

A REVIEW OF LEPA KALPANA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MODERN HERBAL
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ABSTRACT

Lepa Kalpana is a well-established external pharmaceutical dosage form described in Ayurveda under *Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa*.^[1] Among its various forms, *Anulepana* is advocated as a daily topical application for maintaining skin hygiene, enhancing complexion, controlling perspiration and body odour, and protecting the skin from environmental insults. The pharmaceutical principles of *Anulepana* exhibit notable similarities with those of modern herbal dusting powders, yet this relationship has not been comprehensively reviewed.

KEYWORDS: *Lepa Kalpana*, *Anulepana*, Ayurveda, *Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa*, Topical Drug Delivery.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda emphasizes both the prevention of disease and the promotion of health through internal and external therapeutic approaches. Among the external therapies (*Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa*), *Lepa Kalpana* is an important pharmaceutical dosage form involving the application of medicinal substances over the skin to achieve local and systemic therapeutic effects. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe *Lepa* for the management of various conditions, including skin diseases, inflammatory disorders, wounds, and cosmetic applications.

The skin (*Twak*) is considered an important site for topical therapy in Ayurveda, where externally applied medicines are believed to act through *Bhrajaka Pitta*, *Romakupa*, and *Svedavaha Srotas*.^[2] These concepts provide the Ayurvedic basis for the therapeutic action of topical formulations and can be correlated with the modern understanding of topical drug delivery.

Apart from *Lepa Kalpana*, the concept of *Anulepa* is described in the *Dinacharya Prakarana* of *Bhavaprakasha Samhita Purva Khanda* as a daily topical application for maintaining skin health, enhancing complexion, reducing perspiration and body odour, and

promoting overall well-being. Although *Anulepa* is not classified as a type of *Lepa* in *samhitas*, its objectives and method of application share several similarities with modern topical powder formulations.

In contemporary pharmaceuticals, dusting powders are finely divided powders intended for external application to absorb moisture, reduce friction, protect the skin, and prevent microbial growth. The pharmaceutical objectives of herbal dusting powders closely resemble the principles described for *Anulepa* in Ayurveda. However, a comprehensive review establishing the relationship between the classical concepts of *Lepa Kalpana* and *Anulepa* with modern herbal dusting powders is lacking. Therefore, the present review critically evaluates the classical concept of *Lepa Kalpana* with special reference to dusting powders while highlighting the relevance of *Anulepa* as described in *Bhavaprakasha Samhita* and its potential contribution to the development of modern Ayurvedic herbal dusting powder formulations.

AIM

To critically review the classical concept of *Lepa Kalpana* in Ayurveda and explore its pharmaceutical

relevance with special reference to modern herbal dusting powder formulations.

OBJECTIVE

To review the classical concept of *Lepa Kalpana* in Ayurveda.

To study the concept of *Anulepana* in relation to skin care.

To correlate Ayurvedic principles with modern herbal dusting powder formulations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

Classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Sharangadhara Samhita*, and *Bhavaprakasha* were reviewed for references related to *Lepa Kalpana*, *Anulepana*, their properties, indications, and methods of application. Relevant published literature on modern dusting powders and herbal topical formulations was also considered.

Methods

A narrative review of the available classical and contemporary literature was undertaken. Relevant references concerning *Lepa Kalpana* and *Anulepana* were collected, critically examined, and compared with the pharmaceutical characteristics and functions of modern dusting powders. Particular attention was given to particle size, moisture absorption, skin protection, reduction of friction, odour control, antimicrobial activity, and safety. The classical properties of *Anulepana*, including *Daha-jit*, *Sweda-jit*, *Durgandha-jit*, and *Twak-Varna-Prasādana*, were correlated with the corresponding functions of modern herbal dusting powders. The findings were critically interpreted to assess the possible Ayurvedic pharmaceutical relevance of *Anulepana* in the development of modern herbal dusting powder formulations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lepa Kalpana

Lepa Kalpana is an important *Bahya Kalpana* (external dosage form) described in Ayurveda under *Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa*. The word *Lepa* is derived from the Sanskrit root “Lip”, meaning “to smear or apply.” It refers to the external application of medicinal substances in the form of a paste over the skin for therapeutic purposes.

Lepa is prepared by mixing finely powdered herbal, mineral, or animal-origin drugs with a suitable liquid medium such as water, *Kwatha*, *Swarasa*, milk, *Takra*, *Taila*, or *Ghrta* to obtain a smooth paste. The selection of the liquid medium depends on the disease condition and the predominance of *Dosha*.

According to Ayurveda, the therapeutic action of *Lepa* is mediated through *Twak*, *Romakupa*, *Svedavaha Srotas*, and *Bhrajaka Pitta*.^[3]

It is indicated in conditions such as *Shotha* (inflammation), *Vrana* (wounds), *Kushtha* (skin disorders), pain, burns, and cosmetic applications. The pharmacological actions of *Lepa* include *Shothahara*, *Kandughna*, *Krimighna*, *Ropana*, *Vedanasthapana*, and *Varnya* effects.

From a modern pharmaceutical perspective, *Lepa* can be considered a topical dosage form that delivers active constituents directly to the skin. The principles of fine particle size, appropriate vehicle selection, and local therapeutic action^[4] described in *Lepa Kalpana* provide a scientific basis for the development of modern Ayurvedic topical formulations, including herbal dusting powders.

Classical Ayurvedic texts like *Sharangdhara Samhita* describe different forms of *Lepa* based on consistency, duration of application, and therapeutic purpose.^[5] *Pralepa* is a thin application mainly indicated in conditions dominated by *Pitta* and *Rakta*, whereas *Pradeha* is comparatively thicker and commonly used in *Vata* and *Kapha* disorders. Proper preparation, uniform thickness, timely removal after drying, and the use of fresh formulations are considered essential for achieving optimum therapeutic efficacy.

Anulepa

अभ्यंगोद्धर्तनं स्नानं नेत्रयोरञ्जनं तथा ।
वस्त्रे मृदू यत्तच्च तथा मुद्वनुलेपनम् ॥^[6]

Bhavaprakasha (*Purva Khanda*, *Kaumarabhritya Prakarana*) describes *Anulepana* as one of the *Nitya Hitakara Karmas* (daily beneficial practices) for infants. It is mentioned along with *Abhyanga*, *Udvartana*, *Snana*, *Netranjana*, and the use of soft clothing, highlighting its importance in routine infant care. The inclusion of *Anulepana* among these essential practices indicates that it is more than a cosmetic procedure; it is intended to maintain healthy skin, enhance comfort, and provide protection. Performed after massage and bathing, *Anulepana* helps keep the skin dry, reduces friction, and preserves skin hygiene. These classical principles closely correspond to the functions of modern herbal dusting powders, which are designed to absorb excess moisture, minimize friction, and protect delicate skin. Thus, *Anulepana* provides a classical Ayurvedic basis for the development of herbal dusting powder formulations.

Therapeutic Properties of *Anulepana* and Their Relevance to Modern Herbal Dusting Powders

अनुलेपस्तृषामूर्च्छादुर्गन्धस्वेददाहजित्
सौभाग्यतेजस्त्वर्णप्रीत्यौजोबलवर्धनः ।
न स्नानानर्हलोकानामनुलेपोऽपि नो हितः ॥^[7]

According to Acharya *Bhavaprakasha* (*Purva Khanda*, *Dinacharya Prakarana*), *Anulepana* possesses several beneficial properties, including *Trishna-jit* (relieves thirst), *Murchha-jit* (alleviates giddiness), *Durgandha-jit* (eliminates body odour), *Sweda-jit* (controls excessive

perspiration), *Daha-jit* (relieves burning sensation), *Twak Varna Vardhana* (improves complexion), and *Ojo-Bala Vardhana* (promotes vitality and strength). These actions indicate that *Anulepana* is not merely a cosmetic application but a comprehensive skin-care practice aimed at maintaining skin health and overall well-being.

Many of these classical properties can be correlated with the functions of modern herbal dusting powders. The *Sweda-jit* and *Durgandha-jit* actions correspond to moisture absorption and odour control, while *Daha-jit* reflects the soothing and cooling effects desired in topical powders used for irritated skin. The *Twak Varna Vardhana* property supports improved skin appearance, and the use of herbs with *Krimighna*, *Kandughna*, and *Ropana* activities provides additional antimicrobial, anti-pruritic, and skin-protective benefits. Thus, the therapeutic profile of *Anulepana* closely parallels the objectives of modern herbal dusting powders, supporting its role as a classical Ayurvedic basis for their development.

Both approaches emphasize the use of finely processed powders for topical application and aim to preserve skin integrity, minimize friction, and protect against moisture-induced skin disorders. Unlike conventional dusting powders, Ayurvedic *Anulepana* incorporates medicinal herbs that may provide additional therapeutic benefits, including antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, wound-healing, and antioxidant activities. Therefore, *Anulepana* is not merely comparable to modern herbal dusting powders but can be regarded as their classical Ayurvedic pharmaceutical precursor, supporting the development of safe, herbal, and evidence-based topical powder formulations.

DISCUSSION

The review highlights that *Lepa Kalpana* is a classical Ayurvedic external dosage form with significant therapeutic and preventive applications. Although *Anulepana* is described separately in *Bhavaprakasha*, its purpose closely resembles that of modern herbal dusting powders. Properties such as *Sweda-jit*, *Durgandha-jit*, *Daha-jit*, and *Twak Varna Vardhana* correlate with moisture absorption, odour control, soothing action, and skin protection. Unlike conventional powders, Ayurvedic formulations contain medicinal herbs with *Krimighna*, *Kandughna*, *Ropana*, and *Shothahara* properties, offering additional therapeutic benefits. However, further standardization and scientific validation are required to establish their safety, quality, and clinical efficacy. Thus, the concept of *Anulepana* provides a strong classical foundation for the development of modern herbal dusting powder formulations.

CONCLUSION

Lepa Kalpana represents an important external pharmaceutical dosage form in Ayurveda with applications in both disease management and skin care. The classical concept of *Anulepana*, described in

Bhavaprakasha as a *Nitya Hitakara Karma*, shares several functional similarities with modern herbal dusting powders, including moisture absorption, reduction of friction, maintenance of skin hygiene, and skin protection. The use of medicinal herbs with *Krimighna*, *Kandughna*, *Ropana*, *Shothahara*, and *Varnya* properties further enhances its therapeutic potential. Thus, *Anulepana* may be considered a classical Ayurvedic foundation for the development of modern herbal dusting powder formulations. Further pharmaceutical standardization and clinical studies are warranted to establish their safety, efficacy, and wider acceptance in contemporary healthcare.

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