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Research Article

PHARMACEUTICAL PREPARATION OF *PRABHKARA VATI* - AN AYURVEDIC FORMULATION

Anju M[1]*, Anand S[2]

*[1]PG Scholar, [2]Associate Professor, Department of Rasasastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, Government of Ayurveda College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India.

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ABSTRACT

Prabhakara Vati, an Ayurvedic formulation, plays a significant role in treating heart-related ailments, as emphasized in the *Bhaishajya Ratnavali (Hridroga Prakarana)* and the Ayurvedic Formulary of India (Part 1). The preparation involves five key ingredients: *Sudha Abraka Bhasma, Sudha Loha Bhasma, Sudha Swarna Makshika Bhasma, Sudha Shilajathu,* and *Tugaksheeri (Bamboo Manna)*. The preparation involves using *Terminalia arjuna* bark decoction during trituration *(Bhavana*), which enhances its medicinal properties and supports its cardioprotective function. The preparation of *Prabhakara vati* involves preprocessing of *Abraka Bhasma, Loha Bhasma, Swarna Makshika Bhasma,* and *Shilajit Sodhana*, each performed according to classical Ayurvedic methods. Each *Bhasma* was prepared by purification (*Sodhana*) process followed by incineration *(Marana*). Purification of *Abraka, Loha,* and *Swarnamakshika* was carried out by *Nirvapa* (quenching) method while *Shilajthu sodhana* by *Suryatapi* method mentioned in *Rasataragini.* After purification, incineration was done for each ingredient based on classical reference: *5 Puta* (incineration) for *Abraka bhasma*, 8 *Puta* for *Loha basma*, and *6 Puta* for *Swarna makshika*. Subsequently, *Bhasma pareeksha* was carried out to test the quality of each *Bhasma.* After the preprocessing of this *Bhasma, Prabhakara vati* was prepared by triturating an equal amount of each five ingredients with *Arjuna kashaya*, which was prepared using *Bhavana* method. Special care is taken to maintain the purity and authenticity of ingredients, ensuring the formulation retains its therapeutic efficacy. This work is a comprehensive documentation of the step-by-step preparation of *Prabhakara Vati,* conducted at Government Ayurveda College in Thiruvananthapuram, and provides a detailed guideline for the formulation process described herein.

INTRODUCTION

Prabhakara vati is a herbo-mineral formulation mentioned in *Bhaishajya Ratnavali-Hridroga Prakarana*[1]. It contains four mineral ingredients (*Abraka, Loha, Swarnamakshika, Shilajathu*) and one herbal ingredient (*Tughaksheeri-Bamboo manna).* The reference is also in the Ayurvedic Formulary of India-AFI Part 1[2]. It supports heart health, improves respiratory function, and enhances vitality. The preparation follows a systematic and meticulous process to ensure its therapeutic efficacy and adherence to classical guidelines. Here, the minerals are converted into nano sized particles using various procedures like *Sodana* (purification) and *Marana* (incineration).

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The *Sodhana* (purification) of *Abraka* (mica), *Swarna Makshika* (copper pyrite), and *Loha* (iron) was performed using the *Nirvapa* method[3], involving rapid heating and quenching in a suitable liquid medium. After *Sodhana,* the materials underwent an incineration process, involving pellet formation, *Sandhibandhana* (dried pellets were placed in an earthen vessel covered with another vessel, and sealed to create a closed system, facilitating controlled heating and incineration), and controlled heating, until the desired *Bhasma Pariksha* (confirmatory test for *Bhasma*) was attained. It was confirmed by the presence of characteristic features such as *Varitaratwa* (when *Bhasma* is placed on water, it floats on it), *Rekha*

Purnata (when *Bhasma* is rubbed between fingers, it fills in the lines of a finger), and suitable *Varna* (colour) by the *Bhasma Lakshanam* (incinerated material characteristics) described in classical Ayurvedic texts[4]. Thereby, the toxic nature of the metals and minerals is nullified and becomes biocompatible, absorbable, and suitable for the human body.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The preparation of *Prabhakara vati* was completed through the following steps.

1. Procurement of raw drugs and their authentication

The required raw mineral samples *Abhraka, Swarna makshika, Silajathu* and *Gandaka* were purchased through a Palakkad vendor. Their consanguinity was tested as per the classical textbook's *Grahya laksana* (confirmatory test).

Abraka: *Snigdha* (smooth), *Pruthuthalam* (thick layered), *Bharatho adikam* (heavy weight), *Varna samyuktam* (coloured), *Sukha nirmochya patra* (easily separable) [5].

Swarna makshikam: *Nishkonam* (having no angles), heavy, *Snigdha* (smooth), *Swarna varna* (bright yellow colour), black line while rubbing with hand and golden line while rubbing with touching stone[6].

For preparation of *Loha bhasma*, iron metal powder (100 mesh size) was collected from the laboratory supplies, Thiruvananthapuram.

2. Preparation of *Abraka bhasma*

Abhraka (mica) is a translucent and lustrous mineral used for treating hepatitis, tuberculosis, asthma, gastritis, and skin conditions. The preparation of *Abraka bhsama* is based on *Sinduramanjari* reference, a Keraleeya textbook, which bypasses *Dhanybraka nirmana*. This is an intermediate stage during *Abraka sodhana* and its *Marana*, helps in reducing the particle size and making the preparation of *Bhasma* easier[7]. The preparation involves *Abarka sodhana* (purification) and *Abhraka bhasmeekarana* (incineration of *Abraka*).

Abraka Sodhana

Abraka sodhana was done by *Nirvapa* method by heating *Abraka* using tongs until it turned red hot, and then it was dipped in freshly made *Triphala kwatha*[8]. The *Triphala kashaya* (decoction of *Emblica officinalis, Terminalia bellerica,* and *Terminalia chebula)* was prepared by taking an appropriate amount of coarse powder of *Triphala* in a stainless steel vessel mixed with 8 parts of water and reduced to 1/4th. After self-cooling, it was collected from the *Kwatha* by filtering. From *2nd Nirvapa* onwards, it was heated in an iron kadai up to red hot. The quenching process was repeated six more times, each time freshly prepared *Triphala kwatha* was used. After the seventh *Nirvapa,* the *Abhraka* was washed with lukewarm water and dried on a sunshade. The whole procedure was completed within 3 days.

Abhraka Bhasmeekarana

Sodhita abraka was ground with *Kumari swarasa* using a mixer grinder for 3 hours to achieve a butter consistency. It was then triturated with enough *Triphala kashaya* for 12 hours, and *Chakrika* (pellets) were prepared. Later, it was dried under shade, placed in a *Sarava samputa* (closed earthen vessel) with seven-layered *Sandhibandhana* (mud-smeared cloth), and dried. Incineration was conducted at 950°C in a muffle furnace for 1 hour, monitored every 15 minutes. The obtained *Chakrika* were again powdered and grinding was carried out using *Kumari swarasa* till attained *Subhavitha laksana* (microfine grinding)[9]. The whole procedure was continued four times to meet *Bhasma pareeksha* standards.

3. Preparation of *Swarnamkashika Bhasma*

Makshika (copper pyrite) is a mineral composed of copper, iron, and sulphur. The *Samhita* period literature describes *Makshika* therapeutically, but *Rasasastra* literature provides a detailed pharmaceutical description. *Swarna makshika bhasma* was prepared according to *Rasaratna Samuchaya's* reference.

Swarna Makshika Sodhana

Swarna makshika (200g) was purified by *Nirvapa* (quenching) method using *Triphala Kashaya*[10]. The process was repeated seven times to ensure proper purification, and fresh *Triphala kashaya* was used each time.

Swarna Makshika Bhasmeekarna[11]

150g of each *Soditha Swarna makshika* and *Soditha gandhaka* was taken and triturated with *Matulunga swarasa* using a mortar and pestle until it attained *Subhavitha laksana*. Small pellets were made, dried, placed inside an earthen *Sharava,* sealed with *Sandhibandhana,* and dried under the sun. The sealed *sarava* was placed in a muffle furnace set to 600°C for 1 hour, with temperature readings noted every 15 minutes. After 2-3 days of self-cooling (*Swanga seetathwa*), the *Chakrika* were re-powdered and ground with *Matulunga swarasa*. This process was repeated five times to obtain proper *Swarna makshika bhasma*.

4. Preparation of *Sodhita shilajathu*

According to *Rasatarangini's* reference, the purification of *Shilajathu* was performed using the *Suryatapi* method. Initially, 500g of coarse *Triphala* powder was mixed with 4L water and boiled until reduced to 1L to prepare *Triphala Kashaya*. For the *Sodhana* process, 500g of *Shilajathu* was dissolved in 250ml of the prepared *Triphala Kashaya* and 1L of hot water, then exposed to sunlight. The scum formed on the liquid surface was collected daily until no more

scum remained. The collected scum was then dried, powdered, and stored in an airtight container [12].

5. Preparation of *Loha bhasma*

Loha bhasma was prepared as per *Rasaratna Samuchayam* reference. After *Samanya* and *Vishesha sodhana*, *Loha bassmeekarana* was done.

Samanya Sodhana of *Loha* [13]

Five liquid media are needed for the *Samanya sodhana* of *Loha*, and three of them are prepared as per the reference quoted below.

Preparation of *Takra*: 3L curd mixed with 1½L of purified water and ground well with a mixer grinder [14].

Preparation of *Aranala*: 1.6kg Sali rice was mixed with 3 parts water (4.8L) in a mud pot, sealed with a *Sarava,* and secured using a three-layered *Sandhibandhana*. The mixture was left undisturbed for 7 days, after which it was filtered for use in quenching [15].

Preparation of *Kulatha kashaya*: To avoid stirring, it was prepared by making *Kizhi* (poultice). 2kg horse gram poultice, which was hung on a wooden rod and dipped into 16L of water-containing pot. It was heated on mild fire and its reduction point was 4L.

For *Sodhana,* 650g of iron powder was heated to red-hot, then dipped into a vessel containing *Tila taila*. After self-cooling, it was filtered and repeated six more times using fresh *Tila taila*. The same procedure was carried out in the medium like *Takra, Gomutra, Aranala,* and *Kulatha kashaya*.

Vishesha Sodhana of *Loha*

Vishesha sodhana was also conducted using the *Nirvapa* method. In this process, *Triphala kashaya* was utilized, and 678.5g of *Samanya soditha loha* underwent the procedure seven times [16].

Marana of *Loha* [17]

620g of *Soditha loha* was mixed with an equal amount of ghee until the ghee completely burned off. When *Loha* turns red-hot, put grass on the mixture and it burns constantly. Then it was taken out and kept for self-cooling. The procedure was repeated five times. The obtained product was powdered and triturated with freshly prepared *Triphala kwatha*, following *Bhavana kashaya* reference[18]. *Chakrika* was prepared, dried under a sunshade, placed in an earthen *Sharava,* sealed, and heated in a muffle furnace at 600°C for an hour. After 2-3 days of self-cooling, this process was repeated with fresh *Triphala kwatha* until the product passed all *Bhasma pareeksha* tests.

6. Preparation of *Prabhakara vati*

30g of each ingredient *Swarna makshika bhasma, Loha bhasma, Abhraka bhasma, Tughaksheeri, Sodhita silajathu* were weighed separately. All ingredients were powdered well and triturated well with *Arjuna kwatha*, prepared by *Bhavana kashaya vidhi* preparation. After attaining *Samyak bhavitha*, *Vati* was prepared in 250mg size.

OBSERVATION AND RESULT

1. Preparation of *Abraka bhasma*

The *Abhraka* plates were transformed into small pieces, and the layers were easily detachable after each *Nirvapa* in *Sodhana* process. From the fourth *Nirvapa* onwards, the *Abhraka* became powdered and dark, and shinier at the end of 7th *Nirvapa.* The colour of *Triphala kashaya* becomes darker and the amount of *Kashaya* decreases after each *Nirvapa.* The amount of *Abhraka* was increased after the 7th *Nirvapa*.

Table 1: Observation during *Abraka Bhasmeekarana*

Process	Observation
Sodhana	Amount of raw *Abraka*: 650g Total amount of *Kashaya* used for *Nirvapa*: 14L (1.2L for each time) Obtained *Sodhita abraka* after *Nirvapa*: 861.5g Weight gained:
Marana	The number of *Puta* required: 5 Temperature on muffle furnace: 950 Weight of *Sodhita abraka*: 861.5g Weight of *Abhraka* after 5th *Puta*: 282g Weight reduction: 579.5g Total amount of *Kumari swarasa* used: 5.05L Total amount *Triphala kashaya* used: 2.25L

The final obtained *Chakrika* were red *(Sindhurabha*) in colour and pass all *Bhasma pareeksha- Varitaratwa, Rekhapurnatwa,* and tasteless.

2. Preparation of *Swarnamakshika bhasma*

On doing *Swarna makshika sodhana*, the characteristic smell and fumes of sulfur were noted on heating. The golden colour of *Makshika* turned dark brown by the 4th *Nirvapa,* and eventually, some parts turned black by the 7th *Nirvapa.* Most of the material became coarsely powdered, transforming from a hard and crystalline nature to a brittle form.

Table 2: Observation during *Swarna makshika bhasmeekarana*

Process	Observation
Sodhana	Quantity of raw *Swarna makshika*: 200g Quantity of *Triphala Kashaya* used: 2.8L Quantity of *Sodhita Swarna makshika* obtained: 175g Reduction in weight: 25g
Marana	The number of *Puta* required: 6 Amount of *Sodhita makshika*: 150g Amount of *Soditha Gandhaka*:150g Amount *Matulunga swarasa* used in total: 255 ml Temperature on muffle furnace:600 Weight of *Makshika* after 6th *Puta*: 97g Weight reduction: 53g

During *Bhavana,* the golden colour transformed into a shining cement colour, with *Chakrika* appearing lustrous. After the first *Puta*, some turned slightly brown with a golden tinge but did not pass any *Bhasma pareeksha* tests. The second *Bhavana* turned black with white spots; post-*Puta*, some remained brown with luster. *Rekhapurnatwa* was achieved, but *Varitaratwa* was not. By the fourth *Puta*, the *Chakrika* turned red and lost its luster, but exhibited a metallic taste, achieving *rekhapurnatwa* but not *Varitaratwa.* The fifth puta attained fifty percent of *Varitaratwa.* By the sixth *Puta*, the red coloured *Chakrika* passed all *Bhasma pareeksha* tests, achieving both *Rekhapurnatwa* and *Varitaratwa*, with no metallic taste.

3. Preparation of *Sodhita silajathu*

The purification process begins with 500g of raw *Shilajathu*, resulting in 283.5g of purified *Shilajathu* (*Sodhita shilajathu*).

4. Preparation of *Loha bhasma*

Table 3: Observation during *Loha bhasmeekarana*

Process	Observation
Samanya sodhana	Amount of *Loha churna*: 650g Total amount of *Tila taila, Takra, Gomutra, Aranala, Kulatha Kashaya*: 3.5L (each time 500ml was used-total 7 *Nirvapa*) Quantity of obtained *Samanya sodhita loha*: 678g Weight gained: 28g
Vishesha sodhana	Amount of *Samanya odhita loha*: 678.5g Amount of *Triphala kashaya* used: 3.5 L Amount of *Loha*, after *Vishesha sodhana*: 655g
Loha marana	**During *Loha barjana* in *Grita*** Amount of *Sodhita loha* taken :620g Amount of ghee used: 3.1L(620ml-5times) Amount of *Loha*, after this procedure: 606g **Marana of *Loha churna* with *Triphala Kashaya*** Amount *Loha* taken for *Marana*: 600g No of *Puta* required: 8 Temperature on muffle furnace:600 Amount of *Loha* after *Marana*: 497g Weight reduction: 103g

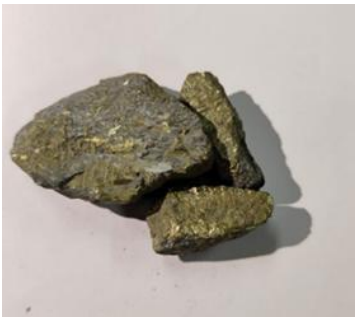
After *Taila nirvapa,* the metallic luster was lost, and the *Loha* turned blackish. Huge flames were observed during the sudden quenching of red-hot iron in *Taila*. During *Takra nirvapa,* the fine powder form of *Loha* was lost, and the smell of burned *Takra* was noted. *Takra* separated into whitish coagulated masses and watery parts. *Gomutra* changed from pale yellow to brown, with a typical *Gomutra* smell on *Loha* during *Gomutra nirvapa*. After *Kulatha Kashaya nirvapa*, most of the thickened mass was powdered. 28g weight gain and 23.5g weight reduction of *Loha* were noted after *Samanya* and *Vishesha sodhana* respectively.

During the *Loha bharjana* in ghee, the *Loha* caught fire intensively. Suffocating white fumes were noticed towards the end, and the *Loha's* blackish colour turned brownish red. During the initial *Puta* stages, *Chakrika* transitioned from black to reddish-brown, with neither *Rekhapuranatwa* nor *Varitaratwa*

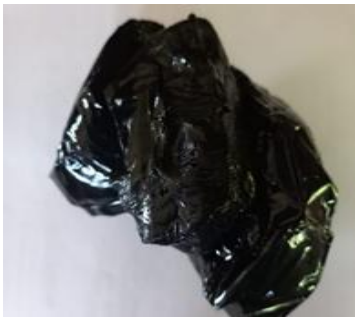
achieved, retaining a sour taste. By the sixth *Puta*, *Rekhapuranatwa* was achieved with a reddish-brown colour, but *Varitaratwa* was not. In the seventh *Puta, Chakrika* turned *Jambu varna,* reaching 50% *Varitaratwa.* Finally, in the eighth *Puta*, the *Chakrika* were *Jambu varna*, achieving both *Rekhapuranatwa* and *Varitaratwa*, and were tasteless.

Ingredients for the Preparation of *Prabhakara Vati*

Abraka

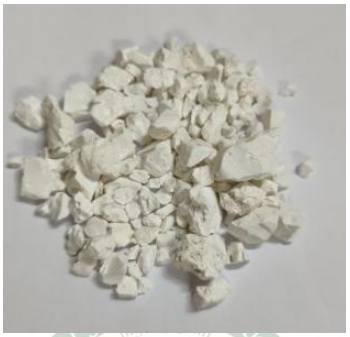


Swarna makshika



Shilajathu

Iron powder



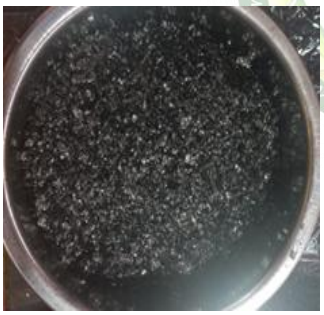
Tughaksheeri

Arjuna

Fig 1: Ingredients for the preparation of *Prabhakara vati*

Stages of *Abraka Bhasmeekarana*

Making red hot



Sodita abraka

Prepared *Chakrika* for *Marana*

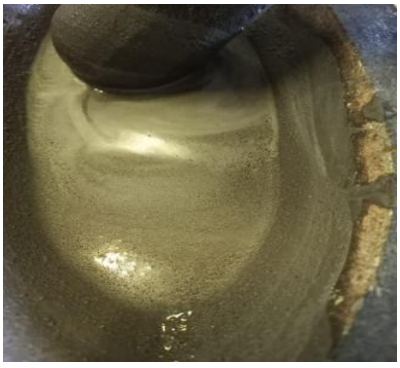
Abraka bhasma* after 5th *Puta

Fig 2: Stages of *Abraka bhasmeekarana*

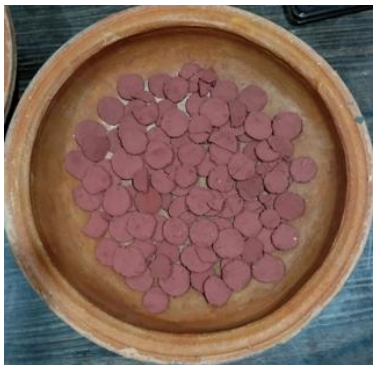
Stages of *Swarna Makshika Bhasmeekarana*

Making red hot

Shoditha Swarna makshika



Shodita makshika* and *Sodita gandaka* are triturate with *Matulunga swarasa* for *Marana

Prepared Chakirika **_Chakrika_ obtained after 6th _Puta_**

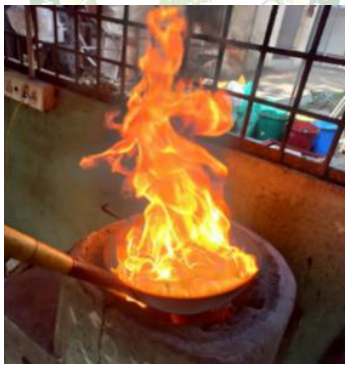
Fig No: 3 Stages of _Swarna makshika bhasmeekarana_

Stages of _Shilajathu Sodhana_

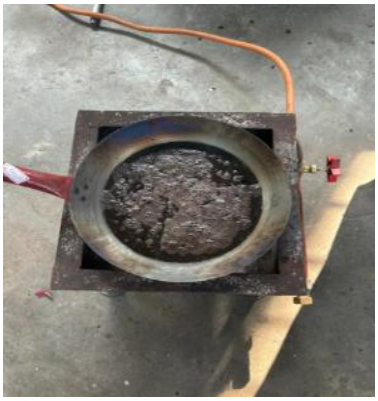

Scum formation **Collected scum/_Sodhita shilajathu_**

Fig 4: Stages of _Shilajathu sodhana_

Stages of _Loha Bhasmeekarana_


Making red hot **_Loha_ catches fire during process of _Taila nirvapa_** **Obtained product after _Samanya_ and _Vishesha sodana_**



***Loha bharjana* with ghee** **Prepared _Chakrika_ after _Triphala Kashaya bhavana_ for _Maran_** **Obtained _Loha bhasma_ after 8th _Puta_**

Preparation of *Prabhakara Vati*

Bhavana* with *Arjuna Kashaya

Prepared *Prabhakara vati*

Fig 6: Preparation of *Prabhakara vati*

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

For the pharmaceutical processing of *Prabhakara vati*, preprocessing four *Bhasmas- Abraka, Swarna makshika, Loha*, and *Shilajath* was conducted. Utilizing the appropriate *Sodhana* and *Marana* processes, these raw materials were meticulously converted into their *Bhasma* forms. In the case of metals and minerals, *Sodhana* facilitated the physicochemical and therapeutic transformation, rendering them suitable for further *Marana* or direct use. This careful processing transformed the brittle and hard nature of the raw drugs, resulting in significant particle size reduction.

One of the formulation ingredients, *Abraka bhasma* was prepared as per *Sindhura Manjari* reference. During *Nirvapa* in *Triphala kashaya*, the weight increased due to the adhesion of *Triphala kashaya* on the *Abraka* surface. For first *Puta* shall be done after *Bhavana* with *Kumari swarasa* (up to butter consistency) and then followed by *Triphala kashaya*. From 2nd *Puta* onwards, only *Kumari swarasa* was used for *Bhavana* purposes. Temperature of the muffle furnace was 950 and total of 5 *Puta* were carried out for proper *Bhasmeekarana.*

Swarna makshika bhasma was prepared as per *Rasaratna Samuchaya* references, using *Triphala kashaya nirvapa* for purification. Krushn Kumar et al's study highlights that repeated quenching with *Triphala kashaya* detoxifies the raw material and enhances therapeutic attributes[19]. The golden-yellow, crystalline *Swarna makshika* became brittle, black powder after *Sodhana,* due to repeated heating and cooling. For *Marana,* the *Sodita Swarna makshika* was triturated with *Matulunga swarasa* and subjected to six *Puta* at 600°C. Trituration with *Matulunga swarasa*, containing citric acid, had a bio-enhancing effect[2]. After *Bhasmeekarana,* the material converted into sulfides and oxides of iron and copper, with reduced particle size [21].

One of other ingredient, *Loha bhasma* was prepared as per *Rasaratna Samuchaya*, using the *Nirvapa* method for *Samanya* and *Vishesha sodhana.* Iron powder was heated to red-hot and dipped in various media, including *Tila taila, Takra, Gomutra, Aranala, Kulatha kwatha,* and *Triphala kwatha*, seven times. This process removes impurities and reduces particle size. The *Taila*, being non-aqueous, prevents oxidation. *Sodhana* resulted in a 28g weight gain. Before incineration, 620g of *Soditha loha* was heated with an equal amount of ghee, repeated five times, then powdered and triturated with *Triphala kashaya*. It was subjected to 8 *Puta* at 600°C. *Triphala,* rich in ascorbic acid and tannin, enhances iron absorption and protects it from oxidation, contributing to the effectiveness of *Loha bhasma* [22].

Soditha silajathu, an ingredient of *Prabhakara vati*, was prepared using the *Suryatapi* method from *Rasatarangini.* This method involves 500g of *Silajathu*, 250ml of *Triphala kashaya,* and 1L of hot water placed over sunrays. The resulting smooth *Sodita silajathu* weighed 283g, with *Triphala's* properties enhancing its therapeutic action. *Vamsalochana*, the only herbal ingredient, was sourced from Thrissur and authenticated.

The final preparation involved grinding 30g each of *Abraka bhasma, Swarna makshika bhasma, Loha bhasma, Sodita silajathu,* and *Tughaksheeri* with *Arjuna kashaya*, forming 250mg pills over 8 hours. The finished *Prabhakara vati* was stored in an airtight container.

CONCLUSION

As outlined in this article, the preparation of *Prabhakara vati* involving the preprocessing of *Abraka bhasma, Loha bhasma, Swarna makshika bhasma,* and *Soditha silajathu*. After this, 30g of five ingredients are triturated with *Arjuna kashaya* and prepared the final product, *Prabahkara vati*, which is used to treat cardiac diseases.

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***Address for correspondence**
Dr. Anju M
PG Scholar,
Department of Rasasastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana,
Government of Ayurveda College,
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
Email:
anjumadanchery@gmail.com