

## RESEARCH PAPER

# Mukhakāntikāra Lepa (Facial Radiance Therapy) under Ayurveda: Daily Routine (Dinacaryā) and Its Modern Dermatological Perspective

Dr. Champa Sahu<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Vibha Pali<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Shweta Kanwar<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Pooja Singh<sup>4</sup>,  
Dr. Gamini Taram<sup>5</sup>, Dr. Dharmendra Binjhar<sup>6</sup>, Dr. Harish Sharan Sahu<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, N.P.A. Government Ayurved College, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India [Sahu.charu17@gmail.com](mailto:Sahu.charu17@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, N.P.A. Government Ayurved College, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India [vibhapali@gmail.com](mailto:vibhapali@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>Post Graduate Scholar, Department of kriya Sharir, Shri N.P.A. Government ayurved college Raipur, Chhattisgarh. [shwetakanwa786sk@gmail.com](mailto:shwetakanwa786sk@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup>Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Kriya sharir, N.P.A Government Ayurved College Raipur Chhattisgarh. [singhpooja88850@gmail.com](mailto:singhpooja88850@gmail.com)

<sup>5</sup>Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Kriya sharira , N.P.A Government Ayurved College, Raipur, Chhattisgarh. [gamini.taram@gmail.com](mailto:gamini.taram@gmail.com)

<sup>6</sup>Lecturer, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, Chhattisgarh Ayurvedic Medical College Manki, Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh, India. [dharmendrabinjhar205@gmail.com](mailto:dharmendrabinjhar205@gmail.com)

<sup>7</sup>Dr. Harish Sharan Sahu Ayurved Medical Officer, Govt. Ayurved Dispensary Salouni, K.C.G. Chhattisgarh, India. [hsharishsahu56@gmail.com](mailto:hsharishsahu56@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Āyurveda (the traditional Indian system of medicine) emphasizes preventive and promotive health through lifestyle regimens known as Dinacaryā (daily routine). Within this framework, Mukhakāntikara Lepa (facial radiance therapy)—herbal facial applications designed to enhance kānti (radiance and complexion)—represents a distinctive approach to beauty and skin health. Unlike modern cosmetics focusing on superficial aesthetics, Āyurveda integrates external care with systemic balance and psychosomatic well-being.

**Basic Ayurvedic Concepts:** Āyurveda explains body functioning through three Doṣas (bio-energetic principles): Vāta, Pitta, and Kapha. Pitta governs metabolism and skin, Vāta controls movement, and Kapha maintains structure. Agni (digestive fire) is responsible for metabolism and nourishment. Its imbalance leads to toxin formation (Āma), causing skin disorders.

**Methods:** Classical Āyurvedic texts, commentaries, and contemporary research literature were reviewed to analyze the concept, formulation, and therapeutic relevance of Mukhakāntikara Lepa. Particular attention was given to its association with Lepa Kalpanā (herbal paste formulations) and Sneha Kalpanā (oil- and ghee-based preparations), as well as pharmacognostic and phytochemical evidence supporting its efficacy.

**Results:** Key ingredients such as Haridrā (Curcuma longa), Candana (Santalum album), Mañjiṣṭhā (Rubia cordifolia), Lodhra (Symlocos racemosa), and Yaṣṭimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra) possess rūpavardhaka, tvacya, and varṇya properties. Phytoconstituents like curcumin, santalols, anthraquinones, and glycyrrhizin demonstrate antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, depigmenting, and antimicrobial effects. Recent clinical findings (2020–2024) validate the utility of herbal Lepa in acne, melasma, and photoaging management.

**Discussion:** Āyurvedic concepts of Lepa Kalpanā and Sneha Kalpanā collectively promote both external radiance and internal tissue nourishment, aligning with modern principles of preventive dermatology. Thus, Mukhakāntikara Lepa exemplifies the holistic and sustainable model of beauty advocated by Āyurveda, bridging ancient wisdom with modern evidence-based science.

**Keywords:** Āyurveda, Dinacaryā, Mukhakāntikara Lepa, Lepa Kalpanā, Sneha Kalpanā, herbal dermatology.

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## INTRODUCTION

Āyurveda, derived from the Sanskrit words Āyus (life) and Veda (knowledge), is a comprehensive life science concerned not only with disease treatment but also with the preservation of health and promotion of longevity [1]. Its principles are preventive, promotive, and therapeutic, emphasizing equilibrium among body, mind, and spirit. Within this framework, beauty (saundarya) and aesthetics are not superficial qualities but reflections of internal harmony, vitality, and wellness.

Āyurveda explains body functioning through three Doṣas (bio-energetic principles): Vāta, Pitta, and Kapha. Pitta governs metabolism and skin, Vāta controls movement, and Kapha maintains structure. Agni (digestive fire) is responsible for metabolism and nourishment. Its imbalance leads to toxin formation (Āma), causing skin disorders.

Among the numerous lifestyle practices described in Āyurveda, Dinacaryā—the daily regimen—occupies a central role. It prescribes systematic routines encompassing abhayaṅga, snana, exercise, diet, and mental discipline [2]. A distinctive component within this regimen is Mukhakāntikāra Lepa (facial radiance therapy), an herbal facial application formulated to promote kānti (radiance), remove blemishes, and maintain skin health. Classical treatises such as Charakasamhitā, Suśrutasaṃhitā, and Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya provide elaborate descriptions of various Lepa (herbal paste) formulations employed for beautification, disease management, and systemic health.

Unlike modern cosmetics, which often rely on chemical agents and seek rapid results, Āyurveda emphasizes prevention, deep nourishment, and the maintenance of Doṣa balance (bioenergetic principles). Skin is regarded as a reflection of Rasa and Rakta Dhātu (nutrient plasma and blood tissues), whose luster depends upon digestive fire (Agni), lifestyle, and mental state. Thus, interventions like Mukhakāntikāra Lepa (facial radiance therapy) transcend mere cosmetic use, acting upon deeper layers of physiology and metabolism.

The rising demand for natural, safe, and holistic alternatives in dermatology and cosmetology has revived interest in Āyurvedic facial Lepa formulations. Recent clinical trials suggest that preparations containing Haridrā (Curcuma longa), Candana (Santalum album), Mañjiṣṭhā (Rubia cordifolia), and Yaṣṭimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra) show significant improvements in acne, melasma, and hyperpigmentation [3]. Moreover, these herbal formulations generally demonstrate superior safety profiles compared to synthetic chemical treatments.

This review integrates classical Āyurvedic perspectives with modern biomedical evidence to provide a comprehensive understanding of Mukhakāntikāra Lepa (facial radiance therapy). It examines its conceptual foundation within Lepa Kalpanā and Sneha Kalpanā, explores key ingredients

and mechanisms of action, reviews clinical evidence, and highlights its relevance within Dinacaryā.

## ĀYURVEDA AND DINACARYĀ

Āyurveda emphasizes the rhythmic cyclicality of life, aligning human behavior with natural diurnal patterns. Dinacaryā (daily regimen) is prescribed to maintain Doṣa equilibrium, strengthen immunity, and promote mental clarity. It includes practices such as:

- *Uṣāhkāla utthāna* (early rising, aligned with circadian rhythm)
- *Dantadhāvana* (brushing teeth with herbal twigs)
- *Jihvānirlekhana* (tongue scraping)
- *Nasya* (nasal medication)
- *Abhyanga* (oil massage)
- *Snāna* (bathing)
- *Mukhakāntikāra Lepa* (application of herbal facial paste)

Each of these practices addresses specific aspects of physical, psychological, and environmental health. *Mukhakāntikāra Lepa* (facial radiance therapy) forms an essential ritual within this sequence, targeting facial skin care, enhancing *kānti*, preventing premature aging, and shielding the skin from environmental stressors such as sunlight and pollution.

The classical rationale for incorporating *Mukhakāntikāra Lepa* (facial radiance therapy) into the daily routine stems from the belief that external beauty mirrors internal balance. *Kānti* (radiance) arises from the optimal nourishment of Dhātu, efficient digestion (*Agni*), and a balanced mental state (*Sattva*). Disorders such as acne, pigmentation, or dull complexion are viewed as manifestations of *Doṣa* imbalance or Dhātu disturbance. Hence, daily Lepa application serves both preventive and therapeutic functions.

From a modern scientific perspective, the alignment of *Dinacaryā* with circadian biology is particularly remarkable. Practices such as early rising, oil massage, and the use of natural herbal skin formulations synchronize with biological rhythms that regulate epidermal repair, collagen synthesis, and oxidative defense. Thus, *Mukhakāntikāra Lepa* (facial radiance therapy) embodies the harmony between ancient Āyurvedic insight and contemporary dermatological science.

## CONCEPT OF MUKHAKĀNTIKĀRA LEPA (facial radiance therapy)

The term *Mukhakāntikāra Lepa* (facial radiance therapy) literally translates as “facial paste that enhances radiance.” Āyurveda identifies *Kānti* as a vital indicator of health and youthfulness, characterized by luminosity, even complexion, and freedom from blemishes. Classical treatises describe numerous herbal formulations belonging to this category.

Charakasamhitā recommends applications of Haridrā (Curcuma longa), Lodhra (Symplacos racemosa), and Mañjiṣṭhā (Rubia cordifolia) for improving

complexion and alleviating tvacāroga (skin disorders) [4].

The Āyurvedic theory behind Mukhakāntikāra Lepa highlights two dimensions:

1. **Cosmetic:** Improvement of varṇa (skin tone), prasāda (clarity), and kānti (radiance).
2. **Therapeutic:** Management of disorders such as mukhaduṣikā (acne), vyanga (melasma), vyangakoṭha (blemishes), and premature wrinkling.

According to Āyurvedic pathology, these conditions are often associated with Pitta and Rakta vitiation, accumulation of Āma (metabolic toxins), and obstruction of srotas (microchannels). Application of herbal Lepa helps restore balance through cooling, anti-inflammatory, detoxifying, and nutritive properties.

Modern biomedical research corroborates these principles. Turmeric (curcumin) demonstrates potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity; licorice inhibits tyrosinase enzyme, reducing hyperpigmentation; while sandalwood and Mañjiṣṭhā possess antimicrobial and anti-melasma effects. Clinical studies indicate that such formulations are safe for long-term use and effective in conditions like acne, hyperpigmentation, and photoaging.

Thus, Mukhakāntikāra Lepa represents a unique intersection of aesthetics and therapeutics—where facial beauty becomes an expression of holistic health.

## LEPA KALPANĀ

### Definition and Classical Basis

Lepa Kalpanā refers to semi-solid formulations prepared from powdered herbs, fresh plant pastes, or decoctions mixed with suitable liquid media and applied externally [5]. The Sanskrit term lepa derives from the root “lip,” meaning “to smear” or “to anoint.” In Āyurveda, Lepa is categorized under bahirparimarjana cikitsā (external therapies) and is prescribed for cosmetic enhancement, wound healing, inflammation, pain relief, and rejuvenation.

### Types of Lepa

Classical texts classify Lepa into three principal types:

- **Pralepa** – Thin pastes with cooling and soothing effects, indicated mainly in Pitta disorders and inflammatory skin conditions. Example: Candana + Haridrā paste for erythematous acne lesions.
- **Alepa** – Thick, unctuous applications used for Vāta-dominant conditions with dryness and degeneration. Example: Ghṛta-based paste for wrinkles and xerotic skin.
- 1. **Pradeha** –It is thicker (bahala), warm, and unctuous in nature. It is usually applied in the same direction as the hair follicles and is mainly used to reduce pain, swelling, and inflammation[6].

Example:Yava godhuma pradeha in inflammation and pain.

**According to the thickness (quantity) of lepa, it is stated that:**

**1.Doshaghna Lepa** (Anti-dosha therapeutic paste):

The thickness should be one-fourth of a finger breadth.

**2.Vishaghna Lepa** (Anti-poison paste):

The thickness should be one-third of a finger breadth.

**3.Varnya Lepa** (Cosmetic / complexion-enhancing paste):

The thickness should be half a finger breadth [7].

### Therapeutic and Cosmetic Applications

- **Cosmetic:** Enhances varṇa (complexion), kānti (radiance), and ślakṣṇatā (smoothness).
- **Therapeutic:** Exhibits anti-inflammatory, detoxifying, antimicrobial, astringent, and wound-healing properties.
- **Preventive:** When used as part of Dinacaryā, Lepa protects the skin from dust, sunlight, and environmental aggressors.

### Integration with Mukhakāntikāra Lepa

Mukhakāntikāra Lepa represents a specialized subset of Lepa Kalpanā, designed not merely for beautification but for correcting Doṣic imbalances in Rasa and Rakta Dhātu. Classical formulations containing Haridrā, Candana, Lodhra, Yaṣṭimadhu, and Mañjiṣṭhā are recommended in daily or seasonal regimens for maintaining skin luminosity and texture.

## SNEHA KALPANĀ

### Definition and Classical Basis

Sneha Kalpanā refers to the pharmaceutical process of preparing medicated lipids (Taila – oil, Ghṛta – ghee) by processing herbal decoctions (kvātha), pastes (kalka), and liquid extracts in fatty media. Āyurveda recognizes four snehadravya: Ghṛta, Taila, Vasa (muscle fat), and Majjā (bone marrow fat). Among these, Ghṛta and Taila are most frequently used in dermatological and cosmetic formulations.

### Sneha Preparations in Skin Care

- **Ghṛta (Ghee-based preparations):** Cooling, nourishing, anti-aging; ideal for Pitta or sensitive skin.
- **Taila (Oil-based preparations):** Warming, lubricating, and penetrative; balances Vāta; useful in dryness, acne scars, and pigmentation.
- **Combined Sneha-Lepa:** Lepa prepared with Ghṛta or Taila enhances percutaneous absorption. Example: Yaṣṭimadhu-ghṛta lepa for vyanga (melasma).

### Role of Sneha in Enhancing Lepa Action

Sneha acts as an effective vehicle that enhances:

- Transdermal absorption of herbal actives.

- Moisture retention and longer contact time by preventing rapid drying.
- Deep nourishment up to Rasa–Rakta Dhātu levels.
- Barrier repair through restoration of the skin’s lipid layer.
- antimicrobial protection, and reduction of transepidermal water loss.
- Ghṛta-based formulations exhibit anti-inflammatory and wound-healing properties.
- Lipid-based Ayurvedic formulations are now being explored as phytosomal or nanoemulsion carriers, enhancing the stability and delivery of phytochemicals.

#### Modern Evidence on Sneha Preparations

- Studies on coconut and sesame oils reveal significant improvement in skin barrier repair, Thus, Sneha Kalpanā complements Lepa Kalpanā, ensuring both immediate topical benefits and long-term systemic nourishment.

#### Comparison with Modern Dermatology

Aspect	Ayurvedic Lepa	Modern Treatments
Nature	Natural, herbal	Chemical-based
Action	Holistic	Superficial
Safety	Safe	Possible irritation
Effect	Long-term	Temporary
Cost	Economical	Expensive

#### HERBAL INGREDIENTS AND PHYTOCHEMISTRY

Mukhakāntikāra Lepa formulations employ herbs renowned in Āyurveda for their varṇya (complexion-enhancing), tvacya (skin-nourishing), and rūpavardhaka (beautifying) actions. Each drug contributes distinct guṇa (qualities), rasa (taste),

vīrya (potency), and karma (therapeutic action). Contemporary phytochemical studies validate these properties through antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, depigmenting, and antimicrobial effects, underscoring their dual cosmetic and therapeutic significance.

**Table 1. Key Herbs Used in Mukhakāntikāra Lepa – Ayurvedic and Biomedical Correlation**

Sanskrit / Botanical Name	Āyurvedic Attributes (Rasa, Guṇa, Vīrya, Vipāka, Karma)	Major Phytoconstituents	Biomedical / Dermatological Actions	References
<b>Haridrā</b> (Curcuma longa)	Tikta, kaṭu rasa; laghu, rukṣa guṇa; uṣṇa vīrya; kaṭu vipāka; kāntivardhaka, varṇya, kṛmighna	Curcumin, demethoxy-curcumin, essential oils	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial; inhibits melanogenesis and accelerates wound healing	[8]
<b>Candana</b> (Santalum album)	Madhura, tikta rasa; guru, snigdha guṇa; śīta vīrya; madhura vipāka; tvacya, dāhaprasāmana	α- & β-santalol, santalenes	Cooling, anti-pruritic, anti-inflammatory, complexion-enhancing	[9]
<b>Mañjiṣṭhā</b> (Rubia cordifolia)	Tikta, kaṣāya rasa; laghu, rukṣa guṇa; uṣṇa vīrya; kaṭu vipāka; raktaprasādana, varṇya	Anthraquinones (rubiadin, munjistin), purpurin	Antioxidant, detoxifying, anti-melasma; supports micro-circulation	[10]
<b>Lodhra</b> (Symplocos racemosa)	Kaṣāya rasa; laghu, rukṣa guṇa; śīta vīrya; kaṭu vipāka; varṇya, stambhana, raktasamśamana	Symplocoside, betulinic acid, tannins	Astringent, anti-acne, tightening, anti-pigmentation	[11]
<b>Yaṣṭimadhu</b>	Madhura rasa; guru,	Glycyrrhizin,	Tyrosinase	[12]

(Glycyrrhiza glabra)	snigdha guṇa; śīta vīrya; madhura vipāka; varṇya, vayasthāpana	liquiritin, glabridin	inhibition, anti-inflammatory, photoprotective, depigmenting	
<b>Nimba</b> (Azadirachta indica)	Tikta, kaṣāya rasa; laghu, ruṣa guṇa; śīta vīrya; kaṭu vipāka; kṛmighna, raktaprasādana	Azadirachtin, nimbidin, quercetin	Antimicrobial, anti-acne, anti-oxidative	[13]
<b>Kumkumī</b> ( <b>Kuṅkuma</b> ) (Crocus sativus)	Kaṭu, tikta rasa; laghu, snigdha guṇa; uṣṇa vīrya; madhura vipāka; varṇya, vayasthāpana	Crocin, safranal, crocetin,	Brightening, antioxidant, enhances micro-circulation, anti-aging	[14]

#### Mechanism of Action of Mukhakāntikara Lepa (facial radiance therapy)

The therapeutic efficacy of Mukhakāntikara Lepa operates through an integrative mechanism encompassing both Āyurvedic concepts and modern biomedical pathways. It harmonizes Doṣa, nourishes Dhātu, purifies Srotas, and enhances Kānti (radiance) through systemic and local effects.

#### Āyurvedic Mechanism

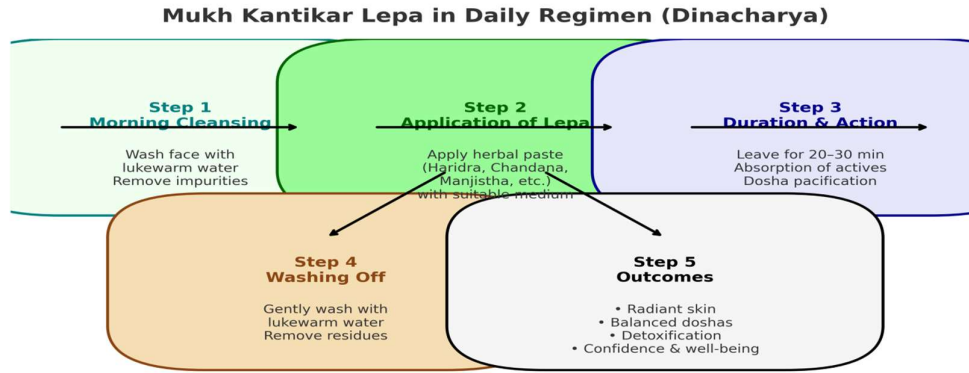
- Doṣa balance:** Cooling and soothing herbs such as Candana (*Santalum album*) and Yaṣṭimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) pacify Pitta; detoxifying and Raktaprasādana agents like Mañjiṣṭhā (*Rubia cordifolia*) and Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*) regulate Raktadhātu; emollients such as Ghr̥ta and Kumārī (*Aloe vera*) alleviate Vāta.
- Dhātu nourishment:** Mukhakāntikara Lepa acts primarily on Rasa and Rakta Dhātu, which are directly responsible for the health and luster of Tvak (skin).
- Srotas cleansing:** Detoxifying and anti-inflammatory agents facilitate the purification of Raktavaha Srotas, preventing hyperpigmentation, acne, and inflammatory disorders.
- Kāntivardhana:** Classical texts describe Varṇa-prasādana actions of Kumkuma (*Crocus sativus*) and Candana (*Santalum album*), enhancing natural complexion and glow.

#### BIOMEDICAL MECHANISM

- Antioxidant action:** Phytochemicals such as curcumin, crocin, and emblicanin neutralize free radicals and reduce oxidative stress, delaying photoaging.
- Anti-inflammatory pathways:** Extracts of Haridrā, Nimba, and Yaṣṭimadhu downregulate NF-κB and COX-2 pathways, mitigating acne, erythema, and inflammatory lesions.
- Melanogenesis inhibition:** Compounds like glabridin (from licorice), aloesin (from *Aloe vera*), and santalol (from sandalwood) inhibit tyrosinase activity, thereby reducing melanin synthesis and hyperpigmentation.
- Barrier restoration:** Sneha-based Lepas enhance epidermal lipid integrity and decrease transepidermal water loss (TEWL), improving skin hydration and resilience.
- Collagen stimulation:** Āmalakī (*Emblica officinalis*), rich in vitamin C and polyphenols, promotes collagen biosynthesis and maintains dermal elasticity.

#### Graphical Abstract (conceptual):

A pathway diagram (prepared separately) can depict herbs → phytochemicals → biological targets → skin outcomes (radiance, anti-acne, anti-aging).



### Role of Mukhakāntikāra Lepa in Dinacharyā

Dinacharyā (daily regimen) is a fundamental preventive approach in Āyurveda, aimed at maintaining Doṣic equilibrium and promoting both physical and mental well-being. Within this framework, Mukhakāntikāra Lepa serves as an integral component, offering cosmetic enhancement and therapeutic protection for the skin.

#### Morning Regimen

After Mukhaprakṣāṇa (cleansing of the face with lukewarm or medicated water), application of Lepa is advised as part of daily self-care.

- Lodhra–Mañjiṣṭhā Lepa is specifically recommended for detoxification and purification of Raktavaha Srotas.
- Regular application improves Varṇa (complexion), Prasāda (clarity), and Kānti (radiance), reflecting inner systemic balance. This practice aligns with Saundarya Cikitsā (Ayurvedic cosmetology), where external beauty is viewed as a manifestation of internal harmony.

#### Seasonal Adaptation (R̥tucaryā Integration)

The properties of Lepa are adjusted according to seasonal variations to maintain Doṣa balance:

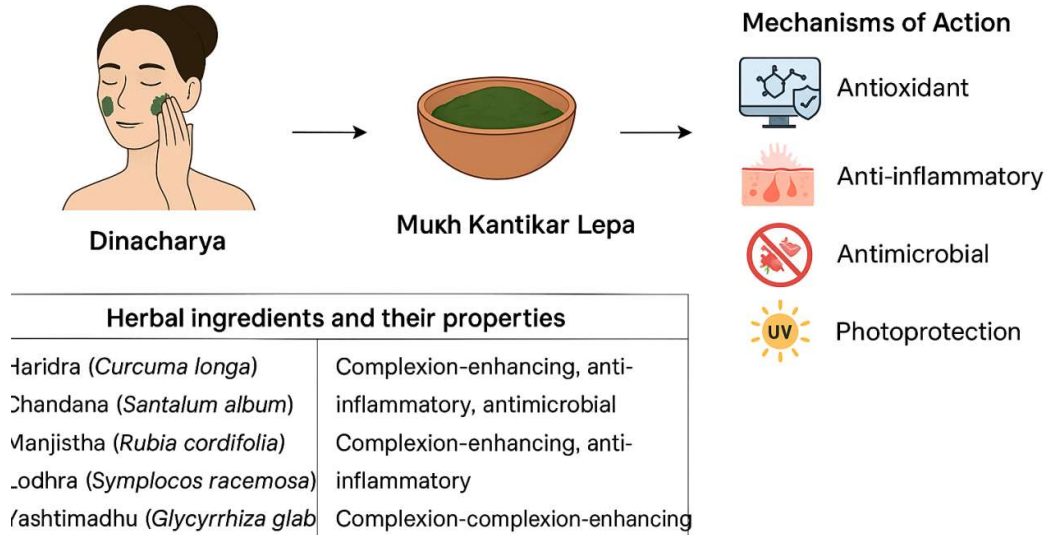
Season (R̥tu)	Dominant Doṣa	Recommended Mukhakāntikāra Lepa	Therapeutic Action
Gr̥ṣma (Summer)	Pitta	Cooling Lepas with Candana, Kumārī (Aloe vera)	Soothing, anti-inflammatory, refreshing
Varṣā (Monsoon)	Kapha–Vāta	Antifungal Lepas with Nimba (Azadirachta indica), Tulasi (Ocimum sanctum)	Antimicrobial, detoxifying
Hemanta (Winter)	Vāta	Sneha-based Lepas using Ghr̥ta and Yaṣṭimadhu	Nourishing, anti-aging, protective

Seasonal Lepa Prayoga thus embodies the Ayurvedic principle of Yuktivyapāśraya Cikitsā—treatment tailored to the individual and environment.

#### Preventive and Promotive Health Aspects

- Mukhakāntikāra Lepa\* acts as a protective barrier against dust, pollutants, and ultraviolet radiation, thereby preventing premature aging and environmental skin damage.
- The process of Lepa application, accompanied by aromatic herbs like Candana and Kumkuma, induces Manaḥśuddhi (mental purification) and enhances psychosomatic wellness.
- The use of natural, biodegradable, and plant-derived ingredients aligns with the modern concept of **sustainable skincare**, minimizing ecological impact while maintaining efficacy.

## Mukh Kantikar Lepa under Ayurveda Dinacharya An Ayurvedic and Modern Perspective



### DISCUSSION

This review underscores Mukhakāntikara Lepa as a unique interface between beauty and therapy in Āyurveda. The classical rationale—balancing Doṣas, purifying Raktadhātu, and promoting Kānti—corresponds with contemporary biomedical mechanisms such as antioxidant defense, antimicrobial protection, inhibition of melanogenesis, and collagen stimulation. The synergy of Lepa Kalpanā and Sneha Kalpanā is particularly noteworthy: lipid media (Sneha) enhance dermal absorption, prolong active contact, and provide nourishment at the Rasa–Rakta level. Modern pharmaceutical innovations, including nano-emulsions and phytosomal carriers, resonate with this traditional concept by improving bioavailability and stability of herbal actives.

### LIMITATIONS

- A limited number of large-scale randomized controlled trials (RCTs).
  - Need for standardized processing, quality control, and uniform dosage protocols.
  - Regulatory harmonization for integrating Āyurvedic cosmeceuticals within global skincare markets.
- These gaps emphasize the necessity of evidence-based validation while retaining traditional authenticity.

### CONCLUSION

Mukhakāntikara Lepa (facial radiance therapy) epitomizes the holistic, preventive, and promotive orientation of Āyurveda's *Dinacharyā* (daily routine). Rooted in classical literature and enriched with a diverse herbal pharmacopeia, it provides a

natural, sustainable, and scientifically supported alternative to chemical cosmetics.

### FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

- Establishing pharmaco-botanical and analytical standardization
- Conducting multi-centric, double-blind clinical trials with robust methodology.
- Innovating evidence-based Āyurvedic cosmeceuticals through biotechnological and green-formulation approaches for global dermatology.

In essence, Mukhakāntikara Lepa transcends mere cosmetic application—it represents a scientifically grounded ritual of self-care that harmonizes external radiance with internal health, affirming Āyurveda's timeless relevance in modern cosmetology.

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