

**KASAHARA MAHAKASHAYA OF CHARAK SAMHITA: A CRITICAL REVIEW**Shalu Sharma<sup>1</sup>, Om Parkash Sharma<sup>2</sup>

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**ABSTRACT**

The term “Kasa” is frequently used in ancient Ayurvedic classics. The in-depth knowledge of the *Dravyas* is essential for achieving success in treatment. *Dravyas* have been classified in the Classical texts based on very keen and intelligent observations of our Acharyas. A comprehensive classification of the *Dravyas* is presented in the form of *Panchaashat Mahakashaya* by Acharya Charaka. *Kasa* is a disease of *pranavaha srotas* and mainly vitiation of *vata* (*Prana* and *Udana*) and *Kapha*. *Kasahar Mahakashaya* is the 36<sup>th</sup> *Mahakashaya* of Acharya Charaka which consist of ten *Dravyas* i, e *Draksha*, *Abhaya*, *Amalaka*, *Pippali*, *Duralabha*, *Shringi*, *Kantakari*, *Visscher*, *Punarnava* and *Tamalaki*. This work is carried out to critically analyse the pharmacological properties of all the ten *Dravyas* mentioned in *Kasahar Mahakashaya*, on the basis of Ayurvedic text as well as Modern research. Here an attempt has been made to critically analyse the pharmacological properties of *Kasahar Mahakashaya Dravya* to find out the probable mode of action of these *Dravyas* on *Kasa* and it is concluded that *Kasahara Mahakashaya* is the complete wholistic designed formulation with special reference to *Kasa* according to Acharya Charaka.

**Keywords:** Charak Samhita, Ayurveda, Dravya, Kasa, Kasahar Mahakashaya.

## INTRODUCTION

“द्राक्षाभयामलकपिप्पलीदुरालभाशृङ्गीकण्टकारिकावृश्चिरपु  
नर्नवातामलक्य इति दशेमानि कासहराणि भवन्ति”

Acharya Charaka has established the perfect combination of ten drugs in *Kasahara Mahakashaya* which is the 36<sup>th</sup> *Mahakashaya* among *Panchashata Mahakashaya*<sup>1</sup>. *Panchashata Mahakashaya* of Acharya Charaka is the most authentic and efficacious combination of ten drugs each in the form of *Kashaya*. Thus, he has given Fifty *Mahakashaya*.

Acharya Sushruta has been classified in the form of *Saptatrinshata Gana* in which the description of pharmacological actions of each *Gana* is also mentioned. *Guna - Karmas* of *Dravyas* has been separately explained in *Sutra Sthana*, Chapter 46. While explaining *Kasa Chikitsa*, Acharya Sushruta has given equal importance to the *Kasahara Mahakashaya Dravyas* given by Acharya Charaka and mentioned the *Kasahara Yogas*.

*Nighantus* provide information regarding the *Dravyas* which are traditional and authentic. *Nighantus* is the first reliable classical text which laid emphasis on the correct identification of the *Dravyas* on the basis of Morphology and Actions. *Dravyas* of *Kasahara Mahakashaya* is found to have almost similar *Rasapanchaka* and *Guna-karma* in *Nighantus* too. *Paryaya* of *Dravyas* is also described in *Nighantus*.

Acharya Charaka strongly stated that every substance on this earth can be beneficial in treatment, if and when applied with appropriate planning for a specific purpose<sup>2</sup>

*Kasa* is one of the important diseases and is discussed widely by all the *Brihatrayi*, *Laghutrayi*, and modern texts as symptoms of many diseases and the independent disease itself. *Kapha* gets aggravated due to various etiological factors and brings obstruction for the movement of *Vata* in the *Uras* leading to aggravation of *Pranavata* and *Udana Vata*. As a result, *Vata* moves upwards, afflicts the channels of circulation in the upper part of the body, and gets lodged in the throat & chest. This agitated *Vata* enters & fills up all the channels of *Siras* to cause bending & stretching of the body, jaws, sides of neck & eyes. Further, *Vata* brings contraction & stiffness of the eyes, back, chest & sides of the chest, giving rise to *Kasa* which may be dry or with sputum. It is associated with severe pain & loud sound like that of a broken bronze<sup>3,4</sup>.

The cough reflex is the irritation of the mucus membrane of the larynx or tracheobronchial tree that causes coughing. The cough reflex is almost essential to life, for the cough is the means by which the passages of the lungs are maintained of foreign matter.

*Rasapanchaka* and *Dosha-Karma* of all the *Dravyas* are tabulated as under to show the similarity and synchronization for the resultant *Kasahara* action.

### Materials and methods

*Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Vagbhata*, *Dhanwantari Nighantu*, *Shodhala Nighantu*, *Madanapala Nighantu*, *Kaiyadeva Nighantu*, *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*, *Raj Nighantu*, Modern medical databases (PubMed, Scirus, Science Direct and Scopus).

## DISCUSSION

*Rasapanchaka* and *Dosha-Karma* of all the *Dravyas* are tabulated as under to show the similarity and synchronization for the resultant *Kasahara* action.

**Table 1:** Showing Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka and Dosha Karma of the *Dravyas* of *Kasahara Mahakashaya*

S. N	DRA-VYAS	RASA	GUNA	VIRYA	VIPAKA	DOSHA KARMA
1.	<i>Draksha</i>	<i>Madhura, Kashaya, Amla</i>	<i>Guru, Snigdha, Mridu</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vata -Pitta Shamak</i>
2.	<i>Abhaya</i>	<i>Madhura, Amla, Katu, Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridosha Shamak</i>
3.	<i>Amalaki</i>	<i>Madhura, Amla, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridosha Shamak</i>
4.	<i>Pippali</i>	<i>Katu, Tikta</i>	<i>Snigdha, Teekshna, Natisnigdha, Laghu, Ushna</i>	<i>Sheeta, Anushn, Natiushn, Atiushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Kapha- vata Shamak</i>
5.	<i>Duralabha</i>	<i>Madhura, Amla, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu, Sara</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vata-Pitta Shamak</i>
6.	<i>Shringi</i>	<i>Kashaya, Tikta</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha- vata Shamak</i>
7.	<i>Kantakari</i>	<i>Katu, Tikta</i>	<i>Laghu, Sara, Ruksha, Ushna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha- vata Shamak</i>
8.	<i>Vrishchir</i>	<i>Madhura, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Sara, Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Tridosha Shamak</i>
9.	<i>Punarnava</i>	<i>Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Ushna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhur, Katu</i>	<i>Tridosha Shamak</i>
10.	<i>Tamalaki</i>	<i>Madhura, Amla, Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu, Sheeta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Kapha –Pitta, Shamak</i>

- ❖ These Medicinal plants exhibit diverse pharmacological actions. Pharmacological actions and chemical composition of all the *Dravyas* are tabulated as under to show the similarity and synchronization of the resultant *Kasahara* action.

**Table 2:** Showing Pharmacological Actions and Chemical Composition of Kasahara Mahakashaya Drugs

Name	Latin Name	Family	Parts used	Pharmacological actions	Chemical composition
<i>Draksha</i>	<i>Vitis vinifera</i> Linn.	VITACEAE	Fruit.	Antioxi-dant, <sup>5</sup> antibacteri-al, <sup>6</sup> anti-histaminic, Use in cough & respiratory tract catarrh, <sup>7</sup> Anti-inflammatory. <sup>8</sup>	Flavonoids viz, quercetin, rutin, kaempferol, and luteolin. phenolic acids and $\beta$ -sitosterol. <sup>9</sup>
<i>Abhaya</i>	<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	COMBRETACEAE	Fruit rind, tender fruits.	Anti-asthmatic, mast cell stabiliser, <sup>10</sup> immunomodulatory, <sup>11</sup> antibacterial, <sup>12</sup> Anti-tussive <sup>14</sup>	Tannins, gallic acid, chebulagic acid. <sup>14</sup>
<i>Amalaki</i>	<i>Emblica officinalis</i> Gaertn.	EUPHORBIACEAE	Fruit pulp/fruit rind	Anti-Inflammatory, <sup>15</sup> anti-oxidant, <sup>16</sup> immunomodulatory, <sup>17</sup> antitussive, <sup>18</sup> anti-microbial, <sup>19</sup> Anti-asthmatic. <sup>20</sup>	Tannins, alkaloids, phenolic, amino acids, carbohydrates, vitamin C, 3 Ethylgallic acids. <sup>21</sup>
<i>Pippali</i>	<i>Piper longum</i> Linn.	PIPERACEAE	Fruit and root.	Antimicrobial, <sup>22</sup> antiasthmatic, <sup>23</sup> anti-inflammatory, <sup>24</sup> immunomodulatory, <sup>25</sup> mast cell stabiliser and Bronchodilator, <sup>26</sup> anti-histaminic, <sup>27</sup> anti-tubercular. <sup>28</sup>	Piperine, alkaloid, sesamin dihydrostigasterol <sup>29</sup>
<i>Duralabha</i>	<i>Fagonia Cretica</i> Linn.	ZYGOPHYLLACEAE	Whole plant, Yava Sarkara	Antioxidant, <sup>30</sup> analgesic, <sup>31</sup> anti-inflammatory, <sup>32</sup> anti-allergic, <sup>33</sup> anti-microbial. <sup>31</sup>	Saponins, alkaloids, aminoacids <sup>34</sup>
<i>Shringi</i>	<i>Pistacia integerrima</i> Stewart ex Brandis	ANACARDIACEAE	Galls.	Analgesic, <sup>35</sup> anti-inflammatory, <sup>35</sup> antioxidant, <sup>36</sup> antimicrobial, <sup>37</sup> anti-histaminic, <sup>7</sup> expectorant. <sup>7</sup>	Alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, saponins, sterols, and essential oils. <sup>38</sup>
<i>Kantakari</i>	<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i> Schard & Wendl.	SOLANACEAE	Whole plant, root, fruit.	Antioxidant, <sup>39</sup> anti-asthmatic, <sup>40</sup> anti-histaminic, <sup>7</sup> expectorant, <sup>40</sup> mast cell stabilizer. <sup>7</sup>	inorganic nitrate. <sup>41</sup> Carp sterol, solanocarpine, solasonine <sup>42</sup> ,
<i>Vrishchir</i>	<i>Boerhaavia verticillata</i> Poir.	NYCTAGINACEAE	The whole plant, root, leaf.	Antipyretic, anti-cough. <sup>43</sup>	Alkaloids, carbohydrates, <b>tannins</b> . <sup>44</sup>
<i>Punarnava</i>	<i>Boerhaavia diffusa</i> Linn.	NYCTAGINACEAE	Whole plant, root, leaf	Immunomodulatory, <sup>45</sup> anti-inflammatory, <sup>46</sup> expectorant <sup>7</sup>	Flavonoids, boeravinone, punarnavine, boeravinone, alkaloids. <sup>44</sup>
<i>Tamalaki</i>	<i>Phyllanthus niruri</i> Hook f.	EUPHORBIACEAE	Whole plant, root.	Anti-inflammatory, <sup>47</sup> antioxidant, <sup>48</sup> anti-microbial, <sup>49</sup> immune modulatory, <sup>50</sup> anti-asthmatic, <sup>51</sup> anti-pyretic <sup>7</sup> , anti-spasmodic. <sup>7</sup>	Niruricide, <sup>52</sup> lignans, phyllanthin, hypophyllanthin, flavonoids, tannins, alkaloids. <sup>53,54,55</sup>

### **Effect of Draksha on Kasa:**

*Draksha* possesses *Madhura Rasa*, *Snigdha*, *Guru*, *Madhura Vipaka*, and *Vatapittahara*. It is indicated in *Vata Pradhana Kaphaja Kasa* and acts as *Rasayana*. The anti-inflammatory activity of *Draksha* may be attributed to the presence of high content of flavonoids viz, quercetin, rutin, kaempferol, and luteolin in addition to phenolic acids and  $\beta$ -sitosterol which are all reported to have an anti-inflammatory effect. The antioxidant activity of *Draksha* may be attributed to the presence of phenolic acids and flavonoids.

### **Effect of Abhaya on Kasa:**

*Abhaya* has *Madhura*, *Amla*, *Katu*, *Kashaya Rasa*, *Laghu*, *Ruksha Guna*, *Ushna Virya*, *Madhura Vipaka* and *Tridosha Shamaka* properties. *Abhaya* is also named '*Pathya*' since it removes obstructions from channels in the body. Based on a recent study report, the ethyl acetate and methanolic extract of the fruit of *Abhaya* demonstrated significant antitussive activity. The traditional use of the fruit of *Abhaya* is used in the treatment of cough and respiratory disorders.

### **Effect of Amalaki on Kasa:**

*Amalaki* has *Amla Pradhana*, *Pancha Rasa*, *Guru*, *Ruksha Guna*, *Sheeta Virya*, *Madhura Vipaka* and is *Tridosahara* as well as a *Rasayana*. The dry extract of *Amalaki* exhibits antitussive activity not only due to ant-spasmodic and antioxidant efficacy effects but also to its effect on mucus secretion in the airways.

### **Effect of Pippali on Kasa:**

*Pippali* with the *Guna* like *Katu Rasa*, *Laghu*, and *Tikshna Guna*, causes alleviation of *Kapha Dosha* with opposite properties like *Madhura*, *Guru*. *Pippali* with *Tikshna Guna* causes *Bhedana* of *Kapha*, which is stuck to the *Srotas* by *Picchila* and *Sandra Guna*. Piperine, which is the prime constituent of *Pippali* has anti-inflammatory activity. It is effective against many gram-negative and gram-positive bacteria.

### **Effect of Duralabha on Kasa:**

*Duralabha* has *Madhura Rasa*. *Madhura rasa* has the dominance of *Prithvi* and *Jala Mahabhuta* in its formation or composition. It alleviates *Vata* and *Pitta* due to its *Brimhana*, *Balya*, *Snigdha*, *Sheeta*, and

*Guru Guna*. *Duralabha* has *Katu Rasa*, *Katu rasa* comprises of *Vayu* and *Agni Mahabhuta*. *Katurasa* breaks or disintegrates the accumulation of *Kapha*. It has *Tikta rasa*, *Tikta rasa* alleviates *Pitta-Kapha* by its *Laghu-Ruksha guna*. Having *Kashaya Rasa* alleviates *Pitta-Kapha* due to the presence of *Prithvi-Vayu Mahabhuta*, so it is useful in all types of *Kasa*. *Duralabha* acts as an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-microbial it has been proved in modern research papers. It cures cough due to the presence of any inflammation and bacterial infection in the respiratory tract.

### **Effect of Shringi on Kasa:**

*Shringi* has *Tikta Rasa*. *Tikta rasa* alleviates *Pitta-Kapha* by its *Laghu-Ruksha guna*. *Guru Guna* increases the strength of the body. Due to *Ushna Virya*, it leads to *Vilayana* of *Kapha* and generates easy expectoration, this clears the channels and hence, vitiation of *Vata* gets correct so it provides relief from cough. It acts as an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-microbial, it has been proved in modern research papers. So, it inhibits inflammation and bacterial infection in the respiratory tract and cures cough. Being antihistaminic inhibits the physiological effects of histamine so that it is used especially in the treatment of allergic cough.

### **Effect of Kantakari on Kasa:**

*Kantakari* has *Tikta* and *Katu Rasa*, *Ruksha* and *Laghu Guna*, *Ushna Virya* and *Katu Vipaka*, hence *Deepana* in nature. It is quoted as the best drug of choice for *Kasa* by *Acharya Vagbhatta*. *Kantakari powder* is anti-tussive and is effective in bronchial asthma and nonspecific cough. Its root is an expectorant. The expectorant action is due to inorganic nitrate content.

### **Effect of Vrishchir on Kasa:**

*Vrishchir* has *Katu Rasa*. *Katu rasa* comprises *Vayu* and *Agni Mahabhuta*. *Katu rasa* breaks or disintegrates the accumulation of *Kapha*. The presence of *Madhura rasa* gives strength to the body. It has *Tikta Rasa*, *Tikta rasa* is composed of *Vayu* and *Aakash Mahabhuta*. *Tiktarasa* alleviates *Pitta-Kapha* by its *Laghu-Ruksha guna*, it also has *Kashaya Rasa* which is made up of *Prithvi-Vayu Mahabhuta*. and allevi-

ates *Pitta-Kapha* so it can be used in *Vataj* and *Kaphaja Kasa*.

**Effect of Punarnava on Kasa:**

*Punarnava* has *Ushna Virya*, which leads to *Vilayana* of *Kapha* and generates easy expectoration, this clears the channels and hence, vitiation of *Vata* gets correct. *Punarnava* have *Ruksha Guna*, it is *Kaphahara* in nature. *Punarnava* is immunomodulatory which helps in eliminating the infection or regulating the allergic responses. *Punarnava* is expectorant in nature, promotes the secretion of sputum by the air passages, and treats the cough.

**Effect of Tamalaki on Kasa:**

*Tamalaki* have *Madhura Vipaka*. It promotes the formation of *Dhatu*s in the body. It has *Tikta Rasa*. *Tikta rasa* is composed of *Vayu* and *Aakasha Mahabhuta*. *Tikta rasa* alleviates *Pitta-Kapha* by its *Laghu-Ruksha guna*. *Tamalaki* has *Kashaya Rasa*, which is made up of *Prithvi-Vayu Mahabhuta*, it alleviates *Pitta-Kapha*, so it cures *Pittaja* and *Kaphaja Kasa*. *Tamalaki* has anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory properties, it can be used for infectious disorders of the respiratory system.

Most of the drugs including *Draksha*, *Abhaya*, *Amalaki*, *Pippali*, and *Tamalaki* have shown anti-microbial or anti-bacterial properties, hence can be used for infectious disorders of the respiratory system.

**Antihistaminic:** a drug or other compound that inhibits the physiological effects of histamine, used especially in the treatment of allergies *Draksha*, *Pippali*, *Shringi*, and *Kantakari* are antihistaminic.

**Antitussive:** tending or having the power to act as a cough suppressant *Abhaya*, and *Amalaki* are antitussive drugs.

From a modern perspective, these drugs act as potent antitussives probably by blocking the vagal sensory afferents by counter-irritant and local anaesthetic mechanisms. *Piperine*, one of the principal components present in *Pippali* has recorded its role in modulating the membrane permeability which may permit potassium ion influx and have a role on the ion gated mechanism of the mucosal C - type vagal receptors and may up- regulate the cough threshold.

**Expectorant:** The drug which promotes the secretion of sputum by the air passages, is used to treat cough. *Shringi*, *Kantakari*, *Punarnava* are expectorant in nature.

**Mast cell stabilizer:** They block mast cell degranulation, stabilizing the cell and thereby preventing the release of histamine and related mediators. *Abhaya*, *Pippali*, *Kantakari* are mast cell stabilizer in nature. All the pros and cons have been taken care of while deciding on this combination of Drugs. All the *Dravyas* work synergistically by their pharmacological properties to cover every aspect of the disease. Thus, it is clear now that these ten drugs have also been proved on experimental bases for *Kasahara* Action.

## CONCLUSION

*Kasahara Mahakashaya* is one of the most important groups of drugs among the 50 mahakashaya. From the classical literature and recent clinical trials, it is observed that the drugs of this mahakashaya have the potential to treat the *Kasa* effectively. It should be used singly or in combined form in different pharmaceutical forms as per the need. Hence, it is proved that these ten drugs work synergistically by their pharmacological properties to produce the resultant *Kasahara* action. *Kasahara Mahakashaya* is the complete wholistic designed formulation related to the treatment of *Kasa*.

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