



Review Article

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**ALEPA CHIKITSA IN KUSHTA: A CRITICAL REVIEW**Muktha Bharadwaj K A ^{1*}, Vinay Kumar K N ²¹ PG Scholar, Department of PG studies in Panchakarma, Sri Kalabyraveshwara Swamy Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Centre, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India² Professor & HOD, Department of PG studies in Panchakarma, Sri Kalabyraveshwara Swamy Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Centre, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

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*Corresponding author

E-mail: kb8321@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Skin is the largest organ of the body which is in direct contact with the environment, the status of which reflects the status of healthy body. When skin gets affected, it not only has its impact on Somatic system but also on Psychological and Social aspects. In Ayurveda, skin diseases are broadly classified into *Kushta* which is a *Bahya rogamarga janya vyadhi* and gets *vyakta* in *Twak* and the treatment of which consists of both external and internal treatments which are considered as *bahirparimarjana* and *antarparimarjana chikitsa*. *Bahirparimarjana chikitsa* like *Udvarhana*, *Takradhara*, *Parisheka* and *Lepa* all have very beneficial effects in treating this disease called *Kushta* in the same way as that of *Shodhana*. *Alepa chikitsa* has been given prime importance among these *Bahir – Parimarjana chikitsa* as it does *Twak prasadana*, *rakta prasadana*, *kandu vinashana* and *daha prashamana*. Hence, an attempt has been made to compile and critically analyse the use of different *lepas* helpful in *Kushta roga*.

Keywords: *Kushta roga*, *Bahirparimarjana chikitsa*, *Antar Parimarjana chikitsa*, *Udvarhana*, *Takradhara*.**INTRODUCTION**

Skin is the largest organ of the body which acts as a protective layer between the inside and rest of the world. It also helps to regulate temperature of the body. Skin holds high cosmetological importance as it comes in contact with the world and has an impact on the person's social, personal and psychological health. Healthy skin serves as the mirror image of good health. Skin diseases are becoming very common now a days due to varied life style and prevalence of which has reached to more than 30%. Any skin diseases are broadly considered as *Kushta* in Ayurveda which are classified mainly into *Mahakushta* and *Kshudrakushta*. All these *Kushta* manifests in *twak* for which there is need of both *Bahirparimarjana* and *Antarparimarjana* to remove *doshas* both externally and internally. *Bahirparimarjana* includes *Udvarhana*,

Parisheka, *Lepa* etc., and *Antarparimarjana* includes *Shodhana* modalities like *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Raktamokshana* mainly.

Bahirparimarjana has been given more importance in *Kushta roga* as it is a *Bahya rogamarga janya vyadhi* with *Twak* as *vyakta sthana*. *Lepa* is one of such *Bahir Parimarjana chikitsa* in *Kushta* which is of utmost importance as it does *twak prasadana*, *mamsa-rakta prasadana*, *daha prashamana*, *daha*, *kandu*, *ruja nashana*¹ which is needed in *Kushta roga*. Acharya Charaka has quoted about *Bahirparimarjana chikitsa* in *Kushta* in Sutra sthana 3rd chapter about different *Lepas* that can be used in *Kushta* soon after the chapter on *Antarparimarjana* giving the importance for it². It has been told that after *samshodhana* and *raktamokshana* use of *lepas* will be beneficial in mitigating the disease *Kushta*. Hence, an attempt is made here to compile different *lepas* told by different acharyas in the context of *Kushta Chikitsa*.

Table 1: Different lepas according to Acharya Charaka

Names of Lepa	Reference	Ingredients
Aragvadhadi Lepa	Cha.Su.3/3	Aragvadhya, Edagaja, Karanja, Vasa, Guduchi, Madanphala, Haridra
Shryahvadi Lepa	Cha.Su.3/3	Shryahva, Surahva, Khadira, Dhava, Nimba, Vidanga, Karaveera Twak
Bhurjadi Lepa	Cha.Su.3/4	Bhurja Granthi, Lashuna, Shirisha, Dhatu Kaseesa, Guggulu, Krishnagandha.
Phanijjakadi Lepa	Cha.Su.3/4	Phanijjaka, Kutaja, Saptaparna, Peelu, Kushta
Vachadi Lepa	Cha.Su.3/5	Vacha, Harenuka, Trivrit, Nikumbha, Bhallataka, Gairika, Rasanjana
Manahshiladi Lepa	Cha.Su.3/5	Manahshila, Gruhadhuma, Ela, Kaseesa, Lodhra, Arjuna, Musta, Sarja
Chitrakadi Lepa	Cha.Chi.7/85	Chitraka, Ela, Bimbi, Vrushaka, Trivrit Patra, Arka, Nagara, Gomutra, Palasha Kshara
Mamsyadi Lepa	Cha.Chi.7/87	Jatamansi, Maricha, Lavana, Haridra, Tagara, Sudha, Gruha Dhuma, Gopitta, Palasha Kshara
Trapvadi Lepa	Cha.Chi.7/88	Trapu, Kasisa, Loha
Siddharthaka Churna	Cha.Chi.7/91	Musta, Madanphala, Triphala, Karanja, Aragvadhya, Kutaja, Daruharidra, Saptaparna
Kushtadi Lepa	Cha.Chi.7/93	Kushta, Karanja Beeja, Edagaja
Lodhradi Lepa	Cha.Chi.7/95	Lodhra, Dhataki, Vatsaka Beeja, Karanja, Malati Pushpa
Shirishadi Lepa	Cha.Chi.7/96	Shirisha Twak, Karpasa Pushpa, Rajavruksha Patra, Kakamachi Patra
Sidhmanashaka Lepa	Cha.Chi.7/118	Kushta, Tamala Patra, Maricha, Manahshila, Kasisa, Tila Taila.
Priyavadi Lepa	Cha.Chi.7/132	Priyangu, Harenuka, Vatsaka Phala, Ativisha, Chandana, Katu Rohini, Khasha.
Swarnaksheeri Lepa	Cha.Chi.7/170	Manahshila, Vidanga, Kaseesa, Gorochana, Swarnaksheeri, Saindhava Lavana.

Table 2: Different lepas according to Acharya Sushruta

Names of Lepa	Reference	Ingredients
Tutthadi Lepa	Su.Chi.9/10	Tuttha, Swarji Kshara, Kasisa, Vidanga, Agara Dhuma, Chitraka, Katuka, Sudha, Haridra, Saindhava Lavana.
Harataladi Lepa	Su.Chi.9/10	Haritala, Manahshila, Arka Ksheera, Tila, Shigru, Maricha
Swarjikadi Lepa	Su.Chi.9/10	Swarjika, Kushta, Tuttha, Kutaja, Chitraka, Vidanga, Maricha, Lodhra, Manahshila
Haritakyadi Lepa	Su.Chi.9/10	Haritaki, Karanja, Vidanga, Siddharthaka, Lavana, Avalguja, Haridra.
Lakshadi Lepa	Su.Chi. 9/12	Laksha, Kushta, Sarshapa, Haridra, Navaneeta Dhupa, Vyosha, Chakramarda Beeja, Takrapishti.
Chakramardadi Lepa	Su.Chi. 9/13	Saindhava, Chakramarda Beeja, Guda, Rasanjana, Keshara
Hemakshiradi Lepa	Su.Chi.9/14	Hemaksheeri, Kiramaalaka, Shirisha, Nimba, Sarja, Vatsaka, Mahasarja.
Dvaipadi Lepa	Su.Chi.9/16	Ash of Skin of Either Dveepi or Elephant Mixed with oil
Avalgujadi Lepa	Su.Chi.9/25	Avalguja, Nadija, Kakodumbara, Laksha, Loha Churna, Magadhi, Rasanjana, Mixed with Krishnatila
Tutthadi Lepa	Su.Chi. 9/27	Tuttha, Aala, Katuka, Vyosha, Arka, Hayamaraka, Kushta, Avalguja, Nhallataka, Ksheerini, Sarshapa, Snuhi

Table 3: Different lepas according to Ashtanga Sangraha

Name of Lepa	Reference	Ingredients
Shaileyakadi Churna Lepa	A.Sa.Chi.21/67	Shaileya, Kampillaka, Lodhra, Saurashtri, Sarjarasa, Manahshila, Navaneeta
Edagajadi Lepa	A.Sa.Chi.21/68	Edagaja, Kushta, Saindhava, Siddhartha, Vidanga, Kanjika
Lakshadi Lepa	A.Sa.Chi.21/69	Laksha, Vyosha, Chakramarda Beeja, Shrivesthaka, Kushta, Siddharthaka, Takra, Haridra, Mulaka Beeja
Durvadi Lepa	A.Sa.Chi.21/70	Durva, Haritaki, Saindhava, Chakramarda, Kutheraka, Kanjika, Takra
Manahshiladi Lepa	A.Sa.Chi.21/71	Manahshila, Kutaja Twak, Kushta, Lomasha, Edagaja, Karanja, Bhurja Granthi, Karaveera Mula, Palasha Rasa, Dhatu Kasisa
Eladi Lepa	A.Sa.Chi.21/72	Ela, Chitraka, Nimba, Vrushaka, Kuruvinda, Nagara, Arka, Palasha, Kshara, Gomutra
Mamsyadi Lepa	A.Sa.Chi.21/72	Jatamansi, Maricha, Lavana, Haridra, Tagara, Sudha, Gruha Dhuma, Gomutra, Gopitta, Palasha Kshara

Table 4: Different lepas according to Ashtanga Hridaya

Names of Lepa	Reference	Ingredients
Karaveeradi Lepa	A.Hr.Chi.19/61	Karaveera, Nimba, Kutaja, Shyamaka, Chitraka, Gomutra, Darvi Lepa Kwatha.
Shirishadi Lepa	A.Hr.Chi.19/63	Shirisha Twak, Karpasa Pushpa, Rajavruksha Patra, Kakamachi
Vyoshadi Lepa	A.Hr.Chi.19/64	Vyosha, Sarshapa, Haridra, Gruha Dhuma, Yava, Shuka, Saindhava, Chitraka, Kushta
Manahshiladi Lepa	A.Hr.Chi.19/70	Manahshila, Maricha, Arka Taila, Ksheera
Sidhmahara Lepa	A.Hr.Chi.19/76	Kakajangha Mula, Vamani Patra, Mulaka Beeja, Takra
Pitta Kapha Kustahara Lepa	A.Hr.Chi.19/88	Jala, Kushta, Loha, Kesara Patra, Plava, Chandana, Mrunala

DISCUSSION

Kushta is a *kleda pradhana*, *bahudoshaja vyadhi* involving *saptako dravya sangraha* and manifesting in *twak*³. When a *Lepa* is applied over the surface of skin in *pratiloma gati* i.e., opposite to the direction of hair follicles through a proper base, the active principles of the ingredients of *lepa* are released into the skin, later it enters into *romakupa* and further gets absorbed through *Swedavahi srotas* and does *siramukha viviktata*, and *bhrajaka agni deepana* which is residing in *pitta* thereby giving *Sroto shodhana* effect⁴.

In modern medical science, the topical applications of oilients and other creams are prescribed in these skin diseases where the absorption of it takes place through hair follicles and gets absorbed in to capillary network then to minor veins and systemic circulation and shows its action. The same action has been explained in the Samhitas in the context of *Alepa chikitsa*.

Alepa is classified in to *Pralepa*, *Pradeha* and *Alepa* by Acharya Sushruta. *Pralepa* is the one which is applied as *sheeta*, *tanu*, *avishoshi* or *vishoshi*. *Pradeha* is applied either *ushna* or *sheeta*, *bahala* or *abahura*, *avishoshi*. *Alepa* is the one which is *madhyama* and does *rakta* and *pitta prasadana*. As in *Kushta roga* there will be vitiation of *dushya rakta*, *Alepa* can mainly be adopted in order to mitigate *rakta dosha*.

Sharangadhara have explained about 3 types of *lepa* i.e., *Doshaghna*, *Vishaghna* and *Varnya lepa*¹⁰. *Doshaghna lepas*

helps in the pacification of vitiated *doshas* which are applied in the thickness of 1/4th *angula* which are used in different diseases where *twak* will be the *vyakta sthana*. *Vishaghna lepas* helps in pacifying *visha* and is applied in the thickness of 1/3rd *angula*. *Varnya lepas* are applied in the thickness of 1/2 *angula*. These can be applied in the conditions like acne vulgaris, *vyanga*.

Acharyas have given more importance for *bahirparimarjana chikitsa* in *Kushta* along with *Antar Parimarjana chikitsa*. Acharya Charaka soon after the chapter *Apamargatanduleeya* where dravyas for *antarparimarjana* has been explained has quoted the chapter named *Aragvadhadi adhyaya* in which there is explanation of 32 different *lepas* mainly indicated for *Kushta roga*. Chakrapani has also mentioned that even though *Khadira* is best *Kushta hara* but for *bahirparimarjana*, *Aragvadhadi* is considered to be the best and have started the chapter with *Aragvadhadi lepa*⁵. The importance for *Bahir Parimarjana* is in such a way that Acharya Charaka have mentioned it in both *sutra sthana* and *chikitsa sthana* of Charaka Samhita.

Acharya Sushruta have highlighted the use of *Alepa chikitsa* in different *Dhatugata Kushta* showing its importance in the disease. The treatment for different *dhatugata Kushta* has been explained in the chapter as if the *Kushta* is in *rasa dhatu* then *Shodhana* and *lepa* is beneficial, if in *Rakta dhatu* then *Shodhana*, *Alepa*, *Kashayapana*, *Shonita avasechana*, if in *Mamsa dhatu* then *Shodhana*, *Alepa*, *Kashayapana*, *Shonita avasechana*, *arishta- mantha prasha*. So, in all the *dhatugata Kushta Alepa chikitsa* have been given importance soon after *Shodhana*⁶.

Alepa has both *Shodhana*, *Shamana* and *Ropana* property. Acharya Sushruta have stated the few *Bahya shodhana* modalities of which one among them is *Alepa*. It also acts in the form of *Dosha shaman* after proper *shodhana* of the body. *Alepa* also has the property of *Ropana* which are used for *Vrana ropanartha*. Mainly in *Kushta roga* its action is *Shodhana* and *Shamana* of *doshas*.

Acharya Vagbhata have given the opinion that *Alepa* should be done only after *Shodhana* of *Shareera*, if done without it then the *tikshna guna* of *lepa* will harm the body so *lepas* should be applied only after proper *Shodhana* of *Shareera*⁷.

Acharya Vagbhata have stated that *Lepas* helps in the *nirharana* of vitiated *rakta dosha*. It is to be done soon after *samshodhana* of *Shareera* to remove *dushita rakta* from the body. It gets useful only when applied after *samshodhana* of *shareera*⁸.

Few examples of *lepas* that are beneficial in different types of *Kushta* are, *Shirisha twak lepa* in *Dadru kushta*, *Edagajadi lepa* in *Vicharchika*⁹. There are many similarities in the *lepas* told by different acharyas like *Siddharthaka Churna*, *Lakshadi lepa*, *Mamsyadi lepa* etc. these *lepa dravyas* can be used for other *Bahir Parimarjana chikitsa* like *Udvardana*, *Parisheka* etc. the need of which is to pacify the disease.

CONCLUSION

Lepa is applied in the *pratiloma gati* helping it to get absorbed by the hair follicles through which the drug gets absorbed in the capillary network to minor veins and then in to systemic circulation. This results in the absorption of medicaments and to get desired effect. Among the types of *lepas*, *Alepa* is considered as best in *twak vikara* as it does *rakta* and *pitta Shamana* which is mainly needed here. *Kushta* is a disease of *Bahya roga marga* and its *vyakta sthana* is *twak*, hence *lepas* done over there helps in mitigating the disease after proper *shodhana* of *Shareera*. Hence *lepa chikitsa* have been given high importance in *Kushta* and other such *twak vikaras*.

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