



THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL OF DRAKSHADYAGHRITA IN KARSHYA - A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Karshya, a condition closely associated with pediatric undernutrition, is a significant public health issue, particularly in developing countries like India. Ayurvedic texts provide extensive guidance on managing Karshya using Brimhana (nourishing) and Balya (strengthening) therapies. Among the many formulations prescribed, DrakshadyaGhrita—an herbal ghee preparation described in *Yogaratanakara*—stands out due to its unique combination of Deepana (digestive stimulants), Brimhana, and Balya herbs. This review explores the classical references, pharmacological properties, and therapeutic significance of DrakshadyaGhrita in the management of Karshya.

KEYWORDS: DrakshadyaGhrita, Karshya, Ayurveda, Brimhana therapy, Pediatric undernutrition.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, **Karshya** is recognized as a disease of nutritional deficiency resulting from inadequate nourishment of *Rasa Dhatu*, leading to subsequent depletion of *Mamsa Dhatu* and other tissues. It is classified under the *Ashtauninditiya Purusha* described in *Charaka Samhita*, which outlines the signs and symptoms of an emaciated individual, such as visible bones, sunken features, poor strength, and vulnerability to other diseases.^[01]

The formulation of DrakshadyaGhrita, as mentioned in *Yogaratanakara*,^[02] is a polyherbal medicated ghee that incorporates herbs known for their nutritive, immunomodulatory, and digestive-enhancing effects. These properties make it especially suitable for children suffering from Karshya, where poor digestion and nutrient assimilation are primary contributing factors.

Need of Study

Karshya remains a major pediatric health concern. A comprehensive literature review is essential to understand classical Ayurvedic perspectives, evaluate the therapeutic relevance of DrakshadyaGhrita, and establish its potential in modern clinical practice.

CLASSICAL REFERENCE

DRAKSHADYA GHRITA

This formulation is indicated for conditions of **debilitation, weight loss, respiratory issues, anemia, and general weakness**—all of which overlap with the Ayurvedic concept of Karshya.

COMPOSITION AND PROPERTIES OF INGREDIENTS

1. Draksha (*Vitis vinifera* – Grapes)^[03]

Draksha is a well-known Ayurvedic fruit used for its nourishing and restorative properties.

- **Rasa (Taste):** *Madhura* – The sweet taste helps in nourishing the body and promoting strength and energy.
- **Guna (Qualities):** *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Guru* (heavy), *Mridu* (soft) – These attributes support the Brimhana (nourishing) effect and help increase tissue mass.
- **Virya (Potency):** *Sheeta* (cold) – Has a calming and soothing effect, especially on Pitta Dosha.
- **Vipaka (Post-digestive taste):** *Madhura* – Helps in promoting anabolic functions and tissue building.



- **Pharmacological Actions**

- *Brimhana*: Promotes nourishment and healthy tissue development.
- *Balya*: Strengthens the muscles and overall body.
- *Jeevaniya*: Enhances vitality and life force.
- *Pushti-prada*: Provides essential nutrition and improves immunity.
- **Active Compounds**: Contains **malic acid, tartaric acid, racemic acid, and glucose**, which contribute to its antioxidant and energy-boosting effects.
- Draksha serves as a mild, palatable tonic that improves energy levels, supports weight gain, and is ideal for pediatric patients suffering from undernutrition.

2. Yashtimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra* – Licorice Root)^[04]

Yashtimadhu is a revered herb in Ayurveda with a wide range of therapeutic uses.

- **Rasa**: *Madhura* – Provides strength and helps pacify vitiated Doshas.
- **Guna**: *Guru* (heavy), *Snigdha* (unctuous) – Supports nourishment and lubrication of bodily systems.
- **Virya**: *Sheeta* – Cooling and soothing in nature, especially helpful for inflammation and hyperacidity.
- **Vipaka**: *Madhura* – Facilitates tissue regeneration and anabolic activity.



- **Pharmacological Actions**

- *Balya*: Enhances strength and stamina.
- *Brimhana*: Promotes healthy tissue formation and weight gain.
- *Medhya*: Improves cognitive function and mental clarity.
- *Vata-Anulomana*: Helps regulate Vata Dosha, aiding smooth bowel movements and calming the nervous system.

- **Active Compounds:** Includes **glycyrrhizin**, **glabrin A & B**, and **beta-glycyrrhetic acid**, known for their anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and adaptogenic effects.
- Yashtimadhu supports digestive health, strengthens the body, improves mental clarity, and boosts immunity, making it a key herb for managing Karshya.

3. Pippali (*Piper longum* – Long Pepper)^[05]

Pippali is one of the most powerful herbs for enhancing digestion and bioavailability in Ayurvedic medicine.

- **Rasa:** *Katu* (pungent); transforms to *Madhura* (sweet) after digestion – Enhances metabolism while ensuring post-digestive nourishment.
- **Guna:** *Laghu* (light), *Tikshna* (sharp), *Snigdha* (unctuous) – Stimulates digestion without causing dryness.
- **Virya:** *Ushna* (hot) – Stimulates digestive fire (Agni), promoting better assimilation of nutrients.
- **Vipaka:** *Madhura* – Strengthens tissues and supports anabolic metabolism.



- **Pharmacological Actions**
 - *Deepana:* Stimulates appetite and activates digestive enzymes.
 - *Pachana:* Aids in the complete digestion and absorption of food.
 - *Krimighna:* Helps eliminate intestinal parasites and toxins.
 - *Balya:* Supports strength and vitality.
- **Active Compounds:** Rich in **piperine**, **methyl piperine**, and **piperidine**, which are known to increase the bioavailability of other herbs and nutrients.
- Pippali is crucial in managing Karshya as it corrects poor digestion, improves nutrient assimilation, and enhances the action of other ingredients in the formulation.

4. Goghrita (Cow Ghee)^[06]

Cow's ghee is a highly revered base in Ayurvedic medicine due to its Rasayana (rejuvenative) properties.

- **Ayurvedic Properties**
 - *Ayurvedhaka:* Promotes longevity.
 - *Balya:* Builds strength.
 - *Rasayana:* Acts as a rejuvenator for all tissues.

- *Netrya:* Supports eye health.
- *Vata-Pitta Shamak:* Balances Vata and Pitta doshas.

• Therapeutic Role

- Acts as a **Yogavahi**^[08] – a substance that carries the properties of herbs deep into the tissues.
- Enhances **bioavailability** and **absorption** of the herbal actives.
- Nourishes **Rasa** and **Mamsa Dhatus**, which are central to addressing Karshya.
- Goghrita not only serves as a medium for the delivery of herbs but also contributes directly to nourishment, tissue regeneration, and immune enhancement.

Mode of Action of DrakshadyaGhrita in Karshya

Karshya, an Ayurvedic condition correlating with undernutrition or underweight, arises due to **deficiency in Rasa Dhatu**—the first and foundational tissue formed after digestion. This leads to poor nourishment of subsequent Dhatus (tissues), resulting in generalized weakness, emaciation, and developmental delays, especially in children. The therapeutic management of Karshya focuses on correcting the digestive fire (Agni), improving nourishment, and enhancing immunity and strength. DrakshadyaGhrita acts **synergistically** on all these fronts.

1. Deepana-Pachana (Appetizer and Digestive Actions)

Key Ingredient: *Pippali (Piper longum)*

- Pippali stimulates **Agni (digestive fire)** and enhances **Jatharagni** and **Dhatvagni**,^[07] which are responsible for the digestion of food and transformation into Dhatus.
- The *Deepana* (appetizer) property improves appetite, encouraging children to eat adequately.
- The *Pachana* (digestive) property ensures proper digestion and breakdown of food, preventing the formation of Ama (toxic waste).
- This correction of digestive function is essential in Karshya, where the root cause is often poor digestion and nutrient assimilation.

Result: Improved digestion and metabolism lead to better absorption of nutrients, which is foundational for tissue nourishment and growth.

2. Brimhana and Balya (Nourishing and Strengthening Actions)

Key Ingredients: *Draksha*, *Yashtimadhu*, *Goghrita*

- *Draksha* and *Yashtimadhu* are known for their **Madhura Rasa (sweet taste)**, **Snigdha Guna (unctuousness)**, and **Brimhana Karma**, which promote anabolic activity—necessary for **tissue building and weight gain**.
- These herbs increase **Mamsa Dhatu** (muscle tissue) and improve **general strength (Bala)**.
- *Goghrita (cow ghee)* acts as both a **nourishing agent** and a **vehicle (Yogavahi)** that enhances the efficacy and absorption of herbal ingredients.

Result: The formulation supports overall weight gain, tissue regeneration, and muscular strength—key targets in the treatment of Karshya.

3. Rasa Dhatu Poshana (Nourishment of the First Tissue)

- According to Ayurveda, **Rasa Dhatu** is the first tissue formed after digestion. It acts as the base for the formation of all other Dhatus.
- DrakshadyaGhrita enhances **Rasa Dhatu formation** by supplying **nutritive, unctuous, and easily digestible substances**.
- With the help of **Madhura Vipaka (sweet post-digestive effect)** of its ingredients, it helps maintain a stable and nourishing Rasa, which then adequately nourishes the remaining Dhatus.

Result: Proper formation and maintenance of Rasa Dhatu leads to the development of subsequent Dhatus, reversing the cycle of depletion and supporting growth.

4. Agni-Vardhana (Enhancement of Digestive Fire)

Key Ingredients: *Pippali, Yashtimadhu*

- Impaired or Mandagni (low digestive fire) is a key factor in the pathogenesis of Karshya. Without proper Agni, even nutritious food cannot be transformed into usable nutrients.
- *Pippali* has **Ushna Virya (hot potency)** and **Tikshna Guna (sharpness)**, which kindle Agni.
- *Yashtimadhu*, although Sheeta Virya (cold), acts as a **balancer**, promoting healthy digestion without aggravating Pitta.
- Together, they normalize the function of Agni without causing hyperacidity or irritation.

Result: Stable and well-functioning Agni ensures better digestion, nutrient transformation, and Dhatu nourishment—critical for overcoming Karshya.

5. Immunomodulation and Rasayana Effect

Key Ingredients: *Yashtimadhu, Goghrita, Draksha*

- Karshya-affected children often have poor immunity and are more prone to infections.
- *Yashtimadhu* has proven **anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory properties** that strengthen immune response.
- *Goghrita* is considered a **Rasayana** in Ayurveda—it promotes **longevity, vitality, mental clarity, and immunity**.
- *Draksha* contributes by improving **Ojas** (the essence of all Dhatus), which is directly linked to immunity and resilience.

Result: The formulation helps build resistance to illness, promotes faster recovery from infections, and supports holistic physical and mental development.

THERAPEUTIC INDICATIONS

According to *Yogaratanakara*, DrakshadyaGhrita is beneficial in:

- Kshina (emaciation)

- Jvara (fever)
- Shwasa (respiratory conditions)
- Visphota (skin eruptions)
- Halimaka (jaundice-like condition)
- Raktapitta (bleeding disorders)
- Pradara (gynecological discharges)

Given these broad indications, its application in **Karshya**, especially in pediatric populations, is both rational and contextually appropriate.

CONCLUSION

sDrakshadyaGhrita, as described in classical Ayurvedic texts, offers a comprehensive and holistic approach to managing Karshya—a condition analogous to pediatric undernutrition. Its carefully selected ingredients such as Draksha, Yashtimadhu, Pippali, and Goghrita work synergistically to improve digestion, enhance nutrient assimilation, nourish depleted Dhatus, and strengthen immunity. The formulation not only addresses the root causes of Karshya, such as Agnimandya and Rasa Dhatu Kshaya, but also promotes overall physical and mental development in children. Given its palatability, safety, and multifaceted action, DrakshadyaGhrita stands out as a promising therapeutic option in Ayurvedic pediatric practice. Further clinical studies are encouraged to substantiate its efficacy and broaden its application in modern healthcare.

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