



A REVIEW ON AMALTAAS (CASSIA FISTULA LINN.) AS AN EKAL DRAVYA CHIKITSA IN BRIHATRAYEE
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ABSTRACT

Cassia fistula, also known as golden shower, is a plant with many medicinal uses being used for various therapeutic purposes. It is also known by name *Aaragvadh*, which means “disease killer”. Its leaves, fruits and flowers are known to have medicinal relevance in Ayurveda. The fruit pulp is known to have laxative properties. It has many health benefits due to its constituents of variety of biologically active compounds those have various medicinal properties in its different part. *Amaltaas* is a potential medicine when used in *Ekal* form as well as in compound formulations. Since ancient times, it has been used in different traditional system of medicines for various ailments. This article aims to provide a comprehensive review on the use of *Amaltaas* as an *Ekal Dravya* for treating many ailments like diabetes, hematemesis, leucoderma, pruritis, intestinal disorders, as an antipyretic, analgesic and laxative. *Amaltaas* is being used as a one of the best prescribed remedy for many of the common ailments in day today’s life by large number of physicians. Using *Amaltaas* as a single *dravya* with various *anupaan* may results in optimum health benefit. *Ekal dravya* concept of using single substances has been mentioned in our ancient Ayurvedic literature. Use of *amaltaas* as a single drug therapy has been evidenced at various instances in *Brihatrayee* which is being reviewed in this article. Using *Amaltaas* as an *ekal dravya* and with other medicinal substances as an *anupaan* is also been considered and taken for the review.

KEY WORDS: *Ekal, Dravya, Chikitsa, Amaltaas*

INTRODUCTION

Medicinal plants are the prime substances in the field of Ayurveda on which the physician rely for attaining a better health condition. An ancient practice of using plants as a source of medicine is an important component of the health care system. Most of Physicians practicing traditional system of medicines prepare their own formulations, whereas many use single herbs for managing disease conditions. The interest in traditional medicines is growing rapidly due to its less harmful side effect if used cautiously. Using single drug therapy is more reliable in this context as the pharmacological action of single *dravya* is well known rather than that of multiherbal formulation where drug to drug interaction is unknown. Single drug therapy also ensures the quality of substance being used. There are number of physicians using *Amaltaas* as a single *dravya* for therapeutic purpose, but it still needs more extensive and evidence-based research. So here it has been reviewed in *Brihatrayee* to provide an evidence-based data for using *Amaltaas* as an *Ekal Dravya Chikitsa* in many ailments where it is single sufficient to break the pathogenesis.

Ekal Dravya Chikitsa (EDC) is being practiced nowadays by many of the physicians who follow our basic literature for managing the diseased conditions. It has been evidenced that *Amaltaas* is being used in single forms at various instances for its purgation activity in many diseases where *virechan* (purgation) is the basic line of treatment. Many a times a substance is no single enough to break the pathogenesis. So, it is being used with other substances having medicinal properties known as *anupaan* or *sahapaan* or in processed form so that it is single enough to cure any ailment. So, for practical use and need of time, *anupaan* or *sahapaan* or processed single *dravya* are also considered to be taken into concept of *Ekal Dravya Chikitsa*.

Cassia fistula Linn. belongs to family Caesalpiniaceae, is widely used for its medicinal properties, to cure many ailments. Its main property being that of a mild laxative, due to which it is commonly used plant in traditional system of medicines to cure diseases where purgation is the basic line of treatment. In present time, this plant has been evidenced to be useful against variety of skin diseases either in the form of external application or using it as interventional purposes. The plant is also found to be used traditionally as an infusion, decoction, powder, either alone or in combination with other medicines. *Amaltaas* is alone effective when used in proper dose and proper form. Using compound formulation for therapeutic use in place where single *dravya* is sufficed is of no use. There are many ailments where *Amaltaas* can alone cure the disease or can provide symptomatic relief. Using *Ekal Dravya Chikitsa* helps in many ways by reducing the load on biodiversity, minimizing the cost of medicine, ensuring the quality of medicine etc. *Ekal Dravya Chikitsa* has been mentioned in past ancient time and is also been in practice in present era. But due to lack of available information in exact pathological condition where single *dravya* is used, practitioners are not obtaining effective results.

- Compilation of information relating to *ekal* aspect of *amaltaas* from Charak Samhita, Sushrut Samhita, Ashtang hridayam with their commentaries and other relevant texts of Ayurveda and allied subjects.
- Conceptual review of *amaltaas* as *Ekal Dravya Chikitsa*.
- Compilation of various form of *Ekal Dravya* used in *Brihatrayee*.

Brihatrayee, considered as one of the basic texts of Ayurveda have been reviewed for the observation of *amaltaas* used as EDC

in various forms. This information was compiled in a tabulation form as listed in table 1, 2, 3.

DISCUSSION

Aaragvadha is mentioned by all *Aacharyas* for purgation as an EDC in many ailments. In *Urdhwa Raktapitta*, fruit pulp mixed with honey and *sugar* is used for *Virechan* by Charak (*virechan dravya*- ch.su.2), while young leaves mixed with honey is advised to lick by Sushrut. Both Charak and Vagbhata has prescribed local application of *patra Kustha* (*aaragvadhaadi gana*), and

intake of processed milk for *virechan* in *Pittaj Udar*. Decoction of *Amaltaas* for *virechan* is also indicated by Sushrut in *Haridrameha* and *Paandu* (*Aaragvadhaadi gana*- *meha*; *laakshaadi gana*- *tikta rasa*). Young fried leaves are used by Sushrut in *gulma* (*Shyamaadi gana*), while bark pounded in women breast milk is used as collyrium in *Pittaj Abhishyand*. *Amaltaas* is considered as mild purgative which is well used by Vagbhata along with *Draaksha swaras* in *Udaavart*, *Jwar* (*Aaragvadhaadi gana*) and *Hridroga*; and in the form of processed ghee in *Kasa*. The above data has been compiled in the tabulation form in table 4.

Table 1: List of AMALTAAS used as an EDC in Charak Samhita

1.	<i>Fruit (Phalini dravya) – virechan</i>	Ch.su.1
2.	<i>Virechanaarth dravya</i> (purgative)	Ch.su.2
3.	<i>Kushtaghna mahakashaya, kandughna mahakashaya</i>	Ch.su.4
4.	<i>Mridu virechan</i> (Mild purgative)	Ch.su.25
5.	<i>Urdhwa Raktapitta</i> - administration of fruits along with the liberal quantity of <i>Madhu, sharkara</i> (honey and sugar) - For the purpose of <i>virechana</i> (purgation)	Ch.chi.4/57, 58
6.	Decoction of <i>Amaltaas</i> - for purgation - <i>Kaphaj Kustha</i> (leprosy of <i>kaphaj</i> origin)	Ch.chi.7/80
7.	Application of paste of <i>Amaltaas patra</i> - <i>Kustha</i> (leprosy)	Ch.chi.7/96
8.	Drink Milk boiled with fruit pulp of <i>Amaltaas</i> - <i>Pittaj udar</i> (<i>pittaj</i> type of abdominal disease)- <i>virechan</i>	Ch.chi.13/69
9.	Ghee cooked with decoction of fruit pulp of <i>aaragvadha</i> – purgation therapy- <i>Kshayaj kasa</i>	Ch.chi.18/151

Table 2: List of AMALTAAS used as an EDC in Sushrut Samhita

1.	<i>Aaraghyvadhyaaadi gana, shyamaadi gana, Laakshaadi gana</i>	Shu.su.38
2.	<i>Virechan dravya</i>	Shu.su.39/4
3.	Oil taken from pulp of <i>aaragvadh</i> , used in children up to 12-year age, taken with castor oil followed by intake of warm water. Oil taken from pulp of <i>aaragvadh</i> , used in children up to 12-year age, taken with <i>Kustha</i> oil followed by intake of warm water.	Act as purgative in <i>vata kapha</i> disorders Shu.su.44/75
4.	Decoction of <i>Amaltaas</i>	<i>Haridrameha</i> Shu.chi.11/9
5.	<i>Dushtavrana sneha</i> - oil used in vitiated wounds	Shu.chi.31/5
6.	Bark of <i>varnaka</i> pounded in woman milk – used as collyrium	<i>Pittaja abhishyand</i> Shu.uttr.10/10
7.	<i>Ankur (komal patra)- ghrit bhrusht</i> (fried in ghee)	<i>Gulma</i> Shu.uttr.42/61
8.	<i>Kwatha</i> for <i>virechan</i>	<i>Paandu</i> Shu.uttr.44/16
9.	Young leaves of white <i>Karnikaar</i> should be licked mixed with honey	<i>Raktapitta</i> Shu.uttr.45/19

Table 3: List of AMALTAAS used as an EDC in Ashtang hridayam

1.	<i>Virechan upyogi dravya</i>	As.hr.su.15
2.	<i>Aaragvadhaadi gana, Shyamaadi gana</i>	As.hr.su.15
3.	<i>Amaltaas</i> licked with milk	In fever As.hr. Chi.1/101
4.	Ghee processed with <i>Amaltaas</i> taken along with juice of <i>Mridvika</i>	This purifies the body of a weak person As.hr.chi.3/152
5.	The patient should be given oleation therapy followed by repeated purgation therapy using milk boiled with the paste of <i>Amaltaas</i>	In patient of <i>pittaj udar Roga</i> - when strength of the digestive fire is found increased As.hr.chi.15/64
6.	Intake of <i>Amaltaas</i> with <i>Ikshu rasa</i> (sugarcane juice)	<i>Kaamala</i> (jaundice) As.hr.chi.16/41
7.	Intake of <i>Amaltaas</i> with <i>Vidaari swaras</i> (<i>vidaari</i> juice)	
8.	Intake of <i>Amaltaas</i> with <i>Aamalki swaras</i> (<i>Aamalki</i> juice)	
9.	Ghee boiled for 100 times with the root of <i>aragvadh</i> , consumed daily, followed by drinking of decoction of <i>khadira</i>	<i>Kustha</i> (leprosy) As.hr.chi.19/13
10.	Application of paste of leaves of <i>Amaltaas</i>	<i>Kustha</i> (leprosy) As.hr.chi.19/63
11.	For purgation- <i>Aaragvadha</i> is best <i>dravya</i> as it is mild purgative, <i>madhur</i> and <i>sheetal</i> (cold potency)	<i>Jwar, Hridroga, Vatarakta, Udaavarta</i> As.hr.klp.2/30
12.	use in children, old age people, emaciated persons, delicate people- for purgation – as it is mild purgative	As.hr.klp.2/31
13.	Drink Fruit pulp with <i>Draaksha swaras</i>	<i>Daaha, udavarta</i> - purgation As.hr.klp.2/34
14.	Drink cold decoction of fruit pulp of <i>Amaltaas</i> with <i>dadhimand/ suramand/ Aamalki juice/ kaanji</i>	For purgation As.hr.klp.2/35
15.	Mixing fruit pulp of <i>Amaltaas</i> and old jaggery with decoction of <i>danti</i> root- fermenting it for 1 month or 15 days- use for drinking	For purgation As.hr.klp.2/37

Table 4: List of Amaltaas used as EDC in various diseases with different anupaan in Brihatrayee

		CHARAK	SUSHRUT	VAAGBHAT
1.	<i>Urdhwa raktapitta</i>	fruit pulp mixed with <i>madhu</i> and <i>sharkara</i> -Ch.chi.4/57, 58	young leaves mixed with honey is advised to lick- Shu.uttr.45/19	
2.	<i>Kustha</i>	local application <i>patra</i> -Ch.chi.7/80,96		L.A of <i>patra</i> -As.hr.chi.19/13,63
3.	<i>Pittaj Udar roga</i>	intake of processed milk for <i>virechan</i> Ch.chi.13/69		intake of processed milk for <i>virechan</i> As.hr.chi.15/64
4.	<i>Haridrameha</i>		Decoction of <i>Amaltaas</i> for <i>virechan</i> Shu.chi.11/9	
5.	<i>Dushtavrana</i>		Shu.chi.31/5	
6.	<i>Abhishyand</i>		Bark pounded in women breast milk is used as collyrium in <i>Pittaj Abhishyand</i> -Shu.uttr.10/10	
7.	<i>Gulma</i>		Young fried leaves Shu.uttr.42/61	
8.	<i>Paandu</i>		Decoction of <i>Amaltaas</i> for <i>virechan</i> Shu.uttr.44/16	
9.	<i>Kamala</i>			As.hr.chi.16/41;
10.	<i>Jwar</i> (Fever)			along with <i>Draaksha swaras</i> As.hr.Chi.1/101
11.	<i>Hridroga</i>			along with <i>Draaksha swaras</i> As.hr.klp.2/30
12.	<i>Vatarakta</i>			As.hr.klp.2/30
13.	<i>Udaavarta</i>			along with <i>Draaksha swaras</i> As.hr.klp.2/30

CONCLUSION

Aacharya charak has mentioned *ekal* use of leaves and fruit pulp for therapeutic purposes in *raktapitta*, *kustha* and *udar roga*. Sushrut indicated use of bark, leaves and oil from pulp in *raktapitta*, *prameha*, *vrana*, *gulma*, *paandu*. whereas Vagbhata has used root, leaves and fruit pulp for therapeutic management of diseases like *kustha*, *udar*, *kamala*, *jwar*, *vatarakta*, *udaavarta* and *hridroga*.

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