

AYURVEDIC REVIEW ON *LEPA KALPANA*Vd. Poonam D. Patil^{1*} and Vd. Apeksha A. Patil²¹MD Scholar, Dept. of Rasa Shastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, Shree Saptashrungi Ayurved College and Hospital, Hirawadi, Nashik, Maharashtra India.²Associate Professor, Dept. of Rasa Shastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, Shree Saptashrungi Ayurved College and Hospital, Hirawadi, Nashik, Maharashtra India.

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, a holistic science, addresses diseases through both internal and external medicinal applications. For external treatments, various methods such as *Lepa*, *Udvaratana*, *Malahara*, *Upnaha*, and *Abhyanga* are described in Ayurvedic texts. Among these, *Lepa* stands out as a semi-solid paste applied externally. Its historical roots depict its dual role in treating ailments and enhancing beauty. *Lepa*, as a therapeutic and cosmetic remedy, involves preparing medicinal pastes primarily for topical application. This includes treating skin conditions and even hair colouring. The process typically starts with converting wet or dry medicinal herbs into a paste by grinding and sometimes adding water. This resultant paste, known as *Lepa Kalpana*, becomes the basis for external application. Despite its significance, a comprehensive chapter solely dedicated to *Lepa Kalpana* is absent in Ayurvedic literature. Therefore, understanding its nuances requires piecing together information from various scattered references. While Acharya Charaka's '*Aragwadhiya Adhaya*' provides formulations for external applications, neither he nor commentator Chakrapani extensively delve into the pharmaceutical intricacies of *Lepa Kalpana*. Thus, practitioners must rely on diverse sources to grasp the full scope of *Lepa* preparation and application.

KEYWORDS: *Lepa*, *Udvaratana*, *Semi-solid*, *Kalpana*, *Pharmaceutics*, *Kalka* etc.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a science which treat the diseases both external and internal application of medicines in different form.

In *Ayurveda* classics, administration of drugs in three different ways, as,

- *Anatah Parimarjan*
- *Bahaya Parimarjan*
- *Shastra Pranidhan*

Bahaya Parimarjan prescribes medicinal treatments solely for external application. Ayurveda delineates various forms of external applications for treating diverse ailments, such as *Lepa*, *Udvaratana*, *Malahara*, *Upnaha*, and *Abhyanga*.

Lepa, a semi-solid topical application, holds a significant place in Ayurvedic therapy, serving both medicinal and cosmetic purposes. It involves the preparation of medicaments meant for skin application and hair colouring, among other uses. In the formulation of *Lepas*, single or compounded herbs are finely powdered and combined with specific liquid mediums.

Beauty, a quality that gratifies the senses, is a cherished aspiration for many. While some are naturally endowed with it, others seek to enhance their appearance. Beauty transcends mere external aesthetics; it encompasses qualities that delight the senses, intellect, and morality.

Ayurvedic literature extensively details herbs for beautification purposes, offering remedies for various skin conditions and hair care. The rising demand for Ayurvedic beauty products stems from their unique approach to enhancing beauty, coupled with their efficacy, affordability, accessibility, and minimal side effects. *Keshranjan Lepa*, or hair colour-changing paste, stands out as a renowned and time-tested method. It involves applying herbal paste to the scalp, allowing it to dry completely before rinsing off with fresh water.

CONCEPT OF LEPA KALPANA

In pharmaceutical view, *Lepa Kalpana* is same as *Kalka Kalpana*. *Lepa* and *Kalka Kalpana* are only different in use, so their nomenclature has been given. In modern pharmaceutical science, there are no specific terminology has been given.

Definition

द्रव्यं आद्रम् शिलापिष्टं शुष्कं वा सद्रवं तनु |

देह प्रलेपनार्थं तल्लेप इत्युच्यते || (D.G. Uttrardha 1)

As per Yadavji Trikamji, medicinal substances are processed into a paste-like consistency for external application, known as *Lepa Kalpana*. This involves either starting with wet drugs already in paste form or converting dry drugs into paste form using prescribed liquid media or water. For dry drugs, the process begins by grinding them into a fine powder using devices like *Khalva Yantra*. The resulting powder is then filtered to remove any impurities. The filtered material is then mixed with the necessary quantity of water or specific liquid in the *Khalva Yantra* or similar device. This mixture is triturated, or ground, until it forms a paste, which is then utilized as *Lepa* for treating various ailments.

Acharya Charaka^[1] has been described the properties of Lepa

नातिस्निग्धो न रुक्षश्च न पिंडो न द्रवः समः || (Cha. Chi. 21/100)

According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Sneha Drava* may be taken in sufficient quantity, quantity of other liquid media should be quantity sufficient neither more or less quantity. Quantity of the *Sneha Drava* or other liquid media which able to form the *Lepas* should be take.

IMPORTANCE OF LEPA KALPANA^[2]

Acharya Sushruta has been mentioned the importance of *Lepa Kalpana*

यथा प्रज्वलिते वेश्मन्यग्भसा परिषेचनम् |

क्षिप्रं प्रशमयत्यग्निमेवमालेपनं रूजः || (Su. Chi 1/15)

Acharya Sushruta described the importance of *Lepa Kalpana* through an example that, when poring the water over burning house, the fire is extinguished immediately or may be control, in the same manner the *Lepa* pacifies the local *Doshas* by the instant/initial stage of local application.

Acharya Sushruta also mentioned^[3] that

आलेप आध उपक्रमः, एषसर्वशोफानां सामान्य प्रधानतमश्च || (Su. Su. 18/3)

Acharya Sushruta indicate that *Alepa* is initial and best topical application he also mentioned that it is the best treatment *Shotha* and pain reliver.

SYNONYMS OF LEPA^[4]

आलेपस्य च नामानि लिप्तो लेपश्च लेपनम् | (Sha. Sa. Ut. Kha. 11/01)

Alepa, *Lipta*, *Lepa*, *Lepan* etc. words are used as *Lepa* in different classics.

CLASSIFICATION OF LEPA

There are different types are described in *Ayurveda* Classics. Some important classifications are described below by different *Acharyas*

A. According to Acharya Sushruta^[5]

- *Pralepa*
- *Pradeha*
- *Alepa*

B. According to Acharya Vagbhata^[6]

- *Snaihika*
- *Nirvapana*
- *Prasadana*
- *Stambhan*
- *Vilayana*
- *Pachana*
- *Pidana*
- *Shodhan*
- *Shoshan*
- *Savarnikaran*

C. According to Acharya Sharangadhar^[8]

- *Doshghna Lepa*
- *Vishghna Lepa*
- *Varnya Lepa*

1. According to Acharya Sushruta

- *Pralepa*: This type of *Lepa* possesses cooling (*Sheeta*), thin (*Tanu*), and non-drying (*Aishoshi*, *Avishoshi* in non-compressing wounds) properties.
- *Pradeha*: *Pradeha Lepa* can vary in consistency, being either thick or thin, and can exhibit cooling (*Sheeta*) or warming (*Ushna*) properties.
- *Alepa*: *Alepa Lepa* combines properties from both *Pralepa* and *Pradeha*, encompassing a mix of characteristics.

2. According to Acharya Vagabhata:

- *Snaihika Lepa*: This type of *Lepa* incorporates oily substances (*Sneha Dravya*) and is applied in conditions related to *Vata* imbalance.
- *Nirvapana Lepa*: *Nirvapana Lepa* contains cooling (*Sheeta*) substances and is used in conditions such as *Pitta* imbalance, poison-related issues, burns, and injuries caused by acids or alkalis.
- *Prasadana Lepa*: Similar to *Nirvapana Lepa* in properties, *Prasadana Lepa* is applied in conditions related to *Vata* and blood disorders.
- *Stambhan Lepa*: *Stambhan Lepa* possesses coagulant properties and is used to control excessive bleeding.
- *Vilayan Lepa*: *Ushna* (warming) substances are utilized in *Vilayan Lepa*, typically employed in conditions like immature swelling (*Apakvashotha*), inflammation due to *Kapha* imbalance, and glandular swellings.
- *Pachana Lepa*: *Pachana Lepa* contains substances with heating (*Ushnaveerya*) and drying (*Ruksha*)

properties, employed in the treatment of suppurative wounds.

- *Peedana Lepa*: This type of *Lepa* utilizes dry (*Ruksa*) and viscous (*Picchila*) substances and is applied in small wounds to induce healing.
- *Shodhan Lepa*: *Shodhan Lepa* is used for the purification of wounds.
- *Ropana Lepa*: *Ropana Lepa* aids in wound healing.
- *Savarnikaran*: This specific *Lepa* type is utilized to change the colour of wounds to match the skin tone.

3. According to Acharya Sharangdhar

Acharya Sharangdhar categorizes *Lepa* based on their intended purpose and specifies the ideal thickness for each application:

- *Doshaghna lepa*: Applied according to the *Doshas*, with a thickness of ¼ part of *Angula*.
- *Vishaghna lepa*: Utilized in poison-related conditions, with a thickness of 1/3 part of *Angula*.
- *Varnya Lepa*: Employed for cosmetic purposes, with a thickness of ½ part of *Angula*.

THICKNESS OF THE LEPA

It must need that when applied *Lepa* on skin than how it working proper. It is depended on the applied quantity of *Lepa* because of very thin or very thick *Lepa* will not working proper. So, it must need that *Lepa* should be in prescribe manner. In *Ayurveda* classics, it is well defined according to their presence of *Doshas*, or use of purpose.

Charaka Samhita^[8]

Acharya Charaka has been described first about thickness of the *Lepa*

त्रिभागांगुष्ठ मात्रः स्यात् प्रलेपः कल्कपेषितः |

(Cha. Chi 21/100)

According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Pralepa* should be applied in a thickness equivalent to 1/3 part of the *Angula*, which is a measurement unit. He also mentions that when expecting a rubefacient action from a drug, it should be applied uniformly thick. However, if a softening action is desired, the drug should be applied in a uniformly thin layer. This statement illustrates the varied effects of the drug based on its application thickness. In modern practices, such detailed instructions regarding application thickness are not commonly mentioned, with recommendations typically focusing on uniformly applying the medication over the affected skin.

Sushruta Samhita^[9]

तस्यस्य प्रमाण महिषार्दमाहिष चर्मोत्सेधमुपदिशन्ति ||

Su. Su. 18/12

According to *Acharya Sushruta* thickness of the *Lepa* for the application on the skin should be equal to the buffalo's skin.

Sharangdhar Samhita^[10]

त्रिप्रमाणश्चतु भागोअर्धांगुलोनन्तः ||

Sha. Sa. Ut. Kha. 11/2

Thickness of the *Lepa* is one fourth, one third and half *Anguli* is respectively for *Doshaghna*, *Vishaghna* and *Varnya Lepa*.

QUANTITY OF SNEHA DRAVA IN LEPA^[11]

The precise quantity of *Sneha Dravya*, or oily substances, used in *Lepa* preparation is crucial, as it directly impacts the mitigation of *Doshas*, or bodily imbalances. According to *Acharya Sushruta's* guidance, (SU. SU 18/4) the amount of *Sneha Dravya* incorporated into the *Lepa* varies based on the *Doshas* present. For *Vata Dosh*, one-fourth part of the *Lepa* consists of *Sneha Dravya*, aiming to balance this, *Dosh*. Similarly, for *Pitta Dosh*, one-sixth part of the *Lepa* includes *Sneha Dravya* to address its effects. In the case of *Kapha Dosh*, one-eighth part of the *Lepa* contains *Sneha Dravya* to counteract its influence. These proportions ensure that the *Lepa* effectively addresses specific *Dosh* imbalances in the body.

APPLYING METHOD OF LEPA

Acharya Sushruta^[12] provides insights into the proper application method for *Lepa*, emphasizing its effectiveness when applied correctly. According to his teachings, *Lepa* should be gently spread on the skin in an upward or reverse direction to the hair growth. This technique enhances the efficacy of the treatment. This application method allows the *Lepa* to penetrate the *Romakoopa* (hair follicles) and swiftly absorb through the *Swedavahisrotas* (sweat ducts) and *Siramukha* (pores), leading to the desired therapeutic effects. The rubbing action involved in this method increases the skin's temperature, facilitating the uptake of the medicinal components and their permeation through the skin in topical formulations.

TIME AND DURATION OF LEPA APPLICATION^[13]

The timing and duration of *Lepa* application are crucial factors for ensuring its effectiveness without causing harm. Traditional texts emphasize specific timeframes for applying medicines like *Lepa* and *Upnaha* to maximize their benefits. It is generally advised not to apply *Lepa* at night due to the body's natural processes. During nighttime, the body releases heat through the skin pores. Applying *Lepa* during this time can block the pores, hindering the natural heat transfer process. *Acharya Charaka* explains that at night, the body's channels (*Strotas*) tend to close, and their functioning capacity decreases compared to daytime. Therefore, applying *Lepa* at night may not yield the desired therapeutic effects. However, there are exceptions to this guideline, such as in the case of immature swelling (*Apakva*) or inflammation involving blood and phlegm (*Rakta Shlesma Shotha*), where nighttime application may be permissible.

In essence, while there are general recommendations against applying *Lepa* at night due to potential interference with natural bodily processes, exceptions exist for specific conditions where nighttime application may be suitable.

CONTRAINDICATION OF LEPA^[14]

Topical applications like *Lepa* have specific contraindications that relate to factors such as the ingredients used, prolonged usage, and application method. When applied in contraindicated conditions, *Lepa* may not deliver the intended therapeutic effects and could potentially lead to complications such as itching, burning sensation, or watery discharge if not administered correctly. To ensure the efficacy of *Lepa* and to prevent adverse effects, our ancient texts provide guidance on the appropriate duration and timing for application. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, using stale *Lepa* is discouraged as it may lead to a loss of quality and undesirable effects. Additionally, it is advised not to apply a new layer of *Lepa* over an existing one without removing the previous application. This is because the accumulation of *Lepa* can increase density and compactness, resulting in elevated skin temperature and discomfort. Such conditions may prevent the desired action of the *Lepa*.

Acharya Sushruta^[15] also mentioned that

न च तेनैव लेपेन प्रदेहं दापयेत्नपुनः ।

शुष्कभावात् स निर्वीयो युक्तोपि स्यादपार्थकः ॥

(Su. Su. 18/16).

Effect of *Lepa* is properly when it should be applied in semisolid form. So, A *Lepa* should not be used in dry form or reused after mixing of the solvent in it, without mixing of solvent it become unaffected or useless.

SHELF-LIFE PERIOD OF LEPA^[16]

In Ayurvedic literature, the concept of *Saviryata Avadhi*, or the period of potency, denotes how long a medicine remains effective. Although not explicitly outlined in ancient texts, it gained significance in later works such as the *Sharangadhar Samhita* and *Yogaratanakar*, especially concerning different dosage forms. *Acharya Sushruta* suggests that a drug can be utilized for therapeutic purposes as long as it maintains its integrity, including taste, smell, and appearance. The shelf life of a drug extends until it undergoes deterioration or physical changes. According to the Ayurvedic Formulary of India (AFI), medicines should ideally be consumed within a specified period from the time of manufacture to ensure optimal results.

Lepa made from herbal drugs, it is recommended to use it within 24 hours to prevent decomposition, as expired *Lepa* may pose risks to the skin. However, if the *Lepa* contains minerals or metals, it can typically be used for a longer duration based on the shelf life of its components. The duration of potency depends on the specific base with which the drugs are mixed in the *Lepa* formulation.

DISCUSSION

Lepa, a topical medication in Ayurveda, is specifically designed for external application. It involves preparing a paste by combining prescribed herbs with a suitable medium, as outlined in Ayurvedic scriptures. Numerous *Lepa* formulations exist in Ayurvedic literature, each tailored to address specific ailments. The efficacy of *Lepa* hinges on adhering strictly to guidelines regarding its thickness, preparation time, technique, and application method. Following these protocols diligently ensures optimal therapeutic outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Lepa is a crucial medication that should be given topically to the skin. *Lepa* is used to treat a variety of ailments, including acne, wound healing, fairness, inflammation, and other skin conditions. *Lepa* is a key component of Ayurveda, it can be said in this way.

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