

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# A review article on the role of *Kusthadi Lepa* in *Ek-Kustha* (Psoriasis)

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### ABSTRACT

All skin disease comes under the umbrella of *Kustha Roga*. *Ek-Kustha* is one among the *Kshudra Kustha* with the dominancy of *Vata* and *Kapha Doshas*. It is characterized by symptoms of *Aswedanam*, *Mahavastu*, and *Matsyashakalopam*. It resembles Psoriasis, which is an autoimmune and chronic inflammatory dermatosis characterized by erythematous plaques and silvery scales predominantly affecting the skin of the elbow, scalp, and knees. Currently, the modern medical science treats psoriasis with synthetic drugs, i.e., methotrexate, Psoralen ultraviolet light A, Vitamin D3 lotion, and steroid creams. Hence, there is a need for a treatment having safe and has good efficacy. *Acharya Charak* mentioned that the treatment of *Ek-Kustha* by external medications, i.e., *Takradhara*, *Lepa*, *Udhavartan*, *Pradeha*, etc., are effective in *Ek-Kustha*. Therefore, in this article, an attempt was made to aim the role of *Kusthadi Lepam* in *Ek-Kustha* (Psoriasis).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Skin is the largest organ of our body. It is an extremely complex organ. It plays the most important role in protecting against pathogens, regulating body temperature, water and electrolyte imbalance, sensing painful and pleasant stimuli, etc. Patients with skin disease always experience physical, emotional, and socioeconomical embarrassment in society. Among these conditions, psoriasis is the most common because it affects the body and psychological status of the person. It is also known as the Healthy Man's disease. Psoriasis is a chronic, non-infectious, inflammatory dermatosis characterized by well-defined erythematous plaques with silvery scales.<sup>[1]</sup> It occurs primarily on the elbow, scalp, and knee. Research shows that signs and symptoms of psoriasis usually appear between 15 and 35 years of age. About 75% develop psoriasis before the age of 40 years. Worldwide prevalence of psoriasis 3% and in India prevalence of psoriasis varies from 0.44% to 2.8% and it is twice as common in males compared to females.<sup>[2]</sup> Some genetic factors are responsible for the spread and prevalence of this disease, which play an important role in its etiology. Currently,

the modern medical science treats psoriasis with synthetic drugs such as corticosteroids, beta blockers, lithium, chloroquine, Psoralen ultraviolet light A<sup>[3]</sup> that are not very promising, and the therapy gives serious side effects such as liver and kidney failure, and bone marrow depletion. Hence, there is a need of time to find out safe and effective medicine for psoriasis, and here comes the role of *Ayurveda*.

In *Ayurveda*, all skin diseases have been described under the umbrella of *Kustha*. *Ayurveda* texts do not give a direct reference toward a single disease, which can be compared with the modern-day "Psoriasis." Many entities such as – *Kitibha*, *Charmadala*, and *Ek-Kushth* consist of the signs and symptoms, i.e., *Aswedana* (absence of sweating), *Mahavastu* (extensive lesion invading the whole body), and *Matsyashakalopan* (scaling resembling scales of fish). *Acharya Charaka* mentioned *Vata Kapha*<sup>[4]</sup> dominancy. *Acharya Vagbhatt* has explained similar *Doshik* involvement<sup>[5]</sup> but *Acharya Sushruta* mentioned *Kapha* dominancy.<sup>[6]</sup>

As there is no satisfactory treatment for psoriasis in modern science, the unique treatment modality of *Ayurveda* provides long-lasting results to the patients. Basic principles of treatment are such as *Shodhana*, *Shamana*, and *Nidana Parivarjana*. In *Ayurveda*, *Panchakarma* has a very important role in the management of autoimmune disorders. *Acharya Charak* also mentioned the treatment of *Ek-Kustha* by external medications, i.e., *Takradhara*, *Lepa*, *Udhavartan*, *Pradeha*, etc.,<sup>[7]</sup>

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They are effective in *Ek-Kushta*. Hence, here, we selected *Kusthadi Lepa* as mentioned by *Acharya Charak* in *Ek-Kushta Chikitsa Aadhyaya*.

## 2. SAMPRAPTI

Due to Laghu, Tikshna Guna and Katu Vipak, *Kusthadi Lepa* act as Vata-Kapha Shamak.

Due to Ushna Virya, *Kusthadi Lepa* Darvya enters from hair follicle into the skin and blood vessels. After absorption of Bhrajak Piita, it enters into Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Mamsavaha, and Medavaha Srotas because in *Ek-Kushta* Twak, Rakta, Mamsa and Lasika are Dushya [Figure 1].

## 3. SAMPRAPTI GHATAKA<sup>[8]</sup>

*Dosha – Vata-Kapha pradhana, Tridosha*  
*Dushya – Twaka, Rakta, Mamsa, Lasika*  
*Srotasa – Ras, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda*  
*Srotodusthi – Sanga and Vimarg gamana*  
*Agni – Jatharagni and Dhatwagnimandya*  
*Udbhavasthan – Amashaya, Pakwashaya*  
*Adhisthan – Twacha*  
*Vyadhimarga – Bahya*  
*Swabhava – Chirkari*

## 4. ABOUT DRUG

### 4.1. *Kusthadi Lepa*<sup>[9]</sup>

The *kusthadi lepa* consists of 23 drugs. Details are given in Table 1.

### 4.2. Preparation of *Lepa*<sup>[10]</sup>

The drugs of *Kusthadi Lepa* are finely powdered and then made into *Kalka* form, i.e., paste by adding liquid media such as *Madhu, Ghrita, Taila, or Jala*. Thickness should be 1/4<sup>th</sup> *Angulas*. The *Lepa* should be applied in *Pratilomagati*, i.e., direction opposite to hair follicles facilitates the faster and effective absorption of the drug's active components into the skin.

## 5. ROLE OF KUSTHADI LEPA IN EK-KUSHTA CHIKITSA

*Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa* – As *Ek- Kushta* arises due to vitiation of mainly *Vata, Kapha* and *Tridoshas*; on the whole, *Doshaghna Lepa* are mainly indicated to pacify the *Doshas* that are vitiated locally. *Acharya Vagbhata* stated that just like *Agni* gets *Shanta* after pouring water, similarly vitiated *Doshas*, which are manifested as *Ek-Kushta*, also get pacified by the application of *Kusthadi Lepa*; as the main symptoms of *Ek-Kushta* include *Ruk, Kandu* and *Daha*. The *Dravya*, which is applied as *Kusthadi Lepa*, causes *Shodhana, Shophahara, and Ropana* of that particular lesion of *Ek-Kushta*.

## 6. DURATION FOR LEPA<sup>[11]</sup>

*Sharangdhar* has stated that *Lepa* should not be applied at night, nor should it be allowed to stay on after it dries up.

## 7. PROBABLE MODE OF ACTION OF LEPA<sup>[12]</sup>

*Twak* being the site for the *Doshas* like *Bhrajaka Pitta*, the complexion or *Varnyaprasada* for *Twak, Samana Vayu* and *Vyana Vayu*, which perform activities such as penetration, absorption by their *Upasoshana*

*Guna*, is the outer covering of the whole body. *Ayurveda* propagates the theory of “*Srotomayapurush*,” i.e., the whole body is porous. After being absorbed into the skin, the drug action starts pertaining to its *Virya* and *Prabhava*.

## 8. DISCUSSION

*Kasis (Lauh)* is present in the *Kusthadi Lepa*, so it has *Lekhana* property, which may help in removing Hyperkeratinization. Furthermore, it has *Yogvahi* and *Raktaprasadana* property,<sup>[13]</sup> which may help in the management of the disease *Ek-Kushta*. Upon topical application, the active principle of the *Lepa* reaches the deeper tissues through the *Swedavahi Srotas* and stains them with its *Tikshna* property. Due to its *Ushna, Tikshna* properties, it deblocks the obstruction in *Swedavahi Srotas* and allows the local toxins to flow out through the *Sweda*, thus clearing out the micro channels. The *UshnaVeerya* of *Kusthadi Lepa* causes pacification of *Vata* and *Kapha*, which forms the *Samprapti*, thus alleviating the symptoms. In this article, an attempt was made to discuss the benefits of *Kusthadi Lepa* in *Ek-Kushta Chikitsa*.

## 9. CONCLUSION

As *Ek-Kushta* takes the *Bahya Rogamarga, Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa* in the form of *Kusthadi Lepa* helps to cure the lesions. *Lepa* alone has the efficacy to cure certain types of *Ek-Kushta*. Hence, *Lepakalpna* is given most importance not only in *Kushta Chikitsa* but in *Ayurveda* as a whole. Nowadays, so many advancements in the classical methods of *Lepakalpna* are made for therapeutic purposes and in the branches of dermatology, cosmetology, for much better and faster results.

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## 11. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors have contributed equally to conception, design, data collection, analysis, drafting, and final approval of the manuscript.

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This study does not require ethical clearance as it is a review article.

## 14. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

## 15. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript, and all data are available for only review purposes from the principal investigators.

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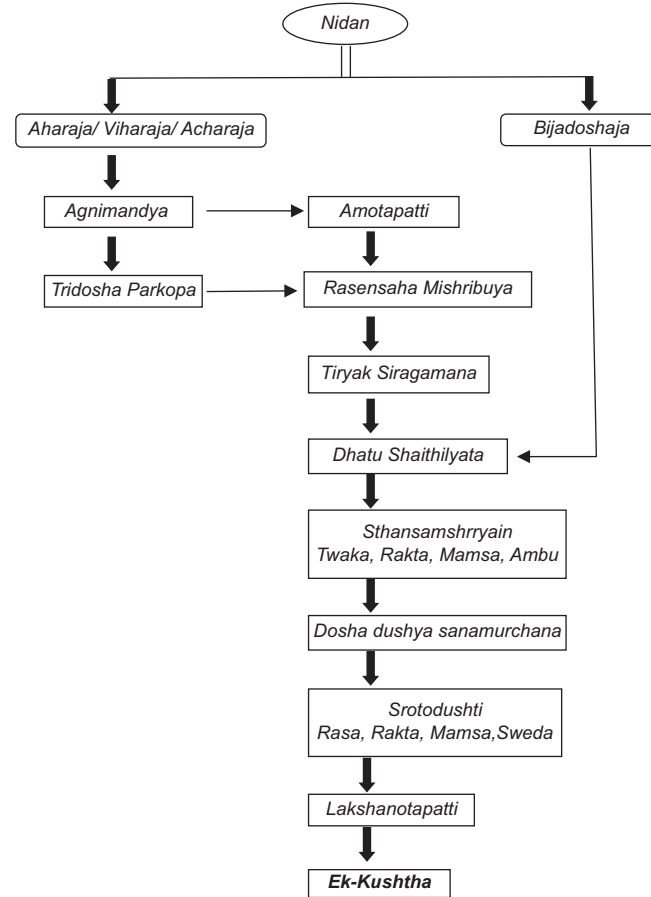
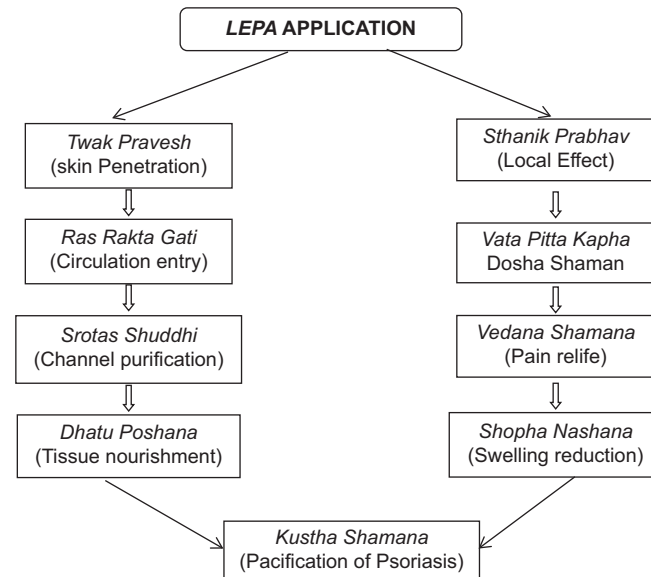


Figure 1: Samprapti



**Table 1:** Properties of *kusthadi lepa*

Name	Botanical name	Family	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipak	Action	Chemical composition
<i>Kustha</i>	<i>Saussurea lappa</i>	Compositae	<i>Tikta, Katu, Madhur</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-vata shamak</i>	Essential oil, Resinoids, Inulin, Sugar
<i>Aark</i>	<i>Calotropis procera</i>	Asclepiadaceae	<i>Katu, Tikta</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-vata shamak</i>	Glycosides- calotropin
<i>Tuth</i>								Copper sulfate (CuSO <sub>4</sub> )
<i>Katphal</i>	<i>Myrica nagi</i>	Myricaceae	<i>Kashya, Tikta, Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha- Vata Shamak</i>	Myriconol, Myricetin, Myricadiol
<i>Mooli</i>	<i>Raphanus sativus</i>	Crucifera	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Tridoshamak</i>	Essential oil, Sulforaphene, Malic acid
<i>Kutaki</i>	<i>Picrorhiza kurroa</i>	Cucurbitaceae	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Laghu, Ushna</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-Vata Shamak</i>	Glucoside Picrorhizin, Kutkin
<i>Kutaj</i>	<i>Holarrhena antidysenterica</i>	Apocynaceae	<i>Tikta, Katu, Kashya</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-Vata Shamak</i>	Steroid alkaloids, conessine
<i>Utpala (neelkamal)</i>	<i>Nymphoea nouchali</i>	Nymphoeaceae	<i>Madhur, Kashya, Tikta</i>	<i>Snigdha, Picchil</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhur</i>	<i>Tridoshamak, Vata-Pitta Shamak</i>	Gallic acid, Tannic acid
<i>Mustha</i>	<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>	Cyperaceae	<i>Katu, Tikta</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Tridoshamak</i>	Essential oil, Cyperene
<i>Brihati</i>	<i>Solanum indicum</i>	Solanaceae	<i>Tikta, Katu,</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksh</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kaph-Pitta Shamak</i>	Solanine, Solanidine, Solasonine.
<i>Karvir</i>	<i>Nerium indicum</i>	Apocynaceae	<i>Katu, Tikta, Kashay</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-Vata Shamak</i>	Neriodorein, Karabin
<i>Kashis</i>								Ferrous sulfate [FeSO <sub>4</sub> .7(H <sub>2</sub> O)]
<i>Charkamarda</i>	<i>Cassia tora</i>	Caesalpinaceae	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-Vata Shamak</i>	Aloe-emodin, Chrysophenol, Rhein
<i>Nimba</i>	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Meliaceae	<i>Tikta, Kashay</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha- Pitta Shamak</i>	Azadirachtin, Nimbin, Salanic acid
<i>Patha</i>	<i>Cissampelos pareria</i>	Menispermaceae	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Laghu, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Tridoshamak, Kapha-Pitta Shamak</i>	Bebeerine-R, Hyatinne, Hyatidine
<i>Durlabha</i>	<i>Fagonia cretica</i>	Zygophyllaceae	<i>Madhur, Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Vata-Pitta Shamak</i>	Tri-terpenoid saponin, Oleanolic acid
<i>Chitrak</i>	<i>Plumbago zylanica</i>	Pumbaginaceae	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-Vata Shamak</i>	Plumbagenin
<i>Chitrak</i>	<i>Plumbago zylanica</i>	Pumbaginaceae	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-Vata Shamak</i>	Plumbagenin
<i>Vidang</i>	<i>Embelia ribes</i>	Myrsinaceae	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-Pitta Shamak</i>	Embelin, Auereitol, Tannin
<i>Titlauki (ikshvaku)</i>	<i>Lagenaria vulgaris</i>	Cucurbitaceae	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-Pitta Shamak</i>	B- Glycosidesis
<i>Kampeelak</i>	<i>Mallotus philippensis</i>	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-Vata Shamak</i>	Saponin, Rottlerin, Mallotus A and B
<i>Sasharpa</i>	<i>Brassica campestris</i>	Brassicaceae	<i>Katu, Tikta</i>	<i>Tikta, Ruksha, Snigdha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha-Vata Shamak</i>	Oleic, Linolic, Erucic acid
<i>Vcha</i>	<i>Acorus calamus</i>	Araceae	<i>Katu, Tikta</i>	<i>Laghu, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha- Vata Shamak</i>	Glucosidacarin, Oil-colanaena
<i>Daruharidra</i>	<i>Berberis aristata</i>	Berberidaceae	<i>Tikta, Kashay</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>		Berberine, Karachine, Taxalamine