

# Product Appearance versus Product Brief / Claims, How Consumer Differentiate AYUSH Drugs from Herbal Cosmetics - CPT Analysis

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**Abstract:** Due to rampant use and aggressive promotion of various cosmetic products through the abysmally small quantity of many medicinal herbs used in all such products with 'cosmeceutical' benefit may cause confusion about siddha drugs whether they are drug or cosmetic preparation. In order to reach the essentials of AYUSH drugs and system, adopting some level of contemporariness is needed which add further confusion especially to the taxation authorities and obviously not the end user. In order to understand how the end users perceive and identify Siddha drugs from cosmetic preparations, CPT was conducted. Findings show that, all AYUSH drugs clearly carry the list of herbs and proportion along with therapeutic claim and scientific linkage whereas cosmetic products would list the herb in the lowest order proving their presence to be the least but would make mountain out of mole hill. All the siddha drugs, the general public has identified clearly as Siddha drugs based on several level of their scrutiny and details are presented in the article.

**Keywords:** CPT analysis, cosmetic products, AYUSH drugs, antidandruff, hyperpigmentation, Psoriasis

## 1. Introduction

AYUSH drugs are largely remedial preparations, made either with most common herbal material (s) that are present in our kitchen or are harvested from remote parts of Himalaya or other inaccessible areas where the identification of the plant and other associated details require super-specialized guidance of an expert.

AYUSH drugs have vast legacy, own science and also have several para-normal traits in healing human suffering; that is why AYUSH stream even after several thousands of years, enjoys global reverence, respect and acceptance. In ancient days, availability of natural resources was high and on the contrary, the population was less, hence the Nattu Vaidya used to make the AYUSH recipes afresh, as when required by the patient (1). But in due course of time, the system has started to stock the raw materials in advance and so the prepared recipes so that the treatment is neither delayed to the patient nor the service suffer paucity of time when the number of patients turns for such treatment became huge.

AYUSH recipes are prepared according to the strict dictum of the respective system of medicine such as Siddha or Ayurveda or Unani etc. The dictum starts from the cultivation of the herbal medicine, collection time and period/season, processing regimen of the medicine etc., which is costly, cumbersome and time consuming, that is how most AYUSH recipes are manufactured (2).

After understanding the healing power of several herbs and their rampant use by the population like pepper, ginger, clove, cardamom, Tulsi, Aloe vera etc., to deal several small ailments, the personal care and toiletry industry has started to exploit those herbs in cosmetic products and thereby could easily galvanize the attention and imagination of the consumer (3). Due to the above approach, all such cosmetic products started to enjoy 'semi-drug' (cosmeceutical)

patronage status among general mass than all such products are seen by the end user as cosmetic formulations which are otherwise 'inert' from the legal definition.

AYUSH drugs, due to their long heritage, legacy and spiritual linkage with our culture and civilization, Government of India and the respective state governments in India are giving several sops in the form of reduced or no tax etc., which is extremely essential for the system to survive and offer its best service to our health care sector (4).

After the invasion of cosmetic products into market with rampant use of medicinal herbs along with high decibel advertisements, most of the medicinal herbs are seen more as herbal ingredient used for cosmetic preparations than as raw medicinal herbs identified and gifted by our ancient AYUSH system. As a result, the revenue departments have started to see most of the AYUSH drugs as mere cosmetic formulations for the purpose of increased taxation so that they can increase the exchequer of the government through such re-nomenclature. But such an endeavor would break the spinal cord of the AYUSH system as the system is already struggling due to the ever expansion of universally powerful and mighty allopathic system of medicine.

The present study was conducted to understand how the end users view, differentiate and distinguish AYUSH drugs from cosmetic preparations when the product presentations are quite identical and similar both in appearance and use of the herb however the former carry clear therapeutic indications. Findings of the common parlance test (CPT) (5) are presented in the article.

## 2. Materials and Methods

Common parlance test (CPT) was conducted six Siddha drugs vis-à-vis cosmetic products among 25 volunteers.

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Quest Life Sciences, a CRO based in Chennai, conducted the study.

#### **Volunteer details**

Twenty-five volunteers were recruited for the study and out of which 11 were female volunteers and 14 were male. The age group of the volunteers participated in the study were between 23-40 years. 22/25 volunteers were graduates / post graduates and rest of the 3 volunteers had only school education. All the 25 volunteers belong to middle income group with adequate exposure to wide range of cosmetic products obtained through television, print media and friends. Also by visiting departmental stores and other popular malls, they obtain adequate awareness about changing trends in cosmetic products, benefit proposition, packaging details etc.

#### **Details of the products used for CPT study**

Dano antidandruff oil, Evefresh cream, Keshraksha gel, Keshraksha oil, Lumina herbal shampoo, Psorolin medicated bathing bar were used for the present study. All the formulations are licensed proprietary Siddha medicines of Dr.JRK's Research and Pharmaceutical Pvt., Ltd. Chennai. All the above products clearly carry the license details, list of all herbal ingredients and proportion, indication and sufficient linkage leading towards all scientific studies on the herbal ingredients/the product.

#### **Psorolin medicated bathing bar**

Aloe verathailam - 10%

Wrightiatinctoriathailam - 10%

Vegetable oil derived fatty acid base – QS

#### **Dano antidandruff oil**

Each 5ml contain extracts of

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis - 100mg

Wrightiatinctoria - 100mg

Cassia alata - 100mg

Azadirictaindica - 100mg

Oleum cocosnucifera - Q.S

#### **Lumina herbal shampoo**

Each 5ml contains

Acacia sinuate - 10mg

Aloe vera - 2mg

Trigonellafoenum - 2mg

Hibiscus rosasinensis - 5mg

Indigoferatinctoria - 5mg

Psoraleacorylifolia - 2mg

Shampoo base - Q.S

#### **Keshraksha gel**

Each 5gm contains extracts of

Phyllanthusemblica - 50mg

Murrayakoenigii - 50mg

Lawsonia alba - 50mg

Indigoferatinctoria - 75mg

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis - 75mg

Ecliptaprostrata - 75mg

Carbomer IP base – QS

#### **Kesh raksha oil**

Each 5ml contains extracts of

Phyllanthusemblica - 50mg

Bergamiakoenigii - 50mg

Lawsonia alba - 50mg

Indigoferatinctoria - 75mg

Ecliptaprostrata - 75mg

Oleum cocosnucifera- Q.S

At random, a few cosmetic products containing similar herbal actives and with similar indications were also kept for comparison so that how the volunteers differentiate siddha medicines from cosmetic preparations.

#### **List of questions posed to the volunteers**

The following simple and absolutely non-convoluted questions were asked to the volunteers while presenting the products and asked them to answer assuming how would they judge the product when they intent to buy from market.

The questions were,

- 1) How the volunteer would see/perceive the above list of Siddha proprietary drugs with reference to the packaging aspect from a distance when the product is placed in the market place
- 2) What do they look for or scrutinize in the product?
- 3) How do they differentiate Siddha medicines from cosmetic products?
- 4) How do they place their trust on Siddha medicines versus cosmetic products?

### **3. Results**

#### **Basis of product understanding and selection**

All 25 volunteers unequivocally stated that they would look for the following details when intent to buy the product such as

- a) License category – either drug, Siddha product or cosmetic formulation
- b) Proportion of herb (s) present in the product is clearly listed or not
- c) Indication and benefit proposition; is therapeutic or cosmetic
- d) Product is already known to them through advertisement
- e) Product is prescribed by clinician and is available mostly in chemist's shop

All the above details are considered by the volunteers to distinguish whether the product is a cosmetic formulation or AYUSH medicament. Further, the information about the product (s) is available in print media and television media is also considered to understand the product.

#### **How the volunteers perceived and identified the Siddha drugs used in the CPT study**

All the 25 volunteers clearly stated that the 6 products presented to them to understand how they would perceive and identify the products, are siddha/Ayush drugs as all of them carry the complete list of herbs and proportion of each herb used in the formulation and so the indication, which is obviously therapeutic in nature. Further the products are not known to them through advertisement or being available in popular shops.

On the contrary, the cosmetic products they differentiate based on the listing of the herbal ingredients in the lowest order without mentioning the proportion of the same being used.

Further the claim and adopted in cosmetic products is quite popular, tempting and wanting by the end user, which in a sense quite emotive in nature and obviously not therapeutic or treatment centric. Table 1

**Table 1:** Remarks of volunteers on products

| Product name                   | Listing of herbs and proportion                     | Claim – therapeutic or cosmetic                | Product availability                            | Final Remark Siddha drug/ cosmetic preparation |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Dano antidandruff oil          | Fully provided                                      | Dandruff, Pityriasis and Sebhoerric dermatitis | Chemist's shop                                  | Siddha drug                                    |
| Keshraksha gel                 | Fully provided                                      | Alopecia                                       | Chemist's shop                                  | Siddha drug                                    |
| Keshraksha oil                 | Fully provided                                      | Alopecia                                       |   | Siddha drug                                    |
| Lumina herbal shampoo          | Fully provided                                      | Dandruff, Pityriasis and Sebhoerric dermatitis | Chemist's shop                                  | Siddha drug                                    |
| Psorolin medicated bathing bar | Fully provided                                      | Psoriasis                                      | Chemist's shop                                  | Siddha drug                                    |
| Evefresh cream                 | Fully provided                                      | Hyper-pigmentation                             | Chemist's shop                                  | Siddha drug                                    |
| Cosmetic products              | Listed at lowest level, actual proportion not given | Cosmetic claim, tempting and quite popular     | Chemist's shop, departmental stores, petty shop | Cosmetic product                               |

#### 4. Discussion

The present investigation was carried out to understand how the consumers would identify, understand and differentiate Siddha/AYUSH drugs from cosmetic preparations. The above conflict is often encountered when the AYUSH drugs that are likely to overlap with the daily needs/cosmetic needs of the user. For example, a volunteer who wants to improve the skin colour by lightening/whitening, would find skin lightening cosmetic cream overlapping with the AYUSH drug in cream dosage form for hyperpigmentation. A few herbs used as the raw drug in such AYUSH drugs are quite popular, safe and available in abundance and hence are used rampantly in the cosmetic preparations as well. The best example is Licorice, the extract from the root of Glycyrrhizaglabra or saffron (6,7). When the cosmetic industry promotes Licorice obviously the general public would perceive the Licorice to be a cosmetic ingredient and possibly may assume all those products (creams) that contain Licorice are cosmetic preparations. But the origin of the wisdom of Licorice certainly came from AYUSH system and not vice versa (8).

Antidandruff oil, shampoo, hair preparations for the treatment of alopecia, a specialty soap for Psoriatic skin under Siddha drug category are likely to be interpreted as cosmetic products because of both the product nature and contemporary packaging approach adopted by the manufacturer, but in strict sense, they are not cosmetic preparations.

Cosmetic products differ clearly from AYUSH drugs by two distinctions viz.,

- 1) Cosmetic products will use only abysmally small quantity of herb (s) but would make large claim and also the proportion will not be disclosed
- 2) Cosmetic product would try to make mountain out of molehill by projecting the herbal portion than the actual chemical constituent, example – Climbazole, Niacinamide etc., instead would hype the herbal ingredient (s) used in such formulation.

In the present study, we have subjected 6 Siddha drugs to a panel of 25 volunteers along with certain cosmetic oils,

shampoo, skin lightening creams and soaps. All the 25 volunteers clearly differentiated the Siddha drugs from cosmetic products based on the following obvious attributes. The volunteers after seeing the herbal constituents present in such products, checked for the proportion and then the license category. Then they checked the product benefit/claim whether it is therapeutic or popular and wanting by the end user. Such attribute is scrutinized carefully to understand whether the purchase intent is triggered by the emotive claim or the therapeutic benefit that is being required by the end user after a medical consultation. Alongside, the volunteers also checked for the availability of the product in departmental stores/ chemists/ druggists shop to further differentiate the product. Based on the above scrutiny, all the 6 products were unambiguously, the 25 volunteers perceived and identified as Siddha drugs and also remarked that all the 6 products are completely different from cosmetic preparations.

Although the contemporary packaging may partly tempt the volunteers to assume the siddha drugs to be a cosmetic preparation, but the details provided in the product as well as the details that they have used to scrutinize clearly helped them to identify all such products as Siddha drugs and not cosmetic preparation.

The confusion due to the overlapping benefit prepositions and used of similar or same herb in both Siddha drug and cosmetic preparation should not lead any government agency, including the taxation department to conclude all such Siddha drugs as cosmetic preparations.

The method of preparation of Siddha/Ayurveda drugs differ greatly from cosmetic preparation. In cosmetic formulation, the herb is nothing but a catch phrase or buzz phrase and therefore the herb is used in lowest level possible whereas in Siddha/Ayurveda preparation, the herbal constituent is the real therapeutically active agent and the base is only a mere vehicle or dispensing/delivering agent. The treatment of raw herbal drug to convert into drug followed by siddha system of medicine is quite unique whereas no such preparatory method is adopted in cosmetic formulations (9).

AYUSH is the ancient treasure/ health care wealth and wisdom of our India which is linked with our sacred culture, heritage and spiritual way of life, government of India is promoting such preventive and promotive health wisdom of native India to the world by providing several sops to the system. Therefore, the government tax department should not hamper the effort of the government of India by acting in an ouroboros manner where the government of India would promote the system by providing several financial assistances while the tax department of the same government would look for various ways and means to re-classify and re-notify all such Siddha/AYUSH drugs as cosmetic products and tax them accordingly and would make the survival of the AYUSH perilous and impecunious.

The present investigation clearly confirm that the general public does not have any confusion in identifying and differentiating Siddha drugs as Siddha drugs from cosmetic products merely due to 'some' similarity.

No customer would buy any product without knowing the details about the product (10) and hence the initial perception of a product does not instigate the purchase intent especially when the benefit preposition is therapeutic whereas the emotive claims of cosmetic products may tempt especially among aspirational, marginalized and partially gullible folks in rural areas.

## 5. Conclusion

The CPT study clearly conveys that the products displayed was identified as medicine and label is in detail regarding the same.

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