

REVIEW ARTICLE

Dermal Wellness and Facial Cleansing Through *Mukhaprakshalana*: A Review of an Ayurvedic *Dinacharya* Procedure

Koshatwar Swati Santosh^{1*}, Jai Singh Yadav²

¹PG Scholar, P.G. Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, Ch. Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan GNCTD, New Delhi, India.

²Associate Professor, P.G. Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, Ch. Brahm Prakash Ayurved Charak Sansthan GNCTD, New Delhi, India.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Facial cleansing is essential to preserve skin health and avoid dermatological conditions. *Mukhaprakshalana* is a traditional Ayurvedic procedure mentioned in *Dinacharya* (Ayurvedic daily regimen), which involves cleansing the face with herbal decoctions, medicated liquid, or simply with cold water. It plays a crucial role in maintaining facial hygiene, preventing skin disorders, and enhancing complexion. In Ayurvedic classics, different procedures, such as *Mukhalepa*, *Anulepana*, *Snana*, *Udgharshana*, *Utsadana*, *Abhyanga*, *Nasya*, *Mukhaprakshalana*, are mentioned for preserving skin health and treating dermatological conditions.

Aim: This study aimed to review the classical Ayurvedic principles, therapeutic significance, and scientific applicability of *Mukhaprakshalana* as a natural procedure for skin cleansing and maintenance of facial health.

Materials and Methods: The review was conducted using classical Ayurvedic literature along with scientific articles related to skin cleansing and Ayurvedic skincare practices. Relevant information regarding the procedure, indications, and benefits of *Mukhaprakshalana* was compiled and analyzed.

Discussion: The Ayurvedic *Dinacharya* procedure *Mukhaprakshalana* helps to remove accumulated impurities, sweat, oil, and environmental pollutants from the skin surface if we practice it daily as a *Dinacharya* procedure.

Conclusion: Hence, it helps to maintain skin hygiene and treat dermatological conditions such as *Yuvana pidika* (acne vulgaris), *Vyanga* (freckles), *Nilika* (melasma/dark pigmentation).

1. INTRODUCTION

Skin is the largest organ of the human body, which acts as a primary protective barrier against environmental insults, microorganisms, ultraviolet (UV) radiation, and chemical substances. Regular cleansing and maintenance of skin hygiene are crucial for preserving skin's physiological processes, structural integrity, and appearance of the skin. Stratum corneum, the outermost layer of the skin, is affected throughout the day by environmental pollutants, cosmetic residue, bacteria, sweat, and sebum, which accumulate on the skin's surface. If these substances are not removed, they can damage the skin barrier, clog pores, and exacerbate inflammatory skin disorders such as acne vulgaris. Regular cleansing keeps the pH balance and microbiota

balance of skin by removing pollutants, dead keratinocytes, and excess sebum. In *Ayurveda*, daily cleansing practices are included under *Dinacharya* (daily routine). *Mukhaprakshalana* (facial cleansing) is advised to remove sweat, dirt, and environmental impurities and to keep *dosha* balance.^[1]

1.1. Aim

This study aimed to systematically review the Ayurvedic principles of *Mukhaprakshalana*, exploring its classical descriptions and contemporary clinical relevance in the maintenance of dermal health.

1.2. Objective

1. To explore the classical references of *Mukhaprakshalana* in various Ayurvedic texts, such as *Charak Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*.

Corresponding Author:

Koshatwar Swati Santosh, PG Scholar,
P.G. Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, Ch. Brahm Prakash Ayurved
Charak Sansthan GNCTD, New Delhi, India.
E-mail: koshatwarswati@gmail.com

- To understand the indications and procedural aspects of *Mukhaprakshalana* and their pharmacological properties, and their correlation with modern concepts of facial hygiene.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The data were compiled from various Ayurvedic texts, including Brihatryi and Laghutrayi, and databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, and Scopus.

2.1. Review of *Mukhaprakshalana*

Mukhaprakshalana^[2] is a *Mukha Swasthya Rakshak Dinacharya Upakarma*. The word *Mukhaprakshalana* is derived from two words: *mukha* means face or mouth, and *prakshalana* means to cleanse or purify thoroughly. The process is described in detail in the *Sushruta Samhita chikitsa Sthana*. *Acharya Sushruta* places it in *Anagatabadha pratishedha*, which means prevention of future diseases, establishing *Mukhaprakshalana* as a clearly preventive medical intervention. In *Ayurveda*, *Acharya* include it in the daily regimen, which involves washing the face with cold water and herbal decoctions to promote skin health by eliminating impurities and improving smoothness and radiance.

2.2. Position of *Mukhaprakshalana* within *Dinacharya*

Dinacharya, the ayurvedic daily regimen, is mentioned in various *Ayurveda* classics such as *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtang hridayam*, and *Bhavprakashya*. It contains a sequence of practices beginning at *Brahmamuhurta* and extending throughout the day. *Mukhaprakshalana* occupies a specific position within this sequence, typically following *Danta dhavana* (tooth brushing), *Jihva nirlekhana* (tongue scraping), and *Gandusha* (holding liquids in the mouth) and preceding *Anjana* (collyrium to the eyes) and *Nasya* (nasal administration). The sequence is not a random one. Oral and dental hygiene is completed first, in order to prevent microbial biofilms released during teeth brushing and tongue scraping from contaminating the face washing procedure. Eye and nasal care follow, so that the open pores of the freshly cleansed face may receive ocular and nasal preparations effectively. An implicit microbiological and pharmacokinetic awareness that is consistent with the current knowledge of procedural skincare is revealed by this sequencing.

2.2.1. Preparation of *kashaya* for *mukhaprakshalana*

- Take coarse powder of dried fruit or bark of the mentioned drug, and if the herbs are not available, plain cold water is used
- The *kashaya*^[3] is prepared with one part of the drug, which is added to sixteen parts of water, and then it is reduced to one-fourth after boiling
- After filtering, allow it to become lukewarm [Figure 1].

2.2.2. Method of application

After washing hands properly, splash the decoction on the face repeatedly, give it 1–2 min to make contact, then use a fresh cloth to pat dry.

2.3. *Mukhaprakshalana*, according to *Acharya Sushruta*^[4]

A healthy individual should wash their mouth and eyes with either a decoction of *Bhillotaka* or *Amalaki* or with cold water or a decoction of *Ksheeri vriksha* (*Panchavalkala*) barks mixed with milk. *Nilika* (black patches on the face), *Pidika* (acne vulgaris), *Mukhashosha* (dryness of mouth), *Vyanga* (freckles), discolored patches on the face, eruptions, and diseases caused by *rakta* and *pitta* can be cured with this procedure.

- Mukhaprakshalana* is of two types^[5]
 - Antarmukhaprakshalana* – Internal mouth cleansing
 - Bahirmukhaprakshalana* – External cleansing of the face.

Commentator *Gayi* says that *bhillotaka* is specially used for internal mouth cleansing, and *amalaki kashaya* for external face and eye washing.

2.3.1. Indications

As it is mentioned in *Dincharya*, it is useful for *swastha* individuals for daily skincare and complexion enhancement, and for those who are suffering from dermatological conditions.

2.3.2. Therapeutic benefits

The practice cures *Nilika* (dark/bluish skin discoloration), *Mukhashosha* (dryness of mouth), *Pidika* (pimples or pustules), *Vyangam* (melasma or dark patches on the face), and other diseases caused by *rakta* and *pitta*.

2.3.3. Contraindications and precautions

It should be contraindicated in extremely sensitive skin conditions, open wounds, or bleeding lesions, and the use of very hot or cold liquid should be avoided.

2.4. *Dravyas* used for *Mukhaprakshalana*^[6]

- Ksheeri vriksha* (*Panchavalkala*)
- Bhillotaka* (*lodhra*)
- Amalaki*
- Sheetodaka*

3. REVIEW OF DRUGS

3.1. *Ksheeri vriksha*

Ksheeri vriksha is also called *panchvalkala* or *panchksheeri*. It contains a combination of 5 drugs; the *twaka* (bark) is used for the preparation of *kashaya* for *mukhaprakshalana*. When used externally for *mukhaprakshalana* due to *pitta* and *kapha shamana* nature, it is useful in alleviating symptoms of boils and acne. The following drugs are included in *ksheerivrikshya*:

- Vata* (*Ficus benghalensis* Linn.)
- Ashvatha* (*Ficus religiosa* Linn.)
- Udumbar* (*Ficus glomerulosa* Roxb.)
- Plaksha* (*Ficus lacor* Linn)
- Parisha* (*Thespesia populnea* Linn.)

Ksheeri vriksha generally has *Kashaya rasa* (*Udumbara* and *Ashvatha* having *madhura* as *anurasa*), *Sheeta virya* does *kapha-pitta shamana* and *karma* such as *shothahara*, *vedanasthapana*, and *vranaropana*. *Mukhaprakshalana* with these herbs does *shamana* and *ropana* of skin disorders [Table 1].

3.2. *Bhillotaka* (*Lodhra*) (*Symplocos racemosa* Roxb.)^[8]

- Synonyms – *Symplocos beddomei* C. B. Clarke
- Family – Symplocaceae
- Hindi name – *Lodh*
- English name – *Chunga*, *Symplocos bark*

Bhikkotaka is also called *Lodhra*, *Rodhra*, due to its healing property and *Stambhana* action.

Rasapanchaka: *Guna-laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Rasa-kashaya*, *Vipaka-katu*, *Virya-sheeta*, *Doshghnta-kapha pittahara*, *Karma-raktastambhana*, *Shothahara*, *Kushtaghna*, *Vranaropana*.

3.2.1. Therapeutic external use of lodhra^[9]

It is useful in *Yuvanapidika*, *Kushta*, and *Vrana* due to its healing properties. In the case of *Yuvanapidika* paste of *Lodhra* and *Sphatika* applied locally, rubbing and applying powder paste of *Lodhra*, *Dhataki*, *Indrayava*, *Karanja*, and *Jati* is useful in skin diseases (*kushta*). *Dhataki* and *Lodhra* promote wound healing due to their *vrana* properties.

It has analgesic, antiacne, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties. Due to this, it is helpful in reducing *Shopha* (inflammation), *Shotha* (swelling), and *Raktapitta prashamana* when it is applied externally.^[10]

When applied topically, the bark of *Symplocos racemosa* includes a number of bioactive phytoconstituents that contribute to its therapeutic effect in dermatological disorders. Leucopelargonidin-3-glucoside, symplocoside, and symposide are examples of flavanol glucosides that have strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant qualities that assist in lowering inflammation and oxidative stress in skin conditions. Its antibacterial and antioxidant properties are further enhanced by the presence of ellagic acid, which prevents microbial development linked to acne and other skin problems. Rhamnetin-3-digalactoside and other flavonol glycosides have anti-inflammatory properties that lessen swelling and erythema in inflammatory lesions. Triterpenoids, such as betulin, oleanolic acid, arjunolic acid derivatives, and asiatic acid derivatives, are recognized for their tissue-regenerative and wound-healing qualities, which accelerate the healing of injured skin. Compounds such as α -amyryn and phytosterols such as β -sitosterol have anti-inflammatory properties and aid in the restoration of skin barrier function.^[10]

Alkaloids such as loturidine and loturine also have antibacterial properties that stop skin sores from becoming infected. When applied externally, these components give *Lodhra* bark antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and astringent qualities that support its traditional use in Ayurveda for the treatment of skin conditions such as acne (*Yuvana pidika*), inflammation, and wound healing.

3.3. Amalaki^[11] (*Phyllanthus emblica* Linn.)

- Synonyms – *Emblica officinalis* Gaertn.
- Family – Euphorbiaceae
- Hindi name – *Aawla*, *Amla*
- English name – Indian gooseberry, *Emblica myrobalan*

Amalaki is a wonder herb, also known as *vayastha*, whose fruit is used to maintain youthfulness, as *Amalaki* is a rich source of Vitamin C.

Rasapanchaka – *Guna-guru*, *Ruksha*, *Sheeta*, *Rasa-panchrasayukta* (*amlapradhana*) except *Lavana*, *Vipaka-Madhura*, *Virya-sheeta*.

It has *tvachya* (skin tonic), *kantikara* (imparting luster to skin), *raktastambhak* (hemostatic), and *vranaropaka* (wound healer) properties, and a coolant nature; it is indicated in *kushta* (skin diseases).^[10]

It is beneficial in *Vyanga* (freckles) – tender fruits of *amalaki* after keeping in *gomutra* for a week mixed with *aja ksheer*, a paste is made which is applied on the face to clear of *vyanga*.^[12]

Amalaki is also used for *snana*,^[13] if a person bathes with *amalaki* leaves for a hundred years, it makes a person remain free from wrinkles. As it is rich in Vitamin C and antioxidants, applying it to the skin or mixing it in bathwater helps to maintain youthfulness and vitality.

Amalaki helps in maintaining dermal health – when applied externally via *mukhaprakshalana* using herbal decoctions or pastes to remove impurities and to enhance glow. These compounds have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and collagen booster action, which makes *amalaki* ideal for topical use in a daily regimen.^[14]

Antioxidant protection – High Vitamin C and polyphenols such as emblicanin A and B, pedunculagin, and punigluconin neutralize free radicals and protect skin from UV damage and oxidative stress during external application. It prevents premature aging, wrinkles, and pigmentation by boosting collagen synthesis and skin elasticity. Anti-inflammatory effects – Gallic acid, ellagic acid, and tannin reduce inflammation, redness, and irritation when applied externally and are helpful in treating conditions such as acne and eczema. Flavonoids such as quercetin, kaempferol, and fatty acids such as linoleic and oleic acid decrease pitta-related skin diseases, promoting healing in *mukhaprakshalana*. Skin brightening and rejuvenation - Ellagic acid inhibits tyrosinase and lightens hyperpigmentation and even tone while minerals, amino acids, and sugars hydrate and exfoliate gently. Terpenoids, alkaloids, and carotene enhance complexion, reducing blemishes and improving texture through external application.

Tannins and fatty acids provide antimicrobial and astringent action, which provide antibacterial properties by controlling pores, preventing acne in external application.^[10]

3.4. Mukhaprakshalana with Sheeta Jala

According to *Bhavprakash*^[15] and *Sushruta*,^[4] washing the face with cold water helps in curing *Raktapitta* (bleeding disorders and internal heat), *Mukhadushika* (acne), *Shosha* (dryness), *Nilika*, and *Vyanga* (dark spots, skin discoloration, and freckles/melasma).

Washing the face with cold water overcomes hemorrhagic disorders, furuncles, dryness, *Nilika*, and *Vyanga* of the face. Or else the face can be washed with tepid water also, it alleviates *kapha* and *vata*; it is unctuous, so it makes the face unctuous and alleviates dryness of the face.^[16] If the mentioned herbs are not available, plain cold water is used for *Mukha* and *Netra prakshalana*.

4. DISCUSSION

In today's market, a large number of face washes are available, but according to many studies, they contain a high amount of chemicals that may be harmful to both skin and overall health. Some face washes can cause irritation to the skin due to the presence of harsh chemical ingredients. Frequent use of those chemical-containing face washes can remove the skin's natural oil and reduce its natural elasticity, and the presence of chemicals such as sulfur and parabens also leads to the formation of acne.^[17] Therefore, it is important to select a face wash that suits your skin type and does not cause harm to the skin, so in today's era use of natural cleansing methods is very important and *Mukhaprakshalana* with cold water and decoctions of natural herbs such as *Amalaki*, *Lodhra*, *Ksheeri vriksha* is useful for skin cleansing and their regular use alleviates spots, face acne, boils and other dermatological disorders with cost effectiveness.

5. CONCLUSION

In an era increasingly dominated by clean beauty and the rejection of microplastics and parabens, *Mukhaprakshalana* offers a sustainable, zero-waste alternative as it is biocompatible and cost-effective. The *Ayurvedic* way of cleansing, i.e., *Mukhaprakshalana*, preserves

the beneficial flora of skin, unlike harsh modern cleansers. It has a clinical and physiological impact on skin, as using water or herbal decoctions at a specific temperature helps to constrict or dilate the capillaries, which helps in the removal of stagnant metabolic waste from the face. Various *Kwatha* used for *Mukhaprakshalana* with their healing and antimicrobial activities can help in decreasing the severity of conditions such as *Yuvana pidika* and *Vyanga*. By alleviating *pitta* and *kapha*, it reduces inflammatory and sebum-related factors such as follicular occlusion and sebum oxidation, which are the primary factors responsible for acne formation. *Mukhaprakshalana*, along with *Netraprakshalana*, helps clear the *indriyas* and improve mental clarity and can be used as a preventive and curative measure for maintaining skin health.

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7. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors give equal contribution in making of this manuscript.

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9. ETHICAL STATEMENT

Ethical approval was not required for this study as it is a review study.

10. CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

11. DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data analyzed in this review were obtained from publicly available sources, including peer-reviewed articles, observational studies, and surveys accessible through databases.

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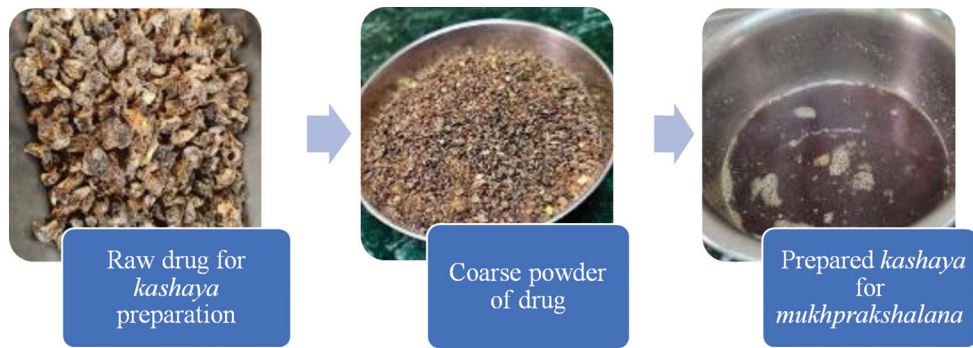


Figure 1: Method of preparation of Kashaya of Amalaki for Mukhaprakshalana

Table 1: Properties of *ksheeri vrikshya*^[7]

S. No.	Dravya	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Karma	Doshgnata
1	Vata	Kashaya	Guru, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Varnya, Stambhana, Vranaropaka, Vedanasthapana	Kapha-pittahara
2	Ashvatha	Kashaya, Madhura	Guru, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Varnya, Stambhana, Vranaropaka	Pitta-kaphahara
3	Udumbar	Kashaya, Madhura	Guru, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Varnya, Stambhana, Vrana shodhana Vranaropaka	Kapha-pittahara
4	Plaksha	Kashaya	Guru, Ruksha	sheeta	Katu	Shothahara, Vranaropak, Raktashodhak, Dahaprashamana	Kapha-pittahara
5	Parisha	Kashaya	Laghu, Ruksha	sheeta	Katu	Shothahara, Stambhana, Vranaropaka, Kushtaghna, Dahaprashamana	Kapha-pittahara