A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO BEAUTY CARE IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW

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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 complexion), sara (structural predominance), pramana (measurement) and dirghayu lakshana (symptoms of long life). So the present article aims to derive the possible ways of Saundarya prasada (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, Dukhayu. Among these Sukhayu is most important. Sukhayu 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). Most of these practices mentioned in Ayurvediya texts are dependent on the seasonal variations (Ritus) and are found subtly interwoven with daily routine practices (Dinacharya).

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 attractiveness. 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 preperations. Twacha (skin) being the seat of sparshanandriya and being inherited with the qualities like varna (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) Sadachara anusarana
3) Ritucharya anusarana
4) Social hygiene

Swasthavritta anusarana

Various procedures have to be followed in daily routine under the headings of Dinacharya for the maintenance of health. Getting up in brahma mahurata (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 anusarana

Seasonal changes also bring causation of many diseases. Abhayanga, Utsadana, Praleha, Pradeha etc. have been quoted in accordance with the respective Ritu charya varnan in Samhitas. 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 beauty. 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 prithivi (earth) or Aapya (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 therapy) to totally cure a disease.

Panchabhautika Skin Anatomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Various parts of skin</th>
<th>Bhautikatva</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romkopko, Swedvaha Srotas etc</td>
<td>Aakash Pradhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaivah Nadi (nerves) etc</td>
<td>Vayu Pradhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhrajaka Pitta, Prabha, Kanti etc</td>
<td>Tej Pradhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweat, Secretions, Rasadhana etc</td>
<td>Aapya Pradhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subcutaneous fat, epidermis, Rom (hair) etc</td>
<td>Prithivi Pradhana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of skin according to mahabhootha

- 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), shalshana (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), usha sparsh (warmer), sweaty, tanu (thin).
- Prithvi pradhana skin shall essentially be kathina (hard), sthoolo (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 pradana skin indicates rough skin but roughness is not so much as to show any pathological changes.

Prithvi

Tatra dravyaani
gurukarachakthihamandasthiravishadasantrasthulagandhhunaha
hulaani parthihami tanyupchayasaanghata gauravasthirayakra
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This implies that prithvi dominant vikriti shall show roughness (due to kharatva guna), hardness (due to kathina, sthira guna), thickening (due to sthoola guna), excessive formation of thickness due to Prithvi, and swelling with more of hardness, and colour and appearance of skin shall be more towards sly detail and greyish.

Examples of the: - Sidhma, Charmakhya14
Chikitsa:- Aapya and tejas dravyas shall be highly useful in such diseases. Aapya dravyas shall reduce kathinta (hardness), sthiro (stability). Also increase in Aapya shall cause easier flow of kleda which can be excreted out and thus help in cleansing the body leading to a better skin. Useful dravyas are sariva, gokshur etc. Tejas dravyas shall help to breakdown the ghanatva (high density) of prithivi e.g. maricha, pippali etc.

Aapya

Dravasnidhasheetamandamridipichhilarasagunabahulanyapyan
itaani upkledasnechandhavishayandamardavpralhadakrami.13
This implies that Aapya dominant vikriti shall show oiliness (due to snigdhatva), cold (due to sheetatva), softness (due to mrudutva), itching (due to visheyatva). 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, visheyandkar, the disease shall tend to spread over adjoining parts of skin faster and visheyandkar 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 suvarnaagirika 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

Ushnatikshnasukshmalaghurukhavishhadarapagunabahulanyaa
eyani taani dhaaapaprakhapraavasvakrani.13
This implies that teja dominant vikriti shall show dryness (heat i.e ushntavata causes loss of Aapya leading to dryness) and hardening. Swellings undergo paka faster leading to faster maturity (paka-avastha) of vranashtta. 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 pradha dravyas as per guna involved can be useful. Prithvi pradana dravyas are gurus 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), ghrta (snigdha), chandan (sheeta) etc.

Vayu

Laghushheerakshhakharishhadasukshmasparshagunabahunayam
vayaayani, taani raukshyaglanivichharvishadyaglabhavakra
14
This implies that vayu dominant vikriti shall show sheetatva (coldness), rukshatva (dryness), kharatva (roughness), sputhitva (broken skin). Swellings shall be usually unbearable (sarasashvatvam) 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, shyva (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, Shatatma.14
Chikitsa: Parthiva, Aapya, tejas dravyas are to be used. Ushna, snigdha, guru, madhunabuyishtha dravyas should be used like ghrta, vidari, rajani, manjishtha etc.
CONCLUSION

Skin diseases usually take a longer time to be specifically diagnosed and cured. Twacha (skin) is said to be the Adishthana (site) of sparshendriya (organ of touch). This implies that twacha is related mainly by vayu-mahabhuta. Bhaautikatva 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 panchbhuatic approach. The Varna (complexion), Bala (energy), Kesha (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 Ayurvediyya concept, one’s inherited prakriti cannot be changed, hence all the therapeutic efforts in Ayurveda are aimed at keeping the varna in the prakriti 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 prakriti (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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