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SHOTHAHARA GANA OF CHARAKA: A REVIEW ON ITS ANTI-INFLAMMATORY POTENTIAL

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ABSTRACT
Inflammation is a protective physiological response of the body to harmful stimuli such as pathogens, tissue injury, or irritation. In Ayurveda, inflammatory swelling is described under the concept of Shotha. Acharya Charaka described Shothahara Gana as one among the Mahakashayas (Dashemani), consisting of ten medicinal plants known for their ability to reduce swelling and inflammatory conditions[3]. Many of these plants constitute the classical Dashamoola group, widely used in Ayurvedic therapeutics [4]. The present article reviews the concept of Shotha, the composition of Shothahara Gana, pharmacological properties of individual drugs and their relevance in the management of inflammatory disorders.

KEYWORDS: *Shotha, Shothahara Gana, Dashamoola, Inflammation, Anti-inflammatory herbs*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda explains inflammatory swelling under the concept of Shotha, which refers to abnormal swelling occurring due to the vitiation of doshas and disturbance of tissue metabolism[3]. Acharya Charaka classified medicinal plants into different groups known as Mahakashayas. Among them, Shothahara Gana includes drugs specifically indicated for reducing swelling and inflammatory conditions[3].

Concept of Shotha

Shotha is defined as swelling occurring in any part of the body due to the vitiation of doshas and disturbance of normal tissue metabolism[3]. It may manifest as an independent disease or as a symptom associated with several pathological conditions[5].

Types of Shotha

Shotha is classified based on different criteria in Ayurvedic texts.

Based on Dosha
Vataja Shotha
Pittaja Shotha
Kaphaja Shotha
Sannipataja Shotha[3]

Based on Cause
Nija Shotha – caused by internal factors such as dosha imbalance
Agantuja Shotha – caused by external factors such as trauma[5]

Based on Extent
Ekanga Shotha – localized swelling
Sarvanga Shotha – generalized swelling

Shothahara Gana

The **Shothahara Gana** described by Acharya Charaka includes ten important medicinal plants[3]:
Patala
Agnimantha
Shyonaka
Bilva
Gambhari
Kantakari
Brihati
Shalaparni
Prishniparni
Gokshura
These drugs are widely used in Ayurveda for the management of inflammatory conditions and form a major part of the Dashamoola group, which is extensively used in various formulations[6].

Table: Rasapanchaka of Shothahara Gana Dravyas

Drug	Botanical Name	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Dosha Karma
Patala	*Stereospermum suaveolens*	Tikta, Kashaya	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Tridoshahara[7]
Agnimantha	*Premna serratifolia*	Tikta, Katu	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Kapha-Vatahara[7]
Shyonaka	*Oroxylum indicum*	Tikta, Kashaya	Laghu	Ushna	Katu	Kapha-Vatahara[7]
Bilva	*Aegle marmelos*	Tikta, Kashaya	Laghu	Ushna	Katu	Kapha-Vatahara[7]
Gambhari	*Gmelina arborea*	Tikta, Kashaya	Guru	Ushna	Katu	Tridoshahara[7]
Kantakari	*Solanum xanthocarpum*	Tikta, Katu	Laghu	Ushna	Katu	Kapha-Vatahara[8]
Brihati	*Solanum indicum*	Tikta, Katu	Laghu	Ushna	Katu	Kapha-Vatahara[8]
Shalaparni	*Desmodium gangeticum*	Madhura, Tikta	Guru	Ushna	Madhura	Tridoshahara[8]
Prishniparni	*Uraria picta*	Madhura, Tikta	Laghu	Ushna	Madhura	Tridoshahara[8]
Gokshura	*Tribulus terrestris*	Madhura	Guru	Sheeta	Madhura	Vata-Pittahara[8]

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Brief Description of Individual Drugs

Patala: One of the important drugs of Brihat Panchamoola known for its anti-inflammatory and respiratory benefits[7].

Agnimantha: Possesses analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties and is widely used in Dashamoola formulations[7].

Shyonaka: Known for digestive and anti-inflammatory properties and helps reduce Ama[7].

Bilva: Widely used in digestive disorders and inflammatory conditions due to its Grahi and Kapha-Vatahara properties[7].

Gambhari: Acts as a strengthening drug and helps reduce inflammation and pain[7].

Kantakari: Important drug used in respiratory disorders such as kasa and shwasa and also exhibits anti-inflammatory activity[8].

Brihati: Similar to Kantakari and useful in respiratory and inflammatory disorders[8].

Shalaparni: Acts as Balya and helps relieve body pain and inflammation[8].

Prishniparni: Strengthens body tissues and reduces swelling[8].

Gokshura: Commonly used in urinary disorders and also exhibits anti-inflammatory and tissue-nourishing properties[8].

Formulations Containing Shothahara Gana

Some important formulations containing Shothahara Gana drugs are[9]:

Sl No	Formulation	Main Ingredient	Indication
1	Dashamoola Kwatha	Dashamoola	Anti-inflammatory
2	Dashamoolarishta	Dashamoola	Respiratory disorders
3	Dashamoola Taila	Dashamoola	Pain and swelling
4	Dashamoola Ghrita	Dashamoola	Neurological disorders
5	Brihat Dashamoola Kwatha	Dashamoola	Chronic inflammation

These formulations exhibit anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties and are widely used in Ayurvedic clinical practice for the management of Shotha[9].

DISCUSSION

Shotha results from the imbalance of Tridosha and involvement of tissues such as Rasa, Rakta and Mamsa[3]. The drugs of Shothahara Gana act by pacifying aggravated doshas and restoring normal tissue metabolism.

Many of these herbs possess pharmacological activities such as anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antioxidant and immunomodulatory effects[10]. The presence of bioactive compounds such as flavonoids, alkaloids, tannins and saponins contributes to their therapeutic potential[11].

These herbs form the basis of many classical formulations like Dashamoola, which are widely used in Ayurvedic practice for the management of inflammatory disorders[12].

CONCLUSION

Shothahara Gana described by Acharya Charaka represents an important group of medicinal plants used for the management of inflammatory conditions in Ayurveda. These herbs help reduce swelling, restore tissue functions and balance doshas. The presence of bioactive phytochemicals further supports their anti-inflammatory activity from a modern pharmacological perspective[13].

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