



Review Article

ON THE TOPIC OF EPIDEMIC DESTRUCTION ACCORDING TO CHARAKA'S STATEMENT 'TASYA MULAM ADHARMASYA' ITS RELEVANCE IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT (WITH REFERENCE TO THE CORONAVIRUS)

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, one of the oldest medical systems, provides a detailed explanation of epidemic conditions under the concept of *Janapadodhwamsa*, which refers to the large-scale destruction of communities. It emphasizes four fundamental factors essential for life-*Vayu* (air), *Jala* (water), *Desha* (land), and *Kala* (season). Any disturbance in these elements can adversely affect individuals, communities, and the environment collectively. The primary cause of such widespread disorders is described as *Adharma* (unrighteousness), which originates from *Prajnaparadha* (intellectual blasphemy or failure of wisdom). The Charaka Samhita elaborates this concept extensively, detailing its causes, manifestations, and management. Despite differences in individual constitution (*Prakriti*), diet (*Ahara*), physique (*Deha*), strength (*Bala*), adaptability (*Satmya*), mental status (*Mana*), and age (*Vaya*), a single disease can affect large populations simultaneously during *Janapadodhwamsa*. Although modern microbiological terms like viruses and bacteria are not mentioned in Ayurveda, similar causative agents are described as *Krimi*, *rakshas* and *Bhuta*. The vitiation of the four essential factors can be correlated with present-day disasters such as epidemics, pandemics, and natural calamities like earthquakes and cyclones. Preventive and therapeutic measures in Ayurveda-including proper utilization of resources, adherence to dietary and lifestyle guidelines, *Panchakarma*, and *Rasayana* therapies-play a vital role in managing and preventing such large-scale health crises. Understanding *Janapadodhwamsa* is therefore highly relevant in the current global health scenario.

INTRODUCTION

'Tasya Mulam Adharmasya'

Meaning: In epidemic destruction, the primary cause of the vitiation of the air element (*Vayu*) is *Adharma* (unrighteousness). The present verse is taken from Charaka Samhita, Vimana Sthana, Chapter 3, Verse 20.

Meaning of *Janapadodhwamsa*:

Janapada + Udhvansa

'*Janapada*' refers to a group of people living in a particular place and that place which attracts groups of people.

'*Udhvansa*' means 'destruction.'

It implies that whenever a human community is destroyed due to any reason, it is termed *Janapadodhwamsa*.

This is the reason that the World Health Organization (WHO) has called this Coronavirus a pandemic, and the Ministry of AYUSH has termed it an epidemic destruction disease because, even in Coronavirus, the destruction of a large human community has been observed.

Definition of Dharma

Dharyate iti dharmah '

or

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'Dharanat dharmah'

That is, that which is to be upheld is called *Dharma*.

Definition of *Adharma*:

"*Aadharyate iti adharmah*"

meaning that which is not to be upheld is called *Adharma*.

or

"*Anacharah adharmah*"

"*Acharaḥ Paramo Dharmah*"

meaning that good conduct itself is the supreme *Dharma*.

Vatsyayana Muni explained *Adharma* or vice as bodily, verbal, and mental (verse): *Dauṣaiḥ prayuktaḥ sharīreṇa pravartamano himsasteya*

Meaning

The sinful tendencies leading to *Adharma* include the following: a person, driven by attachment and aversion, commits violence, theft, and adultery through the body; lies, harsh speech, slander, and irrelevant or meaningless speech through words; and mental tendencies such as enmity, desire for others' wealth, and disbelief.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To study the concept of *Janapadodhwamsa* as described in classical Ayurvedic texts *Susrut*, *Bhel*, and especially in *Charaka Samhita*.
- ✓ To explore and analyse the concept of *Janapadodhwamsa* described in *Ayurveda*.
- ✓ To evaluate the relevance of *Charaka's* principle "*Tasya Mūlam Adharmah*" in understanding the causative factors of modern pandemics like corona virus.

Meaning

- ✓ To interpret the meaning of *Dharma* and "*Adharma*" in the context of health, environment, and societal behaviour.
- ✓ To analyse the etiological factors of COVID-19 in relation to environmental imbalance (*Vayu*, *Jala*, *Desha*, *Kala*).
- ✓ To correlate unethical human activities (*Adharma*) such as ecological disturbance, pollution, and lifestyle imbalance with the emergence of pandemics.
- ✓ To evaluate the preventive role of *Dharma*-based practices (ethical living, environmental harmony, and public health measures) in controlling epidemics.
- ✓ To establish the contemporary relevance of Ayurvedic principles in managing global health crises like COVID-19.

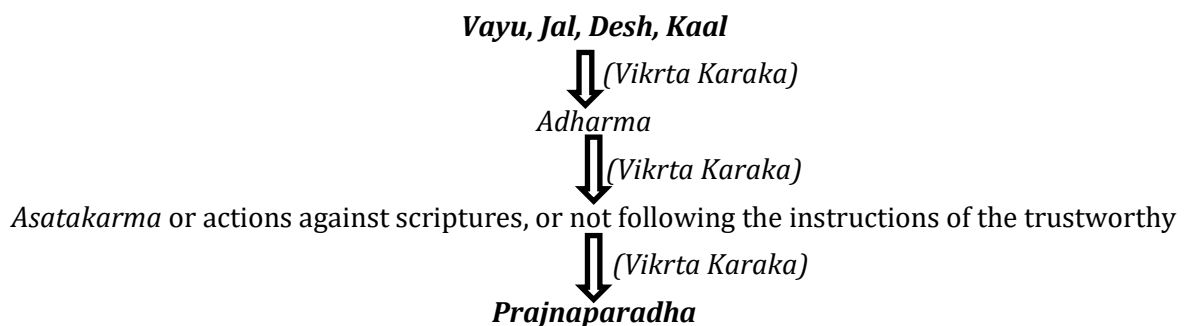
METHODOLOGY

Thousands of years ago, Maharshi Charaka described diseases like Corona in the chapter named "*Janapadodhwamsaniya*" in his text on epidemics, mentioning the first four causative factors:

- Vitiated air
- Vitiated water
- Vitiated location
- Vitiated time

Considering the distorted age and the root cause of the corruption of these four as unrighteousness, it has been said that:

"*Vayvadīnam yadvai guṇyam utpadhate 'tasyamūlam adharmah' tanmūlam va'sat karma pūrvakṛtaṁ, tayoryoniḥ prajñaparadha eva.* (Ch. Vi. 03/20)



Definition of *Prajnaparadha*

When intellect, *Dhṛti* (determination), and memory are confused, the actions performed are inauspicious. That is called *Prajnaparadha*, which leads to the manifestation of all faults. (Ch. Sha 1/102)

Characteristics of *Vikṛta Vayu*– *Ashraddha*, irregular, excessively cloudy, overly restless, excessively rough, extremely cold, excessively hot, excessively dry, non-flowing, terrifying, causing obstruction, moving in an

intertwined manner, lacking harmony, producing foul smell, vapor, impurities in water, smoke disturbance. (Ch. Vi 03)

All these characteristics make *Vayu* a cause of disease, and the elements causing *Vayu* pollution, which are man-made and based on *Adharma*, are as follows:

- ✓ Power sector (Thermal)
- ✓ Industrial pollution

- ✓ Pollution related to military activities
- ✓ Pollution from automobiles and aviation
- ✓ Cutting down of trees and forests.

All the above causes are generated by humans, who, to fulfill their will, create these factors without worrying about the atmosphere, which reduces the level of pure air and causes breathing difficulties along with respiratory system diseases; sometimes, due to the fury of air itself, cyclones, such as district-destroying storms, occur. Therefore, it is clear that human-caused air pollution is fundamentally responsible for the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic.

Characteristics of *Vikrta Jal*

Water, indeed, from its taste, smell, color, juice, touch, moisture, excess froth, foreign water-dwelling birds, creatures, or insects in water- possesses harmful qualities

Water with such symptoms is a pollutant and has destructive properties:

Air pollutants

- ✓ Pollution of water bodies
- ✓ Sand mining from riverbeds
- ✓ Uncontrolled damming, pollution of the seabed, and all these factor elements are caused by humans themselves who, to fulfill their own will, are responsible for the above reasons.

It causes disasters. Due to which human society has to face floods at times and sometimes droughts.

Characteristics of *Vikrta desh*

By 'region' is meant the land region and the body region. A region in which the natural color, smell, taste, touch have become corrupted, excessively moist, inhabited by snakes, violent animals, mosquitoes, locusts, flies, rats, owls, vultures, jackals and other creatures, where earthquakes and the like frequently occur, and where truth, non-violence, modesty, and similar virtues have been destroyed or corrupted, such a region should be considered impure.

Factors causing a corrupted *Desh* (region)

- ✓ Policies promoting urbanization and expansion
- ✓ Extensive human activity that exploits and destroys mountains, forests, and ecosystems in a non-ecological manner.
- ✓ Use of non-biodegradable toxic substances like plastics, pesticides, etc.

All such human-made activities disturb nature's balance, which is inherently unrighteous and causes destruction like pandemics such as Coronavirus. Even in the present time, such symptoms can be clearly seen, such as sudden attacks on crops by locust swarms in various countries and regions, the

continuous occurrence of earthquakes, and the destruction of birds like vultures and sparrows throughout India. All these clearly resemble the symptoms of a corrupted country as previously described in Charaka's account of national corruption.

Characteristics of *Vikrta kaal*

"One should know the time with opposed characteristics, contrary to the season, with fewer symptoms, to be harmful."

Air, water, land, and time- these four corrupt factors are the causative factors of any epidemic disease. That is, the period with characteristics opposite to normal seasonal characteristics, and with fewer natural symptoms, should be considered harmful. They create a favorable ecosystem, through which these factors achieve their favorable conditions and cause diseases in various weak and strong individuals. Since even at present all these factors and symptoms are clearly visible, we can say that all four of the above-mentioned causes are responsible for the corona pandemic, which is man-made and unlawful. The impact of these destructive factors on humans leads to a reduction in disease resistance, and affects the *Ras, Gun, Virya, Vipak* etc., of medicines, destroying them.

The factor causing the corona pandemic is considered in the form of a foreign virus (according to some people, it was released from the laboratory of China after research, in which there is a difference of opinion), which, entering the body through the human respiratory tract, affects the respiratory pathway. By deforming it, it causes obstruction in it, leading to blockage of vital air and ultimately causing death due to heart failure.

Death in war is due to unrighteousness: In war, the destruction of territories caused by weapons and arms is also due to unrighteousness, because it is said that: -

- "Loullyam clesh karanam shreshtham" (ch.su.25/40)

That is, greed is the cause of suffering. Just as in individuals where greed, anger, attachment, and pride have increased excessively, they suppress weaker individuals and fight each other with weapons for the destruction of their brothers and others. Whenever there is war between two territories, destructive explosive elements are used in it, causing the destruction of the majority of military forces and the creation of adverse circumstances, which is unrighteous and causes territorial destruction in the form of war.

➤ **Attack by supernatural beings is unrighteous (with reference to Corona):** "Raksoganadibhirv Aabhi Hanyante." (Ch. Vi. 3/22)

That is, regions are destroyed by demons or groups of various ghosts and spirits when unrighteousness or any other impurity is treated. In Ayurveda, the harmony of external factors like viruses aligns with demons or ghosts. In Ayurvedic texts, the virus (external factor) is associated with demons or spirits. Since Corona is also a virus-caused disease, it can therefore be considered among the spirits. The attack of demons or spirits on a person or region occurs only when there is mental, physical, or atmospheric impurity there.

➤ **Relation of disease caused by curses to Corona**

Similarly, the destruction of regions caused by curses also happens due to unrighteousness, where righteousness has disappeared, and which is devoid of dharma. Those who have become base, disrespect elderly, accomplished, sage-like, and venerable teachers and engage in harmful conduct, upon being cursed by such teachers and elders for the destruction of many lineages of men, the subjects quickly (perish) and turn to ashes, and specific persons then receive the prescribed effect of the curse and undergo untimely destruction. It is observed that when an accomplished, elderly, or weak (helpless) person is mentally or physically harassed by a powerful tyrant, the difficult words or curses uttered by that weak (helpless) person circulate in the atmosphere as negative energy or remain stored in the mind of the person, gradually affecting the body like mild poison in the future and exerting harmful effects on society, causing the emergence of diseases in individuals.

➤ **Symptomatic description (correlation of corona with diseases described in Ayurveda):** Current Symptoms of corona

Fever - Mild or severe

- Difficulty in breathing or stiffness in the throat and entire body
- Cough, sneezing
- Mouth aversion

Thus, if we consider the symptoms of corona and the accompanying fever. Observing the symptoms of *Abhishangaja* fever, there is considerable similarity. For example:

At times there is burning, at times cold; pain in the bones and joints; headache, Sound and harshness in the ears, throat covered as if by foam; Drowsiness, confusion, delirium, cough, breathing issues, loss of taste, dizziness, Appearance of gray or reddish swellings in the body; Mute speech, pus in the channels, heaviness of the abdomen, etc.

➤ If one carefully observes the daily emergence of new symptoms from the origin of Corona to the

present situation, the symptoms of dengue fever and Corona are very similar.

Furthermore, in Corona, the upper gastrointestinal and chest areas of the body are first affected, which, according to Ayurveda, is the area of Prana and Udana Vayu, and this is also reflected in its observable symptoms, as mentioned.

➤ **Symptoms of Pranavrita Udana Vayu:**

"Shirograhaḥ, pratishyayo, niḥśvasocchvasa saṁgrahaḥ Hrd rogaḥ, mukha śoṣa chapi udane praṇa saṁvrte." (Ch. Chi 028/206)

Treatment: *"Tatra ūrdhvaḥbhagika karma karyam, aśvasanam tatha-* Meaning, performing upper gastrointestinal treatments such as gargling (*Kavala*), steam, nasal cleansing (*Nasya*), etc., and giving a wholesome regimen to mentally strengthen the patient.

Recognized cause of contagious disease in Corona

Cause of spread of contagious disease

"Prasaṅgaḥ gatrasaṁsparśat niśvasotsaha 'bhojanat, saha śayya 'asanacca api vastramalyanulepanat." (Su.ni. 05/39)

From these causal factors, the Corona pandemic is also spreading from one person to another. For this reason, the World Health Organization and the Indian AYUSH system Also by sharing a bed and a seat, as well as by using clothes, garlands, and anointing oils. (Suní 05/39) Even through these factors, the coronavirus pandemic is spreading from one person to another. For this reason, the World Health Organization and the Indian Ministry of AYUSH have called this disease an epidemic that devastates local populations.

In Ayurveda, it is said that there is a correspondence between the individual and the world:

Whatever is in the world is in the body.

Whatever is in the body is in the universe.

If human society, under the influence of its ignorance, contaminates the atmosphere, then the bodies will inevitably also be contaminated. Therefore, it can be said that today's coronavirus pandemic is also a result of human's own unbalanced and uncontrolled willpower and is fundamentally unrighteous.

Prevention of destruction of communities and general medical practices

(1) Diagnostic treatment

(2) Symptomatic treatment

➤ **Diagnostic treatment:** Regularly maintain social and personal distancing.

➤ Regularly use masks and sanitizers.

➤ **Symptomatic treatment:** (1) Logic-based treatment: eightfold 'pure' management

(2) Digestion

(3) Elimination of *Doshas*; Management (All these medical practices should be carried out according to the country, time, disease, patient, and circumstances.)

- **Rasayana (rejuvenation) therapy:** Especially follow ethical *Rasayana* practices because the root cause of coronavirus is to prevent unrighteousness, thus ethical *Rasayana* is extremely important.
- **Medicinal Rasayana:** Such as *Ashwagandha*, *Tulsi*, *Pippali*, *Shatavari*, *Mulethi*, *Giloy*, etc., and consumption of *Chyawanprash Avaleha* can be used as medicinal *Rasayana* and pacifying treatment, as also directed by the Ministry of AYUSH and the Government of India.
- **Divine-assisted treatments-** Follow practices like mantras, medicinal smoke rituals, rules of chanting, and austerities for natural and physical purification. Regular use of various Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals to enhance disease resistance as prescribed in Ayurveda.
- **Mental-strengthening treatments-** For strengthening the mind and when symptoms of spirits or entities appear, mental-strengthening and assurance therapies become necessary. Current widespread devastation caused by Corona, based on the previously mentioned symptoms and factors:

DISCUSSION

The concept of *Janapadodhwamsa* described in Charaka Samhita provides a profound and holistic understanding of epidemic diseases. According to Acharya Charaka, the root cause of epidemic destruction is Adharma (unrighteousness)- "***Tasya Mulam Adharmasya***". This philosophical yet practical principle becomes highly relevant when analyzed in the context of the modern Coronavirus pandemic.

Charaka explains that vitiation of *Vayu* (air), *Jala* (water), *Desha* (land), and *Kala* (time) leads to large-scale destruction of communities. In the present era, these four factors are evidently disturbed due to human activities such as industrialization, environmental pollution, deforestation, and ecological imbalance. These activities are clear manifestations of *Adharma*, as they violate the natural laws and ethical conduct (*Sadachara*), which Ayurveda considers essential for maintaining health.

The concept of *Prajñaparadha* (intellectual blasphemy) plays a central role in this discussion. Due to impaired intellect, memory, and judgment, humans engage in actions that harm both themselves and the environment. The reckless exploitation of natural resources, disregard for ecological balance, and unhealthy lifestyle practices have collectively

contributed to reduced immunity and increased susceptibility to infectious diseases like COVID-19.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, the Coronavirus pandemic can be correlated with *Abhishangaja Jwara* (fever caused by external factors) and conditions involving *Pranavaha Srotas* (respiratory system). The mode of transmission described in classical texts- through contact, respiration, shared food, and proximity- closely resembles the transmission dynamics of COVID-19, validating the timeless relevance of Ayurvedic principles.

Furthermore, Charaka's reference to *Rakshasa*, *Bhuta*, and *Krimi* can be interpreted in modern terms as microorganisms or pathogens. The idea that such entities attack when there is impurity in body, mind, and environment aligns with current scientific understanding that weakened immunity and polluted surroundings facilitate the spread of infections.

The discussion also highlights that epidemics are not merely biological events but are deeply connected with ethical, social, and environmental dimensions. War, greed, exploitation, and moral degradation further aggravate conditions leading to mass destruction, as seen in both ancient descriptions and modern global crises.

Preventive and curative measures suggested in Ayurveda- such as *Rasayana* therapy, adherence to *Dharma*, environmental purification, and strengthening immunity- are highly relevant today. Recommendations by the Ministry of AYUSH during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the use of herbal formulations and lifestyle modifications, reflect the application of these classical principles in modern healthcare.

CONCLUSION

The Ayurvedic concept of *Janapadodhwamsa* provides a holistic understanding of pandemics such as COVID-19. Charaka's statement "***Tasya Mulam Adharmasya***" highlights that large-scale diseases arise from *Adharma*, *Prajñaparadha* (intellectual errors), and disturbance of natural balance. The COVID-19 pandemic reflects the consequences of environmental degradation, ecological imbalance, and unsustainable human practices. Therefore, Charaka's teachings remain highly relevant today, emphasizing the need for ethical living, environmental responsibility, immunity enhancement through *Rasayana*, and the integration of traditional Ayurvedic wisdom with modern science to prevent future pandemics.

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