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ROLE OF *GANDUSHA KARMA* IN THE AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF *TUNDIKERI* (TONSILLITIS): A NARRATIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Tundikeri is described in classical Ayurvedic literature among diseases of the oral and throat region. Its clinical features include *Shopha* (swelling), *Toda* (pricking pain), *Daha* (burning sensation) and *Paka* (suppuration)[1]. These manifestations share some clinical similarities with tonsillitis, an inflammatory condition of the palatine tonsils that may be caused by viral or bacterial infections. To review the classical Ayurvedic principles of *Gandusha Karma* and evaluate its potential role in the symptomatic management of *Tundikeri*, with particular emphasis on its proposed mechanisms and available clinical evidence a review approach was adopted using the classical descriptions and secondary literature supplied for this article. Relevant concepts concerning the definition, classification, indications, procedure, therapeutic rationale and possible physiological mechanisms of *Gandusha* were examined alongside contemporary understanding of tonsillitis. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe *Gandusha* as the retention of a prescribed liquid in the oral cavity until the appropriate procedural endpoint is reached. Depending on the formulation and therapeutic objective, *Gandusha* may be classified as *Snigdha*, *Shamana*, *Shodhana* and *Ropana*. Its proposed relevance in *Tundikeri* includes local soothing, maintenance of oral hygiene and

possible symptomatic relief. Salivary secretion and salivary antimicrobial factors provide plausible physiological explanations for some local effects.

KEYWORDS: *Tundikeri, Gandusha Karma,* tonsillitis, *Ayurveda, Mukha Roga,* Oral health.

INTRODUCTION

Tonsillitis is inflammation of the palatine tonsils and commonly presents with sore throat, painful swallowing, tonsillar erythema, enlargement and, in some cases, fever or exudate. The condition may be viral or bacterial in origin, with group A Streptococcus being an important bacterial pathogen. Although many acute episodes resolve with supportive care, selected patients require diagnostic testing, antimicrobial treatment or assessment for complications.

Recurrent tonsillitis may affect daily activities, school attendance, sleep and quality of life. Potential complications include peritonsillar abscess and, in specific streptococcal infections, acute rheumatic fever or post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis. These complications do not occur in every patient, and their risk depends on the underlying infection and clinical circumstances. Tonsillectomy may be considered in selected patients with sufficiently frequent or severe episodes, but it is not the universal primary treatment for every case of tonsillitis.

Tundikeri is *rakta -pitta* predominant condition described in classical texts among disorders of the oral and throat region. *Sushruta* discusses it among *Talu-gata* disorders[2], while *Vagbhata* describes it in the context of *Kantha-gata*[3] disease, since it occurs at the *Hanusandhi Asrhita Kanthapradesha*[4] (sub-mandibular region). The inflammatory swelling in *Tundikeri* resembles to *Vanakarpasa Phala*[5] (cotton fruit). It can be co-related to disease tonsillitis in modern science on the basis of sign and symptoms of *Tundiker* include *Shopha* (swelling), *Toda* (pricking pain), *Daha* (burning sensation) and, *Paka* (suppuration).

Ayurvedic management includes therapeutic approaches selected according to the disease presentation and the patient's condition. Among local procedures, *Gandusha Karma* is of particular interest because it involves retaining a prescribed liquid in the oral cavity. The nature of the liquid, its properties and the intended therapeutic action determine its traditional application. The present review focuses specifically on *Gandusha Karma* and its potential role in the symptomatic management of *Tundikeri*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article was prepared as review using the supplied material on *Gandusha Karma*, classical Ayurvedic descriptions, secondary literature and contemporary clinical concepts related to tonsillitis. The review examined the definition and classification of *Gandusha*, its proposed indications, procedural principles, possible physiological mechanisms and relevance to *Tundikeri*.

The supplied material was used as a starting point rather than as a complete systematic literature search. Classical textual statements and modern biomedical explanations were considered separately to avoid interpreting traditional concepts as established physiological mechanisms without supporting evidence.

Classical Concept of *Gandusha Karma*

Gandusha is a traditional Ayurvedic oral procedure in which a prescribed decoction or *Sneha* is retained in the mouth without the repeated active movement characteristic of *Kavala*. The liquid is retained according to the prescribed method and after which it is expelled. Classical descriptions associate the procedure with the appearance of appropriate signs indicating completion. Some traditional accounts mention secretions from the oral cavity, nose or eyes as procedural endpoints. *Gandusha* formulations may include oil, *ghee*, milk, honey-containing preparations, water, decoctions or other prescribed liquids.[6]

Classification of Gandusha[7]

Ayurvedic authorities describe different categories of *Gandusha*[5] according to their intended actions.

***Snigdha Gandusha*:** Uses unctuous substances and is traditionally associated with the management of *Vata*-related manifestations.

***Shamana Gandusha*:** Intended to pacify aggravated *Pitta* or promote a soothing effect, according to the formulation and the relevant textual classification.

***Shodhana Gandusha*:** Traditionally intended to facilitate the elimination or reduction of accumulated *Doshas*, particularly in *Kapha*-related conditions.

Ropana Gandusha: Associated with healing and the management of affected oral tissues.

The selection of a particular category for *Tundikeri* should be based on a verified classical

indication and an appropriate clinical assessment.

Dravya Selection and Therapeutic Rationale

Classical descriptions discuss the selection of *Gandusha Dravya* according to the intended action and the qualities of the ingredients. Unctuous preparations are associated with *Snigdha* therapy; cooling and soothing preparations with *Shamana* therapy; and appropriately selected substances with *Shodhana* or *Ropana* purposes.

For a condition characterised by throat discomfort, the suitability of a preparation should be assessed carefully. A liquid intended for oral use must be non-irritating and of an appropriate temperature. Strongly concentrated, excessively hot or otherwise irritating preparations may aggravate discomfort or damage the oral mucosa.

The traditional concepts of *Shothahara* (addressing swelling), *Vedanasthapana* (relieving pain), *Kaphahara* and *Ropana* provide a rationale for investigating selected formulations.

Procedure of *Gandusha Karma*

According to Acharya Sushruta, *Gandusha Karma* involves filling the oral cavity completely with the prescribed medicinal liquid and retaining it without moving it inside the mouth.[8] *Acharya Sharangadhara* also describes the use of liquid substances in *Gandusha* therapy.[9] The liquid is held in the mouth until lacrimation and nasal discharge (*Netra* and *Nasa Srava*) occur, after which it is expelled. The prescribed quantity of *Gandusha Dravya* is one *Kola*[10] or *half Karsha*. The procedure should be performed attentively in an upright sitting posture. The medicinal liquid is retained until the mouth is completely filled and the signs of lacrimation or nasal discharge appear, following which it is spat out and a fresh quantity is taken for the subsequent round.[11]

Benefits of *Gandusha*[12]

- Enhances Vocal Strength (*Svara-bala*): Regular practice increases the power, clarity, and strength of the voice.
- Prevents Throat Dryness (*Kanthashosha*): It prevents dryness of the throat, keeping the oral cavity and throat well-hydrated.
- Strengthens Jaw and Oral Structures (*Hanu-bala & Mamsopachaya*): It strengthens the jaw bones and promotes healthy muscular fullness/nourishment in the face, mouth, and throat area.

- Improves Taste Perception (*Rasa-jnana* & *Aruchi-nashana*): It enhances the capacity to perceive tastes proper and overcomes loss of appetite or tastelessness in food.
- Protects Lips (*Oshta-sphutana*): It prevents cracking or dryness of the lips.

Contraindications and Precautions

Gandusha should not be attempted in patients who cannot reliably retain and expel the liquid (< 5 yrs), have swallowing difficulties or are at increased risk of aspiration. Young children require particular caution and should not be encouraged to perform the procedure unsupervised.

Possible Mode of Action of *Gandusha Karma*

Mechanical and Sensory Stimulation

Retaining a liquid in the oral cavity provides contact between the formulation and accessible oral mucosal surfaces. The presence, temperature, taste and consistency of the liquid may stimulate oral sensory receptors and influence salivary secretion.

Salivary Secretion and Oral Defence

Salivary secretion is regulated by autonomic pathways involving salivary nuclei in the brainstem and parasympathetic innervation, including pathways associated with the facial and glossopharyngeal nerves. Taste and other oral sensory stimuli can increase salivary flow. Saliva contains several protective components, including secretory immunoglobulin A, lysozyme and other antimicrobial proteins. These contribute to oral mucosal defence and help maintain the oral environment.

Oil pulling stimulates salivary enzymes that draw toxins from the circulation and eliminate them from the body through the tongue, including chemical, bacterial, and environmental toxins.[13,14,15,16] Hence, it cleanses and de-toxifies the entire human body.[17]

A major consideration is the distinction between *Gandusha* and gargling. *Gandusha* primarily involves retaining liquid in the mouth, whereas gargling deliberately directs liquid towards the pharyngeal region.

Local Soothing and Symptom Relief

A suitably selected, non-irritating liquid may provide temporary oral comfort through moistening and local sensory effects. Depending on the formulation, it may also contribute to

the removal of accessible oral debris.

Ayurvedic Interpretation

Within the Ayurvedic framework, the proposed effects of *Gandusha* may be discussed in relation to *Shamana, Shodhana, Shothahara* and *Ropana* actions, depending on the selected formulation and classical indication. These concepts provide a traditional rationale for selecting a local procedure.

Role of *Gandusha Karma* In *Tundikeri*

The possible relevance of *Gandusha* in *Tundikeri* arises from its local mode of application and the traditional use of selected formulations for oral and throat-related complaints. Its potential role can be considered in three areas.

First, *Gandusha* may be investigated for short-term relief of oral discomfort associated with throat symptoms. Second, selected formulations may be assessed for their effects on oral hygiene, salivary parameters and mucosal tolerability. Third, the procedure may be evaluated as a supportive intervention alongside appropriate standard care.

For *Tundikeri* formulations like *Triphala Madhu Gandusha, Apamargaditail Gandusha, Panchvalkal Kashaye Gandusha, Kankshi Jala Gandusha* can be used.

DISCUSSION

The relationship between *Tundikeri* and tonsillitis offers a basis for examining *Gandusha Karma* within an integrative research framework. The classical descriptions identify manifestations that overlap with modern symptoms of tonsillar inflammation, while the procedure provides a defined local therapeutic approach. *Gandusha* stimulates the oral mucosa mechanically and sensorially, thereby potentially enhancing salivary flow. Saliva contains protective substances, including secretory IgA, lysozyme, and antimicrobial proteins, which support oral health. Medicinal liquids may soothe oral tissues, maintain moisture, and facilitate the removal of accessible debris.

CONCLUSION

Gandusha Karma is a classical Ayurvedic oral procedure with a traditional rationale for use in selected oral and throat-related conditions. In *Tundikeri*, its possible relevance lies in local application, oral moistening, salivary stimulation and the potential symptomatic effects of appropriately selected formulations.

Gandusha offers an additional benefit when used alongside appropriate standard care. *Gandusha Karma* should therefore be considered a potential adjunct rather than a substitute for appropriate medical assessment and standard treatment.

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