Herbal fume inhalation similarities between Dhoopan and Hawan

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https://doi.org/10.36018/ijyr.v4i1.71

Abstract. Herbal fume inhalation for a health benefit or disease treatment is an Ayurvedic and Vedic approach. In Ayurvedic texts, it is mentioned as Dhoopan and in Vedic texts, it is referred to as hawan (Yagya). There are similarities in methods and procedures of both the methods. The present study identifies five areas where there are similarities i.e. herbal mixture preparation, offerings to fire, use of smokeless fire, use of chanting, dose repetition. This perspective showed similarity present between these two ancient herbal inhalation methods potentiating a great scope of further research in this direction.

Keywords. Dhoopan, Hawan, Yagya, Ayurvedic texts, Vedic texts

Introduction

Herbal fume inhalation for a health benefit or disease treatment is an Ayurvedic approach mentioned in Ayurvedic texts, as Dhoopan. Kashyap Sanhita (1) has a separate chapter on Dhoopan describing different Dhoop made of different Dhoopan Dravya for various diseases. It mentioned रोगनाशना: (for disease treatment), पूरोअमरिक्रियाम (destroys all diseases immediately), सर्वरोगेषु शम्यते (treats all diseases), सुखार्हः (Health tonic), कर्पविनमरः (for Child growth), सर्वरोगेषु अपस्मार विशेषण (in all diseases especially in epilepsy). In addition Charak Sanhita (2) and Sushrut Sanhita (3) also described herbal inhalation as Dhoomnasya and Dhoompana for apasmar (epilepsy), unmaad (mania), eye diseases, ear diseases, etc. Other Ayurvedic texts such as Yog Ratnakar (4), Bhaishajya Ratnavali (5) also mentioned Dhoopan for treating fever, krumi (worm) infection, etc and also for other health benefits.

Similar to this Ayurvedic Method, Atharvaveda also mentioned herbal fume inhalation for health benefit or disease treatment using Hawan. It mentioned hawan for various kinds of physical and mental diseases i.e. tuberculosis, mania, etc. (6).

However, there are some similarities among these herbal inhalation methods, especially in materials, their preparation and its usage procedure. The present study aimed to find these similarities.
Materials and Methods Similarities between Dhoopan and Hawan

Herbal inhalation in Ayurveda is referred to as various terminologies i.e. dhoompana, dhoom nasya, and dhoopan while in the Vedas and vedic texts hawan or Yagya has herbal inhalation as part of its component. The Below table described some common similarities between both herbal inhalation methods from Ayurvedic and Vedic texts (1-3) (7-9).

| Ayurvedic references | Vedic references |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Dhoopan dravya (जौकुट) is made through mortar and pestle (कूटकर), and Hawan dravya (samagri) is also made coarse powder (जौकुट) | Vedas also recommends preparation of havi (Hawan Samagri) through mortar and pestle as havishyakrudehi (हविश्याक्रूदेहि) (sloka 15, Yajurveda Chapter 1 (7)) to make Jaukut (coarse) powder of havi. |
| Translation of Mahadhoop (महाधूप) preparation described to make the dhoopan dravya through mortar and pestle (यर्कूट करें एर्ं तनधूवम अतनन जलाएं). (5). | |
| Dhoopan dravya is offered through fire to get Dhoop (होमजापत...अनिम्रवीत), Hawan samagri is also offered to fire to get herbal fumes | |
| It is said to use dhoop produced by using fire (given by fire) (1). | Hawan samagri is also offered to fire to get herbal fumes. Agni is one of the prime divine forces of Vedas. The first sloka of the Rigveda (8) is about agni. All the offerings including havi are offered to Agni as is also considered as a carrier of all the offerings to the deity. Suktas of Agni (7-9) clearly state prayers to Agni to take all the offerings to the deity. This is also similar in dhoopan as described in this section. |
| Fire is considered deity (important) for generating dhoop (1). | |

Table 1. Similarities between materials and methods between herbal inhalation portion of dhoopan and hawan.
Dhoopan dravya should be offered to smokeless fire (निर्भूष दीप) and inhalation of herbal fumes is recommended; Hawan samagri is also offered in smokeless fire and herbal fume inhalation is recommended.

Ashtanga Hridayam (10) described to put dhoopan dravya in smokeless fire (तनधूवम दीप्ति तस्िरीगारगुणे) कसघ्रम् तू यूणव गुतटकाम् र्ा तनधूवमदीप्ततस्िराडंगरपूणे सुसंतस्िशरार्े प्रतक्षप्यान्येन मूतध्नव प्रर्ृत्ततच्छिेण शरार्ेणातपधाय तनधाय तत्स्त्रोततस नेत्रं कृत्र्ा मुखेनैर् धूमम् तपबेत् ।

Hawan samagri is also offered in smokeless fire. Vedas described smokeless fire through symbolic language i.e. sapta jihva agni (seven fold fire) (6-8).

In addition, the method of herbal fume inhalation described in Vedic texts is well described in Rigveda 10/137/2-3 (8) and Atharvaveda 4/13/2-3 (9). They state medicinal fumes generated in Yagya are of two types. One, breath in, is full of medicinal properties, which destroys diseases; the other, breath out, is sending the disease far away – indicating method and potential of herbal inhalation which is as similar to Dhoopan or Dhoompana.

After dhoop generated, there should be chanting (दह्यमाने जपेतत्र्दम), Hawan also involves chanting of Mantras

During Hawan havi (hawan samagri - herbal mixture) is offered to fire with mantra chanting followed by ‘Svaha’ chanting. Mantra chanting is an essential portion of Hwan (10). The invocation of divine forces described in hawan i.e. Agni, Shiva, Aditya, Marut, etc are similarly described in Kashyap Sanhita.

Dhoopan should be repeated to treat (धूप्यते पुनः), Hawan (Yagya Therapy) is also given for continues at least 40 days

Many studies have published Yagya (hawan) Therapy which was given for continuous 40 days having repetition of dose (11) (12).

Cont... Table 1. Similarities between materials and methods between herbal inhalation portion of dhoopan and hawan.
Discussion & conclusion
The existence of herbal fumigation as an important therapeutic module is suggested in Ayurvedic and Atharvedic texts which are well described in table 1. If this was an important module of health treatment then the prevalence of herbal fumigation should also exist in practice. A study reported around 50 countries of 5 continents used mono or multi herbal fumigation for the neurological, pulmonary, female disorders, etc diseases (13). Dhoopan and Hawan are close or very similar procedures. Infact, as per ‘Athharva Chikitsa Vigyan’ book by Dr. Hiralal Vishwakarma (14) says “Hawan is also known as Yagya and Dhoop” in this world.

Thus, based on above references of Ayurvedic texts and Atharvaveda, it is clearly implied that herbal fumigation for health benefit and therapeutic purpose is an ancient therapeutic method and it is well described in both Ayurvedic and Atharvedic texts.

Conflict of Interest
Author declares no conflict of interest

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