



Review Article

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A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO BEAUTY CARE IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW

Anand Parul^{1*}, Ramamurthy A.², Sharma Tarun³

¹M.D. Scholar, Department of P.G. Studies in Dravyaguna, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

²Associate Professor, Department of P.G. Studies in Dravyaguna, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

³M.D. Scholar, Department of P.G. Studies in Dravyaguna, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

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*Corresponding author

E-mail: anand.parul.mailbox@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The literary meaning of Saundarya is Beauty. Many authors and poets have described Saundarya in their own ways. In the present era, the meaning of Saundarya is beautiful features, some think of beauty as beautiful personality, deep blue eyes, dark eyes, long black hair, fair skin and so on. But Saundarya in Ayurveda is one of the aspects of healthy person. Saundarya comes naturally to a person who is healthy according to Ayurveda, as it is defined as one of the outcomes of Sukhayu (longevity). Beauty consciousness and the knowledge of application of herbs, minerals and animals products are as old phenomena as the human existence. Beauty of person gives a profound experience of pleasure and satisfaction. Ayurveda unites the concept of beauty with the involvement of mental and spiritual well being of human body. Ayurveda determines beauty by the assessment of some factors like prakriti (Body constitution), samhanana (compactness of body), twak (skin completion), sara (structural predominance), pramana (measurement) and dirghayu lakshana (symptoms of long life). So the present article aims to derive the possible ways of Saundarya prasadana (enhancement of beauty) through the principles of swasthya prapti as told in Ayurveda.

Keywords: Saundarya, Sukhayu, beauty, swasthya.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is composed of two words viz. Ayu and Veda. Ayu means life and Veda denotes to the science. It is one of the most comprehensive healing systems in the world, dealing integrally with body, mind and spirit. It describes the basic and applied aspect of life process, health, disease and its management in terms of its own principles and approaches. In Ayurvediya texts there are four types of Ayu, namely Hitayu, Ahitayu, Sukhayu, Dukhayu¹. Among these Sukhayu is most important. Sukhayu² deals with life without physical and mental disorders and having qualities like Bala, Virya, Parakrama, Yauvana.

Beautification is the process of making visual improvements to a person, place or thing. The act of changing something into something different in essential characteristics. The concept of beauty in Ayurveda is not only directed towards achieving an attractive external appearance, but also towards gaining good health longevity (deerghayu)³. Most of these practices mentioned in Ayurvediya texts are dependent on the seasonal variations (Ritus)⁴ and are found subtly interwoven with daily routine practices (Dinacharya)⁵.

According to Drugs and Cosmetics Act (India) 1940, cosmetics are defined as, any substance intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled, or in any way applied to human body for cleansing, beautifying and promoting attractiveness⁶. Ayurvediya concept of beauty and cosmetics started from the inheritance and pursuance of ideal life style i.e Dinacharya, Ratricharya, Ritucharya with the use of herbo-metallic preparations. Twacha (skin) being the seat of sparshanandriya⁷ and being inherited with the qualities like varna⁸ (colour, complexion) has been told to be kept in prakrita (normal) stage by above said practices.

ASPECTS OF BEAUTY IN AYURVEDA

The concept of beauty includes four aspects according to Ayurveda:-

- 1) Swasthavritta anusarana
- 2) Sadachar anusarana
- 3) Ritucharya anusarana
- 4) Social hygiene

Swasthavritta anusaran

Various procedures have been told to be followed in daily routine under the headings of Dinacharya for the maintenance of health⁹. Getting up in brahama muhurata (before sunrise), excretion (mala and mutra *tyaga*), cleaning the teeth and mouth, abhyanga (oil massage), vyayama (exercise), bath, aahara (diet), vihara (sleep etc.) are some of them. Many of these habits like drinking water, exercise, and healthy eating habits, sleep are now a days being popularly considered as the pillars of the beauty and fitness promotion.

Ritucharya anusaran

Seasonal changes also bring causation of many diseases. Abhayanga, Utsadana, Pralepa, Pradeha etc. have been quoted in accordance with the respective Ritu charya varnan in Samhitas¹⁰. For example in grishma ritu due to scorching heat, the body turns weak, perspiration is excessive which may lead to fluid loss, slow and impaired digestion.

Sadachara (Good behaviour or Achaar Rasayana)

It implies towards the pure thoughts and aims at mental cleansing, which also contributes to beauty¹¹. Good behavior promotes happiness in one's soul, hence reflecting inner aspect of beauty.

Social hygiene

Man is a social animal and therefore one has to work in society in a way which is conducive to better hygiene and sanitation of his community. Many infectious diseases can be prevented by following the principles of social hygiene.

Mahabhautika approach towards dermatological diseases

A pancha-mahabhautic thought process is very useful for diagnosis and treatment of all diseases in general and skin disease in particular. For example a vikriti due to kapha can be due to either prithvi (earth) or Aapyaa (water) or both. Similarly vata-vikriti can be due to either vayu (air) or aakash (sky) space or both. If one is able to specify the exact cause viz. specific mahabhoot, the treatment can be specific. And instead of using broad spectrum medicines, one can certainly use specific and sometimes even ek-dravya (single plant therapy¹²) to totally cure a disease

Panchabhautika Skin Anatomy

Various parts of skin	Bhautikatva
Romkoop, Swedvaha Srotas etc	Aakash Pradhana
Vatvahi Nadi (nerves) etc	Vayu Pradhana
Bhrajaka Pitta, Prabha, Kanti etc	Tej Pradhana
Sweat, Secretions, Rasadhathu etc	Aapya Pradhana
Subcutaneous fat, epidermis, Rom (hair) etc	Prithvi Pradhana

Types of skin according to mahabhoota

- Vayu pradhana skin shall essentially be ruksha/parusha (dry), aruna/shyava/karbura/vichitra (brownish-red/dull-black/grey/mixed-coloured), khara (rough).
- Aakash pradhana skin shall essentially be tanu (delicate/thin), sweat pores more in number and unobstructed. Skin will show colour of underlying vessels more clearly.
- Aapya pradhana skin shall essentially be snigdha (oily/moist), sheeta (cool), shalkshna (smooth). Varna (colour) will be on the fairer side but varying with desha etc.
- Teja pradhana skin shall essentially be ruksha (dry due to heat), raktavarna (red colour), ushna sparsh (warmer), sweaty, tanu (thin).
- Prithvi pradhana skin shall essentially be kathina (hard), sthoola (thick), keshayukta (hairy), Krishna/shyama (dark coloured), khara (rough) and ruksha (dry).

It is to be understood that these are the prakrita (inherent) qualities. For example, kharatva in vayu pradhana skin indicates rough skin but roughness is not so much as to show any pathological changes.

Prithvi

Tatra dravyaani

gurukharakathinamandasthiravishadasandrasthulagandhagunabaha hulaani parthivani tanyupchayasanghata gauravasthairyakrani¹³.

This implies that prithvi dominant vikriti shall show roughness (due to kharatva guna), hardness (due to kathina, sthira guna), thickenings (due to sthoola guna), scaly formations and dryness (due to ruksha guna), swellings with more of hardness, and colour and appearance of skin shall be more towards dully side and greyish.

Examples of the diseases: - Sidhma, Charmakhya¹⁴.

Chikitsa:- Aapya and tejas dravyas shall be highly useful in such diseases. Aapya dravyas shall reduce kathinta (hardness), sthira (stability). Also increase in Aapya shall cause easier flow of kleda which can be excreted out and thus help in cleansing the system leading to a better skin. Useful dravyas are sariva,

gokshur etc. Tejas dravyas shall help to breakdown the ghanatva (high density) of prithvi e.g. maricha, pippali etc.

Aapya

Dravasnidghasheetamandamidupichhilarasagunabahulanyapyan i taani upkledasnehabandhavishyandamardavaprahladakrani.¹³

This implies that Aapya dominant vikriti shall show oiliness (due to snigdhatva), cold (due to sheetatva), softness (due to mridutva), itching (due to vishyandatva). Swellings will be more oedematous due to rasa-guna bahulya. Colour and appearance of the skin shall be more towards white side and skin shall be over oily and shall show luster. Nature of the exudates shall be thin, free flowing and there shall be over exudation. This over exudation shall keep the skin moist thus preventing healing of wounds (scab formations). Exudate shall be sticky but the stickiness will be pichhila.

Another important aspect is that being drava, sara (spreading due to fluidity), rasa guna bahula, vishyandkar, the disease shall tend to spread over adjoining parts of skin faster and vishyandkar guna shall create an environment favourable for krimi (infection/worm infestation).

Examples of disease: Vicharchika, Dadru.¹⁴

Chikitsa: Prithvi, Teja, and Vayu pradhan dravyas should be used. Preparations of suvarnagairika and haridra are highly effective as well as varnya and disinfectant. Other useful medicine shall be gandhaka, which is good antiseptic and a teja pradhan dravya.

Teja

Ushnatikshnasukshmalaghuruksavishadarupagunabahulanyaag neyani taani dahpaakprabhaprakashvarnakrani.¹³

This implies that teja dominant vikriti shall show dryness (heat i.e ushnatva causes loss of Aapya leading to dryness) and hardening. Swellings undergo paka faster leading to faster maturity (paka-avastha) of vransthotha. Sensations of burning but of various qualities viz. osh, chosh, dhoomayana. Colour of the skin will first turn to red and if samprapti continues then it will become blue-black and then black at more chronic stage. Exudate is less in quantity and is warm to touch, yellow/red in colour.

Examples of disease: Udumbara, Rishyajivha, Visphota¹⁴.

Chikitsa: Prithvi, Aapya, Vayu pradhana dravyas as per guna involved can be useful. Prithvi pradhana dravyas are guru as against the laghu guna of teja. Aapya dravyas are sheeta, snigdha, manda guna bahula, which help to reduce burning sensations, reduce dryness and thus moisten the skin. For example Sariva (sheeta, Aapya), ghrita (snigdha), chandan (sheeta) etc.

Vayu

Laghusheetarukshakaravishadasukshmasparshagunabahulani vayavyani, taani raukshyaglanivicharvaishadyalaghavakrani.¹³

This implies that vayu dominant vikriti shall show sheetatva (coldness), rukshatva (dryness), kharatva (roughness), sphutita (broken skin). Swellings shall be usually unbearable (sparsh-asahatvam) on the affected areas. Pain will be toda (pricking pain), vyadh (piercing pain), bheda (cutting pain), spandan (pulsating pain) in nature. Colour and appearance of skin will be dry, dull, shyava (greyish) and aruna (brownish red). Exudate will be thin and less in amount. Another important aspect of such vikritis is that lesions caused are of irregular shape and intensity of signs and symptoms will be irregular.

Examples of the disease: Kapala, Pama, Shataru¹⁴.

Chikitsa: Parthiva, Aapya, tejas dravyas are to be used. Ushna, snigdha, guru, mridu gunabhuyishtha dravyas should be used like ghrita, vidari, rajani, manjishtha etc.

Aakash

Mridulaghusukshmalakshanashabdaganabahulanyaakashatmakani, taani mardavasaushiryalaghavakraani.¹³

Aakash means space. The main quality of aakash mahabhoota is to provide space for the other mahabhootas to function. All srotas are therefore mainly aakashiya. When these srotas have any pathological changes, the skin gets affected. For example, when swedvaha srotas in skin get occluded then the tendency to sweat is reduced. As Aakash cannot remain unoccupied, it shows qualities relating to vata. Increase in Aakashiya tatva leads to its being occupied by vitiated vata causing vata vikritis. Skin becomes thin and thus shows colour of underlying vessels and structures. Exudate is extremely thin in nature.

Chikitsa: Parthiva, Aapya dravyas are especially useful.

CONCLUSION

Skin diseases usually take a longer time to be specifically diagnosed and cured. Twacha (skin) is said to be the Adishthana (site) of sparshanendriya (organ of touch). This implies that twacha is related mainly by vayu-mahabhut. Bhautikatva of skin needs to be considered to decide the pradhan and anubandha doshas. Hence specific diagnosis and line of treatment can be made easier using the panchbhautic approach. The Varna (complexion), Bala (energy), Keshha (quality of hair) etc. features are inherited by virtue of one's prakriti i.e the features bestowed to human body at the time of birth. According to Ayurvediya concept, one's inherited prakriti cannot be changed, hence all the therapeutic efforts in Ayurveda are aimed at keeping the varna in the prakrita state. The ongoing concept of beauty varies from that told in Ayurveda in the respect that while the former lays stress on alteration of one's complexion or quality of hair etc, the latter promotes beauty by keeping all the inherited features of human body in prakrita (healthy) state.

"We are what we eat" but it's better to say "we are what we digest". So, Beautification begins with proper nutrition, efficient digestion and assimilation of nutrients by the body, and regular elimination. Therefore the concept of beauty in Ayurveda doesn't only consider the external appearance of a person, but also includes life style and therapeutic procedures for the promotion of one's overall health thereby granting beauty to the body.

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