

Yagya and Dhupana karma in Disorders of Female Reproductive System

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Abstract. The present paper discusses the guiding theme of Ayurveda, “Āyuh kāmāye manena hi dharmārtha-sukha-sāadhanam”, which emphasizes the pursuit of a healthy and purposeful life. Following the laws of nature, the ancient Ācāryas established fundamental principles for promoting both individual well-being (hita-āyu) and social harmony (sukhāyu). They also highlighted the importance of sustaining the continuity of human life since its origin, as envisioned in the cosmic creation by Brahma. According to the Atharvaveda, Yagya possesses the inherent power to preserve a healthy, continuous life cycle. Women play a central role in sustaining life, and various disorders of the female reproductive system can disrupt this natural continuity. From this perspective, the present discussion explores the conceptual understanding of Yagya in the Vedas and dhūpana karma in Ayurveda, particularly in the context of striroga and prasūti roga. This review seeks to identify new directions for managing female reproductive disorders by integrating traditional Ayurvedic principles with the therapeutic potential of Yagya Therapy (YagyopathyTM).

Keywords. Yagya Therapy (YagyopathyTM), Ayurveda, Reproductive System, Gynecological disorders

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Introduction

Most disorders of the female reproductive system described in Ayurveda fall under the twenty *Yonivyapadas* [1], disorders of the intrauterine fetus under *Garbhavyapada* [2], disorders during pregnancy as *Garbhopadrava* [2], and complications related to labour described as *Mūdhagarbha* [2], etc. The etiology of *Yonivyapadas* is based on various causative factors such as *mithyā-ācharaṇa*, *ārtava-doṣṭi*, *bīja-doṣa*, and *daiva* [1]. These disorders are named according to the vitiated *doṣa*, such as *Vātaja*, *Pittaaja*, *Kaphaja*, etc. [1]. Disorders whose diagnosis is difficult or which arise due to unknown causes are described under the category of *Daiva*. These causative factors are also applicable to other female reproductive disorders. The principles of treatment are based on the status of the vitiated *doṣa* involved in each specific *vyādhi* (disorder). In Ayurveda, the mode of action of drugs depends on their *rasa*, *guṇa*, *vīrya*, *vipāka*, and *prabhāva*. *Samiskāra* can modify the natural properties of a *dravya* without changing its inherent nature (*svabhāva*). *Samiskāra* may be performed using *agni*, *jala*, *kāla*, etc. [3].

Ayurveda, a branch of the Atharvaveda [4], is predominantly devoted to health. It includes detailed descriptions for both the prevention and treatment of diseases, among which Yagya (Havi, Havana) is described as a therapeutic procedure used to alleviate various disorders. In this therapy, specific herbs are used for havi (herbal oblation), which produces medicinal smoke (dhūma). These herbal fumes, rich in *doṣa-karma* properties, are believed to act externally on the skin and internally across various body systems through the respiratory pathway [5]. For this reason, this therapy is also addressed as Yagyopathy.

Historical reviews make the purpose of this study clearer. Thousands of years ago, when no specific medicines were available, societies managed epidemics primarily through a clean environment and natural immunity. The Gopatha Brāhmaṇa describes a form of Yagya performed during weather transitions not only to prevent but also to cure epidemics [6]. The Ayurvedic therapies of dhūmapāna, dhūmanasya, and dhūpana may be considered components of Yagya therapy, where the chanting of mantras further enhances its therapeutic value. Conducted in this manner, Yagyopathy offers a holistic approach to health. Ayurveda also describes local applications of fumigation, such as *vraṇa-dhūpana* [7] and *yoni-dhūpana*. The application of this therapy in female reproductive disorders is not new to Ayurveda; it is already documented in the classical texts of the Vedas and Ayurveda. Various herbs, such as *dwi-haridra* and *vṛhatiphala*, are used for fumigating the

yoni (female genital tract) in conditions of severe tenderness (*sparśāsahatā*).

Extensive references to dhūpana and Yagya chikitsā (Therapy) are found in the Vedas and Ayurvedic literature. Ācāryas Charaka, Suśruta, Vāgbhata, and Kaśyapa have all emphasized fumigation therapy in various diseases across all stages of life, including female reproductive disorders. Ācārya Kaśyapa, in *Kalpsthāna*, has discussed the procedure, origin, and classification of fumigation in a systematic manner, specifically for unknown neonatal disorders and also for adults.

The objective of this discourse is to explore the theoretical and clinical aspects of Yagya therapy and dhūpana chikitsā in the context of disorders of the female reproductive system and to propose a natural and non-invasive therapeutic approach for contemporary healthcare needs.

Origin of Dhūpana Karma (Fumigation)

An interesting narration in Kashyapa Samhita describes the spiritual background behind the origin of fumigation. It explains how fumigation was used to protect newborn children of sages from *rākṣasas* and other harmful entities, thereby preventing and curing ailments. To accomplish this great task, the sages, endowed with the power of oblation, recitation, and penance, sought refuge in the divine fire. God Agni accepted their plea and said, “Use this fumigation given by me; it will dispel all fear from *rākṣasas*, *bhūtas*, and *piśāchas*.” He further instructed that the wet nurse should use this fumigation for newborns, growing children, and sick children. Ācārya Kaśyapa, known as the benefactor of the universe and the well-wisher of humankind, was appointed by the sages to collect these fumigation substances from Lord Agni. After obtaining them, he further expanded and multiplied their formulations. Children protected through fumigation could not be harmed by *rākṣasas*, *bhūtas*, or *piśāchas*. Thus, the fumigation indicated by God Agni came into existence for the welfare of humanity. These fumigation substances were derived from both *jāṅgama* (animal-origin) and *sthāvara* (plant-origin) sources [8].

Classification

According to Jivaka, Dhūpana is classified [8] into two types. The first classification is based on the method of use and mode of action, and the second is based on the origin of the dhūpana *dravya*. These classifications are summarized in Table No. 1 [9].

According to method of use and mode of action	Dhūpa – The main dhūpa for generalized or for a particular disease. Can also be called pradhāna dhūpa. It has both preventive and curative properties.	Anudhūpa – This dhūpa is used after main dhūpana karma. The purpose of this dhūpa is to maintain the effect of main dhūpana karma and to prevent the recurrence of the ailment.	Pratidhūpa – This dhūpana karma is done to counteract the side effects or adverse effects of main dhūpana karma, as the drugs of main dhūpana may be tikṣṇa, uṣṇa, or kaṭu, etc.
According to origin of dhūpana dravyas	Sthāvara (Plant origin): Kuṣṭhahara, Kṛmighna, Kaṇḍūghna and Vraṇahara Gaṇa, and Rakṣoghna and Bhūtaghna dravyas are used for dhūpana. These drugs mostly have antimicrobial properties, like vidanga, sarṣapa, nimba, guggulu, vacā.	Sthāvara (Minerals): Sulphur compounds like Mānaśila, Haritāla, Sauvīrañjana, etc.	Jāṅgama (Animal origin): Ghṛta, honey, hair, nails, horns, etc. have been used where keratin is a structural component which has antimicrobial activity.

Table 1: Classification of Dhūpana according to Jivaka

Method of Collection, Storage and Preparation of Dhūpana Dravyas

Āchāryas have indicated that dhūpana dravyas should be collected during Puṣya or Maitra Nakshatra and from the south-east direction (Agnēya kona) or north-east direction (Īśāna kona). Before going for collection, the collector should observe a fast, take a bath, perform sacrifices, and listen to auspicious and pleasant words. The collected material should be pounded by four young girls while maintaining proper hygiene. After preparation, the material should be stored in new earthen pots and kept hidden in a safe place. Such properly prepared material is believed to provide definite and effective results [8].

Stability

If fumigating material is preserved in air-tight containers, herbal substances remain stable for 2 years, whereas mineral substances can be stored indefinitely [10].

Grāhya–Agrāhyatva

Materials should be tested for their original colour and fragrance before being used in dhūpana [10].

Mode of Administration / Procedure

Form of Drug

Various references mention the use of fumigation material in Powder form (Chūrṇa), Paste form (Kalka), for performing Dhūpana Karma [3, 11, 12].

Dhūpana Yantra [7]. For vraṇa dhūpana (wound fumigation), the vraṇa netra should be: Eight fingers long, Blunt-mouthed, Having the thickness of a kālaya (pea size), With an aperture the size of a kulattha (horse gram), After igniting the fumigating material, recitation should be performed invoking various deities, such as: “Brahma fumigates you... all sages fumigate you... and finally, I fumigate you with truth and honesty; I offer my salutations.” This procedure is mentioned by Lord Kaśyapa [8] (Ka. Sa. Kalpa 1/57–58). Fumigation may be repeated if the disease is not relieved after the first application.

Sr. No.	Disorder Name	Name of Dravya Used for Yoni-dhūpana Karma (Fumigation)
1.	Sparśāsahyatā [7]	Dviharidrā and Vṛhatīphala.
2.	Yonirāva [3]	Sarala, guggulu and yava.
3.	Yonikaṇḍū [3]	Dviharidrā and Vṛhatīphala.
4.	Garbhasaṅga [13]	Piṇḍitaka.
5.	Aparasanga [14]	Bhojapatra and guggulu.

Table 2: Dhūpana Karma in Ayurveda for Female Disorders

Dhūpana Karma in Ayurveda for Female Disorders

Ayurveda provides multiple dosage forms (svarasa, kalka, hima, chūrṇa, vaṭī, kaṣāya, etc.) and methods of their application, both systemic and local, depending on the condition. Dhūpana karma is one of these methods and is particularly beneficial due to its local action. Yoni dhūpana (vaginal fumigation) is commonly advised in prasūti and strī roga (obstetric and gynecological conditions). Examples are provided in Table No. 2.

One form of systemic drug administration is through nasal inhalation. In this method, the nasal

mucosa (in the case of topical instillation) and other membranous layers of the respiratory tract (in the case of gaseous or aerosolized drug forms) absorb the drug rapidly, producing quick physiological effects. Through this route, the drug acts at a systemic level.

Table No. 2 presents the general Dhupana Karma recommended in Prasuti Tantra and Stri Roga, as well as for various systemic disorders that may negatively affect a woman's fertility or contribute to other conditions of the female reproductive system. These include tuberculosis, worm infestation, fever, epilepsy, and several idiopathic disorders where a definitive diagnosis may not be established. Further examples are provided in Table No. 3.

Sr. No.	Disorder Name	Name of Dravya Used for Dhūpana Karma (Fumigation)
1.	Anagata-prasava [3]	Bhojapatra, nameru and guggulu or śiṃśapā-sāra.
2.	Prajāvṛddhi [8] (To increase progeny)	Ghr̥ta, sarjarasa, kṛṣṇa bhallātaka, śaileya, jātuṣīra, sarṣapa, flower of arjaka, vidanga, vacā, tagara, hiṅgu, balāka.
3.	Apasmāra (epilepsy) [3]	Pālāṅkaṣa, guggulu, haridrā, kākānasa, mādar, jatāmāmsī, mustard, nakulī, vacā, dūrvā, hiṅgu, corapuṣpī, kuṣṭha, atirasa, citraka, māṃsāmīna, bastamūtra.
4.	Kṛmi [8] (Ectoparasitic infestation)	Vidanga, arjuna, kalihārī, khasa, rāla, śveta candana, kuṣṭha, lohvana.
5.	Jvara (fever) [3]	Pālāṅkaṣa (guggulu), nimbapatra, vacā, kuṣṭha, harītakī, sarṣapa and yava.
6.	Sarvarogeṣu [8] (idiopathic)	Sthauneyaka, jatāmāmsī, tagara, coco-grass, hauber, fennel, haritāla, maṇṣīlā, seed of nirguṇḍī, green cardamom.

Table 3: Names of Dravyas Used for Dhūpana Karma (Fumigation)

Yagya Therapy in the Vedas for General Disorders and Pregnancy

The Vedas are ancient literature and the cultural heritage of our country. They are comprehensive texts that touch every aspect of life—from birth to death—and Yagya is an integral part of this tradition. Female health has also been given equal importance since ancient times. Even today, no significant ritual is considered complete without the involvement of women, who have always participated actively in Yagya. Yagyas have been performed since antiquity. The Atharvaveda is largely devoted to the health and well-being of human life, while some references are also found in the Rigveda. Yagya therapy was an established method in ancient times for the prevention and treatment of both infectious and non-infectious diseases. Even in the modern age of advanced medicine, Yagya continues to hold relevance for maintaining health and environmental balance,

just as it did thousands of years ago.

Below are selected references from the Rigveda and Atharvaveda related to general health and the reproductive health of women:

References from Rigveda and Atharvaveda

Rigveda 10/162/3: Yagya is mentioned for addressing impotency, abortion during fetal development, unstable embryo (early pregnancy loss), risks during labour, and newborn health issues.

Atharvaveda 1/12/2: This verse advises the use of Havi (herbal offerings) in Yagya for the prevention of fever and generalized weakness.

Atharvaveda 1/12/3: This verse explains that the Sun along with Havi helps cure fever associated with headache and cough arising due to imbalance of Vata, Pitta, or Shleshma.

Atharvaveda 5/22/1–2: The verse advises that components of Yagya—such as Sun, Somras, Veda,

Kusha, and Samidha—when used properly, help remove fever and associated weakness.

Atharvaveda 3/11/1–2: These verses describe the potency of Yagya–Agni and Vayu (herbal smoke) in curing overt, latent, and even complicated stages of tuberculosis.

Atharvaveda 3/11/3: This verse explains the strength of medicinal smoke from Yagya in preventing TB recurrence.

Atharvaveda 3/11/4: The herbal fumes of Yagya, along with Vayu, Yagya Fire, Sun, and Jupiter’s vital force (Parjanya), are described as capable of freeing humankind from TB and granting longevity of 100 years.

Atharvaveda 7/80/3–4, 7/81/1: These verses advise Yagya for treating deeply penetrated or primary TB infection.

Atharvaveda 1/8/1–4: These verses explain that Yagya fumes are potent enough to destroy worms even in concealed places within the body.

Atharvaveda 5/29/4: Air mixed with Yagya fumes weakens worms by disrupting their physiological activities.

Atharvaveda 5/29/6–9: These verses confirm the ability of Yagya to destroy worms and all stages of their life cycle (eggs, larvae—the most infective forms), making the patient completely free from infestation through various routes of entry.

Atharvaveda 6/55/3: Here, Yagya is advised for disease prevention.

Atharvaveda 7/55/6: As Yagya is considered complementary to life (Ayu), it provides longevity; hence it is recommended for long life.

Atharvaveda 7/89/1: This verse states that Yagya is to be performed to gain strength.

Rigveda 1/12/7: This verse describes Yagya as capable of eradicating many diseases.

Atharvaveda 19/58/1: This verse emphasizes longevity and vitality through prolonged herbal offerings with ghee in Yagya.

Rigveda 3/10/3: Similar to the Atharvaveda, this verse explains the use of herbal sacrifice in Yagya to attain strength [15].

Discussion

According to Ayurveda, the definition of health includes all dimensions—physical, mental, social, and spiritual—and incorporates the concept of “prasannātma-indriya-manah” [7]. Ayurveda emphasizes preventive measures even before curative treatment. Our ancient scriptures have always established milestones for the welfare and progress of society.

The Vedas discuss every aspect of life (dharma, artha, karma, and moksha) from birth to death. The

foundation of any developed society is health, education, and a clean environment. Since ancient times, health has been a priority in our culture, and ailments existed parallel to human life. Remedies for these ailments were known to ancient scholars (sages), who developed a scientific remedy known as Yagya Therapy, which uses herbs, minerals, and other natural materials [16].

Yagya is a potent therapy for reducing air pollutants [17], for the prevention and management of mental disorders [18], and for various systemic disorders [19]. Hence, this therapy adopts a holistic approach to human health.

Women constitute fifty percent of society, and their systemic health directly influences reproductive functioning. Keeping this in mind, our Acharyas have explained various treatment principles for female disorders. Here, two forms of fumigation are discussed—Yagya and Dhupana Karma. The major difference between them is that mantra chanting is an essential component of Yagya.

As per yogic tradition (echoed in Charaka Samhita) - “yatā pinde tatā brahmānde”, meaning that whatever exists outside the human body (including dravya and urjā), also exists inside. All elements, in subtle (sūkṣma) and gross (sthūla) forms, are present within the human body. Thus, purification of both internal and external environments can be achieved through a holistic method such as Yagya. Ayurvedic principles including tridosha, panchamahabhuta, and dhatu form the foundation for understanding physiology, pathology, and treatment in Ayurveda [7]. Every disorder has both physical and psychological components. The rhythmic vibrations produced during mantra chanting help invoke divine forces, influencing mental and spiritual states. Many studies support these effects. The mode of action of herbs is described according to the tridosha theory. Modern studies also show that herbal offerings in Yagya can eliminate microorganisms from the body and environment while providing subtle nourishment. Therefore, the Yagya therapeutic module is more potent and holistic than Dhupana alone.

Although Ayurveda describes various therapeutic measures for maintaining women’s general and reproductive health—Dhupana being one among them—Yagya therapy, due to its comprehensive nature, attains a superior position and should be included as part of the treatment regimen. Moreover, Yagya involves Agni Saṁskāra of the dravya. The nature (swabhava) of stri artava (neuroendocrine regulatory system of the female reproductive cycle) is also said to be agneyam (artavam agneyam) [7]. Thus, Yagya therapy is an ideal module for supporting women’s

health and maintaining the natural life cycle.

Conclusion

Yagya is a natural therapeutic method for curing diseases while maintaining health and environmental balance. Dhupana Karma also carries its own significance at both local and systemic levels, depending on the action of the drugs. However, Yagya therapy provides benefits at the physical, mental, and spiritual levels, and also fulfills social and environmental objectives when performed traditionally. This study is not merely a compilation of Vedic and Ayurvedic literature but highlights core principles relevant to female reproductive disorders, many of which are aggravated by stress. Yagya therapy can play an important role as part of a therapeutic regimen in such conditions, as supported by classical texts.

There is a need for precise clinical and experimental studies on Yagya to establish it as a parallel therapy in the modern era. The present study may help guide further analytical and scientific investigations on the role of Yagya therapy in female disorders.

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