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Exploring the Role of Laghumanjsthadi Kashaya and Mahatrinaka Taila in the Management of Eczema (Vicharchika): An Integrative Ayurvedic Review

Abstract

Background: Vīcarcikā, described under Kṣudra Kuṣṭha in Ayurveda, shares clinical similarities with eczema, a chronic, relapsing inflammatory dermatosis characterized by pruritus, erythema, exudation, and lichenification. Long-term management of eczema remains challenging due to frequent recurrence and limitations of prolonged pharmacotherapy. Classical Ayurvedic formulations such as Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya (oral decoction) and Mahātrināka Taila (topical medicated oil) are indicated in various skin disorders and may offer a complementary therapeutic approach.

Objective: To critically review the classical basis, pharmacodynamic attributes, and probable mechanisms of action of Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya and Mahātrināka Taila in the management of Vīcarcikā, with reference to contemporary pharmacological evidence.

Methods: Classical Ayurvedic compendia including Bhārata Bhaiṣajya Ratnākara and relevant Nighaṅṭus were examined to analyse the pharmacological attributes—Rasa (taste), Guṇa (qualities), Vīrya (potency), Vipāka (post-digestive effect), and Karma (therapeutic actions)—of the constituent drugs. Published experimental and pharmacological studies were reviewed to identify documented biological activities relevant to eczema.

Key Findings: The formulations predominantly comprise herbs with bitter and astringent taste, light (Laghu Guṇa) in nature, and hot potency, traditionally indicated for reducing inflammation, excessive exudation, and itching. Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya is described to act systemically by correcting internal pathological factors and improves blood quality, whereas Mahātrināka Taila provides localized anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antipruritic, and wound-healing effects. Contemporary evidence supports these properties through demonstrated anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antifungal, and tissue-repair activities.

Conclusion: The integrative use of these internal and external formulations represents a rational Ayurvedic strategy for eczema management. Further well-designed clinical studies are warranted to validate efficacy and standardize therapeutic protocols.

Keywords: Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya, Mahātrināka Taila, Vīcarcikā, Eczema, Kuṣṭha, Tvak Vikāra.

Introduction

The skin, the largest organ of the human body, serves as a protective barrier between the internal environment and external stressors. Rapid urbanization, environmental pollution, dietary irregularities, and lifestyle changes have contributed to a rising incidence of chronic dermatological disorders. Among these, eczema is a common inflammatory condition characterized by pruritus, erythema, oozing, and, in chronic stages, lichenification. The disease often follows a relapsing course and significantly affects quality of life.

Current dermatological management primarily focuses on symptomatic relief through topical corticosteroids, antihistamines, antibiotics, and antifungals. While these modalities reduce acute inflammation and itching, long-term use may be associated with adverse effects and frequent recurrences. Consequently, there is growing interest in traditional and complementary systems of medicine that emphasize long-term disease modification.

In Ayurveda, Vīcarcikā is described under Kṣudra Kuṣṭha and clinically resembles eczema. It is understood as a disorder involving vitiation of mainly Kapha doṣa along with impairment of blood and skin tissues, leading to itching, discharge, discoloration, and thickening of skin. Management focuses on correcting internal imbalance and providing local symptomatic relief.

Laghumanjīsthādi Kaṣāya, an oral herbal decoction, is traditionally indicated for various skin disorders and is described to purify blood and reduce inflammation. Mahātrināka Taila, a medicated oil for external application, is used to alleviate itching, discharge, and chronic skin changes. The combined internal and external use of these formulations may offer a rational and integrative approach for the long-term management of eczema. The present review aims to explore their classical basis and contemporary relevance in eczema care.

Aims and Objectives

- To review the therapeutic role of Laghumanjīsthādi Kaṣāya and Mahātrināka Taila in the management of Vīcarcikā (eczema).
- To explore the pharmacological properties of the constituent ingredients of Laghumanjīsthādi Kaṣāya and Mahātrināka Taila in relation to inflammatory and infectious mechanisms involved in eczema.
- To correlate the classical Ayurvedic rationale of these formulations with contemporary dermatological understanding and current treatment approaches for eczema.

Materials and Methods

- This article is designed as a narrative review. A comprehensive analysis of classical Ayurvedic literature and contemporary scientific publications was undertaken to explore the therapeutic relevance of Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya and Mahātrināka Taila in the management of Vīcarcikā (eczema).
- Classical references were reviewed from authoritative Ayurvedic texts including Bhārata Bhaiṣajya Ratnākara and relevant Nighaṅṭus [1] (to examine the formulation details and pharmacodynamic attributes of the constituent drugs, such as Rasa (taste), Guṇa (qualities), Vīrya (potency), Vipāka (post-digestive effect), and Karma (therapeutic actions)).
- For contemporary correlation, published literature was searched through electronic databases including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar [2]. Experimental, pharmacological, and dermatological studies relevant to anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, antipruritic, and wound-healing activities of the individual ingredients were reviewed.
- A comparative analytical framework was applied to correlate classical Ayurvedic concepts with modern dermatological understanding of eczema, particularly focusing on inflammatory mechanisms, microbial involvement, immune dysregulation, and skin barrier dysfunction.

Table 1: Ingredients of Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya (Bhārata Bhaiṣajya Ratnākara)

S.N.	Name of Drug	Latin Name	Part Used	Proportion
1	Mañjisthā	Rubia cordifolia Linn.	Root	1 part
2	Vācha	Acorus calamus Linn.	Root	1 part
3	Haritakī	Terminalia chebula Retz.	Fruit	1 part
4	Bibhītakī	Terminalia belerica Roxb.	Fruit	1 part
5	Amalakī	Emblica officinalis Gaertn.	Fruit	1 part
6	Kuṭakī	Picrorhiza kurroa Royle ex Benth.	Rhizome	1 part
7	Haridrā	Curcuma longa	Rhizome	1 part
8	Nīmba	Azadirachta indica	Bark	1 part
9	Gudūcī	Tinospora cordifolia	Kanda	1 part
10	Devadāru	Cedrus deodara	Root	1 part
11	Nisoṭhā	Operculina turpethum Silva Manso	Root	1 part
12	Khadira	Acacia catechu Wild.	Sara	1 part

Table 2: Ingredients of Mahātrināka Taila (Bhārata Bhaiṣajya Ratnākara)

S.N.	Name of Drug	Latin Name	Part Used	Proportion
1	Haridrā	Curcuma longa Linn.	Rhizome	1 part
2	Kuṣṭha	Saussurea lappa C.B. Clarke	Root	1 part
3	Mañjisthā	Rubia cordifolia Linn.	Root	1 part
4	Śāmpak	Cassia fistula Linn.	Leaves	1 part

5	Sarṣapa	Brassica campestris	Seeds	1 part
6	Sarṣapa Taila	Brassica campestris	Seeds	80 parts
7	Kāsmarda	Cassia occidentalis Linn.	Leaves	1 part
8	Ariṣṭha	Melia azedarach Linn.	Leaves	1 part
9	Chakramarda	Cassia tora Linn.	Seeds	1 part
10	Trinkakā	Cymbopogon citratus	Leaves	160 parts

Table 3: Properties and Actions of Ingredients of Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya

Drug	Rasa	Guṇa	Vīrya	Vipāka	Karma	Pharmacological Actions
Manjisthā [1]	Tikta, Kaṣāya, Madhura	Guru, Rukṣa	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kṛmighna, Kaphapittaghna, Kuṣṭhaghna, Viṣaghna, Varnya, Rāsāyana	Anti-acne, antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-peroxidative, antiviral
Vācha [2]	Katu, Tikta	Laghu, Tikṣṇa	Uṣṇa	Katu	Dīpana, Kṛmighna, Kaphavātaghna, Medhya	Anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, antioxidant [3]
Haritakī [4]	Pancharasa (Lavana varjita) Kaṣāya pradhāna	Laghu, Rukṣa	Uṣṇa	Madhura	Dīpana, Medhya, Tridoṣaśāmaka, Rāsāyana, Anulomana	Antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, antimutagenic, hepatoprotective, cardioprotective, antioxidant, cytoprotective, adaptogenic, antianaphylactic, immunomodulatory [5]
Bibhitakī [6]	Kaṣāya	Rukṣa, Laghu	Uṣṇa	Madhura	Bhedanīya, Kaphapittaghna, Kṛmighna	Immunomodulatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, antibacterial [7]
Amalakī [8]	Pancharasa lavana varjita, Amla pradhāna	Guru, Rukṣa, Śīta	Śīta	Madhura	Tridoṣaśāmaka, Rāsāyana	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, adaptogenic, nootropic, antimicrobial, immunomodulatory, dermatoprotective [9]
Kuṭakī [10]	Tikta	Rukṣa, Laghu	Śīta	Katu	Rechana, Kṛmighna, Pittasaraka, Raktashodaka, Kuṣṭhaghna, Sothahara	Hepatoprotective, immunomodulatory, anti-allergic, anti-anaphylactic, anti-neoplastic [11]
Haridrā [12]	Tikta, Katu	Rukṣa, Laghu	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kṛmighna, Kuṣṭhaghna,	Antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antiprotozoal,

					Varnya, Viṣaghna	hepatoprotective, anti-allergic, antioxidant [13]
Nimba [14]	Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu	Śīta	Katu	Kandughna, Kaphapittaghna , Dīpana, Viṣaghna, Vranashodhana	Analgesic, anthelmintic, antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, anti- inflammatory, antimalarial, antipyretic, immunomodulator [15,16]
Gudūcī [17]	Tikta, Kaṣāya	Guru, Sīghd a	Uṣṇa	Madhur a	Tridoṣa- śāmaka, Kuṣṭhaghna, Dīpana, Pittasaraka, Kṛmighna, Raktashodaka, Dahaprashama	Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, hepatoprotective, anti-allergic, anti- stress [18]
Devadār u [19]	Tikta	Laghu, Snigdha	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kuṣṭhaghna, Kṛmighna, Sothahara, Dīpana, Paçana, Raktaprasādana	Anti-inflammatory, analgesic, insecticidal, anti- apoptotic, anticancer, immunomodulator y [20]
Nisoṭhā [21]	Tikta, Katu	Laghu, Rukṣa, Tikṣṇa	Uṣṇa	Katu	Bhedana, Rechana, Kaphapitta- śodhana, Sothahara	Anti-allergic, analgesic, anti- inflammatory, bactericidal, antifungal, antiviral, cytotoxic [22]
Khadira [23]	Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu, Rukṣa	Śīta	Katu	Kuṣṭhaghna, Pittashāmaka, Kṛmighna, Kandughna, Sothahara, Raktaprasādana	Antibacterial, anticancer, anti- inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, antisecretory, hepatoprotective [24]

Table 4: Properties and Actions of Ingredients of Mahātrināka Taila

Drug Name	Rasa	Guṇa	Vīrya	Vipāka	Karma	Pharmacological Activities
Haridrā [25]	Tikta, Katu	Rukṣa, Laghu	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kṛmighna, Kuṣṭhaghna, Varnya, Viṣaghna	Antibacterial, anticancer, anti- inflammatory, antiprotozoal, hepatoprotective,

						anti-allergic, antioxidant [26]
Kuṣṭha [27]	Katu, Tikta	Laghu	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kaphavātaghna, Raktashodhana, Varnya	Anti-inflammatory, antiviral, anti-hepatotoxic [28]
Manjisthā [29]	Tikta, Kaṣāya, Madhura	Guru, Rukṣa	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kṛmighna, Kaphapittaghna, Kuṣṭhaghna, Viṣaghna, Varnya, Rāsāyana	Anti-acne, antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-peroxidative, antiviral, gastroprotective
Śāmpakā [30]	Madhura	Guru, Mṛdu, Snigdha	Śīta	Madhura	Pittashāmaka, Kuṣṭhaghna, Dahaprashamana, Vātarakta, Kandu	Hepatoprotective, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antileishmanial, antimicrobial, antipruritic, antiparasitic, wound healing [31]
Sarṣapa [32]	Tikta, Katu	Snigdha, Tikṣṇa	Uṣṇa	Katu	Dīpana, Kaphavātaghna	Antifungal, antibacterial, analgesic [33]
Kāṣmarda [34]	Tikta, Madhura	Rukṣa, Laghu, Tikṣṇa	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kuṣṭhaghna, Viṣaghna, Dīpana, Rechana, Pittasaraka, Kaphavātaśāmaka	Antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, cytotoxic, antioxidant [35]
Nimba [36]	Tikta, Kaṣāya	Laghu	Śīta	Katu	Kandughna, Kaphapittaghna, Dīpana, Viṣaghna, Vranashodhana	Analgesic, anthelmintic, antibacterial, antiyeast, antifilarial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, antinematodal, antipyretic, insecticidal, immunomodulator [37,38]
Chakramarda [39]	Katu	Laghu, Rukṣa	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kuṣṭhaghna, Viṣaghna, Raktaprasādana, Rechana, Anulomana	Antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antihelminthic, antioxidant [40]
Trīṅgakā	Katu, Tikta	Tikṣṇa, Rukṣa	Uṣṇa	Katu	Kaphavātaśāmaka	Antimicrobial, hepatoprotective, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, purgative,

						antipruritic [41,42]
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Table 5: Comparison of Ayurvedic and Contemporary Approaches to Eczema

Ayurvedic Concept / Intervention	Modern Medical Correlation	Explanation / Clinical Relevance
Vicharchikā (Kshudra Kuṣṭha)	Eczema (chronic inflammatory dermatosis)	Both describe relapsing inflammatory skin lesions with itching and discharge
Tridoṣa imbalance with Rakta involvement	Immune dysregulation and inflammatory mediators	Reflects systemic inflammatory processes underlying eczema
Agni impairment and metabolic accumulation	Altered immune response and barrier dysfunction	Suggests systemic contribution to chronic inflammation
Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya (internal therapy)	Systemic anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory agents	May help reduce chronic inflammation and recurrence
Mahātrināka Taila (topical application)	Topical corticosteroids, emollients, soothing ointments	Facilitates skin repair, reduces itching, inflammation, and dryness
Snigdha (unctuous) property of oil base	Emollient therapy	Restores skin barrier and reduces transepidermal water loss

Discussion

Vicharchikā, described in Āyurveda under Kṣudra Kuṣṭha, clinically correlates with eczema, a chronic inflammatory dermatosis characterized by pruritus, erythema, oozing, scaling, and lichenification. Āyurveda attributes its pathogenesis to Kapha-predominant Tridoṣa imbalance with involvement of skin (Tvak), blood (Rakta), muscle tissue (Māṃsa), and lymphatic components (Lasikā), along with impaired digestion and metabolism leading to inflammatory manifestations. In contemporary medicine, eczema is understood as a multifactorial disorder involving immune dysregulation, epidermal barrier dysfunction, microbial colonization, and chronic inflammation.

The majority of ingredients in both Laghuanjsthādi Kaṣāya and Mahātrināka Taila possess predominantly bitter and astringent taste, light and drying qualities, and hot potency. Collectively, these attributes are traditionally described to reduce inflammation, itching, excessive discharge, and tissue vitiation. From a biomedical perspective, many of the constituent herbs such as Manjisthā (*Rubia cordifolia*), Haridrā (*Curcuma longa*), and Nimba (*Azadirachta indica*) have demonstrated anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, and immunomodulatory properties in experimental studies. These actions

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are relevant in controlling erythema, pruritus, oozing lesions, and secondary infections commonly observed in eczema.

Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya, administered internally, is traditionally indicated for various skin disorders and is described to purify blood, regulate metabolism, and reduce chronic inflammatory processes. Its systemic action may correspond to immunomodulatory and anti-inflammatory mechanisms, which are crucial in recurrent eczema.

Mahātrināka Taila, used externally, provides localized relief by reducing itching, inflammation, and discharge. The lipid base supports restoration of the epidermal barrier and reduces transepidermal water loss—an important therapeutic target in modern eczema management. Additionally, the antimicrobial properties of its ingredients may help prevent secondary infection.

The combined internal (Abhyantara) and external (Bāhya) approach offers a comprehensive strategy addressing both systemic inflammatory factors and local skin manifestations. This integrative rationale aligns with contemporary understanding that effective eczema management requires both immune modulation and barrier repair.

Results

This narrative review identified converging classical and contemporary evidence supporting the potential role of Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya and Mahātrināka Taila in the management of Vicharchikā (eczema).

1. Classical Therapeutic Outcomes

Analysis of classical Ayurvedic texts indicates that the majority of ingredients in both formulations possess properties traditionally described as anti-inflammatory (Śothahara), antipruritic (Kandughna), antimicrobial (Kṛmighna), blood-purifying (Rakta Śodhana), and wound-healing (Vranaropana). Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya is primarily indicated for systemic correction of doṣic imbalance and chronic skin disorders, whereas Mahātrināka Taila is indicated for local application in conditions associated with itching, discharge, and skin discoloration.

2. Pharmacological Evidence from Contemporary Studies

Published experimental and pharmacological studies demonstrate that key ingredients such as:

- **Rubia cordifolia (Manjisthā)** – anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial activities
- **Curcuma longa (Haridrā)** – anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, wound-healing effects

- **Azadirachta indica (Nimba)** – antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory properties
- **Tinospora cordifolia (Gudūcī)** – immunomodulatory and anti-inflammatory actions
- **Cymbopogon citratus (Triṅkakā)** – antimicrobial, hepatoprotective, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, purgative, anti-pruritic activities

These activities are relevant to eczema pathogenesis, which involves chronic inflammation, immune dysregulation, oxidative stress, microbial colonization, and epidermal barrier impairment.

3. Conceptual Integration

The findings suggest that Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya may contribute to systemic immunomodulation and reduction of inflammatory mediators, while Mahātrināka Taila may assist in local inflammation control, pruritus reduction, antimicrobial protection, and barrier restoration. Collectively, the formulations demonstrate a multi-targeted therapeutic potential consistent with current pathophysiological understanding of eczema.

Conclusion

This narrative review examined the role of Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya and Mahātrināka Taila in the management of Vicharchikā (eczema), integrating classical Ayurvedic rationale with contemporary pharmacological evidence.

The reviewed literature indicates that the constituent herbs possess documented anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, immunomodulatory, and wound-healing properties relevant to eczema pathogenesis.

- Laghumanjsthādi Kaṣāya may contribute to systemic regulation of inflammatory and immune mechanisms.
- Mahātrināka Taila supports local symptom control, barrier restoration, and reduction of pruritus and discharge.

The combined internal and external approach reflects a comprehensive therapeutic strategy consistent with both Ayurvedic principles and modern dermatological understanding.

Further well-designed experimental and clinical studies are warranted to validate these findings and establish standardized protocols for their use in contemporary eczema management.

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