

Asian Resonance

Cosmetic Aspects of Some Herbs from Valmiki Nagar, Bihar



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Abstract

In Ayurvedic system of medicine from remote past, herbs have been treated as an integral part of health care system among folklore. Besides health care, herbs from which different types of cosmetics, colour and allied articles are produced also do beautification of our body.

Keywords : Herbal cosmetics, Colours, Valmiki Nagar.

Introduction

Cosmetics are the substances especially prepared to add beauty and increase the smartness of the person. The use of cosmetics dates back to the remotest antiquity. Study of primitive cultures indicate that cosmetics beautification have been used in practice all over the world (Upadhyaya, 1985).

Actually, there are sixteen modes of beautification called "Solah Shringar" in traditional Indian literature where one herbs or a mixture of herbs are applied externally for this purpose. Even certain metallic preparations and animal products have been prescribed for local application as well as oral administration to beautify different parts of our body. While using metallic preparations which, however, very few, are always incorporated with herbal extract or animal products. The modes of herbal recipes according to Upadhyaya (1980) are as such -

1. Single herbal recipes;
2. Compound herbal recipes;
3. Compound herbal + animal product recipes;
4. Compound herbal + metallic recipes;
5. Compound herbal + animal products + metallic recipes;
6. Metallic recipes processed with herbs / animal preparations.

Materials and Methods

All plants existing on this earth are confined with economic qualities edible, medicinal or commercial. The plants used in cosmetics do not merely enhance beauty but also have got definite medicinal values (Sharma, 1979). They all are being tested since time immemorial and proved to have side benefits in place of adverse effects generally produced by the synthetic and chemical bases harmful products (Prashar, 1985). A number of plants may be processed in cosmetics, which is in great demand all over the world (Chunekar, 1969; Nadkarni, 1975).

The present work is based on the result of intensive study of some herbs of cosmetic values grown in different places like Harnataand etc. of Valmiki Nagar, a block of sub-division Bagaha under the district West Champaran, Bihar. During the field work the plants of cosmetic aspects as used by local people, vaidyas, Tharu etc. were explored and collected and preserved on herbarium sheets (method used as given by Jain and Rao, 1978). The tribal people and indigenous communities use to collect and utilize various parts like roots, rhizomes, tubers, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds, bark etc. sometimes entire plants of easily growing herbs season wise.

Detail of few plants of cosmetic aspects is given as such:

1. *Asparagus racemosus* Willd.
Common Name: Satawar, Satawari.
Family: Liliaceae.
Parts used: Fasciculated root stock.
Uses: The fasciculated roots are blended in massage oils and creams as cure of wrinkled and vitiate the skin among aging people.
2. *Azadirachta indica* A. Juss.
Common Name: Neem
Family: Meliaceae.

Parts used: Bark, leaves, seeds.

Uses: The paste of barks, leaves and seeds are applied externally in skin care, hair care and scalp care.

3. *Curcuma longa* Linn.

Common Name: Haldi

Family: Zingiberaceae.

Parts used: Rhizome.

Uses: The infusion or paste of rhizomes form a good face lift and used in face pack to cure acne and blemishes. The paste also forms old ritual in India to apply it as "Ubtan" a paste of Turmeric and mustard oil to bride and bridegroom during pre-marital ceremony.

4. *Eclipta alba* (L.) Hassk.

Common Name: Bhangraiya.

Family: Asteraceae.

Parts used: Entire plant.

Uses: The paste of entire plant is applied for profuse and healthy growth of hairs, with their original black colour.

5. *Emblia officinalis* Gaertn.

Common name: Amla

Family: Euphorbiaceae.

Parts used Fruit.

Uses: Fresh fruits form a rejuvenating tonic, and have a rich source of ascorbic acid. The infusion of dried fruits is applied externally for promoting healthy growth of hairs.

6. *Aloe vera* (L.) Burm.f.

Common name: Ghritkumari.

Family: Liliaceae.

Parts used: Leaves.

Uses: The bulbs of leaves are used externally and internally in hair fall, dandruff, sun burn, skin eruption and fire burns twice a day.

7. *Acacia concinna* DC.

Common name: Shikakai.

Family: Mimosaceae.

Parts used: Pods.

Uses: The infusion of dried pods is blended in hair cleanser, with fruits of *Sapindus trilobatus* Gaertn. (Sapindaceae) to promote hair growth, stop hair splitting and check falling of hairs and dandruff.

8. *Opuntia dillenii* Haw.

Common name: Nagphani

Family: Cactaceae.

Parts used: Fruit.

Uses: The paste of fruits exhibits red in colour which is used in lip care.

Observation

Field collection was made through extensive survey of the experimental site during different seasons. A total number of thirty different plant species of cosmetic values were identified. Among these thirty different plant species eight plant species were luxuriantly used as cosmetics by the local people of different places of Valmiki Nagar. The herbs mentioned above cover a number of our body parts e.g., skin, hair, general body complaints besides

providing natural colours and nutrients. A cure to sunburn, complexion brightener, hair remover, preservative etc. are possible from these herbs. Thus these herb plants have numerous values to meet their day to day need including health care in general and as cosmetics in particular.

Discussion

India has gifted with the rich source of plants used to fulfill the different requirements of human beings. Human beings are beauty conscious. For this purpose people depend on pharmaceutical products which are expensive and have side effects. According to a survey that there was no deduction on the expenses incurred on cosmetics. Thus, it becomes the duty of manufacturers and medical professionals to take the help of Mother Nature to provide safe and harmless substitute of harmful chemical based products. These products have side benefits, besides being effective in main problem they tone up whole system and promote radical cure (Upadhyay, 1985).

Diet, nutrition, health status, exercise, yoga and meditation i.e. holistic approach is essential for a beautiful body. Ayurveda put stress on this approach while using local application and oral administration of suitable herbs.

In this paper authors have tried to study the different plant species which are directly used as raw to improve beauty by the local people of Valmiki Nagar. Their hierarchical knowledge from their ancestors has intermingled in their culture and livelihood.

Conclusion

These plants are very much commonly used as cosmetics by local and tribal people of Valmiki Nagar of district West Champaran of Bihar on account of easily availability.

They are potential renewable natural resources. Therefore, their methods of conservation and sustainable utilization must necessarily involve a long term integrated and scientifically oriented action programme. This should involve the pertinent aspects of protection, preservation, maintenance, exploration, conservation and sustainable utilization.

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