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**International Journal of
Contemporary Research In
Multidisciplinary**

Research Article

Ayurvedic Management of Kushtha – A Conceptual Review

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18298678>

Abstract

Kushtha is a broad term in Ayurveda used for various dermatological disorders. It is considered one of the Ashta Mahagada due to its chronic nature, recurrence, and psychosocial impact. Ayurveda explains Kushtha as a Tridoshaja Vyadhi with dominance of Kapha and involvement of Rakta, Mamsa and Lasika. This paper highlights the classical concept of Kushtha and elaborates the Ayurvedic principles of management including Shodhana, Shamana, Pathya-Apathya and Rasayana therapy with their modern relevance.

Manuscript Information

- **ISSN No:** 2583-7397
- **Received:** 13-10-2025
- **Accepted:** 23-11-2025
- **Published:** 30-12-2025
- **IJCRM:** 4(6); 2025: 619-621
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- **Plagiarism Checked:** Yes
- **Peer Review Process:** Yes

How to Cite this Article

Nagori Z, Urmalia N, Harode P, Hardeniya P, Gupta R. Ayurvedic management of Kushtha – a conceptual review. Int J Contemp Res Multidiscip. 2025;4(6):619-621.

Access this Article Online



www.multiarticlesjournal.com

KEYWORDS: Kushtha, Skin diseases, Panchakarma, Shodhana, Rasayana, Ayurveda

1. INTRODUCTION

Skin diseases constitute a major health problem worldwide, affecting both physical and mental well-being. In Ayurveda, all skin disorders are described under the broad heading of Kushtha.

Acharya Charaka has described Kushtha as a disease involving Sapta Dravya Sangraha – Dosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), Dushya (Twak, Rakta, Mamsa, Lasika).

Kushtha is classified into:

Mahakushtha – 7 types

Kshudra Kushtha – 11 types

Due to its chronicity, recurrence and social stigma, Kushtha is considered difficult to treat, but Ayurveda provides a systematic and holistic approach for its management.

Aims and Objectives

To study the classical Ayurvedic concept of Kushtha.

To review the principles of Ayurvedic management.

To correlate Ayurvedic treatment with modern dermatology.

To highlight the role of Panchakarma and Rasayana in chronic skin disorders.

Materials and Methods

This is a conceptual review study based on:

Classical texts:

Charaka Samhita

Sushruta Samhita

Ashtanga Hridaya

Modern dermatology literature

Previous research articles and review papers

Concept of Kushtha in Ayurveda

Nidana (Etiology)

Viruddha Ahara (incompatible diet)

Atisevana of Guru, Snigdha, Amla, Lavana Ahara

Vega Dharana

Papa Karma

Poor hygiene

Mental stress

Samprapti (Pathogenesis)

Vitiated Doshas enter Tiryak Siras and affect Twak, Rakta, Mamsa and Lasika leading to various types of Kushtha.

Lakshana (Symptoms)

Kandu (itching)

Vaivarnya (discoloration)

Pidika, Srava

Daha

Twak Vaikrita

Classification of Kushtha

Mahakushtha (7 types)

Kapala

Audumbara

Mandala

Rishyajihva

Pundarika

Sidhma

Kakanaka

Kshudra Kushtha (11 types)

Includes Eka-kushtha, Kitibha, Dadru, Charmadala, Vicharchika etc.

Principles of Ayurvedic Management

Ayurvedic management of Kushtha is based on Trisutra – Hetu Sevan Tyaga, Shodhana, Shamana

1. Shodhana Chikitsa (Bio-purification)

Shodhana is considered essential in Kushtha due to deep-seated Dosha involvement.

1. major research work

Vamana – Kapha pradhana Kushtha

Virechana – Pitta-Rakta pradhana Kushtha

Basti – Vata pradhana and chronic Kushtha

Raktamokshana – Especially in Pitta-Rakta disorders

Charaka emphasizes repeated Shodhana in Kushtha for the complete eradication of Doshas.

2. Shamana Chikitsa (Palliative Therapy)

Internal Medicines

Drug / Formulation

Action

Gandhak Rasayana

Antimicrobial, Rasayana

Arogyavardhini Vati

Deepana, Pachana, Rakta Shodhaka

Mahamanjishthadi Kwatha

Blood purifier

Kaishora Guggulu

Anti-inflammatory

Panchatikta Ghrita

Dosha Shamana, Twak Prasadana

External Applications

Nimba Taila

Karanj Taila

Jatyadi Taila

Aragwadha Lepam

3. Pathya-Apathya

Pathya (Wholesome)

Yava, Mudga, Tikta Shaka

Nimba, Patola

Purana Ghrita

Warm water

Apathya (To avoid)

Curd, fish, milk together

Excess salt, sour, spicy food

Day sleep

Alcohol

Suppression of natural urges

4. Rasayana Therapy

Rasayana plays an important role in chronic and recurrent Kushtha.

Important Rasayana:

Guduchi

Amalaki

Haridra

Shilajatu

Triphala

They improve immunity, tissue regeneration and prevent recurrence.

Modern Correlation

Kushtha can be correlated with:

Psoriasis

Eczema

Fungal infections

Vitiligo

Chronic dermatitis

Modern treatment mainly focuses on steroids and immunosuppressants which often lead to recurrence and side effects, whereas Ayurveda aims at root-cause management and systemic purification.

DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic management of Kushtha is unique because it treats not only the skin but the entire body system.

The combination of Shodhana, Shamana and Rasayana provides:

Detoxification

Immune modulation

Psychological support

Long-term remission

Repeated Shodhana and strict Pathya play a crucial role in preventing relapse.

CONCLUSION

Kushtha is a complex chronic disorder requiring a multidimensional approach. Ayurveda offers a comprehensive management strategy focusing on Dosha balance, tissue purification and rejuvenation. With proper selection of Shodhana therapy, appropriate Shamana drugs and strict lifestyle regulation, Kushtha can be effectively managed and recurrence can be minimized.

Thus, Ayurvedic management provides a safe, holistic and sustainable solution for chronic skin diseases.

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