



A Review on Herbs Used in Ancient Cosmetology

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this review was to investigate the possibility of comparing the performance of different herbs used in cosmetics. Cosmetic products made up of mixture of herbal ingredients used by all age group of persons to keep their skin, hair healthier and oral hygiene. Claimed effects and safety of this cosmetic product depends on the ingredients incorporated. By adopting proper methodologies and techniques risk factors of ingredients incorporated in cosmetics can be determined and managed at safety here. This paper enlightened the herbal used in the cosmetic for the long time. This review encourage the industrialist, cosmeticians, pharmacist and researchers to carry and publish more cosmetic herbs studies which would help to explore the myth of herbal cosmetics in front of consumers that will beneficial in terms of human health.

Keywords: Cosmetic herbs, hair care, skin care, nail care, oral hygiene.

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INTRODUCTION

Cosmetology is the science of alteration of appearance^{1, 2}. For thousands of years, herbs have been used for cosmetic purposes. Indian women have been using herbs such as sandalwood, turmeric, henna and natural oils for skin care, hair care and as perfumery. For these purposes they used the herbal extract, or whole part or part of these traditional herbs for various ailments of skin, hair and for overall appearance. Many herbs like *Aloe vera*³, *Azadiracta indica*⁴, *Santalum album*⁵, *Curcuma longa*⁶ were scientifically evaluated for their cosmetic potential. Still many of the herbs are not scientifically proved for its use in cosmetology. This article attempts to review and fill up the herbs that were traditionally used for cosmetic purposes like hair care, skin care and perfumery by ancient people. Cosmetic products are the substances which is a single drug or preparation or mixture of several drugs in to it. Turmeric powder was used as single or mixed with so many drugs like *Nalungu* powder. *Nalungu* powder (face wash powder) and *PanchaKarpaKuliyal* (five herbs bath powder) powders are the bath powders which were used by Tamil people, since time immemorial. They protect skin and prevent from skin diseases. Cosmetic products are intended to be placed in contact with the various external parts of the human body like epidermis, hair system, nails, lips, teeth and mucous membrane of the oral cavity or correcting body odour and protecting them or keeping them in good conditions. There are numerous herbs or herbal preparations that help to cleanse, tone, moisturize the skin, and there are many hair tonics which moisten and strengthen the hair, various bath oils which help to tone and soothe the skin.

Hair Cosmetics

In human, hair is the most attractive index. Sometimes hair fall may spoil the beauty. There are many causes that may lead to hair fall such as deficiency of nutrients, infections in scalp or hair follicles, or excessive heat. Several herbs are used traditionally to control hair fall and retention of hair growth. Some of the herbs are given below which mentioned in Table 1

Table 1: Showing Herbs used for Hair Cosmetics⁷

No	Botanical Name	Eng Name	Vernacular Name	Part Used	Action
1	<i>Amarantus tristis</i>	Spleen amaranth	<i>Arukeerai</i>	Seed	Hair Darkening
2	<i>Aristolochia bracteolate</i>	Indian birthwort	<i>Adutheendapalai</i>	Leaf	Hair Growth
3	<i>Citrullus colocynthis [Linn] Schrades</i>	Bitter apple	<i>Artu-thumatti</i>	Seed	Hair Darkening
4	<i>Eclipta prostrata Linn</i>	White eclipta	<i>Karisalankanni</i>	Leaf	Hair Darkening
5	<i>Aloe vera</i>	Indian aloe	<i>Katralai</i>	Leaf	Hair Growth
6	<i>Trichosanthes lobata.Roxb</i>	Snake gourd	<i>Kattuppeipudal</i>	Leaf	Hair Growth
7	<i>Nardostachys grandiflora</i>	Valerina root	<i>Jadamanjil</i>	Root-Oil	Hair Darkening

8	<i>Nymphaea alba</i> Linn	Water lily	<i>Kazhuneer</i>	Rhizome	Hair Growth
9	<i>Plectranthus vittiveroides</i> (jacob) Singh & Sharma	White cuscus root	<i>Vilamichu-ver</i>	Root	Hair perfume
10	<i>Crotalaria juncea</i> Linn	Sunnhemp	<i>Chanappu</i>	Seed	Hair Growth

Spleen Amaranth

Traditionally, its seeds are used for hair darkening. It is obtained from *Amaranthus tristis* which belongs to the family Amaranthaceae. Amaranthus seeds are a good source of protein. Compared to other grains, the seeds of Amaranth are rich in the essential amino acid lysine. It contains 30% more protein than cereals like rice, sorghum & rye. It contains proteins like tryptophan, threonine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, cystine, phenylalanine, tyrosine, valine, arginine, histidine. A red dye taken from its flowers is used as hair dye by ancient people ^{8,9,10}.

Indian Birthwort

Its leaves are used for hair growth. It is obtained from the plant *Aristolochia bracteolata* which belongs to Aristolochiaceae. It has insecticidal properties. The leaves possess antibacterial and antifungal properties. Its roots and leaves are bitter and anthelmintic. The use of this plant as a source of medicine has been inherited and it is an important component of health care system in India ¹¹.

Bitter Apple

It is otherwise called as Wild gourd. It is obtained from *Citrullus colocyn* this, belonging to Cucurbitaceae. Its seeds are used for hair darkening. Seeds are small in size and much interest in developing new oil seed crops which could be used in food and for medicinal and industrial purposes. These seeds have rich oil and protein content and they are edible but similarly bitter, nutty, flavoured. The oil content of the seed is 17-19% 1W/W which consists of 67-73% linoleic acid, 10-16% oleic acid, 5-8% stearic acid, and 9-12% palmitic acid and high amount of arginine, tryptophan and sulphur containing amino acids ¹².

White Eclipta

They have so many other names like False daisy, Swamp daisy, Trailing eclipta, Thistles. It is obtained from *Eclipta prostrata* which belongs to family Asteraceae. In Siddha Medicine, eclipta is mostly used for hair darkening. Oil prepared with amla, brahmi and some drugs is well known in India as AmlaBhringraj oil which is said to blacken the hair. A black dye obtained from eclipta is also used for dyeing. It contains Coumestans such as Wedelolactone and demethylwedelolactone, polypeptides, polyacetylenes, thiophenederivatives, steroids, triterpens and flavonoids ¹³.

Aloe

Aloe is a succulent plant species from *Aloe vera* in Liliaceae family but now it is included in Xanthorrhoeaceae family. Several cosmetic products were made from aloe since thousand years. They not only used for hair growth but also used for so many cosmetic purposes like skin and other medical treatment like psoriasis etc. It has 75 and more nutrients, organic colour system. So, it promotes hair growth and it has anti pruritic, anti-inflammatory activity which help to reduce dandruff. It has proteolytic enzymes which are able to eradicate dead skin cells on the body and scalp. It has analgesic, anti-inflammatory enzymes and salicylic acid which are responsible for calming property of aloe. Aloe has antifungal activity and combination of 20 AA also adds both strength & luster to the hair¹⁴.

Snake Gourd

Its leaves are used for hair strengthening. It is obtained from *Trichosanthes lobata.roxb* in the family of Cucurbitaceae. It has pharmacological activities like anti-fungal and antibacterial actions. The chemical constituents of snake gourd are Nicotinic acid, Riboflavin, Vitamin C, Thiamine, 5-hydroxytryptamine, linoleic acid, oleic acid, oleostearic acid which is used for hair strengthening. Various skin diseases were treated with *PataladiKvathe* (decoction) which has a mixture of *Trichosanthes* and several other plants¹⁵.

Valerine Root

It is otherwise called as spikenard, nard, nardin and musk root and has a botanical name *Nardostachys grandiflora*, DC. It is the flowering plant of Valerinaceae family which grows in Himalayan region of Nepal, China and India. The rhizomes are dark, cylindrical and covered with fibers. Oil from this rhizome promotes the growth and blackness of hair and has anti-fungal effect. It contains variety of Sesquiterpene, Valeranone, Nardostachyin, Jatamols A&B, Calarenol Coumarin include Jadamansin. Rich history of medicinal uses has been valued for centuries in Indian system. Spikenard essential oil was known in ancient times and was a part of herbal tradition of India¹⁶.

Water Lily

It is an aquatic perennial which belongs to the family of Nymphaeaceae and has a botanical name *Nymphae alba*. Its rhizome is used for hair growth. It contains Protein (32%), Palmitic (21%), Linolenic (1%) acids. Rhizome has Tannins, Glycoside, Sesquiterpenes and the protein content of the tubers (8-8.1%) was higher than that of staple maize. The predominant fatty acids in the tubers were oleic (47%), Linoleic (32%) palmitic (21%) and linolenic acids which favour hair growth¹⁷.

White cuscus Root

The root of the plant *Plectranthus vittiveroides*, family Lamiaceae is used for hair care. Ancient women wear its roots with hair for perfuming purpose. It is a small profusely branched, succulent, aromatic herb with straw coloured aromatic roots, glandular, hairy broadly ovate leaves. It is distributed in middle Asiatic countries and its roots have Diterpenoids, Essential oil, phenolics and Sesquiterpenes. It is used for burning sensation, leprosy, skin diseases, leucoderma, fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, ulcer and hair growth¹⁸.

Sunn Hemp

Seeds are used for hair growth from ancient times. It is from the plant of *Crotalaria juncea* family Leguminaceae. It is widely distributed in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of India, Nepal, Srilanka and South Africa. Seeds and fruits have anti-bacterial activity and the presence of steroids, triterpenes, flavanoids, phenolics and glycosides which is used for hair growth. It is otherwise called as Vengalhemp¹⁹.

Pediculosis

Pediculosis is an infestation of lice²⁰. It is a common problem in school going children and hostel pupils. Ancient peoples advocated applications on scalp and to take bath which mentioned in Table 2.

Table 2: Showing Herbs used for Pediculosis⁷

No	Botanical Name	Eng Name	Vernacular Name	Part Used	Applications and uses
1	Anamirta cocculus	Indian berry, Fish berry	Tamil: <i>Kakkaikolli</i> Sanskrit:Kakphala,Kakanshika	Nut	Grind with water. Kills lice
2	Vernonia anthelmintica	Purple fleebare	Tamil: <i>Kattu- chirakam</i> Sanskrit:Vanajeerakam	Seed	Grind with lemon juice. Kills lice
3	Prunus amygdalus, Batsch	Bitter Almond	Tamil: <i>Kasappuvadhumi</i> Sanskrit: Bitter Badama	Nut	Grind with gingelly oil. Kills lice

Dandruff

Dandruff is quite common in the population²¹. It is an abnormality of the exfoliating process of the skin which is strictly confined to the scalp. Both men and women suffer from dandruff. It is caused by several microorganisms.

Dandruff can have several causes, including:

- Dry skin.
- Irritated, oily skin (seborrheic dermatitis).
- Not shampooing often enough.
- Other skin conditions.

- A yeast-like fungus (malassezia).
- Sensitivity to hair care products (contact dermatitis)²².

In traditional medicine there are several drugs used for this dandruff. It is advised to apply any oil on the scalp and take bath, for dandruff with itching. One of the best compound preparations available in Siddha system of medicine for dandruff which contain the following drugs is tabulated in Table 3.

Table 3: Showing herbs used for Dandruff⁷

No	Botanical Name	Eng Name	Vernacular Name	Part Used
1	<i>Gmelina arborea</i>	Coom teak, Cashmeri tree	TAM: <i>Kumizhamaram</i>	Fruit
2	<i>Curcuma zedoaria</i>	The round white zedoary	TAM: <i>Kichili-kizhangu</i> SAN: Kachura	Rhizome
3	<i>Papaver somniferum</i>	Poppy, opium	TAM: <i>Kasakasa</i> SAN: Khas-khas	Seed
4	<i>Psoralea corylifolia</i>	Babchi	TAM: <i>Karpokarisi</i> SAN: Vakuchi	Seed
5	<i>Vernonia anthelmintica</i>	Purple fleebare	TAM: <i>Kattu-Jeeragam</i> SAN: Vanajeeragam	Seed
6	<i>Nigella sativa</i> Linn	Black Cumin	TAM: <i>Karunjeeragam</i> SAN: Upakunchika	Seed
7	Cow's milk	BosTarus	TAM: <i>pasu</i> SAN: Ghaii	Milk
8	<i>Sesamum indicum</i> (Gingelly oil)	Gingeli oil plant, Sesame	TAM: <i>Ellu</i> SAN: Tilam	Oil from Seeds

Take fruit of Cashmeri tree decoction and mixed with gingelly oil and cow's milk, Powder the other 5 drugs and boil this mixture until it becomes thylam consistency.

Halitosis

Halitosis is also referred to as oral malodor²³. Identifying the cause of bad breath is the first step. It is caused by some source of bacteria in mouth or caused by certain food example garlic, onion, etc. Without proper treatment mouth may become a breeding ground for bacteria. Traditionally there are many drug which is used for halitosis, they eliminate bad breath, clean the oral cavity. When we ignore taking proper protection may lead to cause of several disease. Following drugs were used by ancient peoples to treat this halitosis (Table 4).

Table 4: Showing Herbs used for Halitosis⁷

No	Botanical Name	Eng Name	Vernacular Name	Part Used
1	<i>Buchana nialanzan</i>	Almondette tree, Cheronjee	Tamil: <i>Akkarapattai</i>	Seed
2	<i>Papaver somniferam</i>	Opium, Poppy	Tamil: <i>Abini</i> Sanskrit: Aphipehnam	Seed
3	<i>Ficus benghalensis</i>	Banyan tree	Tamil: <i>Alamaram</i>	Bark

			Sanskrit:Vata	
4	<i>Phoenix sylvestris</i>	Small Date Palm	Tamil: <i>Cittrechu</i>	Fruit
5	<i>Amomum subulatum</i> <i>Roxb</i>	Wild Cordomon	Tamil : <i>Kattuealam</i>	Seed
6	<i>Areca catechu</i>	Areca-nut	Sanskrit:Brahata-upaKunchica Tamil: <i>Kalipakku</i>	Seed
7	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	Coriander	Sanskrit:Kramukam Tamil: <i>Kothumalli</i>	Seed
8	<i>Alternanthera</i> <i>sessilis</i>	Sessilie plant	Sanskrit: KustumbariDhanyaka Tamil : <i>Ponnanganni</i>	Leaf
9	<i>Commiphora myrrha</i>	Myrrh, Indian bdellium tree	Sanskrit:Meenakshi,Mathsyakshi Tam: <i>Valendirabolam</i>	Resin
10	<i>Cinnamomum veram</i>	Cinnamon	Sans:Gandha-Rasaha Tam: <i>Illavangapattai</i>	Bark
11	<i>Acorus calamus</i>	Sweet-Flag	Sanskrit:Twak Tamil: <i>Vasambu</i>	Rhizome
12	<i>Curcuma zedoaria</i>	The Round White Zedoary	Sanskrit:Vacha Tam: <i>Kichizhikilangu</i> Sanskrit:Kachura	Rhizome

Skin Cosmetics

Skin is the largest organ in our body²⁴. It has many function, First to regulate the temperature, It acts as chemical and physical barrier for the body, protecting us against from harmful pathogens from the external environment so skin is very important to all so we protect it safely. Several herbs are used for very effective germicidal treatment & skin softening remedy²⁵. In preparation for wedding, traditional Indian beauty care is still a part in to it. Its regular use slows down the ageing process of the skin. Aloe vera has well known nourishing properties²⁶, hence it is used commonly in herbal creams, lotions, & face packs. *Nalungu powder* and *Pancha Karpa Kuliya* powder are the mixture of several drugs which protects the skin traditionally.

Nalungu Powder

It contains 7 drugs. It is a bath powder .This powder was used traditionally by ancient people to protect skin.It contains Green gram, Root of Cuscus grass, Root of White cuscus grass, Sandal wood, Root tuber of nut grass, Babchi Seeds, Rhizome of round Zeodaria which is tabulated in Table 5

Table 5: Showing the Ingredients of *Nalungu Powder*²⁷

No	Botanical Name	Eng Name	Vernacular Name	Part Used
1	<i>Vigna radiate</i>	Green gram, golden gram	TAM: <i>Pasippayaru</i> SAN: Mudgam	Seed
2	<i>Vetiveria zizanioides</i>	Cuscus grass khas-kash	TAM: <i>Vettiver</i> SAN:Usheera,Veeranam	Root
3	<i>Plectranthus vettiveroides</i>	White cuscus grass	TAM: <i>Vilamichuver</i> SAN: Hroeberam	Root

4	<i>Santalum album</i>	Sandal wood	TAM: <i>Chandanam</i> SAN:Shri-gandha	Wood
5	<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>	Nut grass	TAM: <i>Muthakasu</i> SAN:Mutha	Root tuber
6	<i>Curcuma zeodaria</i>	The round White Zeodaria	TAM: <i>Kichizhikilangu</i> SAN:Kachura	Rhizome
7	<i>Psoraleacorylifolia</i>	Babchi seeds	TAM: <i>Karbogaarisi</i> SAN:Vakuchi	Seed

Pancha Karpha Kuliya Powder

It contains 5 drugs. It is a bath powder. This powder was used traditionally by ancient people to protect skin. It contains Rhizome of Yellow Zeodary, Seeds of black pepper, Seeds of Margosa tree, dried fruit of Indian gooseberry, and dried fruit of Chebulic Myrobalan which is tabulated in Table 6

Table 6: Showing the Ingredients of Panchakarpakuliya Powder²⁸

No	Botanical Name	Eng Name	Vernacular Name	Part Used
1	<i>Curcuma aromatic</i>	Yellow-Zeodary	TAM: <i>Kasthurimanjal</i> SAN:KasthuriNisa	Rhizome
2	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	Black pepper	TAM: <i>Melagu</i> SAN:Maricha	Seed
3	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Margosa tree	TAM : <i>Vembu</i> SAN:Nimba	Seed
4	<i>Phyllanthus embolic</i>	Indian Gooseberry	TAM: <i>Nelli</i> SAN:Amalaki	Dried Fruit
5	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Chebulic Myrobalan	TAM: <i>Kadukkai</i> SAN: Sudha, Pathya Haritaki, Bhishak	Dried Fruit

Bromhidrosis

It is an offensive bad smell mostly from the axilla²⁹, although from other parts of the body like breast, groin. All humans have bacteria and other micro organisms that normally live on the skin, some of them have more than that of other people. This bacteria breakdown of sweat and cellular debris resulting in a foul smell. Axillary sweating which has become foul smelling as a result of its bacterial decomposition³⁰. To control this bromhidrosis by control the number of bacteria in skin and keep the skin in the area namely armpit as dry and sweat free. For this purposes following herbs are used to control bacterial growth by application externally or by using as bath powders which is tabulated in Table 7

Table 7: Showing Herbs used for Bromhidrosis⁷

No	Botanical Name	Eng Name	Vernacular Name	Part Used
1	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>	Jequity Jamaica or Indian liquorice	TAM: <i>Athimathuram</i> SAN: Yashti-Madhukam	Leaf
2	<i>Cassia auriculata</i>	The tunners-cassia	TAM: <i>Avarai</i> SAN: Telepotakam	Flower
3	<i>Solanum surratense</i>	Yellow-barried Night shade	TAM: <i>Kandankattiri</i> SAN: Kanta-karikaNidegdhika	Leaf
4	<i>Hemidesmu indicus</i>	Indian Sarasaparilla	TAM: <i>Nannari</i> SAN: Sariba	Root
5	<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>	Nut grass	TAM: <i>Koraikilangu</i> SAN: Mutha	Root tuber

CONCLUSION

The present review was focused on the potential of herbs in cosmetic purposes. The knowledge of herbs in cosmetics used by the people seems to be well known to its culture and tradition. Some herbs were found to have dual action both curative and cosmetic. Further studies in herbs used in cosmetics may lead to the discovery of herbal medicine with high efficacy and without side effects. It also makes an attempt to give scientific evidence of herbs in cosmetics. In the end the new research will result in herbal cosmetics of superior quality and efficacy to offer the consumers.

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