

Vajrakanjikam: A Comprehensive Review Emphasising Its Benefits for Boosting Breast Milk Production

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ABSTRACT : Breast milk, known as Stanya in Ayurveda, is considered as nectar for a growing child, promoting strength, long life, and overall development. It benefits both the child and the mother or wet nurse. Modern women face increased vulnerability due to stress, lifestyle, and dietary habits, leading to disorders like Stanyakshaya (inadequate breast milk). Ayurvedic Samhitas detail Stanya's origin, characteristics, Dosha imbalances, and treatments. Ayurveda includes herbal remedies to increase breast milk production, and one such formulation is Vajrakanjikam, discussed in Ksheeradosha Chikitsa. This article analyzes Vajrakanjikam's role in promoting breast milk production (Ksheeravardhana) and explores the efficacy of traditional remedies to address Stanyakshaya, ensuring the well-being of both mother and child.

KEYWORDS : Stanya, StanyaKshaya, Ksheeradosha, Vajrakanjikam, Breast milk

I. INTRODUCTION

“Breastfeeding is a mother’s gift to herself, her baby, and the earth.” – Pamela K Wiggins

Pregnancy is the most beautiful chapter of every woman's life. A woman goes through several physical, mental and emotional transitions from the day of conception to the day of labour, one of which is lactation. Breast feeding is a natural food that serves as a complete source of infant nutrition for the first 6 months of life. It contains all the necessary nutrients provided in a bioavailable and easily digestible form, protecting both mothers and

children against illnesses and diseases with immunological properties.¹

WHO actively promotes breastfeeding as the best source of nourishment for infants and young children, and is working to increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months up to at least 50% by 2025. Exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) has been defined by the WHO as the situation where “the infant has received only breast milk from his/her mother or a wet nurse, or expressed breast milk and no other solids or liquids with the exception of drops or syrups consisting of vitamins, minerals, supplements, or medicines.”²

Breastfeeding is essential for the health and development of infants. Studies show that around 30 – 40% of mothers stop breast feeding because they believe they have insufficient milk supply. However, genuine hypogalactia, a condition of low milk production is present only about 5% of mothers due to anatomical or medical issues. Ayurvedic literature also provides beautiful explanation of the value of breast milk and the advantages of breastfeeding. In Ayurveda, the condition of low milk production is described as Stanyakshaya. Though it may seem like a straightforward issue, it can have significant implications for a child’s health.

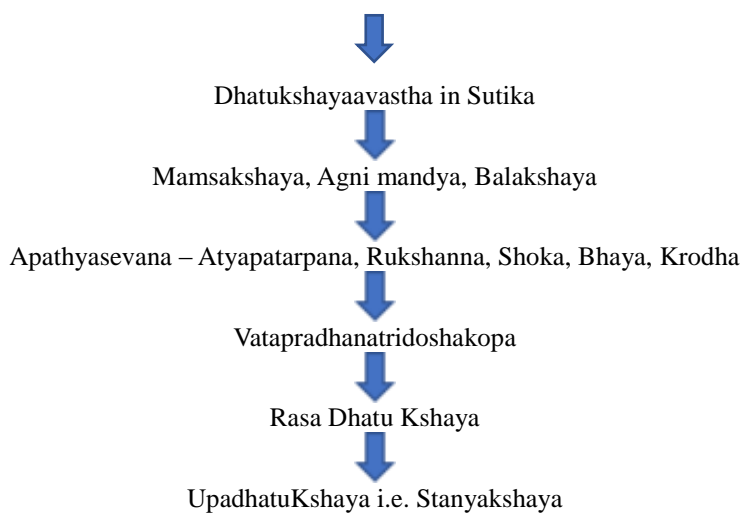
CAUSES OF STANYA KSHAYA (HYPOGALACTIA)

Causes of StanyaKshaya are explained by Acharyas like Charaka, Sushruta, Vagbhata and Kashyapa^[4-8]. Along with the common overall debilitating factors of parturition like loss of blood and energy, other predisposing factors delineated by our Acharyas are :-

1. Dietary factors – Excessive intake of RukshaAnnapana (dry edibles and drinks), Langhana (Fasting), Karshana (Emaciation), Atyapatarpana (Excessive fasting)
2. Psychological and Behaviouralfactors – Krodha (Anger), Shoka (Grief), Bhaya (Fear), Kaama (Excessive coitus), Avaatsalya (Lack of affection for the infant), Excessive Shodhana Karma (Excessive use of purifying measures), Swabhaava, Punagarbhadhaarana (Re-pregnancy).⁹

SAMPRAPTI OF STANYA KSHAYA

Pravahanavedana, Raktapravrutti, Kleda during Prasava



VAJRAKANJIKAM^{10,11,12,13}
 INGREDIENTS^[Table No. 1] :

Table No. 1 Ingredients of Vajrakanjika

| Name | Botanical Name | Family | Rasa | Guna | Virya | Vipaka | Karma | Pharmacological Action |
|--------------|----------------|------------|------|---------------------|-------|---------|---|---|
| Pippali | Piper longum | Piperaceae | Katu | LaghuSnigdhaTikshna | Ushna | Madhura | Vata-Shleshmahara, Deepana, Vrishya, Rasayana | Antioxidant, Antiinflammatory, Digestive, Immunomodulatory, Antidepressant, Antispasmodic, Chologogue |
| Pippali mula | Piper longum | Piperaceae | Katu | LaghuRuksha | Ushna | Katu | Kapha-Vatahara, Bhedana, Deepana, Pachana | Antioxidant, Antiinflammatory, Digestive, Immunomodulatory, |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|------|----------------------|-------|---------|---|--|
| | | | | | | | | Anti depressant , Antispasmodic |
| Chavya | Piperchaba | Piperaceae | Katu | LaghuRuksha | Ushna | Katu | Kapha-VataharaDeepanaPachana | Muscle relaxant, Analgesic, Acts on metabolism |
| Shunti | Zingiber officinale | Zingiberaceae | Katu | Guru RukshaTiksha | Ushna | Madhura | Vata-Kaphahara, Deepana, Bhedana | Anti inflammatory, Antibacterial, Antifungal, Antipyretic, Antidepressant , Inhibition of prostaglandin release. |
| Yavanika | Carumcopticum | Apiaceae | Katu | LaghuRuksha.Tikshana | Ushna | Katu | Kapha-Vatahara, DeepanaPachana | Antimicrobial, Anticholinergic, Carminative Antispasmodic |
| Jeeraka | Cuminumcymimum | Apiaceae | Katu | LaghuRuksha | Ushna | Katu | Kapha-Vatahara, DeepanaPachana, Grahi, Vrishyam, Garbhasaya Shodhaka, Balya | Antimicrobial, Antispasmodic, Stomachic , Anti-inflammatory, Carminative, Lactagogue |
| Krishna Jeeraka | Carumcarvi | Apiaceae | Katu | Ruksha | Ushna | Katu | Kaphahara, Medhya, Garbhasaya Vishodhaka | Antispasmodic , CarminativeReduce breast swelling |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------------|-------|------|---|--|
| Haridra | Curcuma longa | Zingiberaceae | Tikta Katu | Ruksha Laghu | Ushna | Katu | Kapha-Vatahara, Lekhana, Varnya, Vishagna | Anti-bacterial, Cholagogue, Anti-histamic |
| Daruharidra | Berberis aristata | Berberidaceae | Tikta Kashaya | LaghuRuksha | Ushna | Katu | Kapha-Pittahara, Chedana, | Anti fatigue, Antipyretic, Anti-inflammatory, Anti-bacterial |
| Vidalavana | Artificially made salt | | Lavana | Sakshara TikshaSukshmaVayavi | Ushna | | Deepana, Shulahara, Rochana, Vatanulomana | Antioxidant |
| Souvarchalavana | Black salt | | Lavana | LaghuSukshmaVidada | Ushna | | Shula Vibandhahara, Hridya, Udgarashudhi | Antioxidant |

METHOD OF PREPARATION :

Table No. 2 Ingredients and its quantity

| Drug | Quantity |
|-------------------|----------|
| Pippali | 1 part |
| Pippalimula | 1 part |
| Chavya | 1 part |
| Shunti | 1 part |
| Yavanika | 1 part |
| Jeeraka | 1 part |
| Krishna Jeeraka | 1 part |
| Haridra | 1 part |
| Daruharidra | 1 part |
| Vida Lavana | 1 part |
| SouvarchalaLavana | 1 part |

The raw drugs Pippali (Piper longum), Pippalimula (Piper longum), Chavya (Piper chaba), Shunti (Zingiberofficinale), Yavanika (Carumcopticum), Jeeraka (Cuminumcyminum), Krishna Jeeraka (Carumcarvi), Haridra (Curcuma longa), Daruharidra (Berberisaristata), Vida Lavana (Artificially made salt) and SouvarchalaLavana (Black salt) were taken unequal quantity and made into coarse powder. Then 12g of the powder, 95 ml Kanji and 190 ml water are mixed together and

cooked. The boiling is continued until the Kanji is left over. It has to be prepared on Mandagni (low temperature) so that sensitive active principle may not get spoiled with high temperature. The processing is done according to the method of KsheerapakaVidhi.

INDICATIONS :

As per the review on various Samhitas , all Acharyas have indicated VajrakanjikamasAmavatahara (Alleviates Amavata), Vrishya (Promotes sexual vigour), Kaphaghna (Alleviates Kaphadosha), Agnideepana

(Improves digestion),MakkallaShulaShamana (Alleviates puerperal pain)andKsheeravardhana (Increases breast milk). It is also indicated in Sutikarogas (Puerperal disorders) according to Basavarajeeyam.^[Table No.3]

Table No. 3 Indications of Vajrakanjika according to Various Samhitas

| Yogarataknara | Chakradatta | BhaishajyaRatnav ali | Basavarajeeya |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Amavataharam | Amavataharam | Amavataharam | Amavataharam |
| Vrishyam | Vrishyam | Vrishyam | Vrishyam |
| Kaphagham | Kaphagham | Kaphagham | Kaphagham |
| Agni vivardhanam | Vahnideepanam | Vahnideepanam | Agnideepanam |
| Makkalla Shula Shamanam | Makkalla Shula Shamanam | Makkalla Shula Shamanam | Shulaghna |
| Ksheeravivardhanam | Ksheerabhivardhanam | Ksheerabhivardhanam | KsheeraVardhanam |
| Streenamagnivivardhanam | Streenamagnivivardhanam | Streenamagnivivardhanam | - |
| Vatanashanam | - | - | - |
| PrasutaSukhamashnute | - | - | SutikaRogaShamaka |

MECHANISM OF VAJRA KANJIKAM IN PROMOTING BREAST MILK PRODUCTION

Inadequate dietary habits during pregnancy, the presence of Ama (undigested toxins), and improper postpartum care can disrupt the process of Mammogenesis and Lactogenesis. Additionally strenuous delivery and inadequate post natal care may further disturb Galactokinesis and Galactopoiesis, leading to conditions like StanyaKshaya or StanyaDushti, which result in insufficient breast milk production or impaired quality.

Breast milk is unique and tailored to meet the specific needs of each baby. To promote sufficient breastfeeding, it is essential to address these underlying issues. The formulation, Vajrakanjikam comprising ingredients with Amahara(removal of Ama) and Agni Vardhana (Enhancing digestive fire) properties, aids in the proper formation of Rasa Dhatu, which inturn improves KsheeraPravrutti (Flow of breast milk). Moreover, the Lactagogue properties present in its chemical components further support milk production, ensuring an adequate supply of nourishing breast milk for the baby.

Lactational insufficiency can be caused by maternal health issues such as Anemia or PreviousPsychiatric disorders including post partum depression. Vajra Kanjikam with its herbs possessing properties like Anti-oxidant, Immunomodulatory, Anti-fatigue, Anti-depressant, CNS stimulant and tonic contributes to the overall

well-being of the mother. It can also help prevent psychological disorders like postpartum blues and depression, leading to improved breast milk production.

II. DISCUSSION

During labour, woman is debilitated due to bearing down efforts, straining, loss of body fluids, blood and energy. So, due to Balakshaya (Deprivation of strength/energy) and Agninaasha (Loss of digestive fire), there is Vatapradhanatridoshaprakopaand Rasadhathukshaya in Sutika (Puerperal woman), resulting in Stanyakshaya (Diminution of breast milk). Vajrakanjikam is mainly consisting of drugs having Katu (Pungent), Tikta (Bitter), Kashaya (Astringent) Rasa; UshnaVirya (Hot potency) and Madhura (Sweet),Katu (Pungent)Vipakawhichhave effect on Rasavahasrotas and Rasadhathvagni. In addition to that, being Ushna in Virya, they act as Agnivardhaka (Increases digestive fire), Deepana (Appetizing action) – Pachana (Digestion), Srotoshodhaka (Channel cleansing) and Vatanulomaka; and being Madhura in Vipaka, they act asVrishya, Rasayana and Dhatuvardhaka. By virtue of these properties, itenhances the Agni (Digestive fire), aids in metabolism and clear the obstruction in Stanyavahasrotas. Thus, it improves the Rasadhatu and leads to proper StanyaUtpatti (Breast milk production) and Pravrutti (Breast milk flow).

III. CONCLUSION

Mother's milk is crucial for a child's development. In today's World, lactational insufficiency possess a significant public health concern globally, as it leads to the use of breast milk substitutes and supplements, increasing the risk of infant morbidity, mortality and malnutrition. The solution lies in promoting breast feeding and enhancing milk production. Stanyakshaya is primarily caused by Agni mandya and Rasa dhatukshaya, which can be corrected with the administration of Vajrajanjikam.

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