



## SAMSKAR KALPANA IN AYURVEDA AHARA: A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda emphasizes that *Ahara* (diet) is the foremost pillar of life and health. The concept of *Samskara Kalpana* (dietary processing and modifications) highlights the role of transformation in enhancing utility, digestibility, safety, and palatability of food. The objective of this review is to critically analyze various *Samskara* (processing methods) described in classical texts with special reference to their relevance in present-day nutrition. **Materials and Methods** include textual review of *Brihattrayi*, *Laghutrayi*, commentaries, and modern nutritional literature. Observations reveal that *Samskara* improves bioavailability, reduces toxicity, and ensures preservation. It also modifies *guna* (qualities) and *karma* (functions) of *Ahara dravya*. **Conclusion:** The principles of *Samskara Kalpana* retain significant value in preventive and clinical nutrition and can guide the modern food processing industry.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda, Ahāra, Saṃskāra Kalpanā, Food Processing, Nutrition.*

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the science of life, accords prime importance to *Ahara* (food) as the foundation of health and longevity. *Acharya Sushruta* states that wholesome diet sustains life, imparts strength, complexion, and intellectual clarity. On the contrary, unwholesome diet leads to disease. To optimize the utility of *Ahara dravya* (dietary substances), our seers have explained the principle of *Samskara Kalpana* – a set of transformative processes applied to substances to alter their properties, enhance bioavailability, reduce toxicity, and increase acceptability.

The term *Samskra* denotes modification at the level of *guna* (qualities), *rasa* (taste), *virya* (potency), *vipaka* (post-digestive effect), and *prabhava* (specific action). The *Kalpana* aspect indicates its applied methodology for preparation and processing. The concept has been elaborated in various contexts: drug processing (*Bhaisajya Kalpana*), dietetics (*Ahara Kalpana*), and daily regimen. In *Ahara*, it includes procedures like *ushna-samskara* (heating/cooking), *mardana* (grinding), *manthana* (churning), *jalasamyoga* (aqueous treatment), *bhavana* (trituration), *dhana* (roasting), and *dharana* (preservation). These are not mere culinary methods but scientifically significant interventions that bring about structural and functional transformation of food. In the present era, food science and technology similarly focus on processing for preservation, nutrient retention, detoxification, and sensory enhancement. This correspondence highlights the timeless relevance of Ayurvedic *Samskara Kalpana* in modern dietetics and public health nutrition. This review critically explores these processes, drawing connections between classical wisdom and contemporary nutritional science.

### Objectives

1. To explore the principles and types of *samskara kalpana* in Ayurveda *Ahara*.
2. To analyze the nutritional, pharmacological, and preventive significance of *Samskara* in modern perspective.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review article is based on a comprehensive study of Ayurvedic classical texts including *Caraka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Samgraha*, and *Ashatnga Hridaya* with commentaries of *Chakrapai*, *Dalhana*, and *andarundatta*. Relevant chapters on *aanapanvidhi* and *viruddha ahar Vidnyana* were critically examined. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed Ayurvedic and nutritional research articles, dissertations, and contemporary food science literature. The data was analyzed qualitatively with emphasis on conceptual interpretation, comparative analysis, and applied relevance.

### Review of Literature

The classical texts describe multiple *Samskaras* in relation to food. *Charaka* enumerates ten *Samskaras*— *mardana* (pounding), *manthana* (churning), *bhavana* (levigation), *vidhana* (arrangement), *samyoga* (combination), *vibhaga* (division), *samkarana* (modification), *samkṣepa* (condensation)—that significantly modify *guṇa* and *karma* of *dravya*.

Sushruta emphasizes that even toxic substances can be rendered safe through proper *Samskāra*, while nutritious food can become harmful if processed improperly. Vagbhata in *Ashtanga hriday* provides detailed accounts of *Ahara Kalpana*, particularly highlighting cooking methods, fermentation, churning, and preservation.

From a functional standpoint, Samskara can be grouped as:

- *Samskara* for enhancement of qualities – roasting grains, boiling pulses, fermentation of milk (curd).
- *Samskara* for reduction of undesirable qualities – detoxifying *kutaja seeds*, processing *visha dravya*.
- *Samskara* for preservation – drying, salting, storage.
- *Samskara* for digestibility and palatability – cooking, seasoning, churning.

In modern nutrition, similar concepts are recognized: heating reduces microbial load, fermentation increases probiotic value, soaking enhances mineral bioavailability, and roasting improves flavor. However, excessive processing (refining, chemical preservation) may reduce nutrient density and cause lifestyle disorders. Thus, Ayurvedic emphasis on balanced and natural processing retains relevance. Commentary on vagbhata explains that Samskara not only changes *rasa* and *guna* but also redefines the suitability (*yogyata*) of *Ahara* dravya to specific *prakriti* (constitution) and disease conditions. This principle can guide personalized nutrition in the present era.

## OBSERVATION

The review highlights that *Samskara Kalpana* in *Ahara* serves multiple purposes—safety, preservation, enhancement of utility, and therapeutic suitability. Classical categorization of *Samskara* aligns with modern understanding of food processing techniques. Traditional methods like fermentation, churning, boiling, and roasting have been validated by contemporary nutritional studies.

Observations suggest that:

1. *Samskara* improves digestibility and bioavailability of nutrients.
2. It reduces toxicity and microbial contamination.
3. It preserves food for longer duration without harmful additives.
4. It individualizes *Ahara* according to *prakriti* and disease.
5. It bridges the ancient wisdom with modern dietary science.

## CONCLUSION

*Samskara Kalpana* in *Ahara* is a profound Ayurvedic contribution to dietetics. It offers a scientific framework for processing food to enhance safety, palatability, and therapeutic potential. The integration of these principles in modern nutrition and food technology can promote sustainable and health-oriented dietary practices.

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