



Review Article

IMPORTANCE AND UTILITY OF *TRISUTRA* IN TEACHING, RESEARCH AND CLINICAL PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of Ayurveda is to maintain the health of individuals. It is accomplished through the two objectives; curing disease in the diseased and preventing disease in the healthy. For this purpose Ayurveda, the science of life is presented in the form of *Trisutra* (three aphorisms). They are *Hetu* (etiological factors), *Linga* (symptomatology) and *Oushadha* (therapeutics). The causative factors for the derangement of health and its reversal are coming under the purview of *Hetu*. Generally, excess, deficient and wrong union of sense objects, action and time result in diseases and health is the outcome of their proper union. *Linga* represents the clinical features of health and disease. *Oushadha* include drugs, therapies, wholesome diet and lifestyle which are intended to cure the disease and promote health. The entire Ayurveda is coded in these three aphorisms, hence it is known as *Trisutra Ayurveda*. The term *Triskandha* (three pronged) is synonymously used with *Trisutra*. The present knowledge of Ayurveda was evolved by the decipherment and elaboration of *Trisutra* through continuous research processes. Ayurveda compendia were designed in the order of *Trisutra, Hetu, Linga* and then *Oushadha* for the effective teaching and learning. *Trisutra* forms the ground for research in Ayurveda. Fundamental and applied researches in Ayurveda are primarily based on these three principles. Thorough understanding of *Trisutra* is essential for the accurate diagnosis of diseases and planning of effective management for them.

INTRODUCTION

Good health is the root cause of attainment of *Purusharthachatushtaya* (supreme objects of life)- *Dharma* (righteous acts), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (gratification of desires) and *Moksha* (salvation). To achieve these goals one has to maintain a healthy life. Creatures were seized with diseases which became an obstacle to their penance, righteous regimen, learning and longevity. Great sages out of compassion to all creatures searched for remedial measures to eradicate diseases. This was the very reason for descent of Ayurveda from celestial to terrestrial state. Thus obtained Ayurveda was in the form of *Trisutra*. *Sutra* is a system of words used to represent abundant

information which needs to be deciphered. The *Trisutra* are *Hetu* (etiology), *Linga* (symptomatology) and *Oushadha* (therapeutics). The entire Ayurveda is coded in these three aphorisms and by using *Pramanas* (means of knowledge)- *Pratyaksha* (direct perception), *Anumana* (inference) and *Aptopadesa* (authentic advice) these were decoded into today's available form of Ayurvedic knowledge. These fundamental principles were subjected to rigorous research processes so as to convert them into applied form.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Literary review on *Trisutra* was done by using Ayurveda classics like Caraka samhita, Susruta samhita, Ashtangahridaya, Madhavanidana etc and other available authentic journals.

Trisutra Ayurveda

The aim of Ayurveda is *Dhatusamyā* (health) with two objectives, *Svasthyarakshana* (protection of health) in *Svastha* (healthy) and *Vikaraprasamana* (cure of disease) in *Atura* (diseased). To achieve these objectives Ayurveda is explained in the form of

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Trisutra. So it is known as *Trisutra Ayurveda*. *Hetu* include both current and distant causative factors and *Linga* indicates the clinical features of both healthy and diseased. The *Oushadha* includes wholesome diet and mode of life also.^[1] *Trisutra* is also known as *Triskandha* (three pronged).

Classification of *Hetu*^[5]

Table 1: Classification of *Hetu*

Number of <i>Hetu</i>	Description
4 types	<i>Sannikrishta</i> <i>Viprakrishta</i> <i>Vyabhichari</i> <i>Pradhanika</i>
3 types	<i>Asatmya indriyarthasamyoga</i> <i>Prajnaparadha</i> <i>Parinama</i>
3 types	<i>Dosha Hetu</i> <i>Vyadhi Hetu</i> <i>Ubhaya Hetu</i>
2 types	<i>Utpadaka Hetu</i> <i>Vyanjaka Hetu</i>
2 types	<i>Bahya Hetu</i> <i>Abhyantara Hetu</i>
2 types	<i>Prakrita Hetu</i> <i>Vaikrita Hetu</i>
2 types	<i>Anubandhya</i> <i>Anubandha</i>

Sannikrishta Hetu

It is the immediate or precipitating cause. This factor causes the aggravation of *Doshas* without undergoing the state of accumulation. The changes brought about by digestive process, diurnal changes over the *Doshas* are the examples of *Sannikrishta hetus*.

Viprakrishta Hetu

It is the distant cause, which do not produce disease immediately but its cumulative or delayed effect produces the disease after certain period of time. Eg: *Kapha* accumulated in *Hemanta Rtu* causes diseases in *Vasanta Rtu*.

Vyabhichari Hetu

It is the inferior or subordinate cause which is not enough to produce a disease independently. But it can precipitate disease under favourable conditions. Eg: Consumption of unwholesome food alone is unable to initiate morbidity in persons who are naturally strong and doing regular exercise.

Pradhanika Hetu

It is the prime and strong cause that shall bring sudden and intense morbidity. Eg: poisoning.

Asatmya indriyarthasamyoga

It is the improper contact of sensory faculties with their objects. It is of three types- *Heenayoga* (insufficient union), *Mithyayoga* (perverted union) and *Atiyoga* (excessive union). The improper contact leads to disease and Proper contact is responsible for health.

Hetu

Hetu is the factor responsible for producing diseases.^[2] Synonyms of *Hetu* are *Nidana*, *Nimitta*, *Ayatana*, *Pratyaya*, *Utthana*, *Karana*, *Karaka*, *Karta*, *Samutthana*, *Mula* and *Yoni*.^{[3][4]}

Prajnaparadha

Due to derangement of intellect, remembrance or restraint and memory, the inauspicious or unwholesome acts being done are known as *Prajnaparadha* (intellectual error). This leads to vitiation of *Tridoshas*. Three fold actions of body, speech, and mind, each having three divisions (excess, none and perverted use) constitute intellectual error.^[6] Eg: Disappearance of modesty and good conduct, straining during incomplete urges and suppression of natural urges.

Parinama

Kala (time) indicate the change. Each and everything which is created in the universe is the product of continuous process of transformation. A year, the unit of time is subdivided into *Hemanta* (winter), *Grishma* (summer), and *Varsha* (rainy season) characterized with dominance of cold, heat, and rains respectively. Excessive manifestation of specific character of season is the *Atiyoga* of *Kala*. Deficient manifestation and manifestation of just opposite characters to that of normal characters are the *Heenayoga* and *Mithyayoga* of *Kala* respectively.^[7]

Dosha Hetu

Factors responsible for *Dosha Vaishamyas* (vitiation) are called *Dosha Hetu*. *Doshas* undergo vitiation based on;

- **Season-** Eg: *Kapha Prakopa* in *Vasanta Rtu*, *Vata prakopa* in *Varsha Rtu* and *Pitta Prakopa* in *Sarat Rtu*
- **Taste-** Eg: *Madhura, Amla, Lavana Rasas* increase *Kapha, Katu, Tikta, Kkashaya Rasas* increase *Vata* and *Katu, Amla, Lavana Rasas* increase *Pitta*.

Vyadhi Hetu

Etiological factor responsible for a specific disease is called *Vyadhi Hetu*. Eg: Causation of *Mritbhakshanajanya pandu* by mud eating and *Madatyaya* by excess alcohol consumption.

Ubhaya Hetu

Factor responsible for vitiation of a specific *Dosha* and at the same time it act as a specific etiological factors for a particular disease. Eg: Specific factors which aggravate *Vata* and *Rakta* simultaneously results in the disease *Vatarakta*.

Utpadaka Hetu

Vitiation of *Dosha* is required for the manifestation of any disease. In the initial stage of disease manifestation, *Nidana* which causes *Doshadudhti* in the form of *Vrddhi* or *Prakopa* is called *Utpadaka Hetu*. If the disease is yet to be manifested completely, still *Doshadudhti* is there. Eg: Excess intake of heavy, sweet and oily food produces accumulation of *Kapha* in *Hemanta Rtu*.

Vyanjaka Hetu

It is the triggering or aggravating factor. Eg: Hot, spicy food aggravates the symptoms of *Amlapitta*. Similarly, cloudy weather precipitates *Tamaka swasa*.

Bahya Hetu

External factors like food, activities, seasons, pathogenic organisms, toxins etc.

Abhyantara Hetu

Intrinsic factors responsible for diseases Eg: Vitiation of *Dosha, Dhatu* and *Mala*.

Prakrita Hetu

It is the causative factor for vitiation of *Doshas* naturally. Eg: Vitiation of *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha* in *Varsha, Sarat* and *Vasanta Rtu* due to seasonal effect.

Vaikrita Hetu

These are the causes for *Dosha* vitiation irrespective seasonal effects. Eg: Vitiation of *Kapha* and *Pitta* in *Varsha Rtu*, vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha* in *Sarat Rtu*, vitiation of *Vata* and *Pitta* in *Vasanta Rtu*.

Anubandha and Anubandhya Hetu

These are the primary and secondary causes of diseases.

Linga

Clinical symptoms of health as well as disease come under the purview of *Linga*. Health is the condition of equilibrium of *Dosha, Dhatu* and *Mala* associated with normalcy of metabolism, purity of self, sense organs and mind.^[8] The equilibrium of *Dhatu*s results in the subsidence of disease and it is assessed

by the features; alleviation of disease, normalcy of voice and complexion, development of body, enhancement of strength, desire for food and appetite during mealtime, proper digestion of ingested food, normal sleep at appropriate time, nonappearance of abnormal dreams, easiness of awakening, timely excretion of flatus, urine, faeces and semen, overall feeling of healthy or normal status of mind intellect and sense organs.^[9]

In case of disease, the fully or clearly manifested symptom is called *Linga* or *Rupa*. It is the succeeding stage of *Purvarupa* (premonitory stage). The symptoms which are vague or unclear in *Purvarupa* become completely and clearly manifested in the state of *Rupa*. It is a prominent diagnostic key of disease. Terms which are synonymously used with *Linga* are *Samsthana, Vyanjana, Rupa, Lakshana* and *Chinna*.^[10]

Types of Rupa

Pratiniyata Lakshana

These are the cardinal symptoms specific to a particular disease which directly helps the physician in drawing the diagnosis. Synonyms are *Pratyatma Linga, Avyabhichari Linga* etc. Eg: *Pratyatma Linga* for *Jwara* is *Santapa* (increased body temperature) and for *Atisara* it is *Bahu Drava Mala Sarana* (evacuation of excess watery faeces).

Doshaja Lakshana

Symptoms of a disease which indicate the involved *Doshas* are called *Doshaja lakshanas*. Eg: *Daha, Paka, Puyasrava, Jwara* in *Vrana* indicate the involvement of *Pitta Dosha*.

Avasthanusara Lakshana

Symptoms which develop according to the stage of disease. Eg: In *Sama Jwara* severity of *Jwara Upadravas, Aglani, Bahumutrata* are seen. In *Pachyamana Jwara* there is increased *Jwara vega, Trishna, Pralapa, Bhrama* etc and in *Nirama Jwara* symptoms opposite to *Sama Jwara* are observed. *Uttana Vatarakta* is characterised with *Kandu, Tamra, Syava lohita tvak, Daha, Ruk* etc and *Adhika ruk, Svayathu, Paka, Khanjam, Pangu* etc are the symptoms found in *Gambhira Vatarakta*.

Atura Samvedya Lakshana

These are symptoms which are felt only by the patient. Physician comes to know these symptoms by interrogation. Eg: pain, Burning sensation.

Vaidya Samvedya Lakshana

These are signs of a disease which the physician can directly observe such as swelling, redness, temperature etc.

Oushadha

Oushadha is the therapeutics, ie the treatment, therapy or any drug used to cure, mitigate, treat or prevent the disease. It is synonymously used with the term *Bheshaja* which means that which removes the

fear of disease. Other synonyms of *Bheshaja* are *Chikitsitam*, *Vyadhiharam*, *Pathyam*, *Sadhanam*, *Oushadham*, *Prayaschittam*, *Prasamanam*, *Prakritisthapanam* and *Hitam*.^[11]

Types of Oushadha

According to action *Oushadha dravyas* are classified into two types.^[12]

1. **Sodhana**- Drugs results in purification therapy by elimination of vitiated *Doshas*.

2. **Samana**- Drugs results in pacification therapy.

In another way, according to action *Oushadha* are of three types.^[13]

1. **Dosha Prasamana** - Drugs which pacify *Doshas*

2. **Dhatu Pradooshana** - Drugs which vitiate *Dhatu*

Classification of Chikitsa^[16, 17, 18]

3. **Swasthavrittamata** - Drugs which are good for maintaining health by preventing diseases.

According to origin *Oushadha Dravyas* are of three types; *Jangama* (animal origin), *Oudbhida* (plant origin) and *Parthiva* (metals and minerals).^[14]

Qualities of Oushadha Dravyas^[15]

Oushadha is one among the quadruple of treatment. Effectiveness of treatment depends upon the excellence of these factors. The qualities of ideal *Oushadha* are abundance (in availability and qualities), effectiveness (for the condition to be used), fit for various pharmaceutical forms, and of normal composition or character.

Table 2: Classification of Chikitsa

Types of Chikitsa	Description
1 type	<i>Nidanaparivarjana</i> – Avoidance of causative factors
1 type	<i>Pathya</i> – Wholesome diet and mode of life
2 types	<i>Langhana</i> <i>Brimhana</i>
2 types	<i>Swasthasya urjaskara</i> <i>Artasya roganut</i>
2 types	<i>Dravyabhuta</i> <i>Adravyabhuta</i>
3 types	<i>Daivavyapasraya</i> <i>Yuktivyapasraya</i> <i>Satvavajaya</i>
3 types	<i>Antahparimarjanam</i> - External cleansing <i>Bahiparimarjanam</i> - Internal cleansing <i>Sastra pranidhanam</i> - surgical intervention
3 types	<i>Apakarshanam</i> - Extraction <i>Prakriti vighatana</i> - Destruction of source of origin <i>Nidana tyaga</i> - Avoidance of causative factors
4 types	<i>Brimhitavyam</i> - Nourishment of decreased <i>Doshas</i> <i>Prasamayitavyam</i> - Pacification of increased <i>Doshas</i> <i>Nirhartavyam</i> - Expulsion of aggravated <i>Doshas</i> <i>Paripalana</i> - Maintenance of equilibrium of <i>Doshas</i>
6 types	<i>Langhana</i> , <i>Brimhana</i> , <i>Svedana</i> , <i>Stambhana</i> , <i>Snehana</i> , <i>Rukshana</i>
7 types	<i>Dipana</i> , <i>Pachana</i> , <i>Kshut nigraha</i> , <i>Trit nigraha</i> , <i>Vyayama</i> , <i>Atapaseva</i> , <i>Maruta seva</i>
10 types	<i>Vamana</i> , <i>Virecana</i> , <i>Niruha vasti</i> , <i>Nasya</i> , <i>Pipasa</i> , <i>Maruta</i> , <i>Atapa</i> , <i>Pachana</i> , <i>Upavasa</i> , <i>Vyayama</i>
18 types	<i>Hetu</i> , <i>Vyadhi</i> and <i>Ubhaya Viparita/ Viparitarthakari</i>
60 types	<i>Vrana Upakrama</i> – Treatment for ulcers

Langhana and Brimhana

Treatment is widely classified into two; *Langhana/Apatarpana* (attenuation therapy) and *Brimhana/Samtarpana* (nourishing therapy). *Langhana* is further classified into *Sodhana* (elimination therapy) and *Samana* (palliative therapy). *Sodhana* is of five types; namely *Vamana* (emesis), *Virechana* (purgation), *Nasya* (errhines), *Niruhavasti* (decoction enema) and *Raktamoksha* (bloodletting). *Samana* is of seven types; *Pachana* (digestives), *Dipana*

(carminatives), *Kshutnigraha* (fasting), *Tritnigraha* (enduring thirst), *Vyayama* (exercise), *Atapaseva* (sun basking) and *Marutaseva* (exposure to wind).

The ten types of *Langhana* include *Vamana* (emesis), *Virecana* (purgation), *Niruhavasti* (decoction enema), *Nasya* (errhines), *Pipasa* (controlling thirst), *Maruta* (exposure to wind), *Atapa* (exposure to sunlight), *Pachana* (digestives), *Upavasa* (fasting) and *Vyayama* (exercise).

Swastasya Urjaskara and Artasya Roganut

Urjaskara (invigorating or energizing) treatment in healthy individuals is of two types; *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) and *Vrishya* (aphrodisiac). Management of diseases in diseased comes under the latter.

Dravyabhuta and Adravyabhuta Chikitsa

Dravyabhuta is the drug therapy in which medicines originated from plants, animals metal and minerals are used. *Adravyabhuta* is the non-pharmacological treatment in which different *Upayas* (methods) are used. Eg: *Bhaya darsana* (causing fear), *Vismarana* (facilitate to forget), *Kshobhana* (provoking), *Vadha* (beating), *Bandha* (tying) etc.

Daivavyapasraya Chikitsa

It is the spiritual therapy which includes chanting of hymns, amulets of drugs and gems, auspicious acts, sacrifices, gifts, oblations, adherence to religious precepts, atonement, fasting, invoking blessings and pilgrimage.

Yuktivyapasraya Chikitsa

It is the rational application of medicine and diet in appropriate diseased condition.

Satvavajaya Chikitsa

It is the psychotherapy through which control over mind is attained. As a result the individual is restraint from improper objects.

Importance and utility of Trisutra**In teaching**

Ayurveda compendia are designed in the order of *Trisutra*. Initially the *Hetu*, then *Lakshana* and to the last *Oushadha* are described. Eg: In *Ashtangahridaya* sutrasthana itself, the first ten chapters are coming under *Hetuskandha*, 11th and 12th chapters are in *Lakshanaskandha* and the rest comes under *Oushadhaskandha*. This represents a progression of the texts from basics to the advanced, so as the students can understand it properly.

In research

The term *Anusandhana* is used for research in Ayurveda. According to Acharya P V Sarma, the study of cause- effect relationship between *Dravya*, *Guna* and *Karma* after several observations, examinations and arrival at final conclusion is called *Anusandhana*.^[19] Ayurveda, being a medical science, the areas of research are *Hetu*, *Linga* and *Oushadha* i.e., the diseases, their etiological factors and their management. Based on *Hetu* and *Linga* researches on prevalence of diseases, association of disease and risk factors are carrying out. In experimental studies interventions like drugs for prevention, treatment or palliation, clinical devices, surgical and rehabilitative procedures, medical counselling, diet, exercise, change of life style etc. are given. These are coming under the purview of *Oushadha*.

In Clinical Practice

Ayurveda focuses on causes of both health as well as disease, i.e., the preventive and curative aspects. The causes for health are wholesome *Ahara*, *Vihara* and observance of *Dinacharya*, *Rtucharya* *Sadvritta* etc. The causes of diseases are *Asatmya indriyarthasamyoga*, *Prajnaparadha*, and *Parinama*. Causes for each *Doshakopa*, and specific *Rogas* are described in detail in classical texts. The knowledge of *Hetu* is helpful in various contexts as follows;

- **Diagnosis-** Eg: *Mritbhakshanajanya pandu* can be easily diagnosed, if the *Nidana*, eating of mud is known. If two diseases having similar clinical presentations, they are differentiated with the *Nidanas*. Eg: low back pain due to trauma and degenerative changes.
- **Preventive aspect of treatment-** If the causes of disease are known, avoiding them can prevent the disease.
- **Curative aspect of treatment-** Avoidance of etiological factors is the first line of treatment, for which the knowledge of *Nidana* is essential. It is also useful in planning proper treatment and avoiding recurrence of the disease. While doing *Upasaya*, *Hetu Viparita* (treatment against cause) and *Hetu Vyadhi Viparita* (treatment against cause and disease) the knowledge of *Hetu* is needed.
- **Prognosis-** For predicting the prognosis of a disease. Eg: A disease with single cause and lesser the strength of vitiation are easily curable.

There are *Lakshanas* described for both health as well as disease. The knowledge of *Linga* is essential in various contexts like,

- **Diagnosis-** *Rupa* is the clear manifested symptoms of a disease, so if it is known properly, it will be helpful in accurate diagnosis.
- **Treatment-** Knowing the *Doshapratyanika Lakshanas*, the *Doshas* involved in the pathogenesis of a disease can be understood and the treatment can be planned accordingly. In some conditions, treatment is done according to symptoms. Eg: In *Rajayakshma*, symptoms like *Arochaka*, *Pinasa*, *Kasa* etc are separately treated.
- **Prognosis-** If the *Lakshanas* are weak, disease is easily curable.

The knowledge of *Oushadha* and its rational application is essential for the effectiveness of treatment. This fact is emphasized with prime importance in Ayurveda classics.

- An unknown drug is fatal like poison, weapon, fire and thunderbolt, while the known is like ambrosia (life provider). If the drug is improperly administered, it is responsible for complications.^[20]

- Accomplishment of success in its entirety (prevention and cure of ailments) indicates proper application of principles and medicine.^[21]

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda, the science of life is presented in the form of *Trisutra - Hetu, Linga and Oushadha*. Entire Ayurveda is coded in these three aphorisms. Hence it is known as *Trisutra Ayurveda*. These were deciphered further into principles and their practical applications so as to achieve *Dhatusamya* (health), which is the very benefit of Ayurveda. This process of decipherment of *Hetu, Linga and Oushadha* involved continuous learning and rigorous researches since the decent of Ayurveda. The proper understanding of *Trisutra* is essential for teaching, learning, clinical practice and research.

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