

Ayurvastra: A Study on the Ancient Indian Textile for Healing

Authors : Reena Aggarwal

Abstract : The use of textile chemicals in the various pre and post-textile manufacturing processes has made the textile industry conscious of its negative contribution to environmental pollution. Popular environmentally friendly fibers such as recycled polyester and organic cotton have been now increasingly used by fabrics and apparel manufacturers. However, after these textiles or the finished apparel are manufactured, they have to be dyed in the same chemical dyes that are harmful and toxic to the environment. Dyeing is a major area of concern for the environment as well as for people who have chemical sensitivities as it may cause nausea, breathing difficulties, seizures, etc. Ayurvastra or herbal medical textiles are one step ahead of the organic lifestyle, which supports the core concept of holistic well-being and also eliminates the impact of harmful chemicals and pesticides. There is a wide range of herbs that can be used not only for dyeing but also for providing medicinal properties to the textiles like antibacterial, antifungal, antiseptic, antidepressant and for treating insomnia, skin diseases, etc. The concept of herbal dyeing of fabric is to manifest herbal essence in every aspect of clothing, i.e., from production to end-use, additionally to eliminate the impact of harmful chemical dyes and chemicals which are known to result in problems like skin rashes, headache, trouble concentrating, nausea, diarrhea, fatigue, muscle and joint pain, dizziness, difficulty breathing, irregular heartbeat and seizures. Herbal dyeing or finishing on textiles will give an extra edge to the textiles as it adds an extra function to the fabric. The herbal extracts can be applied to the textiles by a simple process like the pad dry cure method and mainly acts on the human body through the skin for aiding in the treatment of disease or managing the medical condition through its herbal properties. This paper, therefore, delves into producing Ayurvastra, which is a perfect amalgamation of cloth and wellness. The aim of the paper is to design and create herbal disposable and non-disposable medical textile products acting mainly topically (through the skin) for providing medicinal properties/managing medical conditions. Keeping that in mind, a range of antifungal socks and antibacterial napkins treated with turmeric and aloe vera were developed, which are recommended for the treatment of fungal and bacterial infections, respectively. Both Herbal Antifungal socks and Antibacterial napkins have proved to be efficient enough in managing and treating fungal and bacterial infections of the skin, respectively.

Keywords : ayurvastra, ayurveda, herbal, pandemic, sustainable

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