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Pharmaceutical Importance of *Murchhana Samskara* in *Sneha Kalpana*: A Critical Review

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Sneha Kalpana* plays a crucial role as a drug delivery system in *Ayurvedic* pharmaceutics, enhancing therapeutic effectiveness and drug bioavailability. Classical literature suggests that the practice of *Murchhana Samskara* serves as a preliminary treatment for *Sneha Paka*, enhancing the quality and stability of ingredients such as *Taila* and *Ghrita*. **Aim**: To study the classic literature and pharmaceutical importance of *Murchhana Samskara* in making *Sneha Kalpana*. **Materials and Methods**: The compilation of literary work from classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Sharangdhara Samhita* and *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*. **Results**: *Murchhana Samskara* eliminates the *Ama Dosha* and *Gandha Dosha* of *Sneha* while enhancing the stability, shelf-life and therapeutic quality of *Sneha* formulations. The various drugs involved in this *Murchhana* process act as both antioxidant and preservative which strengthen the acid value and peroxide value of *Sneha* formulations. **Conclusion**: *Murchhana Samskara* serves as an essential pharmaceutical process that boosts stability, palatability and enhances the therapeutic potency of *Sneha* formulations so it became necessary to perform *Murchhana* as a mandatory preparation step in *Sneha Kalpana*.

Key Words *Murchhana Samskara, Sneha Kalpana, Taila Murchhana, Ghrita Murchhana, Ayurvedic pharmaceutics*

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INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurveda*, pharmaceutical processing methods have a supreme importance because they modify the natural properties of raw drugs to make them more suitable for therapeutic use. *Bhaishajya Kalpana* describes different preparations to enhance the stability, acceptability and efficacy of drugs in clinical practice[1]. Among such formulations, *Sneha Kalpana* is a lipid based formulation help to achieve better tissue penetration[2,3] and provide better delivery of the active principles. Classical texts also suggest initial processing steps to be followed before *Sneha Paka* especially *Murchhana Samskara* plays a vital role for improving the quality of the base lipid media such as *Taila* and *Ghrita*[4,5]. This process is practiced by some rasavaidyas though it is not consistently followed in usual its

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importance, this procedure is not consistently practiced in routine pharmaceutical preparations. Therefore the study of *Murchhana* concept became necessary from both traditional and contemporary view.

AIM

In the present review, an attempt has been made to critically examine the pharmaceutical significance of *Murchhana Samskara* as a prior processing of *Sneha Kalpana* & evaluate its contribution in improving the quality, stability, pharmacopeial properties, and therapeutic utility of *Sneha Dravya*.

OBJECTIVES

- To describe the pharmaceutical procedure and drugs used in *Murchhana Samskara* of *Sneha Kalpana*.
- To evaluate the role of *Murchhana Samskara* in improving organoleptic characteristics such as colour, odour, and texture of *Sneha Dravya*.
- To analyse the importance of *Murchhana Samskara* in enhancing the stability and shelf-life of *Sneha* formulations.
- To highlight the pharmaceutical importance of *Murchhana Samskara* in improving the therapeutic efficacy and quality of *Sneha* formulations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The review is based on a literature review of current *Ayurvedic* classical literature & previously published literature regarding *Murchhana Samskara* in *Sneha Kalpana*. Classical references were collected from major texts such as *Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Sharangdhara Samhita,* and *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*. along with relevant published articles. Information thus collected was analysed to estimate the pharmaceutical merits of *Murchhana Samskara* in enhancing the quality of *Sneha* preparations.

Definition of *Murchhana Samskara*

The term *Murchhana* originates from the Sanskrit root "*Murchha*" which denotes transformation through specific processing. In Ayurveda, pharmacopeia's *Murchhana Samskara* is done for lipid materials e.g., *Taila*, *Ghrita* before subjecting them to further medicated processing[4]. Classic references suggest that it reduces *aama Dosha* of *Ghrita* and *Gandha Dosha* of *Taila* while simultaneously improving desirable therapeutic properties of lipid medium. Hence, *Murchhana Samskara* can be regarded as a pharmaceutically beneficial modification process that enables *Sneha Dravya* to easily accept therapeutic properties of *Dravya* during subsequent processing [4,5].

Table 1 Classical References of *Murchhana*

S. No.	Classical Text	Reference Context	Significance
1	*Charaka Samhita*[1]	Indirect reference to *Sneha* processing and the *Samskara* concept	Explains the importance of pharmaceutical processing for enhancing drug quality
2	*Ashtanga Hridaya*[2]	Reference to *Sneha Kalpana* procedures	Supports the role of *Sneha* in internal and

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			external therapies
3	*Sharangdhara Samhita*[4]	Detailed explanation of the *Murchhana* procedure	Provides practical pharmaceutical steps of *Sneha Murchhana*
4	*Bhaishajya Ratnavali*[5]	Specific formulation details of *Taila* and *Ghrita Murchhana*	Describes ingredients and procedure for *Murchhana Samskara*
5	*Sushruta Samhita*[6]	Description of *Sneha* utility and processing methods	Highlights therapeutic importance of properly processed *Sneha*

Out of these, *Sharangdhara Samhita* and *Bhaishajya Ratnavali* are the most comprehensive works which describe the details about the method as well as materials used in the *Murchhana* of *Taila* and *Ghrita* which indicates its role in improving the quality stability and therapeutic efficacy of the *Sneha Kalpana*.

General Procedure of *Murchhana Samskara*[7]

Murchhana Samskar is prior treatment as well as purification measure to be carried out just before starting *Sneha Kalpana* to upgrade the quality and stability of *Sneha Dravya* e.g., *Taila* and *Ghrita*[5]. In the beginning, *Sneha Dravya* warmed on mild fire in a clean vessel. Finely prepared kalka of certain drugs like *haridra, manjistha,haritaki, bibhitaki, musta, Amalaki, lodhra* etc. are added in the *Sneha* with sufficient quantity of water; then it is heated over a very mild flame stirring continuously, so that the whole quantity of water can be evaporated off as soon as possible and specific indicator marks appear for completion of *Murchhana* process. After completion of this process, *Sneha* is filtered over clean cloth and stored in an airtight container for later use for *Sneha Paka*[4,5,8].

Thus the processed *Sneha* produced in *Murchhana Samskara* become odourless, free from unwanted particles, free from moisture and most stable so fit for consumption from pharmaceutical point of view.

Pharmaceutical significance of *Murchhana Samskara*

Murchhana is one of important preliminary pharmaceutical process which performs before starting *Sneha Paka* to enhance purity and stability and efficiency of *Sneha Dravya*. It improves the organoleptic property as well as physico chemical property of *Sneha* and so it can be used further in formulations in pharmaceutical industry.

The pharmaceutical aspects of *Murchhana Samskara*:

Removal of *Ama Dosha*[4]

Murchhana eliminate undesirable impurities and moisture related factors present in raw *Sneha Dravya*, thereby improving purity and pharmaceutical suitability.

Removal of *Gandha dosha*[4]

The process removes unpleasant odour of raw *Sneha* and enhances acceptability of formulations for therapeutic use.

Improvement in Colour[4]

The drug *manjistha* is used in such a ratio that gives the *Taila* a characteristic reddish colour and same in case of *Ghrita haridra* gives a yellowish colour which is a marker of properly processed Sneha.

Enhancement of Stability[8,9,10]

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Antioxidant and antimicrobial properties of *Murchhana* drugs helps to prevent oxidative deterioration and microbial contamination.

Increase in Shelf-life[9,10]

Reduction in moisture content increases the stability of *Sneha* which improves longevity of formulations.

Improvement in Extraction of active principles[2,11]

Murchhana enhances interaction between *Sneha Dravya* and Kalka during *Sneha Paka*, facilitating better extraction of active principles into the lipid medium and improving therapeutic potency.

Murchhana alters the molecular structure of fat to make it better vehicle (*Anupana*) which transports herbal alkaloids across cell membranes. Thus *Murchhana Samskara* is a key process from pharmaceutical and therapeutical view.

Modern Analytical view[9]

The method was described originally in traditional terms but recent analytical data provide some confirmatory evidence in favour of an improvement in physicochemical quality of *Sneha Dravya* after *Murchhana*.

In some analytical comparisons of lipid formulations before and after *Murchhana* processing, The stability indicators increases after raw *Sneha* has been gone through *Murchhana* process. Reduction in acid value suggests decreased availability of fee fatty acids[8,10,12], which is generally associated with improved storage stability of lipid preparations. It has been further found that lower values of peroxide values in the treated sample indicate less susceptibility of the fat base to peroxide deterioration. Such findings support the classical claim that the procedure enhances resistance to rancidity[9,10].

The other great advantage of *Murchhana Samskara* is decreasing the amount of moisture retained in the raw base lipid, i.e., decreasing microbial contamination[10,11] possibilities and hydrolytic degradation through keeping less water in the lipid during storage. Also, beside of these visible improvements in all sensory characteristics i.e., odour, transparency, appearance are noticed following to processing with some antioxidant rich herbs which used in *Murchhana samskara*.

In such a way, that *Murchhana Samskara* acts as a scientifically valid stabilization technique providing support to classical pharmaceutical objectives as mentioned in *Sneha Kalpana* formulation.

Comparative Studies of *Taila* and *Ghrita Murchhana*

Murchhana process is applied to both the *Taila* and *Ghrita* before their formulations in *Sneha Kalpana*. As the target of *murchhana* is same in both but pharmaceutical differences are present for raw *Sneha dravya* having varied physical and chemical nature.

Taila Murchhana primarily focuses on removing *Gandha Dosha*, reducing moisture and enhancing the oxidative stability, as the *Taila* has more tendency for spoiling than *Ghrita*. Antioxidant

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and antimicrobial activities of the herbal drugs employed in the treatment contribute to the shelf life and stability of the *Taila* formulations.

In contrast *Ghrita Murchhana* mainly works to remove *aama Dosha*, improvement of colour, clarity and palatability of *Ghrita* and also to enhance absorption. With the *Ghrita* being more viscous (characterized with good *Yogavahi*) the better incorporation of drug in the medium & thus increased efficacy after *Murchhana*.

Hence, *Murchhana Samskara* has crucial role in enhancing the pharmaceutical quality of *Taila* and *Ghrita* also though nature and strength may vary on the basis of lipid characteristics.

S. No.	Drug Name	Botanical Name	Functional Role in *Murchhana*
1	*Haritaki*[13]	*Terminalia chebula*	Removes impurities, acts as antioxidant, improves stability
2	*Bibhitaki*[14]	*Terminalia bellirica*	Enhances preservation and reduces oxidative changes
3	*Amalaki*[15]	*Emblica officinalis*	Provides antioxidant effect and increases shelf-life
4	*Haridra*[16]	*Curcuma longa*	Acts as antimicrobial agent and improves color
5	*Musta*[17]	*Cyperus rotundus*	Reduces moisture content and improves stability
6	*Lodhra*[18]	*Symplocos racemosa*	Improves odor and acts as stabilizing agent
7	*Manjistha*[19]	*Rubia cordifolia*	Enhances color and purification of *Sneha*
8	*Matulunga*[20]	*Citrus medica*	Removes unpleasant odor, improves organoleptic quality
9	*Ketaki*[21]	*Pandanus odorifer*	Provides fragrance, removes Durgandha, improves acceptability
10	*Vatankura*[22]	*Ficus benghalensis*	Enhances stability and binding properties in Sneha medium
11	*Gandhapriyangu*[23]	*Callicarpa macrophylla*	Improves aroma, acts as deodorizing and stabilizing agent

Table 2 Functional Role of Drugs Used in *Murchhana Samskara*

Compounds used during *Murchhana Samskara* shows potential use as antioxidants, antimicrobial, deodorizing and stabilizing agents for *Ama Dosha*, *Durgandha*, organoleptic characteristic like *Shabda, shaprsha, roopa, rasa* and *Gandha* improvements and drug stability enhancers.

DISCUSSION

Murchhana Samskara is the primary pharmaceutical processing step as given in traditional Ayurvedic literature before *Sneha Kalpana* preparation can be carried out[4.] It serves as an essential step to improve organoleptic as well as physicochemical characteristics of *Sneha Dravya* (*Taila* and *Ghrita*) thus enhancing their pharmaceutical acceptability and therapeutic value.

Classic Ayurvedic texts state that *Murchhana Samskara* is used to remove *Ama Dosha* and *Gandha Dosha*[4,8]. From the modern point of view this can be expressed as impurities, moisture removal and prevention of oxidative degradation of lipid medias. These improve stability and the shelf-life of *Sneha* formulation directly. The herbal drugs employed in the process like

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Triphala, *Musta*, *Haridra*, *Lodhra* and *Manjistha* subjected to *Murchhana* have antioxidant and antimicrobial[8,11], deodorizing and stabilizing properties, which assist preservation, quality improvements of *Sneha Dravya*. The therapeutic properties of these drugs cames in raw *Sneha* through kwathan *Samskara* "*samskarohi gunataradhanam uchyate*[1]" *Agni Samskara* throughout the process make the raw *Sneha laghu*. In case of *Taila* as it is mainly used for *bahya chikitsa*[6] this *laghutva* of *Sneha* helps to penetrate the skin and to reach the minute *strotases*. Similarly in case of *Ghrita* which in turn specially used for *abhyantar chikitsa*[2], this *laghu guna* makes the *Ghrita* easily diagestable.

Comparison between *Taila* and *Ghrita Murchhana* process reveals that during this, quality of both *Sneha Dravya* is improved, although the degree of improvement depends on the nature of their raw lipid characteristics. Being highly prone to oxidation, *Taila* exhibits improved odour, stability and storage properties after the *Murchhana* treatment. *Ghrita*, with its *Yogavahi* nature, becomes clearer, develops a better colour, taste and extraction efficiency after this process.

Pharmaceutical importance of *Sneha* can also be evaluated through its physicochemical evaluations before and after *Murchhana* process[8,10,12]. The reduction in acid value indicates lowered free fatty acid content thereby supporting improved lipid stability while decrease in peroxide value signify inhibition of oxidation which leads to rancidification. Corresponding reduction in the moisture content reduces the chances of microbial growth as well as hydrolytic degradation in storage periods[9,10]. Collective physicochemical transformations lead to enhancements in the shelf-life and stability of *Sneha* preparations.

The improved stability of the *Sneha Dravya* will be helpful in better retention of extracted phytochemicals during *Sneha Paka* which can result in better extraction efficiency and curative efficacy of final formulation. Enhanced organoleptic qualities[10,11] of colour, odor, and texture led to better patient acceptability.

Although this traditional processing method is emphasised in classical writings for pharmaceutical applications the practice of *Murchhana Samskara* still faces neglect in routine pharmaceutical industry due to inadequate regulation and additional time. But taking into consideration its significance in stabilizing and extending shelf-life, enhancing extraction efficiency and ensuring the efficacy of *Sneha Kalpana* formulations, it must be implemented in classical processing protocol for standardization and quality assurance of *Ayurvedic* pharmaceutics.

CONCLUSION

Murchhana Samskara holds the position as an essential pharmaceutical processing technique in classical *Ayurvedic* literature for enhancing *Sneha Kalpana* quality together with stability and therapeutic effectiveness. The process facilitates

the removal of *Ama Dosha* and *gandhadosha*, and enhances the properties of colour, odor, as well as physicochemical stability attributes which include acid value, peroxide value and moisture content.

The *Murchhana Samskara* drugs display antioxidant and antimicrobial effects which extend the shelf-life and extraction efficiency of *Sneha*, to create more effective medicinal final products. Physicochemical data illustrating reduced oxidation and improved stability confirm the traditional value of this process[8,10].

As a result, *Murchhana Samskara* needs to be implemented into the current pharmaceutical practice for ensuring enhancement of quality of *Sneha Kalpana* formulations.

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