

# Ayurvedic Hair-Removal Formulations for Topical Application: A Critical Review

Author: Kirti Mishra<sup>1</sup>

Co Authors: S R Inchulkar<sup>2</sup> and Yuvraj Kaushik<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Agad Tantra Evam Vidhi Vaidyak, Rajiv Lochan Ayurved Medical College, Durg C.G., India

<sup>2,3</sup>Department of Agad Tantra Evam Vidhi Vaidyak, Govt. Ayurved College, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India

## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient science having description of the topical applications in the name of *Lomashatan Lepa* which is known as hair removal formulation described to enhance the beauty. **Objective-** To document various hair removal formulations (*Lomashatan lepa*) described in Ayurved and make them available for the research workers to revalidate their efficacy. **Methodology-** Collection of data related to various herbo-mineral hair removal formulation such as *Hartal, Manahshilla, Palash kshar, Shankh bhasma, Sarjika kshar* etc. from Ayurvedic classical text books. **Discussion-** Almost all depilatory formulations documented in the Ayurvedic literature use for the purpose of topical applications only. On a critical study it is observed that *Hartal, Manahshila, Sarjakshar, Sankha Bhasma, Palash kshar* are present as the main ingredient in different *lomshatan Yogas*. Most of these drugs are *Katu Rasa; Sukshma, Tikshna, Laghu Guna; Ushna Virya* and *Katu Vipaka* and are having *Lekhana* and *Kesaghna* property. **Conclusion-** Research work of *Hartaladi Yoga, Kusumbha Taila* has been done in different institute to understand the efficacy of *lomashatan* or hair removing action which concludes that they are nontoxic and efficacious. Hence the other formulations can also be tried by conducting pre-clinical and clinical trials and make them available for the benefit of a large number of suffering population so as to provide safe and cost effective solution.

**Key Words** *Lomashatan, Lepa, Hartal, Hair removal, Topical, Herbo-mineral*

Received 14<sup>th</sup> December 21 Accepted 31<sup>st</sup> Decemebr 21 Published 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022

## INTRODUCTION

The Ayurvedic Classics have mentioned the types of treatment as *Antahparimarjana* and *Bahiparimarjana*. *Antahparimarjana* medicines are intended for internal use and *Bahiparimarjana* medicines which are intended for external use only. In *Ayurveda* different forms of treatment (*Bahiparimarjana*) are mentioned for different diseases like *Lepa, Upanaha, and*

*Malahara* etc. Among these methods *Lepa Kalpana* has got major importance in *Ayurveda*<sup>1</sup>. The drugs which are to be applied as *lepa* are made into a fine powder form and before its use on the body, it is mixed with some liquid or other medium indicated in each preparation and made into a soft homogenous paste. Water, Cow's urine, oil and *Ghee* are some of the media used for mixing<sup>2</sup>. Ayurved an ancient science having

## REVIEW ARTICLE

description of the topical applications in the name of *Lomashatan Lepa* which is known as hair removal formulation described to enhance beauty. Ayurvedic cosmetics have growing demand in the world and invaluable gift of nature to the human being. Herbo-mineral formulations have considerable attraction because of their efficacy and less side effects when compared to synthetic drugs. The concept of using herbs and minerals for beautification is well defined in *Ayurved*. According to Drugs and Cosmetic Act 1940, cosmetics can be defined<sup>3</sup> as “Any substance intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled or otherwise applied to human being for cleansing, beautifying and promoting attractiveness.” The aim of cosmetics includes beautification of hair and skin, modification of appearance, preservation cleanliness and natural good look. The procedures described for health preservation and beauty enhancements are *abhyanga, lepana, udvartana, nasya, swedana* etc.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To document various hair removal formulations (*Lomashatan lepa*) described in *Ayurved*.

**Table 1** *Lomashatan yoga* according to *Acharya Sushrut*

S.No.	Formulation	Ingredients
1.	<i>Sankha bhasmadi yoga</i>	Two parts <i>Shankh bhasma</i> , one part <i>Hartal</i> mixed with <i>Sukta</i> act as hair depilatory <sup>5</sup> .
2.	<i>Bhallatakadi yoga</i>	<i>Bhallatak</i> oil and <i>Snuhi Ksheer</i> mixture <sup>6</sup> .
3.	<i>Kadaladi yoga</i>	<i>Kadali bhasma</i> , <i>Syonak</i> , <i>Hartal</i> , <i>Saindhav lavana</i> and <i>Shami</i> seeds are mixed with cold water <sup>7</sup> .
4.	<i>Griha godhikadi yoga</i>	<i>Griha godhika puccha</i> (tail of house lizard), <i>Kadali</i> , <i>Hartal</i> , seeds of <i>Ingudi</i> are burnt and collect ash. Then ash mixed with <i>Bhallatak</i> oil and water and dried in the sun <sup>8</sup> .

## Madhyam Kala

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Collection of data related various herbo-mineral hair removal formulation such as *Hartal, Manahshilla, Palash kshar, Shankh bhasma, Sarjika kshar* etc. from *Ayurvedic* classical text books. These hair removal formulations are used as a topical application to wipe out the unwanted hairs of the human body.

### Historical Review on *Lomashatan Lepa*

Historical glance enables us to understand the past experience about drugs with regards to their quality, individuality, uniqueness etc. thus making it more fruitful for future generations. It helps to shape our future planning on that basis. Here are the references of *lomashatan lepa* in classical *Ayurvedic* literatures *Bruhatrayi* and *Laghutrayi*.

### Samhita Kala

- **Charak Samhita:** In *Phala varga Shami Phala* is quoted as *Keshaghna*<sup>4</sup>.
- **Sushrut Samhita:** The following 4 hair depilatory recipes are mentioned by *Sushrut* in *Chikitsa Sthana* 1<sup>st</sup> chapter shown below in table1.

## REVIEW ARTICLE

- **Sharangadhar Samhita:** The main ingredient is *Hartal* used for hair depilatory which is shown in table 2.

**Table 2** Lomashatan yoga according to Acharya Sharangadhar

S.No.	Formulation	Ingredients
1.	<i>Hartaladi yoga</i>	Two parts <i>Shankh</i> , one part <i>Hartal</i> , half part <i>Manahshila</i> and one part <i>Sarjika kshar</i> mixed with water. Within 7 applications makes the part resembles the head of monk <sup>9</sup> .
2.	<i>Hartaladi yoga</i>	Two parts of <i>Hartal</i> , six parts of <i>Shankh bhasma</i> , two parts of <i>Palash Kshar</i> mixed with <i>kadali swaras</i> or leaves of <i>Arka</i> . It acts as good depilatory within 7 applications <sup>9</sup> .

- **Chakradatta:** mentioned various *romshatan yoga* and *taila* for external application which acts as good hair depilatory shown below in table 3.

**Table 3** Lomashatan yoga according to Chakradatta<sup>10</sup>

S.No.	Formulations	Ingredients
1.	<i>Romshatan yoga</i>	<i>Shankh</i> after burning dipped in the <i>Kadali swaras</i> . Then it is rubbed with equal quantity of <i>Hartal</i> (orpiment) and applies to private parts to remove hairs.
2.	<i>Romshatan yoga</i>	Powdered <i>tail</i> of <i>Raktanjanani</i> (bird) dipped in mustard oil for a week is applied and followed by massage of <i>KusumbhaTaila</i> also acts as depilatory.
3.	<i>Aragwadhadi oil</i>	<i>Aragwadha mool- 1 pala</i> (kalka dravya), <i>Shankh bhasma</i> and <i>Hartal</i> each 2 <i>Karsh</i> , <i>Sarsapa</i> oil (sneha dravya), <i>Kshara mutra</i> (Ass's urine) – 1 <i>Prastha</i>
4.	<i>Karpuradi oil</i>	Powder of <i>Karpura</i> , <i>Bhallatak</i> , <i>Sankh</i> , <i>yavakshara</i> and <i>Manahshila</i> , cook with <i>sarsapa</i> oil and then add <i>Hartal</i> .
5.	<i>Kshara</i> oil	<i>Shukti</i> , <i>Shambook</i> , <i>shankh</i> , <i>Aralu</i> and <i>Mushaka</i> burnt into ash. The ash should be decanted with <i>kshar mutra</i> (Ass's urine) and prepare <i>Kshar</i> . <i>Kshar</i> oil prepared with 1/8 part of <i>kshar</i> and <i>sarsapa</i> oil.

- **Bhaishajya ratnavali:** Various *Lomashatan* formulations such as *lepa* and oil mentioned in *Kshudra rogadhikar* which are shown in table 4.

**Table 4** Lomashatan yoga according to Bhaisajya ratnavali

S.No.	Formulations	Ingredients
1.	<i>Lomashatan lepa</i>	<i>Sudha</i> – 1 part, <i>Hartal</i> - 1 part ; prepare paste by mixing with hot water <sup>11</sup> .
2.	<i>Lomashatan lepa</i>	<i>Shankh bhasma</i> – 1 part, <i>hartal</i> - 1 part ; prepare paste by mixing with <i>kadali swaras</i> <sup>12</sup> .
3.	<i>Lomashatan lepa</i>	<i>Palash kshar</i> , <i>Kadali kand kshar</i> , <i>Hartal</i> taken each equal parts triturated with <i>Kadali kand swaras</i> <sup>13</sup> .
4.	<i>Lomashatan lepa</i>	<i>Hartal</i> - 1 part, <i>Shankh bhasma</i> -5 parts, <i>Palash kshar</i> -6 parts then triturated with <i>Kadali kand swaras</i> <sup>14</sup> .
5.	<i>Lomashatan lepa</i>	<i>Shankh bhasma</i> triturated with <i>Kadali kand swaras</i> , then mixed with equal quantity of <i>Hartal</i> <sup>15</sup> .
6.	<i>Lomashatan taila</i>	<i>Kusumbh</i> oil <sup>16</sup> .
7.	<i>Lomashatan taila</i>	<i>Aragwadhadi</i> oil <sup>16</sup>
8.	<i>Lomashatan taila</i>	<i>Karpuradi</i> oil <sup>16</sup>

These 2 recipes *Aragwadhadi* oil and *Karpuradi* oil are taken from *Chakradatta*.

- **Gadanigraha** : Mentioned *romshatan* formulations in *Yoni Nirlomikarana Adhikara*<sup>17</sup> which are shown in table 5.

## REVIEW ARTICLE

**Table 5** Lomashatan yoga according to *Gadnigraha*

S.No.	Formulations	Ingredients
1.	Romshatan yoga	Godant, shankh churna, palash kshar mixed with water.
2.	Hartaladi yoga	Hartal- 5 parts, Palash kshar- 1 part, Yavakshar- 1 part.
3.	Romshatan oil	Koshataki seed oil.
4.	Romshatan oil	Vatsnabh flower powder mixed with mustard oil apply for 7 days.
5.	Hartaladi yoga	Hartal- 1 parts, Palash kshar- 1 part, Shankh churna-1 part, or kausmbh tail lepa.
6.	Koshamra tail	Koshamra (mango seed) oil is mixed with Yavakshara.
7.	Romshatan yoga	Shankh churna, Hartal, Kakmachi, Trikatu churna prepared by pounding with Arka and Snuhi Ksheer.

➤ **Rajmartand** :Table no 6 is showing romshatan formulations for *Yoni loma-haran*<sup>18</sup>.

**Table 6** Lomashatan yoga according to *Rajmartand*

S.No.	Formulations	Ingredients
1.	Haritaladi kalka lepa	Hartal- 5 parts, Palash kshar- 1 part, Yavakshar- 1 part mixed with water
2.	Koshataki seed oil.	Koshataki seed oil.
3.	Halahal puchcha sadhit sarshapa tail	Mustard oil processed with Halahal puchcha, fall of pubic hair within 7 days.

In present review article shows all the *Lomashatan yogas* which is for topical use; mentioned in various Ayurvedic classics. All the formulations can be divided in herbs, mineral and

animal origin which is documented in *Bruhatrayi* and *Laghutrayi* showing in following table 7, 8 and 9.

**Table 7** Herbs mentioned in *Bruhatrayi* & *Laghutrayi* used for *Lomashatan*

S. No.	Name	Scientific name	Family	Parts used
1	Shami	<i>Prosopis cineraria</i> (L.) Druce	Fabaceae	Fruit & Seeds
2	Bhallataka	<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i> L.f.	Anacardiaceae	Oil
3	Kadali	<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> L.	Musaceae	Pseudo stem, rizome
4	Ingudi	<i>Balanites aegyptiaca</i> (L.) DELILE	Balanitaceae	Seeds
5	Palash	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.)	Fabaceae	Panchang
6	Arka	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i> (L.)	Apocynaceae	Leaves
7	Shyonaka	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i> (L.)	Bignoniaceae	Root bark

**Table 8** Minerals mentioned in *Bruhatrayi* & *Laghutrayi* used for *Lomashatan*

S.No.	Name	Scientific name	Common Name	Used as
1	Hartal	Arsenic trisulfide	Yellow orpiment	Powder/ <i>Bhasm</i>
2	Manhshila	Arsenic disulfide	Realgar	Powder/ <i>Bhasm</i>
3	Shaindhav lavana	Halite	Rock salt	Powder

**Table 9** Animal origins mentioned in *Bruhatrayi* & *Laghutrayi* used for *Lomashatan*

S.N.	Name	Scientific name	Family	Part Used
1	Shankha	<i>Turbinella pyrum</i>	Turbinellidae	Incinerated Shell
2	Griha Godhika	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>	Gekkonidae	Tail of Lizard

Hair typically grows all over the human body. Different methods of hair removal are practiced for number of reasons including cosmetic, cultural, medical and religious. Forms of hair removal have been practiced in almost all human

cultures since at least the Neolithic Era. In present epoch, everyone wants to become beautiful with smooth, soft and hair free body. Beautiful body is means free of unwanted hair, so girls usually do waxing and shaving regularly to

## REVIEW ARTICLE

maintain their body. Several treatments are being offered for hair removal which includes shaving, waxing, chemical depilatory creams etc. None of these treatments are ideal but have many side effects such as skin irritation, cuts, burn, irritant dermatitis as well as scarring. On other side, LASER therapy available in market are very costly and usually out of reach to common people. In these circumstances, Ayurvedic compound *Lomashatan lepa* formulation may be the best alternative.

## DISCUSSION

Almost all depilatory formulations documented in the Ayurvedic literature use for the purpose of topical applications only. On a critical study it is observed that *Hartal*, *Manahshila*, *Sarjakshar*, *Sankha Bhasma*, *Palash kshar* are present as the main ingredient in different *lomashatan Yogas*. Most of these drugs are *Katu Rasa*; *Sukshma*, *Tikshna*, *Laghu Guna*; *Ushna Virya* and *Katu Vipaka* and are having *Lekhana* and *Kesaghna* property. *Visha* and *Amritha* are the two sides of the same coin, meaning they are one and the same thing. Hence it is emphasized in *Charaka Samhitha* as though *Visha* is *tikshna*, but by its proper usage it can become the best medicine. *Hartal* (Orpiment) and *Manahshila* are the sulphides of Arsenic (metal poison) having *Ushna virya* (hot potency) drugs and having *Pittala* (increases *Pitta* bodily humour) property. These properties may vitiate the *Bhrajaka Pitta* (*Pitta* bodily humour related to skin) and weaken

the hair roots to cause hair loss, when applied over the skin. *Charak samhita* stated an excessive use of *Lavana* (salt) and *Kshar* (alkali) causes loss of hair. *Kshar* (alkali) is having *Katu* and *Lavana Rasa* (Salty taste) properties. Alkalis have corrosive or caustic (*Ksharana* or *kshanana*) nature which on contact disintegrates or destroys the tissues elements. The text *Sushruta samhita* mentioned *Tikshna* (sharp), *Chhedana* (excision), *Bhedana* (incision), *Lekhan* (scarifying) and *Darana* (tearing) qualities which may assist in depilation. Hence *kshar* has *katu* and *lavana ras*, *lekhan* properties which may assist in *lomashatan*.

## Research work done-

The following research works have been carried out by different scholars at different institutes and presenting here for the benefit of the researchers.

1. Pharmaceutico Analytical Study of Lomasatana Lepa by Dinesh Gupta<sup>19</sup>.
2. A Conceptual and Clinical Study on Lepa Kalpana w.s.r. to Lomasatana Lepa in Hirsutisam by Dr. H. Pamanna Gouda<sup>20</sup>.
3. Study on Kusumba Taila (*Arthamus tinctoria*) w.s.r. to *Lomasatana Lakshana*<sup>21</sup>.
4. A comparative study on *Lomashatana* Lepa on facial Hirsutisam by Vasudevam<sup>22</sup>.
5. To study the effect of mineral- compound as hair removal.(*Romashatan*) by Vd. Chandikar shilaja<sup>23</sup>.
6. Safety and efficacy of karaveeradi taila as lomashaatana on healthy volunteers by Dr.Anjana Mohan Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bengaluru, Karnataka<sup>24</sup>.

**REVIEW ARTICLE**

**CONCLUSION**

Research work of *Hartaladi Yoga, Kusumbha Taila* has been done in different institute to understand the efficacy of *Lomashatan* or hair removing action which concludes that they are nontoxic and efficacious. Hence the other formulations can also be tried by conducting pre-clinical and clinical trials and make them available for the benefit of a large number of suffering population so as to provide safe and cost effective solution.

## REVIEW ARTICLE

### REFERENCES

1. Acharya Charak , Charak Samhita, vidyotani hindi commentary, by Pt Kashinath Shastri, Chowkambha orientalia Varanasi, Reprint edition 2013; volume 1, charak sutra sthan 11, page no-239.
2. The Ayurvedic Formulary of India A.F.I. part 1, Govt of India, Ministry of health and family welfare, department of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy , Unani and Homeopathy (AYUSH) new Delhi , page no- 171.
3. Drug and cosmetic act 1940, chapter-1, page no-5.
4. Acharya Charak, Charak Samhita, vidyotani hindi commentary, by Pt Kashinath Shastri, Chowkambha orientalia Varanasi, Reprint edition 2013; volume 1, charak sutra sthan 27/160, page no-544.
5. Acharya Sushrut, Sushrut Samhita by Dr Ambika Datta Shastri, Chowkambha orientalia Varanasi, Reprint edition 2012, *chikitsa sthan* 1/105, page no-14 .
6. Acharya Sushrut, Sushrut Samhita by Dr Ambika Datta Shastri, Chowkambha orientalia Varanasi, Reprint edition 2012, *chikitsa sthan* 1/106, page no-14 .
7. Acharya Sushrut, Sushrut Samhita by Dr Ambika Datta Shastri, Chowkambha orientalia Varanasi, Reprint edition 2012, *chikitsa sthan* 1/107, page no- 14.
8. Acharya Sushrut, Sushrut Samhita by Dr Ambika Datta Shastri, Chowkambha orientalia Varanasi, Reprint edition 2012, *chikitsa sthan* 1/108 page no-14-15.
9. Sharangdhar, Sharangdhar Samhita by Dr Shailja Srivastava, Chowkambha orientalia Varanasi, Reprint edition 2011, Sharng.uttarkhand 11/35-39, page no-432.
10. Chakradatta, chikitsa samgrah of Chakrapani Datta, Sanskrit text with English translation, by Dr. G. Prabhakar Rao, Chowkambha orientalia Varanasi, Reprint edition 2014, chapter 62, page no- 613-615.
11. Kaviraj Govind Das Sen ‘Bhaishajya Ratnavali’ by Prof. Siddhi Nandan Mishra, ‘siddhi prada’ hindi commentary, Chaukhamba surbharti prakashan Varanasi, prakaran 60, Kshudra Rogadhikar ,edition-2012. Bh.r 60/166, page no-949.
12. Kaviraj Govind Das Sen ‘Bhaishajya Ratnavali’ by Prof. Siddhi Nandan Mishra ‘siddhi prada’ hindi commentary, Chaukhamba surbharti prakashan Varanasi, prakaran 60, Kshudra Rogadhikar ,edition-2012. Bh.r 60/167, page no-949.
13. Kaviraj Govind Das Sen ‘Bhaishajya Ratnavali’ by Prof. Siddhi Nandan Mishra, ‘siddhi prada’ hindi commentary, Chaukhamba surbharti prakashan Varanasi, prakaran 60, Kshudra Rogadhikar ,edition-2012. Bh.r 60/168, page no-949.
14. Kaviraj Govind Das Sen ‘Bhaishajya Ratnavali’ by Prof. Siddhi Nandan Mishra, ‘siddhi prada’ hindi commentary, Chaukhamba surbharti prakashan Varanasi, prakaran 60,

## REVIEW ARTICLE

- Kshudra Rogadhikar ,edition-2012. Bh.r 60/169-170, page no-949.
15. Kaviraj Govind Das Sen 'Bhaishajya Ratnavali' by Prof. Siddhi Nandan Mishra, 'siddhi prada' hindi commentary, Chaukhamba surbharti prakashan Varanasi, prakaran 60, Kshudra Rogadhikar ,edition-2012. Bh.r 60/171, page no-949.
16. Kaviraj Govind Das Sen 'Bhaishajya Ratnavali', by Prof. Siddhi Nandan Mishra, 'siddhi prada' hindi commentary, Chaukhamba surbharti prakashan Varanasi, prakaran 60, Kshudra Rogadhikar ,edition-2012. Bh.r 60/172, page no-949.
17. Shrimad vaidya Sodal virachit, Gadnigrah, vidyotani hindi commentary, by Shri Indradev Tripathi, vol-3 shalakyadi-panchkarm adhikaranto bhag, Chaukhambha Sanskrit sansthan, Varanasi, third edition 1999, chapter 10, page no- 512-513.
18. Rajmartand (Nanavidh Yoga samgrah) by Dr. K. Nishteshwar, Dr. R. Vidyanath, Chowkambha orientalia Varanasi, Reprint edition 2016, chapter 31/51-53, page no- 84-85.
19. Dinesh Gupta et al, International Journal of Ayurveda and Pharma Research, Vol.3 Issue 11, Nov. 2015.
20. P.G. Thesis submitted in the Dept. of Samhita and Siddhanta, SDM College, Udupi 2011-12
21. International Journal of Ayurveda and Alternative Medicine, Vol.4, Issue 2, 2016
22. Vasudevam, International Ayurvedic Medical Journal, Vol.1, Issue 2, Dec.2016-Jan.2017; PP160-165.
23. Chandikar shilaja, International Journal of Ayurvedic and Herbal Medicine 5:4, (2015) PP1853-1860
24. P.G. Thesis submitted in the Dept. of Agad tantra evam vyavhar Ayurveda, K.V.G. College, sullia Karnataka 2017.