

KUSHTHA (SKIN DISORDERS) IN VEDIC AND OTHER RELIGIOUS LITERATURES - A REVIEW

O.P. Singh*, B.Das*, M.M.Padhi* & N.S. Tewari**

ABSTRACT

In view of the description of Medical citations; Vedic literature, Buddhist literature, Jain literature, Mahabharat, Ramayan etc. have also got significant importance. Like other diseases, the description regarding Kushtha (different skin disorders) is also available in all these treatises. These are akin to the description available in Ayurveda. From the above, it is apparent that description of different diseases mentioned in Ayurveda are also available in religious literatures.

Introduction

The Ayurveda where all the fundamental doctrines have been isolated from *darshanaas* teaches us an outlook on problem of health. It has been said that health is the chief basis for development of religions, economic, worldly and heavenly - happiness of man. There are innumerable types of *Kushtha* according to intensity of disease but for the purpose of diagnosis and treatment, great sages have limited the numbered of *Kushtha* to eighteen. Of these eighteen, seven are called *Mahakushtha* and eleven as *Ksudra Kushtha*.

Kushtha has been plaguing mankind from ancient times. *Maharshi* Vedvyas has stated in the great Epic *Mahabharat* that one *Maharshi* named 'Devapi' suffered from *Kushtha*. Besides Veda, *Kushtha* has been also described in Mahabharat, Buddhist, Jain and other literatures.

* Asst. Research Officer, C.R.I., Unit - I, Bhubaneswar
** Director, C.R.I., Unit-I, Bhubaneswar

Vyutpatti (derivation) of the word kushtha

The word “*Kushtha*” is derived from the root Kush Nishkarshe i.e. ‘to tear’ or ‘to expel’ with suffix k-than (*Unadi Kosh.*) It means that which *definitely* despises and disfigures the body and body tissues is called *Kushtha*.

Kushtha in vedic literature

Ayurveda is intimately connected with the Vedas which is evident from the fact that it is regarded as an Upaveda of Rigveda (because of antiquity) or Upanga of Atharvaveda (because of similarity in approach and the subject matter). In later period when the *Vedas* became target of attacks from many corners, Ayurveda was utilized as a powerful instrument for supporting the authoritativeness of *Vedas*. Number of skin diseases are described in *Vedic* literature.

Name of the skin disease	Reference
Kilasi (To mean a spotted deer)	Rig-veda-Explained by Max Muller
Kilasa	Atharva-veda-1.23 ,24, Vajisaneyi Samhita, Taittiriya-Aranyak XIV,3,17; XXII-I,II,III, Panchavimsa Brahman XXX-21
Pama	Atharva-veda- V. 22,12, Chhandogya Upanishad- IV -1,8, Taittiriya Samhita VI -1,3,8, Shatpatha Brahman-III-2,1,31
Svitra	Panchvimsa Brahman-XII-II,I
Sidhmala	Vajisaneya Samhita-XXX-17, Taittiriya Brahman- III-4,14
Dushcharman	Taittiriya Samhita -II-1.4.3;5.1.7, Taittiriya Brahman-I. 7,8,3, Panchvimsa Brahman-XIV.3,17, Taittiriya Aranyaka-V.4.12

Kushtha (Skin Diseases) in Mahabharat

Certain skin diseases are also described in Mahabharat as follows-

Kushtha	-	Chapter XII 303.6
Svitra	-	Ibid XIII 10.18; 23.13
Sidhma	-	Ibid XII 303.6
Palita (whiteness of hairs)	-	Ibid 111233.16.

Kushtha (Skin Diseases) in Balmiki Ramayan

Skin disorder are not described in the above literature but the term *Vrana* has been described there. There are two types of *Vranas* described viz. *Aghataj* and secondary due to diseases

Vrana	Sadharan (Aghataj)	-	Ayodhya K.73/3
	Vishesh (Due to Ragas)		

Kushtha (Skin diseases) in Buddhist Literature

In Heenyan - So many skin disorders are described in the particular literature as follows

Kuttha (Kushtha)	-	Vinay Pitaka Mahavagga (V.P .M. V .1.68.126) Vinay Pitaka Cullavagga (V.P .C. V .X.X.X.22) Vishuddhimagga (VM XI.21)
Seta Kuttha (Sveta Kushtha)	-	(J. V. 69; VI 196) Jatak
Vitacchika (Vicharchika)	-	Anguttar nikaya (AX.6.60)
Daddu (Dadru)	-	V.M. XI.21,AX.6.60
Kandu	-	AX.6.60, V .M.XI.21, V .1.202,296, J.V.198
Kilasa (Leucoderma)	-	VPMV 1-68.126, VPCV XX 32
Kacchu	-	VPMV VI-2.5
Kaccha (Kakasa)	-	VPMV VI-2.5

In Mahayan

<i>Kandu</i>	-	<i>Mula Sarva 1/2 Page 217</i>
<i>Kushtha</i>	-	<i>Mula Sarva 1/2 Page 52, Sadharin 26 Page 267</i>

Kushtha in Jain Literature

Some skin disorders are also described in this literature like-

- Ktilthi (Kushtha/Kandu) - Prasna Vyakaran Sutra (P.V. Su 1/2/8, 1/64/29)*
 - *Vipaka Sutra (V. Su. 7, Page 377, 384)*
 - *Acharang Sutra (A. Su. 1/6, 1/173)*
 - *Jambu Dweep Prasna-vyakaran Sutra (J.D.P.V. Suo 1/26)*

Conclusion

Study of literatures concerning medical and other ancient treatises reveal that the skin diseases including Leprosy was prevalent in oldest days also. There have been enumeration of social awkwardness due to these diseases as well as their therapeutic aspects. Further, the impact of Ayurveda on the then Indian Society and intermingling of ideas between medical and other social or religious sciences can be ascertained from such descriptions.

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सारांश

वैदिक एवं अन्य धार्मिक ग्रंथों में कुष्ठ का वर्णन - एक पुनर्निरीक्षण

ओ.पी. सिंहा *, बि. दास *,
एम.एम. पाठी *, एन.एस. तिवारी **

आयुर्विज्ञान की दृष्टि से वैदिक, बौद्ध ग्रंथ, जैन ग्रंथ, महाभारत, रामायण आदि महत्वपूर्ण ग्रंथ है। अन्य अनेक रोगों की तरह कुष्ठ (विभिन्न प्रकार के चर्म रोग) का प्रतिपादन भी उपरोक्त ग्रंथों में किया गया है, जो आयुर्वेदीय ग्रंथों में वर्णित चर्म रोगों से साम्य रखते हैं अथवा उपरोक्त विषय से यह निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि आयुर्वेदीय ग्रंथों में वर्णित विभिन्न रोगों की प्रतिपादन धार्मिक ग्रंथों में भी वर्णित है।