



SCIENTIFIC REVIEW ON VIRECHANA DRAVYA (PURGATIVE DRUGS) OF SUSHRUTA SAMHITA
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ABSTRACT:

The ancient Ayurvedic therapy of *Panchakarma* plays a vital role in purifying the body and promoting health. Among its procedures, *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation) is particularly effective for conditions related to *Pitta Dosh*, often combined with *Vata* or *Kapha* imbalances. Known for its simplicity and relatively low risk compared to other detoxification methods, *Virechana* facilitates the expulsion of toxins with minimal stress on the body. This study was conducted through a comprehensive manual review of all sections (*Sthanas*) of the classical Ayurvedic text, *Sushruta Samhita*, along with the Dalhana commentary, with a specific focus on identifying references to various *Virechana Dravyas* (purgative substances). A total of 36 *Virechana Dravyas* are mentioned in *Sushruta Samhita*, with 33 listed in the *Sutra Sthana* and 3 in the *Uttara Tantra*. The *Virechana Dravyas* outlined in *Sushruta Samhita* represent an invaluable resource for Ayurvedic practitioners, providing effective means for detoxifying and balancing the *Tridosha*, particularly *Pitta*. However, to optimize the therapeutic potential of these herbs, further research is essential. This includes standardizing formulations, establishing effective dosages, and addressing challenges in herb availability.

Keywords: *Virechana*, *Shodhana*, *Panchakarma*, *Ayurveda*, Purgative drugs.

INTRODUCTION:

Panchakarma eliminate the disease causing toxins and revitalizes the tissues by increasing the digestion and metabolism. Purification allows the biological system to return to homeostasis and to rejuvenate rapidly and facilitates the desired pharmaco-therapeutic effects of medicine, this is why it is popularly known as rejuvenation therapy. Regular *Shodana* therapy expels the *Chaya-Purvaka Prakupita Dosh*a, which helps in Primary Prevention of Disease. In *Vyaktavastha* appropriate *Panchakarma* helps in Secondary Prevention of Disease. In *Bhedavastha* helps to improve the quality of life (QOL) and does tertiary prevention of disease. *Virechana* means the procedure which expel out the *Dosha* from the *Adobhaga* (rectal route). Because of its simplicity, eliminating the *Dosha* in more quantity with less Stress and having lesser complications compared to *Vamana*.

Virechana therapy has long been acknowledged in *Ayurveda* for its therapeutic benefits in managing *Pitta*-related disorders and maintaining health. However, the vast array of *Virechana Dravyas* scattered throughout *Sushruta Samhita* requires a systemic compilation and evaluation to fully realize their therapeutic potential. Identifying and consolidating these references offers insight into the traditional uses of these herbs, along with their current availability and botanical identity, which are essential for ensuring consistency in clinical practice. This study addresses the need to preserve traditional Ayurvedic knowledge while integrating it with modern pharmacognostic data, thus

promoting evidence-based usage of these purgative herbs in modern Ayurvedic therapy.

AIMS:

To compile scattered references to various *Virechana Dravya's* mentioned in *Sushruta Samhita* and in depth evaluation of botanical identification, part used, current availability, indications, current use in practice, etc. of the drugs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

This study was conducted through a comprehensive manual review of all sections (*Sthanas*) of the classical Ayurvedic text, *Sushruta Samhita*, along with the Dalhana commentary, with a specific focus on identifying references to various *Virechana Dravyas* (purgative substances). A total of 36 *Virechana Dravyas* are mentioned in *Sushruta Samhita*, with 33 listed in the *Sutra Sthana* and 3 in the *Uttara Tantra*. The following steps were employed:

1. **Data Collection:** Using the keyword "*Virechana Dravya*," all mentions of purgative drugs were systematically compiled from *Sutra Sthana*, *Chikitsa Sthana*, and *Uttara Tantra* of *Sushruta Samhita*.
2. **Botanical Identification and Categorization:** Each identified drug was researched for botanical name, part used (e.g., root, bark, fruit). For this purpose, additional sources, including modern Ayurvedic and pharmacognosy references, were consulted.
3. **Literature Review and Analysis:** Collected data on the botanical names and therapeutic properties were cross-referenced with contemporary sources to find the current

availability, the therapeutic indications and usage of each herb.

4. **Compilation and Interpretation:** Data on each herb were organized, emphasizing details such

as name, English equivalent, botanical name and referenced location in *Sushruta Samhita*, part used, and current availability in herbal markets.

Table 1: nomenclature of Virechana Drugs

Sl.no	Name of the drug	English name	Botanical name	Reference
1	<i>Trivruth</i>	Indian jalap	<i>Operculina terpepethum</i>	Su.Su 39/4
2	<i>Danti</i>	Wild croton	<i>Baliospermum montanum</i>	Su.Su 39/4
3	<i>Dravanti</i>	Purging nut	<i>Jatropha curcas</i>	Su.Su 39/4
4	<i>Saptala</i>	Soap nut acasia	<i>Euphorbia litescens</i>	Su.Su 39/4
5	<i>Shankini</i>	Dragon Spurge	<i>Euphorbia dracunculoides</i>	Su.Su 39/4
6	<i>Vishanika</i>	Avaram Senna	<i>Cassia auriculata</i>	Su.Su 39/4
7	<i>Gavakshi</i>	Bitter apple	<i>Citrullus colocynthis</i>	Su.Su 39/4
8	<i>Chagalantri</i>	Elephant creeper	<i>Argyreia speciose</i>	Su.Su 39/4
9	<i>Snuka</i>	Indian tree spurge	<i>Euphorbia tirucalli</i>	Su.Su 39/4
10	<i>Swarnaksheeri</i>	Mexican poppy	<i>Argemone Mexicana</i>	Su.Su 39/4
11	<i>Chitraka</i>	Ceylon leadwort	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>	Su.Su 39/4
12	<i>Kinhi</i>	Devil's horsewhip	<i>Achyranthus aspera</i>	Su.Su 39/4
13	<i>Kusha</i>	Sacrid grassred	<i>Desmostachya bipinnata.</i>	Su.Su 39/4
14	<i>Kasha</i>	buckwheat	<i>Saccharum spontaneum</i>	Su.Su 39/4
15	<i>Tilvaka</i>	Symplocos bark	<i>Symplocos racemosa</i>	Su.Su 39/4
16	<i>Kampillaka</i>	Monkey face tree	<i>Mallotus philippensis</i>	Su.Su 39/4
17	<i>Ramyaka</i>	Chinaberry tree	<i>Melia azedarach</i>	Su.Su 39/4
18	<i>Patala</i>	Trumpet	<i>Stereospermum suaveolens</i>	Su.Su 39/4
19	<i>Puga</i>	Betal nut	<i>Areca catechu</i>	Su.Su 39/4
20	<i>Haritaki</i>	Chebolic myrobalan	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Su.Su 39/4
21	<i>Amalaki</i>	Indian gooseberry	<i>Embilika officinalis</i>	Su.Su 39/4
22	<i>Vibhitaki</i>	Bellirica myrobalan	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i>	Su.Su 39/4
23	<i>Nilini</i>	True indigo	<i>Indigofera tingtoria</i>	Su.Su 39/4
24	<i>Chaturangula</i>	Golden shower	<i>Cassia fistula</i>	Su.Su 39/4
25	<i>Eranda</i>	Castor plant	<i>Racinus communis</i>	Su.Su 39/4
26	<i>Putika</i>	Holopttela integrifolia	<i>Holoptelea integrifolia</i>	Su.Su 39/4
27	<i>Mahavriksha</i>	Indian spurge tree	<i>Euphorbia nerifolia</i> Linn	Su.Su 39/4

28	<i>Saptachhada</i>	Blackboard tree	<i>Alstonia scholaris</i>	Su.Su 39/4
29	<i>Arka</i>	Madar	<i>Calatropis procera.</i>	Su.Su 39/4
30	<i>Jyotishmati</i>	Staff tree	<i>Celastrus paniculatus</i>	Su.Su 39/4
31	<i>Devadali</i>	Himalayan cedar	<i>Lufa echinata.</i>	Su.Su 39/5
32	<i>Karavellaka</i>	Bitter guard	<i>Momordica charantia.</i>	Su.Su 39/5
33	<i>Koshataki</i>	Ridged Gourd	<i>Luffa acutangula</i>	Su.Su 39/5
34	<i>Katuki</i>	Hellebore	<i>Picrorhiza kurroa</i>	Su.Ut 39/269
35	<i>Kashmarya</i>	Beech wood	<i>Gmelina arborea</i>	Su.Ut 45/15
36	<i>Draksha</i>	Grape	<i>Vitis vinifera</i>	Su.Ut 45/15

Table 2: Details of Virechana drugs- part used, availability, use in Practice

Sl.no	Name of the drug	Part used	Availability	Use in Practice
1	<i>Trivruth</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Most used
2	<i>Danti</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Most used
3	<i>Dravanti</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Most used
4	<i>Saptala</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Not used
5	<i>Shankini</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Not used
6	<i>Vishanika</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Rarely used
7	<i>Gavakshi</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Rarely used
8	<i>Chagalantri</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Not used
9	<i>Snuka</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Rarely used
10	<i>Swarnaksheeri</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Not used
11	<i>Chitraka</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Not used
12	<i>Kinhi</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Not used
13	<i>Kusha</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Not used
14	<i>Kasha</i>	<i>Moola</i>	Available	Not used
15	<i>Tilvaka</i>	<i>Twak</i>	Not Available	-
16	<i>Kampillaka</i>	<i>Phala raja</i>	Available	commonly used
17	<i>Ramyaka</i>	<i>Twak</i>	Available	Not used
18	<i>Patala</i>	<i>Twak</i>	Available	Not used
19	<i>Puga</i>	<i>Phala</i>	Available	Not used
20	<i>Haritaki</i>	<i>Phala</i>	Available	Most used
21	<i>Amalaki</i>	<i>Phala</i>	Available	Most used

22	<i>Vibhitaki</i>	<i>Phala</i>	Available	Most used
23	<i>Nilini</i>	<i>Phala</i>	Available	Rarely used
24	<i>Chaturangula</i>	<i>Phala</i>	Available	commonly used
25	<i>Eranda</i>	<i>Phala</i>	Available	Most used
26	<i>Putika</i>	<i>Patra</i>	Available	Not used
27	<i>Mahavriksha</i>	<i>Ksheera</i>	Available	Not used
28	<i>Saptachhada</i>	<i>Ksheera</i>	Available	Not used
29	<i>Arka</i>	<i>Ksheera</i>	Available	Rarely used
30	<i>Jyotishmati</i>	<i>Ksheera</i>	Available	Rarely used
31	<i>Devadali</i>	<i>Swarasa</i>	Available	Rarely used
32	<i>Karavellaka</i>	<i>Swarasa</i>	Available	Rarely used
33	<i>Koshataki</i>	<i>Swarasa</i>	Available	Rarely used
34	<i>Katuki</i>	<i>Kanda</i>	Available	Most used
35	<i>Kashmarya</i>	<i>Phala</i>	Available	commonly used
36	<i>Draksha</i>	<i>Phala</i>	Available	Most used

DISCUSSION:

Panchakarma, Ayurveda's unique detoxification and rejuvenation system, serves a multifaceted role in health maintenance, disease prevention, and quality of life enhancement. Among its five primary procedures, *Virechana* stands out as a potent therapeutic approach to expelling excess *Pitta Dosh*, alongside its associated imbalances with *Vata* and *Kapha*. Unlike *Vamana* (emetic therapy), which can be intensive and carries higher risks, *Virechana* is comparatively gentle on the patient and is effective in expelling a substantial quantity of *Dosha*, making it particularly advantageous for managing chronic and acute conditions linked to *Pitta* imbalance.

The findings of this study highlight the wide variety of *Virechana Dravyas* mentioned in *Sushruta Samhita*, including their botanical classifications,

medicinal properties, and availability in modern Ayurvedic practice. A notable observation is that many of these herbs are still accessible in contemporary markets, although their prevalence may vary depending on ecological and geographical conditions. Additionally, variations in plant parts used (roots, bark, fruits, or leaves) and preparation methods can influence the efficacy of these therapies. Standardizing these factors through further clinical studies may enhance therapeutic outcomes and facilitate broader, evidence-based application.

Despite the availability of many *Virechana Dravyas*, certain herbs remain limited in supply, highlighting a need for conservation and sustainable harvesting to protect these natural resources. By facilitating primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention of disease, *Virechana* therapy holds considerable

potential not only for detoxification but also for sustaining long-term health and quality of life.

CONCLUSION:

The *Virechana Dravyas* outlined in *Sushruta Samhita* represent an invaluable resource for Ayurvedic practitioners, providing effective means for detoxifying and balancing the *Tridosha*, particularly *Pitta*. However, to optimize the therapeutic potential of these herbs, further research is essential. This includes standardizing formulations, establishing effective dosages, and addressing challenges in herb availability. Integrating traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with contemporary scientific methods can enhance the application of these herbal therapies, offering

promising avenues for both preventive and curative health care.

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