Abstract

Rasaushadhis are a group of drugs consisting of herbs, metals, and minerals that have substantial advantages over traditional medicines, including lower therapeutic doses, faster action, and a wider range of therapeutic uses. Suryaprabha gulika is a herbo-mineral preparation mentioned in a classical Malayalam Ayurvedic treatise, Sahasrayogam. It contains parada, gandhaka, hingu, amalaki, harithaki, vibheethaki, sunti, pippali, maricha, yavani and vatsanabha. This formulation is indicated in various diseases like swasa, kasa, sula and jwara and is widely used in the management of respiratory tract infections associated with fever by Ayurveda medical practitioners in Kerala. There are five references available for this formulation in different classical Ayurvedic textbooks in different prakaranas. This paper is a review article on Suryaprabha gulika which mainly comprises a comparison of different yogas of the formulation with respect to the ingredients, indications and dose with special reference to the probable mode of action of yoga mentioned in Sahasrayogam.

Introduction

In the Medieval era, alchemy was a branch of chemistry that was explored in an effort to find new ways to turn base metals into gold. This method was employed for many years and yielded several important discoveries in the alchemy field. In India, alchemy was first practised to create a potion of life that would grant immortality and later to transmute common metals into gold. Then, in the advanced ages, all of the acquired alchemical knowledge was applied practically, leading to the development of a variety of mercury and other metal preparations that served as useful medical accessories. The focus has been on herbs and their therapeutic use in traditional Ayurveda. In due course, Ayurvedic practitioners began to favour animal products, metals, and minerals since they are potent and extremely beneficial for illness prevention, rejuvenation, and immunisation. Rasasastra is a branch of Ayurveda that focuses on the purification of various metals, minerals, and other compounds, such as mercury, and the coupling of these substances with suitable herbs in the right proportions to alleviate disease.
Rasauvadhis or mercurial preparations are said to be superior to all other therapies because of the low dosage, absence of distaste and faster restoration of health. The mercurial medicines are generally administered in small doses but have a wide range of therapeutic activity and yet get assimilated fast. This system is found to be extremely supreme as these medicines can be given even for incurable diseases.\textsuperscript{[3]} Suryaprabha gulika is one such mercurial preparation which is having wide range of therapeutic applications primarily utilised by Ayurvedic practitioners nowadays. This formulation is included under Khalviya rasayana in which mercury is ground along with other drugs in a kharala or khalwa (mortar and pestle). The yoga which is mentioned in Gulika prakaranas of Sahasrayogam is currently in use. This formulation is indicated in sula, jwara, swasa and kasa. Apart from this yoga, there are other references available in different prakaranas such as Udara roga chikitsa of Rasaratna samuchaya, Royajakshma and Sula chikitsa of Yogaratnakara, Vatavyadhi chikitsa of Brihat Rasaraja Sundara respectively with difference in ingredients, indications, dose etc. This article aims to compare these yogas thereby giving a critical review on different aspects of these references along with the probable mode of action of reference mentioned in Sahasrayogam.

Methodology

All available information about Suryaprabha gulika was gathered through an electronic search as well as a library search of peer-reviewed academic articles. A hand search of classical Ayurveda textbooks such as Sahasrayogam, Rasaratna samuchaya, Yogaratnakara, Brihat Rasaraja Sundara and relevant other textbooks of different disciples was also carried out.

Here is an attempt to understand the overview of different yogas of Suryaprabha gulika mentioned in different classical Ayurvedic textbooks.

Results and Discussion

The table below enlists the different yogas of Suryaprabha gulika available in different prakaranas comprising the details of ingredients, liquid media for the trituration, dose and indications of the corresponding yogas.

Suryaprabha gulika is a Khalviya rasayana, a mode of preparation in which mercury is ground along with other drugs in a Khalva (mortar) mentioned in Sahasrayogam containing 11 ingredients such as sodhitha parada (mercury), sodhitha gandhaka (sulphur), sodhitha hingu (oleo gum resin of Ferula foetida), amalaki (Emblica officinalis), harithaki (Terminalia chebula), vibheethaki (Terminalia belerica), sunti (Zingiber officinale), pippali (Piper longum), maricha (Piper nigrum), yavoni (Trachyspermum ammi) and sodhitha vatsanabha (Aconitum ferox). This yoga is currently used by the Ayurvedic practitioners. Ingredients such as parada, gandhaka, hingu and vatsanabha should be subjected to proper purification procedures as per classical references otherwise it may impart unwanted effects while administering the medicine. Consumption of impure mercury may cause kushtadi rogas or the death of an individual. Therefore, only the purified mercury should be used for all pharmaceutical preparations as it helps to remove the naisargika, yougika and kanchuka doshas of parada. Consumption of impure gandhaka results in chitta vyakulatha (delirium), raktha vikritijanya roga (diseases of pitha and raktha dosha) and ruins calmness of the mind (mana prasannatha), physical appearance (surupata), body radiance (prabha) and physical strength (bala). Asuddha sevana vikaras of vatsanabha include moha (syncope), daha (acute burning sensation all over the body), hritgatriroda (cardiac arrest) which eventually lead to the death of the individual. Hingu if consumed without proper sodhana, can cause utkleda (nausea). Hence it is necessary to perform bhajana (frying) of the resin in an equal quantity of ghee by which it becomes crunchy. It is essential to ensure the proper purification of these ingredients before their use in the formulations.\textsuperscript{[21, 22, 23, 24, 25]}

A general method for the preparation of Suryaprabha gulika involves the mardana (grinding) of sodhitha parada and sodhitha gandhaka in equal quantities to form kajjali until kajjali siddha lakshanas like varitaratwa, rekhapurnatwa, slakshnatwa, unama and nischandratrata are attained followed by bhavana (levigation) of a mixture of kajjali and fine powders of other ingredients taken in equal quantities except for vatsanabha in 1/16\textsuperscript{th} of total quantity in a khalwa yantra by adding sufficient quantity of jambeera swarasa (Juice of Citrus Limon) as bhavana dravya till the mass attains pill rolling consistency. Then the pills of the desired size and shape are rolled about the weight of gunja beega (Abrus precatorius) which is approximately 125mg.

On analysis of therapeutic properties of the ingredients it is found that the majority of the constituents have predominance of katu rasa, laghu ruksa tikshna guna and ushna virya that corresponds to the dipana (carminative), pachana (improves digestion or metabolism) and ama dosha nirharana nature of the formulation. This yoga is predominantly kapha vata samana and causes srotosodhana (opens up the metabolic pathways). The indications mentioned in yoga such as swasa, kasa and jwara are primarily caused by the doshas localised in the amasaya, an important seat of kapha and agni. Doshas

Kerala Journal of Ayurveda 2(3): 06–14 (2023)
Table No 1: Different yogas of *Suryaprabha gulika* [2,3,4,5,6]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Prakarana</th>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Bhavana dravya</th>
<th>Dose of gulika</th>
<th>Indications</th>
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</table>
| 1      | Sahasrayogam - Gulika prakarana  | Suddha parada  
Suddha gandhaka  
Suddha hingu  
Amalaki  
Harithaki  
Vibheethaki  
Sunti  
Pippali  
Maricha  
Yavani  
Suddha vatsanabha | Jambeera swarasa | 1 Gunja (125mg) | Sula  
Kasa  
Swasa  
Mahajwara |
| 2      | Rasarata samuchaya - Udara roga  | Bharangi  
Vahni  
Jayanthi  
Abhraka bhasma  
Kadali kanda  
Pata  
Vacha  
Gorochana  
Chavya  
Patra  
Suddha chithraka  
Sunti  
Pippali  
Maricha  
Sarjakshara  
Yavakshara  
Suddha gandhaka  
Trayanti  
Suddha parada  
Nagakesara  
Visha dwaya  
Lavanga  
Kushta  
Sallaphala  
Amalaki  
Hareethaki  
Vibheethaki  
Samudraphena  
Brahmi beeja  
Lata kasthuri  
Bala bilwa  
Viroodaka  
Saindhava lavana  
Samudra lavana  
Bida lavana  
Sauvarchala lavana  
Audbida lavana  
Jatyadi pushpashtaka | Eranda taila | Agni deepana |
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Kerala Journal of Ayurveda 2(3): 06–14 (2023)
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<td>1 panithala matra (12g)</td>
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Urusthamba
Vataroga
Ardita
Gridhrasi
Vidradi
Sleepada
Gulma
Pandu
Haleemaka
Panchakasa
Mutrakrictra
Galagraga
Anaha
Asmari
Vardhma
Grahani
Apabahuka
Arochaka
Parwasula
Udara
Bhagandhara
Hridroga
Sula
Utkampa
Vishamajwara
Uraukshata
Mukharoga
Prameha
Rakhtapitha
Vataraktha
Kamala
Agni sandipana
Hridya
Deergha ayu – Pushtida


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<td>Ushna</td>
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<td>Hingu</td>
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<td>Tikshna</td>
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<td>Katu</td>
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<td>Amla</td>
<td>Guru</td>
<td>Ushna</td>
<td>Amla</td>
<td>Vata sleshmahara, Vibandhanut, Madoshajit, Sula swasa kasa chardi trishnahara, Agnimandyyahara, Krimighna</td>
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</table>

Table No 2: Rasa panchaka of the ingredients in Sahasrayogam[^2][^20]
aggravated by the *nidanas* by virtue of residing in the *amasaya*, destroy the *agni* which is responsible for the digestive activity, combines with the undigested or improperly processed metabolites (*ama*), obstruct the passages (*rasavaha* and *swedavaha srotas*) extricates the *agni* from the site of digestion and spreads all over the body resulting in *jwara*. Both *swasa* and *kasa* are the diseases affecting *pranavaha srotas* having identical etiological factors and site of origin. Due to excessive indulgence in *nidanas*, the *doshas* predominantly *kapha* get vitiated in the *amasaya* move upwards, obstruct the channels of *vata* (*prana*) and get localised (*sthanasamsraya*) in the *uras* (thorax) which is considered to be the special seat of *kapha*. Thus, obstructed *vata* trying to overcome the obstruction travels in all directions resulting in *swasa* and *kasa* *rogas*. *Doshas* primarily involved are *kapha* and *vata* in these diseases. In all three conditions, the basic line of treatment involved is *dipana, pachana, ama soshana, ama nirharana* and *srotosodhana*. On analysing the formulation, it is observed that this *yoga* is unique in its way due to its *rasa* *panchaka* and *dosa karma* (action on vitiated *doshas*) capable enough to break the *samprapti* (pathogenesis) of *jwara, swasa* and *kasa*. This *yoga* predominantly improves the digestive capacity, causes *chedana* of *kapha* and removes the obstruction in the *srotas* caused by the vitiated *doshas* (channels) leading to the normal physiological functions of the *srotas*. *Kapha vata samana, ushna virya* and *vatanulomana* properties of the ingredients alleviate *swasa* and *kasa* as it helps to regain the *anuloma gati* of *prana vayu* (removes ovarana of *vata* by *kapha*) which is being obstructed by *doshas* before. The mineral components involved in this *yoga* include *suddha parada* and *suddha gandhaka*. The *Kajjali*, a black sulphide of mercury is used as the basic ingredient in this formulation. *Kajjali* is the end product of the trituration of *suddha parada* and *suddha gandhaka* without using any *drava dravya* (liquid) and is converted into very soft powder just like collyrium. With suitable *sahapana* and *anupana*, the *kajjali* is capable of curing all types of diseases. Its judicious use with other herbs or metals pacifies all three humours (*tridoshshohara*), increases *sukla dhatu* (*vrishya*) immediately spreads in the body when consumed, clears the obstructed channels in the diseased targeted organ and enhances the properties of other metal or herbal drugs (*yogavahi*). *Vatsanabha* is included in *visha varga* as per *Rasasastra* classics. This potent drug also possesses *yogavahi* property and is generally used in the preparation of formulations which is targeted in the respiratory system as it has *phuphusa sothaghna* property. As per the opinion of many *rasa vaidyas*, the use of *suddha vatsanabha* in the initial stages of pleurisy and pneumonia will help to prevent the further progression of the disease. It helps to bring down the body temperature in fever. The presence of these ingredients potentiates the other constituents in this *yoga* which ultimately results in the alleviation of disease if used properly considering *roga bala, rogi bala* etc. The general dosage of *suddha vatsanabha* for internal administration is 8 to 16mg. Considering the judicious use of *vatsanabha*, the proportion of *suddha vatsanabha* in this *yoga* is given as 1/16<sup>th</sup> of the total quantity. Pharmacological activities like antipyretic, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, cytoprotective, antimicrobial and immunomodulatory actions of the ingredients which are already proven, claim the probable synergetic action of this formulation in diseases like *jwara, swasa* and *kasa*. *Jameera swarasa* which is used as *bhavana dravya*, itself possesses anti-inflammatory and anti-infective properties. This formulation is widely in use by Ayurvedic Practitioners in Kerala as it is found to be very effective in treating fever associated with respiratory diseases like pneumonia, influenza, bronchitis, fever with headache, fever with asthmatic cough and fever with myalgia. The specific indications like *swasa, kasa* and *mahajwara* make this formulation a wonder drug in the management of novel corona virus in which most of the patients experience fever, cough, fatigue, anorexia, shortness of breath and non-specific symptoms like nasal congestion, headache etc. Expert clinicians administer this medicine usually along with *Ardraka swarasa, Amritharishta, and Dasamula katutraya kashaya* according to the conditions of the patients since specific *anupanas* are not mentioned in the *yoga*. Suitable *anupanas* like *swarases, kashayas, arishtas* and *asavas* can be selected based on the predominant symptoms in fevers of viral or seasonal origin. As the name indicates, this *yoga* eradicates diseases just like the rays of the sun melt ice. This medicine can be administered with suitable *sahapanas* too as per the *yukti* of the clinician. Honey might be the best vehicle for the administration in the case of children to avoid palatability issues. The second *yoga* of *Suryaprabha gulika* mentioned in *udara chikitsa prakarana* of *Rasaratna samuchaya* contains 45 ingredients. The mineral drugs in the *yoga* constitute *abhraka bhasma* (incinerated mica), *suddha gandhaka*, *suddha parada*, *saindhava lavana* (rock salt), *sauvarchala lavana* (sochal salt), *bida lavana* (black salt), *romaka lavana* (sambar salt) and *samudra lavana* (sea salt). *Abhraka bhasma* possesses properties like madhura rasa, snigda guna, ushna virya, *dipana* and *ruchya* and *ayushya*. Lavanas are generally *snigda*, *ushna*, *tikshna*, and dipaniyatama in nature. The ingredients such as *amalaki, harithaki*, *vibheethaki*, *sunti, pippali, maricha, suddha parada, suddha gandhaka* and *suddha vatsanabha* are common with *yoga* mentioned in *Sahasrayogam*. *Gorochana* is the only drug of
animal origin present in this yoga which possesses properties like tiktaka, ruksha guna, ruchya, pachana and visha alakshmi graha unmada garbhasthavahara. Kshara dwaya in the yoga includes sarajakshara and yavakshara. Visha dwandwa mentioned in the yoga comprises suddha vatsanabha and suddha sarpavisha. Vahini and brahmi beeja mentioned in this yoga is considered to be suddha bhallatathaka and palasala beeja as per rasa vaidyas. The use of suddha chithraka should be ensured during the preparation. Jatyadi pushpashtaka contributes flowers of 8 herbal medicines such as jati (Jasminum officinale), yutha (Jasminum auriculatum), kshudra yutha (Jasminum multiflorum), bakula (Mimusops elengi), champaka (Magnolia champaca), kadamba (Neolamarckia cadamba), naga champa (Plumeria pudica) and rajamalli (Caesalpinia pulcherrima). There are differences of opinion regarding the botanical source of these flowers. The basic ingredient is kajjali and the general method of preparation includes trituration of kajjali with other ingredients taken in equal quantities in vatari taila (eranda taila) and pills are rolled accordingly. As per the opinions of rasa vaidyas, the average weight of gulika can be 500mg. It possesses krishna varna, lavana rasa, kinchit kasthuri gandha and can be administered with ushnajala as anupana. The majority of the ingredients are carminative in nature and bhavana of ingredients in eranda taila imparts tikhsha usha gunas and srotosodhana properties to the formulation. Hence aims to improve the agni bala and facilitate virechana (laxative) which is the primary line of management involved in udara chikitsa.

The third yoga of Suryaprabha gulika mentioned in rajayakshma prakarana of Yogaratnakara is also a herbal-mineral combination comprising 44 ingredients. The mineral ingredients present in yoga include lavanatraya (saindhava, sauvarchala and bida), suddha silajathu, loha bhasma and makshika bhasma. One karsha each of darvi, sunti, pippali, maricha, vidanga, suddha chithraka, vacha, peetha, karanja, amritha, devahwa, ativisha, trivrut, katuka, kushthamburu, karvi, sarjashara, yavakshara, three salts, gajapippali, chavya, pushkara, talisa, panamula, pushkharajata, bhunimba, bharni, padmaka, jeera, kosa, kutaja, danti and bhadraka should be finely powdered. Here vacha is mentioned twice. Then five palas each of purified silajathu (Asphaltum punjabinum) and guggulu (oleo-gum resin of Commiphora mukul), two palas each of properly formed loha bhasma and makshika bhasma, five palas of sugar, one palo each of vamshi, twak, ela and patra are added together to form a homogenous mixture and made into electuary using honey and ghee and pills of one suvarna (aksaha) which is approximately 12g measure made out of it. This pill named ‘Suryaprabha gulika’ came to light from the lotus-like mouth of Lord Brahma. It cures sosha, kasa, urakshata, tamaka swasa, pandu, kamala, gulma, vidradi, parswasula, udara, krimi, kushta, asras, vishamajwara, grahani and muthraghata. After taking this one pill regularly, one should happily take the desired food. There is no more beneficial drug for men in the three worlds. This pill is like a lion for subduing an elephant like roused sexual passion of amorous women. This formulation promotes dhathu poshana from rasa dhathu till sukra dhathu by its sukhshma and srotosodhana property which corresponds to the probable mode of action of this yoga in pathological conditions.

The fourth yoga of Suryaprabha vati mentioned in sula prakarana of Yogaratnakara is almost similar to the yoga mentioned in Sahasrayogam as it contains certain common ingredients such as sunti, pippali, maricha, suddha hingu and suddha vatsanabha. In addition to that, granthi, vacha, agni and two jaranas are mentioned. Jaraana dwaya includes jeeraka and krishna jeeraka. This yoga is purely herbal. The powders of the ingredients in equal quantities should be macerated separately with the juices of nimbu and ardraka and then pills of maricha size be prepared with it. This formulation is advised to be administered in the morning with lukewarm water. This cures eight types of colic instantaneously. This yoga might be useful in the painful conditions involved in gastric and duodenal ulcers.

The fifth yoga of Suryaprabha gulika mentioned in vatavyadhi prakarana of Brihat Rasaraja Sundara contains 65 ingredients which include both drugs of herbal and mineral origin. One palo each of suddha chithraka, amolaki, harithaki, vibheethaki, nimba, madhyuashthi, varanga, nagakerosa, yavani, amlavetasa, bhunimba, darvi, ela, musta, parpataka, suddha tutha, katuka, bharni, chavya, padmaka, dipyaka, pippali, maricha, danti, sati, sunti, pushkara, vidanga, pippalimula, jeeraka, devadaru, tejopatra, kutaja, rasna, duralabha, amritha, trivrut, lata kasthuri, suddha bhallathaka, talisa, vrikshamala, lavanatraya, dhanyakaro, ajamodakaro, swarma makshika bhasma, jatipala, tugaksheeri, vajigandha, dadima, kankola, usheera, sarajakshara, yavakshara and reuka should be finely powdered. 8 palas of suddha silajathu, 2 palas of suddha guggulu and 8 palas of loha bhasma should be added to the above-mentioned homogenous mixture and pills are made out of it using required quantities of sugar, ghee and honey. This formulation is indicated in a wide range of diseases which includes vatarogas and rogas about rakthavaha srotas. Consumption of this yoga in panita matra promotes longevity and cures all vatika, paithika, kaphaja, dwidosha and sannipatika vikaras. As the name suggests, this yoga alleviates all diseases similar to the sun turning darkness into light. The same yoga
available in *vatavyadhi prakarana* of *Brihat Nighantu Ratnakara* also.\[34\]

**Conclusion**

*Rasayogas* in *Ayurveda* have a wide range of therapeutic utility and exhibit fast action even in small doses. *Suryaprabha gulika* is a herbo-mineral formulation having pharmacological actions in multisystem activity in a spectrum of diseases. With proper *anupana*, this formulation can be recommended safely and effectively in a variety of pathological conditions. Different *yogas* of *Suryaprabha gulika* can be utilised judiciously in the treatment considering the conditions of the patients. The *yoga* of *Suryaprabha gulika* mentioned in *Sahasrayogam* is widely used by *Ayurveda* practitioners as it is presently available and used as a drug of choice in patients with symptoms of respiratory tract predominantly associated with fever. All the five *yogas* mentioned in different classics are primarily srotosodhana in nature hence capable of alleviating the diseases and useful in personalised health care too. Further research works are encouraged to explore various pharmacological activities of the different *yogas* of *Suryaprabha gulika* which are critical to address many of the fatal diseases.

**References**

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