

HISTORY OF INDIAN CONCEPT OF COSMETOLOGY – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT :

Apparent cosmetic approach has importance since the development of civilization. From the very first civilization to the present world, man is trying to find new ways to become more attractive and beautiful. Today the science of cosmetology has reached to its peak, but it has its roots somewhere in the past. So this review is written to know the past. Only Indian history of cosmetology is considered here.

Key words: *Anjana* collyrium,cosmetology.

INTRODUCTION: The word cosmetology is derived from the Greek word: “*Kosmetikos*” meaning “skilled in the use of cosmetics”. So, Cosmetology is the science of alternation of appearance and modification of beauty. Man is using this science from the very first day of development of its civilization. We have this innate desire to look good. This is the reason because of which references of cosmetology are found in all ancient text. As *Vedas* are considered as the source of almost all spiritual and secular conventions, observations and pursuits of human being, abundant cosmetics are also mentioned here. Other texts also have abundant description regarding cosmetics. *Ayurvedic* literature and other ancient allied texts provide us knowledge regarding natural cosmetics.

HISTORY OF COSMETOLOGY:

1)Prevedic Kala: As we know ‘*Mohenjo-daro*’ and ‘*Harrapa*’ are the oldest civilizations. Even at that time cosmetics were used in all level of society. Materials made of ivory and metal, used for holding and applying cosmetics, prove that they knew

the use of face paint and collyrium (*an-jana*). Bronze oval mirrors, ivory combs of various shapes, different types of razors for depilatory purpose, even small dressing tables have been found at *Mohen-jo-daro* and other sites.¹

2)Vedic kala: Various medicaments for individual beautification can be seen in *Vedic* literature. Eyes decorated with *an-jana* were said to be best in each and every *kalpa* (Era).²In *Rigveda* collyrium (*An-jana*), perfumed unguents (*Punyagandha* or *Surabhi*), beautiful garments and flower garlands (*Suvasah*) were mentioned.³In a *verse* un-widowed dames were advised to use kohl and unguent to become free from sorrow⁴. *Agni deva*, *Indra*, *Surya* and *devi Usha* are described as beautiful ones. Here beauty of *Agni* is praised in various *sukta*⁵ and it is said that by worshipping *Agni* one can acquire the glow and beauty just like him⁶.The word *sunder* and *Sugandhi* is used for *Agni* (the god of fire), well-wisher of men, who carries the oblations with his redolent-mouth⁶.*Srakwas* used for flower garlands and *Aswins* were called as *Push-karasrajau*, wearing garlands of Lilies.

In 'Atharvaveda' many mantras highlight the significance of improving the Varna, the Keshha, lustre and the glaring appearances of the body. 'Aasuri herb Rajika' was used by the woman for increasing her beauty and in attracting other people towards her⁷. The description of *Sahas-traparni* (Sankhapushpi) herb has been also found as *Viryavardhaka*, *Saubhagya karak* and *Vashikarana*. *Anjana* has been said to be the mark of Beauty. Use of 'Karambha' for the removal of 'Vishajanya Vaivarnya' is mentioned. Paste of *Kusth*, *Nalada*, *Yastimadhu* and *anjana* were used externally as a cosmetic for cooling effect⁸. The drug like *Nakta*, *Rama*, *Krishana* and *Bramhasangakaushdhi* have been mentioned to be used in *Palitya* (cavities-whitening of hairs).⁹

3) Pauranik Kala: Description of lord Krishna as the one who have *Kasturi Tilaka* on forehead, *koustubha* (ornament) on chest, pearl over nose, *Kanganam* (bracelet) around wrist, necklace made of pearls and total body applied with *Hari chandana* (the yellow fragrant sandal wood etc shows the use of cosmetics in daily routine.

In the prayers of different deity or God various beauty aids are mentioned in *Puranas* e.g. *nilanjanasambhasham* –in *Shani* diety prayers, *Sugandhipushativardhanam* and *Gudakesh* in *Shiva* diety prayers. In *bhavishya puranamadhyam-parva* 2nd chapter painting over ladies nails, breast and different hair styles are also mentioned.

Ramayana: The great epic 'Ramayana' give ample description about Beauty of important personalities like 'Ramachandra', 'Sita', etc. Important descriptions regarding *Anangaraga* are produced and presented by *Anusuyadevi* to *Sita Devi* during her visit to *ashram*.

Anusuya Devi blessed *Sita Devi* with everlasting flower, clothes, ornaments and external applications that increases the glamour and beauty. 'Lord *Ramachandra*' during his 14 years exile in the forest was using the latex from the *Banyan* tree for the purpose of dressing his hair.⁹ In *Sundar Kanda* *Sita Devi* tells *Hanuman* that, *Shri Rama* puts *tilaka* (a mark of beauty spot made on forehead) of *Manahshila*, *Candana*, *Sarala*, *Padmaka*, *Agaru*, *Devadaru* etc. were used.¹⁰

Mahabharata: During this period lamps were filled with perfumed oils; fragrant powders were used for face and body; bed sheets were variegated and scented; arrows and weapons were worshiped by applying sandal paste and decorating with flower garlands. In the 'Anushasan Parva of Mahabharata' for acquiring Beauty and popularity, *Chandrayana Vrata* in 'Magasirsha Masa' has been mentioned¹¹. Narration of the bride 'Draupadi' during the time of 'Swayamvara' and her role as 'Sairandhri' or an aesthetician is another example outlaying the cosmetic sense of that period.¹²

5) Samhita kala: *Ayurveda* gave paramount consideration to the importance of Beauty irrespective of age or sex, but importance of health has never been neglected.

The description of *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya*¹³ indicates the cosmetic sense of that period (*Pathya-Apathya* and dietary regimes are also important factors which not only affects health but also beauty. The unique concept of *Ayurveda* like *Vyayama*, *Abhyanga* (Massage), different types of *Snana* etc.¹⁴ are the best indicators of value of Cosmetology during that period. Moreover, the concept of *Rasayana* therapy suggests the importance of *Yuvavastha*.¹⁵

(A) Charaka Samhita₅

Maharshi Charaka has grouped different herbs of cosmetological importance according to their effects such as *Varnya*, *Keshya*, *Vayasthapana* etc.¹⁶. Many hygienic performances like *Abhyanga*, *Snana*, *Lepa* etc. are stated which enhances the beauty¹⁷. Certain dietary regimens are also mentioned which shows the importance of food in creating and maintaining Beauty. '*Astauninditiya adhyaya*' explains and demarks the limitation of the healthy outlook, unhealthy outlook and sense of Beauty in it.¹⁸

A little advanced Cosmetic approach is seen in *Sushruta Samhita*. This is evident from the '22 *Upkramas*' explained under the heading of '*Vaikritapaham*' as *Alepana*, *Pariseka*, *Utsadana*, *Pandukarma*, *Roma sanjanana* etc.¹⁹ Elaborate description of '*Kshudra Rogas*'²⁰ which are fundamentally related to Cosmetic science also support aesthetic sense of that period. Moreover, *Sushruta* was the first person who established 'Plastic Surgery' like 'Auroplasty' and 'Rhinoplasty'.²¹

In '*Astanga Samgraha*' and '*Astanga Hridaya*', characterized two groups of herbs labeled as '*Rodhradigana*' and '*Eladigana*' as the '*Varnya* group'. Both the *Acharya* have also described '*MukhaLepa*', '*Mukha Lepa Varjya*' and '*Samyak Prokta Mukha Lepa Laksana*'. In '*Astanga Hridaya*' *Acharya Vagbhata* has mentioned six different type of *Mukha Lepa* according to season)²²

7) Madhya Kala: During the *Mughal* rule the cosmetic science got more importance. This is evident from the references available in the texts like *Sharangdhara*, *Bhavapraksha*, *Yogaratnakara* etc. In *Chakradatta*,²³ *Mukha Kantikara*, *Mukha Saundaryakara* etc. *Lepas*,

Various Oil and Ghee for better complexion, treatment of the *Kshudra Rogas* and other skin ailments are described. *Sarangdhara Samhita* refers certain special *Lepas* useful in *Arunsika*, *Indralupta*, *Darunaka*, *Palita* etc., *Snanas* and *Udvardana* are for the purpose of improving the Beauty²⁴

In *Bhavaprakasha*²⁵ special drugs and diets for improving health, vigour and beauty are mentioned. Some special *udvardana* and *snana* (medicated bath) for the purpose of improving beauty has been mentioned in it.

*Yogratnakar*²⁶ detail description of *Dinacharya* and *Ratricharya*. Various plants having specific beautifying effects are also mentioned in this text.

Here it should be noted that *Ayurveda* has guarded the sense of being a healthy, where ever beauty is considered.

Allied Texts:

1. Kautilya Arthashastra (350-283BC):

Some more details of cosmetics as found in *kotilya arthashastra* as following:

- A special oil (prepared from Mustard seed which were previously kept in the urine of got) is mentioned which can alter the colour of hairs of biped and quadruped animals on topical application. The oil is for seven nights.
- Oil extracted from white mustard seeds, which was previously kept in urine of a white cow or a white donkey, can impart as white colour as the fibre of Ark plant.
- Whoever eats a Mixture of powders of *shatavari*, *koshatki* and *kukkutu* roots for one month will become fair
- Whoever uses the decoction of *Vata* for bathing and past of *Sahchar* will become black.

- Paste of bitter gourd, a sinking insect and a white house lizard when applied to hair, the letter becomes as white as hairs.²⁷

2. In Buddhist literature: In *khuddakapada* there are ten *sikkhapada*. The 8th *sikkha* restricts for wearing of flower garlands, use of perfumes, anointing the body, decorating with brilliant dresses, ornaments etc.

In other important Buddhist text i.e., *Brahmajalasutta*, an exclusive list of dressing and bedecking was mentioned as *ucchadana* (anointing with perfumes) *parimardana*, *adasa* (looking once face in the mirror), *anjana*, *malavilepana*, *mukhalepana*, *hattabhandha* (tying bracelet on arms), *sikhavbandha* (hairdressing or plating of hair), *unhisa* (wearing turban), *Mani* (wearing jewels) and *odaramvattham Digha* (wearing embellished and brilliant garments).

3. Kamasutra (100-200CE-by vatsyayana): *Kamasutra* has quite explicit work on cosmetology. *Vatsyayana* in *Kamasutra* stressed on learning sixty-four arts (*Kalas*) of *kamashastraby* every woman to get a higher status in the society. Out of these 64, eight arts are connected with preparation and use of beauty aids and beauty accessories. They are: “*Visheshakachedyama*” means decorating face, hairs and other body parts with *tilakam*; “*Darshana-vasanangaraga*” means decorating teeth and clothes beautifully; “*Gandha-yukti*” means perfume preparing techniques; “*karnapatrabhanga*” means decorating ear lobules with ornaments prepared from ivory or conch shell etc. (*Kamasutra* 7th chapter)

Saubhagy karanamayoga is one such remedy used for protection and enrichment of beauty. A powder prepared from *kustha*, *tagara* and *talishapatra* for external use

and powder of *padma*, *utpal*, *nagkesara* along with honey or ghee is indicated orally for this purpose. Some other cosmetics are *Hair care*. For hair treatment, the hair is smeared with camphor, saffron, and musk for a few moments before bath is and then washed out. Eye and dental care is also mentioned in detail. *Vatsyayana* has depicted clear description regarding toiletries. The requisites of toilets mentioned were *anulepana*, *sikthakarandaka* (a basket of garlands), *sugandhikapitika* (scent box), *matulungatwcha* (skin of Citrus medica fruit) and betel leaf.

4. Abhigyan Shakuntalam (375-415CE: by Kalidas): The heroine *Shakuntala* was using different flowers and leaves as ornaments; it indicates how the lady used to beautify herself for good looking appearance. Especially *Ingudi* fruit was used to enhance Beauty, as antiseptic and for ulcer healing (*Vranaropan*). (*Abhi.Sha.4/3*). *Kalidas* has also mentioned sun light (ultra violet) as a factor destroying Beauty and the drugs like *Ushira*, *Chandana* for local application to protect the skin in summer.²⁵

5. Kumar Sambhavam (375-415CE: by Kalidas): In *Kumar Sambhavam*, it is mentioned that by the application of ‘*Lodhrakashaya*’ and *Gorochanalepa*, very fair complexion of skin is obtained.²⁶

CONCLUSION: Civilization and Cosmetology has interrelationship and have social impact since the ancient period. In today’s world, beauty is at the epicentre of the consideration in the corporate and executive resources. So Cosmetology is gaining paramount importance in present scenario. Technological advances has evolved to such an extent that everyone can buy his/her share of beauty. At the same time modern cosmetology and cosmeto surgery have their own limitations

and various hazardous side effects. On the other hand *Ayurveda* is serving the society with its knowledge of safe cosmetics since ancient period. So there is a need to give an alternative medicine.

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