**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Skin disorders are multi-faceted and may have their origin in allergy, autoimmunity, and hereditary. Ayurveda describes skin disorders under the umbrella of *Kushtha*, a disease characterized by the derangement of the skin. When we take into account the prevalence of different diseases, over 20% of all people seeking medical attention each year are suffering from skin disorders globally. *Kushtha* is categorized as *Maha Kushtha* and *Kshudra Kushtha* by all *Acharayas* depending on the severity of the symptoms and its prognosis. Many different etiological factors and disease management strategies are described in the Ayurvedic system of medicine.

**Aim:** The aim of the study is to assess the scope of Ayurveda in the management of skin diseases.

**Materials and Methods:** Different classical Ayurvedic texts, websites, journals, and research articles were referred in the above context.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** *Kushtha* arises from the vitiation of *Tridosha* and *Twak*, *Mamsa*, and *Lasika*. Thus, the management of *Kushtha* is based on the involvement of *Dosha* and *Dushya*. Although some treatment modalities are condition specific, the fundamental principle of treatment is consistent with all forms of *Kushtha*. *Acharaya* has emphasized the significance of *Shodhana* (detoxification) therapy to eliminate the morbid *Dosha* from the body and *Rakamokshana* to expel *Dushta Rakta* which is the key *Dushya* in the pathology of *Kushtha*. The *Shamana* (palliative) therapy comprises both internal and external medications, namely *Rasa Aushadhi*, *Churna*, *Kwath*, *Asav*, *Aristha*, *Guggulu*, *Ghrita*, and *Malhara*, *Tail*, *Lepa*. Dietary management, *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Rasayana* therapy, and *Sadritta* are given immense importance in Ayurveda to preserve good health and prevention of diseases. This wholesome viewpoint of detoxification, palliative care, and lifestyle modification needs to be analyzed to develop guidelines for the management of skin diseases based on Ayurveda principles.

**ARTICLE INFO**

*Article history:*
- Received on: 11-03-2024
- Accepted on: 09-04-2024
- Published on: 30-04-2024

**Key words:** *Kushtha*, *Raktamokshana*, *Shamana*, *Shodhana*

---

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Skin is the biggest organ in the human body covering the exterior of the body. It serves as the first line of defense as well. The skin is considered one of the important sensory organs in Ayurveda. When we take into account the prevalence of different diseases, we find that every year in the world, about 20% of all people seeking medical guidance have skin disorders, including cosmetic issues.[1] Skin diseases affect people of all ages, from newborns to the elderly, and can harm individuals in various ways, often leading to societal stigma.

Ayurveda has unique concepts for diagnosing and treating a variety of skin diseases. Skin diseases are referred to as *Kushtha* in Ayurveda which means unsightly skin; the involvement of all three *Dosha* (humor) and four *Dushya* (pathological elements) make *Kushtha* a complex disease to treat. The specific *Nidana* (etiological component) aggravates the *Tridosha*, which in turn vitiates *Tvaka* (skin), *Mamsa* (muscle), *Rakta* (blood), and *Lasika* (lymph). These seven elements are the primary pathogenic component of *Kushtha*.[2]

The degree and severity of the vitiation of these sevenfold pathogenic substances precipitate in the distinct presentation of *Kushtha*. Understanding the involvement of dominant *Dosha* and vitiated *Dushya* is crucial for differential diagnosis among various types of *Kushtha*. This can easily be understood by the manifestation of signs and symptoms of the various types of *Kushtha*. This manifestation of...
specific signs and symptoms and detailed history-taking facilitates the understanding of Dosha involvement and the etiology of the disease. The fundamental therapeutic approach in Ayurveda is Nidana Parivarjana, i.e., (avoidance of causative factors) and alleviation of vitiated Dosha. This involves Shodhana (detoxification) and Shamana (palliative) Chikitsa along with Ahara (Diet) and Vihara (Lifestyle) modification. The aim of treatment in Ayurveda is not only symptomatic relief but also the complete remission of disease without any recurrence. This article seeks to explore the various Ayurvedic therapy approaches for different skin disorders.

1.1. Aim
The aim of the study is to assess the scope of Ayurveda in the management of Kushtha (skin diseases).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS
Various Ayurvedic classic texts have been used for this study as primary source materials, namely Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Astanga Hridaya, Astanga Samgrah, Sarngadhara Samhita, Bhava Prakasha, Nighantu, and various other texts. Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India, several review and research publications, and websites have also been referenced.

3. DISCUSSION
When treating skin disorders from an Ayurvedic perspective, it is important to examine Prakriti of each patient as well as their sign and symptoms. The diagnosis and management of the skin condition are based on the detailed history of the patient’s Doshika composition, diet and lifestyle choices, pulse, and disease manifestations. Kushtha arises from the vitiation of Tridosha and Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, and Lasika. Thus, the management for each type of Kushtha is determined by the severity of vitiation of involved Dosha and Dushya. The restoration of Doshika equilibrium is the primary goal of Ayurvedic treatment. A balanced diet and lifestyle that includes regular exercise, food, herbs, meditation, and daily routines are all auxiliary parts of management. While certain modalities are condition specific, fundamental principles for the management of Kushtha are universal throughout the various forms.

The incidence of skin diseases increasing due to the following factors:

- An inadequate diet and daily routine; eating incompatible and unhealthy foods; eating meals before the previous meal requires time to digest; consuming milk with meat and fish (aquatic animals); having a bath immediately after being in the sun or after physical exertion etc.
- Misuse and overuse of chemicals, soap, shampoo, deodorant, and other cosmetic products.
- Unhygienic practices.
- Excessive and unnecessary usage of steroids and antibiotics.

3.1. Fundamental Principles for the Management of Skin Diseases through Ayurveda

- Nidana Parivarjana (avoidance of causative factors).
- Shamana (Internal Medication)
- Shodhana (Purification)
- Local application
- Lifestyle modifications: Dietary management, Dincharya, Rutucharya, Rasayana therapy, and Sadvritta

3.1.1. Nidana Parivarjana: (Avoidance of causative factors)

- Avoid eating unwholesome and incompatible foods, such as hot and salty foods, milk with meats, fish (aquatic animals), and meals taken before the previous meal has had time to digest.
- Avoid taking a bath right away after being in the sun or after exercising.
- Avoid unnecessary and excessive use of antibiotics and steroids.
- Avoid using chemicals, cosmetics, soap, shampoo, deodorants, and other items excessively or improperly.
- Certain skin diseases are caused by emotional conflicts and psychogenic stress. In the treatment of such conditions, various yogic practices should be used to calm the patient’s sentiments.

3.1.2. Shamana Therapy: (Internal medication)

The line of treatment involves Agnideepana, Krimihara, Doshashamak, and Rakta Prasadena medications. The major medications used in the management of Kushtha and their mode of action are discussed henceforth.

3.1.2.1. Rasa Kalpa

- Aroggyavardhini Vati: (Kutaki, Shuddha Parada, Shuddha Gandhaka, Loha Bhasma, Abhraka Bhasma, Tamra Bhasma, Triphala, Shilajatu, Guggul, Chitrakmoolia)[7]
- The line of treatment involves Ayurveda in the Management of Kushtha and their mode of action are discussed henceforth.

- Gandhaka Rasayana: (Gandhaka, Sarkara)[7]
- Gandhaka Rasayana Vati is Agnideepaka, Pachana, Pathyakara, Hrudya, Medonashaka, Malashudhikara. It is said that Kushtha occurs due to Grahani and Pakwashaya Dushhi and Aroggyavardhini normalize their function by doing Samprapati Bhang hence useful in all 18 types of Kushtha. It is specifically used in Vata and Vata-kaphaja Kushtha. [8] Aroggyavardhini Vati helps to remove Ama (toxins) from the body.[5] It also has an antipruritic nature that relieves the itching sensation.[6]

- Gandhaka Rasayana: (Gandhaka, Sarkara)[7]
- Gandhaka Rasayana Vati is Agnideepaka, Pachana, Pathyakara, Hrudya, Medonashaka, Malashudhikara, Rasayana, and Vishaghna. Rakta and Twacha are the site of action of Gandhaka Rasayana. It helps to detoxify the vitiated Rakta Dhatu by eliminating its Malinata and help to transform the saturated Vrik Dravya of body.[8]

- Krimikuthara Rasa: (Karpura, Kutaja, Trayaman, Ajamoda, Vidanga, Hingula Bhasma, Vatsanabha, Palasha Beeg)[9]
- Due to its Krimighna characteristic (de-worming effect), Krimikuthara Rasa helps in the body’s detoxification. It clears the airways, prevents germs from growing, shields the biological membrane from oxidative stress, and activates cell-mediated immune processes.[10]

- Rasamaniyaka: (Shuddha Hartala)[9]
- It acts as Rakshodhaka (~blood purifier), thus providing relief for skin disorders. It removes excess toxins from the body and relieves pain, inflammation, and swelling. Similarly, the action of antiseptic, antifungal, and antioxidant helps to treat skin disorders.[11]

3.1.2.2. Guggulu Kalpa

- Kaishore Guggulu: Kaishore Guggulu is mainly used for anti-inflammatory, antiallergic, antibacterial, and blood purifying properties.[12]

- Triphala Guggulu: Triphala Guggulu acts as Shothahara and Shulahara, Triphala has antiviral property.[13]

- Amritadi Guggulu: Amritadi Guggulu is mentioned specifically in Kushtha and acts as Shothahara and Trnanahara, it is constituent Guduchi lowers the burning sensation and has antiviral properties.[14]
3.1.2.3. Kashyak Kalpa
- **Guduchyadi Kwath**: Guduchyadi Kwath has anti-microbial, anti-allergic, anti-inflammatory, and antileptotic actions. It mostly affects ailments of the Pitta and Kapha Doshas.[15]
- **Patoladi Kwath**: It possesses Tikta Rasa Dravyas, which balance the vitiated Pitta and Kapha Dosha and help in Raktadhatu Prasiddha. It has Kashthaghna, Jwaraghna, and Vishghna properties. It calms itching, discoloration, and burning sensations of various kinds of skin disorders. Moreover, it can support liver detoxification. The liver is an essential organ for Raktadhatu and proper functioning. It has Amapachana and Agni vardhana properties, which aid in digestion and arouse appetite.
- **Mahamanjishthadi Kwath**: It serves as a Raktashodhaka, Kaphaghna, and Kushtha Nashaka.[17]

3.1.2.4. Asav Arishta
- **Khadirarishtha**: Khadira is a primary component. The properties of Khadiras include Kashthaghna, Kandughna, Kashthaghna, Krimighna, Raktashodhaka, and Vranaropaka. It has antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant qualities.[18]
- **Savitrdvasava**: This formulation primarily consists of Tikta, Kashaya (~astringent) Rasa, Sheeta Virya, and Katu vipaka, which soothe Pitta, Rakta (because of Sheeta virya), and Kapha (because of Katu vipaka). Its Raktashodhaka, Raktraprasadaka, and Pidaka Neshaka actions are well established.[19] It helps cure wounds and has antibacterial, antioxidant, antithrombotic, anti-inflammatory, and anti-ulcerogenic properties.
- **Chandanasaiva**: Chandanasava pacifies Pitta Dosha and acts as Raktaprasadaka and Agnideepaka.[20]

3.1.2.5. Ghrita
**Panchaktha Ghrita**: Its properties include Deepana, Pachana, Amapachana, Strotoshodhaka, Raktraprasadana, Raktashodhaka, Kandughna, Kashthaghna, and Varnya.[21]

The ingredients of Panchaktha Ghrita have Katu, Tikta, Kashaya, and Madhura Rasa, Laghu, Raksha, Sheeta, and Snigdha Guana along with Usna Virya, which helps to balance Vata, Pitta, and Kapha Doshas. The pacification of Vata Doshha results in a decrease in dryness and roughness. Pacification of Kapha Doshha helps to subside itching, demarcate and thickness plaque, and plaque adherence. Furthermore, pacification of Pitta Doshha helps in pinpoint bleeding and a reduction in burning sensation.

3.1.2.6. Churna
- **Nimba**: Nimba is used in Kapha Pitta Vikara because of its Sheeta Virya hence utilized for Dahaprasamana and as it is Tikta Kashaya Rasa Dravya, it is Kashthaghna. It is Krimighna and Rasayana.[22]
- **Avipattikar Churna**: The qualities of Avipattikar Churna include Pachana, Deepan, and Mitru Virechana (mild laxative). It eliminates aggravating Doshas, rectifies Agnimandyu, and therefore, eliminates Srotordodha.[22]
- **Vidanga**: Vidanga has the properties of Deepana, Pachana, Raktrashodhaka, and Rasayana. It acts as Krimighna by its Prabhava. Vidanga was described by Charaka in Kashthaghna Mahakashaya. Vidanga possesses Usna Virya and therefore works as a good Kapha Vataa Shamatka.[24]
- **Manjishtha**: The properties of Manjishtha described in Ayurveda as blood purifier, vermicide, and wound healer. It helps to manage itching and burning sensation in the skin. Manjishtha purifies blood, acts as Deepana, Pachana, and has a Kashthaghna effect on the skin. Furthermore, it is Raktashodhak (blood purifier) that raises Raktidhatuvagni, which helps to generate pure blood and acts upon Bhrjak and Ranjak Pitta. Rakta Dhatu is then circulated throughout the body by Vyan Vayu. In addition, it strengthens Oja, which is reflected in Twachka.[25,26]
- **Guduchi Satva**: Guduchi Satva has Usna, Tikta, Tridoshaghna, Rasayana, Deepana, Tikta Rasa Dravya. It lowers Daha, Kandu, and discoloration.[27]
- **Amalaki**: Amalaki is having Pittaghna, Kledaghna, Rasayana, Agnipanana and Amapachhana properties, and Tridosahar. It is Kashthaghna.[28]

These drugs remove Kleda and Doshas from Rasa, Rakta, and Meda. It eliminates both Dushtha Kapha and Pitta, which causes Raktraprasadana. Tikta Rasa eliminates the Gara Visha which are present in Rakta. Through blood purification and Kleda absorption from Rakta, it enhances complexion.

3.1.3. Shodhana (Purification)
Shodhana is the most effective treatment for expelling the vitiated Doshha and controlling the accumulation of toxins in the body. The significance of Shodhana therapy has been underlined by all Acharyas in the management of Kushtha. Shodhana therapy expel out the morbid Doshha from the body. Shodhana removes all toxins from the body at the cellular level as a comprehensive detoxification and cleaning treatment. Repeated Shodhana karma has been recommended for patients with skin disorders at repeated intervals.

Acharya Sushruta recommended that the Vyama (therapeutic emesis) should be given once every fortnight; Virechana (therapeutic purgation) once a month; Raktamoksha (blood-letting) should done twice a year and Nasya (Nasal installation) once in 3 days in a chronic case of Kushtha considering the severity of vitiation of involved Doshha-Dushha.[29]

The Vyama and Virechana procedures involve the administration of Deepana-Pachana medications to aggravate the digestive fire. This is followed by Abhyantar Sneepana with Panchaktha Ghrita, Mahatiktghna Ghrita, etc. for 3, 5, or 7 days depending on the manifestation of Samayk Snigdha Lakshana. This is followed by the rest period of 1–3 days along with Abhyanga-Swedana to bring all the vitiated Doshha into the Koshtha. The Vyama and Virechana eliminate these vitiated Doshha from the Koshtha.

Acharya Charaka advocated the internal administration of Ghrita in patients with Vita-dominated Kushtha, Vyama therapy in Kapha-dominated Kushtha, and Virechana therapy in Pitta-dominated Kushtha in the initial phase of treatment for optimum outcomes.[30]

The majority of Kushtha are described as Raktabladoshajaya Vyadi. Pitta Doshha is the Mala of Rakta. Rakta and Pitta share an Apnavabha Sambandha. When aggravated Pitta Doshha is eliminated from the body through Shodhana, it pacifies the Rakta ultimately alleviating Raktabladoshajaya Vikara such as Kushtha. Therefore, Virechana is overall a good measure for Kushtha. While discolored, dry skin patches, increased sensitivity, etc. are the cardinal symptoms of skin diseases, the most frustrating symptoms for patients are Kandu (itching) and Daha (burning). While Kandu indicates the involvement of Kapha, Rakta, and Pitta Dusyha. Nitya Virechana (Repeated therapeutic purgation) has the property of Pitta Shodhaka (detoxification of Pitta) and Rakta Rakta Prasadana (Pacification of Rakta Rakta), which may be the reason for reduced Kandu[31] and Daha.

Raktamokshana is one of the important procedures among Panchkarma (Penta-bio purificatory) procedures as per Sushruta.[32]
It is an important non-pharmacological intervention through which vitiated Rakta Dosh, along with Pitta, is eliminated through the body by using different techniques such as Sira Vedha (Venous puncture), Prachhana (Incision), Jalauka Avacharana (licech therapy), Shringa Avacharana (horn application), Alabu Avacharana (cupping therapy). Shringa Avacharana is used in the case of Vata Dushka Rakta; Jalauka Avacharana for Pitta Dushka Rakta and Alabu Avacharana is used for Kapha Dushha Rakta.[33]

In the post-Shodhana and Raktamokshana phase, Ghritapana (internal administration of Ghee namely) is essential to prevent Vata Prakopa.

3.1.4. Local application
- Marichyadi Taila: Most of the drugs of Marichyadi Taila are Katu, Tikta, and Kashaya Rasa, which acts as Kapha Shamaka, which decreases Kandu. Laghu, Snigdha Guna decreases scaling. Ushna Viroya raises Swedana by Vata Kapha Nashak Dravya, having immunomodulator, Raktashodhaka, and Kushtha Kandu Nashak characteristics.[34]
- Karanj Taila: It is Kruminashaka (antibacterial/antifungal), Kandughna (antipruritic), Vranashodhaka (wound cleaning), and Vranaropaka (wound healing).[35]
- Gandhaka Malahara: It is Kapavatahara hence used to decrease itching and dryness in the initial stages.[36]
- Shatadhoula Ghrita: It possesses the qualities of Sukshma, Madhur Rasa, Sheet Veerya, Madhur Vipaka, and Dahashamaka. All of the aforementioned Pitta Shaman qualities are present in Shatadhoula Ghrita. It functions as a Vranaropaka (wound healing).

3.1.5. Lifestyle modifications
3.1.5.1. Dietary management
As per Ayurveda, a healthy human being requires perfect digestion and assimilation of food and efficient evaluation of wastes. Together they are responsible for resulting healthy skin.
- One should consume enough seasonal fruits and green veggies.
- Drinking enough water.
- Tikta Rasa veggies and Laghu Ahar need to be consumed.
- Diet should be rich in nutrients, antioxidants, and easily digestible foods.

3.1.5.2. Dinacharya
Dinacharya, i.e., “practice of daily routine” has been described as the correct sequence of routine one should follow to get a healthy long life. To maintain a healthy physique and youthful appearance for a long period of time, one should follow these procedures into their routine so it can be benefited in the beauty of hair, skin, eyes, etc.

It is recommended to awaken during Brahma Muhurta, and consuming water early in the day aids in the removal of toxic substances, natural urges should not be suppressed.
- Abhyanga: The body gets firm, attractive, with smooth skin, and less prone to skin disorders.
- Shiro Abhyanga, Pada Abhyanga: Smoothens the skin of the head, foot, and sole, preventing it from scaling due to dryness.
- Snana, Udvartan: Clean the skin from foul smell, dirt, etc.
- Nasya: Expel out vitiated Dosha from Shira.

In addition, it is mentioned that using an umbrella may protect against rain, wind, sun, and dust as well as mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

3.1.5.3. Ritucharya
Ritu, or the season, is characterized by different characteristics that show various effects on the environment and body. The ability to adapt is essential for survival. People often lack knowledge of what kinds of food, clothes, and other guidelines are appropriate for a given season, which affects homeostasis and leads to a variety of skin diseases. Knowledge of Ritucharya is essential for detoxifying the body according to the aggravation of Dosha in different Ritu.
- In summer – Pitta is worse by the hot weather; thus, a cool, liquid, and sweet diet is recommended. Diets that are very hot, spicy, sour, or salty should be avoided. Consuming rice, coconut water, ghee, milk, and sugar is recommended.
- In spring – A diet that is hot, bitter, and astrigent is recommended; salty, sour, and sweet foods should be avoided. Consumption of wheat, barley, honey, and mango is advised.
- In Rainy season – Vata becomes aggravated therefore sweet, sour, salty food is recommended. Food should be warm, dry, and easily digestible.
- In winter – Vata becomes aggravated so Vata Shamak and Pitta Vardhak diet is recommended, hot, sweet, sour, salty food, milk is advised.
- In autumn – Pitta aggravates so ghee, bitter, sweet diet is advised.

3.1.5.4. Rasayana therapy
Rasayana is defined as a therapeutic measure that promotes longevity, delays aging, improves physical and mental wellness, strengthens memory, and builds resistance and immunity against diseases.

Certain skin diseases are caused by psychogenic stresses and emotional issues. Patients with chronic skin disorders ought to take Medhya Rasayana (Ashwagandha, Bramhi, Guduchi, etc.); these have nootropic effects that enhance the intelligence and functions of the brain. Disease-specific Rasayana (anti-oxidant and immune-modulator) should be provided.

3.1.5.5. Sadvritta
Ayurveda provides guidelines for leading a healthy life and mind. These principles are applicable at anywhere and anytime such as always speaking truth, do not harm anyone, having patience, avoiding disruption in everyday routines, etc. We will experience a variety of problems if we disobey or break these rules.

4. CONCLUSION
Dinacharya, Ritucharya, and Sadvritta play very vital role in the prevention and management of diseases. Due to Sedentary lifestyle and unwholesome dietary habits, the incidence of skin diseases are very high. Ayurveda has great potential to combat with these problems in holistic way. It offers a plethora of modalities such as Dietary management, Shamana therapy, and Shodhana therapy for treating skin diseases.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Nil.

6. AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTIONS
All the authors contributed equally to the design and execution of the article.

7. FUNDING
Nil.

8. ETHICAL APPROVALS
The study is not required ethical permission as it is a review study.
9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

10. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript, and all data are available for only review purposes from the principal investigators.

11. PUBLISHERS NOTE

This journal remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published institutional affiliations.

REFERENCES