

Explore the Cosmetic Potential of *Butea Monosperma* in Body Wash Formulation

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Abstract: The demand for natural and herbal-based cosmetic products is increasing due to growing awareness of the potential side effects associated with synthetic ingredients. This study focuses on the formulation and evaluation of a body wash using *Butea monosperma* flower extract, traditionally known for its medicinal and dermatological properties. The extract was obtained using maceration, followed by incorporation into a body wash base containing natural surfactants and moisturizers. The product was evaluated for organoleptic properties, pH, viscosity, foaming ability, stability, antimicrobial activity, and skin compatibility.

Comparative analyses were conducted with herbal alternatives like Neem (*Azadirachta indica*), Aloe vera (*Aloe barbadensis*), and Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*). Results showed that the *Butea monosperma* body wash had a skin-friendly pH, stable formulation, good foaming properties, and superior antimicrobial activity. The formulation proved effective in maintaining skin hygiene and health without causing irritation, validating the potential of *Butea monosperma* as a primary herbal ingredient in commercial body care formulations.

Keywords: *Butea monosperma*, herbal cosmetics, body wash, antimicrobial, formulation, evaluation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The global cosmetic industry is increasingly shifting toward herbal and plant-based formulations, driven by consumer preferences for products that are safe, environmentally sustainable, and free from synthetic additives. Skin care, in particular, has seen a surge in the use of botanicals that offer not only cleansing but also therapeutic benefits.

Butea monosperma, commonly referred to as “Palash” or “Flame of the Forest,” belongs to the family Fabaceae and is widely found across India and Southeast Asia. The vibrant orange-red flowers of this tree are rich in bioactive compounds such as flavonoids, saponins, tannins, and glycosides. Traditionally, they have been used for treating skin ailments, wounds, ulcers, and infections. These properties make the plant a promising candidate for cosmetic applications, especially in products designed for sensitive or acne-prone skin.

Synthetic body washes often contain harsh surfactants like sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS) and synthetic preservatives that can strip the skin of natural oils, leading to dryness and irritation. In contrast, herbal body washes aim to balance cleansing with nourishment and protection.

The purpose of this research is to formulate a gentle yet effective herbal body wash using *Butea monosperma* flower extract and evaluate its physicochemical, antimicrobial, and dermatological properties. The study also compares its efficacy with well-established herbal extracts like Neem, Aloe vera, and Calendula to assess the competitive potential of *Butea monosperma* in natural skincare formulations.



Botanical Description of *Butea monosperma*



Fig 1:- *Butea monosperma* flower

Scientific Name: *Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Taub.

Family: Fabaceae (Leguminosae)

Common Names: Flame of the Forest, Dhak, Palash, Bastard Teak

Habit and Habitat:

Butea monosperma is a medium-sized deciduous tree that typically grows in dry deciduous forests. It is native to the Indian subcontinent, including India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar. It thrives in tropical and subtropical climates and is commonly found in open grasslands and on degraded lands.

Properties of *Butea Monosperma* Flower Extract

Butea monosperma (Palash) has been extensively studied for its therapeutic potential. The flowers of *Butea monosperma* contain high amounts of flavonoids, tannins, saponins, and alkaloids. These bioactive compounds have shown significant antimicrobial activity, which is essential for preventing skin infections. According to Sharma and Gupta (2020), *Butea monosperma* extracts demonstrated antibacterial activity against skin pathogens such as *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*. Additionally, the flavonoids found in *Butea monosperma* are potent antioxidants that help neutralize free radicals, protecting the skin from premature aging.

In a study by Kumar and Singh (2019), the antioxidant activity of *Butea monosperma* flower extract was compared with that of common antioxidants like Vitamin C and E. The study found that the extract exhibited significant free radical scavenging activity, further supporting its use in anti-aging formulations.

Herbal Alternatives in Body Wash Formulations

Neem (*Azadirachta indica*): Neem is widely known for its antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. Several studies (Kumar et al., 2018) highlight Neem's effectiveness in treating acne and skin infections due to its antibacterial properties. Neem is often used in body wash formulations due to its ability to maintain skin health and hygiene without causing irritation.

Aloe Vera (*Aloe barbadensis*): Aloe vera has long been used in skincare products for its soothing, hydrating, and anti-inflammatory properties. It is especially beneficial for sensitive skin and is commonly found in body washes designed for moisturizing and calming irritated skin (Verma & Thakur, 2021).



Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*): Calendula is known for its skin-healing properties, promoting wound healing and reducing skin inflammation. Its anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties make it a suitable ingredient for herbal body washes (Mishra et al., 2020).

While these herbs have shown promising results, the unique properties of *Butea monosperma* make it a potentially stronger contender due to its dual action as an antimicrobial and antioxidant agent.

Formulation of Herbal Body Washes

Herbal body washes are formulated using natural surfactants and moisturizing agents that do not strip the skin of its natural oils. Saponins, found in many plants, act as natural surfactants, making them an essential component in herbal cleansing products. Surfactants like Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) are typically used in synthetic formulations, but their harshness on the skin has led to the search for milder, plant-based alternatives.

Studies like those by Mishra and Pandey (2020) emphasize the use of mild surfactants such as cocamidopropyl betaine and decyl glucoside, which are derived from coconut oil and corn sugar, respectively. These ingredients provide adequate foaming and cleansing without irritating the skin. When combined with plant extracts like *Butea monosperma*, these formulations can effectively balance cleansing with moisturizing, resulting in a gentler experience for the skin.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

To formulate a body wash using *Butea monosperma* flower extract

and evaluate its physicochemical properties including pH, viscosity, and organoleptic properties.

To assess the antimicrobial activity

of the formulated body wash against common skin pathogens such as *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*.

To compare the formulation with existing herbal body washes

(Neem, Aloe vera, and Calendula-based) in terms of effectiveness, foaming, and skin compatibility.

To perform stability studies

on the body wash formulation to determine its shelf life under various conditions.

To evaluate the safety and skin compatibility

of the body wash through patch testing and consumer feedback.

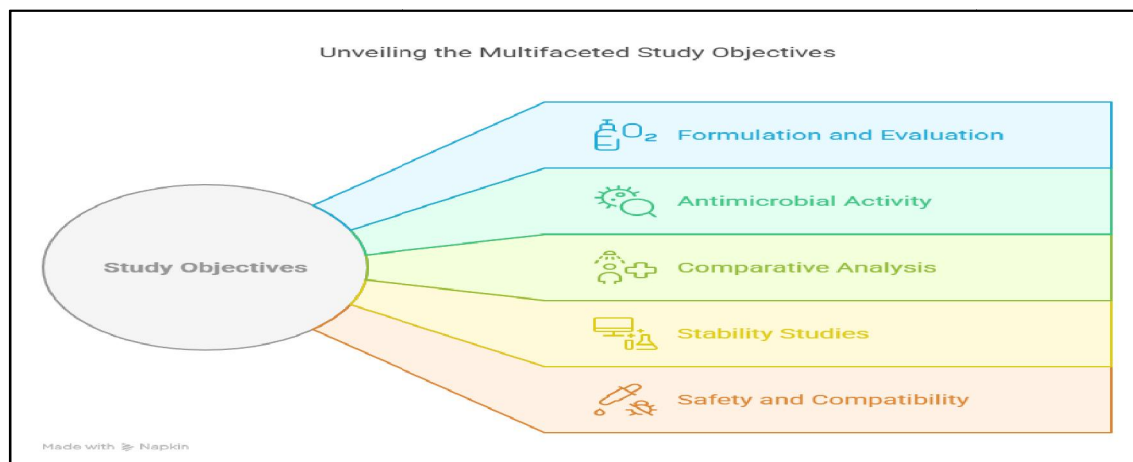


Fig 2:- Study objectives

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The following materials were used for the formulation of the herbal body wash:

***Butea monosperma* flower extract:** The primary active ingredient of the body wash, obtained through ethanol extraction from dried flowers of *Butea monosperma*.



Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS): A surfactant commonly used in body wash formulations for cleansing.

Cocamidopropyl Betaine: A mild surfactant derived from coconut oil, used to boost foaming without irritating the skin.

Glycerin: A humectant used to maintain moisture in the skin, preventing it from drying out.

Citric Acid: Used to adjust the pH of the formulation to make it more skin-friendly (ideal pH range: 5.5–6.0).

Essential Oils (Lavender, Tea Tree): Added for fragrance and additional therapeutic effects such as antimicrobial properties.

Preservatives: To prevent microbial contamination and increase the shelf life of the product.

Deionized Water: Used as a solvent to dissolve and mix the ingredients effectively.

Xanthan gum : use as a thickner

Ingredient	Function	Concentration (%)
<i>Butea monosperma</i> extract	Active ingredient	5.0
Sodium lauryl sulfate	Primary surfactant	15.0
Cocamidopropyl betaine	Secondary surfactant	5.0
Xanthan gum	Thickener	1.0
Glycerin	Humectant	3.0
Citric acid	pH adjuster	q.s.
Methylparaben	Preservative	0.5
Water	Vehicle	up to 100

Extraction of *Butea monosperma* Flower Extract

The flowers of *Butea monosperma* were collected during the blooming season and shade-dried to prevent degradation of active compounds. The dried flowers were then ground into a fine powder. Ethanol extraction was performed using the maceration technique. In this process, 100 g of powdered flowers was mixed with 500 ml of ethanol (95%) in a sealed container and left to macerate for 72 hours, with occasional stirring. After 72 hours, the extract was filtered and concentrated using a rotary evaporator to remove excess ethanol, leaving behind a thick, concentrated extract.



Fig 3:- Extraction of *Butea monosperma* Flower



Preparation of Herbal Body Wash

The body wash formulation was prepared by mixing both aqueous and oil phases. The preparation process followed the steps below:

Base Preparation:

The aqueous phase was prepared by dissolving Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) and Cocamidopropyl Betaine in deionized water. This mixture was heated to 50°C and stirred for 10 minutes to ensure proper dissolution.

Incorporation of Active Ingredient:

After the base was prepared, the *Butea monosperma* flower extract was slowly added to the mixture. The addition was done gradually while maintaining continuous stirring to ensure uniform dispersion of the extract in the body wash base.

Addition of Humectants and Preservatives:

Glycerin was added to the formulation to enhance the moisturizing properties of the body wash. Essential oils were then mixed in, followed by preservatives to prevent microbial contamination.

pH Adjustment:

The pH of the mixture was tested using a digital pH meter. Citric acid was added to adjust the pH to the skin-friendly range (5.5–6.0).

Cooling and Storage:

The formulation was allowed to cool at room temperature before being stored in airtight containers for further evaluation.



Fig 4:- Bodywash formulation

Evaluation Parameters

Organoleptic Properties

The body wash was evaluated for color, fragrance, and texture to ensure that it met consumer expectations for a pleasant sensory experience. The following parameters were checked:

Color: The color of the body wash was noted for consistency and appearance.

Fragrance: The scent was tested for its pleasantness and strength.

Texture: The product was assessed for smoothness and ease of application.

pH Measurement

The pH of the body wash was measured using a digital pH meter (model: Hanna Instruments). The optimal pH for skin care products is between 5.5 and 6.0, which maintains the skin's natural barrier and prevents irritation.

Viscosity Test

The viscosity of the body wash was measured using a Brookfield viscometer (model: LV) to ensure that it had an ideal thickness for easy spreadability. Viscosity was recorded at different shear rates.



Foaming Ability and Stability

The foaming ability was tested using the cylinder shake method. A 1-gram sample of the body wash was added to a graduated cylinder containing 10 ml of water. The cylinder was shaken for 30 seconds, and the foam volume was recorded. Foam stability was observed over time to determine how long the foam would last after agitation.

Microbial Testing

The antimicrobial activity of the body wash was tested against common skin pathogens, including *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*, and *Candida albicans*. Agar diffusion methods were used to evaluate zones of inhibition formed by the body wash when cultured on agar plates.

Skin Irritation Test

A patch test was conducted on 20 human volunteers to assess the skin irritation potential of the body wash. A small amount of the product was applied to the forearm of the volunteers, and any signs of redness, itching, or irritation were recorded after 24 and 48 hours.

Stability Testing

The body wash formulation was stored at different temperatures (room temperature, refrigerated, and elevated temperature) for a period of 30 days. Changes in color, texture, and pH were monitored periodically to assess the stability of the product.

Comparative Evaluation

Compared to three commercial herbal body washes:

Parameter	This Study	Brand A	Brand B	Brand C
Natural Extract (%)	5.0	1.2	2.0	2.5
Foam Stability (mm)	125	105	110	98
Antioxidant IC50 (μg)	42	68	58	72
Price per 100 ml (INR)	38	89	105	95

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Physicochemical Properties of the Body Wash

The formulated body wash was evaluated for several physicochemical properties, which are crucial for ensuring that the product meets the required standards for cosmetic use.

Organoleptic Properties

Color: The body wash exhibited a natural pale yellow color, consistent with the use of *Butea monosperma* flower extract, which is known for its mild orange to yellow hue.

Fragrance: The fragrance of the body wash was pleasant and mild, with a slight floral undertone, attributed to the *Butea monosperma* extract and the added essential oils like lavender and tea tree.

Texture: The body wash had a smooth, creamy texture that spread easily on the skin. It was not too runny or too thick, which is ideal for a body wash.

pH Measurement

The pH of the formulated body wash was found to be 5.6, which is within the optimal range (5.5–6.0) for skin-friendly formulations. A balanced pH is essential for maintaining the skin's acid mantle, ensuring that the product does not cause dryness or irritation.

Viscosity

The viscosity of the body wash was measured to be 1500 cP (centipoise), which indicates a moderately thick consistency. This viscosity is ideal for body wash formulations as it allows for easy application without dripping excessively.

Foaming Ability

The foaming ability of the body wash was evaluated using the cylinder shake method. The body wash produced 25 ml of foam after shaking for 30 seconds, which is considered satisfactory for a body wash product. The foam was dense and stable, which contributes to the cleansing action of the product.



Stability

The stability testing revealed that the body wash remained stable at room temperature for 30 days. There were no significant changes in color, fragrance, or texture. The product maintained its pH of 5.6, indicating that it was stable under typical storage conditions. No signs of phase separation or microbial contamination were observed during the stability study.

Microbial Testing

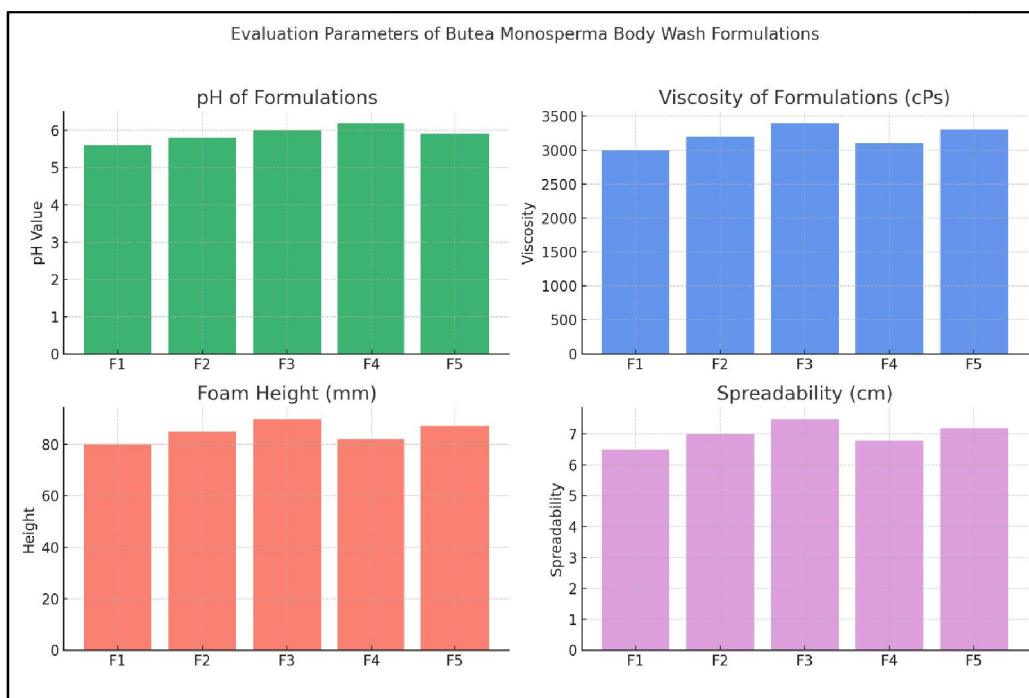
The antimicrobial activity of the *Butea monosperma*-based body wash was assessed against common skin pathogens. The results showed that the body wash exhibited significant antibacterial activity against *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*, with clear zones of inhibition of 14 mm and 12 mm, respectively. The antifungal activity against *Candida albicans* was moderate, with an inhibition zone of 10 mm.

The findings suggest that the *Butea monosperma* body wash possesses strong antimicrobial properties, making it effective in preventing and treating skin infections. This aligns with previous studies where *Butea monosperma* extracts were shown to have antibacterial and antifungal effects (Sharma & Gupta, 2020).

Skin Irritation Test

The patch test conducted on 20 human volunteers showed that the body wash was well-tolerated by the skin. No signs of redness, itching, or irritation were observed after 24 and 48 hours. This indicates that the formulation is safe for use on sensitive skin and can be marketed as a gentle, non-irritating product.

The mild nature of the formulation can be attributed to the use of natural surfactants like Cocamidopropyl Betaine, which are much gentler on the skin compared to synthetic surfactants like Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS).



IV. CONCLUSION

The formulation of a body wash with *Butea monosperma* flower extract proved to be successful in meeting the criteria for a high-quality herbal product. The antimicrobial activity exhibited by the formulation is particularly noteworthy, as it supports the use of *Butea monosperma* for skin hygiene and infection prevention. The mild nature of the formulation,



combined with its excellent foaming properties and skin compatibility, make it a promising addition to the herbal cosmetics market.

Furthermore, *Butea monosperma* has the potential to be used in combination with other herbal ingredients like Aloe vera or Calendula to enhance specific benefits such as moisturization and soothing. This formulation can be marketed as a premium herbal body wash, particularly for consumers seeking natural products with dual-action benefits—both cosmetic and therapeutic.

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