ROLE OF LEPAKALPANA FOR IMPROVING BEAUTY OF SKIN W. S. R. TO MUKHALEPA

Chaudhari Tejaswini¹*, Kubde Sneha², Dive Mukund³, Jamnekar Pallavi⁴

¹P.G. Scholar, ²Guide & Head, ³Professor, ⁴Lecturer, Dept. of Rasashastra & Bhaishajyakalpana, B. M. Ayurved College, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

ABSTRACT

Skin (Twacha) is the largest organ of the body and has a great cosmetic value. It is one of the five Jnanendriyas (sense organs) i.e., Sparsha jnyaan (touch sensation) gets from it. So it has ample of importance in physical and mental well being of an individual. It is most vulnerable to disease as it exposes to external environment. There are lots of reasons behind the skin problems and most striking is the today’s busy and stressful life. Skin disorders affects all ages from the neonates to the elderly persons. Ayurveda an ancient science has vast description of the topical applications in the name of Lepa kalpana described both as the Chikitsa (treatment) of various skin diseases and for beauty. The medicines that are in the form of a paste and used for external application are called as Lepas.

A great demand from Ayurveda in the field of cosmetology has been established due to its unique concept about beauty and effective, cheaper and long lasting therapy without any side effects. The herbal paste which is applied on face to treat acne, pimples, scars, marks and pigments are known as 'Mukh Lepa' (face pack) in Ayurveda. Mukhalepa is a simple and effective skin care treatment in Ayurveda, which is done using variety of herbal pastes. The herbal face pack mainly consists of different rejuvenating herbs that help in nourishment of the skin and also aid in skin cleansing and make it soft and clear. Mukhalepas also helps to increase the elasticity of the skin and thereby prevents the ageing of the skin, avoids wrinkles on the face, and gives a good skin tone.

The present article is aimed to provide the details about the Lepa kalpana from the classics of Ayurveda, the concept of Mukha lepa and the drugs mentioned in classics which are useful for improving complexion and for the common skin ailments.

KEYWORDS: Lepakalpana, Ayurveda, Mukha lepa, Face pack.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda an ancient science has vast description of topical applications in the name of Lepa described both as the Chikitsa of various disease conditions and for beauty. Lepa preparations are the topical medicaments meant for external application to the skin or mucosal membrane.

One or more drugs are pounded to fine powder form and mixed with any of the specified liquid media to prepare Lepa. These preparations are best known for 'Vrna Shodhana' (keep the wounds clean) and 'Vrna ropana' (heal the wounds). [¹]

Beauty, the quality that gives pleasure to the senses, is perhaps the desire of every human being on earth. Some are born beautiful and some are made beautiful. It is the natural desire of mankind to have a healthy and glamorous skin with attractive personality. But very few are blessed with naturally perfect skin. People always have great concern about their health and beauty. Beauty is not just a visual experience; it is characteristic that provides a perceptual experience to the eye, the ear, the intellect, the aesthetic faculty, or the moral sense. It is the quality that gives pleasure meaning or satisfaction to the senses. [²]

The concept of using herbs for the beautification is well described in Ayurvedic literature. Since centuries the herbal extracts, as a whole or part, have been used for various ailments of the skin, hair and for overall appearance. A great demand from Ayurveda in the field of cosmetology has been established due to its unique concept about beauty and effective, cheaper and long lasting beauty therapy without any side effect. The herbal paste which is applied on face to treat acne, pimple, scars, marks and pigments are known as 'Mukha Lepa' (face pack) in Ayurveda. [³]

Mukha lepa (face pack) is one of the well known effective and oldest method which is spread over the face and left for some time to cleanse and improve the condition of the skin. It is allowed to dry or to set with the object of improving the appearance of the skin by producing a transient tightening effect as well as by cleansing the skin. [⁴] Different types of skin need different types of face packs. Mukha lepas help us looking after skin and also prove its worthiness by increasing circulation of the blood within the veins of the face. Mukha lepas are helpful for preventive and curative aspects of any skin problems.
AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- To provide details about the Lepakalpana in Ayurveda
- To explain the concept of Mukhalepa (face pack)
- To mention the drugs from Ayurveda classics which are useful for improving complexion and for the skin ailments.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- References of Lepakalpana have been collected from the classical books on Ayurveda.
- All data is compiled and analyzed and discussed through and in depth understanding about Lepakalpana and Mukhalepa mentioned in Ayurvedic texts.
- Drugs from classics which are used for external application are also compiled in this review.

Concept of Lepa Kalpana

Lepa Definition

The selected freshly collected wet drugs are pounded to fine paste form and used for external application as 'Lepa'.[5]

The selected freshly dried drugs are taken in a clean Khalva yantra, pounded to fine powder form and filtered. This filtrate is again taken in Khalva yantra and added with required little quantity of water or any of the specified liquid preparations. The mixture is thoroughly triturated to obtain it in paste form, which is used as Lepa for external application.

Synonyms of Lepa

Alepa, Lipta, Lepa, and Lepana – all these are the synonymous words used in different contexts of classical texts. [6]

Table 1: Types of Lepa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sushruta, 3 types</th>
<th>Sharangadhara, 3 types</th>
<th>Vagbhath, 10 types[7]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Pralepa</td>
<td>1) Doshaghnna</td>
<td>1) Snahika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Pradeha</td>
<td>2) Vishaghnna</td>
<td>2) Nirvapana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Alepa</td>
<td>3) Varnya</td>
<td>3) Prasadana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Ten types of Lepa according to Vagbhata are not quoted in one chapter or at one place. When all the relevant information from the Ashtanga Sangraha is put together, these ten types of Lepa can be summed up.

1) Pralepa [8]

It possesses ‘Shita guna’ (prepared with Shita virya dravya). It is Tanu which means very thin Lepa as that of Chandana applied to the skin. Pralepa is of two varieties: 1) Avisoshii 2) Vishoshi

Avisoshii

Avisoshii varieties of Lepa are those external applications that are removed from the place of application before they dry up. These types of Lepa are required in conditions where Vrnashopha pidana (squeezing action over the wounds) is not required. After removal of the earlier Lepa, the fresh wet Lepa put in the place to avail the desired therapeutic action.

Vishoshi

Vishoshi varieties of Lepa are those external applications that are left in the place of application after they dry up. These types of Lepa are required in conditions where Vrnashopha pidana (squeezing action over the wounds) is required. The squeezing action exerted by the dry Lepa over Vrnashopha is helpful in ripening of the same.

2) Pradeha

Pradeha possesses either Ushna guna or Shita guna. Ushna pradeha is meant for Vatakaphaja disease conditions and Shita pradeha for Pittaraktaja diseases. [9]

3) Alepa

Alepa variety of Lepa is that, which exhibits the mixed characteristics of both Pralepa and Pradeha. It is neither applied too thin as Pralepa nor applied too thick as Pradeha. The application will be of medium thickness. [10]

Thickness of Lepa

Sushruta has compared the ‘thickness of Lepa’ to the thickness of buffalo’s skin. [11] He says that Pralepa is thinner and Pradeha is thicker to buffalo’s skin.

It means that the actual thickness of the buffalo’s skin may be taken as the thickness in between both, which will be thickness of Alepa. Same is the opinion of Sharangadhara regarding the thickness of Lepa. The thickness of buffalo’s skin may be obtained as 2.8 to 3.2 mm. Commentators have quoted the thickness of different Lepa as below: [12]

**Lepa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thickness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doshaghnna lepa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vishaghnna lepa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varnya lepa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note : 1 Angula = 1.95 cm.

Lepa and the Ratio of Sneha

Sushruta explains about the ratio of Sneha dravya such as Ghrta and Taila to be added while preparing Lepa.

This is done according to Dosa predominance or the disease condition as shown in the table below; [13]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Ratio of Sneha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vataja vyadhigdhi</td>
<td>- 1/4 th part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittaja vyadhigdhi</td>
<td>- 1/6 th part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaphaja vyadhigdhi</td>
<td>- 1/8 th part</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lepa Absorption Mechanism

- Lepa are usually applied against the hair follicular direction (Pratiloma gati) this facilitates the quicker absorption of the drug potency through Romakupa (hair roots), Sweda vahini (sweat glands) and Siramukha (blood capillaries). Even the books of contemporary medical science put forward the same
The theory of drug absorption in case of external applications.[14]

- The function of Bhraja Pitta is said to metabolize the substance of drugs applied to the skin whereas one of its main functions is to manifest the colour and complexion of the Twak (skin). In function of metabolism the activities of Saman Vayu supported by Vyan Vayu is of great importance. Ayurveda also propagates the theory of ‘Srotomaya Purush’ indicating that the whole human body is porous. When the medication is applied in the form of Lepa or Pradeha, the minute particles of the substance penetrate into the Twak owing to the gravitational pull and the weight of the drug. The Upashoshana property of Vayu (Vyana and Samana especially) would play a major role in the penetration, and absorption of the medicaments applied over the Twak. After being absorbed in the Twak, the drugs would act upon the body, pertaining to its Virya (active principle) and in some cases according to its Prabhava.[15]

**Transdermal drug administration**

Transdermal drug absorption can significantly alter drug kinetics. Transdermal drug absorption depends on variety of factors as follows: [16]

- Site of application
- Thickness and integrity of the stratum corneum epidermis
- Size of the molecule,
- Permeability of the membrane of the transdermal drug delivery system,
- State of skin hydration
- pH of the drug,
- Drug metabolism by skin flora,
- Lipid solubility,
- Depot of drug in skin,
- Alteration of blood flow in the skin by additives and body temperature,
- Skin thickness and amount of blood flow in the skin vary considerably with age.

**Lepa Preparation and Application - General Norms** [17]

- All Lepa preparations are for instant use and for single use only.
- Wet drugs are triturated to very fine paste form with no fibrous part left out, to use it as Lepa.
- Dry drugs are thoroughly pounded and the powder obtained is sieved. The fine powder obtained as filtrate is further triturated with specified liquid to prepare Lepa.
- Lepa are applied against the hair follicular direction to facilitate quicker and better absorption.
- Lepa are removed soon after they dry over the place of application.
- Therapeutically Lepa are effective in wet state and they turn non potent and skin irritating when dry. Sushruta and Sharangadharas both have same opinion over this point.[18,19]

- Previous Lepa should never be covered with fresh one. If done so, it hampers the local temperature and leads to pain and numbness in the area.
- Application of Lepa during night hours is prohibited. Because as night time is naturally cool it helps in transfer of body temperature from hair follicles. When Lepa is applied on the skin, transfer of this temperature will be hampered leading to vitiation of Dosha resulting in worsening of the existing skin ailments.

**Concept of Mukha Lepa**

The herbal paste which is applied on face to treat acne, pimples, scars, marks and pigments are known as ‘Mukha Lepa (face pack)’ in Ayurveda. [20]

**Types of Mukhalepa**

Mukha lepa (face pack) are also of three types based on their therapeutic use: [21]

- Doshahara
- Vishaghna
- Varnakrita

**Properties of a good quality Mukha lepa**[22]

- It should be a smooth paste without gritty particles.
- The drugs should be uniformly mixed.
- Sufficient liquid media should be added in preparation of face pack.
- It should have pleasant odor.
- It should produce a significant cleansing of skin.
- When applied to the face, it should dry out rapidly to form an adherent coating on face.
- The coating should be such which can be removed either by piling or by gentle washing and should not cause any discomfort to face.

**Time for Mukhalepa**

As stated earlier Mukhalepa should not be applied at nights nor should it be allowed to stay on after it dries up. [23]

**Direction of Mukhalepa application**

As stated earlier Mukhalepa should be applied against the direction of hair follicles (Pratilom) on the skin to make the action of application more quick and effective. [24]

**Procedure after application of Mukhalepa** [25]

- Lepa should be allowed to remain till it becomes dry; if left dry, it vitiates the complexion of skin.
- It should be removed after moistening and when removed, the face should be anointed with oil.
- The person should avoid day sleep, excessive talk, exposure to fire and sunlight, sorrow and anger.

**Contraindications of Mukha lepa**

It should not be applied to persons suffering from Pinasa (rhinorrhea), Ajirna (indigestion), immediately after Nasya karma (nasal drops), Arochaka (anorexia), Hanugraha (lock jaw), and after keeping awake the previous night (Jagaran). [26]
Benefits of Mukhalepa [27]

- If properly applied, it cures premature graying of hair; 
  Vyanga (blackish hyper pigmentation of face),
  and Nilika (bluish hyper pigmentation).
- It detoxifies the skin and enhances the beauty of the skin.
- Prevents ageing of the skin.
- Reduces skin wrinkles and tones the skin.
- Pacifies pigmentation.
- Decreases discoloration of facial skin.

Classical Drugs for Improving Face Complexion and to Cure Common Skin Ailments

Ayurvedic classics have mentioned the groups of drugs and single drugs having Varnya action, which can be used for improving the complexion of the skin. The drugs can be used both as externally and internally. Externally it can be used for face wash or face pack (mukhalepa) to improve the glow of skin and to treat the ailments.

Acharya Sharangadharma has mentioned the following drugs for Mukhalepa [28]

- Raktachandan (Pterocarpus santalinus)
- Manjisitha (Rubia cordifolia)
- Lodhra (Symplocus racemosus)
- Kushtha (Saussurea lappa)
- Priyangu (Callicarpa macrophylla)
- Vatankura (Ficus bengalensis)
- Masura (Lentils)
- Matulunga jata (Citrus medica)

Varnya Mahakahayana (ten complexion promoter drugs) [29]

- Chandana (Santalum album L.)
- Tunga (Calophyllum inophyllum L.)
- Padmaka (Prunus cerasoides)
- Ushira (Chrysopogon zizanioides L.)
- Madhuka (Glycyrrhiza glabra L.)
- Manjisitha (Rubia cordifolia)
- Sariva (Hemidesmus indicus L.)
- Pasya (Jacquemontia paniculata)
- Sita (white variety of Cynodon dactylon L.)
- Lata (black variety of Cynodon dactylon L.)

Kusthaghna Mahakahayana (ten drugs for curing skin ailments) [30]

- Khadira (Acacia catechu)
- Abhaya (Terminalia chebula)
- Amalaka (Phyllanthus emblica)
- Haridra (Curcuma longa)
- Arushkara (Semicarpus anacardium)
- Saptaparna (Alstonia scholaris)
- Aragwadha (Cassia fistula)
- Karvira (Nerium oleander)
- Vidanga (Emblica ribes)
- Jatipravala (Tenders shoots of Jasminum officinale)

Kandughna Mahakahayana (drugs used in skin ailments) [31]

- Raktachandan (Pterocarpus santalinus)
- Nadad (Arundo donax)
- Amalatas (Cassia fistula)
- Latakurjana (Caesalpina crista)
- Neem (Azadirachta indica)
- Kutaj (Holarrhena antidysentrica)
- Sarshap (Bassia alba)
- Yashtimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra)
- Doruharidra (Berberis aristata)
- Mustak (Cyprus rotundus)

Groups of drugs having Varnya action [32]

- Eladi gana
- Panchavalkala
- Rodhradi gana
- Trijataka and Chaturjataka

DISCUSSION

The skin is not only important for studying the structure and function, but also application of the same in understanding the disorders arise out of it. So it has ample of importance in physical and mental wellbeing of an individual. Lepa preparation are applied to skin prevents metabolism of drugs in the liver and increases the bioavailability of the drug and also provides its effects directly on the site of action. It is the natural desire of mankind to have a healthy and glamorous skin. The concept of using herbs for beautification is well described in Ayurvedic literature. Various drugs used in preparation of Mukhalepa, make skin healthy in natural way and enhances the complexion without causing any adverse reaction. It can be also effectively used to get rid of common skin ailments like acne vulgaris, hyper pigmented patches, scar marks etc. So it is our social responsibility to find out effective herbs from treasure of Ayurveda for skin problems.

The herbs to be used for making the paste for applying on the face should be chosen carefully after studying the skin type of the person and as per the specific requirement of the person. This is very important because if the ingredients are not accurate, there will not be any desired effect from the Mukhalepa therapy.

Ayurveda had reached the zenith of knowledge in the Samhita kala regarding the application of Lepakalpa for therapeutic and cosmetic purposes. Moreover, in contemporary era here are tremendous opportunities for further advancement of Lepakalpa for much better therapeutic, cosmetic purposes by adopting current science and technology. [33]

CONCLUSION

The face is the feature which distinguishes a person. It is one of the parameter to identify a person. All people try to keep their face neat and clean because the face is directly exposed to the external environment and get easily affected by the environmental changes. Use of Mukhalepa increases beauty and imparts freshness. It is better to avoid synthetic chemical based cosmetic products and use the natural substances and products. It will make
skin healthy, prevent from skin diseases and improve complexion. Herbal face packs (Mukhalepa) increase the fairness and smoothness of skin, also able to cure wrinkles, dark circles, pimples etc. one can derive the maximum benefits of Mukhalepa by using them according to their skin type. Mukhalepas are helpful preventive and curative purpose of any skin problem.

REFERENCES

12. Tripathi Brahmanand, Ashtanghridaya, (Sutrasthan 22), Nirmala Hindi Commentary, Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2007, p259, 260.
27. Tripathi Brahmanand, Ashtanghridaya, (Sutrasthan 22), Nirmala Hindi Commentary, Delhi, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2007, p259, 260.


Cite this article as:

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

*Address for correspondence
Dr. Tejaswini Chaudhari
PG Scholar,
Department of Rasashastra & Bhaishajyakalpana, Bhausaheb Mulak Ayurved College, Nandanwan, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.
Email: tej.dehankar@rediffmail.com
Mob: 09665034605

Available online at: http://ijapr.in