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Critical Study of the Manuscript Satkarmasangrah and Its Comparative Evaluation with Hathayogapradipika and Nighantratnakar

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Abstract

Manuscripts constitute the primary carriers of India's traditional medical and yogic knowledge systems. Among these, unpublished Ayurvedic-Yogic manuscripts preserve rare procedural details that are often absent or only partially described in classical treatises. *Satkarmasangrah* (SKS) is one such unpublished manuscript preserved at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI), Pune. The present research is a comprehensive critical, textual, and comparative study of the manuscript *Satkarmasangrah*, focusing on its yogic and chikitsa karmas and their correlation with *Hathayogapradipika* (HYP) and *Nighantratnakar* (NR).

This study was conducted in three phases:

- Collection, transcription, and critical editing of the manuscript;
- Manuscriptological analysis including material, script, orthography, errors, and colophon; and
- Systematic comparison of the karmas described in SKS with those in HYP and NR.

The manuscript describes a wide spectrum of Shatkarmas, yogic purification techniques, and therapeutic procedures aimed at both disease prevention and cure. Several procedures align closely with HYP, while others correspond to chikitsa karmas described in NR. Importantly, the manuscript also documents certain karmas not found in either HYP or NR, highlighting its independent clinical and yogic relevance.

The findings suggest that *Satkarmasangrah* represents a transitional Ayurvedic-Yogic text of the early modern period (circa 17th-18th century CE), reflecting integration of NathSampradaya yogic practices with applied Ayurvedic therapeutics. The study underscores the necessity of critical manuscript research to rediscover, preserve, and contextualize indigenous knowledge for contemporary scholarship.

Keywords: Satkarmasangrah, Manuscriptology, Shatkarma, Hathayogapradipika, Nighantratnakar, Ayurveda, Yoga, NathSampradaya.

1. Introduction

Ayurveda is not merely a system of medicine but a comprehensive science of life encompassing health promotion, disease prevention, and therapeutic management [9]. The continuity of Ayurvedic knowledge across millennia has been made possible primarily through oral transmission and manuscript traditions [10]. Manuscripts, handwritten documents preserved on palm leaves, birch bark, or handmade paper, form the foundational textual sources of Ayurveda and Yoga [11]. Despite their significance, a vast majority of Indian medical manuscripts remain unpublished, unedited, and critically unstudied [12].

The manuscript *Satkarmasangrah* belongs to this vast but underexplored corpus [1]. The text focuses on *Satkarmas*—purificatory and therapeutic procedures aimed at cleansing the body, regulating doshas, and preparing the practitioner for higher yogic practices [2]. While classical yogic texts such as

Hathayogapradipika emphasize Satkarmas as preparatory practices for Raja Yoga [2], Ayurvedic texts such as *Nighantratnakar* elaborate various chikitsa karmas for disease management [3]. *Satkarmasangrah* appears to integrate both perspectives, presenting yogic and therapeutic procedures within a single applied framework [6].

The present study attempts a critical exploration of this manuscript to understand its structure, content, historical placement, and applied significance [1, 4]. By comparing its contents with *Hathayogapradipika*² and *Nighantratnakar* [3], the study aims to identify continuities, innovations, and unique contributions of *Satkarmasangrah* to Ayurvedic-Yogic literature [8].

2. Need for the Study

The need for the present research arises from several academic and clinical considerations:

Manuscripts are original and authoritative sources of Ayurvedic and yogic knowledge^[10]. Loss or destruction of a manuscript implies irreversible loss of traditional wisdom for future generations^[12]. Only about 2–3% of Indian medical manuscripts are available in printed or critically edited form^[13]. *Satkarmasangrah* is an unpublished manuscript with no available critical edition or independent scholarly analysis^[1]. The manuscript documents practical procedures relevant to contemporary lifestyle disorders and psychosomatic diseases^[5]. Comparative evaluation with classical texts helps authenticate procedures and trace textual evolution^[6]. Systematic manuscriptological studies strengthen non-clinical research in Ayurveda and Yoga^[4, 8].

3. Aim and Objectives

Aim

To undertake a critical study of the manuscript *Satkarmasangrah* and to compare its contents with *Hathayogapradipika*^[2] and *Nighantratnakar*^[3].

Objectives

Primary Objective: To critically study, transcribe, and edit the manuscript *Satkarmasangrah* preserved at BORI, Pune^[1].

Secondary Objectives: To compare yogic karmas described in *Satkarmasangrah* with those in *Hathayogapradipika*^[2]. To compare chikitsa karmas described in *Satkarmasangrah* with those in *Nighantratnakar*^[3]. To analyze similarities and dissimilarities in terminology, procedures, and therapeutic indications across texts^[6].

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Materials

The chief source of the study was the manuscript *Satkarmasangrah* (Manuscript No. 304; Reference No. 953/1891–95) preserved at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune^[1]. Classical reference texts included *Hathayogapradipika* by Yogi Svatmarama^[2] and *Nighantratnakar* by Vd. Vishnu Vasudev Godabole, revised by Krishnashastri Navare^[3]. Ayurvedic and Sanskrit lexicons were consulted to clarify technical terminology^[14].

4.2. Methodology

The study was conducted in three phases, following standard manuscriptological research methodology^[4].

Phase I: Collection and Transcription: The manuscript was collected and examined for completeness and physical condition^[1]. The handwritten Devanagari text was carefully transcribed into readable Sanskrit, addressing issues such as continuous writing, absence of verse numbering, and scribal overwriting^[1, 4].

Phase II: Manuscriptological Analysis: Manuscriptological features such as material, size, script, pagination, punctuation, orthography, marginalia, and colophon were systematically analyzed^[4]. Scribal errors including deletion, addition, substitution, and orthographic confusion were identified and critically evaluated^[1, 4].

Phase III: Comparative Analysis: Each yogic and chikitsa karma described in *Satkarmasangrah* was compared with corresponding descriptions in *Hathayogapradipika*^[2] and *Nighantratnakar*^[3]. Similarities, dissimilarities, and unique features were tabulated and interpreted in light of Ayurvedic and yogic principles^[6, 8].

5. Review of Literature

5.1. Review of *Nighantratnakar*:

Nighantratnakar is a

comprehensive treatise on roganidana and chikitsa, composed in the late 18th century CE^[3]. It includes detailed descriptions of Panchakarma, upakarmas, daily regimens, and therapeutic procedures^[3]. Several chikitsa karmas such as raktastrava, nasya, basti, snehana, and swedana described in *Satkarmasangrah* show close resemblance to those in *Nighantratnakar*, suggesting a shared applied therapeutic tradition^[3, 6].

5.2. Review of *Hathayogapradipika*: *Hathayogapradipika* is a seminal yogic text of the 15th–16th century CE². It systematically describes Shatkarma, Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, and Samadhi^[2]. Yogic purification techniques such as dhauti, neti, nauli, and basti described in *Satkarmasangrah* parallel those in *Hathayogapradipika*, though procedural details, indications, and therapeutic emphasis differ^[2, 6].

5.3. Review of Previous Works: Previous critical studies of Ayurvedic manuscripts conducted under Indian universities have established methodological standards for manuscript research^[4, 15]. However, no prior study has critically edited or comparatively analyzed the manuscript *Satkarmasangrah*, highlighting the originality of the present research^[1].

6. Review of the Manuscript *Satkarmasangrah*

6.1 Physical and Material Description: The manuscript is written on handmade country paper, measuring approximately 8 4/5 inches × 4 3/10 inches^[1]. It consists of eight folios (sixteen pages) written in Devanagari script^[1]. The manuscript is generally legible, though minor worm-eaten portions and overwriting are observed in certain folios^[1, 4].

6.2 Authorship and Date: The opening folios attribute authorship to Chidghanandnath, while the concluding folio mentions Raghuvir^[1]. This discrepancy suggests either multiple scribes or later redaction^[1, 4]. Based on internal evidence, script style, and comparison with contemporaneous texts, the manuscript is tentatively dated to the early modern period (17th–18th century CE)^[6].

6.3 Objective of the Manuscript: The stated objective of *Satkarmasangrah* is prevention and cure of diseases through yogic practices and simple medicinal interventions, emphasizing both physical and psychological wellbeing^[1, 5].

7. Content Analysis of *Satkarmasangrah*

The manuscript presents an integrated compendium of yogic and chikitsa karmas aimed at purification, disease management, and enhancement of bodily vitality^[1]. Major procedures described include trataka, neti, dhauti, basti, nauli, gajakarni, nasya, gandusha, snehana, swedana, and raktastrava^[1, 2, 3].

Each karma is described with procedural steps, indications, and therapeutic benefits. For example, dhauti is indicated for disorders such as kasa, shwasa, pliha, kustha, and agnimandya^[1, 2]. Nauli is emphasized for digestive stimulation and dosha regulation^[1]. Basti is elaborated with multiple subtypes and indications resembling Ayurvedic basti therapy^[3].

8. Comparative Analysis

8.1 Comparison with *Hathayogapradipika*: Several Shatkarmas such as dhauti, neti, nauli, and basti show conceptual and procedural similarity with *Hathayogapradipika*^[2]. However, *Satkarmasangrah* extends their application beyond yogic purification to therapeutic disease management^[1, 6].

8.2 Comparison with *Nighantratnakar*: Chikitsa karmas

such as raktastrava, nasya, snehana, swedana, and basti correspond closely with descriptions in *Nighantratnakar* [3]. Variations in instruments, drugs, and indications reflect localized clinical adaptations [6].

8.3 Unique Contributions of *Satkarmasangrah*: Certain karmas described in *Satkarmasangrah* are either briefly mentioned or entirely absent in both *Hathayogapradipika* and *Nighantratnakar*, indicating lineage-specific or regional practices [1, 6].

The manuscript *Satkarmasangrah* reflects a clear synthesis of NathSampradaya yogic traditions with applied Ayurvedic therapeutics, representing an important transitional phase in the evolution of Indian health sciences [1, 3]. Unlike purely philosophical yogic texts or strictly clinical Ayurvedic compendia, this manuscript integrates yogic purification techniques (śodhana karmas) with disease-oriented chikitsa procedures, indicating its practical orientation toward health maintenance and disease management [4].

i). Integration of NathSampradaya and Ayurveda: The repeated invocations of Adinath, Gorakhnath, and Siddha yogis at the beginning of the manuscript strongly establish its roots in the NathSampradaya [5]. Nath yogic literature traditionally emphasizes bodily purification as a prerequisite for higher yogic attainment, particularly through Shatkarma practices [6]. In *Satkarmasangrah*, these yogic procedures are not presented merely as preparatory techniques for Raja Yoga but are explicitly linked with therapeutic outcomes, such as the management of kasa, shwasa, kustha, pliha, agnimandya, and other disorders [1, 3].

This therapeutic framing reflects Ayurvedic principles, especially those related to doshashodhana, agnideepana, and srotasshuddhi [7]. Procedures such as dhauti, neti, basti, nasya, and raktastrava are described with indications and benefits closely resembling Ayurvedicchikitsa, as elaborated in *Nighantratnakar* [3]. Thus, the manuscript bridges yogic discipline and Ayurvedic clinical practice, demonstrating functional convergence rather than doctrinal separation [8].

ii). Applied and Practitioner-Oriented Nature of the Text: One of the most significant observations from this study is the applied nature of *Satkarmasangrah*. The manuscript avoids metaphysical speculation and instead focuses on procedural clarity, indications, contraindications, and practical benefits [1]. This suggests that the text was likely intended for practicing yogis, vaidyas, or yogic healers, rather than for scholastic or monastic audiences [9].

The absence of elaborate philosophical discourse, combined with the inclusion of medicinal substances, instruments, and procedural variants, supports the view that *Satkarmasangrah* functioned as a manual for applied therapeutics [4]. Such manuals are characteristic of the early modern period (17th–18th century CE), when Ayurveda and Yoga increasingly interacted within community-based healthcare traditions [6, 10].

iii). Comparative Significance vis-à-vis *Hathayogapradipika*: When compared with *Hathayogapradipika*, *Satkarmasangrah* shares core yogic purification techniques such as dhauti, neti, nauli, and basti [2]. However, the purpose of these practices differs significantly. In *Hathayogapradipika*, Shatkarmas are primarily preparatory practices for pranayama and Samadhi [2]. In contrast, *Satkarmasangrah* extends their utility to specific disease conditions, thereby expanding

their clinical relevance [1, 6].

This shift indicates a pragmatic reinterpretation of yogic practices in response to health needs, possibly influenced by Ayurvedic clinical frameworks [3]. Such reinterpretation underscores the dynamic and adaptive nature of Indian knowledge systems, wherein techniques were recontextualized without compromising their traditional foundations [8].

iv). Relationship with *Nighantratnakar* and Chikitsa Traditions:

The close resemblance of several procedures in *Satkarmasangrah* to those described in *Nighantratnakar*—particularly basti, nasya, snehana, swedana, and raktastrava—suggests shared therapeutic logic [3]. However, *Satkarmasangrah* often presents simplified or yogically modified versions of these procedures, possibly to suit non-hospital or ascetic settings [10].

This adaptation highlights the manuscript's role as a bridge text, mediating between classical Ayurvedic hospital-based chikitsa and yogic self-practice [6]. Such texts may have played a crucial role in disseminating healthcare knowledge beyond elite institutional settings into community and ascetic contexts [9].

v). Manuscriptological and Historical Implications:

From a manuscriptological perspective, the coexistence of yogic and Ayurvedic terminologies, along with variations in authorship attribution, suggests a living textual tradition, possibly transmitted through oral instruction and scribal reproduction [4]. The manuscript thus represents not a static doctrinal text but a functional compendium shaped by practice, lineage, and regional needs [11].

Historically, this supports the view that the early modern period witnessed increasing interdisciplinary synthesis within Indian medical traditions, rather than rigid compartmentalization of Yoga and Ayurveda [6, 8].

vi). Contemporary Relevance: In the context of rising lifestyle disorders and renewed interest in integrative medicine, *Satkarmasangrah* holds considerable contemporary relevance [5]. Its emphasis on non-pharmacological purification techniques, combined with simple medicinal interventions, aligns well with preventive and promotive healthcare models advocated today [12].

9. Discussion

The manuscript *Satkarmasangrah* represents a significant synthesis of NathSampradaya yogic traditions with applied Ayurvedic therapeutics, reflecting a holistic approach to health that integrates purification, prevention, and treatment. Unlike classical yogic texts that primarily emphasize spiritual progression or Ayurvedic compendia that focus on pharmacological and procedural therapy, this manuscript demonstrates a functional convergence of both systems. The text positions yogic practices not merely as preparatory disciplines for higher yogic states but as effective therapeutic interventions for maintaining and restoring health.

A prominent feature of the manuscript is its strong association with the NathSampradaya. The invocation of Adinath, Gorakhnath, and Siddha yogic lineages at the outset establishes the yogic foundation of the text and highlights the importance of experiential and lineage-based knowledge transmission. At the same time, the manuscript exhibits a pragmatic orientation by providing procedural clarity, indications, and benefits of various karmas. This suggests that

the text was intended for practitioners actively engaged in healing practices rather than for purely philosophical or scholastic study.

The therapeutic interpretation of Shatkarmas in *Satkarmasangrah* marks an important departure from their classical yogic presentation. Practices such as dhauti, neti, nauli, basti, trataka, and gajakarni are clearly associated with the management of disorders affecting the digestive, respiratory, integumentary, sensory, and eliminative systems. This applied approach reflects Ayurvedic principles related to purification of channels, regulation of doshas, enhancement of digestive fire, and restoration of physiological balance. By integrating these principles within yogic practices, the manuscript expands the scope of Yoga into the domain of disease management.

The comparative analysis with classical Ayurvedic texts reveals that several chikitsa karmas described in *Satkarmasangrah* closely resemble established therapeutic procedures. However, the manuscript often presents simplified or modified versions of these interventions. Such adaptations suggest that the text was designed for practical use in settings where elaborate infrastructure, extensive medicinal resources, or institutional support may not have been available. This highlights the manuscript's relevance in ascetic, rural, or community-based healthcare contexts.

From a manuscriptological perspective, variations in authorship attribution, the presence of scribal corrections, and orthographic inconsistencies indicate that *Satkarmasangrah* belongs to a living textual tradition. Rather than being a rigid canonical work, it appears to have evolved through repeated copying, oral instruction, and practical refinement. The absence of excessive philosophical exposition further supports the view that the manuscript prioritizes functionality and applicability over doctrinal completeness.

Historically, the manuscript can be situated in a transitional phase when the boundaries between Yoga and Ayurveda were fluid. During this period, health practices were increasingly oriented toward integrated well-being, combining physical purification, physiological regulation, and mental discipline. *Satkarmasangrah* embodies this integrated vision by addressing both preventive and curative aspects of health through non-invasive, self-regulatory, and cost-effective practices.

In the contemporary context, the manuscript holds considerable relevance due to the increasing prevalence of lifestyle disorders, psychosomatic illnesses, and interest in non-pharmacological healthcare approaches. The practices described in *Satkarmasangrah* offer valuable insights into traditional detoxification, self-care, and preventive health strategies. When interpreted carefully and applied judiciously, these practices may complement modern integrative healthcare systems.

10. Conclusion

The present study of the manuscript *Satkarmasangrah* brings to light an important yet underexplored contribution to Ayurvedic and Yogic literature. The manuscript emerges as a practical and applied compendium that successfully integrates NathSampradaya yogic purification techniques with Ayurvedic therapeutic principles. It demonstrates that traditional Indian health sciences evolved through continuous interaction and synthesis rather than rigid separation of disciplines.

The analysis confirms that *Satkarmasangrah* is neither solely a yogic text focused on spiritual attainment nor purely an

Ayurvedic treatise limited to clinical intervention. Instead, it represents a holistic healthcare manual addressing disease prevention, purification, and management through combined yogic and therapeutic approaches. The inclusion of both Shatkarmas and chikitsa karmas reflects a comprehensive understanding of health encompassing bodily, physiological, and psychosomatic dimensions.

Comparative evaluation with classical texts highlights both continuity and innovation within the manuscript. While many procedures share conceptual foundations with established yogic and Ayurvedic practices, their expanded therapeutic application and contextual adaptation in *Satkarmasangrah* reveal the dynamic and evolving nature of traditional knowledge systems. The manuscript thus contributes original applied insights that are not fully elaborated in classical treatises.

From an academic standpoint, the study underscores the importance of manuscriptological research in reconstructing the applied history of Ayurveda and Yoga. Unpublished manuscripts such as *Satkarmasangrah* hold immense potential to enrich contemporary understanding of traditional healthcare practices and their regional or lineage-specific variations.

In conclusion, *Satkarmasangrah* stands as a valuable textual resource that bridges Yoga and Ayurveda in a clinically meaningful manner. Critical editing, scholarly analysis, and thoughtful interpretation of such manuscripts are essential for preserving traditional knowledge and exploring its relevance in modern integrative health sciences. Further interdisciplinary research and cautious clinical exploration may help revive select practices described in the manuscript for preventive and therapeutic use in contemporary settings.

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