A SURVEY OF AYURVEDIC TEXTILE-
‘AYURVASTRA’

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Abstract—This paper intends to promote the use of natural dyes and other natural techniques to make a cloth have qualities of Ayurveda and this cloth is termed as Ayurvastra. Here, the properties of Ayurvastra and other clothes will be compared and it will be proved that ayurvastra can be seen useful to treat various skin diseases, metabolic disorder, blood pressure etc. 'Ayurvastra' is a product of an ancient Indian practise of dyeing hand-made fabrics with medicinal herbs.

Index Terms—Ayurvastra, Ayurveda, Hand-made fabrics.

I. INTRODUCTION
Ayurvastra is an ancient technique to make healthy clothes since the time when chemicals were not invented. This technique lost its existence with the increase in use of chemicals in textile industries. This technique came into prevalence after the welfare secretary took an initiative by submitting a project for revival of ayurvastra to the government of Kerela.

As a known fact, skin is the protective shield of human body. If the body has to be protected the skin should be protected first. For this, the ayurvastra provide a safeguard as the herbs and medicinal significance benefits the body. The fabric treated to make ayurvastra does not lose its value for long time as the herbs are deeply absorbed by the yarn.

Moreover, Ayurvastra is an eco friendly product. Its manufacture does not pollute the environment. Globally, many countries have banned the use of chemicals in textile industries. With this ayurvastra is again gaining interest for the industries.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY
History of Ayurvastra:
It is believed that Ayurveda was received by Dhanvantri from Lord Brahma. Charaka Samhita and Susruta Samhita are the oldest known and the most famous Ayurvedic texts [1]. Until about 100 years ago, people in many parts of India were using various forms of natural dyeing in which they repeatedly dipped clothes in an herb based preparation after each wash. These natural dyes are free from toxins [2].

Modern vision:
Ayurvastra which is the cloth made from organic cotton fabric that has been specially treated with medicinal herbs to impart not only medicinal properties but also beautiful hues to the textiles [3]. There is a whole spectrum of colors that can be obtained from a multitude of plants, insects and fungi; and these have been used across the centuries to dye textiles, color artefacts, pattern and color our skin/hair, and even color the food we eat. Various natural dyes and herbal products are found to be self-healing when they are applied on the fabrics [4]. Ayurvedic herbs and achieving the great results in treatment of many diseases is a great idea. A new technology launched and developed by the Directorate of Handloom, Department of Industries and Commerce and the Department of Dravyaguna Vijnan, Government Ayurveda College, Kerala, India, with a great view of giving medicinal value to the fabric [5].

The demand for natural and organic dyes for ayurvastra has been increasing considerably because of their eco-friendliness, nontoxic and water solubility unlike chemical and synthetic dyes which pollute the environment. Anthocyanins are one such group of organic colors which are natural phenolic pigments or glycosylated polyhydroxy and polymethoxy derivatives, widely distributed in nature and account for colours in several fruits, flowers and vegetables. They are utilized for the color intensity and
appearance; improves the visual activity also known for multitude of health benefits [6].

Kokum (Garcinia indica Choisy) is an indigenous and commercially valuable fruit crop. The rich bioactive profile of kokum makes it a highly nutritious and desirable fruit crop. The ripened fruits are used as kokum extract, syrup, nectar, juice etc. The present study was taken up with the objective of extraction and estimation of anthocyanin pigment (mg/100g) from kokum rind (Fresh, dry and sugar rind) [7]. Research has shown a vitalizing effect as the person feels fresh and healthy. Selected herbal ingredients in the textiles have been found to cure diseases like arthritis and Hay fever, as it supplements and improves the natural function of the skin to block and resist harmful chemicals and toxins from entering the body [8].

The incorporation of medicinal herbs in Ayurvastra renders a lot of therapeutic value to them. Thus, the fabric is very effective for people suffering from anaemia, arthritis, asthma, diabetes, heart related ailments, HIV AIDS, hypertension, respiratory problems, skin infections and its related allergies, and to people encountering sleep disorders, and also for boosting the over-all body immunity depending upon the herb used in the application [9,10].

Now people prefer apparels with additional extra functions like imparting fragrance with protection, maintaining freshness by anti-creasing capability, leading to a smart appearance, and also helping in nurturing a healthy life by herbal means. This concept finds its origin from Ayurveda, wherein herbal extracts have been found to be used for curing ailments. This is achieved by the addition of cosmetic and pharmaceutical herbal ingredients into the clothing, which then gains entry into the body through the skin by the natural movements of the body. Thus the skin is refreshed, revitalized and cured [11]. The ayurvastra reinforces the importance of sustaining the planet for future generations and for the wellbeing of current generations using age old practices which do not add up to global warming but helps in minimising it [12].

III. PRINCIPLE OF AYURVAstra

Since long time, natural fibres like cotton, yarn, jute, wool, silk, hemp and linen are being used by the textile industries. The use of natural fibres over artificial fibres is beneficial but the dyeing process of the fibre is harmful as it uses chemicals. To make whole fabric favourable, the dyeing chemicals have to be avoided. But the question arises that how will the fabric be given colour then? The answer lies in Ayurvastra (ayur” = health, “vastra” = cloth). Ayurvastra means healthy clothing. It is based on theory of Ayurveda that the cloth is made up of natural fibres dyed using organic herbs and medicinal plants and hence, provide relief from certain disorders. Majorly, sleep wears, towels, bed-sheets, towels, meditation clothes etc. are made out of ayurvastra fabrics. The medicinal properties are permanently infused in the fabric which turns out to be beneficial for health.

The clothes made from yarns instilled with the organic and medicinal herbs reduce the metabolic disorders. As the ayurvastra make contact with the body, the toxins are lost and metabolism increases.

IV. MANUFACTURING PROCESS

Steps:

- Bleaching
- Medication of yarn
- Dyeing
- Washing/Finishing
- Softening
- Drying

Bleaching: A process to remove the dullness and impurities of the yarn using natural agents like sunlight, soap nut, medicinal grass etc.

Medication of yarn: A medicine is prepared from ayurvedic kashayam to medicate the yarn so that it may be disinfected. The medicinal herbs are boiled at controlled temperature and the sap is extracted from herbs.

Dyeing: After the yarn is being disinfected, it has to be provided with the colour. For colouring the yarn, natural dyes like turmeric, pomegranate, myrobalan, tulasi etc are used. To retain the value of cloth, plant material is directly immersed into dye bath. Hence, the colour is fixed permanently to the yarn.

Washing/Finishing: After dyeing, the yarn is dipped in clean water and then treated with natural surfactant solution to fix the unfixed colour.
Softening: Once the colour is fixed in the yarn, the fabric becomes very hard. To soften it, coconut oil/caster oil is used.

Drying: Finally, the coloured fabric is dried in shade and dark rooms for weeks.

V. MERITS & DEMERITS

Merits:
- Balanced Ecosystem
- Enhanced health
- Increasing Participation in global market
- Social sustainability
- Credibility of fabric

Demerits:
- Less resistant to wrinkles and strength.
- Limited range of colours.
- Washing techniques are different.

VI. CONCLUSION

Ayurvastra is constantly gaining popularity in textile world as it imparts health to people. It is an eco-friendly way to adopt healthy living. India hopes that the global market will join hands in this campaign of making textile industry organic and chemical free.

REFERENCES


