

## AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE OF INDRALUPTA AND ITS MANAGEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

These days hair loss is one of the most common problems faced by people. *Indralupta* is one such most common hair loss diseases. *Indralupta* (Alopecia areata) is a commonly occurring disease in which there is sudden loss of hair occurs from the head, beard area and other body parts. It is major cosmetic issue for both sexes with reoccurrence and adverse effects with contemporary treatment. This review article highlights the concept of *Indralupta* to understand *Ayurvedic* perspective of “*Indralupta*” disease and its Ayurvedic principles of management through Ayurvedic *Samhita*.

**KEYWORDS:** *Kushtha, Kshudra Roga, Indralupta, Dushi Visha,*

*Alopecia areata.*

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is one of the oldest known forms of the health care system in the world, which has not only successful history but also a textual and theoretical background. Its main objective is the promotion of health as well as the prevention of diseases. The literal meaning of the word *Indralupta* is a disease in which pre-maturely sudden, and complete loss of hair occurs in a patchy form manner. In modern dermatology, a similar type of skin disorder named Alopecia areata is found to have parity with the disease *Indralupta* mentioned in Ayurvedic texts.<sup>[1]</sup>

In *Ayurvedic Samhitas*, various skin disorders have been described under the heading of *Kushtha*. “*Kushnati vapuh eti kushtham*” means any disease which deforms the skin is known as *Kushtha*. *Kushtha* has two major divisions first seven *Mahakushtha* & second eleven *Kshudra kushtha*.<sup>[2]</sup> Other skin diseases like *Mukhadushika, Indralupta/Khalitya,*

*Palitya, Vyangya, Koyha, Utkohta*, etc are enumerated in *Kshudraroga*.<sup>[3]</sup>

Thus, *Mahakushtha, Kshudrakustha*, and *Kshudraroga* almost cover the whole dermatology in Ayurveda.

### ***Kshudra Roga***

It is made up of two words i.e., '*Kshudra*' and '*Roga*'.

'*Kshudra*' means alpa or short/small/ minor and '*Roga*' means disease.

So, *Kshudra Roga* is a small /short/ minor disease. It has been described in a separate chapter by many *Acharyas*. It also plays a major role in understanding various skin disorders in Ayurveda.

### **Etymology of *Indralupta***

#### **1. According to *Ayurvediya Shabdakosha***

*Indra* means king of lords and *lupta* means *Roga, Kshudraroga*.

इन्द्र-पु देवता, देवानामधिपति

लुप्त-न रोग, क्षुद्ररोग

(Page. no.181-82)

A sudden bald patch appearance could be understood as the fall of a destructive weapon i. e. *Vajra* leading to *Keshluptata*.

#### **2. According to *Vaidyak Shabdasindhu***

A disease in which there is loss of hair on the scalp, beard, and moustache.

इन्द्रलुप्त(क)म्- श्मश्रुकेशघ्नरोगे ।

(Page. no.127)

### **Historical review of *Indralupta* disease**

*Vedas* are the oldest human literature. The loss of hair or the progress of any hair disorder was looked upon as disgraceful and unauspicious during the *Vedic* period.

Ayurveda is considered a *Upveda* of *Atharvaveda* as this Veda deals with many medicinal recipes. There, it has been said that the use of *Swarasa* of a certain plant is beneficial in curing *Indralupta*.<sup>[4]</sup>

### **Samhita Period**

This was the period when Ayurveda reached its pinnacle. Description of *Indralupta* disease in *Samhitas* is as follows.

#### **Charaka Samhita**

No description is found about *Indralupta* in *Charak Samhita* as the name of *Indralupta* but in the *Trimarmiya Chikitsa Sthan*, during describing *Shiroroga*, *Charaka* has described the etiopathogenesis, line of treatment, and various modalities for the treatment of the disease *Khalitya*. It has been included in *Urdhvajatrugata Roga* and has been described to occur due to negotiation of *Dushtapratishyaya*.<sup>[5,6]</sup>

*Acharya Charaka* in *Vimanasthana*, while describing the disorders said that a person habituated to excessive *Lavana* or *Kshara* intake and taking *Viruddha Ahara* in routine is prone to have *Khalitya*.<sup>[7]</sup>

#### **Sushruta Samhita**

In *Sushruta Samhita*, *Acharya Sushruta* elucidates *Indralupta* as a synonym of *Khalitya* and has described it under *Kshudra Roga* along with its pathogenesis in the *Nidanasthana* chapter 13 and its *Chikitsa* is described in chapter 20 under *Chikitsa* of *Kshudra Roga*.<sup>[8]</sup>

#### **Ashtanga Hridaya**

In *Ashtang Hridaya* *Indralupta* is described in chapter 23 of *Uttar Sthana* under the heading of *Shiro- Rogas* and its *Chikitsa* are described in chapter 24 of *Uttar Sthana* under *Chikitsa* of *Shiro-rogas*. *Acharya Vagbhata* differentiated *Indralupta* and *Khalitya* by saying that in *Khalitya*, loss of hair occurs more gradually than that in *Indralupta*, pathology being common in both.<sup>[9,10]</sup>

#### **Nidana Panchaka of Indralupta disease**

The examination of the disease is done by *Nidana/ Hetu* (etiological factors), *Purvarupa* (premonitory signs and symptoms), *Rupa* (Signs and symptoms), *Upashaya*, and *Samprapti* (pathogenesis).<sup>[11]</sup>

**Thus, to understand *Indralupta* disease above five factors should be discussed**

#### **1. Hetu (Etiological Factors)**

In ancient Ayurveda texts, there is a clear description of various factors that imbalance the state of equilibrium of *Doshas*. This ultimately leads to creating a suitable situation for

various diseases. These factors are considered *Hetu* (etiological factors).

*Acharya Charaka* in *Vimanasthana*, while describing the disorders occurring due to over indulgence of *Kshara*, *Lavana*, and *Viruddha Ahara* mentioned the occurrence of hair loss. It has been mentioned that the *Viruddha Ahara* like, simultaneous intake of *Lavana* (salt) with milk in the diet induces *Khalitya*, as observed in the people of *Saurashtra* and *Bahluka*. Thus, it can be said that a person habituated to excessive *Lavana* or *Kshara* intake and taking *Viruddha Ahara* in routine is prone to have *Khalitya*.<sup>[12]</sup> In the *Trimarmiya Chikitsa Sthan*, during describing *Shiroroga*, *Charaka* has described the etiopathogenesis of the disease *Khalitya*. *Acharya Charaka* has said that *Teja* along with *Vatadi Dosha*, burn the *Keshbhoomi* to produce *Khalitya*.<sup>[13]</sup>

### **Sushruta Samhita**

रोमकूपानुगं पित्तं वातेन सह मूर्च्छितम् ।  
प्रच्यावयति रोमाणि ततः श्लेष्मा सशोणितः ॥  
तदिन्द्रलुप्तं खालित्यं रुज्येति च विभाव्यते ॥  
रुणद्धि रोमकपांस्तु ततोऽन्यषामसम्भवः ।

[Su. Ni.13/32-33]

*Acharya Sushruta* a well-versed surgeon, states in the *Kshudrarogadhikara*, self-explanatory pathogenesis of *Indralupta*. It reads as “The Pitta, provocative by its factors penetrates the *Romakoopa* and there it unites with the *Vata* to shatter the hair. Then the *Shleshma* along with the *Shonita* obstructs the *Romakoopa*, to prevent the growth of new hair from that place. Thus, *Acharya Sushruta* has considered the involvement of all three *Doshas* viz. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* along with *Shonita* in the occurrence of *Indralupta*. On this basis, it can conclude that all *Nidan* which can aggravate *Vatadi Dosha* are *Hetu* of *Indralupta* disease.<sup>[14]</sup>

आमाशयस्थे कफवातरोगी पक्वाशयस्थेऽनिलपित्तरोगी ।  
भवेन्नरो ध्वस्तशिरोरुहाङ्गो विलूनपक्षस्तु यथा विहङ्गः ॥ [Su.K.2/28]

*Acharya Sushruta* in *Kalpa Sthana* chapter 2 describing signs & symptoms of *Dushi Visha* said that when *Dushi Visha* lodged in *Amashaya* gives rise to the diseases resulting from the combined action of *Kapha* and *Vata*; whereas, if located in the *Pakvasaya*, it produces diseases due to *Vata* and *Pitta*. The sufferer's hair on the head and body falls off and appears just like a bird that has lost the feathers of its wings. This symptom can be correlated very

well with the diseased condition *Indralupta* (Alopecia areata /Alopecia universlis in advance stage) in which loss of hair occurs in patchy form under skin disease.

The *Ashtanga Hridayakara* has enumerated *Shiroroga* under the caption of *Urdhvajatrugata Roga* and *Indralupta* being one of them. There is no separate mention of the specific causative factor for *Indralupta* but the general etiological factors of *Shiroroga* can be considered as that of *Indralupta*.<sup>[15]</sup>

*Dhooma* (Improper smoke inhalation or exposure), *Aatap* (Exposure to sun rays or fire), *Tushar* (Exposure to dew droplets), *Ambu Kreedaa* (Excess Swimming), *Atiswapana* (Excess Sleeping), *Prajagaren* (Not/less sleeping), *Utsveda* (Excessive sweating), *Purovat* (Exposure to wind flowing from East direction), *Bashpa Nigraha* (Retention of tears urge), *Rodana* (Excess crying), *Atiambupana* (Excess consumption of drinking water), *Atimadyapana* (Excess consumption of Alcohol), *Krimi* (Worms manifestation in the head), *Vegadharan* (Suppression of natural urges), *Upadhan* (Using high or low pillow), *Mruja* (Not taking proper hygiene), *Abhyanga Devesh* (Not having proper oleation on the head), *Adha Pratatekshana* (Looking downwards continuously), *Asatmya Gandha* (Unfavorable smell), *Dushta Aam* (Presence of *aam* in the body), *Atibhashan* (Excess Speaking).

## 2. Purvarupa

*Purvarupa* is the premonitory symptom of the disease, which is observed before the complete manifestation of the disease. In the case of *Indralupta*, no specific *Purvarupa* has been described in Ayurvedic literature. In this way, occasional loss of some hairs may be considered as *Purvarupa* of *Indralupta*.

## 3. Rupa

Vitiated *Dosha* creates various signs and symptoms according to their properties and produces a disease which is called *Rupa*. Thus, the cardinal symptom of *Indralupta* disease is loss of hair in a patchy form appearance.

## 4. Upashaya

*Upashaya* is the fourth factor required for knowledge of the disease. It is also useful in the differential diagnosis of the disease. *Upashaya* is the name given to the homologation symptoms which appear on the intake of the wholesome medicinal dietary and behavioral regimens. Its vice versa state is known as *Anupashaya*.

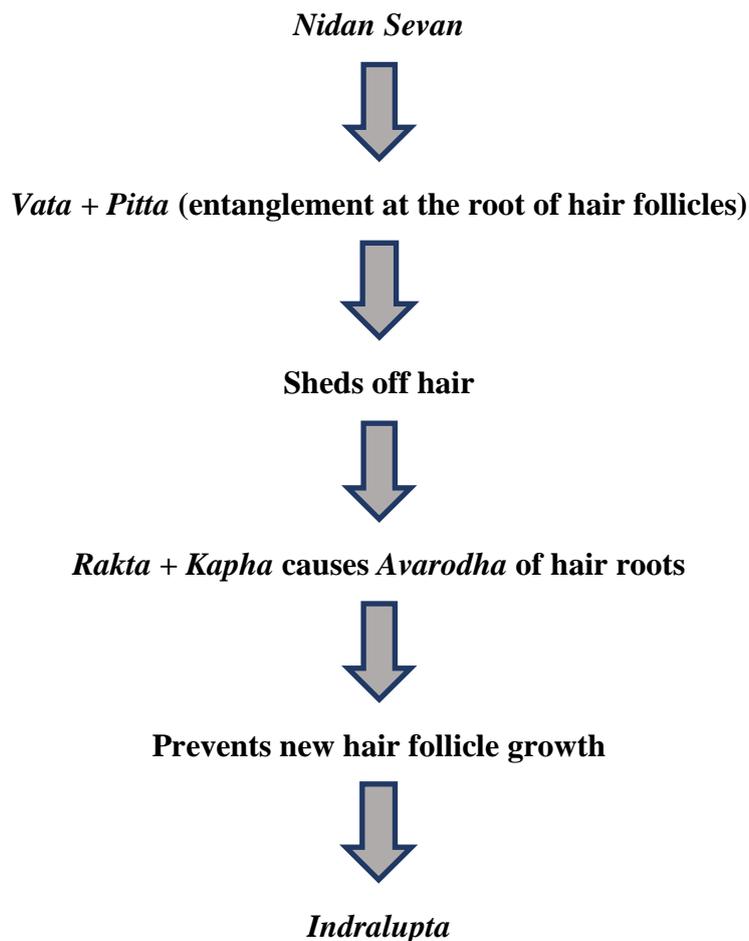
According to *Acharya Charaka* the diet, drug, or behavior, which are opposite to the etiological factor of the disease and which does not deteriorate the latter can be considered *Upashaya*. Thus, the diet, drugs, and behavior, which are antagonists to *Vata Dosha*, *Pitta Dosha*, and etiological factors can be considered as *Upashaya* in *Indralupta*.<sup>[16]</sup>

### 5. *Samprapti*

The whole process initiating from intake of *Nidan* to the complete manifestation of the disease is known as *Samprapti*. The knowledge of *Samprapti* is very needful for a clear knowledge of the disease. It has also been said that treatment is nothing but breaking the chain of *Samprapti*.<sup>[17]</sup>

The disease *Indralupta* is under-described in Ayurvedic texts so a regular description of its *Samprapti* must be narrated and put forward after a cautious glance at the disease and its manifestations.

#### The description of *Samprapti* of *Indralupta* disease



***Samprapti Ghataka******Dosha:*** *Vata: Samana, Vyana**Pitta: Pachaka Pitta and Bhrajaka Pitta**Kapha: Tarpaka Kapha****Dushya:*** *Dhatu: Rasa, Rakta, Asthi**Mala: Sweda, Kेशha**Agni: JatharAgni, Rasagni, Asthiagni, Mahabhutagni**Ama: Rasa, Raktagata Ama****Srotasa:*** *Rasavaha, Raktavaha, Asthivaha, Swedavaha, Manovaha****Udbhava:*** *Amashaya****Sanchara:*** *Rasayani (Rasavaha Srotasa)****Adhithana:*** *Keshabhoomi****Rogamarga:*** *Bahya Rogamarga, including Trimarma (Shira)***Explanation of *Samprapti* of *Indralupta* disease**

On basis of the above-mentioned descriptions, the indulgence of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* i.e., all three humors have been held responsible to produce *Indralupta* disease but, the *Pitta Dosh*a especially the *Bhrajaka Pitta* (localized in the scalp) and the *Pachaka Pitta* (in the form of *Dehoshma*) play an important role in the disease *Indralupta*. Next comes the involvement of *Vata*, mainly the *Samana Vayu* which is responsible for the proper *Dhamana* of the *Pachakagni*, and the *Vyana Vayu* which resides all over the body are involved. The third involvement found in *Indralupta* is of *Kapha Dosh*a especially the *Tarpaka Kapha*, which dwells in the head (localized vitiation).

The *Ushna* and *Tikshna* properties of *Pitta* get augmented whereas the *Vata* suffers an aggravation in *Ruksha*, *Khara*, and *Chala* properties. Here, the aggravated *Pitta (Bhrajaka Pitta)* supported by the vitiated *Dehoshma* burns the *Keshabhoomi* whereas an increased *Vata* gives rise to more frequent and comparatively prolonged *Shira Sankocha* by its *Ruksha* and *Khara Guna*. The *Snigdhatva* and the *Pichchhilatva* of the normal *Kapha Dosh*a are prevalent throughout the pores of the skin to keep it soft and moist. By the augmentation of the *Ushna*, *Tikshna*, *Ruksha*, and *Khara* properties of *Pitta* and *Vata Dosh*as, the *Sneha* and the *Pichchhilatva* of the *Kapha Dosh*a are dried up within the pores of the skin of the scalp thus, obstructing the growth of new hairs, causing *Indralupta*.

### ***Chikitsa Siddhanta***

All those procedures which, administered internally or externally cause the equilibrium status of the *Doshas*, as well as the *Dhatus*, are nothing but the *Chikitsa* of that disease.

### **General line of treatment of *Indralupta***

*Indralupta* being a *Kshudraroga*, the general line of treatment for these diseases can be elicited for this disease. The line of treatment for *Kshudra Rogas* is benevolent for the patients of *Indralupta*. Indulgence in the dietary and habitat regimen, which aggravate *Dushi Visha* is advised to be avoided and on the contrary, the diet and drugs, which bring about the equilibrium State of the body are utilized.

The *Ashtanga Hridayakara* has enumerated *Shiroroga* under the caption of *Urdhvajatrugata Roga* and *Indralupta* being one of them. The line of treatment for *Shiroroga* is benevolent for the patients of *Indralupta*.

### **Specific line of treatment of *Indralupta***

The line of treatment of *Indralupta* mentioned by different *Ayurvedic Acharya* is as follow.

#### **According to *Sushrut Samhita*<sup>[18]</sup>**

After proper *Snehan* and *Swedan*, *Raktamokshan* in the form of *Siravedh* (i.e., Puncture of veins) at *Murdha* must be performed, and then.

- This is to be followed by Local application paste of *Maricha*, *Manahshila*, *Kasis*, and *Tuttha*.
- Paste of *Tagar* and *Devdar*
- Paste of *Gunja* after deep *pracchan* to relieve the pain
- Oil prepared from paste of *Malati*, *Karveer*, *Chitrak* and *Karanj* for *abhyanga*.

#### **According to *Ashtang Hridaya*<sup>[19]</sup>**

- Application of a paste of *Kasis*, *Manshila*, *Tuttha*, and *Maricha* preceded by *Raktamokshan*
- *Kevtimotha* and *Devdar*
- *Gunja* seeds or fruits
- *Kalihari* root or *Karveer swarasa*
- *Chhoti Katari swarasa* with *Madhu*
- *Lepa* of *Dhatuara patra swarasa*

- *Bhallataka Swarasa*
- *Lepa of Gokshur, Sesame flowers, Madhu and Ghrit*
- Application of *Hastidanta Mashhi* with oil is also carried out
- In case there is white hair growth in *Indralupta*, apply ash of sheep horn mixed with oil.
- Until there is complete hair growth avoid sprinkling water.

#### According to *Chakradatta*<sup>[20]</sup>

- After *Raktamokshan (Siravedha)* application of *lepa of Manshila, Kasis, and Tuttha*.
- *Malatyadi Tail*- Local application of oil formulation made with Kalka of *Malati, Kaner, Chitrak, Karanj, and Til Tail*.
- *Kutnatadi Lepa*- Local application of paste/oil of *Kevtimotha, Chitrak, Chameli leaves, Karanj, and Karaveer Moola*.
- *Gunjaphala Lepa*- Local application of a paste of *Gunja* after *pracchan*.
- *Hastidanta Mashhi*- Local application of the paste of *Hastidanta Mashhi* with *Rasanjan*.
- *Bhallatakadi Lepa*- Local application of the paste of *Bhallataka*, the fruit of *Katari, Gunja moola* with *Madhu*.
- *Gunjaphala-moola Yoga*- Topical application of the paste of *Gunja Phala or moola* in *Bruhati swarasa*.
- Application of a paste of *Dhatura* root in water.
- After scrapping the patch, the application of fine *Maricha* powder has to be performed.

#### According to *Yogaratanakar*<sup>[21]</sup>

- *Lepa of Bruhati swarasa, Gunja moola and Bhallataka swarasa* with *Madhu*.
- *Lepa of Navneet* with *Mashi* of the hoof of a white horse.
- *Lepa of Hastidanta mashhi* with *Rasanjan*.
- *Lepa* of equal quantity of *Gokshur* and *Sesame flowers* with *Ghrit* and *Madhu*.
- *Jatyadi Taila*-Local application of oil prepared from *Jati, Karanj, Varuna, and Karveer*.
- *Snuheedugdhadhi Taila*- Local application of oil prepared from *Snuhee dugdha, Arka dugdha, Markov, Langali, goat's urine, cow's urine, Ratika, Indravaruni, Sidharthak, and Tikshnagandha*.

#### Sadhya – Asadhyata

In all Ayurvedic texts, ample importance has been given to the knowledge of *Sadhya-Asadhyata* (prognosis) before starting any treatment.

There is no mention of the prognosis of *Indralupta* in either *Charaka or Sushruta. Ashtanga*

*Samgrahakara* has suggested some conditions of the scalp of patients when the disease turns out to be incurable. These are<sup>[22]</sup>

- A. Burnt-like appearance
- B. Nail-like appearance
- C. Absolute hair loss
- D. Injury due to burns
- E. *Sannipataj Khalati*

### **PATHYA-APATHYA**

There is no clear-cut description of *Pathy-apathya* of *Indralupta* in *Samhitas*, but as the disease *Indralupta* is related to skin diseases, *Rakta Vikara*, *Dhatukshaya*, and *Dushi Visha*, one can take *Rasayana*, *Rakta Dosha Prashamana*, *Vayasthapana*, *Twachya*, *Vishaghana*, etc.

#### ***Pathya Ahara***

Soybeans are useful as they contain large amounts of Proteins, vitamin E, and iron. Iron is important in the production of hemoglobin. Normal hemoglobin levels ensure adequate flow of oxygen to the scalp for hair growth stimulation. Vitamin C in *Awala* is an excellent supply of collagen, vital for hair growth, helps prevent hair loss, and assists the body to absorb iron from protein sources such as meat in our daily diets. Almonds help in preventing hair loss. They are a wonderful source of iron, protein, and vitamin E (all critical elements in ensuring healthy hair and hair growth stimulation).

#### ***Pathya Vihara***

*Shirasnana*, *Nasya*, *Shiroraksha*, *Chhatrdharana*, *Sarvangasnana*, best hygiene of hair, and *Shirobhyanga*. Oil is applied to the scalp to nourish, lubricate, and strengthen the roots. Oleation therapy will also improve circulation to the head.

#### ***Apathya Ahara***

All *Ahara* which vitiates *Pitta* and *Vata Dosha* like.

- High quantity of *Lavana*, *Amla* & *Katu Rasa*, and *Kshara Sevana*.
- Continuous use of fry diet.
- *Viruddha Ahara*

### ***Apathya Vihara***

*Atapa Sevana, Abhighata, Ushna Vayu, Ratri Jagarana, Divaswapna, Vegavarodha Krodha, Bhaya, Ahankara, Irshya, Shock, Lobha, Ati Maithuna, Tension, Excessive exercise, Cold drinks & Alcohol, Tobacco, Smoking & Other drug addiction.*

### **DISCUSSION**

No description is found about *Indralupta* in *Charak Samhita* as the name of *Indralupta*. *Acharya Sushruta* has described diseases of hair loss like *Indralupta, Khalitya, and Rujya* as one disease while according to *Acharya Vagbhata, Indralupta/Rujya/Chach* is a specific condition characterized by instant loss of hair from some scalp areas and *Khalitya* is a disease condition in which there is a slow loss of scalp hair. *Acharya Sushruta* and *Acharya Vagbhata* have described *Vata-Pita* vitiation in the *Indralupta* disease which sheds off hairs from the *Romakupa* of scalp or other body area and further vitiation of *Rakta Dosha* along with *Kapha Dosha* cause *Rom-Kupa avarodha* thereby preventing the growth of new hair in this area. The line of treatment of *Indralupta* disease is mentioned by different Ayurvedic *Acharya* among which *Raktmokshana* is common procedure.

### **CONCLUSION**

*Indralupta* disease is a pattern of hair loss in which there is the formation of one or more well-defined bald spots due to sudden hair loss on the scalp, beard, or any other body part. According to Ayurveda, it is said that *Lavana, Katu* and *Kshara Pradhana Dravya, Guru, Snigdha, and Ushna Guna, Atapa Sevana, Ratri jagarana, Divaswapna, Chinta, and Krodha* are the responsible etiopathological factors for the development of hair loss disease due to aggravation of *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha*, which sheds off hair and further vitiation of *Rakta Dosha* along with *Kapha Dosha* cause obstruction in *Rom-Kupa* thereby preventing the regrowth of hair while procedures and *Chikitsa Siddhanta* of opposite mode of actions to etiological factors are beneficial for its treatment.

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