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Unveiling the Cosmetic Benefits of *Nasya Karma*: A Review Article

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary world, where appearance is paramount, people are spending heavily in cosmetic treatments to enhance their looks leading to a booming cosmetic industry. *Ayurveda*, the science of life, provides a wealth of holistic treatments that is a precious gift to mankind. *Panchakarma* is branch of *Ayurveda* that helps in detoxifying the body by removing accumulated toxins & rejuvenates both body and mind. It promotes better skin health & complexion. *Nasya Karma* is one among the five *Panchakarma* therapies that includes instillation of herbal oils or juices through nasal route. *Nasya* can be given for therapeutic as well as preventive benefits. It is especially desirable for conditions that includes part above the clavicle (*Urdhwajatrugata Vikaras*) and cures various ailments associated with skin and hair; nasal passage being the gateway of head.

Key Words *Ayurveda, Nasya, Vyanga, Khalitya, Cosmetology*

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INTRODUCTION

Beauty isn't just about good looks, it's about having a healthy and fit body, with a healthy lifestyle showing through in clear skin, glossy hair, and overall vitality. In today's era of social media, good looks play a significant role in shaping one's social circle and networks. While external appearance is just one aspect of a person's identity, body dissatisfaction & concerns about appearance are risk factors for mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and eating disorders. *Ayurveda* recognizes a strong connection between mental and physical health, advocating for practices that nurtures

both. *Nasya Karma* not only enhances beauty but also have a calming effect on mind, so illness like anxiety, depression, insomnia, epilepsy etc., can also be managed through it. In *Nasya Karma*, drugs in the form of oil, *ghrita*, *swarasa*, *kwatha* or powder is administered through nasal cavity. According to *Acharya Vagabhata*¹, *Nasa* is the gateway to brain, hence the drug delivered through nasal cavity reaches the brain. The nasal cavity is anatomically connected to the brain so the drugs instilled through nasal cavity removes the vitiated *doshas* situated in *Shira* (brain).

Due to various factors like increased pollution, unhealthy diet, excessive sun exposure, stress,

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sedentary lifestyle, overuse of antibiotics etc., a recent surge is seen in various skin disorders. Nowadays where lots of emphasis is placed on maintaining the external beauty, disorders like *Yuvanpidika*(acne), *Mukhdushika*, *Vyanga*(melasma), *Khalitya*(hairfall), *Akal palitya*(premature greying of hair) are the burning issues in present times that are responsible for deteriorating the beauty. Cosmetology is an art and science of beautifying and improving the skin, nails and hair, and the study of cosmetics and their applications. A wide variety of treatments and products are available to resolve cosmetic issues, but they do not cure the root cause and even deteriorates the natural skin & hairs due to chemicals present in them and is also a toll on our wallets. According to a statistical data published in March 2024, the Indian Cosmetic market is valued is Rs 830 crores², and people are investing heavily on these beauty products and beauty treatments to look good. However, *Nasya* is one such modality which purifies the allied organs by eliminating the morbid *doshas* hence treating the disease at its root and doesn't have any side effect and is also economical.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To evaluate the cosmetic effect of *Nasya* on beauty related ailments like Acne, Melasma, Skin ageing, Premature greying of hair and hair fall.

MATERIALS

For understanding deeper aspects of cosmetic effects of *Nasya Karma*, *Samhitas* and related

textbooks were reviewed to get thoughtful insights of the subject. Various scholarly articles were cited to understand the scope of the subject.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In Ayurveda beauty is associated with *Chaya* (Personality), *Prabha*(brightness or radiance of skin) and *Varna*(color or hue of skin) and depends on many factors like *Prakriti*, *Sara*, *Doshas*, *Mahabhuta* etc. Appearance, built, color, radiance and overall beauty are components of *Chaya*. *Varna* and *Prabha* are contributory factors of *Chaya*³. All cosmetic ailments mainly occur due to morbid *Vata – Pitta doshas* and *Rasa & Rakta Dhatu Dushti*. *Nasya Karma* eliminates these morbid *doshas* and promotes *Rakta-prasadan*. Hence it helps in minimizing pigment disorders, pimples and enhances the complexion of skin.

*Acharya Charaka*⁴ has described for *Nasya therapy*: मुखं प्रसन्नोपचितम् which means pleasantly expressed face or a naturally glowing face that displays happiness or contentment. It simply indicates that *Nasya Karma* helps in attaining a face free from acne, melasma, pimples or any other skin ailments. In the same *shloka* *Acharya Charaka*⁵ has also discussed न च केशाः प्रमुच्यन्ते वर्धन्ते च विशेषतः which implies that *Nasya Karma* not only reduces hair fall but also helps in its growth and make hair strong and thick. *Nasya Karma* also helps in preventing premature greying of hair.

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In the indications of *Nasya Karma*, *Acharya Charaka*⁶ has stated that *Vyanga*(Melasma) can be cured with it.

*Acharya Vagabhata*⁷ has indicated *Shamana Nasya* in *Neelika*, *Vyanga*(Melasma), *Keshadosha* (hair fall & premature greying). Dose of *Shamana Nasya* as per *Ashtanga Samgraha* is 16, 32 & 64 drops as *Hriswa*, *Madhyam* & *Uttam Matra*.

*Acharya Sushruta*⁸ has mentioned for *Nasya Karma* - वलीपलितखालित्यव्यङ्गानां चाप्यसंभवम् which means that if *Nasya* is taken in daily routine then *Vali* (wrinkles on face), *Palitya*(premature greying of hairs), *Khalitya*(hair fall) and *Vyanga*(melasma) will never occur in such patients.

COSMETIC EFFECTS OF NASYA KARMA

Vyanga- *Vyanga* or Melasma is characterized by hyperpigmentation of facial skin which involves *Vata* & *Pitta doshas*. So *Nasya* of *Vata* and *Pitta shamak dravyas* are indicated in *Vyanga*. A case study was carried out to see the effect of *Kumkumadi Taila Nasya* on Melasma and the study concluded that the patients got marked relief in *Vyanga* through *Nasya*⁹.

Yuvanpidika- *Yuvanpidika* or Acne vulgaris is a common disease that occurs during adolescence, mainly caused by vitiation of *Vata*, *Kapha dosha* along with *Rakta dhatu*, leading to pustules on face. It is one of the most burning issue in the youth which causes personality depreciation. A research study was carried out to see the effect of

Nasya karma on *Yuvanpidika* which concluded that *Nasya Karma* is beneficial in Acne¹⁰.

Khalitya- *Khalitya* or Hair fall has emerged as a pressing issue in the present times. A number of reasons are responsible for hair thinning along with stress and dietary insufficiency. *Acharya Vagbhata* has classified *Khalitya* as *Shirogata Vyadhi* and as stated earlier that *Nasa* is a gateway to *Shira*, so *Nasya* of medicated oil acts on vitiated *tridosha* present at *Shira* and eliminates them. Many studies have been conducted to study the efficacy of *Nasya Karma* on *Khalitya*.

Akal Palitya (Premature greying of hair)-

Another pressing concern affecting the youth of modern times is premature greying of hair. Sedentary lifestyle along with faulty dietary habits and stress are responsible for it. *Akal palitya* is a *rasa pradoshaja vikara* which is mainly caused due to vitiated *Pitta doshas*. The *nimba beeja taila pratimarsha nasya* is indicated in *Akal palitya*.

Vali- *Vali* or wrinkling of skin is caused by vitiation of *Vata dosha*. Wrinkling is a natural phenomenon of old age but certain factors like poor diet, UV exposure, pollution and chemical containing cosmetic products accelerates the ageing process leading to premature skin ageing and wrinkling. In today's culture of ageless beauty where everyone is thriving to look younger, face wrinkles have emerged as a critical challenge to address. *Nasya karma* helps in combating this issue and enhancing natural glow of skin.

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Besides these major cosmetic ailments, other disorders like *Neelika* (bluish discoloration of skin), *Indralupta* (Alopecia) etc., can also be cured with *Nasya*.

DISCUSSION

The pursuit of external beauty drives youth to use a variety of chemical based cosmetic products, leading to potential damage to their hair and skin and are also expensive. Use of various chemical based shampoos & conditioners are linked to premature greying of hairs and hair thinning in young people. In the same way chemical-containing skin care products disrupts the skin's natural barrier, leading to acne, dryness, increased sun sensitivity and overall skin health deterioration. *Nasya karma* acts on the root cause of disease and eliminates the morbid *doshas*, giving beauty benefits without any side effects and is also a cost-effective regime. As cosmetic ailments including *Vyanga*, *Neelika*, *Yuvanpidika*, *Khalitya*, *Akal Palitya* mainly occurs due to morbid *Vata – Pitta doshas* and *Rakta Dhatu Dushti* so *Nasya* with *Varnya Mahakashaya*¹¹ drugs can be beneficial. All the drugs of *Varnya Mahakashaya* including *Usheera*, *Yasthimadhu*, *Sariva*, *Durva* etc., are *Tikta & Madhura* in *Rasa* while *Snigdha & Sheeta* in *Guna*. Their mode of action includes *Varna Prasadana*, *Vata-Pitta Shamaka*, *Rakta Shodhaka* etc., Therefore, these drugs are beneficial in minimizing hyperpigmentation & maintaining the glow of skin. Drugs like

Bhringaraja, *Jatamansi* etc., are known to promote hair growth and prevents its premature greying. Drugs given via nasal route gets absorbed easily due to rich vasculature and highly permeable structure of nasal mucosa and have better bioavailability as well¹². It then reaches the skin of face via facial artery and its capillaries and eliminates the disease causing morbid *doshas* along with enhancing the complexion and giving glowing skin to the person.

CONCLUSION

Nasya karma enhances the appearance of a person as its mode of action is in *Urdhwajatrugata vikara* (supraclavicular region) and face and hair are present in this region only. It prevents appearance of premature wrinkles on skin, melasma, acne, premature greying of hairs and hair fall. It helps person to attain good looks which in turn enhances one's self-esteem and overall sense of well-being, contributing to mental health. The cosmetological treatments offered by *Ayurveda* especially *Nasya* is non-hazardous, easy to administer on daily basis and cost-effective. The benefit of *Ayurveda* is that it treats the disease from its root and hence gives a long lasting or permanent effect.

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