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Review Article on Herbal Shampoo

Mr. Sanket Limkar[1], Mr. Prathamesh Gaikwad[2], Ms. Aishwarya Todkar[3], Mr. Nitin Gawai[4]
B. Pharmacy Department Mahadev Kanchan College of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Uruli Kanchan Pune Maharashtra India

Abstract: ***The creation and assessment of herbal shampoos with natural elements that have been shown to improve the hair and scalp is highlighted in this review. Because of their safety, effectiveness, and compatibility with the environment, herbal formulations have drawn attention in response to the growing desire for chemical-free hair care products. Typical herbal components, formulation methods, and typical assessment metrics including pH, foamability, and conditioning impact are included in the article. It also discusses how herbs may be used therapeutically to treat hair conditions including dandruff and hair loss. In order to improve the worldwide market acceptability of herbal shampoos, the study highlights the necessity of scientific validation, standardisation, and regulatory concerns.***

Keywords: Herbal shampoo, natural ingredients, hair care, formulation, evaluation, Amla, Reetha, Shikakai, anti-dandruff, eco-friendly.

I. INTRODUCTION

Plant-based, naturally derived formulations have greatly replaced synthetic and chemical-based ones in personal care products. Among them, herbal shampoos have become very popular because of their medicinal effects, perceived safety, and environmental friendliness. A crucial component of personal hygiene and grooming, hair care calls for solutions that not only wash the scalp and hair but also offer nourishment, conditioning, and damage protection. Conventional shampoos frequently include harsh surfactants, preservatives, and artificial chemicals that, when used for an extended period of time, can have negative consequences including dryness, irritation, hair loss, and allergic responses[1-2].

On the other hand, holistic hair care treatments with few adverse effects are provided by herbal shampoos made with botanicals, essential oils, and plant extracts[3].

Preparations made from natural plant sources are referred regarded as "herbal." Traditionally used for their positive effects on hair and scalp, herbal shampoos contain ingredients like Amla (*Emblica officinalis*), Reetha (*Sapindus mukorossi*), Shikakai (*Acacia concinna*), Hibiscus (Hibiscus rosa-sinensis), Neem (*Azadirachta indica*), Aloe vera (*Aloe barbadensis*), and Bhringraj (*Eclipta Alba*). Vitamins, flavonoids, saponins, tannins, glycosides, and other phytoconstituents with antibacterial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and cleaning qualities are abundant in these components[4-5].

II. EVOLUTION AND DEMAND FOR HERBAL SHAMPOOS

In the past, Indian homes would wash their hair with powdered or decocted versions of plants like Shikakai and Reetha. Herbal shampoos are increasingly offered in appealing, ready-to-use commercial preparations due to growing consumer knowledge of and demand for organic, sulfate-free, and non-toxic formulas. The market for herbal shampoos is expanding steadily on a worldwide scale due to growing environmental consciousness and hair health concerns. In addition to cleansing, people now look for solutions that strengthen hair, stop dandruff, lessen hair loss, promote growth, and shield against environmental stresses like pollution and UV rays[6-7].

As a result, the hair care industry has acknowledged herbal shampoos as a multipurpose cosmetic that combines contemporary formulation methods with traditional ethno medicinal expertise[8].

III. LIMITATIONS OF CONVENTIONAL SHAMPOOS

Sulphate, parabens, silicones, and artificial fragrances are common ingredients in conventional shampoos. While these ingredients are good at creating a lather and speeding up cleansing, they can also alter the pH balance of the scalp, remove essential oils, and cause dryness, irritation, split ends, and long-term hair damage. One of the most widely utilized surfactants in commercial shampoos, sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS), is well-known for its potent cleaning properties but also for its severe drying effects. Concerns over cumulative exposure are also raised by the possibility that certain synthetic chemicals are endocrine disruptors or allergies[9-10].

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Customers are turning more and more to natural substitutes that are safe for their skin, biodegradable, and environmentally friendly as a result of these restrictions[11].

IV. ADVANTAGES OF HERBAL SHAMPOOS

The following benefits are demonstrated by herbal shampoos:

Mild Cleaning Action: Without harming the hair cuticle, plant-based saponins, including those in Reetha, naturally foam and cleanse hair[12].

Nourishment and Conditioning: To keep the hair shaft from becoming dry and brittle, herbal ingredients like aloe vera, hibiscus, and bhringraj supply it with vitamins, proteins, and hydration[13].

Antimicrobial and Anti-Dandruff Properties: Tea tree oil and neem oil help lower the microbial burden on the scalp, which stops itching and dandruff.

Promotion of Hair creation: It is well known that herbs like Amla, Brahmi, and Bhringraj increase blood flow to the scalp, strengthening follicles and encouraging the creation of new hair.

Minimal Side Effects: Properly made herbal shampoos have a decreased risk of adverse responses and are safer for long-term usage[14-15].

V. FORMULATION CONSIDERATIONS IN HERBAL SHAMPOO DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive grasp of herbal Phytochemistry, compatibility, extraction techniques, and physicochemical factors is necessary to formulate a stable and efficient herbal shampoo. Among the crucial factors are:

The selection of herbal extracts was based on effectiveness, literature support, and traditional usage.

Extract types include dry powders, Ethanolic, hydro alcoholic, and aqueous extracts.

Use of Natural Surfactants: such as Shikakai or Reetha saponins.

Preservatives: To guarantee shelf life while upholding the "natural" label, natural preservatives such as benzoin, neem oil, or grapefruit seed extract can be utilised.

Adjusting the pH of shampoo to fit the health of the scalp (about 5-7).

Viscosity and Stability: For a stable formulation, use thickening agents (such as guar gum or xanthan gum) and appropriate emulsification.

Using colorants, perfumes (essential oils), and packaging without sacrificing the purity of the herbs is known as aesthetic appeal[16-18].

VI. SCIENTIFIC AND TRADITIONAL VALIDATION

Although traditional medicine has long employed herbal substances, scientific research has shown their effectiveness in promoting healthy hair. For instance:

Amla is a hair tonic and a good source of vitamin C.

It has been demonstrated that bhringraj prolongs the anagen (growth) phase of hair follicles.

Neem effectively combats dandruff since it is a potent antifungal.

Reetha and Shikakai are natural conditioners and cleaners. By including these plants into contemporary shampoo formulas, the gap between conventional wisdom and scientifically supported research is closed[19-20].

VII. CHALLENGES IN HERBAL SHAMPOO FORMULATION

Despite the increased interest, there are obstacles in the development of herbal shampoos:

Standardisation of Extracts: Differences in concentration, extraction techniques, and plant source.

Problems with stability: Natural substances could break down more quickly, change pH, or encourage the growth of microorganisms.

Sensory Appeal: Using only botanical ingredients to provide texture, colour, and aroma that consumers find acceptable.

Foaming: Because natural foaming chemicals are softer than SLS, people may think they are less effective.

Cost: Using premium herbal extracts and additives may raise the cost of manufacture.

By addressing these issues with nanotechnology, encapsulation, or sophisticated extraction methods (such supercritical fluid extraction), effectiveness and stability may be improved[21-22].

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VIII. FORMULATION

Herbal shampoo is made by carefully choosing and combining herbal elements that provide hair and scalp washing, conditioning, and therapeutic benefits. Natural surfactants like Shikakai (Acacia concinna) and Reetha (Sapindus mukorossi), which offer gentle washing due to their saponins concentration, are important components. Aloe vera, hibiscus, and bhringraj are examples of conditioning agents that are used because of their ability to strengthen, moisturize, and encourage hair development.

1) Selection of Herbal Ingredients

Choose appropriate herbal ingredients based on their traditional and pharmacological properties, such as:

- Shikakai (Acacia concinna) – natural cleanser
- Reetha (Sapindus mukorossi) – foaming agent
- Amla (Emblica officinalis) – hair growth promoter
- Neem (Azadirachta indica) – antimicrobial
- Aloe vera (Aloe barbadensis) – conditioner and soothing agent
- Henna (Lawsoniainermis) – hair conditioner and colorant
- Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri) – scalp rejuvenator

2) Preparation of Herbal Extracts

- Dry the selected herbs in shade and powder them finely.
- Use aqueous extraction (decoction or infusion) by boiling the powdered herbs in distilled water.
- Filter the extract using muslin cloth or Whatman filter paper.
- Concentrate the extract if required, using a water bath at 60–70°C.

3) Base Preparation

Prepare the base shampoo solution using the following:

- Surfactants: Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) or other mild surfactants.
- Cocamidopropyl betaine: For gentle foaming.
- Glycerin: For Moisturization.
- Citric acid: To adjust pH.
- Preservatives (like sodium benzoate) and antioxidants (like vitamin E) may be added.

4) Blending Process

- Take the required quantity of herbal extracts in a clean beaker.
- Add glycerin and preservatives to the extract and stir well.
- Slowly add the surfactant (SLS or equivalent) with constant stirring to avoid excessive foam formation.
- Incorporate conditioning agents such as aloe vera gel or protein hydrolysates.
- Adjust the pH between 5.0–6.5 using citric acid or sodium hydroxide solution.
- Add essential oils or fragrance if desired.
- Mix all ingredients thoroughly until a uniform gel-like consistency is obtained.

5) Final Filtration and Packing

- Filter the final shampoo using fine muslin cloth to remove any residual particles.
- Transfer into sterile containers (preferably amber-colored) and label properly.

6) Storage

- Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight.

The first step in the formulation process is to extract the active phytoconstituents from the chosen herbs using techniques such as hydro alcoholic or aqueous extraction.

Following filtering, these extracts are combined with appropriate thickening agents (guar gum, xanthan gum), natural preservatives (neem oil, grapefruit seed extract), and essential oils (tea tree or lavender) for antibacterial and fragrance purposes. The pH is brought down to about 5 to 7, which is ideal for healthy scalps. To preserve the product's herbal qualities, water is utilized as the solvent basis and little to no artificial ingredients are added.

For all elements to be distributed evenly, proper homogenization is necessary. The finished formulation is kept in suitable storage conditions to preserve stability and is wrapped in opaque or amber-colored containers to guard against light-induced deterioration[23-35].

IX. EVALUATION TEST

1) *Organoleptic Evaluation*
- Color: Visual inspection to determine the appearance shade.
- Odor: Assessment of fragrance or smell.
- Appearance: Observation of the product's look, including clarity and texture.
- Clarity: Check for transparency or turbidity.
- Consistency: Thickness or fluidity of the shampoo.

2) *PH Measurement*
- Measures the acidity or alkalinity; ideal range is 4.5 to 6.5 for scalp compatibility.

3) *Solid Content*
- Percentage of non-volatile matter; indicates shampoo concentration.

4) *Viscosity*
- Thickness of the shampoo; affects spreadability and consumer acceptability.

5) *Foam Stability and Foam Height*
- Measures how much foam is produced and how long it lasts during use.

6) *Surface Tension*
- Lower surface tension ensures better wetting and cleaning action.

7) *Specific Gravity*
- Ratio of the density of shampoo to water; indicates product quality and consistency.

8) *Spreadability*
- Ability of the shampoo to spread evenly on application.

9) *Dirt Dispersion Test*
- Assesses if dirt remains in the foam or gets dispersed in water; dirt in water is preferred.

10) *Wetting Time*
- Time taken for a cotton disc to sink in shampoo solution; measures cleansing efficiency.

11) *Skin/Scalp Irritation Test*
- Checks for potential irritation or allergic reaction using patch testing.

12) *Cleaning Efficiency*
- Evaluates the ability to remove oil, dirt, or sebum from hair.

13) *Detergency Test*
- Measures the cleansing power of shampoo on oily hair strands.

14) *Stability Testing*
- Checks product stability under different storage conditions like heat, humidity, and light

15) *Centrifugation Test*
- Shampoo is centrifuged to check for phase separation and emulsion stability.

16) *Freeze-Thaw Stability*
- Assesses product integrity after subjecting it to repeated freeze and thaw cycles.

17) *Conditioning Performance*
- Evaluates the improvement in hair feel, smoothness, and manageability after shampoo use.

18) Microbial Load Testing
- Determines the total bacterial and fungal contamination in the shampoo.

19) *Foam Volume*
- Quantifies the amount of foam produced under standard conditions.

20) *Foam Retention Time*
- Time for which the foam remains stable before collapsing.

21) *Rheological Behavior*
- Study of the flow characteristics of shampoo (e.g., shear-thinning, Newtonian).

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22) Ash Content

- Measures total mineral content in herbal powders used in formulation[26-27].

X. FUTURE SCOPE OF STUDY

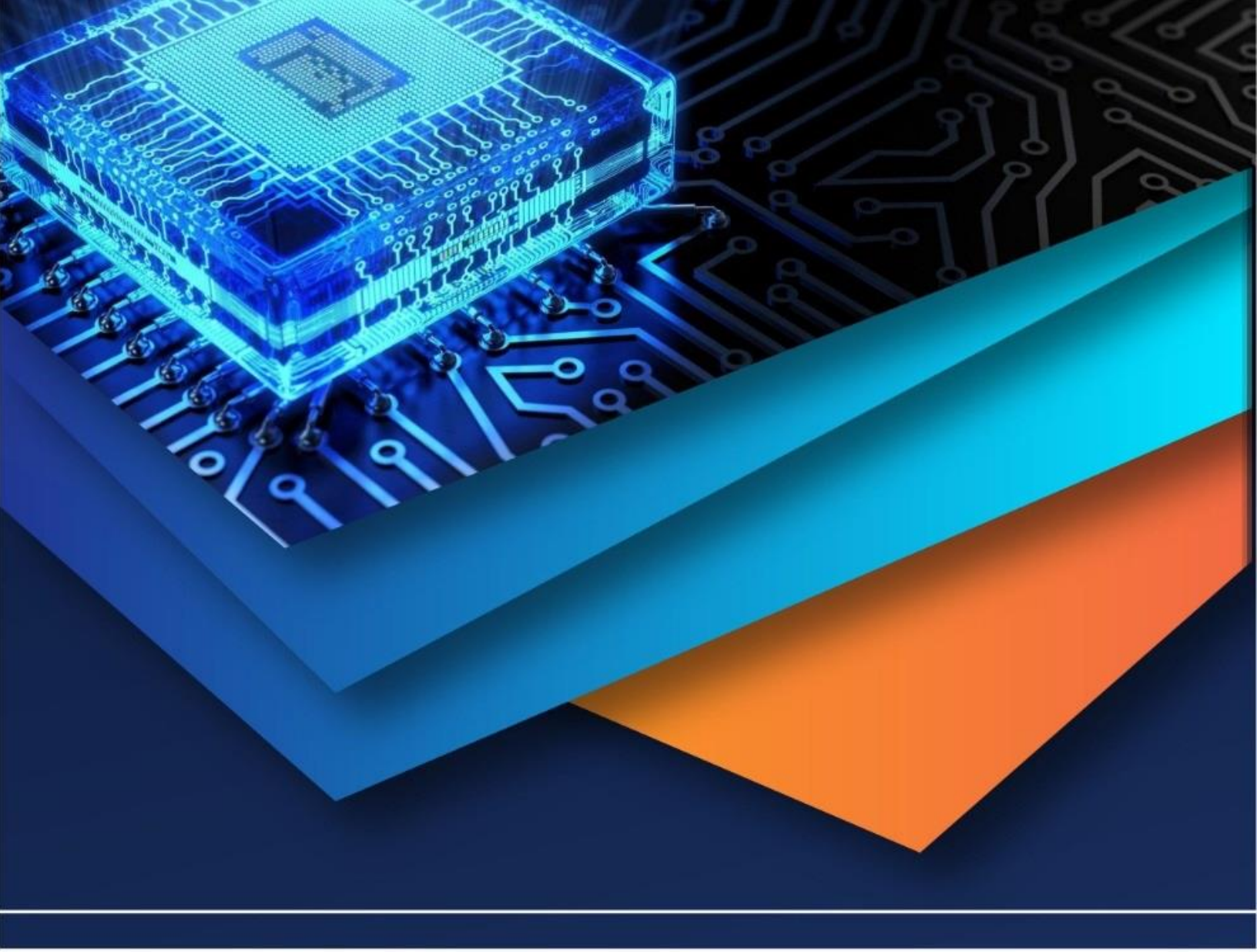
Research on herbal shampoos will likely focus on combining cutting-edge delivery methods and nanotechnology to increase the bioavailability of herbal active ingredients. Research may concentrate on sustainable packaging, stability enhancements, and environmentally friendly extraction methods. Consumer-based research and further clinical assessments will support the validation of formulations' safety and effectiveness. Promising developments are also provided by customized herbal shampoos that use AI-driven component matching and scalp microbiome analysis. Furthermore, the growing demand for natural and organic hair care products throughout the world offers a solid foundation for advancement in the field of herbal cosmetic sciences, including the harmonization of regulations and the investigation of patents for innovative herbal combinations[28].

XI. CONCLUSION

Herbal shampoos, which combine historic knowledge with contemporary formulation processes, provide a natural and efficient substitute for synthetic hair cleaners. With no negative side effects, the use of plant-based components like as Amla, Reetha, Shikakai, and Neem offers healing, cleaning, and conditioning advantages. Safety, stability, and effectiveness are guaranteed by appropriate formulation and assessment. Herbal shampoos suit the modern consumer's need for chemical-free and environmentally friendly goods. Standardizing formulas and investigating novel delivery methods should be the goals of future studies. Therefore, the development of herbal shampoo has a lot of promise for the markets for therapeutic and cosmetic hair care products.

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