

**IMPORTANCE OF SHODHANA IN AYURVEDA****\*Dr. Chhaya H. Dani /Hattimare**

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**INTRODUCTION**

It is a process in which kshalana (washing), Marjana (pounding), bhavana (Levigation), swedana (boiling), Bharjana (frying), Nirvana (heating and dipping in specified liquids), etc., are carried out on mineral drugs to eliminate impurities.

The concept of Shodhana treatment was in practice since the times of the Vedic period, and it also included the measures claimed to be responsible for the alteration or addition of the properties of the drugs while subjected to various pharmaceutical operations and treatments. Though references regarding the Shodhana treatment are available since the time of Ayurvedic classics, the details about the procedure could be traced only after the development of Rasashastra / Rasachikitsa (Mineral therapy) in Ayurvedic medicine during the medieval period, in which mineral / poisonous and sub-poisonous drugs acquired prominence over other types of drugs in the therapy.

Shodhana is an essential intermediary pharmaceutical process used for the purification of metals and minerals. It is a process of detoxification by which physical and chemical blemishes and toxic materials are eliminated, thus making the material suitable for further processing. Most of the raw materials used in Rasa shastra are obtained from earth, and hence there is every chance of impurities, toxicities, and heterogeneous qualities. When the drugs are used by humans, they are subjected to the shodhana process to eliminate their doshas and also to increase potency. Thus, shodhana is a process in which the toxic or unwanted properties of a drug are removed, and additional properties or alterations in these properties are observed, along with changes in physical, chemical, or biological properties.

**OBJECTIVES OF SHODHANA**

1. Elimination of physical & chemical impurities.
2. Neutralization of toxins

3. To induce & enhance therapeutic qualities
4. To impart organic qualities.
5. To make metals & Minerals suitable for administration.
6. To facilitate further processes like marana, satwapatana, lohitakarana, etc.

**The Shodhana process can be of two types**

**1) Samanya Shodhana:** It is a common procedure used for drugs of a particular group, where the drugs of a particular group are subjected to a similar procedure, though individually.

**2) Vishesa Shodhana:** When the Shodhana process is done for a particular Dravya, then it is known as Vishesa Shodhana.

Both the above procedures are further classified into **Saagni and Niragni.**

1. Saagni: Nirvapa, Dhalana, Bharjana, Puta, Swedana, Patana
2. Niragni: Bhavana, Prakshalana, Shoshana, Sinchana, Nimajjana, Gharshana

**Source of shodhana**

- a) Plant Origin: Swarasa, Kashaya, Kshira, Taila, Sukta, Kanji, Arka, Madya.
- b) Animal Origin: Ksheera, Madhu, Mutra, Rakta, Artava, Dadhi, Takra, Dadhimastu, Mamsa Rasa, Kukkutanda Taila, Hastidanta Kwatha.
- c) Mineral Origin: Jala, Drava, Churnodaka, Nimbu Swarasa.

**Elimination of physical & chemical impurities**

As most of the drugs mentioned in Rasashastra are naturally available, they may contain many adulterants like stone, sand, mud, etc. Such foreign matter should be removed by the process of shodhana. Ex: Shilajatu shodhana: As per classics, to separate physical matter, shilajatu has to be washed from alkaline liquid medium, sour liquid medium, cow's urine, etc.

**2. Neutralizes the Toxins**

Though the drug is free from physical and chemical impurities, most of the drugs of rasashastra are toxic in nature. Probably the drugs that we use as a purifying agent for the process of shodhana have such unique qualities that they will neutralize the toxicity of these drugs. Hence, it is mandatory to undergo the shodhana process for these drugs.

3. Enhances the Therapeutic qualities of the drugs. Whatever drugs are being used in the process of

shodhana, whether herbs or animal products, they themselves act as a catalytic agent. These herbs and animal Products can bring some desired changes to the drugs.

Ex: Gandhak shodhana

4) Makes the Metals & Minerals suitable for further process Most of the metals & minerals are basically hard in nature. They are to be administered in suitable form. These hard metals & minerals have to be converted into bhasma form by the process of marana (incineration). So, here the shodhana plays a very important role by imparting brittleness & softness.

5) Brings Organic qualities The aim of rasashastra is to convert diseased body into healthy body, ie dehavada. During purification process herbal drugs not only nullify the toxicity & modifies the active principles, but also brings organic qualities, which is highly necessary for administration.

**Types Of Media Used In Shodhana Procedure**

Sr.No.	MEDIA	EXAMPLE	UTILITY
1	Sneha varga	Taila, Ghrita, Dugdha	Softening of hard material <sup>[6]</sup>
2	Amla varga	Takra, kanji, Nimbu, Amalaki	Mass breaking and disintegration <sup>[7]</sup>
3	Katu varga	Haritaki, Nirgundi, Bhringaraja	Disintegration and breaking the cohesion <sup>[8]</sup>
4	Tikta varga	Swarna ksheeri, vasa,, shireesha	Absorption and moisture <sup>[9]</sup>
5	kashaya varga	Haritaki, vibhitaki, kanchanara	Eliminates external impurities <sup>[10]</sup>
6	visha varga	Vtsanabha, kalakuta peeta visha	Removes inertia in the substance <sup>[11]</sup>
7	Lavana varga	Samudra, saindhava, bida, sauvarchala, audbhida, chullika, kacha	Sarvaloha dravana and shodhana <sup>[12]</sup>
8	Dravaka varga	Guggula, guda, ghrita, gunja, tankana, madhu	Soften and liquefies metals <sup>[13]</sup>
9	Mridukara varga	Indrayava, mahishasringi	Softening hard metals <sup>[14]</sup>
10	Vitgana varga	Paravata, kapota, gridhra, kukkuta	Sarva loha shodhana <sup>[15]</sup>
11	kshara varga	Mutra, kulattha kwatha, kadali kanda	Makes the material soft and brittle <sup>[16]</sup>

**DISCUSSION**

Shodhana is a process of separation by which physical and chemical impurities are removed from substances by treatment with various drugs. It is a process by which blemishes are separated from the substance by various processing like grinding, etc., with specific drugs. Shodhana is a process of removal of impurities from substances by means of pharmaceutical processing of Swedana, Mardana, etc., with particular drugs.

**CONCLUSION**

The Shodhana process described in the classics of Ayurveda is not merely a process of separation, purification, or detoxification. Rather, it increases the therapeutic potency of the drug also. The main objective of the Shodhana process is to increase the biological efficacy of the drug. To provide its finer particles so that the drug may be made suitable for further procedures of other special techniques, viz. Jarana, Marana, and

Satwapatana, etc., to obtain a product suitable for internal use.

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