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A Review Study Of Malhara Kalpana

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Abstract:
Background: Malahara Kalpana is an important formulation type under Bahya Kalpana (external application) in Ayurveda, primarily used for local therapeutic action. These ointments are typically prepared using Siktha Taila (beeswax and oil mixture) or Ghrita (clarified butter) as a base, with additional herbal, metallic, or mineral ingredients depending on the therapeutic requirement.Aim: To review and compile the scattered references of Malahara Kalpana from Rasa Tarangini by Acharya Sadananda Sharma and to trace its historical evolution from the Vedic period to modern times.Methods: Literature related to Malahara Kalpana was collected from Rasa Tarangini and other Ayurvedic classical texts, with particular focus on base materials, processing methods, and therapeutic applications. Historical references were examined to identify changes in formulation techniques and ingredients.Results: Rasa Tarangini describes multiple variants of Malahara Kalpana, predominantly using Siktha Taila as the base. Historical review shows that during the Vedic period, simple drug pastes were applied externally. Later, substances like Navaneeta (fresh butter) and Ghrita were incorporated to improve stability, absorption, and potency. These evolutionary modifications have contributed to the enhanced therapeutic potential of Malahara Kalpana in clinical practice.Conclusion: Malahara Kalpana has evolved significantly from simple paste applications to more complex, stable ointment formulations. Rasa Tarangini offers valuable insights into their preparation and therapeutic use, highlighting the enduring relevance of these formulations in external therapy.
Keywords*: Malahara Kalpana, Bahya Kalpana, Siktha Taila, Rasa Tarangini, Ayurvedic ointments, Rasashastra*

INTRODUCTION

The word Malhar and Malham are basically originated from Unani system of Medicine.Yoga Ratnakara described it under the heading of Malhar Kalpana. This Kalpanaremoves Mala (residue etc.) from Vrana, Vidradhi, Tvakvikar etc. That's why it iscalled Malhar Kalpana. This Kalpana is similar to Ointment in Modern Pharmaceutics.

Ingredients:

Following are used as ingredients-

Guggulu, Rala (Sarjarasa), Siktha (Madhucista-bee-wax), Tila Taila, Sikthataila,Menthol, Thaimol, Satadhauta Ghrita, Sahastra dhautaghrita, Gandha phiroja etc. anyone or more than one is to be taken as a base.Fine powder form of Kajjali, Sodhita Parad, Sodhita Gandhaka, Rasa Sindur, RasaKarpura, Tuttha etc. are also used.

METHOD OF PREPARATION: Base of Malhar materials should be melted or liquefied & filtered first.Then mixed withpowder of rest of the ingredients little by little, by continuous stirring. Then the productis known as Malhar.

Method 1 – Classical Ayurvedic Approach

Malaharas are prepared by adding base materials such as Siktha (beeswax), Sarjarasa (resin from Shorea robusta), etc., to Sneha (oil or ghee, either Pakva – processed, or Apakva – unprocessed) and mixing them thoroughly until the desired consistency, smoothness, and softness is achieved.

For example, in the preparation of Sarjarasa Taila (a Malahara), Tila Taila (sesame oil), Āranala (fermented sour liquid), and Sarjarasa are heated together until the water completely evaporates and Sarjarasa dissolves uniformly into the oil. Subsequently, manthana (vigorous stirring) is performed until a semisolid, ointment-like consistency is obtained.

In this method, the manthana process is considered crucial for achieving the proper texture of the Malahara. In certain formulations, such as BhallatakaŚothahara Lepa, Navaneeta (fresh butter) is used as the base instead of Madhucchistha (beeswax).

Two variations of Siktha Taila are described in Rasa Tarangini:

Ratio 1:5 (Siktha: Taila) – Recommended for use during the hot season.

Ratio 1:6 (Siktha: Taila) – Recommended for the cold season.

This highlights the seasonal variations in base preparation for optimal stability and effectiveness.

Method 2 – Modern/Unani-Inspired Approach

In contemporary practice, especially under Unani influence, bases like paraffin wax, Ghrita, Tila Taila, Gulrogan, Sarasava Taila, and various animal fats are used, with paraffin being the most common.

The general process involves:

Heating paraffin and oil together until completely melted.

Adding gum-like substances and mixing thoroughly.

Incorporating medicinal ingredients and stirring until the mixture cools.

Fat as a Base: Pure fat can be used instead of paraffin. Substances like loban (benzoin resin) may be added to prevent rancidity and unpleasant odors.

Melting with Base: Easily melting substances (e.g., ushaph, guggulu, gandhabiroja) are melted directly with paraffin.

Cold Mixing: Heat-sensitive materials (e.g., egg white, opium) are added only after removing the mixture from heat.

Powders: Any powdered medicinal substances should be finely sieved and triturated thoroughly before incorporation.

Volatile Substances: Ingredients like camphor are added at the final stage to prevent loss of potency.

The commonly accepted oil-to-paraffin ratio is 2:1, although variations exist. According to Unani medicine, Marahama (ointment) is considered a stable preparation with an effective shelf life of up to 20 years.

USES:

Mainly used for Vrana Sodhana& Vrana Ropana purpose. It is also used for thetreatment of Vidradhi, Arsa, Sirahsula, TvakVikara, Kati Sula etc.

OINTMENT

An ointment is a homogeneous, viscous, semi-solid preparation, most commonlygreasy, thick oil (oil 80% - water 20%) with a high viscosity that is intended for externalapplication to the skin or mucous membranes. They are used as emollients or for theapplication of active ingredients to the skin for protective, therapeutic, or prophylacticpurposes and where a degree of occlusion is desired. Ointments are used topically on a variety of body surfaces. These include the skinand the mucous membranes of the eye (an eye ointment), vagina, anus, and nose. Anointment may or may not be medicated.

Ointments are usually very moisturizing and good for dry skin. They have a low riskof sensitization due to having few ingredients beyond the base oil or fat, and lowirritation risk. There is typically little variability between brands of generics and namebrand drugs. They are often disliked by patients due to greasiness.

Classification of ointment:

I. According to their therapeutic properties based on penetration:

A. Epidermic Ointments-

These ointments are meant for action on epidermis and produce local effect. They arenot absorbed. These types of ointments are mainly used as Protective, antiseptics, localanti-infective and parasiticides.

B. Endodermic Ointments-These ointments are meant for action on deeper layers of cutaneous tissues. They arepartially absorbed and act as emollients, stimulants and local irritants.

C. Didermic Ointments-These ointments are meant for deep penetration and release the medicaments that passthrough the skin and produce systemic effects.

II. According to their therapeutic uses:

1.Antibiotic

2.Antifungal

3.Anti-inflammatory etc.

Characteristics of an ideal ointment:

Ø It should be chemically and physically stable.

Ø It should be smooth and free from grittiness.

Ø It should melt or soften at body temperature and be easily applied.

Ø The base should be non-irritating and should have no therapeutic action.

Ø The medicament must be finely divided and uniform the distributed throughthe base.

Ø It should not retard healing of the wound.

Ointment bases:

The ointment base is that substance or part of an ointment, which serves as carrier orvehicle for the medicament while selecting a suitable ointment base. The factors suchas the action desire nature of the medicament to be incorporated and the stability of anointment are to be considered. There are no single ointment bases, which possess allthe qualities of an ideal ointment base. So, it becomes necessary to use more than oneointment base in the preparation of ointments.

Classification of ointment bases-

1. Oleaginous Bases
2. Absorption Bases
3. Emulsion Bases
4. Water Soluble Bases

1. Oleaginous Bases-

These bases consist of water insoluble, hydrocarbons, vegetable oils, animal fats andwaxes. The constituents of hydrocarbon basis are soft paraffin (petrolatum), hardparaffin, and Liquid paraffin.

2. Absorption Bases-

These bases are generally a hydrous substance, which have the property of absorbing(emulsifying) considerable quantities of water but still retaining their ointment likeconsistency. The Absorption bases are two types:

a) Non-emulsified bases
b) water in oil emulsions.

The non-emulsified bases absorb water and an aqueous solution producing w/oemulsions e.g. Wool fat, Wool alcohol, Bees wax, Cholesterol. Thewater in oil emulsions is capable of absorbing more water and has the property of non-emulsified bases e.g. hydrous wool fat (canolin).

3. Emulsion Bases-These bases are semisolid or have a cream like consistency both o/w and w/o emulsionsare used as ointments base. The oil in water type of emulsions bases is more popular, because they can be easily removed from the skin or cloths by washing with water. Thew/o type of bases are greasy and sticky. The emulsifying ointment is prepared fromemulsifying wax, white soft paraffin and liquid parathion.

4. Water Soluble Bases-

These are commonly known as “Greaseless ointment bases". The water-soluble basesconsist of water-soluble ingredients. Such as polyethylene glycol polymers, which arepopularly known, as “Carbo-waxes” the carbo-waxes are water soluble, non-volatileand inert substances.

Selection of Dermatological Vehicles-There are large numbers of ointment bases, which are available in the Market. Thesehave already been discussed. But none of the above discuss ointment base, fulfills allthe requirements of an ideal ointment base, following one the factors, which govern theselection of an ideal base for ointments-

A. Dermatological factors
B. Pharmaceutical factors

A. Dermatological factors-

1. Absorption and Penetration:

Absorption means actually entry into blood stream i.e. Systemic absorption where as“Penetration” indicates passage through the skin i.e. cutaneous absorption. It is provedscientifically that animal fats and fixed oils penetrate more readily through the skin incomparison to mineral oils (paraffin). The substances, which are soluble both in oil andwater, are most readily absorbed. The o/w emulsion bases release the medicament morereadily than oleaginous bases or w/o emulsion bases.

2. Effect on skin function:

Greasy bases may interfere with the skin function like heat radiation and sweetexcretion; Moreover, they irritant to the skin. The water-soluble bases and o/w emulsionbases provide a cooling effect rather than the heating effect. These bases mix readilywith skin secretions.

3. Miscibility with skin secretions and Serum:

Skin secretions are more rapidly miscible drug in more rapidly and completely releasedto the skin. Due to this reason lesser proportions of the medicament are needed whenemulsion bases are used.

4. Compatibility with skin secretion:

Generally neutral ointment bases are preferable because they do not cause discomfortin use and are compatible with majority of medicaments.

5. Freedom from irritant effect:

The ointment bases used should be non-irritant. Greasy bases cause irritation and may cause edema. All bases used should be of high standard of purity.

6. Emollient properties:

Under normal conditions, continuous hydration occurs which keeps the skinsufficiently moist. Dryness and brittleness of the skin cause discomfort to the skin.Therefore, the ointment bases used should possess emollient properties that should beable to keep the skin moist e.g. Glycerin, propylene glycol, Wool fat, lard and paraffin.

7. Ease of Application and Removal:

The ointment bases used should be easily applicable and at the same time they shouldbe easily removable. Stiff & sticky ointment bases are not suitable, because they maycause damage to the newly formed tissues of the skin. Due to this the emulsion basesare preferable as they are softer and spread more readily over the area to which they areapplied. The emulsions particularly o/w type is easily removable with water.

B. Pharmaceutical factors:

a) Stability:

Fats and oils of animal and vegetable source more liable to undergo oxidation provided. They are preserved properly soft paraffin. liquid paraffin arc comparatively more.

b) Solvent properties:

Suitable solvents should be seeded for the proper dispersal of the medicaments of anointment.

c) Emulsifying properties:

Hydrocarbon bases can absorb only a small amount of aqueous substances whereassome animal fats like wool fat can take up about 50% of the water. Therefore, animalfats are used in the preparation of creams.

d) Consistency:

The ointments produced should be of suitable consistency. They should neither be toohard nor too soft. They should withstand the climatic condition.

Preparation of Ointments:

Ointments are prepared by following methods-

1.Triturating method

2. Fusion

3. Chemical reaction

4. Emulsification

1. Triturating method:

It is the most commonly used method for the preparation of ointments. The method isused when the base is soft, and the medicament is insoluble in the base. In this finelysubdivided insoluble medicament are evenly distributed by grinding with a smallamount of the base followed by dilution with gradually increasing amounts of the base.

2. Fusion: In this method the ingredients are melted together in descending order oftheir melting point.

Discussion

Some of the Malahara Kalpana described in Rastarangini for skin diseases are as follows:-

Sl. No.	Name of Malahara	Used in Skin disorders
1	Rasa Pushpa Malahara	Phiranga Rog
2	Rasa PushpadhaMalahara	Phiranga Rog
3	KajalliKodayMalahara	Nadi Varna
4	DadruVidavarnaMalahara	Dadru
5	GandhakadhaMalahara	Pama
6	HinguladhaMalahara	Phiranga Rog
7	HingulamritaMalahara	Nadi Varna
8	TalkodayaMalahara	Nadi Varna
9	TankamritaMalahara	DadayaVarna(Burn)
10	Yashdamrita Malahara	Varna, Vicharchika
11	TudhadamritaMalahara	Pama

12	TudhkadhoMalahara	Varna
13	SindhuradhMalahara	Varna Ropan, In Bacterial infection
14	MiddarshirngadhMalahara	Pama, Kandu, Varna
15	GarikadhMalahara	Kandu, daha, Varna Ropan

CONCLUSION:

Malahara Kalpana represents a significant category of Bahya Kalpana in Ayurveda, with its origins tracing back to the Vedic period. Over centuries, its formulation techniques have evolved from simple herbal pastes to more sophisticated preparations incorporating Siktha Taila, Ghrita, and other specialized bases. The descriptions in Rasa Tarangini highlight the importance of base selection, seasonal variations, and the manthana process for achieving desired consistency and potency. The Unani and modern Marahama preparations, while differing in base composition—often relying on paraffin—offer extended stability and shelf life, making them suitable for large-scale production and storage. Both approaches have unique advantages: the classical method preserves the holistic and synergistic properties of natural ingredients, while the modern method ensures enhanced stability and longer usability. A judicious integration of these principles could lead to improved formulations that are both therapeutically potent and pharmaceutically stable.

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