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Role of Ayurveda in Communicable Diseases

Review Article

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Abstract

Health is never an issue until someone gets sick, it is the reality in current situation. Because of improper diet, lack of exercise, stress, low quality of food grains & global warming overall health status of individuals is poor & they are getting easily prone to communicable diseases. H1N1 influenza, Ebola are the recent examples. They are big challenges & creating a burden over health care system. Ayurveda though an ancient medical science has clearly described such communicable diseases & their cause, mode of transmission, prevention as well as cure. Charak has quoted *Janapadodhwansa*, (mass destruction) & its 4 reasons *asdushitavayu* (Air), *jala* (Water), *kala* (time), *desh* (region). Sushrut has already mentioned *aupsargikarogas* (communicable diseases) i.e. *kushtha* (Skin diseases), *jwara* (Fever) etc. & their mode of transmission. Prevention as well as cure of disease is goal of Ayurveda. Through maintenance of *Dincharaya*, *Rutucharya*, *Sadvritta*, persons physical and mental health is secured. With the help of *Panchakarma*, *Aushadha*, & *Rasayana* these diseases can be cured. In this literary work effort has made to find how Ayurveda can help to face growing challenge of communicable diseases.

Key words- *Janpadodhwans, Aupsargik, Rasayana, Panchakarma, Sadvritta*

Introduction

Due to advancement of science and research life span of human being has been increased but simultaneously threat of communicable disease is increasing day by day. Communicable disease (1) spread from person to another or from an animal to a person. The spread often happens via air borne viruses or bacteria, but also through blood or other bodily fluids. It may also spread easily due to large population, crowd, unhygienic conditions

and low immunological status of individual.

H1N1 Influenza, Ebola virus are the recent example of such diseases. Because of its contagious nature, a large number of individual are getting infected at the same time thus creating great strain over public health.

Ayurveda though being an ancient life science clearly mention's about such disease conditions. A detailed chapter on *Janapadodhwans* (2) in *Charak Samhita Vimansthan 3rd Adhyay* explains epidemic

disease and its etiological factors. In *SushrutsamhitaKushthanidanadhyay* there is a good description on mode of transfer of disease. They are called *Aupasargik rogas* (3)(Communicable diseases).

From these references we come to know that in ancient time also there were such epidemics. A detailed regimen for such diseases is also described in *CharakSamhita* as use of *Panchakarma* and *Rasayana* along with *Sadvrittapalan*. Ayurvedic approach to communicable diseases will be discussed in this paper.

Review of literature:

Charak Samhita Vimansthan 3rd Adhyaya

Aacharya Charak has described the term *Janapadodhwans* (2) meaning destruction of a population living in an area. It is similar with epidemics. People having different *prakruti*, *sarata* and *aahar* but some factors like air, region are common to them and vitiation of these factors leads to disease production and death which is termed as *Janapadodhwans*.

तेतुखलुङ्गमेभावाःसामान्याजनपदेषुभवन्ति; तद्यथा-
वायु, उदकं, देशः, कालइति ।

- चरकसंहिताविमानस्थान ३/६

Janapadodhwans occurs due to vitiation of *vayu*, *jala*, *desh*, *kala*. They are nothing but modes by which infectious diseases spread.

Aacharya Charaka has mentioned *Adharma* (4) as the root cause of *Janapadodhwans*. Not following one's duty to a community is termed as *adharma*. *Pradnyaparadh* (5) is also included in it. Not following *Dincharya*(daily regimen), *ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *vegavidharan*(suppression of urges), *paapkarma* (sins) is included in *Adharma*. All this things are responsible for hampering immunity of an individual.

Thus not directly but surely *Adharma* is responsible for *Janapadodhwans*.

Sushrut Samhita Nidansthan Adhyaya 4th Kushthnidanadhyaya

Aacharya Sushrut has mentioned *Aupasargikrogas*(3) in *Kushthanidan*. They are contagious diseases which spread through direct contact or contaminated objects of patient.

प्रसंगात्गात्रसंस्पर्शात्निश्वासात्सहभोजनात्।

सहशय्यासनाच्चापिवस्त्रमाल्यानुलेपनात् ।

कुष्ठंज्वरश्चशोषश्चनेत्राभिष्यंदएवच।

औपसर्गिकरोगाश्चसंक्रामन्ति नरान्नरम् ।

सुश्रुतनिदानस्थान ५/३३,३४

By physical contact, expired air, eating with others in same plate, sharing bed (sexual contact also) using clothes, garlands and paste (*anulepa* or cosmetics) infectious diseases spread from person to person. Meaning of *Prasang* is excessively and frequently performed according to *Aacharya Dalhana*.

Ayurvedic Management of communicable disease

येषांनमृत्युसामान्यंसामान्यंनचकर्मणाम् ।

Some diseases are incurable if *arishtalakshana* (fatal signs) are present, while others even without such signs are incurable because of certain *purvajanmakrut karma* (fatal past deeds). Ayurveda emphasizes on treatment of *sadhyavyadhis* only. Thus treatment of those who don't show the fatal signs is mentioned in the following quotation.

कर्मपन्चविधंतेषांभेषजंपरमुच्यते।

रसायनानांविधिवच्चोपयोगःप्रशस्यते ॥

- चरकविमानस्थान ३/१३,१४

1. Karma Panchavidham (Appropriate use of Panchakarma) (1)

Vaman, *Virachan*, *Niruhabasti*, *anuvasanbasti* and *shirovirechanare panchakarma*(6) described by *Aacharya Charak* *Aacharya Sushrut* and

Acharya Vagbhat included *Raktmokshana* among *shodhanupkramas*(7) Depending upon *Doshabala*, *vyadhibala* appropriate remedy from above should be selected and implemented.

2. *Rasayanam Viddhi Vaat Upyoga* (Use of *Rasayana*) (1)

According to Acharya Charak treatment is of two types (8).

1. Promotive- It is of two type

a) Which provides strength and immunity to healthy person- *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) The *Rasayana* is of two types. i.e. *Kutipraveshik* and *Vatatapika*. In case of communicable disease *vatatapik Rasayana* can be used. It has minimal precautions and can be easily used in day to day life. In Charak Samhita Chikitsasthana adhyay 1 various *Rasayana* and their indications, benefits have been mentioned. Out of which *Chyavanprash*, *Triphala Rasayana* etc will prove helpful.

b) Which promotes sexual vigor- *Vajikaran* (aphrodisiacs)

2. Curative- treatment which cures the disease of suffering people.

3. *Achar Rasayana and Sadvrittapanan*.

सत्यंभूतेदयादानंबलयोदेवतार्चनं ।.....
आयुषःपरिपालनम् ।

– चरकविमानस्थान ३/१३, १४

These rules and regulations help in maintenance of mental and spiritual wellbeing of a person. Truth, sympathy, respecting elders and teachers, helping needy people, eating nutritious and *Satvikaahar* e.g. milk, ghee etc. in daily food. Properly following these rules will benefit the person in the same way as that of consuming *Rasayana*. Hence it is called *Achara Rasayana*(9).

Along with this regimen treatment of symptoms as per mentioned in *chikitsasthana* can be done.

Summary and conclusion:

From the above discussion we can conclude that ancient *acharyas* had knowledge of communicable diseases that's why a thorough description is given in *Samhitas* regarding them. Treatment of patients not showing fatal signs is given as *Panchakarma* and use of *Rasayana* as mainstream treatment. Thus by improving immunity of individuals spread of communicable diseases can be controlled (10). Further research should be done in order to implement Ayurveda against infectious diseases, in Public health for worldwide acceptance of Ayurveda.

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