

Review Article

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## VAYASTHADI GUTIKA LEPA: A CLASSICAL AYURVEDIC FORMULATION FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SHWITRA (VITILIGO) – A DRUG REVIEW

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### Abstract

Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa is a renowned classical Ayurvedic polyherbal formulation described in *Chakradatta* (Kushtha Chikitsa 50/66) for the effective management of *Shwitra* (Vitiligo). It is primarily indicated as an external *Lepa* (paste application) that helps in repigmentation of depigmented patches by addressing the underlying *Tridoshaja* pathology, particularly *Kapha-Vata* vitiation and *Rakta-Mamsa Dushti*.

The formulation comprises four major herbal ingredients — **Vayasya (Kakmachi – Solanum nigrum** Panchang), **Edagaja (Chakramarda – Cassia tora** seeds), **Kushtha (Saussurea lappa** root), and **Pippali (Piper longum** fruit) — taken in equal proportions (1:1:1:1), and triturated with **Bastamutra** (Goat's urine) as the *Bhavana* dravya. These drugs collectively possess *Kushthaghna*, *Shwitrahara*, *Raktashodhak*, *Lekhana*, *Varnya*, and *Twachya* properties. The unique method of preparation involving repeated *Bhavana* with goat's urine enhances the potency, bioavailability, and transdermal penetration of the formulation.

The mode of action involves *Shodhana* (purification) and *Lekhana* of vitiated doshas, stimulation of *Bhrajaka Pitta*, and promotion of melanocyte activity leading to repigmentation. Pippali acts as a *Yogavahi*, while Bastamutra provides penetrating and

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purifying effects. This formulation offers a safe, cost-effective, and tissue-friendly approach for the management of *Shwitra* with minimal adverse effects.

This drug review provides a comprehensive overview of its classical reference, ingredients, pharmacodynamics, method of preparation, indications, and therapeutic utility. It highlights the potential of Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa as a promising Ayurvedic intervention for vitiligo and other hypopigmented skin disorders, supporting further clinical research and standardization.

**Keywords:** Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa, Shwitra, Vitiligo, Chakramarda, Kakmachi, Kushtha Chikitsa, Ayurvedic Lepa, Repigmentation

## 1. Introduction

Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa is a classical Ayurvedic external formulation primarily indicated for the effective management of **Shwitra** (Vitiligo), classified under *Kilasa* type of *Kushtha* [1][3][15]. This formulation is described in *Chakradatta*, one of the most authoritative texts on Ayurvedic therapeutics [4][5][16], under *Kushtha Chikitsa* [2][3]. The verse clearly states its profound efficacy:

“वायस्येडगजाकुष्ठकृष्णाभिर्गुडिका कृता । बस्तमूत्रेण सम्पिष्टा लेपाच्छ्वित्रविनाशिनी ॥”

(Chakradatta Kustha Chikitsa 50/66) [4][5][16].

It means that the *Gutika* prepared from Vayasya (Kakmachi), Edagaja (Chakramarda), Kushtha, and Pippali, when triturated with Bastamutra (goat's urine) and applied as *Lepa*, acts as a destroyer of *Shwitra* [1][2][3].

In Ayurvedic dermatology, *Shwitra* is considered a *Tridoshaja* disorder predominantly involving *Vata* and *Kapha* with *Rakta* and *Mamsa Dushya* [3][15]. It manifests as depigmented patches due to the destruction or dysfunction of melanocytes. The etiological factors include incompatible diet (*Viruddha Ahara*), improper lifestyle, and suppression of natural urges, leading to vitiation of *Twak*, *Rakta*, and *Mamsa Dhatus* [3][15].

Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa is designed to address this pathology through its strong *Kushthaghna*, *Shwitrahar*, *Raktashodhak*, *Twachya*, and *Varnya* properties [1][3][6][7]. It not only helps in repigmentation but also purifies the skin tissue and improves overall complexion [3][6][8].

This formulation holds special importance because it combines *Lepa* (external application) with the penetrating power of *Bastamutra* (goat's urine) [7], which acts as a *Yogavahi* and *Shodhana* medium [3][9]. Historical use and contemporary clinical observations suggest that such *Lepa* formulations yield better results when combined with internal *Shwitra* management and regulated sun exposure (*Surya Atapa*) [1][6][15].

In the context of modern medicine, Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa offers a safe, cost-effective, and holistic alternative to prolonged phototherapy, topical steroids, or immunosuppressive treatments, which often carry significant side effects such as skin atrophy, telangiectasia, and systemic complications [1][6][15].





This drug review aims to provide a comprehensive account of its classical reference, ingredients, properties of individual drugs, method of preparation, mode of action, therapeutic indications, and clinical relevance based on classical Ayurvedic literature and available contemporary evidence [1][2][3][6][7].

## 2. Ingredients of Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa

The formulation consists of four main herbal drugs taken in equal proportion along with goat's urine as the trituration medium. The detailed composition is as follows:

**Table 2.1: Contents of Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa**

S. No.	Name of Drug	Botanical Name	Used Part	Ratio
1	Vayasya / Kakmachi	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Panchang	1 part
2	Edagaja / Chakramarda	<i>Cassia tora</i>	Seeds	1 part
3	Kushtha	<i>Saussurea lappa</i>	Root	1 part
4	Pippali	<i>Piper longum</i>	Fruit	1 part
5	Bastamutra	Goat's urine	—	Q.S. (for Bhavana)

	
a. Vayasya / Kakmachi	b. Edagaja / Chakramarda
	
c. Kushtha	d. Pippali

Each ingredient has been carefully selected based on classical Ayurvedic principles to achieve synergistic effects. *Vayasya* (Kakmachi) acts as a major *Shwitrahar* and *Raktashodhak* drug. *Edagaja* (Chakramarda) is renowned for its efficacy in all types of skin diseases, especially *Kushtha* and *Shwitra*. *Kushtha* provides *Lekhana* and *Varnya* action, while *Pippali* serves as a *Yogavahi* (catalyst) to enhance penetration and bioavailability. *Bastamutra* is used for *Bhavana* (levigation), imparting *Kshariya* and penetrating qualities to the final product.

The equal ratio (1:1:1:1) ensures balanced therapeutic action without dominance of any single drug. This polyherbal combination follows the principle of *Samyoga* (synergism)

described in Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals. The use of *Bastamutra* as a liquid medium is significant because urine of goat is considered the best among animal urines for *Kushtha Chikitsa* due to its mild alkaline, antimicrobial, and tissue-penetrating properties (Chakradatta and other *Kushtha* chapters). This combination makes Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa a complete formulation for local application in depigmented conditions.

### 3. Properties of Individual Ingredients

Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa is a polyherbal formulation where each ingredient has been meticulously selected for its specific therapeutic actions in Shwitra (Vitiligo). The drugs predominantly possess Katu-Tikta Rasa, Ushna Virya, and Lekhana and Kushthaghna properties, making them highly suitable for correcting Twak Dosha, Rakta Dushti, and Kapha-Vata vitiation [1][6].

Below is a detailed description of each ingredient with its classical properties and therapeutic relevance.

**Table 3.1: Properties of Vayasya / Kakmachi (*Solanum nigrum*)**

Parameter	Details
Rasa	Tikta, Katu
Guna	Laghu, Ruksha
Virya	Ushna
Vipaka	Katu
Karma	Kushthaghna, Raktashodhak, Shwitrahar, Krimighna
Doshagnata	Kapha-Vata Shamaka

#### 1. Vayasya / Kakmachi (*Solanum nigrum*)

Kakmachi is a well-known herb widely used in various skin disorders including Shwitra and Kushtha [13][18]. Its bitter and pungent taste (Tikta-Katu Rasa), light and dry qualities (Laghu-Ruksha Guna), hot potency (Ushna Virya), and pungent post-digestive effect (Katu Vipaka) enable it to pacify Kapha and Vata doshas while purifying Rakta Dhatu. It acts as a potent blood purifier (Raktashodhak) and is specifically indicated for depigmented skin conditions due to its Shwitrahar property [13][18].

In classical literature, it is praised for improving skin texture and promoting repigmentation by stimulating *Bhrajaka Pitta*. Modern pharmacological studies have demonstrated its

antioxidant, immunomodulatory, and melanocyte-stimulating activities, which help in restoring normal skin pigmentation. It also possesses mild anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial effects, making it useful in preventing secondary infections in depigmented patches.

**Table 3.2: Properties of Edagaja / Chakramarda (*Cassia tora*)**

Parameter	Details
Rasa	Katu, Tikta
Guna	Laghu, Ruksha
Virya	Ushna
Vipaka	Katu
Karma	Kushthaghna, Kandughna, Twak Prasadana
Doshagnata	Kapha-Vata Shamaka

**2. Edagaja / Chakramarda (*Cassia tora*)** The seeds of Chakramarda are considered one of the foremost drugs for all types of *Kushtha* and *Shwitra* [2][3][17]. With *Katu-Tikta Rasa* and *Ushna Virya*, it effectively scrapes away morbid *Kapha* and clears obstructions in skin channels (*Srotas*). It is highly *Kandughna* (anti-pruritic) and *Twak Prasadana* (skin-nourishing). Contemporary research supports its strong antifungal, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory actions [2][3], which are beneficial in chronic skin lesions. It is frequently used in *Shwitra* for its ability to initiate repigmentation [17].

**Table 3.3: Properties of Kushtha (*Saussurea lappa*)**

Parameter	Details
Rasa	Tikta, Katu
Guna	Laghu, Ruksha, Tikshna
Virya	Ushna
Vipaka	Katu
Karma	Lekhana, Varnya, Kushthaghna
Doshagnata	Kapha-Vata Shamaka

**3. Kushtha (*Saussurea lappa*)** The root of Kushtha is renowned for its *Lekhana* (scraping) and *Varnya* (complexion-enhancing) properties [8][11]. It removes defective tissues and promotes healthy skin color. Its *Ushna Virya* helps in clearing *Avarana* and improving microcirculation to depigmented areas [8][11].

**Table 3.4: Properties of Pippali (*Piper longum*)**

Parameter	Details
Rasa	Katu
Guna	Laghu, Snigdha, Tikshna
Virya	Ushna
Vipaka	Madhura
Karma	Yogavahi, Deepana, Rasayana
Doshagnata	Kapha-Vata Shamaka

**4. Pippali (*Piper longum*)** Pippali acts as a powerful *Yogavahi* (catalyst), enhancing the penetration and efficacy of other ingredients in the Lepa [14]. It improves transdermal absorption and bioavailability of the formulation [14].

**Table 3.5: Properties of Bastamutra (Goat's Urine)**

Parameter	Details
Rasa	Katu, Tikta, Lavana
Guna	Tikshna, Ushna
Virya	Ushna
Karma	Shodhana, Lekhana, Krimighna
Special Use	Bhavana Dravya for Kushtha

**5. Bastamutra (Goat's Urine)** It is considered the best among animal urines for external application in skin diseases due to its penetrating and purifying (*Kshariya*) properties [7]. It facilitates deeper drug absorption and breaks down accumulated *Dosha* in the skin tissue [7]. Collectively, the ingredients exhibit strong synergistic action ideally suited for chronic and resistant cases of vitiligo by addressing multiple etiopathological factors of *Shwitra* [1][6][16].

#### 4. Method of Preparation

The preparation of **Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa** follows the classical Ayurvedic pharmaceutical principles described in *Chakradatta* and other texts on *Kushtha Chikitsa*. The process is meticulous and requires strict adherence to traditional methods to maintain the potency and therapeutic efficacy of the formulation.

##### Step-wise Method of Preparation:

1. **Collection and Authentication of Raw Drugs:** All herbal ingredients — Vayasya (Kakmachi – *Solanum nigrum* Panchang), Edagaja (Chakramarda – *Cassia tora* seeds), Kushtha (*Saussurea lappa* root), and Pippali (*Piper longum* fruit) — should be collected from authentic sources and identified by a qualified Ayurvedic pharmacognosist as per API (Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia of India) standards.
2. **Cleaning and Drying:** Each drug is thoroughly cleaned to remove dust, foreign matter, and impurities. They are then shade-dried to preserve volatile principles and prevent fungal growth.
3. **Powdering:** The dried drugs are individually powdered in a clean mortar and pestle or mechanical grinder and sieved through a fine mesh (80–100 sieve) to obtain uniform fine powder (*Churna*).
4. **Mixing:** All four herbal powders are taken in equal quantities (1:1:1:1 ratio) and mixed thoroughly in a large mortar to ensure uniform distribution.
5. **Bhavana (Trituration / Levigation):** The mixed powder is then subjected to *Bhavana* with fresh **Bastamutra** (Goat's urine). Sufficient quantity of goat's urine is added gradually and the mixture is triturated continuously for 6–8 hours daily. This process is repeated for 3–7 days or until a thick, homogeneous, semi-solid paste is formed. The repeated *Bhavana* with *Bastamutra* is the most crucial step as it imparts special *Shodhana* (purifying) and *Yogavahi* (penetrating) qualities to the formulation.
6. **Formation of Gutika:** Once the desired consistency is achieved, small pills (*Gutika*) of uniform size (approximately 500 mg to 1 gm) are prepared and dried in shade.
7. **Storage:** The final *Gutika* or paste is stored in an airtight glass or ceramic container away from direct sunlight and moisture to maintain stability.

**Table 4.1: Stages of Preparation of Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa**

Stage	Process	Purpose
Cleaning & Drying	Removal of impurities	Purity of raw material
Powdering	Fine Churna preparation	Uniform mixing
Mixing	Equal ratio combination	Synergistic action
Bhavana with Bastamutra	Repeated trituration	Potentialiation & penetration
Gutika Formation	Pill making	Easy application

This classical method of preparation significantly enhances the bioavailability, potency, and shelf life of the formulation [1][5][6]. Bhavana with Bastamutra not only acts as a medium but also performs micro-pulverization and imparts Kshariya properties that help the Lepa penetrate deeper layers of the skin [7]. The entire manufacturing process should be carried out in a GMP-certified Ayurvedic pharmacy under the supervision of an experienced Ayurvedic pharmacist and quality control expert to ensure safety and standardization [1].

## 5. Discussion

Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa stands as a valuable classical Ayurvedic formulation for the management of *Shwitra* (Vitiligo), a challenging dermatological condition that significantly affects the physical appearance and psychological well-being of patients [15]. Described in *Chakradatta* (Kushtha Chikitsa 50/66) [4][5][16], this *Lepa* exemplifies the wisdom of Ayurvedic polyherbal therapy, combining four potent herbs with *Bastamutra* (Goat's urine) as a unique *Bhavana dravya* [7].

The formulation's strength lies in its multi-targeted approach. Kakmachi (*Solanum nigrum*) and Chakramarda (*Cassia tora*) provide strong *Raktashodhak* and *Kushthaghna* effects [2][3][13][17][18], while Kushtha (*Saussurea lappa*) contributes *Lekhana* and *Varnya* properties [8][11]. Pippali (*Piper longum*) acts as an excellent *Yogavahi* [14]. The use of *Bastamutra* during *Bhavana* imparts *Kshariya* and penetrating qualities [7].

In comparison to modern treatments such as topical corticosteroids, PUVA therapy, or narrow-band UVB, Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa offers a relatively safer profile with minimal risk of systemic side effects, skin atrophy, or long-term complications [1][6][15]. Several previous studies on similar Ayurvedic *Lepa* formulations have reported encouraging repigmentation

rates ranging from 60–85% in localized vitiligo when used consistently along with internal medications and regulated sun exposure [1][6][17].

However, like most classical formulations, Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa has certain limitations. Its efficacy may vary depending on the chronicity of the disease, site of lesions, and individual *Prakriti*. Standardization of *Bastamutra* and quality control of raw drugs remain practical challenges. There is also a need for more robust randomized controlled trials with objective outcome measures such as VASI score, histopathology, and dermoscopic evaluation to generate stronger scientific evidence [1][6].

### Mode of Action (Pharmacodynamics)

The Mode of Action of **Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa** is based on the fundamental principles of Ayurvedic dermatology (*Twak Vikara Chikitsa*). It primarily works through *Shodhana* (purification), *Lekhana* (scraping), *Twak Prasadana* (skin nourishment), *Varnya* (complexion enhancement), and *Kushthaghna* (anti-dermatosis) actions [1][6].

### Detailed Pharmacodynamics:

- **Shodhana and Lekhana Action:** The *Tikta-Katu Rasa* and *Ushna Virya* of the ingredients help in removing vitiated *Kapha*, *Vata*, and *Rakta Dushti* from the skin tissue (*Twak* and *Rakta Dhatu*). *Kushtha* and *Bastamutra* provide a strong *Lekhana* effect that scrapes away the defective, depigmented tissue [8][11].
- **Stimulation of Bhrajaka Pitta:** The *Ushna Virya* drugs stimulate *Bhrajaka Pitta* (a subtype of *Pitta* located in the skin responsible for complexion), which plays a key role in melanogenesis and restoration of normal skin color [1][6][15].
- **Raktashodhak and Twachya Effect:** *Kakmachi* and *Chakramarda* act as potent blood purifiers, improving microcirculation to the affected areas and nourishing *Twak Dhatu* [13][18].
- **Yogavahi Property:** *Pippali* enhances transdermal penetration of the active principles, allowing the formulation to reach deeper layers of the epidermis and dermis, thereby acting directly on melanocytes [14].
- **Krimighna and Antimicrobial Action:** The formulation prevents secondary bacterial or fungal infections in the depigmented patches, which is a common complication in *Shwitra* [2][3][17].

**Table 5.1: Mode of Action of Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa**

Ingredient/ Component	Primary Action	Effect on Shwitra Pathology
Kakmachi	Raktashodhak, Shwitrahar	Blood purification & repigmentation
Chakramarda	Kushthaghna, Kandughna	Clears skin lesions & itching
Kushtha	Lekhana, Varnya	Scrapes defective tissue
Pippali	Yogavahi, Penetration enhancer	Deeper drug delivery
Bastamutra	Kshariya, Shodhana	Enhances absorption & purification

In modern pharmacological terms, the formulation exhibits antioxidant, immunomodulatory, and melanocyte-stimulating activities [13][18]. It helps in reducing oxidative stress on melanocytes and promotes their proliferation and migration from hair follicles to the depigmented areas. When applied regularly followed by mild sun exposure (*Surya Atapa*), it significantly accelerates repigmentation [1][6][15].

This multi-targeted approach makes Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa highly effective even in chronic and resistant cases of vitiligo, offering a safe and holistic solution with minimal systemic side effects compared to conventional treatments [1][6][17].

**Conclusion:** Vayasthadi Gutika Lepa represents an excellent example of traditional Ayurvedic wisdom that can be effectively integrated into contemporary dermatological practice. Its holistic, cost-effective, and patient-friendly nature makes it a promising therapeutic option for *Shwitra*. Further multicentric clinical studies, phytochemical analysis, and pharmacological research are recommended to validate its efficacy, standardize the formulation, and explore its potential in other hypopigmented disorders.

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