Expedition of Kshara Sutra

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Abstract - Kshar sutra in ano rectal disorders has shown miraculous effects and now it’s a Precious gem in the crown of Shalya Tantra. It is one of the very popular modality of treatment nowadays. It is first described in the scriptures of Ayurveda. Since then, how it come in the today’s format; let us know regarding its History….

Key words – Kshar sutra, Sushruta, Chakra-Dutta, Bhavprakash, Vangasena, Rasatarangini, Rasa Kamadhenu.

Introduction - Sushruta the pioneer of Kshara sutra treatment has mentioned Kshara sutra in the context of Chikitsa of the Nadi-Vrana. With this reference Kshara sutra has been focused for Ayurvedic research since 1968. Since then, multi-dimensional use of Kshara sutra has been in practice to treat different diseases by extensive research. Keeping in mind this thought, Kshara sutra is being used surgically to treat the fistula in ano.

Kshara sutra is defined as a Surgico-medicament thread prepared with Snuhi Ksheera, Kshara and Haridra, which is used as a surgical tool in the disease Bhagandara. Regarding the thread, in treatment of Bhagandara, Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine (460 BC), has given its significance as Apolinase thread. Furstenbergh et al (1964) have mentioned the method of Apolinose by which Hippocrates treated Fistula-in-Ano. Hippocrates named the procedure of passing the ligature along the fistulous tract as Apolinose.

Many Ayurvedic authors have given the direction to use the Snuhi Kshara Sutra starting from Chakradatta to Bhavaprakasha. They have made use of Haridra and snuhi in Kshara sutra preparation but none of them have used Kshara.

भावितं रजनीचूर्णः स्नुहीक्षीरे पुनः पुनः | बन्धनात् सुदृढं सूत्रं भिन्नत्त्वायः भगन्दरम् ||

(चक्रदत्त –अशोधिकार)

However they all have advocated using such type of Kshara sutra for the treatment of fistula in Ano. Regarding this view some authors like Charaka, Bhavaprakasha and Vangasena have quoted the name of Kshara sutra to use in different diseases without specific guidelines for the preparation of Kshara sutra.
Chakrapani has mentioned about the methodology of Kshara sutra preparation in his treatise ‘Chakradatta’ to treat Bhagandara.

In twelfth century, Vangasena has enumerated the preparation and application of sutra in his treatise that was used for the treatment of both Arsha and Bhagandara. Later on, Bhavaprakasha has also mentioned similar description regarding Kshara-sutra. Though Chakrapani and Bhavaprakasha have mentioned about the methodology of preparation of Kshara-sutra but they have not christened it as Kshara-sutra. The successive commentators have named it as Kshara-sutra. Though the name is Kshara-sutra but there is no any ingredient of Kshara mentioned as such in the preparation of Kshara-sutra.

Sushruta has advised to prepare the Kshara-sutra coated with Kshara and also paid attention to the necessity of the Kshara to eradicate the disease from the root. In addition, some books related to Rasa Shasta also have given detailed method of preparation for Kshara-sutra.

The description given in “Rasa Chikitsa Vimarsha” is quite similar to that of Bhavaprakasha. “Rasa Kamadhenu” has mentioned the ingredients of Kshara Sutra. According to this text, the threads should be first coated with Arka and Snuhi Ksheera and dried it out. This procedure should be repeated three times, followed by smearing of Kshara but the type of Kshara to be used is not mentioned. Descriptions regarding the method of coatings as well as the number of coatings are available in Rasatarangini –

सुधादुग्धे वस्त्रपूतहिद्राचूर्णसंयुते | निषिक्तेन तु तूलेन स्वल्पेन खलु यत्नः |।
प्रलिप्तं सुहृदं सूत्रं छायायामथ शोषितं | विलिप्य सप्त्धा ह्येवं शोषियत् भिषजां वरः |।
सूत्रमेतत्समाख्यातं क्षारसूत्रं छायायामथ | प्रयोक्तव्यं भागसूत्रं साधानतया सदा |।
(र.त. 24/527-30)

According to this description, fine Haridra Churna should be mixed with Snuhi Ksheera and a thin strong thread should be dipped in this mixture and Chhaya Shushkata is achieved. This procedure should be repeated for seven times. The final thread thus obtained is named as ‘Kshara Sutra’ by the author though it does not contain Kshara as a separate entity.

However it was Prof. P. J. Deshpandey at Banaras Hindu University, who took the lead after ancient Acharyas for exploring the technique, and modified and standardized it with the help of modern science and technology.

The treatment was put to clinical trials in patient of Bhagandara and many scientific papers published. The scientific research work titled “Management of Fistula-in-ano, A new technique with review of 200 cases” of Dr. Deshpande was presented at 24th Annual Surgeons and Teaching Seminar of International Academy of Proctology, San Diego, USA in 1972. Dr. P. J. Deshpande and his associates had done extensive research and had come forward with a scientific and standard method of preparing the Kshara Sutra for the management of Fistula-in-ano.
The Kshara sutra therapy which was developed by Prof. P. J. Deshpande was scientifically proved its effectiveness in multi centric trials and has emerged as a special treatment in the field of Proctology. Apart from that, at the Department of Shalya Shalakya, Gujarat Ayurved University, and Jamnagar many work done on Kshara-sutra treatment for the disease Bhagandara under the guidance of Prof. Kulwant Singh. Later on various other places in India and abroad started Kshara-sutra treatment in Bhagandara (Fistula-in-Ano) and piles patients. The Kshara-sutra treatment is now a well-accepted Ayurvedic technique for treating the ano-rectal diseases viz. Fistula-in-Ano, Arsha (Piles), Parikartika (Fissures with tags) etc.

The modern surgeons have also accepted and advising this treatment to their patients who suffer from diseases of anus especially fistula- in-ano as a non-surgical management.


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