



PANDEMIC AND ITS RELATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA

Sangeeta Gupta^{1*}, Anupama Patra², Sarita Yadav³, Akanksha Thakur⁴

¹Professor and HOD, Rog Nidan Department, FIMS, SGT University, Gurugram, Haryana, India

²Professor and HOD, Shalakyta Tantra Department, FIMS, SGT University, Gurugram, Haryana, India

³Assistant Professor, Shalakyta Tantra Department, FIMS, SGT University, Gurugram, Haryana, India

⁴Assistant Professor, Shalakyta Tantra Department, FIMS, SGT University, Gurugram, Haryana, India

Corresponding Author: drsangeeta123@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The entire world faced the corona crisis recently, still undergoing it. The world merely is seeing through it as a pandemic and is connecting it to a kind of viral infection invading the human community. The whole of the health machinery got paralyzed fighting the pandemic leading to millions of deaths around the globe. Moreover, the advanced modern system of medicine was almost helpless in combating the virus-related hazards to human health. At this time, the considerable contribution was provided by the Ayurveda, our ancient traditional system of medicine. If we see the ayurvedic literature, the concept of *Janpadodhwamsa* provides answers to the mystery behind the fatal covid virus. The paper aims to provide a view about the *Janpadodhwamsa* which states various factors relating to the pandemic, the root cause of such events and the remedial measures for it.

Keywords: *Vayu, Jala, Desh, Kala, Janpadodhwamsa, Nidana Parivarjana, Prajnapradha*

INTRODUCTION

From the last few years, unnatural changes in the environment led to an alarming situation for the world the menace of which is increasing day by day. Scientists are searching for the solution of the same and warning society about its dangerous effects. Still day by day the situation is worsening, and its dangerous effects are also reflected in various ways. In the same way, pandemic diseases are a new dangerous situation for human society. Ayurveda being the eternal science has postulated a clear relationship between these two i.e., the environmental changes and pandemic diseases. The knowledge of Ayurveda may be useful to check dangerous pandemic situations which may extinct humans from this earth. Four types of such unnatural changes have been mentioned in Ayurveda such as in *Vayu*(air), *Jala* (water), *Desha* (land) and *Kala* (time). The root cause of this is the unrighteousness or inequity of human beings. As a result of this mass destruction of society occurs in various ways such as through epidemic and pandemic diseases, natural calamities and riots or war. The present article provides an idea about the pandemic situation.

Ayurveda is not only medical science, but it is said to be eternal science postulated by Lord *Brahma* himself. This knowledge existed even before the creation of mankind. It has incorporated the causes and solutions for every type of problem-related to personal as well as social life. We know the unhealthy or unnatural environment is a factor for millions of deaths worldwide. The unnatural environment here means the unnatural changes in the air, water and land. Along with this, in Ayurveda fourth kind of environmental change which is said to be more dangerous than the above three is that of change in *KalaSwabhava* or time. These changes have been named *Vayu* (air), *Jala* (water), *Desha* (land) and *Kala* (time) *Dushti* respectively.

Aim of this study:

- To acknowledge the society about the real causes of environmental alterations and their hazardous effect.

- To find out the cause and solutions for epidemic or pandemic diseases as per *Ayurveda*.

Materials:

Causes of mass destruction by epidemic diseases:

A chapter in *Charaka Samhita* (one of the main treatises of Ayurveda) has been dedicated to explaining the unnatural changes in the environment, its effects on mankind and the remedial measures for it. Explanation about the epidemic outbreak of diseases is stated as the concept of *Janpadodhwamsa* here. Here, a question was raised to Guru *Lord Atreya* by his disciple, that how a single infliction be applied simultaneously to the persons having dissimilar *Prakriti* (body constitution), *Ahara* (diet), *Deha* (body), *Bala* (physical strength), *Satmya* (suitability), *Satva* (mental strength) and *Vaya* (age) at the same time?^[1]

Here he replies that it happens due to the influence of some common factors like *Vayu* (air), *Udaka/Jala* (water), *Desha* (land) and *Kala* (time/season), which are common for all people living in a locality or community. When these factors are no more natural or they get altered in the wrong way, mass illnesses happen.^[2]

Characteristics of unnatural air as per Ayurveda:

Excessive dry and hot winds, excessively humid, violent blows, excessive clashes of wind from different directions, frequent cyclones, presence of unwholesome smells, gases, sand, smoke etc. are characteristics of unnatural air.^[3]

Characteristics of unnatural water:

Unpleasant and abnormal smell, colour, taste, touch, excessive stickiness, absence of water animals are the characteristics of polluted water ^[3].

Characteristics of unnatural land:

Abnormal colour, smell and touch of soil, excessive moisture, an abundance of serpents, wild animals, mosquitoes, locusts, flies, rats are characteristics of such land. Having an excess of grass and weeds, an abundance of excessively branched creepers, withered dried crops, an abundance of smoke in the wind, the presence of wild cries of birds, dogs etc. are some other features. The inhabitants of the community have either given up or lost virtue, truthfulness, mod-

esty, conduct, behaviour and other qualities, water reservoirs are constantly agitated or overflowing, frequent occurrence of meteorites, thunderbolts, and earthquakes etc.^[3]

Characteristics of unnatural Kala (time):

The unwholesome time is that which is contrary have excessive or deficient features to those of regular season.^[3] It means there is an excess of rains or no rain in the rainy season, too much hot in summer or rains in summer. Winters are extremely cold or there is no cold, instead, there are rains in winter. Such alterations in Kala(time) bring about disharmony and confusion in the biological clock in humans and causes various kind of diseases. Diet and herbs are also do not having appropriate properties in such altered weather conditions.

The second alteration in time is the changes in human nature and corresponding changes in the era. The slow transition or decline in *Dharma* from *Satyuga* to *Kalyuga* leads to bringing miserable conditions for the entire world and humanity. The wise physician considers that the above mentioned four factors along with the irrespective features are responsible for the gross destruction of human beings by epidemic diseases. The factors having opposite qualities to the above are useful for human beings in the maintenance of health^[4]. So, as per *Ayurveda* impairment of *Vaayu*, *Jala*, *Desha* and *Kala* are more lethal in their increasing order^[5].

Cause of the unnatural changes and their net effect:

As per *Ayurveda*, the root cause of the vitiation of all these factors is *Adharma* (misdeeds) or *Prajnapradha* also known as intellectual faults at the individual as well as community level or we can understand it as one's actions motivated by the wrong intellect. Our actions are of three types-physical, mental and vocal which are controlled by our intellect. These actions when derived by the wrong intellect are called bad actions (*Ashubha Karmas*) leading to *Adharma*. When the rulers of many states, towns, cities, and countries do not follow the righteous path and take up the path to sins, then their subordinates and common people also follow the path of *Adharma* and further

add on to this sinful situation. In the present day in covid pandemic also, the role of some countries is suspected.

Further, this *Adharma* or sinful acts make the righteous acts disappear. Because of the disappearance of *Dharma*, the Gods abandons or forsake the people living in these places. Such are the places where seasons gets impaired (*Kala Vikriti*). Consequently, there will be no rainfall in time or excessive rainfall without time, the wind does not blow properly or there are frequent cyclones; there is a change in nature of the land, water bodies are contaminated, food and herbs lose their qualities and get impaired. Such impairment of air, water, land and time is the cause that leads to epidemic or pandemic diseases causing mass destruction (*Janapadodhwamsa*)^[6].

Origin of this Adharma and its effect on life span according to Ayurveda:

At the end of *Satyuga* and the beginning of *Krutayuga*, some rich people got heaviness in their bodies due to overindulgence with sins. They suffered from fatigue and laziness which made them accumulate things; accumulation led to attachment and greed. During *Tretayuga*, greed gave rise to hatred which gave rise to false statements, anger, cruelty as an infliction of which further people suffered from fear, sorrow, grief, worry etc. Therefore, in *Tretayuga*, a quarter of *Dharma* or religious duties disappeared.

Because of this, the life span of a human being is reduced by a quarter. Similarly, there was a reduction in the attributes of the land, water etc., by one quarter. Because of the reduction of these attributes, there was the diminution of the unctuousness, purity, tastes, potency, *Vipakas* (outcome of digestion), specific actions and qualities of grains and herbs by one quarter.

Because of the reduction of a quarter of the attributes of diets and regimens, there was an unusual change in the maintenance of equilibrium of doshas and *dhatu*s in the human body and vitiation of *Agni* (*Pitta*) and *Vayu* (*Vata*) especially. Due to this, humans got afflicted with various diseases due to lowered strength and immunity and lack of proper nutrition. Ultimately

the lifespan of living beings underwent gradual diminution.

Thus, it is said that the religious duties and qualities of living beings got reduced by a quarter gradually by the passage of each *Yuga*. This is how the entire universe must face dissolution. After the passage of 1/100th of the *Yuga*, the life span of living beings gets reduced by one year the actual span of life specific to that *Yuga*^[7].

Remedial measures for Janpadodhwamsa:

The judicious use of ayurvedic diet and medicine regimens along with the following of specialized *Panchakarma* procedures as mentioned in *Ayurveda*, from time to time can help prevent oneself from such pandemic diseases by boosting immunity and vitality of the body. It does not allow the person to suffer even if there is a vitiation of *Vayu, Jala, Desha* and *Kala*.

In *Ayurveda*, avoidance of causative factors has been said as the first line of treatment for every disease. So, for all, avoidance of *Prajnaparadha* or intellectual errors is mandatory for everyone to stop the world from the destruction which is the root cause. *Ayurveda* mentions the *Achara Samhita* or code of conduct for that. Do's and don't's of life must be understood and followed by everyone. *Satya*(truthfulness), *Bhutadaya* (compassion for the living beings), *Sadvritta* (good deeds), an adaptation of preventive measures, tranquillity, *GuptaMantradiRaksha* (protection of self by *Mantra*) are very effective. Enhancing the individual immunity by following *Ayurvedic Dincharya* (daily routine), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) and *Ratricharya* (Night regimen) can help in the prevention of mass illnesses.

From time-to-time *Rasayana* or rejuvenating therapy as mentioned in *Ayurveda* must be followed to prevent such epidemics or pandemics. Devotion towards God, observance of *Brahmacharya*, service to those following *Brahmacharya*, discussion on religious scriptures, following the great sages who have learned the art of self-control, having *Satvika Gunas* and following *sadvritta* are other measures to avoid any kind of illnesses^[9].

If one can adopt the above ayurvedic measures especially at the time of the outbreak of epidemic or pandemic one can easily save his or her life provided the death of an individual is not predetermined (by destiny)^[8].

CONCLUSION

As we all know that Prevention is better than cure. In *Ayurveda*, it has been mentioned that *Adharma* done in this life as well as in previous life has been considered as the main cause of *Janapadodhwamsa* or epidemic and pandemic diseases and the origin of this *Adharma* is *Prajnaparadha*. So, to protect mankind from such kinds of events in future we must avoid all those practices which are away from human values and must follow the ways of Vedic living governed by some moral principles. In this scientific era though it is quite difficult to accept this fact as the *Ayurveda* has its root in *Vedas* which is said to be the voice of *Lord Brahma* himself, who is the creator of all manifestation, the rules of life mentioned here can provide a solution to the problem. So, simply by following the path of *Dharma*, by following the principles of a healthy and happy life as mentioned in *Ayurveda*, or by adopting the Vedic or holistic way of living we can help ourselves and the community to save each and everyone's life.

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