

A REVIEW OF CHARAKOKTA 'VARNYA' MAHAKASHAYA - A NATURAL AND SAFE REMEDY FOR FAIRER SKIN

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ABSTRACT

Ayurvedic cosmeceuticals has evidences of its usage since time immortal. It is now gaining increasing importance in the beautification among the humans, owing to its tremendous potential with no side effects. In last few decades there has been exponential rise in use of cosmetics not only among females but also in male population, as everyone wants to look good and presentive. The ancient classical texts of Ayurveda are having several references of numerous medicinal plants and formulations for enhancing skin texture and complexion. This review made a humble effort to highlight the 'Varnya' Mahakashaya from Charak samhita as a natural and safe remedy for skin lightening.

KEYWORDS: Ayurvedic cosmeceuticals, Varnya Mahakashaya, skin

lightening.

INTRODUCTION

Beauty is the thing which everyone desires. In present competitive era everyone wants to be at the topmost position for which distinct personality plays a major role of ladder. A person with beautiful face and distinct personality is favoured more or less by the society. It cannot be totally denied that fairer complexion plays a major role in enhancing beauty and personality of a person. When it comes to fairness products, there are lot of expensive products available in the market. These products usually contain harmful chemicals. Most of them seems to prove less beneficial rather few of them shows cytotoxic effect on prolonged

use. If you are going to use them, you can get short term results, harming the skin in long run. In such conditions, herbs prove to be a better option with no side effects. Ayurveda has described many herbs which are having the potential of enhancing the complexion (varna) of a person and are called as skin lightening agents (*varnya dravyas*). Acharya Charak has described different 'varnas' as prakrut and vaikrut varnas^[1] among which he has explained both *avdata* and *shama* varnas as prakrut varnas. However in present era everyone is found to be fond of *avdata* varna i.e., fairer complexion and here comes the need for *varnya* dravyas.

AIM

To focus on the Charakokta '*Varnya*' Mahakashya as a natural and safe remedy for getting fairer skin.

To provide scope for further study in this context.

Varnya Mahakashaya

Among his 50 different Mahakashaya with 10 dravyas in each Mahakashaya, Acharya Charak has given one Mahakashaya as '*Varnya*' Mahakashaya.

Following are the 10 dravyas of '*Varnya*' Mahakashaya^[2]

1. Chandan^[a]

Latin name (Ln.) - *Santalum album* Linn.

Family (F.) - *Santalaceae*

Rasa - Tikta, Katu

Vipak - Katu

Veerya - Sheeta

2. Tunga (Punnaga)^{[b],[2,i]}

Ln. - *Callophyllum inophyllum* Linn.

F. - *Guttiferae*

Rasa - Madhur, Kashaya

Vipak - Madhur

Veerya - Sheeta

3. Padmaka^[c]

Ln. - *Prunus puddum* Roxb. ex. Wall

F. - Rosaceae

Rasa - Kashaya, Tikta

Vipak - Katu

Veerya - Sheeta

4. Ushir^[d]

Ln. - *Vetiveria zizandoides* (Linn) Nash.

F. - Gramineae

Rasa - Tikta, Madhur

Vipak - Katu

Veerya - Sheeta

5. Madhuk^[e]

Ln. - *Glycerrhiza glabra* Linn.

F. - Leguminosae

Rasa - Madhur

Vipak - Madhur

Veerya - Sheeta

6. Manjishtha^[f]

Ln. - *Rubia cordifolia* Linn.

F. - Rubiaceae

Rasa - Tikta, Kashaya, Madhur

Vipak - Katu

Veerya - Ushna

7. Sariva^[g]

Ln. - *Hemidesmus indicus* R. Br.

F. - Asclepiadaceae

Rasa - Madhur, Tikta

Vipak - Madhur

Veepak - Sheeta

8. Payasya^[h]

Ln. - *Ipomoea digitata* Linn.

F. - Convolvulaceae

Rasa - Madhur

Vipak - Madhur

Veerya - Sheeta

9. Sita (Shweta doorva)^{[i],[2,ii]}

Ln. - Cynodon dactylon (Linn.) Rers

F.- Gramineae

Rasa - Kashaya, Tikta, Madhur

Vipak - Katu

Veerya – Sheeta

10. Lata (Shama doorva)^{[i],[2,iii]}

Ln. - Cynodon barberi (Linn.) Rers

F. - Gramineae

Rasa - Kashaya, Tikta, Madhur

Vipak - Katu

Veerya - Sheeta

It is seen that most of the above *dravyas* which Acharya Charak has included in his '*Varnya*' Mahakashaya are having Kashya, Tikta and Madhur rasas. Madhur rasa is said to have *varnya* property (*varnyakrut*).^[3] whereas Kashaya rasa is said as '*aati twak prasadak*'.^[4] Most of these drugs are having sheeta veerya. Sheeta veerya is said to have *prasadan* karma.^[5]

DISCUSSION

There are many other herbal drugs which are observed in practice today for skin lightening (like *haridra*, *lodhra*, *kumari*, *kumkum* and many others) but are not included in '*Varnya*' Mahakashaya of Acharya Charak. Moreover few drugs mentioned above which are often used in practice as skin lightening agents are mostly used in the form of topical application (lepa) whereas Acharya Charak has given the '*Varnya*' Mahakashaya as the name suggests, is in the form of decoction (kashaya/kwatha). So here by using '*Varnya*' Mahakashaya of Acharya Charak we can also see for the difference of result, in enhancing the skin complexion, among the other herbal drugs in the form of lepa and the *varnya* dravyas of Charkokta Mahakashaya in the form of kwatha taken internally.

CONCLUSION

It is very clear from the above description that there are large number of herbs which can be used as natural skin lightening agent. These natural cosmetics are without any synthetic chemical. For this reason, it will be good for us to explore the '*Varnya*' Mahakashaya of Charakacharya to get a fairer skin in natural and safe way. The use of bioactive ingredients influences the biological functions of skin, providing necessary nutrients for healthy, glowing and fairer skin. Description of the above topic is beyond the reach of any single review, hence further research, clinical trials and review work is welcomed in this particular area.

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