



A Review Article on Role of Lepa In Kushta Chikitsa

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Abstract -

Kushta includes disorders of skin exhibiting different symptoms and severity of extent. As the skin holds the high cosmetological importance being the largest organ covering the entire body, any disorders of skin shows high impact on the person's personal, social & psychological aspects. Healthy skin serves as the mirror image for good health. As the skin covers the external structure of the body, lepa is considered best for the treatment of various types of kushta. Lepa are the external applications in the form of pastes (kalka) or topical ointments for ailments of skin. So Ayurvedic Acharyas has mentioned several lepas from time immemorial to the concurrent era in the treatment of different conditions. Various formulations are explained under lepakalpna in Ayurveda especially for healthy, beautiful and glowing skin- the prime desire of any human.

Keywords – Kushta, Skin, Lepa, Ayurveda.

Introduction -

Skin is termed as Twacha or Charma in Ayurveda. Twak is considered as one of the 5 Jnanendriya i.e. Sensory organs. Twak is the organ of touch sensation i.e. Sparsanendriya. Any disease or diseases of twak are considered under 'Kushta Roga' in Ayurveda.

There are basically 2 types of Kushta – Mahakushta (7) and Kshudrakushta (11). The prime symptoms of any skin disorder include discoloration, itching, burning sensation, disfigurement, loss of sensation, horripilation, changes in the texture of skin. Any of these symptoms occurring as a result of any of the Kushta, leaves the affected person in 4D's – Discomfort, Disfigurement, Disability and Death. The skin disorders affects the individual in both physical and psychological aspects sometimes forcing the person to develop depression, self isolation & suicidal tendency as a result of emotional abuse and criticism they face from the surrounding people.

Though several medications are available for the treatment of skin diseases in the form of tablets, syrups etc external applications play a very prominent role not only treating the physical appearance of skin but provides psychological satisfaction for the suffering person. Several external applications are mentioned in Ayurvedic classics by various acharyas in the name of 'lepakalpna' for the treatment of not only skin diseases but also for several various ailments. The lepas include the present day exploration in terms of therapeutics, cosmaceutics & neutraceutics mentioned in schedule I of Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940.

Classification of Lepa -

According to Sushruta – 3 types- Pralepa, Pradeha & Alepa.

According to Sharangadhara – 3 types- Doshaghna, Vishaghna & Varnya.

Pralepa– Its application of lepa in the form of thin layer (tanu) prepared from sheetaviryadravyas.

Pradeha – It is applied as thick layer using ushnaviryadravyas. Beneficial in Vatapradhanatwakroga.

Alepa – Its the application of medicated lepa for vranashodhana, utsadana & ropana. Alepa is the combination of pralepa & pradeha.

Doshaghna – Its the application of lepa for the pacification of the vitiated doshas in a thickness of ¼ angulas.

Vishaghna – Its the application of lepa for pacifying visha & is applied in the thickness of 1/3 angula. For the preparation of lepa, vishagnadravyas like sirishatwak, yashtimadhu, tagara, khanda, Chandanamoola, elabeeja, jatamamsi etc.

Varnya – Its applied in a thickness of ½ angula beneficial in pigment disorders as it imparts colour. It is prepared using drygs like Raktachandana, Manjishta, Lodhra etc.

Preparation of lepa :-

Generally for the preparation of lepa the drugs are finely powdered & then made into kalka form i.e. paste by adding liquid media like madhu, ghrita, taila, gomutra or jala. Thickness should be of ArdraMahishaCharma& should be applied in pratilomagati.

Kushtahara Lepa Mentioned In Different Ayurvedic Classics :-

Ashtanga Hridaya:

- Jeevantyadi Yamaka
- Guggulumarichadichurna with chakrikatailam
- Snuhyadilepa in Visarpa
- Avalgujadilepa in Swittrakushta
- Another Teekshnalepa of Bhallataka, Sankachurna, Tuttha, Kushta, Ksharadvayam, Langali, Arkadugdha is also mentioned.

Charaka Samhita:

Acharya Charaka described 32 choornapradeha in 3rd chapter of sutrasthana in Aragwadeeya Adhyaya. Following drugs can be used in kushta as they possess properties like varnya, kushtaghna & kandughna which are opposite qualities for symptoms of kushta like vaivarnya, kandu & kushta (patches)

Varnya Drugs

- Chandana (Santalum album)
- Tunga (Calophyllum)
- Padmaka (Prunuscerasoides)
- Sariva (Hemidesmusindicus)
- Manjishta (Rubiocordifolia)
- Usheera (Vetiveriazizanoides)
- Payasya (Jacquemontiapaniculata)
- Sita (White Cynodondactylon)
- Lata (Black Cynodondactylon)

Kushtaghna Drugs

- Khadira (Acacia catechu)
- Abhaya (Terminaliachebula)
- Amalaki (Embilicaofficinalis)
- Haridra (Curcuma longa)

- Arushkara (Semicarpusanacardium)
- Saptaparna (Alstoniascholaris)
- Aragwadha (Cassia fistula)
- Karavira (Nerium oleander)
- Vidanga (Embeliaribes)
- Jatipravala (Jasminumofficinarum)

Kandughna Drugs

- Raktachandana (Pterocarpussantalinus)
- Nalad (Arundodonax)
- Amalatus (Cassia fistula)
- Latakaranja (Caesalpina crista)
- Nimba (Azardirachtaindica)
- Kutaja (Holarrhenaantidysentrica)
- Sarshapa (Brassica alba)
- Yashtimadhu (Glycirrhizaglabra)
- Daruharidra (Berberisaristata)
- Mustaka (Cyperusrotundus)

Acharyas mentioned groups of similar property drugs under ganas. The gana possessing varnya karma are :-

1. Eladigana
2. Panchavalkala
3. Rodhradigana
4. Trijataka&Chaturjataka.

Basing on the condition, type, severity & symptoms of kushta; any of the above suitable drugs can be made into lepa and can be applied for better results.

Role of Lepa In Kushta Chikitsa

Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa – As kushta arises due to the vitiation of mainly vata ,kapha & tridoshas; on the whole doshaghna lepa are mainly indicated to pacify the doshas that are vitiated locally. Acharyavagbhata stated that just like agni gets shanta after pouring water, similarly vitiated doshas which are manifested as kushta also gets pacified by the application of lepa; as the main symptoms of kushta include pain, itching & burning sensation (Ruk, Kandu & Daha).

Acharya Sushruta in his chikitsasthana explained that application of lepa not only cures the pain but causes happiness to the sufferer. The Dravya which is applied as lepa causes shodhana, shophahara, ropana of that particular lesion of kushta. The drug that is applied as lepa in pratilomagati i.e. direction opposite to hair follicles facilitates the faster & effective absorption of drug's active components into the skin, thereby helps for rapid relief of symptoms as well as disease on the whole.

Probable Mode of Action of Lepa :-

Twak being the site for the doshas like Bhrajaka pitta the complexion or varnyaprasada for twak, samanavayu&vyanavayu which performs activities like penetration, absorption by their upasoshanaguna is the outer covering of whole body. Ayurveda propagates the theory of 'Srotomayapurush' i.e. the whole body is porous. The lepa is said to be applied in pratilomagati (opposite to direction of hair follicle) for quicker absorption of minute particles of drug through these pores or romakupa. After being absorbed into the skin, drug action starts pertaining to its virya and prabhava.

Conclusion :-

As kushta takes the Bahya Rogamarga (Twak), Bahirparimarjanachikitsa in the form of lepana helps to cure the lesions efficiently when used along with abhyantaraaushadhprayoga. Lepa alone has the efficacy to cure certain types of kushta even without abhyantaraaushadhprayoga. Hence lepakalpana is given utmost importance not only in kushtachikitsa, but in Ayurveda as a whole. So many advancements in the classical methods of lepakalpana are made now-a-days not only for therapeutic purpose but also gaining popularity in the branches of dermatology, cosmetology & neutraceuticals for much better & faster results adopting modern techniques & procedures to make it reachable to every individual.

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