



**ARKA AS LEPA WITH REFERENCE TO ARKA PRAKASHA: A REVIEW**

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**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda pharmaceuticals is a branch in Ayurveda that deals with designing of formulations. Various dosage forms are mentioned in pharmaceuticals that are used for internal administration and external application. Lepa is one dosage form that is mentioned for external use. Arka Prakasha is a treatise that has a collection of arka (distillates) of various drugs from plant origin, mineral origin, etc. Arka are distillates of the dravya that are extracted through the process of distillation using any distillation apparatus. Arka have been mentioned for internal administration as well as for external application. A literary search through the book has put light on various arka that are indicated as lepa in various disorders. A few arka are from single dravya and a few are in combination with multiple drugs. These arka, as lepa are indicated in various diseases.

**KEYWORDS:** Arka, Lepa, Arka Prakasha, Ayurveda pharmaceuticals.

**INTRODUCTION**

Arka is a liquid preparation obtained by distillation of certain liquids or drugs soaked in water using the Arka yantra or any convenient modern distillation apparatus.<sup>[1]</sup> Arka as a dosage form can be seen in different texts but the pharmaceutical aspect of Arka kalpana is mentioned

in Arka Prakasha. In this treatise, usage of arka in various forms is mentioned and one way of using is as lepa (external application). External application aid in the management of various diseases specially for in situ action where relief from pain, swelling, etc. is required locally.

**Table 1: Arka of dravya with indication.**

Sl. No.	Arka with single drug	Indication
1	Daruharidra Arka ( <i>Berberis aristata</i> ) <sup>[2]</sup>	Netra roga (eye disorder)
2	Vajri ( <i>Euphorbia neriifolia</i> ) <sup>[3]</sup>	Vrana (wound), Shotha (inflammation), Udara roga (ascites), Jwara (fever)
3	Langali ( <i>Gloriosa superba</i> ) <sup>[4]</sup>	Shotha (inflammation), Arsha (hemorrhoids), Vrana (wounds)
4	Chandala <sup>[5]</sup>	Visha (poison)
5	Dhattura ( <i>Datura stramonium</i> ) <sup>[6]</sup>	Yuka, Krimi, Visha (poisons)
6	Bhallataka ( <i>Semecarpus anacardium</i> ) <sup>[7]</sup>	Mushaka visha (Rat poison)

**Table 2: Arka with single dravya.**

Sl. No.	Arka with single drug	Ingredient	Indication
1	Swedanashaka arka <sup>[8]</sup>	Vrugyakta	Sweda (Perspiration)
2	Bhutonmadahara arka <sup>[9]</sup>	Jwalarariya	Unmada (Psychosis)
3	Mukhadushika rogaghna arka <sup>[10]</sup>	Shalmali ( <i>Salmalia malabarica</i> ) soaked in milk	Mukhadushika (Acne)
4	Agnimukhaadi vinashaka arka <sup>[11]</sup>	Haritala arka	Application to cot or bed by which the bed bugs get destroyed
5	Visphota dahaghna arka <sup>[12]</sup>	Indrayava ( <i>Holorrhena antidyenterica</i> ) soaked in Tandula arka ( <i>Oroxylum indicum</i> )	Visphota (Blister)

**Table 3: Arka with combination of dravya with indications.**

Sl. No.	Name of the arka	Ingredients	Indication
1	Yukaliksha vinashaka arka <sup>[13]</sup>	Dhattura patra ( <i>Datura metel</i> ) and Nagavalli ( <i>Piper betle</i> ) arka	Yuka lika (lice)
2	Dahanashaka arka <sup>[14]</sup>	Kola, Amalaka ( <i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> ), Dhanyaka ( <i>Coriandrum Sativum</i> ) arka	Daha (burning sensation) (Cloth dipped in the above arka can be wrapped to a person suffering from daha)
3	Dadrunashaka arka <sup>[15]</sup>	Kushta ( <i>Saussurea lappa</i> ), Laksha ( <i>Laccifer lacca</i> ), Dadrugghna ( <i>Senna tora</i> ), Haridra ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> ), Saindhava lavana (Rock salt), Sarshapa ( <i>Brassica campestris</i> ), Aamrasthi ( <i>Spondias pinnata</i> )	Dadru (Taeniasis)
4	Granthi roga nashaka arka <sup>[16]</sup>	Sarjikhara (Sodium salts), Mulaka kshara (phyto alkali of <i>Raphanus sativus</i> ) mixed with Shankha churna (Conch shell powder)	Granthi (Cyst)
5	Arbuda roga nashaka arka <sup>[17]</sup>	Vata dugdha ( <i>Ficus benghalensis</i> ), Kushta ( <i>Saussurea lappa</i> ), Romaka lavana (Sambhar salt)	Arbuda (Tumour)
6	Shleepada nashaka arka <sup>[18]</sup>	Dhattura ( <i>Datura metel</i> ), Eranda ( <i>Ricinus communis</i> ), Nirgundi ( <i>Vitex negundo</i> ), Punarnava ( <i>Boerhaavia Diffusa</i> ), Shigru mula ( <i>Moringa oleifera</i> )	As paste along with Sarshapa in Shleepada (Filariasis)
7	Vidradhi roga nashaka arka <sup>[19]</sup>	Yava ( <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> ), Godhuma ( <i>Triticum aestivum</i> ), Mudga ( <i>Vigna radiata</i> ) paste to be mixed with kupilu ( <i>Nux vomica</i> ) arka	Vidradhi (Abscess)
8	Vataja shothahara arka <sup>[20]</sup>	Arka extracted with Vata shamaka aushadha (dravya that alleviate vata dosha) or Vata shamaka mamsa or Vata shamaka ghrita or Kanji (sour gruel)	Vataja shotha (Inflammation due to vata dosha)
9	Sarva vidha Vranapuraka yoga <sup>[21]</sup>	Jati ( <i>Jasminum grandiflorum</i> ), Patola ( <i>Trichosanthes Dioica</i> ), Nimba ( <i>Azadirachta indica</i> ), Putikaranja ( <i>Holoptelea integrifolia</i> ), Madhuyashti ( <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> ), Madhuka ( <i>Madhuca Indica</i> ), Kushta ( <i>Saussurea lappa</i> ), Haridra ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> ), Daruharidra ( <i>Berberis aristata</i> ), Katuruhini ( <i>Picrorhiza kurroa</i> ), Manjishta ( <i>Rubia cordifolia</i> ), Padmaka ( <i>Prunus cerasoides</i> ), Haritaki ( <i>Terminalia chebula</i> ), Lodhra ( <i>Symplocos racemosa</i> ), Neela kamala, Tuttha (Blue vitriol), Ahiphena ( <i>Papaver somnifera</i> )	Vrana (wound) due to visha (poison), Visphota (blister), Visarpa (erysipelas), Keeta damsha (insect bite), Shastraghata (weapon wound), Dagdha vrana (burnt wound)
10	Nadivranahara arka <sup>[22]</sup>	Snuhi ( <i>Euphorbia neriifolia</i> ), Arka dugdha (latex of <i>Calotropis gigantea</i> ), Daruharidra ( <i>Berberis aristata</i> ), Madhu (Honey)	Nadi vrana (Fistula)
11	Visarpahara arka <sup>[23]</sup>	Yashti ( <i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> ), Shirisha ( <i>Albizia lebbek</i> ), Tagara ( <i>Valeriana wallichii</i> ), Jatamamsi ( <i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i> ), Ela ( <i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> ), Chandana ( <i>Santalum album</i> ), Manashila (Realgar), Netrabala ( <i>Pavonia odorata</i> ), Kushta ( <i>Saussurea lappa</i> ), Ghrita (Ghee)	Visarpa (Erysipelas)
12	Lutadi vishahara arka <sup>[24]</sup>	Gairika (Red ochre) arka mixed with – Nisha ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> ), Daruharidra ( <i>Berberis aristata</i> ), Patanga ( <i>Caesalpinia sappan</i> ), Manjishta ( <i>Rubia cordifolia</i> ),	Luta visha (Spider poison)

		Nagakerasa ( <i>Mesua ferrea</i> )	
13	Shatapadyaadi vishahara arka <sup>[25]</sup>	Kutaki ( <i>Picrorhiza kurroa</i> ) macerated with the arka of Krishnajeerka ( <i>Carum carvi</i> ) and Shunti ( <i>Zingiber officinale</i> )	Centipede poison, used as a lepa (applied externally). It is also useful in Kupilu (nux vomica) poisoning
14	Kesha ranjaka arka <sup>[26]</sup>	Triphala (fruits of <i>Terminalia chebula</i> , <i>Terminalia bellirica</i> and <i>Emblia officinalis</i> ), Neeli ( <i>Indigofera tinctoria</i> ), Bringaraja ( <i>Eclipta alba</i> ), Lohakitta (ash of iron oxide)- ground with avi mutra (Goat's urine)	Kesha krishnikarana (colouring of hair)
15	Indralupta nashaka yoga <sup>[27]</sup>	Mamsi ( <i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i> ), Gajadanta bhasma (ash of ivory), Chaga ksheera (urine of goat), Rasanjana (rasakriya of <i>Berberis aristata</i> ), Vata praroaha ( <i>Ficus benghalensis</i> )	Indralupta (Alopecia)
16	Darunakaroga nashaka arka <sup>[28]</sup>	Amra beeja ( <i>Spondias mombin</i> ), Haritaki ( <i>Terminalia chebula</i> )- are soaked in milk, and then arka is extracted	Darunaka (Dandruff)
17	Shirashulahara yoga <sup>[29]</sup>	Pathya ( <i>Terminalia chebula</i> ), Aksha ( <i>Terminalia bellirica</i> ), Dhatri ( <i>Emblia officinalis</i> ), Rajani ( <i>Curcuma longa</i> ), Guda (jaggery), Bhunimba ( <i>Andrographis paniculata</i> ), Nimba ( <i>Azadirachta indica</i> ), Guduchi ( <i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> )	Shirashula (Headache)
18	Padalasa roghara arka <sup>[30]</sup>	Bhringaraja arka ( <i>Eclipta alba</i> ) mixed with daruharidra ( <i>Berberis aristata</i> ) & Bhringaraja ( <i>Eclipta alba</i> )	Padalasa
19	Pipeelaka vishahara arka <sup>[31]</sup>	Shunti arka ( <i>Zingiber officinale</i> )	Application at the site of ant bite

## DISCUSSION

A literary review on arka that are mentioned for external application as lepa has put light that there are few arka that are prepared from single drugs and many are a combination of multiple drugs. The indications of these are also broad where these arka are indicated in conditions like headache, inflammation; few are in skin ailments like teniasis, blisters, erysipelas and many are indicated in various types of wounds. A few arka are indicated for management of jangama visha (animate poison) like Dhattura arka is indicated in Scorpion sting; Lutadi vishahara arka, Pipeelaka vishahara arka and Shatapadyaadi vishahara arka are mentioned for the management of poison of spider, ant and centipede respectively. The advantage of utilizing arka in case of poison are that the dose of arka is less and as it is said to be the most potent, it acts as an advantage in the management of poison. An interesting fact is that distillate of Red ochre is mixed with various herbs and used for external application in spider poison. Red ochre is vishapaha (alexeterics), balya (strengthens body), vranaropaka (wound healing), kandughna (antipruritic) and hence is used in poisonous conditions.<sup>[32]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Shamana chikitsa holds an equal weightage in management of various disorders in ayurveda. And in bahirparimarjana chikitsa, lepa kalpana has its own importance where various dosage forms are applied externally in situ for relief of various symptoms. Out of

these kalpas, arka is one that has its significance owing to its potency as it is said to be most potent among the primary preparations of Ayurveda pharmaceuticals. Commonly, churna are used as lepa i.e., for external application. But the treatise Arka Prakasha gives reference of various arka that are used externally as lepa in various disorders like animate poisons, skin ailments, in different wounds, inflammatory conditions, alopecia, greying of hair, etc. Though distillates are easy to prepare and practice, seldom research in this field is carried out, thus opening avenues for research.

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