

## EFFICACY OF CHATURBEEJA CHURNA IN WOMEN'S WELLNESS – A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Since evolution, women have been worshipped as the creator of new life (*Janani*) and blessed with the power of motherhood, as rightly said, “God created mother because he cannot be everywhere”. The preparation towards motherhood or reproductive function starts in adolescence. Puberty is the state of becoming functionally capable of procreation. It is marked with the start of menstruation. But menstruation, an inevitable natural occurrence in any girl's life, can be wrought with physical, mental, emotional problems, dysmenorrhea and premenstrual symptoms. In folk medicines, *Chaturbeeja* has been used for variety of applications in women for common problems like painful and scanty menstruation. An attempt has been made to understand the pharmacodynamic and pharmacokinetic effects of *chaturbeeja churna* in our body through the Ayurvedic concepts and modern correlation clinically proven by researches.

**KEYWORDS:** *Chaturbeeja, Menstruation, Puberty, adolescence, dysmenorrhea*

### INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurvedic* texts, diseases of the female reproductive system have been collectively described as *Yoni Vyapada*<sup>1</sup>. There are 20 *Yoni Vyapada* listed in *Samhita*, among which *Udavarta Yoni Vyapada* is most commonly seen. *Udavarta Yoni Vyapada*<sup>2</sup> is one in which the woman feels pain along with frothy menstruation. There is distress in the peri-menstrual period along with systemic symptoms. Almost all the female diseases are caused by vitiation of *Vayu*<sup>3</sup>. These symptoms may disrupt the patient's normal functioning, quality of life and interpersonal relationships. In the light of modern medicine, it can be compared with primary dysmenorrhea where women

experience pain during menstruation, not associated with any pelvic pathology<sup>4</sup>. Pain usually occurs at onset of menstruation and is relieved after onset of proper flow. Premenstrual syndrome is also common problem in women. It is a group of symptoms which occur a few days before menstruation in every cycle. These include irritability, anxiety, depression, constipation, bloating, food cravings etc. These problems are almost unattended and illtreated due to ignorance on the part of females. For many women, lifestyle changes can help relieve premenstrual syndrome (PMS) symptoms. But depending on the severity of symptoms, one or more medications may be prescribed

for premenstrual syndrome<sup>5</sup>. In addition, antidepressants or sedatives may be needed for those suffering depression, anxiety or insomnia<sup>6</sup>.

Ayurveda has considered *Chikitsa Chatushpada*<sup>7</sup> i.e. four pillars of treatment for the successful and fast treatment of a disease. They are the *Chikitsaka*, *Aushadha*, *Paricharaka* and *Rogi*. *Aushadha* stands second signifying its importance in the treatment. Emphasis has been laid on the thorough knowledge of *Dravya*. The best *Vaidya* must know its implementation properly in accordance with the status of disease and patient<sup>8</sup>.

It is also stated that the use of proper drug at proper time is like nectar as it relieves off the disease. *Acharya Charaka* said that there is no substance in the universe which cannot be used as a medicine, subject to rational use with definite objective<sup>9</sup>. *Aushadha* literally means relieving the fear of a disease. Selection of *Dravya* or *Aushadha* must be done with the greatest care considering their *Rasa* (Taste), *Guna* (Properties), *Virya* (Potency), *Vipaka* (Post digestive effect) and *Prabhava* (Specific properties).

India is the land of spices and continues to be one of the leading producers of medicinal plants in the world. The beneficial effects of various plants used as spices / seasoning agents in health ailments is well known. To promote the proper use of such medicines and to determine their potential as sources of new drugs, it is essential to study medicinal plants, which have folklore reputation in a more intensified way<sup>10</sup>. One such medicine is *chaturbeeja churna* which has long been part

of folklore medicine used in female problems all over the world. An attempt is made to understand the pharmacodynamic and pharmacokinetic effects of *chaturbeeja churna* in our body through the Ayurvedic concepts and modern correlation clinically proven by researches.

#### CHATURBEEJA CHURNA<sup>11</sup>:

*Chaturbeeja* literally means four seeds and it contains *Methika*, *Chandrashura*, *Kalajaji* and *Yavanika* seeds in equal quantity.

**Table 1. INGREDIENTS:**

| Sl.No | Ingredient                       | Botanical Name                   | Quantity |
|-------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| 01    | Methi seeds (fenugreek seeds)    | <i>Trigonella foenum grossum</i> | 1 part   |
| 02    | Chandrashur seeds (Common Cress) | <i>Lepidium sativum</i>          | 1 part   |
| 03    | Kalajaji seeds (Black Cumin)     | <i>Nigella sativa</i>            | 1 part   |
| 04    | Yavanika seeds (Ajovain seeds)   | <i>Trachispermum ammi</i>        | 1 part   |

It is mentioned in *Bhava Prakasha*<sup>12</sup> that *Chaturbeeja Churna*, which contains *Methika*, *Chandrashura*, *Kalajaji* and *Yavanika*, when taken daily cures *Vata* disorders, *Ajirna* (Indigestion), *Shoola* (Pain), *Adhmana*, *Parshvashoola* and *Kativyatha* (Backache). These drugs have *Vata-shamaka*, *Deepana* (stomachic), *Shoolahara* (Pain killer), *Jwarahara* (Antipyretic), *Garbhashaya-shodhaka*. Detailed properties as mentioned in following table.

**TABLE 2: PROPERTIES OF CONSTITUENTS<sup>13</sup>:**

| DRAVYA (Drugs) | GUNA (Properties) | RASA (Taste) | VIPAKA (Post digestive) | VIRYA (Potency) | Effect on Dosha | Karma |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
|----------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|

|                       |                |             | effect) |       |            | (Actions)                                                                    |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Methika <sup>14</sup> | Laghu, Snigdha | Katu, Tikta | Katu    | Ushna | V. K. √    | Ushna, Deepana, Arochakahara, Vaataprashamani and Jwaranashini <sup>15</sup> |
| Chandrashura          | Laghu, Snigdha | Katu, Tikta | Katu    | Ushna | V. K. √    | Shoolaprashamana; Asrigvaatgadanashaka Balapushtivivardhanam <sup>16</sup>   |
| Kalajaji              | Laghu, Ruksha  | Katu, Tikta | Katu    | Ushna | V. K. √ PA | Garbhashayavishudhikara                                                      |
| Yavani                | Laghu, Ruksha  | Katu, Tikta | Katu    | Ushna | V. K. √ PA | Udaranahahara Gulmahara <sup>18</sup>                                        |

### DOSE AND ANUPANA

*Chaturbeeja Churna*: 3 gm at bed time with lukewarm water for whole month. Its dose can be adjusted according to the *Prakriti* of the patient.

### MODE OF ACTION

*Chaturbeeja Churna* has *Snigdha Guna* and *Ushna Virya* with *Vata-Kaphahara Dosha-karma* which pacifies the vitiated *Vata Dosha* mainly due to *Ushna Virya*. Further, *Laghu Guna*, *Ruksha Guna*, *Katu Tikta Rasa* pacifies the slight *Kapha* vitiation. Thus, the properties of *Chaturbeeja Churna* can be illustrated as follows: -

The drug mainly works with *Ushna Virya* and *Vata Kapha Prashamana* as it is the

most important property which determines the action of the drug. The prepared *powder* has bitter (*Tikta*) taste, thus having *Mukhashodhaka* and *Agnivardhaka* properties. So, it increases appetite, digestion and reduces nausea and vomiting. In formulations, component drugs have synergistic and antagonistic actions and net effect is seen in the final formulation. As mentioned in *Charaka Samhita*, drugs act by *Rasa*, or by *Virya*, or by *Guna*, or by *Vipaka*. Some drugs act by *Prabhava*.

Individually, the drugs also have the properties which help to cure dysmenorrhea, premenstrual symptoms, scanty periods; systemic problems in females etc. as mentioned in the following tables:

**TABLE 3: PHARMACOLOGICAL PROPERTIES AS MENTIONED IN AYURVEDIC TEXTS**

| DRUG                | PROPERTIES                                                  | USES                                                              |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Methika</b>      | Appetizer, Carminative, Emmenagogue<br>Astringent, Diuretic | Anorexia, fever, diarrhea, Vomiting, bloating, Menstrual function |
| <b>Chandrashura</b> | Appetizer, Diuretic and Emmenagogue                         | Low backache, Rejuvenation                                        |
| <b>Kalajaji</b>     | <i>Rajo-rodhanashaka</i> , Diuretic, Ecboic                 | Flatulence, Dysmenorrhoea                                         |
| <b>Yavani</b>       | Analgesic, Laxative                                         | Flatulence, Abdominal pain                                        |

**TABLE 4: CHEMICAL COMPOSITION AND ACTIONS<sup>19</sup>**

| DRUG                             | CHEMICAL COMPOSITION                                   | ACTIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Methika</b>                   | Steroidal saponins, Diosgenin, Flavonoids, salicylates | Anti –diabetic <sup>20</sup> ; Lipolytic; Anti-inflammatory; anti-pyretic; Anti-ulcer activity                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Chandrashura<sup>21</sup></b> | Glycosides, Lepidimide, Phyto-estrogens                | Oestrogenic action, Anti-oxidant, Anti-spasmodic, Diuretic; anti-inflammatory; analgesic; antihypertensive; hypoglycaemic; bronchodilator; phyto estrogenic                                                                                    |
| <b>Kalajaji</b>                  | Thymoquinone Alkaloids, Nigellimine                    | Anti-inflammatory; phyto-estrogenic, Anti-histaminic, lipolytic; Anti-bacterial, Spasmolytic; calcium-antagonistic; anti-tumor; gastro-protective; anti-ulcer                                                                                  |
| <b>Yavanika</b>                  | Thymol                                                 | Anti-spasmodic, muscle relaxant, Diuretic anti-inflammatory; analgesic; antihypertensive; Inhibits platelet aggregation, Muscle relaxant, Anti –oxidant. phyto-estrogenic; Galactogogic; hepato-protective action; abortifacient <sup>22</sup> |

→The formulation contains phyto-estrogens which have pronounced **estrogenic** activity better than estrogen thus combating the hormone deficiency.

→It has significant **spasmolytic<sup>23</sup>** activity mediated through calcium channel blockade. Thus, relieves the pain by direct action on the myometrium.

→It has proven significant **anti-oxidant** activity, which by **free-radical scavenging<sup>24</sup>**, enhances the immunity and general strength of the body. It increases the pain threshold and facilitates better pain tolerance capacity.

→The formulation has **diuretic** property which prevents the bloating, weight gain and reduces water retention symptoms especially during premenstrual phase.

→Thus, has **anti-inflammatory** action and relieves the pain. It reduces the acidity of gastric secretions, thus preventing nausea and vomiting.

→The drug **alters prostaglandin production** by altering arachidonic acid metabolism. It shows **anti-platelet aggregation activity<sup>25</sup>**, thus preventing clot formation which also causes pain during its passage in menstrual phase.

→It reduces irritation of intestines to cure diarrhoea.

→The drug contains various **minerals** (Iron, Calcium, Phosphorus etc.) and **vitamins** (A, B, C) which are also necessary to maintain good health and proper functioning of the body systems. Thus, all these contribute to better health and improved psychology of the patients, allowing them better pain tolerance and even healthier stress-free life.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Recent researches also have rationalized the folklore uses of these drugs and further help us to scientifically prove the mode of action of the *Chaturbeeja Churna* in dysmenorrhea, premenstrual syndrome; diarrhoea induced

by menstrual pain, low backache and abdominal pain. Moreover, the contents are easily available, cost effective and easy to prepare at home. It is safe and well tolerated. It is effective in conditions arising due to vitiation of *Vata and Kapha* in females like *Agnimandya*; *Arochaka*; menstrual irregularities like scanty menstruation, dysmenorrhea and premenstrual symptoms like fluid retention; irritability etc. It can be prescribed safely to women who usually hesitate to seek medical care. Since it is a widespread premonition that medication can affect reproductive capability of their young girls; women avoid giving them any medicine for their menstrual problems. For them it is a very safe option to use as observed effectively in clinical practice. We can help women especially in rural areas by creating awareness regarding use of these simple spices at home whose effect has also been scientifically proven by researches. There is scope of further research and exploration of the beneficial effects of *Chaturbeeja Churna* on other systemic conditions.

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