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Lavana Varga in Ayurveda

Dr. Shilpa Nimbal,¹ Dr. Umapati C. Baragi,² Dr. Jyothi Alias Jyotsna³

¹Post Graduate Scholar, ³Assistant Professor, Dept. of Basic Principles, BLDEA's AVS Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Vijayapur, Karnataka, ²Associate Professor & HOD, Dept. of Basic Principles, Faculty of Ayurveda, Main Campus, Uttarakhand Ayurved University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, INDIA.

ABSTRACT

Lavana has been used as medicine as well as food since ancient times. A number of salts are described in various ancient texts and out of which, some are not available in present day, but *Panchalavana* are mainly used in medicinal purposes. The names of five varieties of *Lavana* are included in *Panchalavana* group, varies from text to text. There are many terms commonly used in Ayurveda as like *Lavantraya*, *Lavana Chaturya*, *Lavana Panchaka*, *Lavanashadushna* etc. *Lavana Panchaka* is explained first among them. The group of five salts viz. *Saindhava Lavana*, *Samudra Lavana*, *Vida Lavana*, *Sauvarchala Lavana*, *Romaka Lavana*, among all *Saindhava Lavana* is the best one.

Key words: *Lavana*, Salt, *Saindhava*, *Pancha Lavana*.

INTRODUCTION

Lavana is essential component of diet. It should not be used in excessive quantity. It is beneficial to body if used in small quantity. *Lavana* is associated with *Ushna* and *Tikshna*, *Anatiguru* and *Anatisnigdha* (not very unctuous) properties. It is *Upakledi* (deliquescent), *Visransansamartha* (capable of producing laxative effect) and *Annadravyarucikara* (increase taste of food).

Lavana, in general is called as Salt. Salt is a vital substance for the survival of all living beings, particularly humans, because it controls the body fluids and regulates the concentration of blood and blood volume. It is said as universal preservative. It

acts as a good appetizer and digestive agent when used in a right quantity. It is widely used in food as well as medicine.

It is an essential element in the diet. Salt is added for preservation and enhancing the taste of food. High salt content in diet is strongly associated with high blood pressure and related cardiovascular diseases.^[1]

Lavana Nirukti

According to Shabdakalpdruma, *Lavana Nirukti* is "Lunati Iti Lavanam", means which is having *Chedana* property is known as *Lavana*.

Lakshana

"Lunaati Jaayamiti"

That which does *Chedana* is called *Lavana*.^[2]

Guna of Lavana

Acharya Vagbhata explained in *Astanga Sangraha Sutrastana Guna of Lavana Rasa*.

Lavana (salt taste) causes too much of salivation in the mouth, burning sensation in the throat and cheeks and makes food tasty.^[3]

Characteristics of Lavana Rasa

Charaka Samhita

Drugs and diets having saline taste get dissolved in the mouth resulting in stickiness, moistness and softness. They also produce burning sensation in the mouth.^[4]

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Shilpa Nimbal

Post Graduate Scholar, Dept. of Basic Principles, BLDEA's AVS Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Vijayapur, Karnataka, INDIA.

E-mail: shilpanmb1346@gmail.com

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Acharya Charaka says, "Lavanam Annadravya Ruchikaranaam", Lavana is best in adding taste to the food.

Sushruta Samhita

That which produces relish in the food, *Kapha Praseka* and *Mardavata* in the mouth is *Lavana Rasa*.^[5]

Astanga Samgraha

It will do *Vishyandana* of *Mukha*, causes burning sensation in *Kantha*, *Kapola*, makes food tastier.^[6]

Astanga Hridaya

It causes more moisture in the mouth (increases salivation) and burning sensation in the cheeks and throat.^[7]

Karma of Lavana

Acharya Charaka also explained about in *Sutrastana* 27 chapter,^[8]

Saindhava Lavana - It is said that it is one of the best *Lavana*. Increases the taste of food *Agnidipaka*, *Shukravardhaka*, good for eye sight, does not increase burning sensation *Tridoshanashaka* and *Madhura* in *Rasa*.

Sauvarcharala Lavana - It is *Sukshma*, *Ushna Virya*, *Laghu* and brings taste in food. Cures constipation, good for heart health, *Udgaarashodhaka* means helps in removing *Vayu* from mouth.

Vida Lavana - It is *Tiksha*, *Ushna*, *Vyavayi* in nature, increases *Jataragni*, *Udarashulanashaka* (cures abdomen pain), helps to remove *Vayu* from upper and lower part does *Vataanulomana*.

Oudbida Lavana - *Rasa* is *Tikta*, *Katu*, *Khara Guna* is *Tikshna* brings moisture to body.

Samudra Lavana - Its *Rasa* is *Madhura*. He further adds they are *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Ushna* (hot) and *Tikshna* (sharp) in nature and acts as *Deepaniyatama* (very good appetizer). They are used in *Alepana* (Ointment), *Sneha Sweda Vidhi* and *Niruha* and *Anuvasana Basti*, for *Abhyanga* (massage), in *Bhojana* (food), *Sirovirechana*, *Sastrakarma* (surgical measures), *Varti* (suppositories), *Anjana* (collyrium) and *Utsadana* (unction). It is beneficial in *Ajirna*

(indigestion), *Anaha* (constipation), *Gulma* (abdominal tumour), *Shula* (colic pain) and *Udara* (ascitis).

Classification of Lavana

Based on its Origin

- **Prakrita** - Eg: *Saindhava Lavana*, *Samudra Lavana*, *Romaka Lavana* .
- **Kritrima** - Eg: *Vida Lavana*, *Sauvarchala Lavana*.

Based on numbers

- *Ekalavana* - *Saindhava Lavana*
- *Dwi Lavana* - *Saindhava*, *Sauvarchana Lavana*.
- *Trilavana* - *Saindhava Lavana*, *Sauvarchana Lavana*, *Vida Lavana*.
- *Chaturlavana* - *Saindhava*, *Sauvarchana*, *Vida*, *Samudra Lavana*.
- *Pancha Lavana* - *Saindhava*, *Sauvarchana*, *Vida*, *Samudra*, *Audbhida Lavana*.
- *Shad Lavana* - *Saindhava*, *Sauvarchana*, *Vida*, *Samudra*, *Romaka*, *Chullika Lavana*.
- *Panchadasha Lavana* - Charaka explained 15 *Lavanas* in *Vimana Stana*.

1. *Saindhava Lavana*
2. *Sauvarchana Lavana*
3. *Kala Lavana*
4. *Vida Lavana*
5. *Pakya Lavana*
6. *Anupa Lavana*
7. *Kupya Lavana*
8. *Valuka Lavana*
9. *Maulaka Lavana*
10. *Samudra Lavana*
11. *Romaka Lavana*
12. *Audbhida Lavana*
13. *Oushara Lavana*
14. *Pateyaka Lavana*
15. *Pamsuja Lavana*

Table 1: Lavana according to Samhitas

Name	CS	SS	AS	AH	RT	RRS	R	RC
<i>Saindhava</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Sauvarchana</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Vida</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+

Samudra	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
Audbida	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
Krishna	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
Romaka	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
Gutika	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pumsaja	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
Kacha	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+
Chullika	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-

CS - Charaka Samhita, SS - Sushruta Samhita, AS - Ashtanga Sangraha, AH - Ashtanga Hrudaya, RT - Rasa Tarangini, RRS - Rasa Ratna Samucchaya, R - Rasarnava, RC - Resandra Chudamani.

Explanation of types of *Lavanas*

SAINDHAVA LAVANA

According to *Charaka* it is considered best among all the salts for internal use.

There are two varieties of *Saindhava Lavana*, they are white and red.

- **Synonyms** : *Sindhu, Sindhuttha, Naadeya, Sindhuja, Shiva, Shuddha, Sheeteshiva, Manimantha* and *Shilaatmaka*.
- **Guna** : *Laghu, Snigdha*
- **Karma** : *Rochana, Deepana, Pachana, Chakshushya*.
- **Doshakarma** : *Tridoshaghna*
- **Amayikaprayoga** : *Hrutnetrarogaghna, Vrana, Aruchi Nashaka*.^[9]

According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Tridosahara, Deepana, Rochana* (improves taste), *Hrudya, Chakshusya, Vrishya* (aphrodisiac), *Avidahi*. It cures *Netrarogas* (eye diseases), *Vranas* and *Vibandha*.^[10]

SAUVARCHA LALAVANA

- **Synonyms** : *Aksha, Ruchaka, Hridyagandhaka, Tilaka, Krsnalavana* and *Kaalalavana*

- **Guna** : *Laghu*
- **Rasa** : *Katu*
- **Veerya** : *Ushna*
- **Karma** : *Rochana, Hridya*
- **Amayikaprayoga** : *Gulma-Shula-Vibandhaghna*^[11]

VIDA LAVANA

- **Synonyms** : *Krtrimaka, Dhurta, Kshara, Dravida, Aasura, supaakya, Khandalavana* and *Krtaka*.
- **Guna** : *Tikshna, Ushna*
- **Karma** : *Deepana, Vatanulomaka*
- **Doshakarma** : *Kaphashamaka*
- **Amayikaprayoga** : *Shulahara, cures Hridroga*^[12]

SAMUDRA LAVANA

Acharya Vagbhata explains in *Astanga Sangraha Sutrasthana*, that *Samudra Lavana* is sweet at the end of digestion, hard to digest and causes increase of *Kapha* greatly.^[13]

- **Synonyms** : *Kshara, Shishira, Samudraja, Saagaraja*.
- **Guna** : *Snigdha*
- **Karma** : *Bhedana*
- **Dosha Karma** : Does not aggravate *Pitta* too much
- **Amayikaprayoga** : *Shulaghna*.^[14]
- **Rasa** : *Madhura*^[15]

Among the above said *Lavanas*, it has been stated that *Saindhava Lavana* is *Hitakara* for human beings and *Ushara Lavana* is said to be *Ahitakara*.^[16]

AUDBHIDA LAVANA

- **Synonyms** : *Paamshulavana, Romaka, Vasuka, Vasu, Ushara, Pamsavakshaara, Aurva* and *Saarvaguna*.
- **Guna** : *Laghu, Teekshna, Sukshma*
- **Veerya** : *Ushna*
- **Dosha Karma** : *Vatanulomaka*

▪ **Rasa : Tikta, Katu**^[17]

In saline earth the soil is found mixed with alkaline or salt substance which is called *Reha* in Hindi. It is mixed in water when decanted, filtered and dried either in sun rays or on fire, the material obtained is known as *Audbhida Lavana*. It is crystal in appearance, greyish white, hard and dissolves in water.

According to *Rasa Hridaya Tantra*, Acharya said that there are six *Lavanas*. In these six *Lavanas*, Acharya has given separate heading for *Vida Lavana* and *Chullika Lavana*.

DISCUSSION

We get different references about different types of *Lavana* in different classics. Among the *Pancha Lavanas*, *Saindhava Lavana* is most useful both for medicinal purpose and for consumption among all varieties of Salt, but *Sauvarchala Lavana* is listed first because of its most agreeable taste. But *Souvarchala Lavana* comes only after *Saindhava* in order of priority.

CONCLUSION

Pancha Lavana are mainly used in medicinal purposes. The names of five varieties of *Lavana* included in *Pancha Lavana* group, varies from text to text. *Saindhava Lavana* is best among all. In *Lavanavargikarana*, *Prachina Acharyas* have given separate headings but *Naveena Acharyas* considered them either as a synonyms as a sub type. That's why standardization is needed for market samples which are available in the name of *Pancha Lavanas*.

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