

Ayurvedic Mukhlepa (Mukhalepa): A Review of Classical Concepts and Therapeutic

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Abstract

Mukhlepa (Mukhalepa) is an important external therapeutic and cosmetic procedure described in Ayurveda for maintaining facial health and treating various skin disorders. The therapy involves the application of herbal pastes on the face to enhance complexion, improve skin texture, delay aging, and manage dermatological conditions. Classical Ayurvedic texts such as Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya have described various formulations and indications of Mukhlepa. The procedure acts by balancing the Doshas, nourishing the skin, promoting circulation, and supporting tissue regeneration. In the contemporary era, where there is growing interest in natural and herbal skincare, Mukhlepa offers a holistic and sustainable approach to facial health. This review explores the concept, classification, therapeutic benefits, indications, and modern relevance of Mukhlepa.

Keywords: Mukhlepa, Mukhalepa, Ayurveda, Varnya, Skin Care, Saundarya Chikitsa, Facial Therapy

Introduction

The skin is considered a reflection of internal health in Ayurveda. Maintenance of healthy skin requires proper balance of Doshas, efficient digestion (Agni), and adequate nourishment of body tissues (Dhatu). Among the numerous external therapies described in Ayurveda, Mukhlepa holds a special place in promoting facial beauty and treating skin diseases. The term Mukhlepa is derived from the Sanskrit words Mukha (face) and Lepa (application of paste). It refers to the application of medicinal herbal formulations on the face for therapeutic and cosmetic purposes. Ayurvedic scholars regarded Mukhlepa as an effective measure for preserving youthfulness, improving complexion, and preventing premature aging.

Historical Background

Descriptions of facial applications are found in classical Ayurvedic literature. Various herbal formulations have been prescribed for improving complexion (Varna), treating discoloration (Vyanga), acne (Yuvanapidika), and enhancing skin health. Ayurvedic texts emphasize that external applications should be selected according to the individual's constitution, Dosha predominance, season, and disease condition. Concept of Mukhlepa According to Ayurveda, skin disorders often arise from the vitiation of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha Doshas. These imbalances affect the skin and blood tissue (Rakta Dhatu), leading to various Manifestations such as acne, pigmentation, dryness, inflammation, and wrinkles.

Mukhlepa serves several functions:

- Pacification of aggravated Doshas
- Nourishment of facial tissues
- Improvement of complexion
- Elimination of impurities
- Promotion of local circulation
- Prevention of premature aging

The medicinal substances used in Mukhlepa penetrate the superficial layers of the skin and Exert local therapeutic effects.

Classification of Mukhlepa

Classical Ayurvedic texts classify Mukhlepa into three major categories:

1. Doshaghna Mukhlepa

These formulations are used to alleviate Dosha-related skin disorders. The ingredients are Selected according to the predominant Dosha involved.

2. Vishaghna Mukhlepa

These preparations are indicated in conditions resulting from toxins, insect bites, environmental Irritants, and poisonous influences affecting the skin.

3. Varnya Mukhlepa

Varnya formulations are designed to improve complexion, enhance skin texture, and maintain Facial beauty.

Common Ingredients Used in Mukhlepa

Several herbs and natural substances are traditionally used:

Herb| Botanical Name| Therapeutic Action

Haridra| *Curcuma longa*| Anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial

Chandana| *Santalum album*| Cooling, complexion enhancing

Lodhra| *Symplocos racemosa*| Skin tightening, anti-inflammatory

Manjistha| *Rubia cordifolia*| Blood purifier, complexion enhance

Yashtimadhu| *Glycyrrhiza glabra*| Rejuvenative, soothing

Nimba| *Azadirachta indica*| Antimicrobial, detoxifying

Kumari| *Aloe vera*| Moisturizing, wound healing

Procedure of Mukhlepa

The standard procedure includes:

Purva Karma (Pre-procedure)

- Examination of skin condition
- Cleansing of the face
- Selection of appropriate herbal formulation

Pradhana Karma (Main Procedure)

- Preparation of fresh herbal paste
- Uniform application on the face
- Maintenance for a specified duration until semi-dry

Paschat Karma (Post-procedure)

- Gentle removal of the paste
- Washing with lukewarm water
- Application of suitable moisturizing agents if required

Mukhlepa is beneficial in:

- Acne (Yuvanapidika)
- Hyperpigmentation (Vyanga)
- Facial discoloration
- Wrinkles (Vali)
- Dry skin
- Oily skin
- Sun-induced skin damage
- Premature aging
- Minor inflammatory skin conditions

Benefits of Mukhlepa

Enhancement of Complexion Varnya herbs improve skin tone and radiance.

Anti-aging Effects

Regular use helps reduce wrinkles and delays age-related skin changes.

Acne Management

Herbs with antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties assist in controlling acne.

Improved Skin Nutrition

Mukhlepa nourishes the skin and supports tissue regeneration.

Stress Relief

The procedure provides a soothing effect and promotes relaxation.

Dosha Balancing

Tailored formulations help restore Dosha equilibrium and maintain skin health.

Modern Perspective

Contemporary dermatological research supports many traditional claims regarding Ayurvedic Herbs used in Mukhlepa. Ingredients such as turmeric, sandalwood, neem, and aloe vera have Demonstrated antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and wound-healing properties. The increasing demand for herbal and chemical-free skincare products has renewed interest in Ayurvedic facial therapies. Mukhlepa represents a cost-effective, natural, and holistic approach To skin care and cosmetic enhancement.

Discussion

Mukhlepa exemplifies the Ayurvedic principle of combining preventive and therapeutic Measures. Unlike cosmetic products that primarily target appearance, Mukhlepa seeks to Address the underlying causes of skin disorders by correcting Dosha imbalances and supporting Tissue health. Its individualized approach aligns with modern concepts of personalized medicine And integrative dermatology.

Conclusion

Mukhlepa is a valuable Ayurvedic external therapy that promotes facial beauty, maintains skin Health, and assists in the management of various dermatological conditions. By utilizing natural herbal formulations and individualized treatment principles, Mukhlepa offers both cosmetic and Therapeutic benefits. Its relevance continues to grow in contemporary healthcare due to Increasing awareness of natural and holistic approaches to skin care.

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