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REVIEW ARTICLE

A Literary Insight into *Stanyajanana dashemani*

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ABSTRACT

Breast milk, regarded as the nectar of infant health, is referred to as "*stanya*" in Ayurveda. The growth and development of an infant are mainly dependent on *stanya*. The quantity and quality of breast milk reflect the mother's overall health status. According to Acarya Caraka, *stanya* is considered an *upadhatu* of *rasa*, formed from the *prasada bhaga* of *rasa dhatu.* The production and secretion of *stanya* are closely influenced by the mother's physical and mental well-being. According to Ayurveda, improper diet and lifestyle, along with mental disturbances, such as anger, grief, and fear in the mother, can impair lactation. Ayurveda has recognized the vital role of *stanya* in child's growth and development. Classical texts elaborate not only on the formation and physiological aspects of *stanya,* but also on its abnormalities and their management. Acharya Caraka highlights two major concerns related to the purification and production of *stanya* and prescribes two sets of ten drugs, namely, *stanyajanana dashemani* and *Stanyajanana dashemani* to address these issues. Caraka classifies ten key herbs under *stanyajananamahakashaya,* collectively known as *stanyajanana dashemani*, to promote lactation. These herbs include *virana, sali, shashtika, ikshuvalika, kusa, kasa, gundra, itkata,* and *katruna*. Most of these herbs possess *madhura rasa* and qualities, such as *snigdha, sita, guru, manda,* and *sandra.* Due to their nourishing and cooling attributes, these drugs are also beneficial in conditions arising from *rasakshaya* and *mutrajanya vikaras*. This paper aims to highlight the significance of *stanyajanana dashemani* in promoting the production of breast milk.

1. INTRODUCTION

The milk secreted from the mammary glands is known as *stanya*. In Ayurveda, *stanya* is regarded as a sacred physiological offering from the mother to the child, symbolizing maternal affection and serving as the essential nourishment for the infant's physical, mental, and immune development. It is considered to possess qualities similar to digestive fire (*agni samatmaka*) and is described as *jivanam* (life-sustaining) and *balavardhana* (strength-promoting), like nectar to infants. The quality and quantity of *stanya* are closely linked to the mother's overall health, digestive strength, and emotional state. A well-nourished and emotionally balanced mother is more likely to produce adequate and wholesome breast milk. Therefore, Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of proper nutrition, adequate rest, and supportive therapies for the optimal production of breast milk. Acarya Caraka has described a group of ten herbs under the name *stanyajanana dashemani,* specifically for promoting lactation.[1] Acarya Kasyapa also recommends a decoction prepared from the roots of *sali, shashtika, darbha, kusa, gundra,* and *itkata* as an effective galactogogue, particularly beneficial for women experiencing natural loss or dryness of breast milk, as well as those afflicted by the abnormalities in milk caused by negative influences, such as the evil eye.[2] Beyond their lactogenic effect, these herbs contribute to the overall physical and emotional well-being of the mother, supporting her recovery and vitality during the postpartum period.

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2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Relevant information was gathered from the Caraka Samhita Ayurveda Dipika commentary, other samhitas, and various online sources. The collected data were then systematically analyzed.

2.1. Aims and Objectives

To analyze the role of *Stanyajanana dashemani* in enhancing breast milk production.

2.2. Lactation Mechanism - a Review

Lactation refers to the synthesis, ejection, and secretion of breast milk. The breasts contain mammary glands, which are modified sweat glands

responsible for milk production. During pregnancy, the ductal system undergoes further development, with the formation of new alveoli and proliferation of glandular tissue. Progesterone plays a key role in the development of the alveolar system, while hormones, such as growth hormone, thyroxine, cortisol, and relaxin support the overall growth and development of the mammary glands.[3] Prolactin is the primary hormone responsible for milk secretion, and normally its activity is suppressed by prolactin-inhibiting hormone from the hypothalamus. Lactation primarily involves two processes: Milk secretion and milk ejection. Milk secretion refers to milk synthesis by the alveolar epithelial cells and its movement through the ductal system. This occurs in two phases: Lactogenesis and lactopoiesis. Lactogenesis is the initiation of milk secretion, predominantly regulated by prolactin. Lactopoiesis, the maintenance phase, is governed by growth hormone, thyroxine, and cortisol, which ensure a steady supply of essential nutrients, such as glucose, fats, calcium, and amino acids needed for continued milk production. Milk ejection is the release of milk from the mammary glands, regulated by a neuroendocrine reflex involving the hypothalamus and pituitary gland. It is triggered by the baby's suckling, which activates a reflex leading to contraction of smooth muscles in the breast.

Ayurveda offers a parallel explanation rooted in its own physiological principles. According to Susruta, the sweet essence of *rasa,* formed from the digested food, circulated throughout the body, ultimately reaches the breasts, and is known as *stanya.*[4] This concept of Susruta aligns with the modern understanding that breast milk is derived from nutrients absorbed and processed in the body. He further explains that after conception, the orifices of the *artavavaha srotas* in a pregnant woman get blocked by the growing fetus, leading to cessation of the menstrual cycle. As a result, *artava* cannot exit through the vagina. This obstructed *artava* partly contributes to the formation of the placenta, while the remaining portion moves upward to the breasts, aiding in the development of lactiferous ducts and preparing them for milk production. The postnatal events described in Ayurveda also resonate with the physiological responses observed in modern science. After childbirth, the increased *vata* compresses the *artavavaha srotas* and dilates the lactiferous ducts of the mammary glands, leading to the actual secretion of milk, which occurs usually by the 3rd or 4th day. The touch of the baby, the sight of the baby, picking up the baby, or even the memory of the baby stimulates the secretion of breast milk.[4] Yogaratnakara reiterates Susruta's view by stating that *stanya* is formed from the essence of *rasa dhatu,* which circulates within the body and accumulates in the breasts to nourish the newborn.[5] According to the opinion of Caraka and Sarngadhara*, stanya* is the *upadhatu* of *rasa dhatu*.[6,7] According to Haritasamhita, milk is formed as a result of a sequence of digestive processes. After the digestion of food, the essence known as *rasa* combines with pitta and undergoes further transformation through the action of *pacakagni.* This transformed food essence, termed as "*dugdharasa*" is carried through the *kshiravahanadi* and ultimately takes the form of milk, which is white and unctuous. Milk is produced only in lactating mothers and not in virgins or infertile women. In such women, the *kshiranadis* are either underdeveloped or absent due to insufficient *dhatubala* and *alpasaratva*. As a result, these channels remain occupied by *vata* and are unable to transform *rasa dhatu* into *stanya.* After childbirth, however, milk production is initiated due to the enhanced strength of the body and the physiological changes brought about by delivery.[8] Thus, in Ayurveda, *stanya* is viewed as a refined product that is formed through the mother's nourishment and physiological processes during pregnancy, serving as a vital link between maternal health and infant well-being.

2.3. *Stanyajanana dashemani*

Considering the significance of breast milk, the classical texts of Ayurveda have outlined various methods and measures to enhance both its quantity and quality. Acharya Charaka has mentioned a group of ten herbs known as *Stanyajanana dashemani.* These ten drugs are easily available and are effective in promoting these are explained in tables 1 and 2.

3. DISCUSSION

Stanyakshaya (reduction of breast milk) and *stanyanasa* (complete absence of breast milk) are two common problems faced by lactating mothers. These conditions can adversely affect the health of the infant. Therefore, a physician needs to initiate proper measures to enhance breast milk production when a nursing mother experiences a decrease in breast milk. Caraka has described a group of ten drugs under the name *Stanyajanana dashemani,* which serve as a cost-effective and easily available remedy for this issue. All ten drugs in this group are known to promote lactation. They can be selected based on the condition of lactation and the availability of the herbs. These drugs may be administered in various forms, such as *kashaya, kshirakashaya*, *ghrita,* or other suitable preparations, depending on convenience. Most of the drugs in *stanyajanana dashemani* possess *madhura rasa, madhuravipaka,* and *sitavirya.* They are typically *snigdha, sita, guru, manda,* and *sandra* in nature. Due to these properties, they are effective in conditions, such as *stanyakshaya* and *stanyanasa*, due to their stimulating and promotive effects on lactation. As many of these herbs belong to the *trinapanchamula* group, they also support the health of the urogenital system and exhibit diuretic properties. Their *sitavirya* imparts a cooling and soothing effect, while their *madhura rasa* and *vipaka* make them *pittahara*, helping to reduce mental stress in the mother. Their *brimhana* and *balya* qualities assist in rebuilding the depleted *dhatus* after childbirth. The mother's diet plays a vital role in the health of the breastfeeding infant. The *stanyajanana* group of drugs enhances the production of *rasa dhatu*, the pre-cursor of *stanya.* These herbs are also useful in conditions caused by *rasakshaya.* Furthermore, *stanyajanana dashemani* supports breast milk secretion by maintaining hormonal balance.

4. CONCLUSION

Stanyajanana dashemani provides a holistic and effective approach to managing lactational insufficiency. With their nourishing, cooling, and lactogenic properties, these herbs not only stimulate and promote breast milk production but also help to restore maternal strength and support overall postnatal recovery. Their role in enhancing *rasa dhatu* and maintaining hormonal balance highlights their importance in ensuring the health and well-being of both mother and child. Thus, the timely use of these easily available and cost-effective formulations can serve as an effective therapeutic measure in managing *stanyakshaya* and *stanyanasa.*

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7. ETHICAL APPROVALS

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8. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

9. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for only review purposes from principal investigators.

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Table 1: *Stanyajanana dashemani* drugs with their botanical names and parts used[9]

S. No	Drug	Botanical name	Parts used
1	*Virana*	*Vetiveria zizanioides*	Roots
2	*Sali*	*Oryza sativa*	Roots, seeds
3	*Shashtika* (variety of rice)	*Oryza sativa*	Roots, seeds
4	*Ikshuvalika*	*Astercantha longifolia*	Roots, leaves, seeds
5	*Darbha*	*Imperata cylindrica*	Whole plant
6	*Kusha*	*Desmostachya bipinnata*	Whole plant
7	*Kasha*	*Saccharum spontaneum*	Roots, stem
8	*Gundra*	*Typha australis*	Rhizomes, leaves
9	*Itkata*	*Sesbania bispinosa (Controversial identity)*	Leaves, flowers, seeds
10	*Katruna*	*Cymbopogon citratus*	Leaves

Table 2: Pharmacological properties of *Stanyajanana dashemani* drugs[9]

Drug	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Karma
Virana	*Tiktha, Madhura*	*Laghu Snigdha*	*Seetha*	*Madhura*	*Vatapithaprasama, pachana, sthambhana, sthanyajanana, raktaprasadana*
Sali and Shashtikasali	*Madhura Kashaya*	*Guru Snigdha*	*Seetha*	*Madhura*	*Tridoshahara, sukrala, brimhana, muthrala, balya, ruchya, sthanyajanana*
Ikshuvalika	*Madhura amla tiktha*	*Pichilasnidgha*	*Seetha*	*Madhura*	*Vatapittahara, balya, sukrasodhana, sthanyajanana*
Darbha	*Madhura Kashaya*	*Laghu Snigdha*	*Seetha*	*Madhura*	*Tridoshahara, rasayana, muthravirecaniya, sthanyajanana, pipasahara, kushtaghna, dahaprasamana, vamaka*
Kusha	*Madhura kashaya*	*Laghu snigdha*	*Seetha*	*Madhura*	*Kaphapittahara, muthrala, sthanyajanana*
Kasha	*Madhura tiktha*	*Sara*	*Seetha*	*Madhura*	*Vatapittahara, balya, vrishya, sramahara, ruchya*
Gundra	*Kashaya madhura*	*Guru*	*Seetha*	*Madhura*	*Vatapittasamaka, sthanyasodhaka, sthanyajanana, sukrasodhaka, rajosodhaka, muthravirechaniya, muthrasodhaka*
Ithkata	*Madhura*	*Snigdha guru*	*Seetha*	*Madhura*	*Vatapittahara, muthravirechaniya, sthanyajanana*
Kathruna	*Katutiktha*	*Theekshnalaghu rooksha*	*Ushna*	*Madhura*	*Vatakaphahara, seethaprasamana, deepana, pachanarechana, vishghna, mukhasodhana, chakshushya, ruchya, vamihara, sthanyajanana*