

CONCEPT OF COSMETOLOGY IN ANCIENT INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SUSHRUTA SAMHITA

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ABSTRACT

The history of cosmetics extends at least 6000 years and is present in almost every society all over the world. Cosmetology is the science of beautifying skin and its appendages, which play an important role in sociosexual communication. It specially deals with the beautification of face, hair and skin. The clinical cosmetology ranges from exfoliation, extraction, chemical peeling, laser hair removal, hair transplant, cosmetic surgery and plastic surgery. The modern cosmetology has developed many advanced devices and technologies, although the root of this science is found in the ancient period. Now a day, it has been transformed and came up with a very new marketing branch known as beauty industry. This review is written by focusing the concept of cosmetology in India only especially *Samhita* period. *Sushruta Samhita* which has given the innovative cosmetic approach is the base for this review.

Keywords: Hypopigmentation, hyperpigmentation, hair removal, hair regeneration, rhinoplasty, cosmetology

INTRODUCTION

Definition of beauty is different in different cultures and countries but overall we can define it as the quality of a person that gives immense pleasure to the senses or pleasurable intensifies the mind and/or spirit. The famous saying 'Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder' seems to reflect the enriched human culture, nature and perception of beauty. The human beings have natural desire to look beautiful and hence man is using cosmetics for this purpose from the very initial period of civilization.

History of civilization of India and ancient cosmetology:

Indian civilization has long standing history of more than 5000 years. *Harappa* and *Mohenjodaro* civilizations are the oldest of all. Some specimen like face paint, collyrium pots, bronze oval mirrors, combs, razors of different types, dressing tables, etc. found in Mohenjodaro prove that even at that time cosmetics were used in all levels of society.¹ Eye decoration with collyrium, perfumed unguents, beautiful garments and flower garlands are mentioned in *Rigveda*.² In *Atharvaveda*, many chanting highlight the significance of improving the *Vrana*, *Kasha*, luster and glaring appearance of body.³ In *Garud Purana*, various beautifying *Yoga* are mentioned.

The two great epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* give ample description about beauty of important personalities like *Ramchandra*, *Sita*, *Nakula*, *Sahadeva*, etc. Performing *Chandrayana Vrata* for acquiring beauty and popularity is mentioned in *Anushasan Parva* of *Mahabharata*.⁴

Cosmetology:

The word cosmetology is derived from the Greek word '*Kosmetikos*' means skilled in the use of cosmetics. It is the science of alteration of appearance and modification of beauty. Clinical cosmetology involves passage of active ingredients across skin, thereby altering the physiology of the area. The services offered by cosmetology can be classified as Dermatology, Trichology, Cosmetic surgery and Plastic surgery.

Dermatology – Dermatology is the branch of medicine dealing with the skin, its structure, functions and diseases. Therapies provided by the dermatologist are treatment of warts by cryosurgery, laser therapy for the management of birth mark and skin disorders like vitiligo and for tattoo removal, chemical peels for the treatment of acne, melisma and sun tan.

Trichology- Trichology is the branch of dermatology dealing with health of hair and scalp. It offers the treatments like hair removal with laser or other modalities, hair transplant for baldness, premature graying and diseases of scalp like eczema, psoriasis, seborrhea dermatitis etc.

Cosmetic surgery- The procedures, techniques and principles of cosmetic surgery are entirely focused on enhancing a patient's appearance. The key goals of cosmetic surgery are improving aesthetic appeal, symmetry and proportion. The scope of cosmetic surgery includes breast enhancement, facial contouring by rhinoplasty, chin or cheek enhancement, facial rejuvenation by face lift, eyelid lift, neck lift, brow lift, body contouring by tummy tuck, liposuction, gynaecomastia treatment and skin rejuvenation by laser resurfacing, botox, filler treatment etc.

Plastic surgery - Plastic surgery is focused on repairing defects to reconstruct a normal function and

appearance. It is a surgical specialty dedicated to reconstruction of facial and body defects due to birth disorders, trauma, burns and diseases. Plastic surgery is intended to correct the dysfunctional areas of the body and is reconstructive in nature. Examples of plastic surgery procedures are congenital defect repair like cleft lip and cleft palate repair, breast reconstruction, burn repair surgery, scar revision surgery etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW-

Cosmetology in *Sushruta Samhita*:

In ancient India *Sushruta*, the father of surgery has contributed a lot in the field of cosmetology. In his compendium *Sushruta* has not only described the medicinal and parasurgical management of different ailments of skin and hair but also presented the detailed account cosmetic, plastic and reconstructive surgery.

He has mentioned many diseases of skin and their treatment approach like *Shvitra*, *Nyachcha*, *Vyanga*, *Nilika*, *Tarunyapitika* etc, which hamper the normal character of skin. *Shvitra* is characterized by the hypopigmentation of skin. In the treatment of *Shvitra Kushtha*, *Sushruta* has mentioned many formulations like *Jalagandaja Kshar*, *Avalgujadi Lepa* and *Tutthadi Lepa* etc.⁵ *Nyachcha*, *Vyanga* and *Nilika* are the skin diseases characterized by hyperpigmentation of skin. Treatment mentioned by *Sushruta* in these diseases is *Siravedha* i.e. puncturing the vein of forehead and then rubbing roughly the skin. Further he has mentioned the application of paste of bark of trees having milky sap added with their own milk sap or with the paste of one of the following combination. 1. *Bala*, *Atibala*, *Yastahva* and *Rajani*. 2. *Payasya*, *Agaru*, *Kaliyaka* and *Gairika*. Paste of tusk (canine tooth) of a boar mixed with honey and *Ghee* or paste of *Kapittha* and *Rajadana* is also beneficial.⁶

In the wound management while mentioning sixty measures (*Shashti Upakrama*), *Sushruta* has mentioned special management for scar hyperpigmentation as *Pandukarma* and for the hypopigmentation he has mentioned *Krishnakarma*. For *Pandukarma*, he has mentioned to soak the fruit of *Rohini* in goat's

milk for seven days and then its fine paste to be applied locally.⁷ For *Krishnakarma*, *Bhallataka* oil mixed with the ash made from burning hoof of domestic animals of marshy regions is advised for local application on hypo pigmented patches.⁸ Acne is also one of the skin conditions which hamper the beauty of the face. This condition usually affects the people in adolescence so *Sushruta* has termed it as *Yuvanpidika*. He has mentioned *Shodhan Chikitsa* (treatment of purification) like *Vamana* for this condition along with the local application of paste of *Vacha*, *Rodhra*, *Saindhava* and *Sarshapa*.⁹

Hair regeneration or hair removal: In context to the wound management, *Sushruta* has mentioned that after healing of the wound and development of the scar sometimes that part of skin does not show normal hair growth. For the regeneration of hair in this part, he has mentioned some unique formulations. He has mentioned that by the application of combination of ash of *Hastidanta* (elephant's tusk) and *Rasanjana* one can grow hairs even on the palms. Ash of the skin (leather), hairs, hoofs, horn and bones of four-footed animals mixed with oil applied on the skin makes hairs to grow again. Also *Kasis*, leaves of *Naktamala* soaked in the juice of *Kapittha* and applied locally is best remedy to regrow hairs.¹⁰ *Sushruta* has mentioned the *Indralupta*, a disease of hairs characterized by the loss of hairs, in *Kshudraroga*. This can be compared with alopecia areata. While mentioning its treatment *Sushruta* said that after massaging and fomentation, vein on the scalp should be punctured. Then the skin should be incised and paste of *Maricha*, *Manasheela* and *Tuttha* or *Tagar* and *Devadaru* should be applied. After incising the affected scalp area application of paste of *Gunja* is beneficial for hair regrowth. Oil prepared with *Malati*, *Karaveer*, *Agni* and *Naktamal* is best for the cure of *Indralupta*.¹¹ *Sushruta* has also mentioned hair removal as a procedure to help in wound healing. Wound surrounded by the hairs does not heal properly. So hairs should be removed by using scissors, razors or forceps. Two parts of ash of *Shankh* (conch), one part of *Harital* macerated in

vinegar and applied on the area is the best remedy to make the hairs fall off. Oil of *Bhallataka* together with milky sap of *Snuhi* is also the best to ward off hairs. *Kadali*, *Dirghavrinta* made into ash applied removes the hairs. Tail of *Agargodhika* (house lizard) along with *Rambha* (*Kadali*), *Ala* and seeds of *Ingudi* should be burnt together to make ash. This ash mixed with oil and cooked in sunlight and applied on the area removes hairs.¹²

Otoplasty- (Repairing ear): *Sushruta* has dedicated a full chapter describing various techniques of repair of severed ears and techniques of reconstruction of ears, nose and lips. These techniques are the proof of great expertise of *Sushruta* in the field of plastic and reconstructive surgery. He has mentioned fifteen kinds of techniques of repairing severed ear as follows – 1) *Nemisandhanak*, 2) *Utpala Bhedyak*, 3) *Valluraka*, 4) *Asangima*, 5) *Gandakarna*, 6) *Aharya*, 7) *Nirvedhima*, 8) *Vyayojima*, 9) *Kapatsandhika* 10) *Ardhakapat Sandhika*, 11) *Sankshipta*, 12) *Hinakarna*, 13) *Vallikarna*, 14) *Yashtikarna*, 15) *Kakaushataka*. Out of these techniques, *Gandakarna* is cutting a piece of muscle of the cheek, maintaining its attachment and turning it over on the damaged pinna. This is the common method of otoplasty operation even in the present era. *Aharya* is fabricating the pinna of the ears from the flaps of muscles of both the cheeks. *Nirvedhim* is making the pinna by cutting a piece of muscle from the back of the ears.¹³ When the pinna including lobe is absent then it should be repaired by cutting the skin at the back of the ears. When the pinna is present but lobe is absent, then flap of living muscle is cut from the cheek and retaining its connection intact, it is turned over to the site of lobe after scrapping the area and the lobe is reconstructed.¹⁴

Rhinoplasty: *Sushruta* has also mentioned the same method of flap implant in rhinoplasty as in otoplasty. The method is as follows - A leaf of a tree should be taken and cut to the shape, double the size of the nose. This is placed on the cheek and the cheek muscle is cut to the same size, raising a flap of it and maintaining the connection with the live muscles.

The flap is placed quickly on the mutilated nose after scrapping it, suitable bandage tied, inserting two tubes into the nose one on each nostril. Lastly powder of *Patanga*, *Yashtimadhu* and *Anjana* should be sprinkled on site and dressing is done. *Tila Taila* should be sprinkled frequently. After the union is healed, the flap of muscle should be cut allowing the remainder intact.¹⁵

Oroplasty: joining the mutilated lips should be done in the same way as joining of mutilated nose but without the insertion of tubes.¹⁶

DISCUSSION

Sushruta Samhita (*Sushruta's* compendium) which describes the ancient tradition of surgery in India is considered as one of the most brilliant gems in Indian medical literature. This treatise contains detailed description of teaching and practice of the great ancient surgeon *Acharya Sushruta*, whose surgical wisdom is relevant even in present era. Most of the part of his compendium is dedicated to surgical diseases and their conservative and surgical management. Along with surgical knowledge *Sushruta* has touched many fields in the branch of medicine both preventive as well as curative aspects. When it comes to cosmetology, *Sushruta* has dealt with every aspect including dermatology, trichology, cosmetic surgery and reconstructive surgery. In this context he has not only mentioned medicinal, purificatory and parasurgical management but also described the details of surgical management.

We can conclude that *Sushruta's* contribution in cosmetology is very important as he is the pioneer of modern era's cosmetology. Many of his formulations are still under clinical trials and his principles of management always give us proper direction for innovative treatment in *Ayurveda* and cosmetology. The most important aspect of his contribution is the method of plastic and reconstructive surgery which is popularly known as Indian method of plastic surgery. No doubt *Acharya Sushruta* is called as the father of Surgery.

CONCLUSION

Cosmetic industry is achieving heights day by day with new advances and technologies. But there are certain side effects of these treatments. Cosmetic treatment for skin ailments can cause skin redness, irritation, dryness, burning, scarring and change in the pigmentation of skin. Laser treatment also has some hazardous side effects like scars, wounds, purpura, epidermal thickness and squamous cell carcinoma.¹⁷ Complications of chemical peels include scarring, infections, reactivation of herpes simplex infections. Deep peels generally require extensive local anaesthesia, conscious sedation and occasionally general anaesthesia which carries its own risks.¹⁸ Hair transplant also have some unpleasant side effects like bleeding, infection, temporary thinning of hairs, itching, scarring, hiccup, pain and numbness.¹⁹ We need to find other alternatives to avoid these side effects. The world will look forward to Ayurveda to find herbal and formulations in cosmetics as they are not having such hazards like modern cosmetic treatments. *Sushruta* in his compendium, *Sushruta Samhita* has given many formulations for diseases of skin and hairs. There is need to study and experiment these formulations to prove their efficacy and establish the new form of treatment with these formulations. *Sushruta* has also given the base for the plastic and reconstructive surgery. It is our duty to develop this branch of cosmetology by making advances sticking to the basic knowledge shared by *Sushruta*. That is the only way to establish the contribution of *Sushruta* in cosmetology.

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