



Pushpa Ayurveda: A Traditional Indian Floral Therapy

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ABSTRACT

The current research article explores the historical roots, philosophical foundations, therapeutic modalities, and contemporary relevance of Pushpa Ayurveda within the broader framework of Ayurvedic medicine. Drawing upon ancient Indian texts, empirical observations, and modern scientific research, this article provides a comprehensive overview of Pushpa Ayurveda's unique approach to health and wellness. It delves into the significance of botanical remedies, particularly flowers, in addressing a wide range of physical, mental, and emotional ailments. Furthermore, the article discusses the holistic wellness approach advocated by Pushpa Ayurveda, emphasizing the integration of lifestyle practices, herbal medicines, and personalized healthcare. Through its exploration of traditional wisdom and contemporary advancements, this research article aims to shed light on the enduring legacy and vast influence of Pushpa Ayurveda as an indigenous Indian tradition of health practice.

Keywords: Pushpa Ayurveda, Indian Tradition, Floral Therapy.

Introduction

The Pushpa Ayurveda, within the broader framework of Ayurveda, encompasses the ancient Indian system of medicine's principles, practices, and treatments related to herbal remedies and botanical therapies. Derived from the Sanskrit words "Pushpa" meaning "flower" and "Ayurveda" meaning "knowledge of life". Pushpa Ayurveda emphasizes the holistic approach to health and wellness through the integration of botanical substances. Ayurveda, one of the world's oldest holistic healing systems, originated in India over 5,000 years ago. Pushpa Ayurveda, as a branch of Ayurveda, has evolved through centuries of traditional knowledge, empirical observations, and experiential learning, deeply rooted in ancient Indian texts like Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita. Pushpa Ayurveda operates on the fundamental principles of balance and harmony within the body, mind, and spirit. It views health as a state of equilibrium between the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) and aims to restore this balance through natural remedies derived from flowers and other botanical sources. Pushpa Ayurveda employs various therapeutic modalities including herbal medicines, aromatic oils, flower essences, and botanical extracts to address a wide range of physical, mental, and emotional ailments. These therapies are administered through oral ingestion, topical applications, inhalation, and other routes, tailored to individual constitutions and imbalances. Central to Pushpa Ayurveda is the use of medicinal plants and flowers renowned for their therapeutic properties. Each flower is believed to possess unique qualities and healing properties, which are harnessed through methods like decoctions, infusions, powders, and oils for treating specific health conditions ranging from digestive disorders to skin ailments and mental health issues. Pushpa Ayurveda advocates for a holistic approach to wellness that encompasses not only physical health but also mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. It emphasizes lifestyle practices such as yoga, meditation, dietetics, and seasonal routines to maintain health and prevent disease. While deeply rooted in ancient wisdom, Pushpa Ayurveda continues to evolve by integrating modern scientific research and evidence-based practices. This integration aims to validate traditional knowledge, enhance efficacy, and ensure safety standards in the development and application of botanical therapies. In recent years, Pushpa Ayurveda has gained popularity beyond its traditional roots in India, attracting interest from wellness enthusiasts, holistic practitioners, and researchers worldwide. Its emphasis on natural remedies, sustainability, and personalized healthcare aligns with contemporary trends toward holistic healing and integrative medicine. Pushpa Ayurveda represents a specialized branch of Ayurveda focused on the therapeutic potential of flowers and botanical substances. Grounded in ancient wisdom yet adaptable to modern times, it offers a comprehensive approach to health and wellness, emphasizing the harmonious integration of mind, body, and nature.

Historical Roots

Pushpa Ayurveda, like many Ayurvedic practices, finds its roots deeply embedded in the rich tapestry of Indian history and culture. Ayurveda, often referred to as the "science of life" or the "knowledge of longevity," is one of the oldest systems of medicine in the world, with origins dating back over 5,000 years. The term "Ayurveda" is derived from two Sanskrit words: "Ayur," meaning life, and "Veda," meaning knowledge or science. This ancient medical system encompasses a holistic approach to health, focusing on the balance between the body, mind, and spirit to promote overall well-being. Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmony within the body and with the surrounding environment to prevent disease and achieve

optimal health. The roots of Ayurveda can be traced back to the Vedas, the ancient sacred texts of India, particularly the Atharva Veda, which contains hymns and verses related to healing and medicinal plants. Over time, these early Ayurvedic principles were further developed and systematized into comprehensive texts known as the "Samhitas." Among the most influential of these texts are the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya, which were believed to be composed between the 6th century BCE and the 5th century CE. The Charaka Samhita, attributed to the sage Charaka, is one of the oldest and most authoritative texts on Ayurvedic medicine. It covers a wide range of topics, including anatomy, physiology, diagnosis, treatment, and ethics. The Sushruta Samhita, attributed to the sage Sushruta, focuses primarily on surgery and is considered the foundational text of Ayurvedic surgery. It describes in detail various surgical procedures, including plastic surgery, rhinoplasty, and the removal of urinary stones. These ancient texts served as the cornerstone of Ayurvedic education and practice for centuries, passing down knowledge from generation to generation through oral tradition and later in written form. Ayurvedic practitioners, known as Vaidyas, continued to refine and expand upon this knowledge, incorporating insights from other ancient Indian traditions, such as yoga and meditation, as well as contributions from neighboring cultures. Pushpa Ayurveda, specifically, may have its unique historical roots depending on its lineage and regional influences. The term "Pushpa" in Sanskrit means flower, which suggests a focus on botanical medicine and the use of plant-based remedies. Throughout history, India has been renowned for its rich biodiversity and the use of medicinal plants in traditional healing practices. Ayurvedic formulations often include a wide array of herbs, roots, flowers, and other botanical ingredients, carefully selected and combined to address specific health concerns. In modern times, Ayurveda continues to thrive as a prominent system of medicine, both in India and around the world. The integration of Ayurvedic principles with contemporary healthcare practices has led to the emergence of new branches and specialties within the field, including Pushpa Ayurveda, which may emphasize certain aspects such as herbalism, aromatherapy, or specific therapeutic approaches. Pushpa Ayurveda is deeply rooted in the ancient tradition of Ayurvedic medicine, drawing upon millennia of wisdom and knowledge passed down through the ages. Its historical roots are intertwined with the cultural heritage of India and the enduring quest for holistic health and well-being. One of the important Ayurvedic treatises called "Kalyana Karaka" authored by Ugraditya Acarya, a Jain physician who lived in the 9th century, holds significance in the history of Ayurveda as it provides insights into various aspects of healthcare and wellness practices prevalent during that era.

Kalyana Karaka: An ancient Ayurvedic treatise-

Ugraditya Acarya was a prominent Jain physician and scholar who contributed significantly to the field of Ayurveda during the 9th century. He was known for his expertise in herbal medicine, anatomy, and physiology. His work "Kalyana Karaka" showcases his deep understanding of Ayurvedic principles and practices. "Kalyana Karaka" is a comprehensive treatise that covers a wide range of topics related to Ayurveda, including principles of diagnosis, treatment modalities, medicinal herbs, dietary guidelines, lifestyle practices, and preventive healthcare measures. The treatise delves into the fundamental principles of Ayurveda, such as the concept of doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha), dhatus (tissues), and malas (waste products). It explains how the balance of these elements is essential for maintaining health and harmony within the body and provides guidelines for restoring balance through various therapeutic interventions. "Kalyana Karaka" offers detailed insights into the treatment of various diseases and health conditions using a combination of herbal remedies, dietary modifications, lifestyle changes, and therapeutic practices such as massage, yoga, and meditation. The text emphasizes the holistic approach of Ayurveda, which addresses the root cause of illness rather than merely alleviating symptoms. One of the highlights of "Kalyana Karaka" is its extensive coverage of medicinal herbs and their therapeutic properties. The text describes the uses, preparation methods, and dosage of a wide range of herbs for treating different ailments, ranging from common colds and fevers to more complex diseases like arthritis and digestive disorders. Ugraditya Acarya emphasizes the importance of diet in maintaining health and preventing diseases. "Kalyana Karaka" provides detailed dietary guidelines based on Ayurvedic principles, recommending specific foods and cooking methods suitable for different body types and seasons. In addition to treating diseases, "Kalyana Karaka" also emphasizes the importance of preventive healthcare measures such as hygiene, sanitation, regular exercise, and stress management. It advocates for a balanced lifestyle that promotes physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Overall, "Kalyana Karaka" stands as a testament to the rich tradition of Ayurveda and the contributions of ancient scholars like Ugraditya Acarya towards advancing the science of healthcare and holistic living. Its teachings continue to inspire practitioners and researchers in the field of Ayurveda to this day, serving as a valuable resource for promoting health and wellness.

Taxonomy of flowers used in Ayurveda :

In Ayurveda, flowers play a significant role in medicinal formulations due to their therapeutic properties. The taxonomy of flowers in Ayurveda is primarily based on their botanical classifications, as well as their qualities and effects according to Ayurvedic principles. Flowers are categorized based on their taste (rasa), potency (virya), post-digestive effect (vipaka), and therapeutic actions (guna). They are also classified according to their effects on the three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Some commonly used flowers in Ayurveda include jasmine (*Jasminum sambac*), rose (*Rosa spp.*), lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*), and hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*). Each flower possesses unique medicinal properties and is used in various Ayurvedic preparations for promoting health and treating ailments.

Properties such as taste, potency, and therapeutic effects:

-Taste (Rasa): In Ayurveda, taste refers to the perceived flavor of a substance and its effect on the body. Flowers can have different tastes such as sweet (madhura), bitter (tikta), astringent (kasaya), sour (amla), pungent (katu), and salty (lavana). Each taste corresponds to specific qualities and therapeutic actions in Ayurvedic medicine.

-Potency (Virya): Virya denotes the inherent heating or cooling nature of a substance in the body. Flowers can be classified as having a heating (ushna) or cooling (shita) potency. This classification determines their impact on the doshas and their suitability for balancing specific imbalances.

-Post-digestive Effect (Vipaka): Vipaka refers to the taste that arises after digestion. Flowers can have a post-digestive effect that is either sweet (madhura), pungent (katu), or a combination of both. This post-digestive effect influences their long-term effects on the body after consumption.

-Therapeutic Effects (Guna): Guna refers to the inherent qualities of a substance that affect the body and mind. Flowers possess various gunas such as light (laghu), heavy (guru), oily (snigdha), dry (ruksha), smooth (sara), and rough (khara). These qualities determine their therapeutic effects, including whether they pacify or aggravate specific doshas.

Understanding these properties helps Ayurvedic practitioners prescribe flowers appropriately in medicinal formulations to restore balance and promote health.

Methods adopted by the flora physician in this treatment of diseases.

In Ayurveda, flowers are valued for their medicinal properties and therapeutic effects. Ayurvedic physicians, also known as Vaidyas, utilize flowers in various forms to treat diseases. Some of the main methods adopted by Ayurvedic physicians in the treatment of diseases using flowers include:

Herbal Formulations: Flowers are often included in herbal formulations to create potent remedies for specific health conditions. Vaidyas may combine flowers with other herbs, roots, and botanicals to create decoctions, powders, pastes, oils, and tinctures. These formulations are carefully crafted to address imbalances and symptoms according to the principles of Ayurveda.

Aromatherapy: The aromatic properties of flowers are harnessed through aromatherapy to promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Vaidyas may use flower essences, hydrosols, or essential oils derived from flowers in inhalation therapies, massage oils, or diffusers. Different flowers have distinct aromas and therapeutic effects, which can be tailored to individual needs and imbalances.

Flower Infusions and Teas: Flowers such as chamomile, hibiscus, and rose are commonly used to prepare herbal infusions and teas in Ayurveda. These floral beverages are valued for their soothing, calming, and rejuvenating properties. Flower teas can help balance doshas, improve digestion, relieve stress, and support overall health when consumed regularly.

External Applications: Flowers are applied externally in various forms to alleviate skin conditions, inflammation, and pain. Vaidyas may recommend poultices, compresses, or topical ointments containing flower extracts for localized relief. Flowers with cooling properties, such as rose and jasmine, are often used to soothe irritated skin and reduce inflammation.

Panchakarma Therapies: Some flowers are incorporated into specific Panchakarma therapies to enhance detoxification and rejuvenation. For example, flowers may be included in herbal pastes used for Abhyanga (oil massage) or Shirodhara (oil pouring on the forehead) to promote relaxation, balance the doshas, and nourish the body and mind.

Ayurvedic Cosmetics: Flowers are utilized in Ayurvedic cosmetics and skincare products for their nourishing, moisturizing, and rejuvenating properties. Flower extracts, hydrosols, and essential oils are incorporated into creams, lotions, and facial masks to promote healthy skin, prevent aging, and enhance beauty naturally.

Varadhan (1985) in his research article titled, "Introduction to Pushpa Ayurveda. Ancient Science of Life" mentioned Darsanam, Sparsha Vidhanam, Alepana Vidhanam, Aghrana Vidhanam or Nasya, Vidhanam (Smelling process or Nosal Dropping), and Asvadana Vidhanam as methods of treatments by floral therapists.

Darsanam: The treatment called "Darsanam" in ancient India involved the use of specific flowers by floral therapists for therapeutic purposes. Darsanam, which translates to "sight" or "vision," was a form of healing practice that utilized the colors, aromas, and visual appeal of flowers to evoke positive emotions, enhance mental well-being, and promote healing. The floral therapists selected flowers based on their colors, fragrances, and symbolic meanings. Different flowers were associated with specific qualities, energies, and emotions, making them suitable for addressing various imbalances and promoting specific healing effects. Patients undergoing Darsanam treatment were encouraged to engage in visualization and meditation practices while gazing at the flowers. They were guided to focus their attention on the colors, shapes, and textures of the flowers, allowing their minds to become immersed in the beauty and tranquility of the floral display. Generally, treatment is done through the colors of flowers. The red color flower Raktamandara (Hibiscus Rosa sinensis) is used for the treatment of vata roga and joint pains. Aragwada, also known as Cassia fistula or the Golden Shower tree, is useful in constipation. Yellow coloured marigolds and anthemis Nobilis are useful for pitta jwaras i.e. Fevers born from biliousness and blue coloured Visnukrana (Evolvulus alsinoides) for general fevers.

Sparsha Vidhanam: It refers to a method in ancient Indian floral therapy that involves the therapeutic use of touch or tactile sensation with flowers. In this method, specific flowers are selected and used in various ways to stimulate the sense of touch, thereby promoting healing, relaxation, and emotional well-being. **Puspa Sayya (bed made of flowers), garments made of flowers, necklaces, bracelets, or flower caps are used to get tactile sensations.**

Alepana Vidhanam: It is a method in ancient Indian floral therapy that involves the application or anointing of the body with floral pastes, oils, or extracts for therapeutic purposes. In Sanskrit, "Alepana" means "smearing" or "anointing," and "Vidhanam" refers to a systematic method or procedure. In this practice, various flowers and botanical ingredients are used to create specialized preparations that are applied to the skin to promote healing,

relaxation, and muscle and joint pain. The herbal preparations nourish and moisturize the skin, soothe inflammation, and promote detoxification. The aromatic properties of the flowers and herbs also have a calming and uplifting effect on emotions, helping to alleviate stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue. In addition to its therapeutic benefits, Alepana Vidhanam often carries ritual and spiritual significance in Indian culture. The act of anointing the body with sacred herbs and flowers is considered purifying and auspicious, and it may be accompanied by prayers, mantras, or other spiritual practices to invoke blessings and protection.

Aghrana Vidhanam or Nasya Vidhanam: It refers to a method in ancient Indian floral therapy that involves the therapeutic use of smelling or nasal administration of floral fragrances or herbal preparations. This practice, also known as "smelling process" or "nasal dropping," is based on the principles of Ayurveda and is believed to have various health benefits for both the body and mind. Floral fragrances or herbal oils are prepared into specialized nasal drops or nasal oils suitable for administration through the nostrils. These preparations may be diluted with a carrier oil or water to ensure proper absorption and minimize irritation to the nasal passages. Aghrana Vidhanam or Nasya Vidhanam is believed to have various therapeutic effects on the body and mind. Nasal administration of floral fragrances or herbal oils can help clear congestion, lubricate the nasal passages, and promote respiratory health. Additionally, the aromatic properties of the fragrances can have a calming, uplifting, or invigorating effect on the mind and emotions, helping to alleviate stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue. According to Ayurvedic principles, different fragrances have distinct effects on the doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha), and nasal administration is used to balance these energies. For example, calming fragrances like sandalwood and rose are often used to pacify excess Vata and Pitta doshas, while stimulating fragrances like eucalyptus and camphor may help alleviate Kapha imbalances.

Asvadana Vidhanam: The term "Asvadana" is derived from the Sanskrit word "Asvad," which means "to taste" or "to experience." In the context of floral therapy, "Asvadana" refers to the act of tasting or ingesting floral substances, herbs, or botanical preparations for therapeutic purposes. "Vidhanam" indicates the methodological aspect of administering floral substances and herbs for healing. Therefore, it refers to the method of therapeutic tasting or ingestion of floral substances, herbs, or botanical preparations for health benefits. This practice involves the consumption of flowers, herbal powders, decoctions, or infusions. Floral substances and herbal preparations ingested through this method can support digestion, strengthen immunity, detoxify the body, and promote overall vitality. Additionally, the taste and aroma of the flowers and herbs can stimulate the senses, uplift mood, and enhance mental clarity and focus. It helps in dosa balancing for example: sweet-tasting flowers like rose and jasmine may help pacify Vata and Pitta doshas, while bitter-tasting herbs like neem and turmeric can help alleviate Kapha imbalances.

The contemporary relevance of Pushpa Ayurveda:

The contemporary relevance of Pushpa Ayurveda lies in its holistic approach to health and well-being, as well as its alignment with modern principles of integrative and preventive medicine. Some key aspects of its relevance today:

Natural and Holistic Healing: Pushpa Ayurveda emphasizes the use of natural remedies derived from flowers, which are often considered gentle and safe for the body. In an era where there's growing interest in natural and holistic healing modalities, Pushpa Ayurveda offers a gentle yet effective approach to addressing health issues and promoting overall well-being.

Stress Reduction and Mental Health: Many flowers used in Pushpa Ayurveda have aromatic properties that can help reduce stress, anxiety, and promote relaxation. In today's fast-paced and stressful world, there's a growing need for holistic approaches to mental health and emotional well-being. Pushpa Ayurveda's emphasis on aromatherapy and sensory experiences aligns well with modern practices of mindfulness, meditation, and stress reduction.

Skin and Beauty Care: Flowers have long been used in traditional beauty treatments for their skin-nourishing and rejuvenating properties. Pushpa Ayurveda offers natural alternatives to conventional skincare products, with formulations that harness the therapeutic properties of flowers to promote healthy, radiant skin. In an age where there's increasing awareness of the harmful effects of synthetic chemicals in skincare products, Pushpa Ayurveda provides a natural and sustainable approach to beauty care.

Environmental Sustainability: Pushpa Ayurveda promotes the sustainable use of botanical resources, including flowers, herbs, and plants. With growing concerns about environmental degradation and climate change, there's a need for practices that respect and preserve the natural world. By advocating for the sustainable cultivation and harvesting of flowers and botanicals, Pushpa Ayurveda contributes to environmental conservation and biodiversity preservation.

Integrative Medicine: Pushpa Ayurveda can complement modern medical treatments as part of an integrative approach to health and healing. Many modern healthcare practitioners are recognizing the value of integrating traditional healing modalities like Ayurveda with conventional medical therapies to provide more comprehensive and personalized care to patients. Pushpa Ayurveda's emphasis on individualized treatment plans and holistic health promotion makes it well-suited for integration into modern healthcare practices.

Overall, Pushpa Ayurveda offers timeless wisdom and practical solutions for promoting health, vitality, and balance in today's world. By embracing the therapeutic potential of flowers and incorporating them into holistic healing practices, Pushpa Ayurveda remains relevant and valuable in addressing the health needs of individuals and communities in contemporary society.

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