



Review Article

CHIRUVILWADI KASHAYAM: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON ITS PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIONS AND THERAPEUTIC APPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Chiruvilwadi kashayam is a classical Ayurvedic polyherbal formulation described in traditional Kerala text book *Sahasrayogam*. The classical indications of the formulation include *Gudakeela* (Arsas), *Bhagandhara*, *Gulma* and also told as stimulating *Jataragni* immediately. Apart from its indications it is widely used in traditional clinical practices in various conditions. It is prepared out of six medicinal plants namely *Chiruvilwa* (*Holoptelea integrifolia* (Roxb.) *Punarnava* (*Boerhavia diffusa* L.) *Pippali* (*Piper longum* L.) *Sunti* (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe) *Citraka* (*Plumbago zeylanica*.) and *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*). The formulation contains 6 ingredients which predominantly has *Thiktha*, *Katu rasa*, *Laghu ruksha guna*, *Ushna virya* and *Madhura vipaka*. This review aims to critically analyze the classical Ayurvedic references, phytochemical constituents, pharmacological activities, and therapeutic applications of *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam*. By integrating traditional knowledge with available scientific evidence, the article highlights the potential role of this formulation as a safe and effective therapeutic option in the management of anorectal and digestive disorders and underscores the need for further clinical and experimental studies to validate its efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Chiruvilwadi kashayam is a traditional Kerala yoga one of the most important *Kashaya yogam* for *Agnideepthi* mentioned in *Sahasrayogam*. The formulation consists of 6 ingredients i.e., *Chiruvilwa* (*Holoptelea integrifolia*) *Punarnava* (*Boerhavia diffusa*) *Pippali* (*Piper longum*) *Sunti* (*Zingiber officinale*) *Citraka* (*Plumbago zeylanica*) and *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*). *Saindhava Lavana* is prescribed as the *Anupana*, facilitating enhanced absorption and potentiation of the formulation's therapeutic effects. The classical therapeutic indications are *Arsas*, *Bhagandhara*, *gulma*^[1], reflecting its role in anorectal and gastrointestinal conditions. Beyond these traditional indications, the formulation has gained wider clinical application in contemporary Ayurvedic practice. It is found to be effective in managing male and female infertility, PCOS, uterine Fibroid, varicose veins etc. It is also reported to treat varicocele. [2]

However, despite its extensive use and observed clinical benefits, systematic scientific evaluation of *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam* remains limited. In this context, the present review aims to critically analyse the formulation with respect to its Ayurvedic pharmacodynamics and available modern scientific evidence, in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its therapeutic potential.

Methodology

The present review is based on an analysis of classical Ayurvedic literature and available scientific publications. The formulation details, indications, and therapeutic uses of *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam* were obtained from the classical Ayurvedic text *Sahasrayogam*.

In addition, relevant scientific literature related to the pharmacological activities of the constituent drugs was searched through electronic databases including PubMed, Google Scholar, and Scopus. Published articles, review papers, and experimental studies were screened to identify information related to the pharmacological actions of the ingredients. The collected data were compiled and analysed to understand the relationship between the classical

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indications of *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam* and the pharmacological actions reported in scientific studies.

Constituent drugs of *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam*

Table 1 provides the details of the constituent drugs of *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam*, including their botanical names, family, and parts used.

Table 1: List of drugs in *Chiruvilwadi kashayam*

Drug	Botanical Name	Family	Part used	Ratio
<i>Chiruvilwa</i>	<i>Holoptelea integrifolia</i>	Ulmaceae	Stem bark	1 part
<i>Punarnava</i>	<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i>	Nyctaginaceae	Root	1 part
<i>Chitraka</i>	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>	Plumbaginaceae	Root	1 part
<i>Hareetaki</i>	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Combretaceae	Fruit rind	1 part
<i>Pippali</i>	<i>Piper longum</i>	Piperaceae	Fruit	1 part
<i>Sunthi</i>	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Zingiberaceae	Rhizome	1 part

Rasa panchaka

The *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, and *Karma* of the constituent drugs of *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam* are presented in Table 2.

Drug	Rasa	Guna	Veerya	Vipaka	Karma
<i>Chiruvilwa</i>	Tiktha, Kashaya	Laghu, Rooksha	Ushna	Katu	Kaphavata samaka, Sotha, Agnimandya, Anulomana, Soola
<i>Punarnava</i>	Madhura, Tiktha, Kashaya	Laghu, Rooksha	Ushna	Madhura	Tridoshasamaka, Vatavyatha, Agnimandya, Raktaprasadana, Pandusophahara, Rasayana
<i>Chitraka</i>	Katu	Laghu, Rooksha, Teekshna	Ushna	Katu	Kaphapitta samaka, Amavata, Sopha, Agnimandya, Rasayana
<i>Hareetaki</i>	Kashaya, Tiktha, Madhura, Katu, Amla	Laghu, Rooksha	Ushna	Madhura	Tridoshasamaka, Deepana, Soola, Sodha, Vatavyadhi, Yakrit-Pleeha Vriddhi, Srotoshodhana, Anulomana, Rasayana
<i>Pippali</i>	Tiktha	Laghu, Snigdha, Teekshna	Ushna	Madhura	Vata-Sleshma hara, Deepana, Swasa, Kasa, Krimi, Meda-Kapha vinashini, Rasayana
<i>Sunthi</i>	Katu	Laghu, Rooksha	Ushna	Madhura	Vata-Kaphahara, Agnimandya, Aruchi, Arsas, Soolahara, Sodha

Chemical constituents and pharmacological action

Table 3: Chemical constituents and Pharmacological action of constituent drugs

Botanical Name	Chemical Constituents	Pharmacological activity
<i>Holoptelea integrifolia</i> (Roxb.) Planch.	Terpenoids (friedelin, epifriedelin, β -amyrin), triterpenoids (lupeol), sterols (β -sitosterol, stigmasterol), phenolic compounds, flavonoids, alkaloids, saponins, tannins, glycosides, long-chain alcohols (hexacosanol, octacosanol),	Anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antibacterial, antifungal, antioxidant, antidiabetic, antidiarrhoeal, anthelmintic, wound healing, hepatoprotective, anticancer, hypolipidemic ⁽³⁾

	triterpenoid acids (betulin, betulinic acid), holoptelin A and holoptelin B ⁽³⁾	
<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i> Linn.	Alkaloids (punarnavine), rotenoids (boeravinones A–F), flavonoids (quercetin, kaempferol, eupalitin), lignans, xanthenes, glycosides, steroids, phenolic compounds, purine nucleosides ⁽⁴⁾	Hepatoprotective, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antidiabetic, diuretic, immunomodulatory, antimicrobial, anticonvulsant, anti-ulcer, anticancer ⁽⁴⁾
<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i> Linn.	Naphthoquinones (plumbagin, 3-chloroplumbagin), droserone, zeylanone, isozeylanone, flavonoids, phenolic compounds, tannins ⁽⁵⁾	Anti-inflammatory (COX-2 inhibition), analgesic, antioxidant ⁽⁵⁾
<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	Hydrolysable tannins (chebulagic acid, chebulinic acid, corilagin), phenolic acids (gallic acid, ellagic acid), flavonoids, triterpenoids, anthraquinones, glycosides ⁽⁶⁾	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antidiabetic, hepatoprotective, neuroprotective, anticancer, gastroprotective ⁽⁶⁾
<i>Piper longum</i> Linn.	Alkaloids (piperine, piperlongumine, piperlonguminine), amides, flavonoids, lignans, steroids, essential oils ⁽⁷⁾	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, anticancer, hepatoprotective, antidiabetic, immunomodulatory, anti-ulcer, anthelmintic, neuroprotective ⁽⁷⁾
<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Roscoe	Gingerols (6-gingerol, 8-gingerol, 10-gingerol), shogaols, paradols, zingerone, volatile/essential oils (zingiberene, β -sesquiphellandrene, ar-curcumen), flavonoids, terpenoids, phenolic compounds ⁽⁸⁾	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, antiemetic, antidiabetic, anticancer, hepatoprotective, cardioprotective, gastroprotective ⁽⁸⁾

Saindhava as Anupana

Saindhava Lavana is classically prescribed as the *Anupana* for *Chiruviladi Kashayam*, reflecting its well-established role in enhancing digestion and facilitating drug action. In Ayurvedic literature, it is regarded as the best among *Lavanas* and is recommended for regular use owing to its *Tridosahara* property, with a particular capacity to support *Agni*. It exhibits *Deepana* (enhancing digestive fire), *Rochana* (improving appetite), and *Pachana* (promoting digestion) actions, thereby complementing the therapeutic intent of *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam*. Unlike other salts, *Saindhava Lavana* is described as *Avidahi*, indicating that it does not aggravate acidity or produce burning sensations, and is also attributed with *Vrishya* and *Chakshushya* properties, denoting its supportive effects on reproductive health and vision.

From a compositional perspective, *Saindhava Lavana* is often identified as a comparatively pure form of rock salt, consisting of approximately 85% sodium chloride along with a proportion of naturally occurring trace minerals. It is said to contain multiple essential elements such as calcium, potassium, magnesium, iron, zinc, and copper, which contribute to its broader physiological effects. In Ayurvedic pharmacodynamics, it is characterized by a *Lavana rasa* with a mild

Madhura anurasa, *Madhura vipaka*, and *Sheeta veerya*, along with *Laghu* and *Snigdha guna*. These attributes enable it to act at a subtle level (*Sukshma marga anuvartana*), facilitating penetration into microchannels and assisting in the removal of obstructions. This property is particularly relevant when used as an *Anupana*, as it enhances the bioavailability and systemic action of the formulation with which it is administered.

Other Similar formulation

Gandharvahasthadi Kashayam⁽⁹⁾ is another classical Ayurvedic formulation that shows considerable similarity to *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam* in terms of its composition and therapeutic actions. Most of the ingredients present in *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam* are also included in *Gandharvahasthadi Kashayam*, with the exception of *Pippali* (*Piper longum*). The absence of *Pippali*, which is known for its pronounced *Theekshna* and *Deepana-pachana* properties, makes *Gandharvahasthadi Kashayam* relatively lesser *Theekshna* in nature, when compared to *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam*. In addition to the common ingredients, *Gandharvahasthadi Kashayam* contains other drugs such as *Eranda* (*Ricinus communis*), *Dusparsha* (*Fagonia cretica*), and *Bhoomitata* (*Curculigo*

orchiodes), which contribute significantly to its pharmacological profile, particularly in promoting *Vathanulomana*.

Classical Ayurvedic texts describe *Gandharvahasthadi Kashayam* as possessing *Vatha shamaka* properties and as being effective in improving *Agnibala* (digestive strength), enhancing *Ruchi* (appetite), and facilitating *Malashodhana* (bowel cleansing). Owing to these actions, the formulation is commonly used in conditions associated with impaired digestion, and constipation. The classical *Anupana* recommended with this formulation is *Saindhava* (rock salt) and *Guda* (jaggery), which are believed to support its digestive, carminative, and bowel-regulating effects, thereby enhancing the overall therapeutic efficacy of the formulation.

Role in gynaecological conditions

In many gynecological disorders described in Ayurveda, the pathology is often attributed to the improper formation of *Artava/Shukra* along with the vitiation of *Apana Vata*. Disturbance in the normal movement of *Apana Vata* can impair the physiological functions of the reproductive system, particularly those related to menstruation. From an Ayurvedic perspective, the therapeutic approach therefore focuses on restoring the normal movement and function of *Apana Vata*, especially within the *Koshtha* and *Garbhashaya*. The obstruction to the normal movement of *Vata* is often considered to arise from the accumulation of *Kapha* within the channels of *Vata*, particularly the *Artavavaha Srotas*. This obstruction disrupts the physiological flow of *Apana Vata*, contributing to menstrual irregularities and associated gynecological conditions. Consequently, management strategies aim to remove this obstruction and re-establish the unobstructed functioning of *Vata*. *Chiruvilwadi kashayam* is indicated in such conditions due to their *Vata-Kapha Shamana* properties. In addition to pacifying these doshas, the formulation is also known to promote *Agnideepana* (stimulation of digestive and metabolic fire) and to help alleviate conditions associated with *Moodha Vata*.

A combination with *Hinguvachadi Churna* is widely used for its role in alleviating pain and abdominal discomfort. Its use is particularly relevant in dysmenorrhea and pelvic pain conditions due to uterine fibroids or endometriosis, which may sometimes present with features comparable to *Gulma* in Ayurvedic descriptions. Both *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam* and *Hinguvachadi Churna* possess *Gulmahara* properties, which may contribute to the reduction of pain and abdominal discomfort in such conditions.

DISCUSSION

The *Rasapanchaka* profile of the ingredients of *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam* was analyzed to understand the pharmacodynamic basis of the formulation. Most of

the constituent drugs predominantly exhibit *Katu* (pungent) and *Tikta* (bitter) *Rasa*, with *Laghu* (light) and *Ruksha* (dry) being the principal *Gunas*. In terms of *Vipaka*, four of the ingredients possess *Madhura vipaka*, while the remaining two exhibit *Katu vipaka*. All the drugs in the formulation are characterized by *Ushna veerya*, indicating their potential to enhance digestive and metabolic activity.

With respect to *Dosha*-specific actions, three of the ingredients exhibit *Vata-Kaphahara* properties. In addition, *Haritaki* and *Punarnava* are known for their *Tridosha-shamana* effects, whereas *Chitraka* with its pronounced *Deepana* property predominantly exerts *Kapha-Pitta shamana* action, particularly useful in conditions associated with impaired digestion. Considering the collective pharmacodynamic attributes of its ingredients, the formulation as a whole demonstrates *Kapha-Vata shamana* activity. Furthermore, it possesses *Agnideepana* (enhancing digestive fire), *Malapravartaka* (facilitating bowel movement), and *Lekhana* (scraping or reducing excessive accumulations) properties, which may contribute to its therapeutic utility.

The pharmacological activities reported for the constituent drugs further support these classical observations. Phytochemical studies have identified the presence of diverse bioactive compounds, including alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, and phenolic constituents. These compounds have been associated with a range of biological effects such as anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, antidiabetic, hepatoprotective, hypolipidemic, and gastroprotective actions. Experimental and clinical studies on individual ingredients also indicate analgesic, wound healing, neuroprotective, and anticancer potentials. The cumulative effect of these properties suggests a synergistic mode of action, wherein multiple therapeutic pathways are influenced simultaneously. This integrated pharmacological profile may account for the wide spectrum of clinical applications observed with *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam*, extending beyond its classical indications to conditions involving chronic inflammation, metabolic disturbances, and circulatory impairment.

CONCLUSION

Chiruvilwadi Kashayam is a widely practiced classical formulation traditionally indicated in conditions such as *Arsas*, *Bhagandhara*, and *Gulma*. In present-day clinical practice, it is frequently used in the management of anorectal disorders like haemorrhoids and fistula-in-ano, and is also found beneficial in variety of clinical conditions. Classical references describe its ability to stimulate *Jatharagni*. Clinically, it is often observed to act beyond the level of *Jatharagni* and even influence *Dhathwagni*, which may explain its usefulness in a variety of conditions

associated with impaired metabolic activity and accumulation of *Ama*. The therapeutic efficacy of this formulation can be attributed to the diverse pharmacological properties of its ingredients, including anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, immunomodulatory, antimicrobial, hepatoprotective, and gastroprotective activities. The use of *Saindhava Lavana* as *Anupana* further helps to enhance digestion, facilitate drug absorption, and improve the overall effectiveness of the formulation.

Considering its classical indications, multifaceted pharmacological actions, and clinical utility, *Chiruvilwadi Kashayam* continues to remain a valuable therapeutic formulation in Ayurvedic practice. However, further systematic pharmacological investigations and well-designed clinical studies are warranted to scientifically validate its therapeutic claims, elucidate its mechanisms of action, and strengthen the evidence base for its wider clinical application.

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