Thorough review on *dashanga lepa*: a classical polyherbal combination

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ABSTRACT:

*Dashanga lepa* is a classical polyherbal combination which is used in the treatment of many diseases which has quicker manifestation like *Jwar, Visarpa* etc. It is also well known for its action in the treatment of *Vishas* (Venoms/ Poisons/ *Ama Visha*). As the drug is used for topical application and still has got so much importance the detailed study of the drug is necessary. Also, the selection of drug is unique and there is a specific method of application given for this lepa. In this article an attempt is made to give details of all the ingredients, their availability, shelf life of the lepa for practical use, specific method of application, its uses by different classical texts, probable mode of action of *Dashang lepa*, evidences of its practical application and its noted adverse reactions. This article can also help in the manufacturing of lepa with correct ingredients, rescue treatment if any adverse reaction of the lepa occurs & uses of *Dashanga lepa* in other diseases.

KEYWORDS: *Dashanga lepa*, Vish Chikitsa, Mode of action of *Dashanga lepa*, Lepa kalpana

INTRODUCTION:
Lepa Chikitsa (topical application of medicines) is an ancient Ayurvedic therapy. It has three main types according to its utility; they are Doshaghna, Vishaghna & Varnya. Out of these three the Vishaghna lepas are used in Visha Chikita. Dashang lepa a classical polyherbal combination used especially in Agad Tantra (branch of Ayurveda dealing with venoms & poisons). It is also used in the treatment of many diseases which has quicker manifestation like Jwar, Visarpa etc. As the drug is used for topical application and still has got so much importance & also, the selection of drug is unique and there is a specific method of application given for this lepa, the detailed study of the drug is necessary. The combination is described by Acharya Sharangdhar in Lepamurdhailkarnapuran vidhi prakarn. Dasha means Ten and Anga means parts as the name suggests, Dashang lepa contains ten parts or ten ingredients. For practical use one should know about the ingredients, their properties and use of the combination drug. For using it one has to either manufacture the churna or have to purchase it from market. For manufacturing one should at least know which part of the plant is used and how it looks. There is one adverse drug reaction is also recorded which one should know before its use. Thus, knowing these practical aspects are also important along with the theoretical knowledge.

INGREDIENTS:
The ten contents of the lepa are:


5. **Ela** (Eletteriacardamomum Linn. Maton) Ras: Katu, Madhura, Guna: Laghu, Ruksha, Veerya: Sheeta, Vipak is Madhura. Its action is Tridoshahara. Useful parts are Fruit- Seeds. It has got antioxidant, anti-inflammatory properties.


8. **Daruharidra** (Berberis aristata DC.) It has Ras: Tikta, Kashaya. Guna: Laghu, Ruksha. Veerya: Ushna. Vipak: Katu. Its action is Kapha-Vatashamak. Useful part: Root, Rasanjana, It is considered similar to Curcuma longa in therapeutic properties.

9. **Kushta** (Saussurea lappa) Ras: Tikta, Katu. Guna: Laghu, Ruksha. Veerya is Ushna. Vipak: Katu. Its action is Kapha-Vatashamak. Useful parts: Root. It is used for the treatment of Kushtha (Leprosy/diseases of the skin), Raktapitta (bleeding disorder), It is used for chronic skin diseases.

AVAILABILITY OF CONTENTS OF DASHANGA LEPA
Haridra, Ela, Raktachandan, Hriber & Madhuyashti are available with lesser chances of adulteration & quality issues but sometimes Ela and Hriber can be found exhausted as it contains aromatic oils. Daruharidra, Kushtha, Tagar, Jatamansi are Himalayan drugs and has more chances of adulteration and quality issues therefore should always be purchased from the authenticated sellers.

SHELF LIFE:
Shelf life of lepa churna is 3 years. Shelf life of prepared lepa is 1 Ahorata (24 hours) after which it should not be used. Therefore,

INDICATIONS OF DASHANGA LEPA BY DIFFERENT AYURVEDIC TEXTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acharyas</th>
<th>Visarpa (Erysipelas)</th>
<th>Visha Visphota (Blisters due to venoms)</th>
<th>Dushta Vrana (Infected wound)</th>
<th>Shotha (Edema)</th>
<th>Kustha (Skin diseases)</th>
<th>Kandu (Iting)</th>
<th>Jvara (Fever)</th>
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MODE OF ACTION:
Dashanga lepa is seen acting topically & reduces the Shopha (oedema), Vedana (pain), Visha Prabhav (venomous effects of bites) & Jwara (fever). Visha, Visarpa, Jwara are all belong to the quick manifesting diseases.
The first ingredient of Dashanga lepa i.e. Shirish is Vishaghna by Prabhav. Most of the ingredient drugs except Madhuyashti are having Tikta Katu Ras & act as Kapha-Pittashamak thus helpful in Shotha (oedema), Kandu (itching) & Daha (burning). Pitta Dosha & Rakta Dhatu are responsible for the quick manifestation of the disease and almost all the ingredients are Pittashamak and has effect on Rakatavaha srotas. Due to its action on Pitta & Rakta the lepa reduces pain & swelling. Absorbent effect of Kashaya Tikta rasa helps in reducing Shotha. All drugs except Raktachandan are having Laghu Guna which makes the drugs easy to penetrate the skin & act locally.

EVIDENCES OF PRACTICAL USE OF DASHANGA LEPA:
A case study was recorded in the management of dry gangrene by using Kaishor guggulu, Sanjivani vati internally & Dashanga lepa externally. In which Dashanga lepa with luck warm water & cow ghee was applied locally, twice a day for two months on OPD basis & at the end of the two months highly significant results were observed\(^\text{11}\). Also, a case study was recorded in which management of Amavata case (sero-negative rheumatoid arthritis according to modern diagnosis) was done by giving Sthanik pachan with local application of 2 parts of Dashang lepa and 1 part of Shunthi churna topically over affected joints daily for 3 days. As a result of this at the end of Langhana and local Pachana of 3 days, symptoms like ankle joint swelling, morning stiffness, pain over ankle joints were decreased\(^\text{12}\).

REPORTED ADR OF DASHANGA LEPA
Skin rash on site of application of Dashanga lepa (polyherbal formulation): A rare and unexpected drug reaction\(^\text{13}\).

RESCUE TREATMENT OF AVERSE DRUG REACTION:
The rash caused by application of Dashanga lepa was decreased due to application of Shatadhauta ghruta. Therefore, Shatadhauta ghruta can be treated as a rescue treatment for its ADR of Dashanga lepa\(^\text{14}\).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRACTICAL USE:
- For readymade product, expiry date of lepa churna should always be seen before preparing the lepa.
For self-prepared lepa, all the ingredients should be finely ground.
lepa should always be prepared fresh and should be consumed within 24 hours of making.
It should be prepared by proper mixing of water and 1/5th part of pure cow ghee
As it is a Vishaghna lepa its thickness should be 1/3rd angul (1/3rd of fingers thickness) 15
Remove the lepa before it completely dries up.
Do not apply & leave the lepa applied at night.
The paste should be applied during the day especially in those disorders which have been caused by Pitta, Rakta, trauma and poison 16

DISCUSSION:
Expiry date of lepa churna should always be seen to get the best results & avoid the Adverse Drug Reaction. Ingredients should be finely ground in order to make a uniform paste & to prevent the abrasions caused by the granules. Stale lepa becomes hina veerya (ineffective) 17 hence should be consumed within 24 hours of its preparation. This lepa should not be kept applied over night as its application in cold state might prevent the heat from coming out and can cause other disorders.

CONCLUSION:
Dashanga lepa is acting topically and is useful in quick manifesting diseases also.
All the contents of the lepa are nontoxic & safe for internal use but still while applying the lepa precautions like use of good quality raw material & watching for expiry date in case of readymade products is beneficial.
Practicing instructions given for lepa kalpana is important and can give the best results.

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