

# CRITICAL REVIEW ON ANCIENT METHODS OF POISONING

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**Abstract-** Probably the most ancient way of killing people was poisoning. In addition, the presence of poison in the body of victim was very difficult to determine since the symptoms of poisoning were similar to signs of certain diseases. Therefore the criminals had a big chance to escape. Now a days together with development of toxicology the chance of disclosure of such crimes has increased, however, the progress in the field of design and production of toxic substances has also gone up. In ancient time different methods of poisoning are mentioned. It can be administered to other person through various means such as food, drinks, toothbrush, garlands etc. by these various means poison gets entered in human body and produces toxic symptoms so the detection and diagnosis of such types of poison is very much essential.

**Keywords:** poisoning, ancient method, toxicology.

## INTRODUCTION

In our classics, different methods of poisoning are mentioned. Sushruta enumerates them as. In charak samhita, it is mentioned that the king has the threat of being poisoned by enemies and women through food, clothes, bed, seat etc.<sup>[1]</sup> It is also mentioned that during war, the king and his military face the threat of vitiation of the path, water, shades food, fuels, food of animals etc by poison. The king on entering the enemy kingdom should examine the grass, water, path, food, smoke, air etc that may be poisoned by enemies<sup>[2]</sup>. In the context of gara, it is mentioned that women, desirous of luxuries and prosperity and also king's close relatives or associates inspired by enemies to destroy him, mix gara or poison with food<sup>[3]</sup>

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

The poison can be administered to the other persons through following means

- food materials
- drinks
- Tooth brush
- Materials used for massage like oil
- Comb
- Rubbing the body parts with powders
- Medicated decoction which are used to take bath
- Paste is to be anointed to body for improvement of complexion, beauty etc.
- Garlands
- Cloth, dress materials
- Bed and its belongings
- Body coverings for protection from enemies
- Ornaments
- Foot wear
- Foot rest
- Cloths on back of elephants and horses<sup>[4]</sup>

## POISON MIXED FOOD SYMPTOMS

- The voice of kokilaa(cuckoo) change
- The gait of the swan gets altered
- Bhrngaraaja bird (domestic crane) becomes excited
- Krkavaku (cock) hoots loudly

- Suka (green parakeet) and saarika (mynah) makes long loud sounds.
- Chaamikara vomits
- Kaarandava (white breasted goose) fly away,
- Jeevanjeeva bird either dies or faints
- Nakula (mangoose) gets horripilation
- Monkey eliminates faeces
- Pr'shata (spotted deer) weeps
- Mayoora (peacock) gets elated.<sup>[5]</sup>

### **POISONED FOOD PUT IN FIRE SYMPTOMS**

It burns with single point flame, interrupted and slow, emits flame of different colors like rainbow and gives out cracking sound, the smoke that emerges will be having cadaveric smell.<sup>[6]</sup>

### **CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF POISONED FOOD**

Food which when mixed with poison require long time to cook. Cooked one becomes stale, loses its natural odour, becomes hard and undergo change in respect of their normal colour, smell, taste. Also it becomes very moist and appear to be full of glistening particles. Unripe fruits ripen very quickly, ripe fruits undergo putrefaction, green ones lose their shining and attain the features of the cooked ones, the dry ones becomes black or discolored, hard ones becomes soft and soft one becomes hard.

### **TESTS FOR POISONED FOOD:**

After consuming poisoned food crows lose their voice, flies do not sit on such food and if by chance, they sit, they die. By the sight of poisoned food, chakora bird loses natural color of its eye.

### **SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT: <sup>[7]</sup>**

The fumes of poisoned food, when inhaled causes pain in the chest region. Also feeling that his eyes are affected and rotating, headache, fainting, horripilation, excessive salivation, running nose and disturbance in vision arises.

### **Treatment**

1. Nasal medication and corrylium by kushtha, laamajjaka, nalada with honey.
2. Ointment prepared by shireesha, rajanee and chandana.
3. Inhalation of smoke of apaamarga, vidanga, two types balaa, chitraka and meshashrnee.
4. Ash of entire plant of sumana, draksha mixed with ghee and jaggery for intake.

### **POISONED LIQUIDS**

Characters symptoms

Poisoned liquids show, the following characteristics.

- Kwaatha will become dark colored, black or blue,
- the image of the observer in water will be found distorted with less or more of the natural features or image will not appear at all,
- accumulation of foam,
- appearance of dividing lines
- Different kinds of striae, threads and bubbles show up.
- In those, which have predominance of salt, lines of foam appear especially.
- The appearance of blue lines in meat soup.
- Coopers red lines in milk.
- Black lines in wine and water.
- Bluish lines in curd
- Yellow lines in buttermilk
- Lines resembling the color of pigeon in whey
- Black lines in sour gruel prepared from grains.
- Brown lines in medical decoctions
- Light brown in ghee
- Green lines in honey
- Light red lines in oils and also smell of muscle fat <sup>[8]</sup>

### **POISON IN TOOTHBRUSH**

If poison has been administered through toothbrush, the bristles of the brush fall out, it emits the smell of poison and causes dryness and swelling of palate, teeth, tongue and lips.

#### **Treatment**

The part of mouth are to be scraped with blunt instruments so as not to cause bleeding. Then powder of the following is applied: flower of dhatake, seeds of jambu and hareetakee mixed with honey or with paste of saptachada, with honey.

The mouth should be smeared with paste prepared from the juice daadima, karamarda, bhavya, aamrataaka, kola, badara mixed with honey.<sup>[9]</sup>

#### **Massage by poisoned materials**

Body becomes slimy and discolouration occurs. It also produces pain cracking of skin, discharges from skin, suppuration, excessive perspiration, fever and muscle tissue tearing.

#### **Treatment**

Cold water bath of chandana, Tagara, kushtha, usheera, venupatrika, with kapittha rasa and gomootra (cow's urine) is advised.<sup>[10]</sup>

#### **Poisoning from comb:**

It causes falling of hairs, pain in head bleeding from root of the hair and appearance of small masses on head.

#### **Treatment**

Bile of antel triturated with black, mud, ghee, Trivrt, paalindee, Tanduleeyaka.

Lepa of maalate juice, mushikaparnee swarasa or grhadhooma.<sup>[11]</sup>

Doing abhyanga on the head with poisoned materials results in falling of hairs and appearance of smaller mass on head and also symptoms of combing.

#### **Poisoning from mukhalepa:**

If anointing is done with poison paste on face it results in discolouration to bluish white color. Also signs and symptoms of abhyanga with poisonous materials and presence of small spiky appearance similar to padminikantaka can be seen.<sup>[12]</sup>

Placing poisoned cloths on the back of animals like elephant, camel etc. these animals become diseased. Watery discharge from their mouth the human being who travel on such animals will suffer from cracking of genital organs, anal region, scrotum in these condition treatment should be followed similar to abhyanga.<sup>[13]</sup>

### **POISONING THROUGH NASAL ROUTE & AEROSOL**

If poison has been administered through snuff and smoke, there will be headache, discharge of kapha (watery fluids), bleeding through the orifices (nose, eye, mouth) and disorder of sensory perception. Such persons are to be given ghee prepared with paste of ativisha, saweta, kaakamaachee, madayantikaa. Milk should be given for drinking & also for the installation into the nose.<sup>[14]</sup>

### **POISONING THROUGH FLOWERS:**

In poisoning through garland, flowers lose their natural odour and become pale, and their edges get cracked. If a person inhales such odour, he will suffer from headache and his eyes get filled tears, in such condition treatment is similar to face cream.<sup>[15]</sup>

### **POISONING THROUGH KARNAPURANA**

If poison is mixed with oils used for installing into ears, it will produce swelling, pain, ulcers and hearing defects.

In these condition, ears are to be filled with cold fresh juice or Brhatee mixed with ghee and honey or with juice mixed with ghee and honey or with juice of somavalka (katphala).<sup>[16]</sup>

### **POISONING THROUGH COLLYRIUM:**

There will be accumulation of dirt in the eye, redness, pain, distortions of vision and even blindness. In such condition the person should drink ghee, pippali boiled in milk for 7 times drying the pippali after each boiling, then made paste with ghee and medicated ghee is prepared. Later tarpana is done followed by collyrium (anjana) prepared from kapittha, meshashrngee, bhallataka, triturated with varuna niryasa or powder of brhatee shireeshabeeja, prapoundarika and

naagabala all powdered and triturated and powdered and triturated for 7 days times with honey. Small quantity of this and srotonjana and powder of gold are mixed together and applied as anjana. [17]

### POISONING THROUGH ORNAMENTS

The poisoned ornaments produces burning sensation, suppuration and cracking skin. They lose their lustre. In such condition follow treatment of poisoning by abhyanga. Anointing the body by powder of ashwagandha, apamaarga, girikarnikaa, khadira, shireesha with bile of cow may also be done. [18]

### POISONING THROUGH UMBRELLA

If poisoning occurs through umbrella, there will be appearance of boils, associated with severe pain, suppurating quickly resembling the ripe fruit of jambu.

In this condition warm application of paste of madhuka, kasheruka, anajana, kushtha, naagadamani, khadira, shirisha should be done all over the body. [19]

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Poison have been used since existence of human beings for various purposes. In ancient era poisons were mostly used for hunting to kill enemies etc. So to protect human beings from poisoning, some methods were developed by divine sages. Panchbhautik siddhant is the basic of ancient science. Diagnosis of poisoning by agniparikshan, panchabhautik parikshan and bhautik parikshan are based on 'panchabhautik siddhant' diagnosis by sign and symptoms according to nature of poison, mode of administration, route of administration, site of contact toxicology in ancient era. Diagnosis of poisoning in dead signifies the potential development of diagnostic method in ancient era.

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