



Ayurveda and Its Acceptance in India

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, a word from Sanskrit roughly meaning life cloth. A branch of Ayurvedic traditional Indian medicine that uses herb-infused and herb-dyed organic fabrics as healing agents, especially for skin, joint and respiratory conditions. Adopting lifestyle choices that nourishes our soul spiritually and also helps in healing our body seems like the perfect choice. Healing textiles are enriched with nourishment that enhances the wearer's mind, body and soul. Example from the very cottonseed to the final garment, contributes to the well being of the wearer." Ayurveda fabrics not only give a good feeling to the skin but the good properties of herbs reach into the pores of the body. Natural fibers like cotton are good for the skin and when it is dyed with natural medicinal rich herbs, it further enhances the comfort level and soft feel to the skin. Ayurveda reflects that "Pandemic made all of us realise the importance of balance in life. Made us realise that we need to stop and reflect back on what has happened so far. Indian culture has always been about sustainability." Ayurveda is the need of the hour and the Indian textile industry is well placed to accelerate this moment. "Due to the ancient knowledge of Ayurveda and the availability of skilled craftsmen possessing the knowledge of the complex technique, India is in a better position to leverage this sustainable product." The organic product resonates with a new generation of conscious consumers. "Brands are trying to bridge the gap between past and present and trying to make Ayurveda relevant to today's generation through design intervention, good visual communication, creating short films, collaborating with artisans, participating in fashion weeks, making this concept as a part of fashion so that the message spread to the masses."

Keywords: Ayurveda, organic fabrics, healing, nourishment, skin, textiles, soul, mind, body

1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a branch of India's ancient form of medicine, Ayurveda. Ayurveda cloth is used by Ayurveda health clinics in the treatment of a broad range of diseases such as diabetes, skin infections, eczema, psoriasis, hypertension, high blood pressure, asthma, arthritis, rheumatism, cardiac problems and as general health products. The Ayurveda reinforces the importance of sustaining the planet for future generations and for the well being of the current generation using age old practices,[1,2] which do not

add up to global warming but helps in minimizing it. It is expected that unique technology and thereby opening up a new area of entrepreneurship, job orientation and economical stability will be welcomed by the society as a whole. 'Ayurveda' fabrics have great scope in times to come. Ayurveda not only reinforces the importance of sustaining the planet for future generations but also considers the well being of current generations using age old practices. Ayurveda can play effective role in revival and elevation of the market for eco-friendly fabrics. Thus, it may be taken as emerging or new area

of entrepreneurship and job opportunity for young people at one hand and on the other contribute towards offering economic stability to nation. Ayurvastra involves an ancient technique of dyeing textiles using medicinal herbs.



Textile dyeing with herbal colors

The concept of Ayurvastra was practised in India before the industrialization made impact of the textile industry. Even today, in some parts of South India, ayurvedic herbal dyed clothes are used to carry a new born baby as tradition, which will act as an antibacterial barrier for the child. In ancient literature too, there is evidence that these cloths were used as a medium for ayurvedic treatment. The skin received the medicinal benefits of these herbs through the contact to clothing, bedding, or coir mats. Ayurvastra cloth is totally organic, sustainable and biodegradable. Ayurvastra or the ayurvedic medicinal cloth are made of 100 per cent pure organic cotton or silk, wool, jute and coir products that has been prepared on hand loom, processed and dyed by using various ayurvedic herbs to assimilate medicinal qualities into them. Thus, these are free from any chemicals that may release toxins and irritants harmful to users as well as environment. Also at the end of use, it can be disposed off easily owing to its biodegradable nature. It can be used as ayurvedic treatment for diseases like diabetes, skin infections, hypertension, asthma, arthritis and also for boosting immunity.[3,4]

2. DISCUSSION

The Sanskrit word 'Ayur' means life and Vastra means dress. Ayurvastra is the garment that ensures better health and long life. Normal fabrics like organically grown cotton yarn, jute fibre, silk, wool etc. are used to

make Ayurvastra by dyeing them with the desired herbs in a controlled temperature and environment. Ayurvastra cloth is completely free of synthetic chemicals and toxic irritants and is totally organic, sustainable and biodegradable. The color of the Ayurvastra is gained from the medicinal preparation only and no other colorants are used. Resultantly, its property will last as long as the color is there. The roots, flowers, leaves, seeds and barks of around 200 herbs are used to make the dyes. Since the natural herbs are generally found in very beautiful shades, Ayurvastra is also becoming very popular for its color properties. It has been proved that certain synthetic dyes used in garments are harmful to the human body. So garments carrying herbal property will be beneficial to the human body.[5,6]



Medicinal herbs using textile dyeing

Narayan, a nutrition and health coach, came across Kerala's Handloom Weavers Development Society (HWDS) and its project of dyeing fabric with Ayurvedic medicinal plants, he knew he had a role in spreading the word. WDS began creating the fabric and selling it to some shops and markets in Kerala, and the project has received some support from the local Kerala government. HWDS workers begin by bleaching all-natural cotton or yarn with a cow urine-based preparation, which is used traditionally in rituals to bathe Hindu idols. They dry the fabric in direct sunlight and then apply a gumming substance, containing plants like *Aloe vera* (Xanthorrhoeaceae) and camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*, Lauraceae), and then dip it into a concoction called *kashaya* that contains up to 40 medicinal plants, one of which is the primary herb selected for its specific wellness benefits. The gumming substances help the *kashaya* take hold, giving the fabrics their colors. The fabric is left to dry for 3 days and then kept in a room for 15 days for "seasoning," a period of time that allows the fabric to dry completely and

the *kashaya* to settle in to the fabric. It is then washed, dried in the shade, and seasoned for another 15 days.[7,8]

Current Vastra products include shirts in 6 different colors: Yellow (main herb is turmeric [*Curcuma longa*, Zingiberaceae]); blue (main herb is indigo [*Indigofera tinctoria*, Fabaceae]); olive green (main herb is holy basil or tulsi [*Ocimum tenuiflorum*, Lamiaceae]); beige (main herb is neem [*Azadirachta indica*, Meliaceae]); gray (main herb is vetiver [*Chrysopogon zizanioides*, Poaceae]); and light peach (main herb is sandalwood [*Santalum album*, Santalaceae]). These are available through Vastra's website at www.vastra.us. Bed sheets are also available in turmeric, tulsi, and a sunset color dyed specifically for sleep-enhancing benefits. According to Narayan, the herbs that HWDS uses are either organically grown or wild crafted and sustainably harvested by local tribal groups. Even sandalwood, he said, is certified as sustainable by the Forest Department of India.

3. RESULTS

The first step is to procure GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) certified organic cotton from Tamil Nadu. Once the swatches are delivered, they're bleached in a natural aloe vera solution, then dipped in natural gums so they can absorb and hold on to the colour and medicinal properties of the herbs. After dyeing the fabric for a minimum of six hours in ayurvedic herbs, it is cooled, washed and kept in a dark room for a minimum of 15 days. "The longer you keep it in the darkness, the more steadfast the colour and healing properties. The water used to dye the fabric is believed to be medicinal as well, to be consumed or bathed in to enhance health and beauty.[9,10]



Preparation of ayurvedic kashayam (herbal dye)

Ayurvastra project is also initiated and launched by the Directorate of Hand-loom, Department of Industries and Commerce and the Department of Government Ayurveda College, aimed at creating a niche for the eco-friendly wellness textiles (Dyeing the textiles using Ayurvedic herbs and plants and 100% free from toxic and artificial chemicals). Inspired by the project started manufacturing Ayurvastra Products such as hand-loom fabrics, sleep enhance bed-sheets, herbal towel, inner-wear, etc. *Garcinia indica* or Kokum is known to be a rich source of anthocyanin. Cyanidin-3-glucoside and cyanidin-3-sambubioside are the major pigments present in kokum, and is reported to occur in the ratio of 4:1 [4]. *Garcinia indica*, is an indigenous, endemic and underutilized perennial medicinal fruit tree. Commonly known as Kokum, Goa butter tree, Biran, Amsool, Ratamba etc., and distributed mainly in the western Peninsular coastal regions and parts of Eastern India [5]. Kokum, is an antioxidant rich fruit used in the name of Vrikshamba in Ayurveda. The fruits are conical/oblong/pear/spherical in shape, with an average diameter of 1.8-5.51cm and length of 1.19-2.63cm, with 3-8 large seeds being embedded in a red acidic pulp. India produces around 10, 200 metric tons of kokum, with a productivity of 8.5 tons/ha. [6]. Kokum fruits are utilized both in fresh and dry forms; the fruits and fruit rind is valued as a nutraceutical source as it is a rich source of protein, tannin, pectin, total sugars, fat, tannin, starch, crude fat and citric acid. The therapeutic properties such as antioxidant, antibacterial, antiobesity, anticarcinogenic, neuroprotective and antihistamine properties can be attributed to the presence of Garcinol and Hydroxy Citric Acid(HCA) [7]. The ripened fruits are rich in anthocyanins (2-3%) and the pigments may vary from red to dark purple in color, while the inner rind colour may vary through dark maroon to light maroon, from light red to red to reddish maroon.[8,9]

Medicinal properties of fabrics (aayurvastra)

Herbs	Shades	Medicinal Quality of fabric
Turmeric	Yellow	Anti - bacterial, anti-allergy, anti - septic and aromatic, anti - inflammatory properties. Controls Cholesterol, helps reducing the insulin resistance, thus controls diabetes, Boosts immunity, anemia.
Indigo	Indigo Blue	Antiseptic, Anti-allergic and helps fight skin disease
Aloe Vera	Off White	Skin Infections, and burns, Control Diabetes, Boosts Immunity, Anemia
Tulsi	Green	Viral and bacterial infections. controls blood sugar levels, Boosts immunity
Neem	Grey	Controls skin diseases, controls blood sugar levels
Sandalwood	Pink	Anti-septic, Anti-inflammatory, Cools the skin, curing skin itching, burns
Henna	Orange	Blood purifier, an anti-irritant, a deodorant, and an antiseptic. Because of this cooling property, henna used as a prophylactic against skin diseases like burns, bruises, and skin inflammations, including sores from leprosy
Mimosa Pudica	Green	controls blood sugar levels
Chirayata	Brown	Cures various skin diseases, anemia
Catechu	Brown	To treat Pimples, Control Diabetes

Fruit rind contains highest concentration of anthocyanin. The extraction of dye from kokum sugar rind sample after juice extraction. The application of dye onto different clothes with and without mordant showed that jute cloth could absorb more color. And dyeing with mordant gave better shades when compared to dyeing without mordant. Jute was the best out of the four kinds of fabric, as jute gave the dark pink shades which were similar and closer to kokum fruits. Based on the study on kokum fruit anthocyanin content and dye on fabrics - dye can be obtained from fruits rind and it can be used in ayurveda, anthocyanin source of medicinal property it can be in medicinal and pharmaceutical products. One of the main upsides and features of Ayurveda is that they are primarily hand-loomed/hand-dyed. This initiative thus avails great job opportunities for handloom weavers, farmers, and artisans, etc. Also, we carry out an ethical fair trade practice. [7,8]

4. CONCLUSIONS

As the body's largest organ, the skin functions as a protective barrier. The skin may absorb environmental toxins and chemicals from conventional clothing, it can also absorb the wellness value in herbs found in our natural dyes. These wellness qualities in the body strengthen the skin's ability to block and resist harmful substances. Ayurveda is an eco-friendly sustainable fabrics, which gives health benefits and helps in

protecting from various body imbalances. Since we use this fabrics, it's releases wellness properties that will make you feel healthier and comfortable. Wash separately with bleach-free detergent, machine wash (gentle cycle), Warm iron, Steam is ideal, Dry in shade. Around 200 herbs are used to achieve various colors of Vastra. It is interesting to know that medicinal value of this cloth will be increased if cloth is bleached with cow's urine.

Kashāya clothing is in line with Ayurveda (Healing Clothes), a 5000 year old branch of Ayurvedic medicine that uses herb-infused organic fabrics to promote wellbeing through the principle of touch. Traditionally, babies were wrapped in this Ayurvedic herb-infused clothing because it acts as an antibacterial barrier for the baby and helps to boost immunity and induce restful sleep. Adopting the same practice, Kashāya Baby clothing brand is created which is naturally anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory, and hypoallergenic.[10,11]

Conflict of interest statement

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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