

A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON SAINDAVA LAVANA

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ABSTRACT

Saindava Lavana, commonly known as rock salt, is a naturally occurring mineral primarily composed of sodium chloride (NaCl). Saindava Lavana is considered best among all salts in Ayurveda. Unlike table salt, which undergoes extensive refining, Saindava Lavana retains many trace minerals such as calcium, magnesium, and potassium, which contribute to its unique color and flavor. Traditionally used in culinary practices, it is also valued in various cultural and medicinal applications due to its purported health benefits. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in Saindava Lavana for its potential therapeutic properties, which include aiding digestion, improving hydration, and balancing electrolytes in the body. This abstract aims to provide an overview of Saindava Lavana properties, nutritional benefits, and its significance in traditional and modern health practices.

KEYWORDS: *Saindava lavana*, Rock salt, *Ayurveda*.

INTRODUCTION

Saindava lavana is widely described in Ayurvedic classics. Different varieties are used in different setting like household uses for seasoning of food stuffs, pickles, preserving food items, pharmaceutical uses like purification processes, especially in *Parada Ashtasamskaras*^[1], various therapeutic formulations, as a separate *Kalpana* i.e. *Lavana Kalpana*^[2] etc. *Lavana* is so important that it has been mentioned in every Ayurvedic classic. *Saindhava Lavana* stands out among the other forms of *Lavana*.^[3] *Saindhava*, *Sauvarchala*,

Vida, Samudra, and Audbhida Lavana are the five basic types of Lavanas that are commonly employed in Ayurveda.

Saindhava Lavana is highly regarded in Ayurveda for its medicinal properties and ability to balance the three doshas.

Sources

Saindava Lavana, or rock salt, is primarily sourced from underground salt mines, such as the famous Khewra Salt Mine in Pakistan, and from coastal areas through the evaporation of seawater or saline lakes. These mineral-rich natural deposits are mined for a variety of culinary and therapeutic applications.

Vernacular Names^[4]

English	: Rock salt
Hindi	: <i>Sendhanamak, Sendhanone</i>
Bengali	: <i>Saindhava lavana</i>
Marathi	: <i>Saindhvameetha</i>
Gujarati	: <i>Sindhaluna</i>
Kannada	: <i>Saindhava</i>
Telugu	: <i>Saindhava lavanam, Sindhu uppu</i>

Properties^[5]

Rasa (Taste): It possesses a Lavana (salty) rasa.

Vipaka (Post-digestive effect): It has a Madhura (sweet) Vipaka.

Guna (Qualities): It is Anushna, Tikshna (sharp), and Vyavayi (penetrating).

Karma (Action): It has Deepana (stimulates digestive fire) and Pachana (digestion) Karma.

Varieties

Saindhava Lavana comes in two varieties: red (rakta) and white (sweta). When it comes to medicine, the white version is recommended.

According to different classics

In different situations and in different ways, Acharya Charaka talked about Lavanas. He specifically stated that, out of all the Lavanas, the Saindhava is the best.^[6]

For the first time, Sushruta gave a full description of each Lavana. Sushruta has specifically

utilized the Saindhava Lavana at least 68 times in both internal and exterior dose forms throughout the whole Sushruta Samhita. Sauvarchala is next in line, used about 27 times, followed by Vida Lavana at 11 places in decreasing order.^[7]

Ashtanga Hridayam In addition to description of qualities of all six Lavanas, Vagbhata has described the i.e. general properties of Lavanas. Other uses in collaborative view of both Charaka & Sushruta.^[8]

Rasa Vagbhata has used Saindhava in many therapeutic formulations.

Pharmacological properties^[9]

Karma: *Rechana, Deepana, Vrushya, Chakshushya.*

Indications: *Aruchi, Netra roga, Hrud roga, Vrana, Vibandha etc.*

Benefits

It promotes appetite, aids digestion, and enhances the absorption of nutrients. Tridosahara: It is considered to pacify all three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha).

Therapeutic Uses: It is used in the treatment of various conditions, including abdominal disorders, skin problems, rheumatic pains, and herpes.

Swedana: In Ayurvedic practices, Saindhava Lavana is used as a swedana (sweat) material, which is beneficial in conditions like Amavata (a type of arthritis).

Enhances Sneha (Oils): It is used in combination with Sneha (oils) to facilitate their absorption into the tissues.

Uses in Lavana Kalpana: Saindhava Lavana is a key ingredient in Lavana Kalpana, a unique Ayurvedic dosage form where salt is the primary ingredient, often used in low doses.

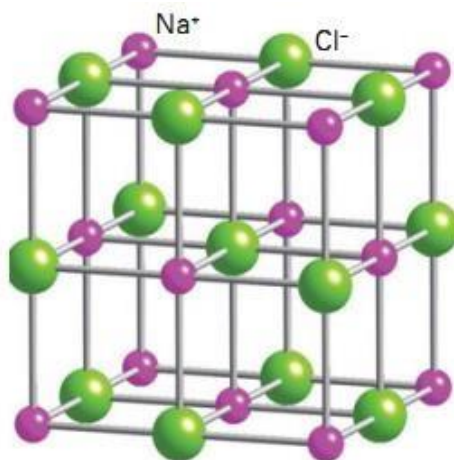
- *Saindhava lavana* is used to construct *Lavana yantra*.^[10]

Modern view

Rock Salt is the common name for the mineral “halite”. Its chemical formula is NaCl. Halite forms isometric crystals.



Structure of Rock salt



Properties of Salt	
Name of compound	sodium chloride
Chemical formula	NaCl
Formula weight	58.443
Colour	colourless or white when pure; coloured splotches (e.g., blue, purple) when impure
Lustre	vitreous
Physical form	transparent to translucent cubic crystals; also powder or granules
Mohs hardness	2 1/2
Density at 0° C (32° F)	2.17 g/cm ³
Melting point	801° C (1,474° F)
Boiling point	1,465° C (2,669° F)
Solubility	water (s)*; glycerol (s); alcohol (ss)†; hydrochloric acid (i)‡
* (s) = soluble; † (ss) = slightly soluble; ‡ (i) = insoluble	

Iodised Salt Vs Rock Salt

Refined Iodised salt	Himalayan Rock Salt
	
Undergone heavy chemical processing.	No chemical processing, rock salt is handmined.
Iodine has to be added artificially	Usually contains iodine naturally.
Often contains additives to keep it from clumping.	Doesn't contain any such additive.
During refining, loses most of its mineral constituents.	Its mineral contents remain intact.

USES OF ROCK SALT

1. Culinary Uses^[11]

- Flavoring: Rock salt is commonly used as a seasoning in cooking, adding a distinctive flavor to dishes. It is preferred in grilling, roasting, and baking due to its mineral-rich taste.
- Salt Blocks: Large blocks of rock salt are used as cooking surfaces for grilling meat, seafood, and vegetables, imparting a subtle, savory flavor.
- Preserving: Traditionally, rock salt has been used to preserve foods, particularly in pickling and curing processes, as it helps draw out moisture and inhibit bacterial growth.

2. Health and Therapeutic Uses^[12]

- Salt Therapy (Halotherapy): Rock salt is used in salt caves or salt rooms where people inhale the air containing salt particles to potentially help with respiratory issues like asthma, bronchitis, and allergies.
- Detoxification: It is believed to have detoxifying properties by promoting proper hydration and aiding the body's natural elimination processes.
- Improving Digestion: In Ayurveda, rock salt is considered helpful for stimulating digestive enzymes, improving digestion, and balancing the body's internal systems.
- Bath Soaks: Rock salt can be dissolved in bathwater to create a relaxing soak, which some believe helps soothe sore muscles and improve skin health.
- Because rock salt includes 84 of the 92 trace elements the body needs to maintain correct electrolyte balance, it is sometimes promoted as a healthier option to conventional salt. Numerous biological activities depend on a healthy electrolyte balance. Heart problems might also result from a lack of certain trace elements, but it still contains sodium, which can raise blood pressure and worsen heart disease if consumed in excess. For individuals

with heart disease, it's important to limit sodium intake to avoid strain on the cardiovascular system.

3. Cosmetic Uses

- Exfoliant: Ground rock salt can be used as a natural scrub for exfoliating the skin, removing dead skin cells, and promoting smoother skin.
- Salt Scrubs: It is an ingredient in body scrubs, often mixed with oils, to provide a rejuvenating and exfoliating experience in skincare routines.

4. Aromatherapy and Air Purification

- Salt Lamps: Rock salt lamps are often used in home decor for their soft, warm glow. Some also believe that the lamps may help purify the air by emitting negative ions, though this is a debated claim.
- Salt Inhalers: Inhaling air containing small amounts of salt can be used to alleviate certain respiratory conditions, similar to salt therapy.

5. Agricultural Uses^[13]

- Deicing: One of the most common uses of rock salt in colder climates is as a deicer for roads, sidewalks, and driveways in winter. It helps melt ice and snow, improving safety and accessibility.

6. Traditional and Cultural Uses

- Religious Ceremonies: In some cultures, rock salt is used in rituals and offerings, symbolizing purity and the importance of natural elements in spiritual practices.
- Meditation and Healing: In some alternative health practices, rock salt is used in meditation spaces to create a calming environment and is thought to enhance the healing process.

7. Other Uses

- Animal Care: Rock salt is sometimes used in the feeding of livestock, providing essential minerals and electrolytes.
- Cleaning Agent: Rock salt can be used in cleaning products for scrubbing surfaces and removing stubborn stains.

Rock salt's versatility, from its culinary applications to its therapeutic and environmental uses, makes it a popular and valuable natural resource.

DISCUSSION

Saindava Lavana (rock salt) is highly valued for its warming properties and its ability to balance the body's internal systems. It is considered to have **Ushna (hot)** Virya, making it especially beneficial for individuals with an excess of **Pitta dosha** (fire element), helping to reduce inflammation, stimulate digestion, and promote better metabolism. Rock salt is also thought to help balance **Vata** and **Kapha doshas**, improving overall digestion and detoxification processes. It is used in various Ayurvedic formulations and practices to support digestive health, enhance the absorption of nutrients, and aid in the elimination of toxins. The mineral-rich composition of Saindava Lavana is also believed to promote hydration and improve electrolyte balance, making it a natural alternative to processed salts.

From a modern scientific viewpoint, Saindava Lavana is recognized for its higher mineral content compared to refined table salt. It contains trace minerals such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, and iron, which contribute to its distinct flavor and potential health benefits. While rock salt is often marketed as a healthier alternative to regular salt due to its minimal processing, modern health experts still caution about excessive sodium intake, as it can contribute to hypertension and other cardiovascular issues. The therapeutic uses of rock salt, such as in **salt therapy** for respiratory health or in bath soaks for muscle relaxation, have gained popularity, but scientific evidence supporting some of these claims is still limited. However, its use as a natural seasoning in cooking and its potential to offer small amounts of beneficial minerals have made Saindava Lavana a preferred choice for many health-conscious individuals today.

CONCLUSION

Saindava Lavana (rock salt) is a natural and mineral-rich alternative to refined table salt, offering both culinary and therapeutic benefits. Its unique composition, including essential minerals like calcium and magnesium, enhances flavor and supports overall health. Ayurveda recognizes its value in balancing doshas and promoting digestion. While modern science acknowledges its potential health benefits, moderation in its consumption is key due to its high sodium content. Overall, Saindava Lavana serves as a versatile and beneficial addition to both traditional and contemporary wellness practices.

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