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### A Literary Review on 'Vasavaleha': A Classical Ayurvedic Formulation

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#### Abstract

Ayurveda, the oldest healthcare system of our country has provided a lot of herbal, mineral and herbo-mineral formulations for prevention and cure of the disease. Vasavaleha is such a classical formulation of Ayurveda which has been used over different system to prevent some diseases through its rasayan properties (rejuvenating action) & manage the diseases like Rajayakshma (pulmonary tuberculosis), Swasa (respiratory disorder), Kasa (cough), Raktapitta (epistaxis/haemoptysis) etc. The said medicine has also been used to prevent the pathogenic pathway by clearing and also strengthening the srota (channels) like pranavaha srota (respiratory tract), raktavaha srota (circulatory system and hematopoietic system) as well. This article has been prepared through the vivid review of different classical text of ancient era like Charak Samhita (2500BC/1000BC), Susruta Samhita (500BC) and some Nighantus (text related to Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals). The revealed data and information have been furnished here methodically to establish the claims of our ancient classics regarding the utility of this popular drug.

**Keywords:** *Vasavaleha, Vasavaleha & pranavaha srota, guna karma of Vasavaleha*

#### Introduction

Ayurveda has given more priority on prevention than the treatment of ailments. All the diseases are caused by the specific pathogenesis i.e. kha vaigunya which is closely related to the concept of deformities or abnormalities in the minute pores or channels of the system. As living cells of the body are performing metabolic activities as well as other physiological functions throughout their life time, so the free radicals or oxidants or waste materials are frequently been gathered or move in different channels. Ayurveda gives importance to maintain the Dosa samya (equilibrium of humours i.e. vayu, pitta, kapha), Dhatu samya (maintenance of normalcy in the proportion of tissue like rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, majja, sukra), Agni samya (maintenance of normalcy in digestive fire or metabolic fire or enzymatic action in tissue level or cellular level as well). The diseases which are related to Pranavaha srota (respiratory tract) are mainly caused by the narrowing of respiratory passage, deposition of excess mucosal substance in the airway by allergens or by infections which manifest the disorders like Swasa (COPD and other respiratory problem), Kasa (vigorous respiratory reflex), Rajayakshma (pulmonary tuberculosis) etc. The aim and objectives of all Ayurvedic formulations related to respiratory system are clearance of channels (srota sodhan), reduction of excess mucosal secretion or stagnation, stimulation of respiratory organs, protection from respiratory

infections, resolution of inflammatory condition/process and soothing of respiratory muscles. The classical product vasa avaleha composed of ingredients like vasa (*Adhatoda vasica*) Nees, sarkara (sugar), pippali (*Piper longum*) Linn., madhu (honey) and ghrita (clarified butter), where main ingredient vasa Possess the properties like Rasa-tikta, kasaya; Guna-laghu, tikshna, sara; Virya-sita and dosik actions are pitta & kaphahara. In association with other ingredients this vasa became more potent and as a whole the product shows the effect against disease producing mechanism. The pharmacodynamics of vasavaleha are able to work on liquefaction of sticky mucous and expectoration, ceasing of excess mucous production due to allergen, irritants or infections, well maintenance of ciliary action inside trachea and bronchus, maintenance of calibre of respiratory tube by resisting the narrowing respiratory passage and enhancement of systemic immunity as well as total body immunity of the patients. Different classical text Charak Samhita (2500BC/1000BC), Susruta Samhita (500BC), Nighantus (Ayurvedic pharmacopeial text of medieval period) and modern Ayurvedic text related to dravyaguna like P.V. Sharma, J.L.N Shastri have clearly mention the properties of vasa as well as other ingredients. Those ingredients when mixed in the prescribed method of preparation then the product Vasavaleha shows the properties like Rasa-tikta, kasaya, madhur; Guna-laghu, tikshna, sara; Virya-sita and dosik

actions are pitta, kapha & vatahara. As per literature, the therapeutic action of the product are found very much significant and claims of our classics are justified in the field of clinical medicine. It is also reported that the Ayurvedic practitioners of our country are frequently using this medicine in the treatment of respiratory tract problem and our ancient practitioner have successfully treated the troublesome problem like COPD, pleurisy, pulmonary tuberculosis etc. with the aid of this product.

## Materials and Methods

### Materials

In present study, ancient Ayurvedic treaties of different era like Charak Samhita (2500BC/1000BC), Susruta Samhita (500BC), Nighantus (Ayurvedic pharmacopoeial text of medieval period), Bhavprakash (1600AD), Bhaisajya Ratnavali (1900AD) and modern Ayurvedic texts like-P.V. Sharma, J.L.N Shastri, journals etc. which have been reviewed thoroughly.

### Methods

Thorough review of the ancient texts & journals have been

## Results & Observation

**Table 1:** Showing composition of Vasavaleha stated by different ancient classics

Ingredients	Dhanwantari Nighantu	Raj Nighantu	Madanpal Nighantu	Kaiyadeva Nighantu	Bhavprakash Nighantu	Shaligram Nighantu
Vasa ( <i>Adhatoda vasica</i> ) Nees	+	+	+	+	+	+
Sarkara (Sugar)	+	+	+	+	+	+
Pippali ( <i>Piper longum</i> ) Linn.	+	+	+	+	+	+
Madhu (Honey)	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ghee (Clarified butter)	+	+	+	+	+	+

**Table 2:** Showing the pharmacodynamics (rasa, guna, virya, vipak & dosa karma) of the ingredients of Vasavaleha mentioned in various nighantus (Ayurvedic pharmacopoeial text)

Ingredients	Rasnapanchak	Dhanwantari Nighantu [2]	Raj Nighantu [3]	Madanpal Nighantu [4]	Kaiyadeva Nighantu [5]	Bhavprakash Nighantu [6]	Shaligram Nighantu [7]
Vasa ( <i>Adhatoda vasica</i> ) Nees	Rasa	Tikta	Tikta, Katu	-	Kasaya, Tikta	Tikta, Kasaya	Tikta, Katu
	Guna	-	-	Sara	Laghu	Laghu, Tikshna	-
	Virya	Sita	Sita	-	Sita	Sita	Sita
	Vipak	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Dosa karma	Pitta-kapha hara	-	Kapha-pitta hara, Vatakara	Kapha-pitta hara, Vatala	Pitta-kapha hara, Vatakara	Sleshma hara
Sarkara (Sugar)	Rasa	-	Madhur	-	Madhur	Madhur	-
	Guna	-	-	Guru	Sara, Guru, Snigdha	-	Sara
	Virya	Sita	Sita	Sita	Sita	Sita	Sita
	Vipak	-	-	-	Madhur	-	Madhur
	Dosa karma	-	Pitta samak	Vata-pitta hara	Vataghni, Kaphaprada	Vata-Pitta samak	-
Pippali ( <i>Piper longum</i> ) Linn.	Rasa	Katu	Katu, Tikta	Katu	Katu	Katu	Katu
	Guna	Snigdha	Snigdha	Snigdha, Laghu	Snigdha, Laghu	Snigdha, Laghu, Tikshna	Snigdha, Laghu
	Virya	Sita	Usna	Ati usna	Isad usna	Usna	Anusna
	Vipak	Madhur	-	Madhur	Madhur	Madhur	Madhur
	Dosa karma	Tridosha hara	Vata-kapha hara	Kapha-vata hara	Kapha-vata hara, Pitta vardhak	Vata-kapha hara	Vata-sleshma hara

carried out vividly with chronological order & furnishing herewith the same in table and chart. Discussion done and conclusion have been made with logical and methodical manner.

### Method of Preparation of Vasa Avaleha

Vasavaleha is prepared as per avaleha kalpana i.e. all the ingredients to be taken in the ratio of (vasa:sarkara:pippali:ghrita:madhu-8:4:1:1:4) respectively. Vasa swarasa mixed with powdered sugar candy and heated over low flame (mandagni), when it reaches semi-solid state (proper paka state), pippali churna and ghrita are added and mixed well, and on self-cooling madhu is mixed uniformly. This is known to be Vasavaleha [1].

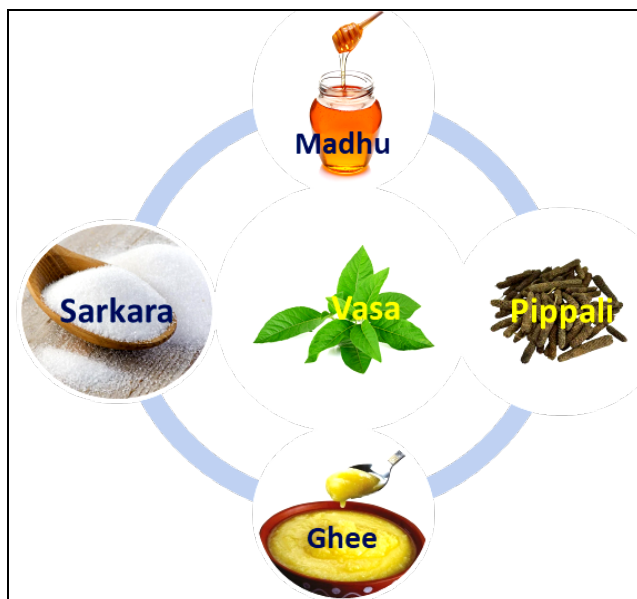
**Dose:** Adult-5 to 10 gram twice daily,  
11 to 15 years of age-3-6 gm twice daily  
6 to 10 years of age-1.5-3 gm twice daily  
Below 5 years-500 mg to 1 gm twice daily

**Anupana:** Luke warm milk or Luke warm water

Madhu (Honey)	Rasa	Madhur, Kasaya anurasa	Madhur	Madhur	Madhur, Kasaya anurasa	Madhur, Kasaya anurasa	Madhur, Kasaya
	Guna	Ruksha, Laghu	Ruksha, Laghu	Laghu, Ruksha, Visada	Ruksha, Laghu	Laghu, Ruksha, Sukshma	Laghu, Ruksha
	Virya	Sita	-	Sita	Sita	Sita	Sita
	Vipak	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Dosa karma	Tridosha hara	-	Alpa vatalam, Kapha-pitta hara	Pitta-kapha hara, Vatalam	Pitta-kapha samak, Alpa Vatalam	Tridosha hara
Ghee (Clarified butter)	Rasa	-	-	Madhur	Madhur	-	Madhur
	Guna	-	-	Guru	Guru, Mridu, Slakshna	-	Soumya
	Virya	Sita	-	Sita	Sita	Sita	Sita
	Vipak	Madhur	Madhur	Madhur	Madhur	Madhur	Madhur
	Dosa karma	Vata-pitta nasak	Tridosha hara	Vata-pitta hara	Sleshmala, Vata-pitta hara	Tridosha hara	Vata-pitta nasak

**Table 3:** Therapeutic indication of Vasavaleha as per opinion of ancient Ayurvedic classics.

	Therapeutic Indication
Bhaisajya Ratnavali (Rajayakshma and kasa roga adhikar) [1]	Rajayakshma (pulmonary tuberculosis), Kasa (cold, cough), Swasa (asthama, respiratory distress), Parshva soola (pain on the sides of abdomen), Hrit sula (cardiac pain), Raktapitta (bleeding disorder like nasal bleeding, haemoptysis, ulcerative colitis, menorrhagia), Jwara (fever).



**Fig 1:** Ingredients of Vasavaleha

**Discussion**

All the classical Ayurvedic formulations are time tested medicine which have been successfully used by our Ayurvedic physician from ancient era to till date. Avaleha is a type of preparation which is usually taken by process of licking. Vasavaleha denotes a medicine which is made up with mainly vasa and in the form of semi-solid thickly licking substance. The ingredients of vasavaleha are vasa, sarkara, pippali, madhu, ghrita, where Vasa swarasa mix to powdered sugar candy and heated over low flame, when it reaches semi-solid thickened state, pippali churna and ghrita are added and mixed well, and after self-cooling madhu is mixed uniformly.

Through literature review it has been revealed that vasavaleha shows its therapeutic efficacy over the ailments like pulmonary tuberculosis, pleurisy, COPD, bronchitis, cough, cardiac disease, epistaxis, haemoptysis etc. Among the ingredients Vasa is known as Kapha-pitta samak agent which indicates that it has power to reduce inflammation & mucosal secretion by addition of usna guna (hot property through paka). It could also play anti-cooling or usna action against vayu. Sarkara (sugar candy) is also a well pitta samak and vata nasak agent, ghrita Possess pitta samak, rukshata nasak as well as anti-spasmodic action. Pippali Possess mucolytic activity along with its agni deepan and lekhan (expectorant) properties. Madhu is pitta kapha hara as well as tridosha hara. Most of the ingredients are having pitta-kapha hara properties which clearly suggest anti-inflammatory and anti-secretory actions in pranavaha srota (respiratory tract). Pippali, madhu, sarkara, ghee are known as brimhaniya (nutritive) agent and may be called as rasayana (rejuvenative or immuno-modulator). The disease sosha/Rajayakshma, parvasoola (pleurisy) are directly related with emaciation of the body where anuloma kshyay and pratiloma kshyay are more evident. These kshyay (degeneration) aggravates vayu which provokes respiratory spasm. In COPD, kapha makes avarodha (obstruction) in the pathway of prana vayu & udana vayu and causes the respiratory distress. In this disorder pippali disintegrates and liquefies the stagnated or sticky cough by its sukshma (subtle), Usna (hot) and tikshna (penetrating) properties and helps to expel out those excess kapha from the respiratory tract. The main ingredient Vasa having tikta, kasaya & katu rasa which have the ability of increasing avakasha (expansion of space of channels means lung alveoli, bronchus, bronchioles etc.). The preparation as a whole, is carrying the actions like srota sodhana, lekhana, deepana, pachana, sarana, rasayana and brimhana. As the ailments which have been mention earlier are chronic and troublesome in nature and nowadays many of the people suffering from such problems, so use of Vasavaleha is now very much frequent among the patients of this field. Usual dose of the drug of adult is 5 to 10 gram twice daily & it may be gradually reduce to the lower age group along with luke warm milk or luke warm water.

**Conclusion**

From above discussion it could be concluded that there are sufficient references in favour of vasavaleha, an unique

Ayurvedic preparation which is frequently used on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), pulmonary tuberculosis, pleurisy, bronchitis, haemoptysis, epistaxis etc. in a dose of 5 to 10 grams twice daily in adults. It keeps respiratory passage clean by demulsifying the stagnated kapha and enhances the systemic as well as total body immunity of the patient.

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