

PHARMACEUTICAL AND THERAPEUTIC REVIEW OF ARDRAK GHRITA –AN AYURVEDIC AND MODERN PRESPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Adrak Ghrit is a medicated ghee preparation where the bioactive components of *Zingiber officinale* (Ginger) are infused into a lipid medium (Cow's Ghee). This formulation leverages the lipophilic nature of ginger's active principles to enhance bioavailability. This article outlines the standardized contents, preparation method, and pharmacological significance of Adrak Ghrit.

INTRODUCTION

Sneha Kalpana^[1] (medicated ghee or oil preparations) represents one of the most significant and versatile dosage forms in Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals. This specialized process involves the extraction of both water-soluble and fat-soluble active principles from herbs into a lipid medium, such as **Go-Ghrita** (Cow's Ghee), which acts as a potent vehicle or *Yogavahi*. According to classical texts, Acharya Charak explains the role of ghrita kalpana in grahani^[2]

explain the importance of dipan ghrita in context of grahani.^[4]

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Sneha is considered the superior agent for stimulating an inefficient or weak digestive fire (*Mandagni*). From a modern pharmacological perspective, these formulations function as **Lipid-Based Drug Delivery Systems (LBDDS)**,^[3] which enhance the bioavailability of phytochemicals by facilitating their transport across the intestinal mucosa and avoiding first-pass metabolism. By reaching all organs and tissues rapidly without altering the medicinal properties of the drug, **Sneha Kalpana** serves as an effective method for treating deep-seated chronic disorders, particularly those related to the gastrointestinal tract and metabolic dysfunction. In Ayurveda the complaints related to GI track is considered under the Grahani. In order to treat grahani the main medicine is ghrita kalpana. Acharya charak

Adrak Ghrit is specifically indicated for *Agnimandya* (loss of appetite), *Aruchi* (tastelessness), and *Shwasa-Kasa* (respiratory ailments). The synergy between the "Srotas-cleansing" (channel-clearing) properties of Ginger and the "Samskarasya Anuvartana" (quality-absorbing) nature of Ghee makes it a potent digestive stimulant.

The preparation of Adrak Ghrit follows the traditional **Snehapaka** method.

'तथार्द्रकस्य स्वरसे विपक्वं'।

तत् कल्क माज्यम् च पयश्च तद् वत्||.....[सहस्रत्रययोग]^[5]

Ingredient	Ayurvedic Category	Role/Function
Ardra Swarasa	<i>Drava Dravya</i>	
Go-Dugdha	<i>Drava Dravya</i>	
Go-Ghrita	<i>Sneha Dravya</i>	

Ardraka Kalka	<i>Kalka Dravya</i>	
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The formulation utilizes the potent digestive properties of **Ardraka** (*Zingiber officinale*). The primary contents include **Ardraka Swarasa** (fresh ginger juice), **Go-Dugdha** (cow's milk), **Go-Ghrita** (cow's ghee), and **Ardraka Kalka** (ginger paste). This combination is specifically designed to address *Grahani*, a disorder characterized by impaired digestion and absorption caused by the vitiation of *Agni*.

Ardraka Ghrita acts by restoring the digestive fire, reducing the accumulation of *Ama* (toxins), and balancing the *Vata* and *Kapha* doshas. In this formulation, the *Ardraka* components provide *Deepana* (appetizer) and *Pachana* (digestive) actions, while the *Go-Dugdha* and *Ghrita* serve as nourishing bases that protect the mucosal lining. Modern medicine correlates

Grahani with **Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)**^[6] and other malabsorption syndromes, highlighting the formulation's relevance in contemporary gastrointestinal therapeutics. The objective of this paper is to review **Ardraka Ghrita** with respect to its pharmaceutical preparation, Ayurvedic indications, and modern pharmacological relevance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a review-based analytical study. Classical Ayurvedic literature, including Charaka Samhita, and Bhavprakash, sahasrayog were studied for references to Ardrak Ghrita and related formulations. Modern data were sourced from PubMed, AYUSH Research Portal, and Google Scholar. The inclusion criteria were texts and studies related to Ghrita Kalpanā, Sneha Pāka, and formulations containing ardrak or its components. Non-lipid-based formulations were excluded.

The ingredients are categorized into three components

Dravya	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Karma
Ardraka ^[7] Swarasa	Katu	Guru, Ruksha, Tikshna	Ushna	Madhura	Deepana-Pachana, Vata-Kapha Hara, Shoshahara, Grahi.
Go-Dugdha ^[8]	Madhura	Guru, Snigdha, Mridu	Sheeta	Madhura	Jeevaniya Rasayana, Medhya, Vata-Pitta Hara.
Go-Ghrita ^[9]	Madhura	Guru Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	Chakshushya, Agnivardhana, Visha-hara, Medhya.

- Drava Dravya (Liquid Medium):** Ardrak Swarasa (Fresh Ginger juice), Godugdha (milk)
- Kalka Dravya (Herbal Paste):** Ardrak kalka
- Sneha Dravya (Base Medium):** Murchita Go-Ghrita (Processed Cow's Ghee).

Preparation of Ardrak ghrita

Category	Ingredients (Dravya)	Form Specification /	Quantity (Classical Proportion)
Sneha Dravya	Go-Ghrita (Cow's Ghee)	Clarified Butter	4 Part
Kalka Dravya	Ardrak kalka	Sūkṣma Cūrṇa (Fine Paste)	1 Part (of Ghee)
Drava Dravya (Liquid Media)	Godugdha, Ardrak swaras	Swarasa / Kwātha	8 Parts each

Procedure^[10]

1. Kalka Preparation (Paste Drugs)

- Take required **Kalka dravya** i.e fresh ardrak in their designated quantities.
- Make a **fine paste** using mortar and pestle.

2. Drava Preparation (Liquid Media)

- Freshly draw the **swaras** from the ardrak liquid using mortar and pestle
- Filter these liquids through a clean **muslin cloth**.

3. Mixing

- In a clean wide-mouthed vessel (preferably copper or stainless steel), combine:
 - Four parts of measured **Go-Ghrita** (cow's ghee).
 - 1 part **Prepared Kalka**.
 - Drava Dravya 8 parts of each godugdha ardrak swaras.

4. Heating

- Heat the mixture over a **mild fire** (manda Agni).
- Stir the mixture continuously to prevent the ingredients from sticking to the bottom of the vessel.
- Continue heating until the **Ghrita Siddhi Lakshanas** appear.

5. Testing for Completion (Siddhi Lakshanas)

The procedure is complete when the following signs are observed:

- Kalka pariksha:** The paste does not stick when rubbed between fingers.
- Sneha pariksha:** The ghee becomes clear, and there is an absence of froth or moisture sounds.
- Gandha pariksha:** The characteristic pleasant aroma of ghrita develops.

- **Shabd pariksha:** A drop of the preparation placed on a fire does not crackle, indicating all water has evaporated and there is absence of moisture in the paste and a characteristic aroma.

6. Filtration and Storage

- Remove the vessel from heat once the signs of completion are achieved.
- Filter the mixture while it is still **warm** through a clean cloth.
- Store the finished product in an **airtight glass container** away from light and moisture

RESULTS

The final formulation, Ardrak Ghrit, contains a complex matrix of nutrients and bioactive compounds. The table below details the primary contents and their roles:

1. Pharmaceutical Description

The classical preparation of ardrak ghrit involves processing Ghrita with ardrak swaras and godugdha and paste of ardrak itself. The liquid media are ardrak swaras and godugdha. The mixture is subjected to Mrdu Agni (mild heating) until Sneha Siddhi Lakṣaṇa – the signs of completion such as absence of froth, proper consistency, and distinct aroma – are observed.

2. Classical Indications

The literature review confirms that *Ardraka Ghrita* is specifically indicated for conditions involving *Agnimandya* (impaired digestion) and *Srotorodha* (channel obstruction). The synthesis of data reveals three primary therapeutic directions:

Gastrointestinal

Effective in Grahani (Malabsorption/IBS), Udarshool, Aruchi in case of grahani there is Deepana-Pachana (Stimulation and Digestion): The primary treatment for Grahani is to rekindle the Mandagni and digest the Ama. Ardraka possesses Katu Rasa and Ushna Virya, which act as a powerful Deepana. Action: It clears the Srotorodha (blockage in the micro-channels) caused by Ama, allowing the Grahani to regain its functional integrity of picking up nutrients and releasing waste (Munchan).

Sneha-Sadhana

Acharya Charaka states that for a patient with a weak digestive fire, Sneha (fats/ghee) is the best stimulant: "Snehameva param vidyāddurbalānalādīpanam" (Ch. Chi 15/201)

- **Therapeutic Role:** Go-Ghrita is unique because it is *Agnivardhana* (increases fire) without causing *Vidaha* (burning sensation).
- **Samskarasya Anuvartana:** Ghee has the property to absorb the medicinal qualities of *Ardraka* while retaining its own cooling and nourishing properties. This ensures the "sharpness" of ginger doesn't irritate the gut lining.

3. Vata-Kapha Shamana *Grahani* often involves the vitiation of *Apana Vayu* (downward wind) and *Kledaka Kapha* (moistening mucus).

- **Ardraka:** Its *Ushna* (hot) and *Tikshna* (sharp) qualities pacify the heavy and cold nature of *Kapha*.
 - **Ghrita:** Its *Snigdha* (unctuous) quality pacifies the *Ruksha* (dryness) of *Vata* that typically causes the colicky pain (*Shoola*) associated with *Grahani*
4. Srotas Shodhana (Channel Cleansing)
In *Grahani*, the intestinal mucosa is often coated with a layer of *Ama*.
- **Therapeutics:** The *Tikshna* (penetrating) attribute of *Ardraka* acts like a brush, scraping away the *Ama* from the *Srotas* (intestinal villi). This restores the absorption capacity of the gut, which is the "Modern Correlation" to treating Malabsorption Syndrome.

3. Pharmacological Properties

- **Ardraka Kalka and Swarasa:** These possess Katu (pungent) Rasa and Ushna (hot) Virya, acting as potent Deepana (appetizer) and Pachana (digestive) agents.
- **Anti-inflammatory and Carminative Action:** Ardraka provides critical anti-inflammatory properties and acts as a carminative to reduce intestinal spasms and gas
- **Go-Ghrita (Cow's Ghee):** It serves as a superior lipid vehicle that improves the intestinal absorption of lipophilic phytochemicals.
- **Mucosal Repair:** Ghrita acts as a mucosal healer, strengthening epithelial integrity and supporting the gut barrier function
- **Role of Godugdha (Cow's Milk):** While milk is the source of the ghee matrix, its inherent Madhura (sweet) Rasa, Madhura Vipaka, and Sheeta (cold) Virya facilitate Vranaropaka (wound healing) actions
- **Inflammatory Management:** The cooling nature of dairy-based lipids helps manage inflammatory conditions, such as those seen in inflammatory bowel disorders, by providing a mild laxative effect and soothing mucosal irritation.
- **Balanced Thermogenesis:** The inclusion of these dairy elements ensures that the Ushna (hot) qualities of Ardraka stimulate Agni (digestive fire) effectively without excessively increasing Pitta or heat, due to the counterbalancing Sheeta (cold) properties of the lipid base.

4. Modern Correlation

In modern terms, the formulation exhibits actions comparable to probiotics, anti-inflammatory agents, and mucosal healers. Studies on ghee-based preparations have demonstrated enhanced absorption of lipophilic phytochemicals, improved gut flora, and reduced intestinal inflammation. The ingredients of ardrak ghrit possess antioxidant and hepatoprotective properties, supporting their role in the management of IBS and colitis.

Component	Active Principles	Therapeutic Action
Adrak (Ginger)	Gingerols, Shogaols, Zingiberene	Thermogenic, anti-emetic, and pro-kinetic.
Go-Ghrita (Cow Ghee)	Butyric acid, Omega-3, Vit A, D, E, K	Bio-enhancer (Anupana), protects gastric mucosa.

The lipid medium ensures that the **Gingerols** (the pungent principles) are stabilized and delivered effectively to the cellular membranes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this review highlight **Ardra Ka Ghrita** as a quintessential example of **Sneha Kalpana**, where the lipid medium (Go-Ghrita) serves as both a therapeutic agent and a sophisticated delivery vehicle. The efficacy of this formulation in managing **Grahani** (Gastrointestinal disorders/IBS) can be analyzed through both Ayurvedic principles and modern pharmacological perspectives.

1. The Synergy of Agni Rakshana

The central challenge in **Grahani** is the state of **Mandagni** (weakened digestive fire). According to the *Charaka Samhita*, **Sneha** (fats) is the most potent agent for stimulating a weak fire without extinguishing it, much like a small amount of oil sustains a flickering flame.

- **Ardra Ka (Zingiber officinale)** provides the **Deepana** (appetizer) and **Pachana** (digestive) catalysts.
- **Go-Ghrita** provides the sustained fuel and protects the **Koshta** (gut) from the potentially irritating **Tikshna** (sharp) and **Ushna** (hot) attributes of ginger.

2. Lipid-Based Bioavailability

From a modern pharmacological lens, **Ardra Ka Ghrita** functions as a **Lipid-Based Drug Delivery System (LBDDS)**.

- **Gingerols and Shogaols**, the primary bioactive compounds in ginger, are lipophilic. Processing them with ghee ensures their stabilization and enhances their transport across the intestinal mucosa.
- This allows the phytochemicals to bypass first-pass metabolism, reaching deeper tissues (**Dhatus**) more effectively than crude ginger powder or juice.

3. Mucosal Healing and Epithelial Integrity

While **Ardra Ka** scrapes away **Ama** (toxic coating) from the intestinal villi, the **Go-Dugdha** (milk) and **Go-Ghrita** (ghee) used in the preparation provide a **Vranaropaka** (healing) effect.

- Modern studies suggest that the **Butyric acid** in ghee is a primary energy source for colonocytes, promoting a healthy gut barrier.
- This dual action—cleansing with ginger and repairing with ghee—addresses the root cause of malabsorption seen in Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and chronic colitis.

4. Balancing the Doshas

A unique aspect of **Ardra Ka Ghrita** is its ability to manage **Vata** and **Kapha** simultaneously without aggravating **Pitta**.

- The **Ushna** (hot) nature of ginger pacifies the coldness of **Vata** and **Kapha**.
- The **Sheeta** (cold) and **Madhura** (sweet) qualities of ghee and milk act as a "thermal buffer," preventing the excess heat from causing **Vidaha** (heartburn or inflammation), which is a common side effect when using dry ginger alone.

CONCLUSION

Ardra Ka Ghrita is a sophisticated example of ancient drug delivery. By combining the pungent, digestive properties of *Zingiber officinale* with the nourishing properties of Cow's Ghee, the formulation provides a potent remedy for metabolic and respiratory sluggishness.

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