

**ROLE OF AGNIKARMA IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW****Ajit Kumar<sup>1\*</sup>, Vishal Tiwari<sup>2</sup> and Shailendra<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1,2</sup>PG Scholar, Shalya Tantra Dept. Govt. Ayurved P.G. College & Hospital, Varanasi.<sup>3</sup>Reader, Shalya Tantra Dept. Govt. Ayurved P.G. College & Hospital, Varanasi.Article Received on  
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The word Agnikarma is made up of Agni and karma, which means application of heat, which involve procedure using a metal rod i.e. shalaka in aseptic manner. Agni Karma is one of the important parasurgical procedures described in Ayurvedic Samhita. Sushruta, Charaka and Vagbhata describe the role of Agni karma in debilitating disorders. Vagbhata even termed it as the best amongst all kind of therapeutic procedures in Ayurvedic armory because of nonrecurrence. AgniKarma is one of the important procedure described in Ayurveda Acharya Dalhana have given explanation regarding the shapes of AgniKarma in his commentry. This AgniKarma is original idea of

modern cauterization procedure. Agnikarma or thermal cauterization is one among the anushastras (Substitute of surgical instrument) or parasurgical technique mentioned in Ayurveda. It is explained to provide complete relief in certain chronic diseases which are not cured by herbal medicine, surgical interventions and alkaline cauterization. This Agnikarma is utilized as preventive measure, as post operative procedure and haemostatic manner.

**KEYWORDS:** Agnikarma, Cauterization, Anushastra, Parasurgical procedure.**INTRODUCTION**

Shalya Tantra or surgery is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda. Sushruta has mentioned different methods of management of diseases, such as Bheshaja karma, Kshara Karma, Agni karma, Shastrakarma and Raktamokshana. Acharya in medical science Agni karma means application of Agni directly or indirectly with the help of different materials to relieve the patient from disease. According to Dalhana, commentator of Sushruta, Agni karma is classified as Agni krita karma or the karma or action carried out by Agni. Sushruta indicated 'Agni karma' in various disorders of skin, muscles, vessels, ligaments joints and bones.

Agnikarma has been explained as one among the Anushastra & Upanyantra. He further mentioned that a disease once treated by Agnikarma does not recur and does not get infected easily. Therefore Agnikarma has emerged as an integral part of the Ayurvedic therapeutics.

### **Agnikarma also describes in vedas**

In Rig-veda application of Agni has been mentioned in context to obstetric and gynecological disorders. The verses indicate application of Agnikarma in order to get rid of microorganisms in vagina and uterus of the women to save the fetus from getting infected. Yajur-veda has symbolized Agni and its purpose in sheeta (cold) and related disorders.

### **According to modern point of view**

Tissue destruction with the help of a hot instrument, an electric current or a caustic substance is known as cauterization and the substance used for it, is known as cautery. The main forms of cauterization used now a days are electro-cautery and chemical cautery. Accidental burns can be considered as cauterization as well. In modern medicine no use of therapeutic burn i.e. *Samyak Dagdha*. But on the other hand, Agnikarma used for coagulation and tissue destruction are being used. It is one of the important parasurgical procedures of branding by fire (Thermal cautery). Cauterization used to stop bleeding, especially during amputations, surgical procedures etc.

### **Literature review on agnikarma**

The word Agnikarma consists of ‘Agni’ + ‘Karma’ i.e. Heat + Procedure. Agni: *Vyutpatti*:  
The word Agni was derived from the Dhatu ‘Agigato’ and formed as- “Since, The Agni has acquires the highest position in the body as compared to other.” “The word ‘Agni’ has derived from the Dhatu ‘Agativyapnoti’ which means spreading fastly everywhere’

### **Nirukti of agnikarma**

The Nirukti of Agnikarma can be as follow According to classical texts;

*‘Agnaukarma Homey Agnihotradau Agnikarma tatah*

*Krtve Iti Smruti, Agnikaryadayo Anyatra’*

*‘Agnina Kritva Yat Karma, Agne Sambandhi Va Yat Karma, Tatagnikarma’*

From the above citation, it is understood that the term “Agnikarma” was used for various meanings in all the conditions in which the use of Agni was unexceptional and unconditional.

### Material required for agnikarma

Various materials was described in classical text for Agnikarma, which are from plant origin, animal origin and metals. These different materials can be classified as under-

अथेमानि दहनोपकरणानि तद्यथा -- पिप्पल्यजा शकृद्गोदन्तशरशलाकाजाम्बवौष्ठेतरलौहाः  
क्षौद्रगुडस्नेहाश्च | तत्र, पिप्पल्यजा शकृद्गोदन्तशरशलाकास्त्वग्गतानां, जाम्बवौष्ठेतरलौहाः  
मांसगतानां, क्षौद्रगुडस्नेहाः सिरास्नायुसन्ध्यस्थिगतानां || (सुश्रुत )

- Snigdha: Kshaudra, Ghrita, Taila (on Sira, Sanayu, Asthi and Sandhi).
- Rooksha: Godanta, Shara, Shalaka, Ajashakrida, Pippali (on Twaka and Mamsa).
- Plant origin: Pippali (Piper longum), Yashtimadhu (Glycerrhiza glabra), Haridra (Curcuma longa), Guda (Jaggery), Sneha (Oil), Bee-wax.
- Animal origin: Godanta (Cow's Tooth), Ajashakrida (Goat's pellet like stool), Ghrita (Cooked butter).
- Metallic origin: Shara and Shalaka made up of Suvarn (Gold), Tamra (Copper), Rajat (Silver), Loha (Iron) and Panchdhatu(amalgam of five metals), Suryakanta (a kind of crystal).
- There are various types of agnikarma described in ayurveda;

#### 1. According to shape

तत्र वलय बिंदु विलेख प्रतिसरणानीतिदहनविशेषाः || (सुश्रुत)

- Valaya (round)
- Bindu (Dot-like)
- Vilekha (Linear pattern)
- Pratisarana (Rubbing at the site)  
Another 3 by acharya Vagbhatt (Astangsangrah)
- Ardachandra – Half moon shape.
- Swastika- shape of Swastika Yantra.
- Ashtapada- shape containing eight limbs

#### 2. According to dhatu burned during agnikarma

तत्र, शब्दप्रादुर्भावो दुर्गन्धता त्वकसंकोचश्च त्वग्दग्धे |

- Twakdagdha - The signs of burning of skin are sound production, bad smelling, shrinking of skin.

कपोतवर्णताऽल्पश्वयथुवेदना शुष्कसऽकुचितव्रणता च मांसदग्धे ।

- Mamsa dagdha - Signs of Mamsa Dagdha are colour which seems like that of the pigeon (ashy, dark grey), mild swelling, pain, dryness and shrinking of the wound.

कृष्णोन्नतव्रणता स्त्रावसन्निरोधातश्च सिरा स्नायुदग्धे ।

- Sira snayudagdha -Signs of Sira snayu Dagdha are ulcer becoming black and elevated, cessation of exudation.

रुक्षारुणता कर्कशस्थिरव्रणता च संध्यस्थि दग्धे ।

- Sandhi asthidagdha -Signs of Sandhi asthi Dagdha are appearance of dryness and slight red colour, roughness and firmness.

### Suitable time for agnikarma (Agnikarma kaal)

तत्राग्निकर्म सर्वर्तुषु कुर्यादन्यत्र शरद् ग्रीष्माभ्यां; तत्राप्यात्ययिकेऽग्निकर्मसाध्ये व्याधौ तत्प्रत्यनीकं विधिं कृत्वा ॥

Agnikarma can be done in all season, except Sharat and Grishma . In Sharat, Prakopa of Pitta and Agnikarma also aggravates Pitta which may lead to be Pitta vitiated disorders. Agnikarma is contraindicated in Sharat and Grishma Ritu but in case of emergency, it can be done in all seasons after adopting counter methods. Dalhanacharya mentions Sheetachadana, Sheeta Virya Bhojana and Pradeha with Sheeta Virya Dravya (covering the site of burning with moist cloth, use of cold foods and applying cool pastes), as the counter methods to decrease the effect of burning.

### Procedure of agni karma

#### 1. Poorva karma

- Necessary equipments used for Agnikarma should be kept ready.
- Patient should be given Sheeta and Picchila food.
- In diseases like Mooda Garbha, Ashmari, Bhagandara, Udara Roga, Arshas and Mukha Rogas, Agnikarma should be done empty stomach.

#### 2. Pradhan karma

- By considering rogi bala, kaal, ritu, vyadi bala, marma etc doing the Agnikarma by selecting the material heating it and placing over the site for required time.

### 3. Paschat karma

- Apply paste of Ghrita and Madhu on burnt area.
- Apply paste of drugs which are Snigdha and Sheeta Virya.

### Pathya apathya

All the Pathya – Apathya mentioned for Vrana are to be considered. Susruta has dedicated a separate chapter named as Vranitopasaniya for the description of Pathya and Apathya of Vranita.

### DISCUSSION

Agnikarma is not just cauterization procedure but it is intentional therapeutic heat burn therapy where different types of materials are being used for performing Agnikarma on different types of tissue and disorders. Importantly - use of Ghrita application for all kind of healing paste, as a base, applied post Agnikarma procedure. Ghrita and honey provides a moist environment, which is helpful for healthy granulation of tissue, honey has healing, debriding and antibiotic properties. Bee wax is also useful during repairing phase of wound healing.

### CONCLUSION

Agnikarma has given important place in surgery by Acharya Sushruta and it is believed that non recurrence of disease treated by Agnikarma. In modern time also it is used as therapeutic burns or cauterization. In the conventional systems also it is practicing for the same like arrest bleeding and save life. So it is an emergency as well as life saving procedure which is explained by our Acharyas with utmost importance.

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