

**REVIEW ARTICLE**

**A PROGRESSIVE STEP TOWARDS THE TREATMENT OF TWAK-VIKAR  
(SKIN-DISORDERS) BY KUSHTHAGNA MAHAKASHAYA OF CHARAKA SAMHITA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Kushthaghna Mahakashaya of Charaka samhita is exclusive one and has great importance in skin disorder. Kushthaghna Mahakashaya is described by Acharya Charak for the management of Kushtha roga (skin diseases). Kushthaghna Mahakashaya contain 10 drugs. This review is mainly focussed on different aspects of Kushthaghna Mahakashaya. It is well recognised in Ayurveda that most of the skin diseases run a chronic course and are difficult to treat. Most of the skin diseases have strong relation with psychological stress and stress is responsible for onset and exacerbation of different skin disorders. Most of the drugs in the Kushthaghna Mahakashaya reported to have Rasayan properties. Therefore, these drugs also help in reducing the negative effect of stress and thus help in coping with chronic skin disorders. Each drug of this Mahakashaya was separately explored for its place in different Mahakashaya and gana, Other important indications and relevant scientific studies on the plants of this Mahakashaya was also searched.*

**Keywords:** Kushthaghna, Twak-vikar, Ayurveda, Mahakashaya.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurvedic system of medicine is the oldest system of traditional medicine which has recognized the healing properties of plants to a great depth. Ayurvedic medicine has around a thousand herbs that are commonly used in this traditional system of medicine, but overall there may be more than 2,500 that are used across India in all forms of herbal medicine. Traditional medicine is a major part of the cultural heritage of a society and it has developed in accordance with the lifestyle and cultural practices of the society. The use of plants and plant products in medicines is getting popularized because the herbal medicines are cheap and have natural origin with higher safety margins and lesser or no side effects.

Group of drugs are 'Jivaniya' etc and 'Vidarigandhadi' etc. while classifying drugs according to action Charak has defined fifty groups beginning with Jivaniya while Sushruta described thirty seven groups according to their therapeutic uses. The former are named after the action concerned while the latter after the first item of the group. Secondly, the former have ten items in each group while in the number of components is not fixed uniformly. Commenting on this Chakrapanidatta says that the number ten in each group is not restrictive but suggestive and as such other drugs having similar properties and actions may also be included wherever necessary. In ancient tradition, the number ten is called 'dik' direction which thus indicates guidance<sup>1</sup>.

When the vitiated doshas causes abnormal colour or complexion of the skin and produces the degeneration of tissue. This disease is known as kushtha (mahakusta). Although all the disorders of skin are included in the word 'kushtha'. The seven dhatus (tissues) are rasa (plasma, extracellular fluids), rakta (blood), mansa (flesh), meda (fats), asthi (bones), majja (bone marrow) & shukra (sperm or ovum). The skin disease which shows more symptoms, more difficulty in treatment & (dhatugatava (involvement of tissues) & hence severe are labeled as mahakustha) and the other skin disorders are called as kshudrakustha. Even shwitra (leucoderma) which actually not a contagious disease can be included in these. Kustha is a chronic, contagious & severe disease.

In Ayurvedic system of medicine, lots of medicinal plants, traditionally used since thousands of years, have been described together as a group of herbal preparations under the category of Rasayana known for their interesting antioxidant activities. Most of the drugs in Kushthaghna Mahakashaya are reported to have Rasayan properties.

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## CHARACTERISTICS OF DRUGS USED IN THE KUSHTHAGNA MAHAKASAYA OF CHARAK-

### Khadira- (*Acacia catechu* Willd. Family- Mimosoidaceae)

This Plant is described in Kuṣṭhaghna mahakashaya, Kaśhā skandha, Agraya prakaran of Charak Samhita and Salsaradi gana of Shusruta samhita. The synonyms are Raktasara, Dantdhavan, Yagyaiya. Dosha karma- Pitta kaphahara. It is also used traditionally For the management of Medoroga, Prameha, Aruchi, Atisar, Jirnajwar and Kasa etc<sup>2</sup>. The main chemical constituents of Acacia Catechu are catechin, epecatechin, epigallocatechin, epicatechin gallate, phloroglucin, protocatechuic acid, quarcetin, poriferasterol glucosides, lupenone, procyanidin, kaemferol, L-arabinose, D-galactose. D-rhamnose and aldobiuronic acid, afzelchin gum, mineral and taxifolin. Heartwood is used to yield concentrated aqueous extract i.e. Cutch and Katha<sup>3</sup>.

### Abhya- (*Terminalia chebula* Retz. Family-Combretaceae)

This Plant is described in Prajasthapana, jvaraghna, Kuṣṭhaghna, Kasaghna mahakashaya of Charak samhita and Āmalakya, Paruṣākādi, Triphalā gana of shusruta samhita. The synonyms are Vayastha, Jivanti, Rohini. Dosha-karma are tridosha samaka. Haritaki is being used traditionally in the management of different ailments which include Kushtha, Visharpa, Santarpana janya roga, Kasa, Shwas, Pratishyaya, Vatrakta, Swetapradara, Prameha, Hikka and Vishamajwar etc<sup>4</sup>. Haritaki contain 14 components of hydrolysable tannins (gallic acid, chebulic acid, punicalagin, chebulanin, corilagin, neochebulinic, ellagic acid, chebulegic acid, chebulinic acid, 1,2,3,4,6-penta-Ogalloyl-β-D-glucose, 1,6-di-O-galloyl-D-glucose, casuarinin, 3,4,6-tri-O-galloyl-D-glucose and terchebulin. The tannin content varies with the geological variation. Flavonol glycosides, triterpenoids, coumarin conjugated with gallic acid called chebulin, as well as phenolic compounds were also isolated. In addition, ethyl gallate luteolin were isolated from the fruit of Haritaki. It also consists of nutrients such as vitamin C, protein, amino acids and minerals. Modified from<sup>5</sup>.

### Amalki

This plant is described in Vayāsthāpana mahakashaya of Charak samhita and Triphalā, Paruṣākādi gana of shusruta samhita. The synonyms are Vrishya, Dhatri, Tisyaphala. **Dosha-karma** are tridosha samaka. In Ayurvedic system of medicine Amalaki described as one of the most important Rasayan (rejuvenation drug). Acharya Charaka includes Amalaki under Vayasthapan & Virechanopaga Mahakashaya and Acharya Sushruta includes it under Triphala and Parushakadi Gana. Traditionally Amalaki used in the management of Kushtha, Visharpa Prameha, Hridroga, Amlapita, Parinamshoola, Udavarta, Kasa, Shwas, Rajyaksama, Pittaja Roga, etc<sup>6</sup>. Emblica officinalis contains phenolic constituents like gallic acid, L-malic acid 2-o-gallate, Mucic acid 2-o-gallate, Corilagin Chebulagic acid, putrajivain A, elacocarpusin, mucic acid, 1-o-galloyl-β-D-glucose, Mucic acid 6-methyl ester 2-o-gallate, Mucic acid 1,4- lactone 2-o-gallate, Mucic acid 1-methyl ester 2-o-gallate, Mucic acid 2-o-gallate, Mucic acid 1, 4-lactone 6-methyl ester 2-o-gallate, mucic acid 1, 4-lactone 3-o-gallate, mucic acid 1,4-lactone 3,5-di-o-gallate. It also contains higher amount of Vitamin C and considerably higher concentrations of most minerals, protein and amino acids like Glutamic acid, proline, aspartic acid, alanine, cystine and lysine<sup>7</sup>.

### Haridra

This plant is described in Lekhaniya, Kandughna, Vishaghna, Kusthghna mahakashaya, Tikta skandha and Haridradi, Mustadi gana of shusruta samhita. The synonyms are Krimighna, Yoshitpriya, Pindaharidra. Dosh-Karma are tridosha samaka. Turmeric has a long history of therapeutic uses as it is credited with a variety of important beneficial properties such as its antioxidant, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and digestive properties<sup>8</sup>. Turmeric contains a wide variety of phytochemicals, including curcumin, demethoxycurcumin, bisdemethoxycurcumin, zingiberene, curcumenol, curcumol, eugenol, tetrahydrocurcumin, triethylcurcumin, turmerin, turmerones and turmeronols. Three main chemical constituents of curcuma longa are curcumin (diferuloylmethane), demethoxycurcumin and bisdemethoxycurcumin. These are responsible for different type of therapeutic uses of curcuma longa<sup>9</sup>.

### Aruskara

This plant is described in Dipanīya, Mūtrasangraha, Kuṣṭhaghna mahakashaya, and Nyagrodhādi, Mustādi gana of shusruta samhita. The synonyms are agnīka, agnimukha. Dosh-Karma are Kaphvata samak. Traditionally Bhallataka has been used in the management of Bibandha, Agnimandhya, Apasamar, Amavata, Gridhrasi, Gulma, Udar roga, Arsha, Grahani roga, Kushtha, Shwitra, Vatrakta and used externally in snake bite<sup>10</sup>.

The most significant components of the Bhallataka are bilwanols, phenolic compounds, 4, 5 biflavonoids, 6 sterols and glycosides.

## Saptaparna

This plant is described in Kusthaghna, Udardaprasamana mahakashaya, and Aragvadhadi, Lakshadi gana of shusruta samhita. The synonyms are vishaltvaka, sharad. Dosh-Karma are Kaphpitta samak. Since Bhallataka is extremely hot and sharp in its attributes, it should be used with caution. Individuals showing allergic reactions to it should stop and avoid the usage of Bhallataka. It should not be used in small children, very old persons, pregnant women and individuals of predominant pitta constitution. The use of the same should be restricted in summer season. For its allergic reactions like rash, itching and swelling, the antidotes used externally are coconut oil, rala ointment, ghee, coriander leaves pulp or butter mixed with musta (*Cyperus rotundus*). The salt and spices should be strictly restricted during Bhallataka treatment. It is also recommended to avoid exposure to sun, heat and excessive sex<sup>11</sup>.

## Aragvadh

This plant is described in Kusthaghna, Kandughna, mahakashaya, and Aragvadhadi, Syamadi gana, Adhobhagahara of shusruta samhita. The synonyms are rajvriksha, shampaak, and chaturangula. Dosh-Karma are Kaphpitta samak. Traditionally it is used for the management of Kushtha, Aruchi, Bibandha, Shuska Kasa, Hridroga, Raktapitta, Shoola, Kamala etc<sup>12</sup>.

## Karavira

This plant is described in Kusthaghna mahakashaya and Tikta skandha, and Lakshadi gana, Sirovirechana gana of shusruta samhita. The synonyms are Shatkumbha, asvamaraka. Dosh-Karma are Kaphvata samak. It is used traditionally for the management of Kushtha, Agnimandhya, Hridroga, Shotha etc., it also used externally over the wounds of Upadansa and Firanga roga<sup>13</sup>. The root of *Nerium indicum* contains glycosides, neriodorin, neriodorein and karabin. The bark contains scopoletin, scopolin. Besides this it contains tannins, red colouring matter, an aromatic oil, wax and flobefin and a yellow coloured stable oil. The roots contain bitter glycosides fenolinic acid and aromatic oil. It also possesses potassium salts in excess<sup>14</sup>.

## Vidanga

This plant is described in Téptighna, Kusthaghna, Sirovirechana mahakashaya and Sursadi, Pippalyadi gana of shusruta samhita. The synonyms are krimighna, chitratanula. Dosh-Karma are Kaphvata samak. *Embelia ribes* is traditionally used in Ayurveda for treatment of various ailments viz. Krimi roga (as vermifuge), Agnimandhya, Vatvyadhi, Aadhaman, Ajeerna, skin diseases, Gandamala, Mutrakrichchha etc. It is one of the plants used as Krimighna (as vermifuge). It is included in Krimighna, Kushthaghna, Triptighna Mahakashaya (Dashemani) by Acharya Charaka and Sursadi and Pippalyadi Gana by Acharya Sushruta<sup>15</sup>.

*E. ribes* fruits contain a quinone derivative, embelin, an alkaloid christembine, a volatile oil and vilangin. Among them, embelin is the major bioactive constituents and marker compound in *E. ribes* berries. Embelin (2, 5-dihydroxy-3-undecyl-1, 4-benzoquinone) has a wide spectrum of biological activities, including antioxidant, antitumor, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, anthelmintic, antifertility and antimicrobial<sup>16</sup>.

## Jatipraval

This plant is described in, Kusthaghna, mahakashaya and Sirovirecana darvya of shusruta samhita. The synonyms sumna, malati and rajputrika. Dosh-Karma are Tridosh hara. In Ayurveda Jati is used traditionally for the management of Kushtha roga, Shirshoola, Bhrama, Pakshaghat, eye diseases, Udavarta, Anaha, Raktavikar etc. It also used externally for the management of Mukha Vrana (apthous ulcers), erectile dysfunction, itching and Kushtha roga<sup>17</sup>. Its chemical constituents include, salicylic acid and an alkaloid named jasminine.

**Table-1:** Properties of different drug in *Lekhaniya mahakasaya of charak*

Drugs	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Dosakarma
KHADIRA	Tikta, Kasaya (Kasaya skandha (C.Vi8/144)	Laghu, Ruksa (PV Sharma II)	Sita (B.P)	Katu (B.P)	KP
ABHAYA	Pancarasa (Kasaya pradhana) Kasaya skandha (C.Vi8/144)	Laghu, Ruksa (PV Sharma II)	Usna (B.P)	Madhura (B.P)	VPK
AMALAKI	Pancharasa (Amla pradhana) Amla skandha Vi 8/140	Guru, RukSa, sita (PV Sharma II)	Sita (B.P)	Madhura (B.P)	VPK
HARIDRA	Katu, Tikta (Tikta skandha (Vi8/143)	Laghu, RukSa (PV Sharma II)	Usna (B.P)	Katu (B.P)	VPK

ARUSKARA	Katu, Tikta, Kasaya (Katu skandha Vi8/142)	Laghu, Snigdha (PV Sharma II)	Usna (B.P)	Madhura (B.P)	KV
SAPTAPARNA	Tikta, Kasaya (Tikta skandha Vi8/43)	Laghu, Snigdha (PV Sharma II)	Usna (B.P)	Katu (B.P)	KP
ARAGVADHA	Madhura(Tikta skandha Vi8/143)	Guru, Snigdha (PV Sharma II)	Sita (B.P)	Madhura (B.P)	VP
KARAVIRA	Katu, Tikta (Tikta skandha Vi8/43)	Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna (PV Sharma II)	Usna (B.P)	Katu (B.P)	KV
VIDANGA	Katu, Kasaya (Katu skandha Vi8/142)	Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna (PV Sharma II)	Usna (B.P)	Katu (B.P)	KV
JATIPRAVALA	Tikta, Kasaya (Tikta skandha Vi8/43)	Laghu, Snigdha (PV Sharma II)	Usna (B.P)	Katu (B.P)	KV

## DISCUSSION

Earlier scholars worked on the drug included in kushthagna mahakashaya of charak samhita. Satyapal *et al.* on phytopharmacological overview on kushthagna mahakashaya<sup>18</sup>. They proved that Kushthagna Mahakashaya contains 10 drugs. As stated in the pathogenesis, kushtha is tridoshaja, so depending on the dominance of doshas, different type are there and so treatment also differs. Amongst the 3 doshas, the treatment of most dominant dosha is give & then the associated dosha is treated by the help of the drugs of kushthagna mahakashaya. These drugs possess various medicinal properties and hence used in the treatment of various disorders especially skin disorders. These are also good source of various biologically active phytoconstituents. These phytoconstituents used directly as therapeutic agents as well as starting materials for the synthesis of pharmacologically active compounds. In the present review an attempt has been made to provide a collective knowledge on therapeutic, pharmacological and medicinal applications of Kushthagna Mahakashaya and its constituent drugs. This collective knowledge on these drugs would motivate to researchers and provide lead to further exploration of the treatment of skin disorders. Ayurvedic products is growing exponentially due to its fewer side effects as compare to other systems of medicine.

## CONCLUSION

All types of Kustha are caused by tridosha, hence the treatment is given according to predominance of dosas. In kushthagna Mahakashaya almost all the drugs are tridoshasha shamaka. It is considered that all Kustha are Tridosaja. After diagnose the kind of Kustha, we can choose drugs from Kushthagna mahakashaya. Among 10 drugs of Kushthagna Mahakashaya by virtue, some are very good vatasamaka, some are pittasamaka and some are kaphasamaka. According to predominance of dosas, we can choose suitable drugs for treating respective type of Kustha.

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