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## A CONCISE REVIEW OF ARKA AS NASAL DROPS

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda pharmaceuticals deals with concocting of formulations in varied dosage forms such as juices, paste, decoction, cold infusion and hot infusion that are considered as primary preparations as well as secondary preparations like confectionaries, lipid soluble dosage forms, etc. These dosage forms are administered through various routes, and one of the route is through nasal route in the form of drops. Nasal route of drug administration is said to be better as it skips passing through the first phase metabolism and action is quicker. In Ayurveda treatises it is mentioned that nasya or nasal drops administration is a gate way to the shiras or head and is mainly indicated in diseases of urdhwajatrugata vyadhi (diseases above the neck). The commonly used dosage form for nasya is oil or ghee preparations as they easily get absorbed by mucous membrane of nasal cavity and get readily transmitted to cranial cavity. In a treatise of Ayurveda pharmaceuticals named Arka Prakasha, a few arka or distillates are said to be used as nasya (nasal drops). The advantage of using arka as nasya is that arka is said to be the most potent compared to the other preparations and has longer shelf life. It has better patient compliant owing to its odour, taste and consistency. Six arka preparations are mentioned to be used as nasya and all are mainly indicated in diseases of the urdwajatrugata vikara.

**Keywords: Nasya, nasal drops, Arka, distillates, urdhwajatrugata vyadhi**

## INTRODUCTION

Arka kalpana can be defined as a liquid preparation obtained by distillation of certain liquids or of drugs soaked in water using the Arkayantra or any convenient modern distillation apparatus [1].

Arka kalpa are said to be the most potent compared to the other panchavidha kashaya kalpas and the concept of Arka Kalpana are elaborated in Arka Prakasha [2]. Arka are indicated for various purposes and in a variety of disorders.

It is indicated as pana (internal administration), gandusha (gargle), lepa (external applications), etc. and one use is also as nasya (nasal drops). For both shamana (pacification process) and shodhana chikitsa (purificatory process) nasya karma is adopted. The nasya yogas explained in Arka

Prakasha are mainly shamaneeya in nature i.e., for the management of the diseases through alleviating the aggravated dosha.

Nasya is instilling of the medication through nostrils and it is one among the five procedures mentioned in Ayurveda for eradication of diseases. It is administered in a wide variety of diseases and specifically in urdwajatrugata vikaras. Swarasa (juice), Taila (oil preparations) and Ghrita kalpas (ghee preparations) are the dosage forms commonly used for nasya. In comparison to other dosage forms the lipid preparations are commonly used.

In Arka Prakasha, a few arka are mentioned to be used as Nasya for diseases such as murcha, apasmara, ardhavabhedaka, suryavarta, putinasa and raktasrava.

Table 1: Arka indicated as Nasya (nasal drops)

Sl. No.	Name of Arka	Ingredients	Indications
1	Raktasrvanirodhaka arka <sup>3</sup>	Dadima pushpa (flower of <i>Punica granatum</i> ) Mrudvika ( <i>Vitis vinifera</i> ) Amrasthi ( <i>Mangifera indica</i> )	Raktasrava (bleeding)
2	Atimurchaharo arka <sup>4</sup>	Madhuka sara ( <i>Madhuca longifolia</i> ), Saindhava lavana (Rock salt), Vacha ( <i>Acorus calamus</i> ), Maricha ( <i>Piper nigrum</i> ), Pippali ( <i>Piper longum</i> )- all taken in equal quantity	Murcha (loss of consciousness)
3	Apasmaraharo arka <sup>5</sup>	Ketaki phala (fruit of <i>Pandanus odorifer</i> )	Apasmara (epilepsy)
4	Suryavartashamako arka <sup>6</sup>	Bringaraja arka ( <i>Eclipta alba</i> ) with milk	Suryavarta (migraine)
5	Ardhavabhedakaharo arka <sup>7</sup>	Vidanga ( <i>Embelia ribes</i> ) and Tila arka ( <i>Sesamum indicum</i> )	Ardhavabhedaka (migraine)
6	Nasikarogaharo arka <sup>8</sup>	Vyaghri ( <i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i> ), danti ( <i>Baliospermum montanum</i> ), vacha ( <i>Acorus calamus</i> ), shigru ( <i>Moringa oleifera</i> ), tulasi ( <i>Ocimum sanctum</i> ), vyosha ( <i>Zingiber officinale</i> , <i>Piper nigrum</i> and <i>Piper longum</i> ), saindhava (Rock salt)	Putinasa (Rhinitis)

## DISCUSSION

Nasya is the administration of different types of medicines through the nasal passage in a systematic manner. It is administered in various diseases and specifically in urdwajatrugata vikara. Arka is said as most potent dosage form in comparison to other primary preparations of Ayurveda.

Nasal route of drug administration is the natural choice for the treatment of local nasal disorders as well as other supraclavicular diseases. This transmucosal nasal drug delivery is a non-invasive drug administration route. Due to large surface area, high vascularity, avoidance of hepatic first pass metabolism and gut wall metabolism, it has occupied a very important place in the field of drug delivery technology [9].

Lipid preparations are commonly used for nasya in comparison to other media. Medicated Sneha has lipid soluble substances which gets easily absorbed by mucous membrane of nasal cavity and get easily transmitted to cranial cavity. Sneha is very useful for as it has fast and easy absorption in the mucous membrane of the nostrils [10].

Various types of nasya are elaborated in texts namely Navana nasya, Avapeeda, Dhmapana, Dhooma nasya, Marsha and

Pratimarsha nasya. In Avapeeda nasya, fresh juice extracted from wet dravya of herbs is administered as swarasa is said to be the most potent. As arka is said to be the most potent among the primary preparations said in Arka prakasha, it can be brought into practice as it is more sterile, and shelf life is also longer. Thus preparing of the swarasa daily for every use can be avoided as it is cumbersome.

## CONCLUSION

Arka are said to be the most potent among the primary preparations mentioned. A review through Arka Praksha has put light on six arka kalpa to be used as Nasya. The arka mentioned are for urdhwajatrugata vyadhi like ardhavabhedaka, putinasa, suryavarta; also apasmara and raktasrava.

Among the various routes of drug administration, nasal route has its significance owing to its high vascularity, avoidance of hepatic first pass metabolism, gut wall metabolism and large surface area. Nasal route of drug administration is said to be a choice of treatment for local nasal disorders as well as other supraclavicular diseases. The arka mentioned as nasya are not yet studied clinically and hence it opens up new paths for research.

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