



Review Article

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## ROLE OF AYURVEDIC THERAPIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DRY EYE SYNDROME (*SHUSHKAKSHIPAKA*): A REVIEW STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

**Background** Dry Eye Syndrome is a multifactorial disorder of the ocular surface characterized by tear film instability, ocular discomfort, visual disturbances, and inflammation. The prevalence of dry eye has increased significantly due to prolonged screen exposure, environmental pollution, aging, contact lens use, and systemic diseases. In Ayurveda, Dry Eye Syndrome closely resembles *Shushkakshipaka*, a condition predominantly caused by aggravation of *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha* affecting the ocular tissues. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe various local and systemic therapeutic measures such as *Tarpana*, *Putapaka*, *Aschyotana*, *Anjana*, *Nasya*, and *Rasayana Chikitsa* for restoring ocular lubrication, nourishing eye structures, and improving visual function. These therapies provide a holistic approach by addressing the root cause and promoting long-term ocular health. **Aim** To review the role of Ayurvedic therapies in the management of Dry Eye Syndrome (*Shushkakshipaka*). **Objectives** To study the Ayurvedic concept of *Shushkakshipaka*. To review modern understanding of Dry Eye Syndrome. To evaluate the therapeutic role of Ayurvedic interventions. To explore integrative management strategies for dry eye disease.

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ROLE OF AYURVEDIC

THERAPIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DRY EYE SYNDROME (*SHUSHKAKSHIPAKA*): A REVIEW STUDY

**Materials and Methods** Classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and ophthalmological literature were reviewed. Modern scientific articles related to Dry Eye Syndrome were analyzed through electronic databases. Relevant information was compiled and critically interpreted. **Results and Discussion** Ayurvedic therapies act by pacifying aggravated *Doshas*, enhancing ocular nutrition, and restoring tear film integrity. Their holistic action offers both symptomatic relief and long-term maintenance of ocular health. **Conclusion** Ayurvedic management provides a safe and effective approach for Dry Eye Syndrome. Integration of classical therapies with modern ocular care may improve treatment outcomes and quality of life.

**Keywords** *Shushkakshipaka*, Dry Eye Syndrome, *Tarpana*, *Nasya*, *Netra Kriya Kalpa*, Ocular Surface Disease

## INTRODUCTION

The eye is one of the most important sensory organs responsible for visual perception and interaction with the external environment.<sup>1</sup> Maintenance of ocular surface integrity depends upon a stable tear film that lubricates, nourishes, and protects the eye. Disturbance in tear production or excessive tear evaporation results in Dry Eye Syndrome, one of the most common ophthalmic disorders encountered worldwide.<sup>2</sup>

Dry Eye Syndrome is a multifactorial disease characterized by tear film instability, hyperosmolarity, ocular surface inflammation, and neurosensory abnormalities. Common symptoms include dryness, irritation, foreign body sensation, burning sensation, redness, photophobia, and fluctuating vision. The prevalence of dry eye has increased due to prolonged digital screen usage, environmental pollutants, air conditioning, aging, hormonal changes, and autoimmune disorders.<sup>3</sup>

Ayurveda describes numerous ocular disorders under *Sarvagata Netra Roga*. Among these, *Shushkakshipaka* exhibits clinical features similar to Dry Eye Syndrome. Classical texts describe symptoms such as ocular dryness, roughness, pricking pain, difficulty in opening and closing the eyelids, and discomfort due to vitiated *Vata* and *Pitta Dosh*.<sup>4</sup>

The Ayurvedic approach emphasizes correction of underlying *Dosha* imbalance, nourishment of ocular tissues, rejuvenation of visual apparatus, and prevention of recurrence. Various therapies such as *Aschyotana*, *Tarpana*, *Putapaka*, *Anjana*, *Nasya*, and *Rasayana* formulations are recommended to maintain ocular health and improve visual function.<sup>5</sup>

## **AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Aim**

To review the role of Ayurvedic therapies in the management of Dry Eye Syndrome (*Shushkakshipaka*).

### **Objectives**

1. To study the Ayurvedic concept of *Shushkakshipaka*.
2. To understand the modern concept of Dry Eye Syndrome.
3. To evaluate Ayurvedic therapeutic interventions.
4. To assess the clinical significance of integrative management.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The present review was conducted through a comprehensive analysis of classical Ayurvedic literature and modern scientific publications. Ayurvedic references were collected from *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Ashtanga Sangraha*, and other authoritative texts. Relevant scientific articles, review papers, and clinical studies related to Dry Eye Syndrome were retrieved from indexed databases including PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate. The collected information was critically analyzed, compared, and synthesized to evaluate the role of Ayurvedic therapies in managing Dry Eye Syndrome.

## **CONCEPTUAL STUDY**

### ***Shushkakshipaka***

*Shushkakshipaka* is described among ocular disorders resulting from vitiation of *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha*. The term literally means inflammatory changes associated with excessive dryness of the eyes. *Shushka* means dry, while *Akshi* denotes eye. Therefore, *Shushkakshipaka* refers to a pathological condition characterized by dryness and irritation of ocular tissues.<sup>6</sup>

**Table No.1 Nidana (Etiological Factors)**

Category	Factors / Involvement	Clinical Significance
Dietary Factors	Excessive intake of dry foods	Increases dryness and aggravates <i>Vata Dosha</i>
	Consumption of pungent and bitter substances	Aggravates <i>Pitta Dosha</i> and causes burning
	Inadequate hydration	Reduces lubrication and tear formation
	Irregular dietary habits	Disturbs normal <i>Dosha</i> balance
Lifestyle Factors	Excessive visual strain	Causes eye fatigue and dryness
	Sleep deprivation	Increases ocular irritation and burning
	Exposure to dust and smoke	Irritates ocular surface
	Prolonged computer and mobile use	Reduces blinking and increases dryness
	Excessive travel	Aggravates <i>Vata Dosha</i> due to dryness and movement
Psychological Factors	Stress	Disturbs body physiology and worsens symptoms
	Anxiety	Increases discomfort and eye strain
	Mental fatigue	Causes tiredness and heaviness in eyes
<i>Dosha</i> Involvement	<i>Vata Dosha</i>	Causes dryness, roughness, pricking pain and reduced tear secretion
	<i>Pitta Dosha</i>	Causes burning sensation, redness, inflammation and ocular discomfort
<i>Dushya</i> Involvement	<i>Rasa Dhatu</i>	Affects nourishment and lubrication
	<i>Rakta Dhatu</i>	Contributes to redness and inflammatory changes
	<i>Mamsa Dhatu</i>	Involves ocular tissue weakness and structural discomfort

### **Clinical Features of *Shushkakshipaka***

- Ocular dryness
- Burning sensation
- Foreign body sensation
- Redness
- Pricking pain
- Difficulty in blinking
- Photophobia
- Eye fatigue

### **Ayurvedic Management<sup>7</sup>**

#### ***Nidana Parivarjana***

Avoidance of:

- Excessive screen exposure
- Smoke and dust
- Sleep deprivation
- Dry and spicy foods

#### ***Aschyotana***

Medicated eye drops help lubricate the ocular surface and reduce inflammation.

#### ***Tarpana***

*Tarpana* is a specialized ocular rejuvenation procedure where medicated *Ghrita* is retained over the eyes for a specific period.

#### **Benefits**

- Ocular nourishment
- Improved lubrication
- Enhanced tear film stability

- Reduction of ocular fatigue

### ***Putapaka***

*Putapaka* provides deeper nourishment to ocular tissues and improves visual function.

### **Benefits**

- Tissue rejuvenation
- Improved tear secretion
- Strengthening of ocular structures

### ***Anjana***

Application of medicated collyrium helps cleanse and strengthen ocular tissues.

### ***Nasya***

Administration of medicated oil through nasal passages nourishes structures above the clavicle including the eyes.

### **Benefits**

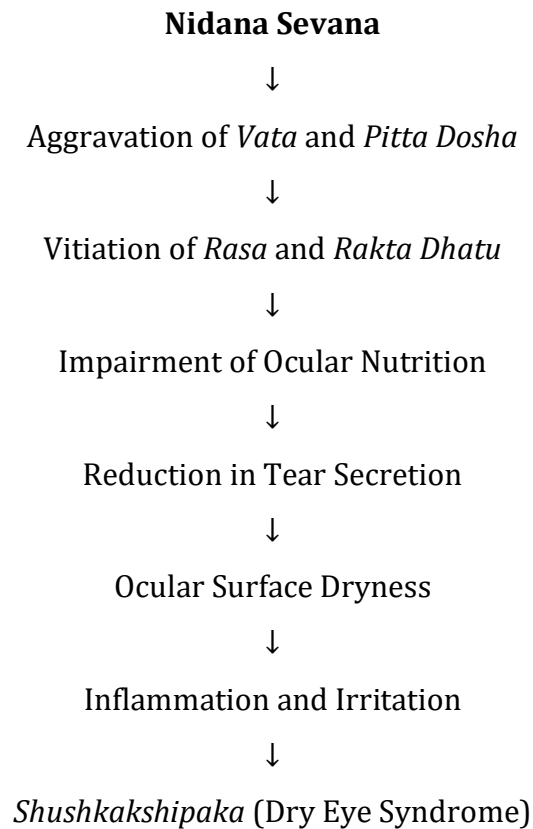
- Improves ocular circulation
- Reduces dryness
- Enhances nourishment

### ***Rasayana Chikitsa***

Important formulations include:

- *Triphala Ghrita*
- *Jeevaniya Ghrita*
- *Mahatriphala Ghrita*
- *Yashtimadhu*
- *Amalaki*

## SAMPRAPTI<sup>8</sup>



## MODERN REVIEW

Dry Eye Syndrome is a multifactorial disease of the ocular surface characterized by loss of tear film homeostasis accompanied by ocular symptoms.<sup>9</sup>

### Anatomy of Tear Film

#### Lipid Layer

- Produced by Meibomian glands
- Prevents tear evaporation

#### Aqueous Layer

- Produced by lacrimal glands
- Provides hydration

#### Mucin Layer

- Produced by goblet cells

- Maintains tear film adherence

## **Etiology**

### **Age-related Factors**

- Reduced lacrimal secretion

### **Environmental Factors**

- Dust
- Wind
- Air conditioning

### **Digital Eye Strain**

- Reduced blink rate
- Increased tear evaporation

### **Autoimmune Disorders**

- Sjögren syndrome
- Rheumatoid arthritis

### **Medications**

- Antihistamines
- Antidepressants
- Beta blockers

### **Clinical Features**

- Dryness
- Burning sensation
- Irritation
- Redness
- Blurred vision
- Excessive tearing
- Photophobia

**Table No.2 Diagnostic Tests**

<b>Diagnostic Test</b>	<b>Purpose / Measures</b>
Schirmer Test	Measures tear production
Tear Break-Up Time (TBUT)	Evaluates tear film stability
Fluorescein Staining	Assesses ocular surface damage
Ocular Surface Disease Index (OSDI)	Measures symptom severity

**Modern Management<sup>10</sup>**

**Artificial Tears**

Provide lubrication.

**Anti-inflammatory Therapy**

Topical cyclosporine and corticosteroids.

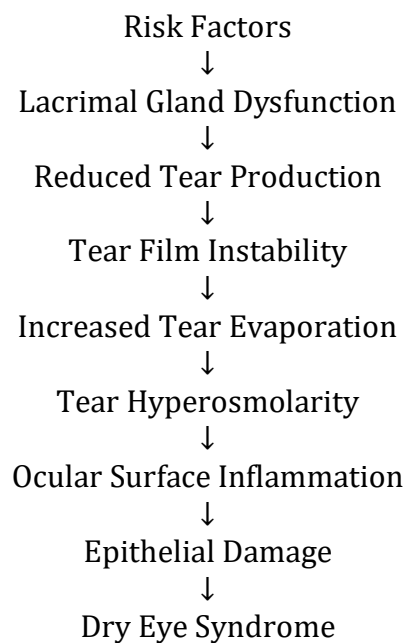
**Punctal Occlusion**

Reduces tear drainage.

**Lifestyle Modification**

Reduces symptom aggravation.

**PATHOGENESIS<sup>11</sup>**



## RESULT AND FINDINGS

- *Shushkakshipaka* closely resembles Dry Eye Syndrome in clinical presentation.
- *Vata-Pitta Dosh*a predominance forms the basic pathogenesis.
- *Tarpana* significantly improves ocular lubrication and tear film stability.
- *Putapaka* enhances nourishment of ocular tissues.
- *Nasya* supports ocular function through systemic nourishment.
- *Rasayana* drugs help rejuvenate ocular structures.
- Ayurvedic therapies reduce dryness, burning sensation, irritation, and eye fatigue.
- Integrated management offers better long-term outcomes and reduced recurrence.
- Lifestyle modifications play a major role in disease prevention.
- Clinical studies support the efficacy of Ayurvedic interventions in improving quality of life.

## DISCUSSION

Dry Eye Syndrome has emerged as a significant public health concern due to changing lifestyles, increasing digital device usage, environmental pollution, and aging populations. Conventional management primarily focuses on symptomatic relief through artificial tears and anti-inflammatory agents. However, recurrence remains common because the underlying pathophysiological factors are often inadequately addressed.<sup>12</sup>

Ayurveda considers *Shushkakshipaka* a disorder predominantly involving *Vata* and *Pitta Dosh*a. The characteristic dryness, irritation, burning sensation, and ocular discomfort are explained through *Dosha-Dushya Sammurchana*. The Ayurvedic approach aims at restoring physiological balance, nourishing ocular tissues, and improving tear film integrity rather than merely alleviating symptoms.<sup>13</sup>

Therapies such as *Tarpana*, *Putapaka*, *Aschyotana*, and *Nasya* provide local and systemic benefits by enhancing ocular lubrication, improving tissue nutrition, and reducing inflammation. The addition of *Rasayana* therapy further supports ocular rejuvenation and

long-term maintenance of visual health. Therefore, Ayurveda offers a comprehensive and sustainable approach to the management of Dry Eye Syndrome.<sup>14</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Dry Eye Syndrome is a common ocular disorder that significantly affects visual comfort and quality of life. Ayurvedic literature describes a comparable condition, *Shushkakshipaka*, resulting primarily from aggravation of *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha*. Classical therapies such as *Tarpana*, *Putapaka*, *Aschyotana*, *Nasya*, and *Rasayana Chikitsa* effectively address ocular dryness, inflammation, and tear film instability through a holistic mechanism of action. Available evidence suggests that these interventions improve ocular lubrication, nourish eye tissues, and enhance visual comfort. Thus, Ayurvedic therapies represent a promising, safe, and integrative approach for the management of Dry Eye Syndrome.

**Conflict of Interest** -Nil

**Source of Support**- None

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