

THE ROLE OF AAHARA IN KUSTHA

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ABSTRACT

Skin shows the internal of an individual person. Healthy skin indicates the personality and level of health of an individual. Now a day due to western culture, it is very difficult to follow the schedules as described in *Ayurveda* science and due to this reason a large population is suffering from diseases like obesity, skin disorders, etc. According to *Ayurveda*, main cause of *Kustha* is *mithya aahara vihara* i.e. consumption of unhealthy food or lifestyle disturbance, environmental pollution stress. If a healthy person follow schedules as described in ayurveda maintain health. So to analyze the role of *aahara vihara* in *kustha* author effort to conclude this here.

Key words : *Kustha, Mithya aahara vihara,*

INTRODUCTION

The health is the foundation of a happy life. Skin is the mirror of one's health since it constitutes the first line of defence. It is one of the largest organs of the body. People around the world spent handful amount of money on skincare products. Diseases of skin accounts for great deal of misery, sufferings and economic loss. Ayurveda has described skin diseases under the heading of *Kustha* unlike its literal translation in English. *Kustha* is a disease characterized by any discoloration or deformation of skin¹. Simple skin infections like ringworm, fungal infections, eczema etc. are becoming common now a day.

Change in lifestyle is mainly responsible for these outbursts. Instead of using expensive topical treatments for skin ailments, overall health of body is the absolute cure of skin disorders. This can be mainly achieved by maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle. In the prognosis of *Kustha*, *aahara* plays an important role. So

the elaborate evaluation of role of *aahara* in *Kustha* needs to be reviewed.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To study the concept of skin diseases in ayurveda.
- To study the role of *aahara* in the skin diseases.
- To establish the importance of *aahara* as the causative factor and treatment of skin disorders.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Textual material available in *ayurveda samhitas* and commentaries, modern text and related websites have also been searched.

REVIEW OF KUSTHA

According to ayurveda, *Kustha* is disease recognised by discoloration or deformity of skin. It is similar to *Visarpa* (Herpes) except the tendency of spreading and severe burning sensation. Also *Visarpa* is *Raktadushtipradhana* while *Kustha* is always *Tridoshaja*.² Due to *Tridoshaja*

Dushti, the prognosis of all types *Kustha* is chronic.

Ayurveda has explained 18 types of *Kustha* with further classification of *MahaKustha* – 7 and *Kshudra Kustha* – 11.³ Total remission of the disease is possible in the initial stage. As the *doshadushti* increases due to continuous exposure to causative factors, the diseases becomes *Asadhya* (incurable).⁴

NIDANA OF KUSTHA (ETIOLOGY)

The etiological factors of *Kustha* can be categorized under following groups

aaharaj hetu (dietary factors)

The first and the foremost *hetu* of *Kustha* mentioned in all the *Samhitas* is *aaharaj nidana*. *Mithya Aahara*⁵ / *Vi-rodhi Anna*⁶ constitute the major cause of

Kustha. *Viruddha Aahara* (Dietetic incompatibilities) is described in detail as the cause of *Kustha*.

viharaj hetu (habitual factors)

Proper follow up of *Dincharya*, *Rutucharya*, *Aachar Rasayana*, *Aahara Vidhi Vidhana* and *Panchkarma* is important for maintenance of health. *Viharaj Hetu* results in immediate aggravation and vitiation of *Tridosha*.

vishesh hetu (exclusive factors)

These causes are different from *Aaharaj*, *Viharaj* and *Manasik nidana*. The difference is they cannot be explained with logical reasoning.

<i>Aaharaj Hetu</i>	<i>Viharaj Hetu</i>	<i>Aagantuj Hetu</i>
<i>Sheetoshna Vyatasat</i> (intermittent consumption of hot and cold stuffs)	<i>Ati Vyavaya</i> (excessive indulgence in sex), <i>Ati Vyayam</i> (Excessive exertion) and <i>Ati Santapa</i> (excess heat or temper) after excess eating of Incompatible food/ <i>Snehapana</i> (oleation) and <i>Vamana</i> (Emesis therapy)	<i>Vipran, Guru Gharshayatan</i> (Disrespect of priest, sage or teacher)
<i>Aptarman aaharaa</i> (Emaciating diet)	Entry in cold water after <i>Bhaya</i> (Frightening), <i>Shram</i> (Exertion) and <i>Santapa</i> (heat)	<i>Paap karma</i> (Wrong deeds or immoral behaviour)
Continuous, excess and simultaneous consumption of <i>Madhu, Phanit, Matsya, Lakuch, Mulak</i> and <i>Kakmachi</i> in spite of indigestion	<i>Chhardi Vega Dharan</i> (Stopping vomiting) & <i>Vega Vidharana</i> (restricting natural urges)	<i>Purva Janmakrit Karma</i> (Deeds of previous life)
Continuous, excess consumption of <i>Vi-rodhi Anna</i> (foods with opposite potencies), <i>Drava</i> (Liquids), <i>Snigdha</i> (Unctuous) and <i>Guru dravya</i> (Heavy meal)	<i>Sneha Atisevana</i> (Excessive use of oils)	<i>Sadhu Ninda evam Vadh</i> (accusing or murder of Sage)
Eating in spite of indigestion	Swimming/ Bathing in cold water coming from hot sun	<i>Anyesu Aaharaana</i> (Money launder-

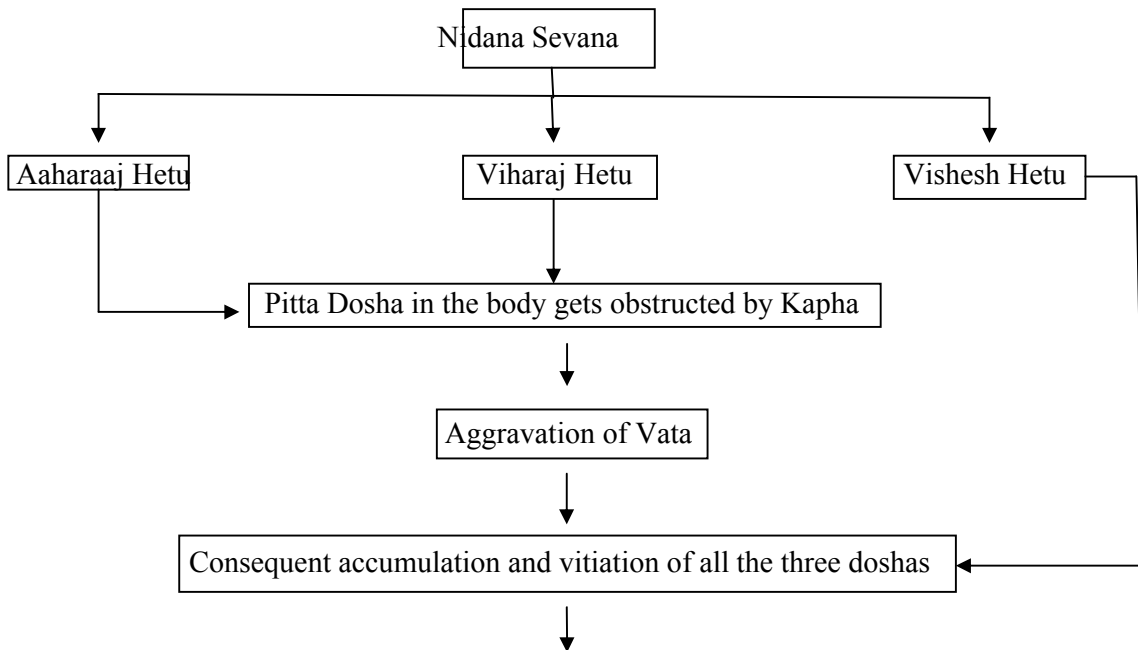
		ing)
Consumption of Navanna (newly grown cereals), Dadhi (yoghurt), Ati lavana (salty), Ati Amla Dravya (Sour) Masha (black gram), Mulaka (Raddish), Tila (Sesame), Kshir (milk), Guda (jaggary), and Pishtanna (starchy food)	<i>Divaswapna</i> (Sleeping during day time)	Praktan (Destiny)
Viruddh, Asatmya, Ajeerna and Ahita Aahara (Incompatible diet)	Improper Snehapana (Oleation Therapy) and Panchakarma Treatment	<i>Aadibalapravritta</i> (Hereditary)
	<i>Ajeerne Vyavaya</i> (Indulgence in sex when food is still undigested)	

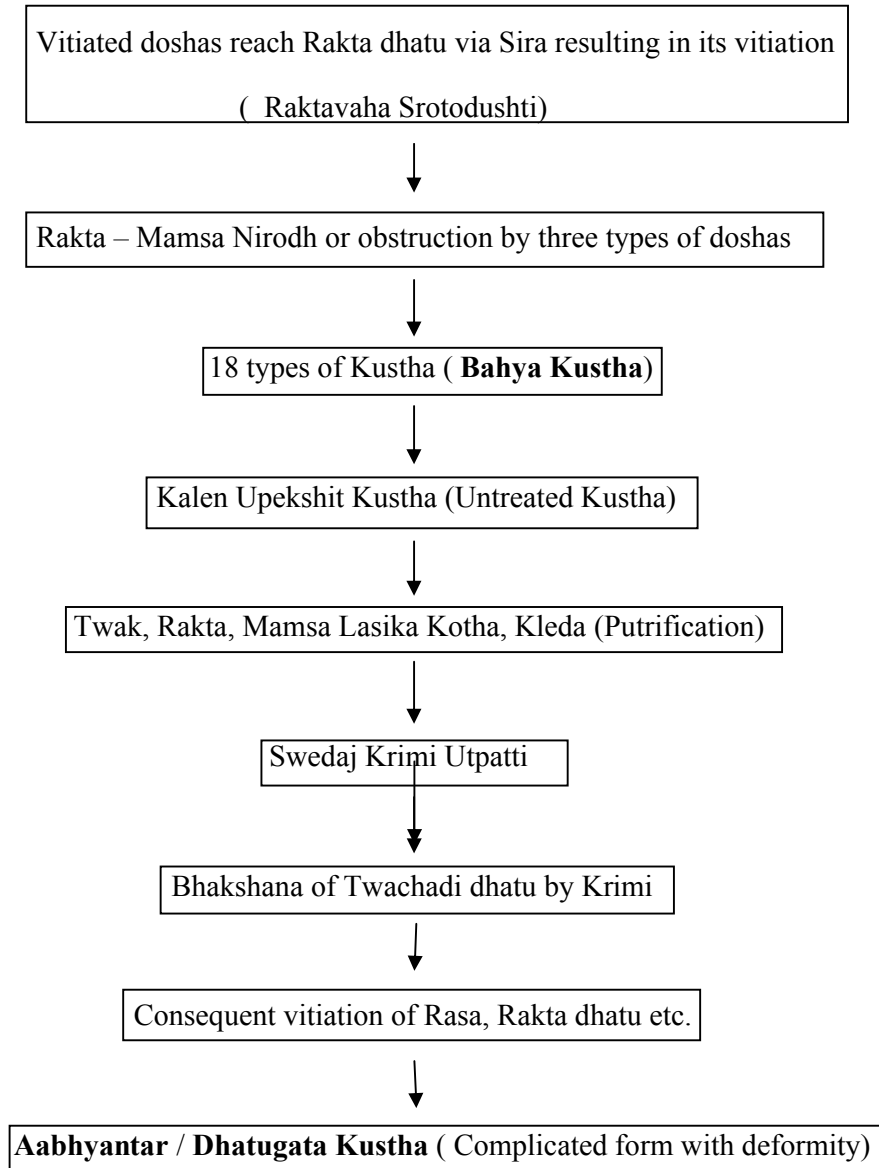
SAMPRAPTI OF KUSTHA

According to ayurveda, the seven important factors (*Saptako Dravya Samgraha*) related to *Kustha* are three *doshas* - *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and four *Dushya* – *Twacha* (Skin), *Rakta dhatu* (Blood), *Mamsa dhatu* (Muscle Tissue) and *Ambu/ Lasika* (Lymph).⁷

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According to *Bhel* , *Pitta* becomes aggravated excessively in body. In turn it vitiates *Raktadhatu*, *Mamsa dhatu* and *Twacha*.





DISCUSSION

The *nidana* and *samprapti* of *Kustha* mainly associated with *aahara*. *Aahara* is called *Prana*⁹ i.e. life depends on it. Ayurveda has detailed description regarding *Aahara*. *Tridosha* are considered as the basic entity responsible for diseased condition of body. *Tridosha* are considered as *Tri Sthambha*¹⁰ (Pillars) while *Aahara* is considered as *Trayopstambha*¹¹ (Supporting Pillars) of body. The pathogenesis of any disease involves Vitiated *Doshas* and

vulnerable *Dhatu*. *Tridosha* are continuously formed during *Avasthapaka* of *Aahara*.¹² It is these *doshas* which are affected by dietary abuses.

The *Aaharaj Nidana* of *Kustha* can be classified into

- Related to consumption of *Viruddha Aahara* (Dietary incompatibility)
- Related to *Aahara Vidhi Vidhana* (Eating habits)

- Related to *Ashtau Aahara Vidhi Vish-
eshaayatanani* (factors to be consid-
ered before making meal)

Viruddha aahara refers to diet that vitiates *Sharir dhatu* and *Dosha (Dehad-
hatu Pratyani)*. It is one of the major causes of all kinds of skin diseases. Con-
tinuous consumption of *viruddha aahara*
decreases *Dhatu Sarta (Vitality)* thus mak-
ing them susceptible to *dushit doshas*. Also
it is *Abhishyandi* (develops clamminess in
body) and vitiates all the three *doshas*.¹³
Thus just by simply avoiding *viruddha aa-
hara*, one can break down the foundation
of *Kustha*.

Jeerne Ashniyat (eating after previ-
ous meal is digested), *Virya Aviruddham*
(Eating food devoid of opposite potencies)
and *Aatmanam Abhisamiksya* (Taking food
in prescribed manner with due regards to
one self) are some of the most important
rules of *Aahara Vidhi Vidhana* (dietary
rules). Negligence in their practice mainly
affects status of *Agni*¹⁴ (Digestive power)
which in turns affects *Dhatvagni* resulting
in formation of subnormal *dhatu*. Also due
to *Agnimandya* the overall *pachana prak-
riya* (Conversion process) in the body also
slow down affecting *Bhrajak Pitta* respon-
sible for normal skin.

*Ashtau Aahara Vidhi Vish-
eshaayatanani*¹⁵ mainly deals with quali-
ties, processing of food and one's eating
habit. These factors are mainly considered
in treatment of *Kustha*. The treatment
mainly revolves around use of medicines
along with diet. For e.g. Preparation of old
and mature grains with *Mandukparni (Cen-
tella asiatica)*, *Avalguj (Psoralia corylifo-
lia)*, *Aatrushaka (Semicarpous anacar-
dium)* etc

Pathya aahara for *Kustha* includes

- *Laghu* (Light) , *Hitakar* (nourishing),
and *Tikta Shaka* (Bitter vegetables)
- Foods and *Ghrita* (ghee) containing
Bhallataka, Triphala and *Nimba*
- *Purana Dhanya* (aged cereals), *Jangal
Mamsa , Mudga, Patola*
- Avoid *Guru* (Heavy), *Amla* (sour),
paya (milk), *dadhi* (yoghurt), *Aanupa
Matsya* (river Fishes), *Guda* (jaggary)
and *tila* (sesame).¹⁶

Thus the role of *aahara* is very sig-
nificant in the pathogenesis and treatment
of *Kustha*. So one should always pay a lot
of attention to maintain healthy diet and
lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

Kustha in ayurveda unlike in mod-
ern science refers to all skin diseases that
involves discoloration or any abnormality
of skin. We are what we eat. Skin is the
outer covering of body. Thus the skin re-
flects the health of a person. The *nidana*
of *Kustha* are mainly related *aahara* and
vihara. *Aahara* is basic factor for the for-
mation of body entities. *Aahara* and
Aachara (Behaviour) are considered as
important part of treatment of *Kustha*.
Therefore emphasis should be given to die-
tary habits for total health.

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