



SKIN CARE IN AYURVEDA: A LITERARY REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurvedic cosmeceuticals dates back to the Indus valley civilization and is being used in human society from ancient time. It is now gaining importance in the beautification and to cure the skin ailments. In last 3-4 decades the use of cosmetics has increased exponentially not only among female but also in male population and play an important role in the FMCG sector. In the ancient classical texts of Ayurveda there are several references of numerous medicinal plants and mode of applications of their processed formulation for enhancing complexion, treating acne, treating dark patches, curing boils and carbuncles, etc. Consideration in this field can be helpful in making the herbs more acceptable, precious, life saving and economy promoter for the mankind. This review made a humble effort to make a monograph of ayurvedic plants that were mentioned by ayurvedic luminaries in the field of skincare.

Keywords: Cosmeceuticals, FMCG, Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

Now days, cosmetics are considered to be one of the essential commodities of life. It is the fulcrum of First moving consumer's good (FMCG) sector. The cosmetics in general are external preparation and are meant to be applied to external part of the body. In other word they may be applied to skin, hair and nail for the purpose of beautification, protection or to cure the diseases of the exposed surface of the body¹. Ayurveda is one of the most ancient medical traditions practiced in India and other South Asian countries. The total number of plants mentioned in Ayurveda are 1773, however the main classics of Ayurveda viz. Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Astang Sangrah (Brihat Trayee) have detailed descriptions of about 700 herbs². Several herbs have been mentioned in Ayurveda which can be used to obtain healthy skin and glowing complexion. Ayurvedic literature describes over 200 herbs, number of minerals and fats to maintain and enhance the health and beauty of the skin. Today there is once again a revival of preference for natural products, and in recent years there has been a great upsurge in the study of Indian herbs³. Ayurvedic cosmetics are in use and practice since thousands of year in India, without any side effect and are well proven and documented. The analysis of many herbal ingredient using modern scientific technologies has led to the identification of phytochemical components in Indian herbs, which deliver functional benefits anti dandruff, deodorant, age-defying properties etc⁴.

Skin care through Ayurveda

According to Ayurveda healthy skin is a result of overall health condition of individuals and prescribes numerous skin care treatment that needs to be pursued at every stage of life. The function of ayurvedic herbs is to purify skin & eliminate vitiated Tridoshas (Vitiated Humor) from the body as they are mainly responsible for skin disorders & other diseases. Several herbs have been mentioned in Ayurveda which can be used to obtain healthy skin and glowing complexion. Specific measurement for the enhancement of different aspect of beauty and disease conditions in relation to skin are mentioned in ancient Ayurvedic texts, they are described in brief.

Charaka Samhita

In contest of skin disorder Charaka described about 18 type of kushtha (obstinate skin disease including leprosy) which included vipadika (rhagdes), dadru (ringworm), pama (scabies) etc in Chikitsa Sthan and also in Nidan sthan⁵. Apart from this there are references of ten drug as Varnya (complexion promoting)- in Sutrasthan viz. Chandana (*Santalum album*), Punnaga (*Calophyllum inophyllum*), Padmaka (*Prunus cerasoides*), Useer (*Vetiveria zizanioides*), Madhuka (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Manjistha (*Rubia cordifolia*), Sariva (*Hamidesmus indicus*), Paysya (*Ipomoea digitata*), Sita (white variety of *Cynodon dactylon*), Lata (black variety of *C. dactylon*)⁶.

Sushruta Samhita

In the Kshudra roga chikitsa (treatment of minor disease) many of the skin care treatments are documented⁷.

Arumsika (Eczema of face and scalp)- Blood should be let out and the lesion are washed with decoction of Nimba (*Azadirachta indica*) then applied paste of Hartal(Orpiment), Haldi (*Curcuma longa*), Patola patra (*Trichosanthes dioica* leaves), paste of Mulethi (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Nilotpala (*Nymphaea nouchali*), Erand (*Ricinus communis*) and Bhringaraj (*Eclipta alba*) paste.

Vyanga (black spot), Nilika (Naevus) - puncturing of the vein is done in the forehead and rubbed roughly with Smudra Phenā (Cuttle fish bone) and applied the paste of bark of kshira-vriksha (plant containing sap) or paste of Bala (*Sida cordifolia*), Atibala (*Abutilon indicum*) Yastimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Haldi (*Curcuma longa*) or of Arkpuspi (*Holostemma rheedie*), Aguru (*Aquilaria agallocha*), Kaliyaka (*Colchicium fenestratum*) and Gairika(Haematite).

Yauvana Pidika (pimples/acne)- Applying the Paste of Vacha(*Acorus calamus*), Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*), Sendha (Rock-salt) and Sarso (*Brassica campestris*) or of paste of Dhanyaka(*Coriandrum sativum*), Vacha, Lodhra and Kuth (*Saussurea lappa*).

Padadari (Rhagades)- Vein puncture should be done after fomentation and anointing, paste of Madhuchista (Bees wax), Vasa (fat), powder of Sarjika kshar (sodium salts), Yava kshar (potassium salts) and Gairika (Haematite) added with ghee and applied to the feet.

Astang Hridayam

There are three type of Mukhlepa (formulation applied on face) viz. for removal of dosha, for removal of poison and varnyakara (complexion promoting). Mode of application of paste over face, duration and precaution were also elaborately mentioned. Furthermore application of paste varies according to the season⁸.

Hemant (Dewy season)-Paste of seed of Ber (*Ziziphus jujuba*), Vasaka root (*Adhatoda vasica*), Savara Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa* or *paniculata*) Sarson (*Brassica campestris*) were applied.

Shisir (Winter)-Kateri root (*Solanum surattense*), blacktil (*Sesamum indicum*), bark of Daruhaldi (*Berberis aristata*), Barly (*Hordeum vulgare*) without husk.

Basant (Spring)-Paste of root of Dabh (*Imperata cylindrica*), Chandan (*Santalum album*), Khas (*Vetiveria zizanioidis*), Shiris (*Albizia lebeck*), Saunf (*Foeniculum vulgare*), chawal (*Oriza sativa*).

Grisma (Summer)- Kumud (*Nymphaea nouchali*), Utpal (*Nymphaea stellata*), Khas (*Vetiveria zizanioidis*), Durva (*Cynodon dactylon*), Yastimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Chandan (*Santalum album*).

Varsa (Rainy season)- Kaliyaka (*Coscinium fenestratum*), Til (*Sesamum indicum*) khas (*Vetiveria zizanioidis*), Jatamansi (*Nordostachys Jatamansi*), Tagar (*Valeriana wallichii*), Padmk (*Nelumbo nucifera*).

Sarat (Autumn)- Talis (*Abies webbiana*), Etkat (*Sesbania cannabina*), Pundarik (*Nelumbo nucifera*), Muledi (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), Khas (*Vetiveria zizanioidis*), Tagar (*Vetiveria wallichii*) and Agru (*Aquilari agallocha*).

Vagbhata mentioned the benefits of *Mukhalepa* as- '**Mukhalepanashilanam dridam bhavati darshanam, Vadanam chaprimlanam shlakshanam tamrasopamam**'. (22/22) - which signifies that the persons who are habitual to application of paste of drug over face, the vision become keen, the face never dull and glows like lotus flower.

Astang Samgrah⁹

Mukhadusika chikitsa (Acne)- In Mukhadusika, application of warm paste of Lodhra and Tuarika (*Hydnocarpus laurifolia*) or leaves of Vata (*Ficus bengalensis*) and narikela shukti (coconut shell) or of Saindhava, Vacha, Aksibhesaja (Sabar lodhra -*Symplocos racemosa* or *paniculata*) and Sidharthaka (*Brassica campestris*) are prescribed.

Lancchana (Patches on the face), vyanga (hyper pigmentation) and nilika (Naevus) chikitsa- In this group of diseases, the nearest vein should be cut and the area covered with the paste of bark of trees having milky sap or that of Bala (*Sida cordifolia*), Atibala (*Abutilon indicum*), Madhuka (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) and Haridra or of Madhuka, Aguru, Payasya (*Ipomoea digitata*) and kaliyaka (*Coscinium fenestratum*). Tender fruit of Kapittha (*Feronia limonia*), Tinduka (*Diospyros peregrine*) and Rajani (*Curcuma longa*), root of Amalika (*Tamarindus indica*) and Sukaradamstra (teeth of pig) are also added with honey and ghee.

Yogaratnakar

In kshudra rog (minor diseases), nidan chikitsa prakaran (chapter dealing with diagnosis and prognosis) there are 44 types of minor diseases of which some are related to skin care¹⁰:-

Arumsika- In Arumsika application of the paste of Nilkamal (*Nymphaea stellata*), Amlaki (*Emblica officinalis*), Yasthimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) in equal amount are

prescribed. Triphaladi tail and Haridradi tail are also prescribed. Triphaladi tail-Oil prepared by Triphala, Yasthimadhu, Bhiringraj, Nilkamal, Sariva and Saindhav lavana are prescribed. Haridradi tail-Oil prepared by Haldi, Daruhaldi, Chiraita, Triphala bark of Nimbi and Rakta chandan are prescribed.

Vyanga (dark patches on the face)- Tribhuvan, Bhangapatra (*Cannabis sativa*), Vidhara (*Argyrea speciosa*) and Sesam root (*Dalbergia sissoo*) or Masur (*Lense culinaris*) exhibit positive results in dark patches. Application of bark of Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*), Manjistha (*Rubia cordifolia*), and Adusa (*Adhatoda vasica*) in equal amount with butter shows good positive result in Vyanga.

Complexion promoting- Masur (*Lense culinaris*) triturated with milk and applied with ghee for enhancing complexion. Kumkumadi tailam also prescribed for the promoting complexion.

Yauvana Pidika (pimples/acne)- In pimples application of paste of Jaiphala (*Myristica fragrans*), Raktachandan (*Pterocarpus santalinus*), Maricha (*Piper nigrum*) or of Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*), Dhanyaka (*Coriandrum sativum*), Vacha (*Acorus calamus*) or of Safed sarso, Vacha, Lodhra and saindhava or of Semal (*Salmalia malabarica*) spine with milk.

Vipadika- Application of paste of wax, saindhav, ghee, Guda (Jaggery) Guggulu (*Commiphora weiti*), gum of shal (*Shorea robusta*) and Geru (Haematite) or application of Madanadilepa prepared by Madanphala (*Randia spinosa*), Wax and Smudra lavana (Sea salt) shows positive result.

Saragadhar Samhita

There are three kinds of lepa viz. dosaghna (pacify the polluted humor), visaghna (pacify the poisonous substance) and varnya (cosmetic application for complexion)¹¹.

Complexion promoting-Rakta chandana (*Pterocarpus santalinus*) Manjistha (*Rubia cordifolia*), Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*), kustha (*Saussurea lappa*), Priyangu (*Callicarpa macrophylla*) and Masura (*Lense culinaris*) have complexion promoting properties.

YauvanaPidika (pimples/acne)- Ripened leaves of Vata (*F. bengalensis*), Malati, Rakta chandan (*Pterocarpus santalinus*), Kustha (*Saussurea lappa*), kaliyaka (*Coscinium fenestratum*) and Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*) are made into paste and applied externally to remove pimples, black spot and patches on the face.

Arumsika- A paste of bark of Khadira (*Acacia catechu*), Aristha (*Sapindus trifoliatus*), Jambu (*Syzygium cumini*), Kutaj (*Holarrhena antidysentrica*) and Saindhav (rock salt) processed in cow's urine which cures arumsika.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is very clear from the above description that large number of herbs and other naturally obtained raw material have been formulated into cosmetics products and this pure natural cosmetics are without any synthetic chemical they are not only devoid of side effects but also equally effective in comparison to their modern counterparts. The use of bioactive ingredients in cosmetics influence biological functions of skin and provides nutrients necessary for the healthy skin. The vast array of knowledge of medicinal plants mentioned in ayurvedic texts is very helpful in the development of the new cosmetics products for present and future cosmeceuticals industry. The classical texts mentioned in the review are just the tip of the iceberg; apart from them there are several books in Ayurveda, which include broad

descriptions about therapeutic effect of Ayurvedic plants in the field of skin care. There are several Nighantus (Lexicons of Ayurveda) containing descriptions about several medicinal plants. There are several books dealing with formulation and pharmaceuticals too. Description of several minerals useful in skin care had been registered from the ancient Indian Astrochemical books, description of all of them is beyond the scope of any single review hence further research and review work is welcomed in this particular field.

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