

COSMETIC APPROACH OF VARNA IN AYURVEDA

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INTRODUCTION

The definition of the health is given by *Ayurveda*, in which, the equilibrium state of *Dosha*, maintenance of *Jathargni*, equilibrium of the *Dhatus* as well as of *Malas*, well-functioning of all these and clarity of *Atma*, sense organs and mind – the person having all these is called in Healthy state. The equilibrium of all the *Dhatus* is the root cause for *Vridhhi*, *Bala*, *Varna*, *Oja*, *Jathargni*, *Medha*, *Ayu* and *Sukha* and disturbed state of the same results in ailments. Here, *Varnais* given as sign of Health. *Varna* is important biologically, cosmetically and socially. From the word 'Varna', all those qualities which can be recognised by *Chakshurindriya* are accepted. The colour, appearance and texture of the skin are known as complexion. *Varna* is attributed to colour or complexion.

All medical sciences aim at the alleviation of ailments, but *Ayurveda* aims to maintain the equilibrium of the body elements. The equilibrium of the *Doshas* and *Dhatus* is examined by many features, acquiring the normal *Varnais* one of them. *Varnais* accepted as one of the parameters, which represents the equilibrium of the body elements. In *Indriyasthan* of *Caraka Samhita*, a whole chapter deals with the predisposing symptoms. Thus, *Varna* becomes of vital importance. So *Varna* word is used in a broader aspect which includes most of the parameters which are necessary for healthy skin.

Prakrita –Vaikrita Varna

Acharya Caraka has stated 4 normal and 5 abnormal *Varnas* in our classics. Normal *Varnas* include *Krishna* (black), *Shyama* (bluish), *Shyamavadat* (bluish white) and *Avadat* (white). Whereas abnormal *Varnas* are *Nila* (blue), *Shyava* (grey), *Tamra* (coppery), *Harita* (green) and *Shukla* (albinotic/abnormal white) *Varna*.

Process and Principles of Varnotpatti

Referring to maximum classical texts, many factors seem to be participated in the process of *Varnotpatti*. They contribute in the formation of *Varna* in *Garbhavastha*. Once the complexion is formed, it cannot be changed at the latter stage of the life. Some factors also participate in the process of *Varnotpatti* after birth. Thus, normal *Varna* of an individual has to be considered under two headings:

1. Sahaja:

The colour and complexion, which is since birth, falls under this category.

2. Jatottara:

In the case of sun-exposure or hot atmosphere, sometimes the complexion of an individual may change from the complexion which is from birth. This type of colour and complexion falls under this category.

All these factors can be divided into two major categories:

A. Factors responsible for the formation of Varna in Foetal life

Role of Mahabhuta

Role of *Mahabhuta* in *Varnotpatti* is accepted in *Brhatrayi*. There are two different opinions available in the classical texts:

According Acharya Shusruta

Agni Mahabhuta has been considered as an originator of all the *Varnas*. The combination of *Agni Mahabhuta* with other *Mahabhuta* gives four types of *Varna*. *Agni Mahabhuta*, when mixes with dominantly *Jala Mahabhuta*, gives *Gaura Varna* to the foetus, contributes *Gaura Shyama Varna* by mixing with *Jala* and *Akasha*, *Krishna - Shyama* complexion with *Prithvi* and *Akasha*, and with dominantly *Prithvi* portion gives *Krishna Varna* to the child. (*Su.Sha.2/35*)

According Acharya Caraka and Vagbhata

According to them *Agni* dominantly associated with *Jala* and *Akasha* gives rise *Gaura Varna* to the Foetus, with *Vayu* and *Prithvi* *Mahabhuta* gives *Krishna Varna* and equal proportion of all the *Mahabhuta* contributes the *Shyama Varna* to the child. (Ch.Sha.8/15)

Role of Shukra

According to *Astanga Samgraha*, the color of *Shukra Dhatu* is also responsible for the formation of colour and complexion of embryo when the colour of *Shukra Dhatu* is white or having the colour of *Ghrita* or *Manda*, the progeny will be having *Gaura Varna* (fair), when it is like Oil, the child will be having *Krishna Varna* (black) and if when it is like the colour of Honey, the child will be of *Shyama Varna* (brownish).

Role of Manas Sthiti of Mother

Astanga Samgrahakara has advised that the lady should think about the persons having that type of *Rupa* and *Varna*, which she wants to have in her child. Colour of child changes according to the type of thinking of mother. Also *Acharya Caraka* has accepted the role of thinking of mother in the formation of *Varna*. (Ch.Sha.8/14)

Role of Ahara and Vihara of the mother

Acharya Vagbhata has clearly stated the influence of *Matur Ahara* and *Vihara* on the colour of child. Taking sweet foods like *Ksira* etc. and much use of water by the pregnant lady results in the fair complexion of her child, the use of *Tila*, *Vidahi* etc. by her results in the child having darker one and with mixed diets the child becomes having *Shyama Varna*.

Acharya Shusruta has stated about the influence of colour of *Ahara* on the colour of foetus (Su.Sha.2/35). *Caraka* and *Shusruta* both have established the relation of complexion with the nutrition in the context of '*Pumsavana Samskara*', which is practiced to change the sex of the foetus (Ch.Sha.8/12). While describing the factors which damage to the foetus, *Caraka* describes that excessive use of *Amla Rasa* by mother results in the child suffering from skin disorders and that of *Kashaya Rasa* results the child having *Shyava Varna*.

Role of Desha

Arundatta has given his opinion that the people of the Northern provinces have a fairer complexion and those in the Southern provinces are having dark complexion, while the people of the central region of India have the *Shyama Varna*. This is also accepted by modern science. The people with ancestors from sunny regions have darker skin than people with ancestors from regions with less sunlight.

B. Factors participating in the process of Varnotpatti after birth**Role of Jatharagni**

Acharya Caraka has clearly referred *Jatharagni* as a causative factor for *Ayu*, *Varna*, *Bala*, *Swasthya*, *Utsaha*, *Upacaya*, *Prabha*, *Oja*, *Teja* etc. (Ch.Chi.15/3)

Role of Ahara

Acharya Caraka has clearly mentioned that complexion, clarity, good voice, longevity, genius, happiness, satisfaction, nourishment, strength and intellect all these are conditioned by the food. (Ch.Su.27/349-350)

Role of Ahara-vidhi

The dietary pattern has the same importance as of the food. *Caraka Acharya* has given more emphasis on rules regulating to the intake of various drugs and diets, according to them the wholesome food consumed in the prescribed manner rules is said to be complexion promoter. (Ch.Su.27/3) Also it is mentioned that diet taken in appropriate quantity certainly helps the individual in bringing out the complexion without disturbing the *Prakriti*. (Ch.Su.5/8)

Relation of Varna with Dosha- Dhatu- Mala Varna according Dosh Pradhanya-**Vayu**

Among types of *Vayu*, *Udana Vayu* is responsible in *Varnotpatti*. *Vagbhata* mentioned that *Udana Vayu* is important factor for *Sharira Bala* and *Varna*.

Pitta

Among types of *Pitta* - *Ranjaka* and *Bhrajaka Pitta* are responsible for *Varna*. *Vagbhata* said that

Bhrajaka Pitta is situated in skin and it gives *Varna* of the skin.

Kapha

Likewise *Vayu* and *Pitta*, there is no clear references were found, but *Caraka* has mentioned that the persons of *Kaphapradhana Prakriti* are attractive which means *Kapha* is mainly responsible for Lustre and Texture of the skin.

Role of Dhatu in Varnopatti-

Rasa -

Rasa Dhatu plays important role in formation of colour and complexion of the skin. That is evident by the qualities of the *Tvakasarapurusha*. *Caraka* said that the skin of the *Tvakasarapurusha* is *Snigdha, Shlakshana, Komal, Prasanna, Sukshama* and *Prabhayukta*. (Ch. Vi. 8/103)

Rakta-

Caraka has mentioned *Vishuddha Rakta* as a responsible factor for *Sharira Bala, Varna, Sukha* and *Ayu*. (Ch. Su. 24/4)

Role of Mala in Varnopatti -

Though *Mala* do not have a direct role in *Varnopatti*, their presence in the body may create disturbances in *Varna* formation. Hence, their excretion through the body must be done.

FACTORS IMPROVING BEAUTY

Role of Dinacharya

As Cosmetic approach of the *Ayurveda* is related to healthy status of the body and mind, the Beauty and health both are given equally importance in *Ayurveda*. Only a healthy person looks beautiful. This daily routine is mentioned under the heading of '*Dinacharya*' by almost all the *Acharayas*. In '*Dinacharya*' following procedures are included (Ch. Su. 5). *Anjana, Dhoompana, Nasya, Dantadhavana, Taila Gandusha, Shiro Abhyanga, Abhyanga, Pada abhyanga, Udvartana, Snana*, wearing clean clothes, ornaments, Cutting Hair, nail etc. There is also an indication about use of umbrella alleviates natural calamities, guards against the sun, wind, dust and rains.

Role of Ritucharya

Like wise '*Dinacharya*', the description of '*Ritucharya*' is also given in almost all the *Ayurvedic* texts for the purpose of maintaining the health as well

as Beauty. '*Ritusandhi*' is the particular stage when many environmental changes are occurred and it affects on public health. The *Sanchaya, Prokopa* and *Prashama* of particular *Dosha* also take place in particular season. All these factors affect body and mind. Therefore, ancient *Acharyas* have mentioned special routines which have to be followed during particular season.

In context to Cosmetic aspect some references can be found like – In cold season (*Hemanta* and *Sishira*) the local application of *Agaru* paste is described to protect the skin against excessive cold. During *Sishira* one should avoid pungent, bitter, astringent, light, cold and *Vata* increasing foods and drinks (Ch. Su. 6/21). During Spring one should use paste of *Chandana* and *Agaru* on the body and diet mainly consisting of barley and wheat (Ch. Su. 6/25). In particular summer season the Sun, with his rays, draws up excessively the moisture of the nature hence, in that season sweet, cold, liquid and fatty foods and drinks are beneficial. (Ch. Su. 6/27) One should take sleep in cool room during day and on the top of the mansion with abundant air and cooled with moon rays during night, having pasted Sandal on one body. During summer, one should resort to forests, cold water and flowers (Ch. Su. 6/30-31). In this way, the *Aahara* and *Vihara* mentioned for the protection from excessive cold and heat during that season show carefulness and awareness about beauty and health.

The Role of Exercise

Regular exercise is essential for health and vibrant beauty because it helps clear the channels of the body so that the entire tissues can be thoroughly cleansed via sweat and other elementary channels and be well supplied with nutrients. Exercise is especially helpful for the skin because in order for the skin to renew itself and be fresh and clear, it needs to be cleared wastes. Exercise also strengthens the body's musculature and keeps it firm and shapely.

On a mental / emotional level, exercise helps to reduce tension, reduces anxiety and promotes a sense of overall well being. It also helps one to get deep, restful sleep. Listen to your body. It is good to extend yourself but don't just blindly push yourself though pain. Be kind and gentle to your body. Whatever you do, enjoy it and make it a natural part of your daily or weekly routine.

Role of Rasayana Therapy

Rasayana therapy is also unique concept of *Ayurveda*. It is a therapy of rejuvenation. It is highly indicative of higher Cosmetic sense of the *Acharyas*. By the invention of *Rasayana* therapy they tried to keep the person younger and attractive till the old age. They also tried for making the person younger again after he developed the changes of old age. Thus *Rasayana* therapy is very much useful to maintain *Yuvavastha*, delay the changes of *Vridhdhastha* and cure the changes of older age. Thus *Ayurveda* acts for beautification in many ways.

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