



Role of Palash (*Butea monosperma*) in Shvitra

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Abstract:

Skin is envelope of our body expressing the harmony inside, it is one of the five *dnyanendriyas* as told by *Ayurveda*, which is responsible for the perception of touch. It also performs the functions such as protection of body against physical, chemical, mechanical and biological injuries; thermoregulation etc. One of the most notable components of skin, that contributes to complexion is a pigment known as melanin. When melanin is less or absent in skin leads to hypopigmentary disorder. Shvitra is Hypopigmentary disorder of skin, in which *shukla varna* appeared on the skin. *Acharya Charaka* stated that *shukla varna* comes under the *vikruta varna*. In *Ayurveda* more than 600 medicinal plant are included as drug, and they are used either alone or in combination with each other to alleviate the disorders. *Palash* is one of them, *Palash* belonging to family Fabaceae, *Palash* is *katu, tikta* and *kashay* in rasa. Its *viapk* is *katu* and *veerya* is *ushna*, it

alleviates *kapha* and *vata dosha* but aggravates *pitta dosha*, in literature it is found that *palash* is useful in many diseases like *trushna, atisar, jwar, charmarog, kushtha, apasmar* and *prameha*. *Acharya Vagbhat* stated in *Ashtang Hridaya*, that *palash* is used in *shvitra chikitsa*, *Vagbhata* included *palash* in *Asanadi gana*. A number of medicine are mentioned for management of *shvitra*. Like *psoralen*, ultra violet therapy and *corticosteroids* in the treatment of *shvitra*, but they are associated with side effects. Hence, there is need to develop effective medicinal plant for the management of *shvitra*.

Keywords: *Palash, Shvitra, Hypopigmentary disorder*

Introduction

Skin is envelope of our body expressing the harmony inside, it is one of the five *dnyanendriyas* as told by *Ayurveda*, which is responsible for the perception of touch. It also performs the functions such as protection of body against physical,

chemical, mechanical and biological injuries; thermoregulation etc. One of the most notable components of skin, that contributes to complexion is a pigment known as melanin. Melanin have many additional properties, apart from protection of eyes and skin from harmful UV radiation. Further, their role in colouring human skin and hair gives them a key role in cosmetics. Melanin produced in a specialized group of cells known as melanocyte. Melanocytes possess the enzyme tyrosinase which is necessary for the synthesis of melanin. Decrease the synthesis of melanin leads to Hypopigmentary disorder. Hypopigmentation is also caused by disease, illness, burns, injury, and fungal infection of skin. In *Ayurveda* all skin disorders are placed under the name of *kushtha*. *Shvitra* is considered as one of the varieties of *kushtha*, that can be correlated with leucoderma. It is caused due to vitiation of *tridosha* and *dhatu*s like *rasa*, *rakta*, *mamsa* and *meda* according to *harita samhita*. *Acharya Vagbhat* used *Palash* in *shvitra*, *Palash* belonging to family Fabaceae, *Palash* is *katu*, *tikta* and *kashay* in *rasa*. Its *viapk* is *katu* and *veerya* is *ushna*, it alleviates *kapha* and *vata dosha* but aggravates *pitta dosha*, in various literature it is found that *palash* is useful in many diseases like *trisha*, *atisar*, *jwar*,

charmarog, *kushtha*, *apasmar* and *prameha*.

Materials and methods

Botanical description

Palash is medium sized deciduous tree, 10-15 meters high belonging to the family Fabaceae, is found throughout India. There are four types of *Palash rakta*, *pita*, *shwet* and *nila* as mentioned by *Raj Nighantu*. Out of above varieties, *shveta* and *nila* are seldom available and *pitta* is rare. As *pitta* variety is endangered and abundantly available *rakta* variety is used commonly in medicine and it is called as flame of the forest.

In *Nighantu*, many drugs have been described in detail by giving different synonyms and their properties and uses. The synonyms of *palash* which are found in most of *nighantu* have described the properties of *palash* as *tikta* and *kashaya rasa*, *virya ushna* but flower of *Palash* is sheet in nature. The fruits is *laghu ushna* and used in *prameha*, *arsha*, *krimi* and *vatakaphaj dosha*, according to *Bhavprakash Nighantu*.

Vernacular names of palash

English- flame of forest, bastard teak, Hindi- *Dhak*, *palas*, Assmis- *Palash*, Sanskrit- *Palash*, *kimshuk*, *vakrapushpa*, *raktapushpa*, Bengali- *palas*, *palash*, *gaccha*, Gujrati- *khakara*, *khakda*, *khakhado*, *khakhar*, *khakar*, *kesuda*, Kannada- *muttagamara*, *muttug*, *muttulu*,

Konkani- *palash*, Punjabi- *chichara*, *dhak*,
palash Tamil- *palashmaram*

Botaniacal classification

Kingdom - *Plantae*
Subkingdom - *Angiosperm*
Superdivision - *Eudicots*
Division - *Rosid*
Order - *Fables*
Family - *Fabaceae*
Genus - *Butea*
Species - *B.monosperma*

Samhita Era

Charak samhita: In *Charak samhita*,
Palash is not described in *mahakashay*.
But it is mentioned in *sutra*, *chikitsa* and
sidha sthan for treating the diseases like
arsha, *atisar* etc.

Sushrut samhita; in *Sushrut samhita*
Palash is described *rodhradi*, *muskakadi*,
ambasthadi and *nyagrodhadi gana*.

Kashyapa samhita: in this *Samhita* *kwath*
of *Palash* is use in give *mukti* from
sheetputana grah for *balak*.

Ashtang hridaya: *Palash* is mentioned in
rodhradi, *muskakadi*, *Ambasthadi* and
nygrodhadi gana.

Nighantu Era

In *Nighantu*, many drugs has been
described in detail by giving different
synonyms and their properties and uses.
The synonyms of *Palash* which are found
in a most of *Nighantu* are *Brahmavriksha*,
Smidvara and *vatapotha* etc. Many of the
Nighantu have been described the
properties of of *Palash*. i.e., the *rasa* of
palash tikta and *kashaya* and *virya ushna*

but flower of *Palash* is *sheet* in nature. The
fruit is *laghu* and *ushna* and used in
prameha, *Arsha*, *Krimi*, according to
Bhavprakash nighantu, while in *nighantu*
adarsha, the *rasa* of *Palash* is *katu*, *tikta*,
kashaya, *virya ushna*, *vipak katu*.

Shvitra

All skin disorder in *Ayurveda* is placed
under the name of *Kushtha*. In *Ayurveda*,
shvitra is considered as one of the varieties
of *kushtha*. *Shvitra* is an idiopathic
acquired as well as congenital
circumscribed. depigmentery condition
which is characterized by the appearance
of white on the skin. The stigma associated
with *shvitra* dates back to ancient time.
The symptoms of *shvitra* as described in
Ayurveda can be envisaged in vitiligo, a
pigmentation disorder of skin.

Charak samhita:

Acharya Charaka mentioned that *kilasa* is
mostly *tridoshaj* and is of three types
darun, *arun*, and *shvitra*, the disease spot
is red, coppery and white, and the
morbidty is located in *rakta*, *mansa* and
meda respectively.

Sushrut samhita:

Shvitra is also a form of *kushtha* itself. It is
three types those caused by *vata*, *pitta*, and
kapha. *Shvitra* is different from *kushtha* in
the sense that the former is located only in
skin and is free from discharge. By *vata* it
is round, reddish, rough and dusty; by *pitta*
it is like lotus leaf and with generalized

burning sensation while by *kapha* it is white, unctuous, thick and itching of them, that with contiguous patches, situated in end parts and having red hairs and also burnt with fire is incurable.

Ashtanghridaya:

The aetiology of *shvitra*, *kilasa* and *darun* is similar to that of *kushtha*. However, these have no discharge, their origin is consider to be from the three *dosha vata*, *pitta*, *kapha* and their location is in the three *dhatu rakta*, *mansa* and *meda*.

Classification of *Shvitra*:

1. According to *Dosha*-

Shvitra can be categorized on the basis of *dosh* variance or by involvement of *dosha* in the pathology or the dominancy of the *Dosha*. *Acharya Vagbhata* was mentioned them as.

Vataja

Pittaja

Kaphaja

2. According to *Dhatugatva*:

Acharya Charaka has mentioned three types of disease on the basis of *dhatugatva*.

Darun : *Rakta Dhatugata*

Arun : *Mansa Dhatugata*

Kilas : *Meda Dhatugata*

3 According to *Sadhyasadhytava*:

Asadhya-

Acharya Charaka mentioned that, *shvitra* which is undemarcated mutually, extensive, having red

hairs and arisen since many years is not curable.

Sadhya-

Shvitra is curable which has no red hairs, is thin, pale, and not so old and raised upwards in the middle, this type of *shvitra* is curable.

Nidan of Shvitra:

The different types of etiological factors described in different texts. In *Ayurvedic* classics no separate description on etiology is available. So the etiology of *kushtha* is to be taken into consideration to understand the aetiopathogenesis of *Shvitra*. *Acharya Charak* specifies, *virudhhahar* is the main factor and bad behavior is an additional factor of *Kushtha*. But in reference to *shvitra* specific bad behaviour and *purvajjanmakrita karma* specify for *shvitra*.

Samprapti of Shvitra:

Shvitra is described along with *Kushtha* and the *Samprapti* of *Kushtha* should be accepted as *Samprapti* of *shvitra*. *Shvitra* is a disease where there is involvement of all three *dosha* like *vata*, *pitta*, *kapha* and *dushya* are *twaka*, *lasika*, *rakta* and *mansa* and they are also vitiated due to vitiated *dosha*. After *Nidana sevan* these *dosha* circulate in the body by mean of blood vessels. Then they engorge in specific *dushya* and vitiate them also. The vitiated *dosha* which situated in the *dushya* are generating different type of *shvitra* depending upon the degree of *dosha* involvement, and also involvement of *dushya* that is *rasa*, *rakta*, *mansa* and

meda. So in same way they produced variety of symptoms. There may be also variation in colour, site, shape, border of patches.

Discussions

Shvitra is hypopigmentation disorder of skin, in which *shukla varna* appears on the skin. *Acharya Charaka* stated that, *shukla varna* comes under the *vikruta varna*. *Shvitra* is described along with *Kushtha* and the *samprapti* of *Kushtha* should be accepted as *samprapti* of *shvitra* according to *Acharya Vagbhat*, *Shvitra* is a disease, in which involvement of all three *doshas* and four *dushyas* as *rasa*, *rakta*, *mansa* and *meda*, they are also vitiated due to vitiated *dosha*. *Acharya Vagbhata* mentioned that, *kashaya rasa* has *karma* of *rakta vishodhan*, *kleda vishoshan* and *twakprasadan*, and it also clears the *strotorodh*. so palash could be helping in *rakta vishodhan*, it means purifies the *rakta*. *Kleda vishoshan* i.e. absorbs the *kleda* from skin. It acts as *twakprasadan*, and it clears the *strotorodh* means clear the channels of skin. *Kashaya rasa* also restore the normal colour of skin. And also acts as *kaphapittaghna*.

Conclusion

In the above light, on the basis of different *samhita palash* could be helpful in *shvitra*. Even *palash* has the properties which is might be effective in many diseases.

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Conflict of Interest: Non

Source of funding: Nil

Cite this article:

"Role of Palash (Butea monosperma) in Shvitra."

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Ayurlog: National Journal of Research in Ayurved Science- 2020; (8) (4):01-05