

Review of Karanja Tankana Lepa: A Traditional Formulation for Vipadika

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Abstract: *Karanja Tankana Lepa is a traditional Ayurvedic topical formulation composed of Karanja taila (oil of Pongamia pinnata) and Tankana (Borax). This formulation has been historically utilized by the Keraliya visha vaidyas for managing dermatological conditions, particularly Vipadika. This review explores the pharmacodynamics, chemical constituents, and therapeutic potential of its ingredients, highlighting its role as an effective antimicrobial and wound-healing agent.*

Keywords: Karanja tankana lepa, Vipadika, Palmoplantar psoriasis

1. Introduction

In Ayurveda, a drug is referred to as *Bheshaja*, an essential tool (*upakarana*) for a physician to maintain health or alleviate disorders¹. Karanja Tankana Lepa is a topical application that combines the medicinal properties of two potent agents: the plant-based *Karanja* and the mineral-based *Tankana*. Its traditional application in *vipadika*- a condition often correlated with palmoplantar psoriasis stems from the sharp (*teekshna*) and penetrative (*sara*) qualities of its components.

2. Ingredients

The formulation is prepared by adding purified *Tankana* to *Karanja taila*.

1) Karanja²(*Pongamia pinnata* Linn.)

- Family:** Fabaceae.
- Chemical Constituents:** Includes Karanjin, Pongapin, Kanjone, and Glabrin.
- Pharmacological Properties:**
 - Rasa:** Katu³(Pungent), Tikta (Bitter), Kashaya (Astringent).

- Guna:** Laghu (Light), Teekshna⁴ (Sharp).
- Veerya:** Ushna⁵(Hot).
- Vipaka:** Katu⁶.

- Action (Karma):** It is *Vatasleshmahara*⁷ (alleviates Vata and Kapha), *Vranahara* (heals wounds), and *Kandughna* (anti-pruritic).

2) Tankana⁸ (Borax)

- Chemical Name/Formula:** Sodium tetraborate decahydrate ($\text{Na}_2\text{B}_4\text{O}_7 \cdot 10\text{H}_2\text{O}$).
- Purification (Shodhana)⁹:** Raw *Tankana* should be heated in an iron vessel until all water content evaporates and finally obtained as a white, puffy substance known as *Sudha Tankana*.
- Pharmacological Properties:**
 - Rasa:** Katu (Pungent).
 - Guna:** Tikshna (Sharp), Sara (Mobile), Rooksha (Dry).
 - Veerya:** Ushna (Hot).
 - Vipaka:** Amla (Sour).
- Action (Karma):** It acts as *Kapha-Vatahara* and *Kapha vishleshana* (clears phlegm/adhesions).

Ingredients of *Karanja tankana lepa****Karanja Tankana Lepa*****Indications and Benefits**

Indicated in the management of Vipadika. Historically used by Kerala's toxicologists (visha vaidyas) to treat cracked skin on the palms and soles.

Antimicrobial Activity: Research confirms that Karanja seed oil has potential antifungal and antibacterial activity against pathogens such as *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, and *Aspergillus niger*.

Skin Protection: Karanja seeds contain photo-absorptive compounds that absorb UV rays in the UVA and B regions, offering protective action for the skin.

Healing Properties: The formulation is Vranahara (wound healing) and Sodhahara (anti-inflammatory), making it suitable for treating various twak dosha (skin disorders).

3. Discussion

The efficacy of Karanja Tankana Lepa lies in the synergy between its two main components. Karanja provides a lipid-based medium (taila) that penetrates the skin, delivering active constituents like Karanjin to the deeper tissues. Its Ushna (hot) potency and Kandughna (anti-itch) properties are essential for treating chronic, dry itchy skin lesions.

Tankana complements this by acting as a Kapha vishleshana agent, which helps in softening and removing accumulated debris or thickened skin layers often seen in vipadika. The purification process of Tankana is critical, as it transforms the raw mineral into a light, "puffy" substance (Sudha Tankana) suitable for medicinal use. Furthermore, research into Karanja

roots and seeds supports its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial claims, providing a scientific basis for its traditional use.

4. Conclusion

Karanja Tankana Lepa is a potent Ayurvedic topical formulation. By combining the antimicrobial and wound-healing properties of *Pongamia pinnata* with the sharp, penetrative actions of purified Borax, it provides a comprehensive approach in managing difficult skin conditions like vipadika. Modern research into its ingredients validates its traditional role as a safe and effective remedy for dermatological care.

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