

MANAGEMENT OF SKIN DISORDERS BY KUSHTHAGHNA MAHAKASHAYA
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ABSTRACT

The Kushthaghna Mahakashaya, as described in the Charaka Samhita, is indeed an important formulation in Ayurveda specifically tailored for managing skin disorders (Kustha roga). The term "Mahakashaya" refers to a formulation containing a significant number of ingredients aimed at providing comprehensive therapeutic effects. According to Acharya Charaka, Kushthaghna Mahakashaya comprises of 10 drugs that synergistically work together to address various aspects of skin diseases. For the chronic and often complex nature of skin disorders, the Kushthaghna Mahakashaya is designed to offer holistic support in managing these conditions. One key aspect highlighted in Ayurveda is the relationship between psychological stress and skin health. Stress is known to play a significant role in both the onset and exacerbation of various skin disorders. Therefore, the inclusion of herbs with Rasayana properties in the Kushthaghna Mahakashaya is noteworthy. In Ayurveda, it is indeed understood that all types of Kustha roga are caused by an imbalance or vitiation of the Tridosha. The Kushthaghna Mahakashaya formulation is composed of herbs that possess Tridosha shamaka properties, meaning they have the ability to pacify all three doshas. This makes the formulation versatile and suitable for addressing various types of skin diseases regardless of the doshik imbalance involved. While each herb within the Kushthaghna Mahakashaya may have unique therapeutic actions, their collective efficacy lies in their ability to address the multifactorial nature of skin diseases, including their physical, mental, and emotional aspects. This holistic approach aligns with the fundamental principles of Ayurveda, which emphasizes restoring harmony and balance within the body to promote health and well-being.

KEYWORDS: Kushthaghna Mahakashaya, Kustha roga, Rasayana.

INTRODUCTION

The *Ayurvedic* system of medicine indeed boasts a rich tradition that extensively utilizes plants and plant-derived products for healing purposes. With approximately a thousand herbs commonly employed in *Ayurveda*, this traditional system of medicine recognizes the diverse healing properties of various botanicals.

The popularity of herbal medicines is on the rise due to several factors, including their cost-effectiveness, natural origins, higher safety margins, and fewer or no reported side effects compared to synthetic drugs. The use of plants aligns with *Ayurvedic* principles of holistic healing and emphasizes the importance of maintaining balance within the body for optimal health and well-being.

The term "Kushtha" encompasses a wide range of skin conditions or illnesses. The word "Kushtha" literally means "that which alters the natural appearance of the skin." It refers to any disorder or disease that affects the

skin, leading to changes in its color, texture, integrity, or structure. According to Acharya Charak Kushtha roga are Tridoshaj.^[1] Acharya Charak has mentioned that Kushtha roga can be seven, eighteen as well as infinite forms.^[2]

Two main categories of *Kushtha roga* are *Mahakushtha* and *Kshudrakushtha*.

Mahakushtha- Further subdivided into seven categories.

1. *Kapala*
2. *Udumbar*
3. *Mandal*
4. *Rishyajihwa*
5. *Pundarika*
6. *Sidhma*
7. *Kakadak*

Kshudrakushtha- Further subdivided into eleven categories.

1. *Ek-kushtha*
2. *Charmkushtha*
3. *Kitibh*
4. *Vipadika*
5. *Alsak*
6. *Dadru*
7. *Charmdal*
8. *Pama*
9. *Visfotak*
10. *Shataru*
11. *Vicharchika*

In *Ayurveda*, drugs are classified according to their therapeutic actions. *Acharya Charak* has classified drugs into fifty groups and named them after the action they produce starting with *Jivaniya*.^[3] Each group typically contains ten items. One significant category is *Kushthaghna* which comes under *Triptighna* *varga*. Furthermore, *Ayurveda* describes a group of herbal preparations under the category of *Rasayana*, which are

known for their antioxidant activities. These *Rasayana* drugs have been traditionally used for thousands of years and are recognized for their rejuvenating properties. Many of the drugs included in the *Kushthaghna Mahakashaya* are reported to possess *Rasayana* properties, highlighting their potential benefits in promoting overall health and vitality. Following drugs are mentioned by *Charaka* as *Kushthaghna Mahakashaya*.^[4]

1. *Khadira*
2. *Abhya*
3. *Amalak*
4. *Haridra*
5. *Arushkar*
6. *Saptaparna*
7. *Aragwadh*
8. *Karvira*
9. *Vidanga*
10. *Jatipraval*

Characteristics of *Kushthaghna Mahakasaya*

S. No.	Dravya	Botanical Name & Family	Synonyms	Raspanchaka	Parts used	Chemical constituent
1.	<i>Khadira</i> ^[5] (Cutch tree)	Acacia catechu, Mimosideae	<i>Raktasara</i> , <i>Dantdhavan</i> , <i>Kantaki</i> , <i>Balpatra</i> , <i>Yagyaiya</i> .	<i>Rasa- Tikta</i> , <i>Kashaya</i> <i>Guna- Laghu</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> <i>Virya- Sheeta</i> <i>Vipaka- Katu</i> <i>Prabhav-</i> <i>Kushthaghna</i> <i>Doshakarma-</i> <i>KaphaPitta Shamak</i>	Bark, Heartwood, Flowers, Extract	Catechin, Catechu tannic acid
2.	<i>Abhya</i> ^[6] (Chebulic myrobalan)	Terminalia Chebula, Combretaceae	<i>Haritaki</i> , <i>Pathya</i> ,	<i>Rasa- Panchras</i> (<i>Lavanrahit</i>), <i>Kashaya Pradhan</i> <i>Guna- Laghu</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> <i>Virya- Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka- Madhur</i> <i>Doshakarma-</i> <i>Tridosahar</i>	Fruits	Tannin
3.	<i>Amalak</i> ^[7] (Indian Gooseberry)	Emblica officinalis, Euphorbiaceae	<i>Dhatri</i> , <i>Vayastha</i> , <i>Amla</i>	<i>Rasa- Panchras</i> (<i>Lavanrahit</i>), <i>Amla</i> <i>Pradhan</i> <i>Guna- Laghu</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Sheeta</i> <i>Virya- Sheeta</i> <i>Vipaka- Madhur</i> <i>Doshakarma-</i> <i>Tridosahar</i>	Fruits	Gallic acid, Tannic acid, Albumin, Cellulose
4.	<i>Haridra</i> ^[8] (Turmeric)	Curcuma longa, Scitamineae	<i>Haldi</i> , <i>Nisha</i> , <i>Krimighna</i> , <i>Kanchani</i>	<i>Rasa- Tikta</i> , <i>Katu</i> <i>Guna-Ruksha</i> , <i>Laghu</i> <i>Virya- Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka- Katu</i> <i>Doshakarma-</i> <i>KaphaVata</i> <i>Shamak</i> ,	Rhizome	Curcumin

				<i>Pittarechak-Shamak</i>		
5.	<i>Arushkar</i> ^[9] (Marking Nut)	Semecarpus anacardium, Anacardiaceae	<i>Bhallatak,</i> <i>Agnika,</i> <i>Sophakrta,</i> <i>Viravraksha</i>	<i>Rasa- Madhura,</i> <i>Kashaya</i> <i>Guna- Laghu</i> <i>Virya- Snigdha,</i> <i>Tikshna</i> <i>Vipaka- Madhura</i> <i>Doshakarma-</i> <i>KaphaVata</i> <i>Shamak,</i> <i>Pitta Samshodhak</i>	Fruits	Anacardiac acid, Biflavonoids
6.	<i>Saptaparna</i> ^[10] (Dita)	Alstonia scholaris, Apocynaceae	<i>Vishaltwak,</i> <i>Shalmalipatra,</i> <i>GandhapushpaGu</i> <i>cchapushpa</i>	<i>Rasa- Tikta,</i> <i>Kashay</i> <i>Guna- Laghu,</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Virya- Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka- Katu</i> <i>Doshakarma-</i> <i>KaphaPitta Shamak</i>	Bark, Latex, Flowers	Ditamine, Echicerin
7.	<i>Aragwadh</i> ^[11] (Purging cassia)	Cassia fistula, Caesalpinaceae	<i>Karnikara,</i> <i>Mahasimbi,</i> <i>Drumotpala,</i> <i>Chaturangula</i>	<i>Rasa- Madhura,</i> <i>Tikta</i> <i>Guna- Guru,</i> <i>Mridu, Snigdha</i> <i>Virya- Sheeta</i> <i>Vipaka- Madhura</i> <i>Doshakarma-</i> <i>VataPitta Shamak,</i> <i>Pitta Samshodhak</i>	Leaves, Roots, Bark, Fruit Pulp, Flowers	Anthraquinone , Tannin
8.	<i>Karavira</i> ^[12] (Indian oleander)	Nerium indicum, Apocynaceae	<i>Aswamaraka,</i> <i>Angulipatraka,</i> <i>Kaner</i>	<i>Rasa- Katu, Tikta</i> <i>Guna- Laghu,</i> <i>Ruksha, Tikshna</i> <i>Virya- Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka- Katu</i> <i>Doshakarma-</i> <i>KaphaVata</i> <i>Shamak,</i>	Root, Rootbark, Leaves	Glycosides, Oleandrin
9.	<i>Vidanga</i> ^[13] (False black pepper)	Embelia ribes, Myrsinaceae	<i>Krimighna,</i> <i>Citrandula,</i> <i>Vayabidang</i>	<i>Rasa- Katu,</i> <i>Kashaya</i> <i>Guna- Laghu,</i> <i>Ruksha, Tikshna</i> <i>Virya- Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka- Katu</i> <i>Doshakarma-</i> <i>KaphaVata</i> <i>Shamak,</i>	Fruit	Embelin, Tannin
10.	<i>Jatipraval</i> ^[14] (Jasmine)	Jasminum officinale, Oleaceae	<i>Jati,</i> <i>Malati,</i> <i>Rajaputrika,</i> <i>Hrdyaghna,</i> <i>Chameli</i>	<i>Rasa- Tikta,</i> <i>Kashay</i> <i>Guna- Laghu,</i> <i>Snigdha, Mridu</i> <i>Virya- Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka- Katu</i> <i>Doshakarma-</i> <i>Tridosahar</i>	Leaves, Flowers, Roots	Salicylic acid, Jasminine

DISCUSSION

Indeed, the drugs used in Kushthagna Mahakashaya possess a variety of medicinal properties that make them effective in treating various disorders, particularly skin disorders. Some of these medicinal properties include.

Antimicrobial: Many skin disorders involve microbial infections, such as bacterial, fungal, or parasitic infections. Drugs with antimicrobial properties help eliminate these pathogens and prevent their growth, aiding in the treatment of skin infections.

Anti-inflammatory: Skin disorders often involve inflammation, leading to symptoms such as redness, swelling, and pain. Drugs with anti-inflammatory properties help reduce inflammation, providing relief from these symptoms and promoting healing.

Antipruritic: Itching is a common symptom of many skin disorders and can be quite distressing. Antipruritic drugs help alleviate itching, providing relief and improving the overall comfort of patients.

Antioxidant: Oxidative stress plays a role in the pathogenesis of certain skin disorders, including aging-related skin conditions and inflammatory skin diseases. Antioxidant drugs help neutralize free radicals and reduce oxidative damage, contributing to skin health and rejuvenation.

Immunomodulatory: Some skin disorders involve immune system dysfunction, leading to abnormal immune responses and inflammation. Immunomodulatory drugs help regulate the immune system, restoring its balance and reducing inflammation.

Wound healing: Skin disorders often involve skin lesions, wounds, or ulcers that require healing. Drugs with wound-healing properties promote tissue regeneration, accelerate wound closure, and improve the overall healing process.

Detoxifying: Toxins accumulated in the body can contribute to the development or exacerbation of certain skin disorders. Detoxifying drugs help eliminate toxins from the body, purifying the blood and improving overall health.

Skin-nourishing: Some drugs used in *Kushthagna Mahakashaya* have specific nutrients or constituents that nourish and support the health of the skin. They may provide essential vitamins, minerals, or other compounds necessary for maintaining skin integrity and function.

Absolutely, the comprehensive understanding of the medicinal properties of drugs used in *Ayurveda*, particularly in the treatment of skin disorders, can indeed serve as a significant motivation for researchers. Researchers can leverage this traditional knowledge base to explore novel treatments for skin disorders through scientific investigation and validation. By conducting rigorous studies on the pharmacological properties, mechanisms of action, and safety profiles of *Ayurvedic* formulations, researchers can provide evidence-based support for their efficacy.

CONCLUSION

The efficacy of *Kushthaghna Mahakashaya* lies not only in the individual therapeutic actions of its constituent herbs but also in their collective ability to address the multifactorial nature of skin diseases. Most of the drugs included in *Kushthagna Mahakashaya* are *Tridosha*

Shamaka, meaning they possess properties that help pacify or balance all three *Doshas*. Since all types of *Kustha* are *Tridoshaj* this makes them suitable for treating a wide range of skin disorders regardless of the specific *Dosha* imbalance present in the individual.

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