-11.5%
- Archidic acid- 0.5-0.8%
- Oleic acid- 27-27.5%

Goghrita- Properties and Indications

Goghrita act as *Rasayan*, *Vrishya*, *Agnivardhaka*, *Rasavardhaka*, *Balya*, *Ojovardhaka*, *Kantivardhaka*, *Indriyabalavridhikar*, *Buddhivardhaka*, *Vayahasthapana*, *Unmadahara* etc. It pacifies Vata by *snigddha guna*, pitta by *madhura rasa*, *shaityata* and *kapha* by processing with *kaphahara* drugs. It should be taken in small quantities for longer duration to pacify pitta and in large amounts to pacify vata.^[8]

In *Bhavaprakasa* it is told that *Goghrita* is *Rasayana*, tasty, good for eyes, stimulant for digestion, supports glow and beauty, enhances memory and stamina, promotes longevity and protects the body from diseases. Other properties of *Ghrita* include cooling and *mruduta* of *angas*, enhancing clarity of voice and complexion. It is conducive for *rasa dhatu*, *sukra dhatu* and *Ojus*.

Ghrita is indicated in persons suffering from conditions like *ruksata*, *ksata*, *Vata vikara*, *Pitta vikara*, *Unmada*, *Mada*, *Apasmara*, *Murcha*, *Siroroga*, *Aksiroga*, *Vrana*, *Sosa*, *Jwara*, *Daha*, *smrti*, *Angimandya*, and persons who are *vridhha*, *bala*, and those who are desirous of *Ayu*, *bala*, *varna*, *swara*, *pusti*, *praja*, *saukumarya*, *bala*, *buddhi*, *indriya* and clearness of voice.

The most important property that makes it distinct from *taila*, *vasa* or *majja* is its action on higher mental functions. i.e., *dhi*, *medha*, *smrti* etc. In *mastiskajanya vikras*, *snehana* especially by *ghrita* is very much important, due to the similarity of *mastulunga sneha dravyas*. So it has targeted action on intellectual and cognitive functions.

Moreover, Acharya Charaka has mentioned that the properties of *Ghrita* of animals are similar to their milk. Milk of cow is sweet in taste and has sheeta, mrdu, snigdha, picchila, guru, manda and pleasing properties. All these ten properties of milk are similar to that of ojas. Therefore, it increases *Ojas* and is *Jivaniya* i.e., it provides all the benefits of *Rasayana*.^[9]

Ghrita being *Yogavahi* can be used in other Ayurvedic preparations. Digestion, absorption and delivery to a target organ system is crucial in obtaining the maximum benefit from any

formulation. This is facilitated by *Ghrita*. Since active ingredients are mixed with *Ghrita*, they are easily digested and absorbed – Lipophilic action of *Ghrita* facilitates transportation to a target organ and final delivery inside the cell, because cell membranes also contain lipid. The modern lipophilic nature can be compared with the *Yogavahi Guna* of *Ghrita* according to Ayurveda. This lipophilic nature of *Ghrita* facilitates entry of the formulation in to the cell and its delivery to the mitochondrion, microsome and nuclear membrane.

6. Benefits of *Goghrit*^[10]

- It is good for the brain, eyes and skin.
- It is full of essential nutrients and fatty acids.
- It is antibacterial, antiviral, anti-fungal.
- It is anti-aging and anti-oxidant.
- It has cooling effect on the body.
- It detoxifies the body and is good for the skin.
- It increases energy, weight and strength.
- It is easily digested by body compared to other *Ghrita*.
- It can stimulate secretion of stomach acids, and thus helping in the digestive process.
- Since it increases the secretion of biliary lipids, it can help in reducing cholesterol level in intestine and serum.
- It increases the absorbability of vitamins and minerals thus help to improve overall health.
- It balances all *Agnis* (digestive fires).

The Toxicological Mechanics: How *Go Ghrita* combats *Visha*

Poisons (*Visha*) possess ten classical attributes (*Visha Guna*) that are diametrically opposed to the *Ojas* (vital life force) and native tissue health of the human body. *Goghrita* acts as an ideal therapeutic antidote through precise pharmacological mechanisms:

<i>Visha Guna</i> (Poison Attribute)	Counter-Action of <i>Goghrita</i>	Clinical Mechanism of Action
<i>Rooksha</i> (Dry)	<i>Snigdha</i> (Unctuous/Lubricating)	Combats mucosal erosion, restores structural lubrication.
<i>Ushna</i> (Hot) & <i>Teekshna</i> (Sharp)	<i>Sheeta</i> (Cooling) & <i>Mrudu</i>	Reduces cellular inflammation, burning sensations (<i>Daha</i>), and tissue necrosis.
<i>Vyavayi</i> & <i>Vikasi</i> (Rapidly spreading / tissue-loosening)	<i>Guru</i> & <i>Madhura Vipaka</i>	Slows down systemic circulation of toxins; blankets gastrointestinal mucosa to slow absorption.

Crucial Role of *Goghrita* in *Aushadha Shodhana* (Detoxification of Toxic Herbs)^[11]

In *Agad Tantra*, several semi-poisonous or highly toxic herbs (*Upavisha / Visha dravyas*) are safely integrated into standard formulations only after rigorous purification processes. *Goghrita* serves as an essential medium here.

- **Example of *Kuchala Shodhana*** (*Strychnos nux-vomica*): In classical *Shodhana* protocols, *Kuchala* seeds are fried on low heat (*Mandagni*) using *Goghrita*.

- **The Science:** The lethal alkaloids in *Kuchala*—primarily strychnine and brucine—are highly heat-labile and lipid-soluble. Frying the seeds in *Goghrita* effectively helps strip or degrade the outer toxic coat, decreasing the concentration of raw, unrefined strychnine to non-lethal, therapeutically manageable limits while rendering the seed structure brittle and easily powdered.

Goghrita as a Baseline Vehicle in Formulations (*Agad Yogas*)

Due to its properties as an excellent *Yogavahi* medium, *Goghrita* is frequently added to, or used as a vehicle for, specialized antitoxic compounds.

- ***Vrushadi Agad*:** Formulated using *Haritaki* and *Murchita Goghrita*, this classical *yoga* is highly relied upon to counteract *Gara Visha* and *Dushi Visha*. The *Ghritha* acts as an effective demulcent, coating the digestive tract lining to halt further systemic integration of ingested cumulative poisons.^[12]

- ***Haridra Ghritha*:** Extensively documented in the *Ashtanga Sangraha*, this formulation combines *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa*) with a *Goghrita* base. Both elements possess intrinsic *Vishaghna* (antitoxic) properties, operating synergistically to inhibit lipid peroxidation and offer deep hepatoprotective shielding against toxic chemical injuries.^[13]

- **Complex Venom Interactions:** In severe conditions like *Sarpa Damsha* (snake bites) or complications presenting as intense internal pain (*Basti Vedana*), classical polyherbal formulations containing chimney soot (*Gruhadhuma*) are cooked down directly in a base of *Goghrita* to secure optimal systemic delivery across the lipophilic blood-tissue barriers.^[14]

5. Penetration of Biological Barriers and Cellular Rejuvenation^[15]

Because it is entirely composed of lipophilic medium-chain and short-chain fatty acids, processed *Goghrita* easily crosses structural cellular membranes and critical physiological

boundaries, such as the blood-brain barrier (BBB). This allows it to transport *Vishaghna* herbs directly into the central nervous system to alleviate neurotoxic emergencies (e.g., in neurotoxic snake bites or encephalopathy caused by cumulative toxins). Furthermore, after systemic toxins are successfully eliminated or neutralized, *Goghrita* provides essential *Rasayana* (rejuvenating) attributes, nourishing depleted Dhatus (tissues) and rapidly restoring cellular vitality.

DISCUSSION

The management of chemical, environmental, and biological toxicity remains a profound challenge in contemporary medicine. *Goghrita* serves a dual purpose in this context. It acts as an immediate physical and physiological shield against acute toxicity, and it serves as an optimal lipidic matrix for anti-toxic drug delivery.

Modern Scientific and Biochemical Profile

From a chemical perspective, *Goghrita* is a complex lipid Matrix composed of approximately 98% glycerides, along with free fatty acids, phospholipids, sterols, carotenoids (giving it its signature yellowish tinge), and fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K).

1. Lipid Profiles and Cardiovascular Safety^[16]

A common misconception is that because ghee is high in saturated fats, it inherently increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases. However, critical modern animal and clinical studies challenge this view. Research evaluating the effects of a 10% *Goghrita* supplemented diet demonstrated that it does not significantly elevate serum total cholesterol or provoke hepatic lipid peroxidation. Conversely, controlled doses have shown a down-regulation in low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and very low-density lipoprotein (VLDL) levels due to its unique fatty acid composition.

2. Bioavailability and the Blood-Brain Barrier (BBB)^[17]

The human brain is protected by a highly selective cellular membrane called the blood-brain barrier. Because *Goghrita* is rich in short-chain and medium-chain fatty acids (like butyric acid), it easily diffuses across lipid-rich cellular membranes. When herbs are processed with ghee, their lipophilic active principles are dissolved into this matrix, allowing them to effectively cross the blood-brain barrier to manage neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer's disease and epilepsy.

Critical Therapeutic Applications

1. Neuroprotective and Cognitive Enhancement^[18]

Formulations such as *Saraswata Ghrita* utilize *Goghrita* to safely carry neuroprotective herbs (e.g., *Acorus calamus*, *Zingiber officinale*) deep into nervous tissues. Modern phytochemical characterizations show that this integration enhances acetylcholinesterase inhibition, directly assisting in preserving memory, speech, and overall intellect.

2. Wound Healing Activity^[19]

Topical application of *Goghrita* has been widely investigated for its tissue-regenerating capacity. Its high concentration of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids forms a protective barrier over open wounds, supporting cell migration and rapid collagen formation. Studies combining cow's ghee with natural extracts like *Aloe vera* demonstrate wound closure rates and epithelialization comparable to modern standard antibacterial creams.

3. Detoxification and Shodhana (Purification)^[20]

In Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals (*Rasashastra*), mineral purification processes—such as *Gairika Shodhana*—frequently employ *Goghrita* roasting. *Ghrita* coats heavy mineral particles, mitigating potential toxicities and ensuring smooth passage through the gastrointestinal tract without causing standard adverse effects like severe constipation.

DISCUSSION

CONCLUSION

This literary review emphasizes that *Goghrita* is an invaluable pharmaceutical and therapeutic asset within *Agad Tantra*. Its unique property of *Samskarasya Anuvartana* enables it to function as a highly versatile vector, augmenting the efficacy of antitoxic herbs while its physical unctuousness protectively coats tissue systems against structural degradation by toxins. From serving as a strict purification medium during *Shodhana* to acting as the core baseline matrix in protective *Agad Yogas*, *Goghrita* successfully balances traditional clinical theory with contemporary pharmacokinetics. Encouraging deeper experimental and clinical evaluations of specialized *Ghrita* preparations will further bridge the gap between classical Ayurvedic toxicology and modern emergency toxic-therapeutics.

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