

Insight of *Trividha Roga Ayatana* (Three Principal Causes of Diseases) Mentioned in Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Disease is as old as mankind itself. Man has always tried to understand natural phenomena and attempted to give his own explanation to it. According to Ayurveda, disease is a state of the body and mind that gives pain and discomfort to us. The cause of disturbance of the normal balance between the mind and body can be external, *Agantuka*, or internal, *Nija*. It means that the internal environment of the body is at constant interaction with the outside world. Disorder occurs when these two are out of balance. Hence to change the internal environment, to bring it at balance with the external world, it is important to understand the process of disease occurrence within the mind and body state. Ayurveda provides extensive insight into the concept and process of disease. According to Ayurveda, the root cause of any disease is always the imbalance of *tridoshas*, or body humours which further manifests as imbalance in other body components inevitably leading to diseases. Three main causes are misuse of intellect (*pragyapradha*), misuse of senses (*Asatmendriyarthasamyoga*), seasonal variations (*parinama* or *kala*).

Keywords- Ayurveda, Roga, tridosha, trividha roga ayatana, pragyapradh, asatmendriyarthasamyog, parinama

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the holistic approach of medical science. It has mentioned "*Lok-purusha-samyak*" *Siddhant* i.e., whatever that happens in outer world reflects in human body. There are various causes of diseases in current scenario but in Ayurveda primary cause of disease is due to imbalance between *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha doshas*.

On a minute level three basic causes of disease pathogenesis are being described in a unique fashion in Ayurveda as follows –

– "*asatma indriyarthasamyog*"; "*pragyapradh*"; "*parinama*".

All the diseases that exist are due to *trividha vikalpa* i.e., *atiyoga*, *ayoga* and *mithyayoga* of above causes.

Pragyapradha is doing things without discriminating as to whether it is favorable or harmful for the body or mind. *Asatmendriyarthasamyoga* refers to improper contact of the senses with their objects, and results in an over stimulation or deficiency of sensory activity. Excessive or *atiyoga of parinama* is extraordinary or unexpected climatic conditions, such as excessive heat in summer or cold in winter.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A detailed study has been done from Charak Samhita and its various commentaries along with other modern literature and digital media containing information about cause of diseases.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Acharya Charaka (2nd B.C) has described in chapter 1st and 11th of *Sutrasthana* that there are mainly three causes of diseases which are *atiyoga*, *ayoga* and *mithyayoga* of *artha* (sense organs); *karma* (dreadful action); and *kaal*(natural factors related to time).

According to Ayurveda there are 2 seats of disease as follows: -

1. *Shareera* (physical body)
2. *Manas* (mental entity)

Charaka has also described that they affect one another continuously. If any diseases appear in physical body, it will also approach towards mental disease in a later fashion and so is vice-versa.

1. *Asatma indriyarthasamyoga*:-

Asatmaya means "improper," *indriya* means "sense organs," *artha* is "the objects of the senses" and *samyoga* means "to combine" or "to link." *Asatmendriyarthasamyoga* refers to improper contact of the senses with their objects, and results in an over stimulation or deficiency of sensory activity. This harms the body- mind, which requires moderation and harmony internally and externally for healthy functioning.

There are mainly five sense organs in our body and inappropriate use or no use or excessive use of these sense organs to their related objects will lead to disease formation. For example, seeing constantly bright object is excessive use of *Darshan indriya* (eyes). On the contrary visualising objects in no light is decreased use of *Darshan indriya* (eyes). Seeing extremely nearby objects (*atishleesta*); or very far objects (*ativiprakishta*); or fear causing objects (*raudra*); not surprising but fear causing like jackal (*bhairvam*); malicing someone (*dwesha*); which develops restlessness in our mind (*bhibhatsa*); someone with abnormal parts (*vikritam*); causing fear suddenly (*vitrasanam*); is inappropriate use of *Darshan indriya* (eyes).

In a similar way excessive hearing of loud voice like thundering or voice of drums or words spoken in arrogant way (*utkrust*) is excess use of *shravan indriya* (ears).

Hearing no voice is decreased use of *shravan indriya* (ears). While listening to harsh words; or destruction of favourite like death of near and dear ones; harmful and humiliating words; and fear causing voices are inappropriate use of *shravan indriya* (ears). Sniffing excessive pungent odour (*tikshna gandha*) i.e. which can shed tears from eyes like cumin seeds; or strong odour (*ugra gandha*) i.e. which can cause emesis like *vacha*; or humid odour (*abhishyandi*) like alcoholic preparation in Ayurveda (*sura and aasava*) are excessive use of *ghrana indriya* (nose). Absence of smelling anything is decreased use of *ghrana indriya* (nose). Taking unpleasant smell (*puti gandha*); hateful smell (*dwesha*); impure smell (*apavitra*); sticky (*klinna*); poisonous smell (*vishakta vayu*), or unpleasant smell from dead body is inappropriate use of *ghrana indriya* (nose).

Taking excessive sweet foods or like some is excess use of *rasa indriya*(tongue). Taking no food is decreased use of *rasa indriya*(tongue).

There are eight different principles of taking food which are: -

1. *Prakriti* (nature of food)
2. *Karan* (procedures of food preparation)
3. *Samyog* (combination of different food)
4. *Rashi* (quantity)
5. *Desha* (location)
6. *Kaal* (time)
7. *Upyog sanstha* (precautions while taking food) and
8. *Upyokta* (user himself)

Neglecting these principles (except *rashi*) while taking food is inappropriate use of *rasa indriya*(tongue).

Taking bath from excess hot or cold water; excessive massage (*abhyanga*), or body scrub (*utsadanam*) is excess use of *sparsha indriya* (skin). Avoiding bath and these procedures is decreased use of *sparsha indriya* (skin). Using these procedures in wrong sequence or way; injury due to odd places; or touching unholy objects is inappropriate use of *sparsha indriya* (skin).

2. Pragyapradh: -

Pragya means "wisdom" or "intelligence", and *apradha* means "offence." So, the literal meaning of *pragyaparadha* is "an offence against wisdom." That is, doing things without discriminating as to whether it is favourable or harmful for the body or mind. These actions may be verbal, mental or physical. The actions generated by *pragyaparadha* aggravate the *tridosha* and stimulate the *rajas* and *tamas gunas*, allowing diseases to become established.

Excessive/*atiyoga* forms of this include talking too much, or excessive thinking, reading, mental work or physical activity.

A deficiency (*hina-yoga*) of these actions is not undertaking these activities sufficiently, like not speaking at all or very little, and not working or engaging in any intellectual or physical activity.

Incorrect (*mithya yoga*) forms include gossip, lying, inciting violence and irrelevant, illogical or harsh speech. Actions that are motivated by greed, anger, material attachment, envy, ego, fear, grief or delusion also are *mithya-yoga*.

The physical form of this includes the suppression of natural urges or performing unnatural activity such as smoking cigarettes, driving recklessly or participating in dangerous sports.

धीधृतिस्मृतिविभ्रष्टः कर्म यत् कुरुतेऽशुभम्।
प्रज्ञापराधं तं विद्यात् सर्वदोषप्रकोपणम्॥
(Ch.sh 1/102)

Persons taking action from vitiated thinking power (*dhi*), tolerance power (*dhriti*) and recollection power (*smriti*) are going towards *pragya apradha* which then can alleviate all *doshas* and can cause disease eventually. Due to vitiated thinking power (*dhi*), person is unable to differentiate between good and bad deeds for him. Due to vitiated tolerance power (*dhriti*), the individual is unable to detach himself from wrongful deeds. While due to vitiated recollection power (*smriti*), the person is unable to recall the mistakes he has done in past so as to avoid them in future.

So according to Acharya Charaka, person who does any sort of work without proper analysis and using his mind moves forward towards wrong action and hence invites disease in his body himself.

All the actions taken by physical body (*shareera*), vocal (*vaani*) and mental entity (*manas*) are collectively called *karma*. Excessive activity from physical body (*shareera*), voice (*vaani*) and mental entity (*manas*) is *atiyoga* of karma. Absence of any type of activity is *ayog* of karma. Holding urination and other such unavoidable waste product of body which can be dangerous to us (*vega dharan*); or forcefully expelling them (*udirana*); falling from high-low places; organs in odd positions; injuring oneself; holding breath; alcohol intake; excess sun exposure are the examples of inappropriate use of physical body (*shareera*). Backbiting; telling lies; speaking at inappropriate time; quarrelling; unpleasant talks; blabbering; and harsh talks are examples of inappropriate use of voice (*vaani*). Fear; grief; anger; greed; attraction; pride; jealousy are examples of inappropriate use of mental entity (*manas*).

3. Parinam or Kaal: -

The external environment can trigger disease by unbalancing the body through unnatural or extreme variations in temperature, rainfall or wind.

According to Acharya Charaka, *kaal* simply here means winter, summer and rainy seasons. Excessive cold during winter season or heliosis during summers is *atiyoga* of *kaal*. Whereas less features of them in their respective season is *ayog* of *kaal*. Opposite climate during particular season like rain in winters is inappropriate *kaal*. *Parinama* or *kala* also refers more generally to the effects of time, and natural physical transformation that occur over time. For example, seasonal influences on the *doshas*, and the disorders associated with specific phases of life and aging are all in this category.

But it has another meaning too. Diseases which are due to natural process

like hunger; thirst; sleep; ageing; and death are due to effect of time and hence they are untreatable.

Time plays an important role in pathogenesis of disease. Disease progress in body according to time and treatment in that certain time interval has value only otherwise it will lead to complications and eventually death.

DISCUSSION

Sushruta stated that '*duhkha*' (grief) is the root cause of diseases- "*taddhukhasamyoga vyadhaya ucyante* (Su.Utt.1) (association of miseries is called '*duhkha*'). That means, if one avoids *duhkha*, there would be no disease. In order to avoid, the removal of causes that are attributed with *duhkha*, needs attention. *Acharya Charaka* has listed the causes for *duhkha*.

धीधृतिस्मृतिविभ्रंशः सम्प्राप्तिः कालकर्मणाम्
असात्म्यार्थागमश्चेति ज्ञातव्या दुःखहेतवः॥
(Ch.Sh.1/98)

Derangement of intellect, restraint and memory, advent of time and action and contact with unsuitable sense objects should know as the cause of misery.

Modern aetiology of Diseases: -

1. Intrinsic- means coming from within. Therefore, any pathological, or disease-causing change that has occurred from inside the body has occurred as a result of intrinsic factors. The following are examples of intrinsic factors: -

- Inherited conditions, or conditions that are passed down to you from your parents. An example of this is haemophilia, a disorder that leads to excessive bleeding.
- Metabolic and endocrine, or hormone, disorders. These are abnormalities in the chemical signalling and interaction in the body. For example, Diabetes mellitus is an endocrine disease that causes high blood sugar.
- Neoplastic disorders or cancer where the cells of the body grow out of control.

- Problems with immunity, such as allergies, which are an overreaction of the immune system.

2. Extrinsic aetiology- This means the cause of the disease, or pathological change, came from outside of the body. The following are examples of extrinsic factors:

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- Infectious agents like bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites
- Animal bites or stings
- Chemicals, electricity, and radiation.
- Iatrogenic- The problem resulted from a medical professional's actions or within a medical setting.

3. Idiopathic - unknown cause.

Asatmendriyārtha samyoga is related to incompatibility senses with their objects. Most professional hazards like continuous peering into computer monitors, listening high decibel sounds through various means, looking at high beam lights, exposure to extreme heat or cold temperatures, smelling of chemical pollutants are the '*asatmya*' (incompatibility) of objects to corresponding sense organs. Abusing the sense of taste or its excessive usage could be termed as overeating which is the instigator for lifestyle disorders like Diabetes Mellitus.

Pragyaparadha carries a greater relevance in contemporary times. Committing errors wilfully is nothing but an intellectual blasphemy. Errors like smoking, alcoholism, abusing elders and noble people, drug abuse and sedentary life style with faulty food habits results in *Pragyaparadha*. Humans have no control over seasonal variations. Hence, Ayurveda advocates *Ritucarya* and *pancakarma* therapy for prevention and treatment purposes.

It is said by *Charaka* that whatever diseases develops due to unknown cause, they are the result of our wrong deeds in past. So intelligent person should not blame any extrinsic factor for this. In this way we can understand that all the diseases that

have idiopathic cause or extrinsic cause are due to “*pragya apradh*” of individual. Metabolic diseases in intrinsic causes are definitely due to fact of uncontrollable sense organs i.e., “*asatma indriyartham samyog*”. For example, most prevalent disease in current scenario Diabetes mellitus is due to dietary habits which directly fall under inappropriate (*mithyayoga*) use of tongue (*rasa indriya*). Type 2 diabetes precipitates through a complex multifactorial process incorporating multiple lifestyle and food-related factors. This is noticed that for diabetic patients, most of such studies focused around sedentary lifestyle and high-calorie diet as potential precipitating factors. It is, at this point, interesting to note that Ayurveda proposes an exhaustive list of possible factors leading to *Prameha*.

आस्यासुखं स्वप्नसुखं दधीनि ग्राम्यौदकानूपरसाः
पयांसि।

नवान्नपानं गुडवैकृतं च प्रमेहहेतुः कफकृच्च
सर्वम्॥

(Ch. Chi. 6/4)

We can clearly understand that this sedentary lifestyle is due to *pragyapradh* of the person. The person is well aware of the fact that continuous sitting at one place or doing less physical work will ultimately affect his body but he doesn't pay attention to the red flags and moves forward towards diabetes. In the same manner if he is consuming high calorie diet on a daily basis it can be understood as *mithyayoga* i.e., inappropriate use of *rasaindriya* (tongue).

Besides lifestyle and dietary factors, few other noteworthy factors from Ayurveda leading to diabetes are *Vegadharana* (suppression of natural urges); stress, anger, and sleep disturbances. It can be understood as *pragyapradh* since the individual deliberately tries to control his urges. Ayurveda also proposes a genetic linkage of diabetes by indicating it as a *Sahaja* (present since birth) and *Anushangi* (irreversible and progressive) disease. This pathology comes under *karmaj roga* which lies under *pragyapradh*. Considering the diverse etiopathogenesis of

diabetes, such additional causes look important and are required to be enquired if they also play a role in diabetes precipitation.

CONCLUSION

In *nidana sthana* of *Charak Samhita* etiological factor of disease are described whereas in *chikitsa sthana* while describing diseases etiological factor of each disease is mentioned in detail. When we go through *trividha* principle of *trividha roga aayatana*, it is narrated by *Acharya* that *trividha roga aayatana* are prime causes of disease. While describing etiological factors it is clearly mentioned that there are various factors related to diet, regime and some other factor (*agantuja*) are responsible for a particular disease. When we think about *trividha roga aayatana* and various factor mentioned for particular disease, it becomes clear that due to *asatma indriyartham samyog*; *pragyapradh*; and *parinaam* there are various dietary and behavioural mistake that result in the aggravation of particular *dosha* or all *doshas* resulting into diseases.

It is described in the texts that the intake of *Hita Ahar* created *subha* (advantageous) effect and *Ahit Ahar* creates *ashubha* (harmful) effect. According to *Acharya Charaka*, body as well as disease are caused by diet wholesome and unwholesome diet are responsible for happiness and misery. The ancient seers gave much importance to intake of proper diet and proper *vihar* for leading a disease free life.

These three causes (*asatma indriyartham samyog*, *pragya apradh* and *parinam*) are the root cause of any disease. In this manner we can say that proper combination (*samyog*) of these causes will lead to sound and healthy body while inappropriate combination (*atiyoga*, *ayoga* and *mithyayoga*) of these causes will take the individual towards diseases.

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