



Review Article

A REVIEW ON JANPADODHWANSA - CONCEPT OF ANNIHILATION IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Janpadodhwansa is one among the unique concept described in Ayurveda treatises which literally means demolition or annihilation of people or community. There are four factors that has been described which are common and essential for every living being i.e. *Vayu* (air), *Jala* (water), *Desha* (land) and *Kaala* (season). Any abnormal alteration in these four factors can significantly influence individual or community or environment or all of them together. Vitiating of these four common factors is the cause for *Janpadodhwansa*. Foremost reason for *Janpadodhwansa* has been described as *Adharma* (immorality) and the root cause of *Adharma* is said to be *Prajnaparadha* (delinquency of wisdom). Considering the noteworthiness of *Janpadodhwansa*, a whole chapter has been depicted in *Charak Samhita* illustrating its onset, causes, peculiar features and management. On the basis of characteristics features of vitiated four factors in Ayurveda classics, catastrophe conditions like cyclones, earthquakes, endemic/epidemic or pandemic disease outbreak etc., may simulate with *Janpadodhwansa*. Restrained utilisation of natural, man-made resources, adoption of Ayurveda dietetics and lifestyle, *Panchakarma* therapies, *Rasayana* therapies may effectively contribute to prevent and manage these situations especially like disease outbreak. This review article primarily focussed on the need of understanding the topic of *Janpadodhwansa* in current scenario.

KEYWORDS: *Adharma, Janpadodhwansa, Prajnaparadha, Panchakarma, Rasayana.*

INTRODUCTION

Different communities and its surroundings may be affected at the same time irrespective of their nationality, religion, caste, diet and lifestyle pattern in certain conditions. Certain common components have been described in Ayurveda which when affected together leads to widespread evolution of disease or illness in all living beings. In Ayurveda, the reason behind every disease has been divided into two factors by Acharya Charak, firstly the factors that are common to every living being and secondly that are different in each and every individual. For instance, *Aahara- Vihara* (diet and lifestyle), is the uncommon factor which differs from person to person and any irregularities in this component may result in individualistic development of disease through vitiation of *Doshas* (humours). Whereas, there are four factors that have been described in Ayurveda treatises which are common and essential for every living being i.e. *Vayu* (air), *Jala* (water), *Desha* (land) and *Kaala* (season).^[1] Any abnormal alteration in these four factors can significantly influence individual, or community or environment or all of them together. This alteration in the four factors may be understood with a paradigm

considering environmental imbalance and disease outbreak emerged due to ongoing industrialisation, pollution etc. Description of such conditions affecting wide population has already been seen in Ayurvedic treatises dating thousands of year back. Acharya Charaka termed this condition as *Janpadodhwansa*. The vitiated above- said four common factors are the cause for *Janpadodhwansa*. Although many scholars considers *Janpadodhwansa* as an endemic or epidemic or pandemic disease condition whereas in *Charaka Samhita* the causes for vitiation of such factors has also been described in a dedicated chapter focused on *Janpadodhwansa*. Therefore, through this review article, attempt has been made to understand the unique concept of *Janpadodhwansa* including its causes, management and its relevance in current scenario.

LITERARY REVIEW

'*Janpad*' means group of people or community and '*Dhwansa*' means demolition. Therefore, the literal meaning of the term '*Janpadodhwansa*' may be considered as a condition with massive demolition or annihilation of people or

community. In *Janpadodhwansa*, persons having distinct *Prakriti* (constitution), *Aahara* (diet), *Deha* (body), *Bala* (strength), *Satmya* (suitableness), *Mana* (mind) and *Vaya* (age) may be affected by one particular disease simultaneously.

In *Janpadodhwansa*, four factors viz. *Vayu* (air), *Jala* (water), *Desha* (land) and *Kaala* (time period/ season) are primarily altered. The sequences of these four factors are important in progressive order because of their essentiality. Among these, *Kaala* being the most powerful of them is cause of catastrophe.

Distinct terminology has been used for *Janpadodhwansa* by different Acharyas. Acharya Sushruta has termed this condition as *Maraka* (destroying condition) and emphasised the utilisation of *Aushadh* (herbs) and *Jala* (water) which are not affected or collected before the onset of *Maraka*.^[2]

(i) Origin of *Janpadodhwansa*

Foremost reason mentioned by Acharya Charaka for *Janpadodhwansa* is *Adharma* (immorality). *Adharma* is an antonym to *Dharma* which denotes lack of morality, or unrighteousness in the people. Unethical and non-harmonious practices among communities and people come under *Adharma*. The root cause of *Adharma* is said to be *Prajnaparadha* (delinquency of wisdom). *Asatmyendriyarthasamyoga*, *Prajnaparadha* and *Parinama* has been described as the main factors for development of any disease.^[3] The word *Prajnaparadha* is made from two words *prajna+aparadh*. *Prajna*=*Dhee + Dhriti+Smriti*, and *aparadh* means misdemeanour. Deranged *Dhee* (intellect), *dhriti* (patience), and *Smriti* (memory) leads to all sorts of *Ashubh karma* (unwholesome/

inauspicious actions). This is called as *Prajnaparadha* and causes vitiation of all *Doshas*.^[4,5] *Prajnaparadha* is even said to be the cause of all *Nija* (endogenous) and *Aagantuka* (exogenous) *Vyadhi*.^[6]

Acharya Charaka has also described *Lobha* (greed) as a factor leading to *Adharma*. Further, reason for *Bhutasangha* (contact with an organism) *Abhishapa* (curse) has also been described as *Adharma*.^[7] *Lobha* (greed) along with *Abhidroha* (affronting) and *Kopa* (anger) has also been mentioned as etiological factors for the occurrence of eight major diseases.^[8] Acharya Sushruta has mentioned that the reason behind the change in *Maraka* is *Adrishta* (invisible or idiopathic). Further *Dalhana* explains these to be caused by the *Adharma* (immorality) of population of that particular area. Sometimes the *Ritu Vyapad* (seasonal variations) may also be caused due to various reasons like *Abhishaap* (curse), *Raksh krodh* (demon resentment) etc.^[9]

In Ayurveda, it has been explained that each and every object, thing or matter is made up of *panchamahabhut* i.e., *Akash* (Space), *Vayu* (air), *Agni* (fire), *Jal* (water) and *Prithvi* (earth).^[10] Due to increasing *Adharma*, *Guna* (attributes) of each *Mahabhuta* declines, leading to alteration in *Vayu* (air), *Jala* (water), *Desha* (land) and *Kaala* (time period/season). Such changes may be evident in terms of environmental abnormalities leading to natural calamities, novel diseases outbreak etc., and eventually resulting in *Janpadodhwansa*.

(ii) Features of *Janpadodhwansa*

In *Janpadodhwansa*, mainly the said four factors are affected and results in mass annihilation. Acharya Charaka has described *Vikruta lakshanas* (altered characteristics) of the said factors are as follows.^[11]

| S.no. | Factor | Vikrita Lakshana (altered characteristics) |
|-------|-------------------|--|
| 1 | <i>Vayu</i> (air) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Vishama</i> (absence of features in accordance with season) 2. <i>Atistimita</i> (excessive calm) 3. <i>Atichalam</i> (excessive violent) 4. <i>Atiparusha</i> (excessive rough) 5. <i>Atishita</i> (extreme cold) 6. <i>Atyushna</i> (extreme hot) 7. <i>Atiruksha</i> (excessive dry) 8. <i>Atyabhishyandi</i> (excessive humid) 9. <i>Atibhairavaravam</i> (wind blowing with excessive sound) 10. <i>Atipratihataparaspargati</i> (colliding in nature) 11. <i>Atikundalinam</i> (excessively cyclonic) 12. <i>Asatmayagandhavashpasiktapanshudhumophatamiti</i> (wind with unwholesome smell, mixed with gases, sand, ashes and smoke) |

| | | |
|---|---------------------|--|
| 2 | <i>Jala</i> (water) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Vikrutgandhavarnarasasparsa</i> (Abnormal smell, colour, taste and touch) 2. <i>Kledabahula</i> (excessive stickiness) 3. <i>Jalcharavihangam</i> (water bodies is devoid of aquatic animals like fishes etc.) 4. <i>Upkshinamjaleshaya</i> (reduced water levels in lakes and ponds) 5. <i>Apritikaram</i> (unpleasant appearance or taste) 6. <i>Upgataganam</i> (devoid of natural qualities) |
| 3 | <i>Desha</i> (land) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Vikrutgandhavarnarasasparsa</i> (Abnormal smell, colour, taste and touch) 2. <i>Kledabahula</i> (excessive stickiness) 3. Abundance of serpents, wild animals, mosquitos, locusts, flies, rats, owls, vulture and jackals 4. <i>Pratanaadibahulam</i> (excessive orchard with grass, weeds and creepers) 5. <i>Atishukshanastashasyam</i> (extremely dried land with destroyed crops) 6. <i>Dhumrapawanam</i> (abundance of smoke in air) 7. Suffering of different animals and birds due due to bewilderment and agony. 8. Land where religion, truth, modesty, manners, conducts and other qualities of the inhabitants are absent. 9. <i>Kshubhitudirnajalashayam</i> (disturbed and turbulent water bodies) 10. <i>Pratataulkapatanighatabhumikampa</i> (Frequent occurrence of meteorites, thunderbolts and earthquakes. 11. <i>Atibhayavaramroopam</i> (hearing of fearful sounds) 12. Sun, moon and stars appears as they are covered with coppery, reddish-brown and whitish coloured clouds. 13. people living on the land appears as confused, bewildered, agitated, sorrowful, frightened etc |
| 4 | <i>Kala</i> | Features opposite, excessive or less to the features of normal course of season |

(iii) Management in *Janpadodhwansa*

Panchakarma (five therapeutic procedures) viz. *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis), *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation), *Asthanavasti* (therapeutic decoction enema), *Anuvasnavasti* (therapeutic oil enema) and *Shirovirechana* (therapeutic administration of medicine through nasal route) has been described as the best treatment regimen during *Janpadodhwansa*.^[12] Methodically use of *Rasayana* has also been described in the *Janpadodhwansa*. Further, it has been mentioned that the medicines prepared from the herbs collected before the onset of *Janpadodhwansa* can be used. Apart from these pharmacological management, certain social and behavioural practices has been advised for adoption i.e. truthfulness, compassion for living beings, charity, offering prayer to God, adhering to the code and conduct, adopting preventive measures, residing in auspicious localities, observing *Brahamcharya*, listening to or reading religious scriptures, serving to the great sages and having association with religious, *Satvik* and learned persons. These therapies if adopted during the phase of *Janpadodhwansa* has been said to be life saving therapy for individuals whose death is not predestined.^[13] It is more difficult

for an individual to live by leaving *Jala* than *Vayu*, *Desha* than *Jala* and *Kaala* than *Desha*.^[14]

In the situation of *Maraka*, Acharya Sushruta has also suggested to utilise medicines that has been collected before the onset of diseases and to use pure water.^[15]

DISCUSSION

The *Loka-Purusha Saamya siddhanta* depicts about the similarity in the *Shadadhatuja Purusha* and the external world.^[16] As per *Loka-Purusha Saamya siddhanta*, each and everything present in this universe is also present in human body exhibiting similarities between nature and human. Any disturbance in nature like pollution will result in development of etio-pathogenesis of different diseases.^[17] The basis of natural harmony between nature and man are five forces of nature, the five elements, consisting of *Akash*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Jala* and *Prithvi*.^[18] The position of ecosphere and its association with different biological components affects the health of mankind as well as the ecosystem itself. The deeds of each biotic component of the system as well as the code and conduct are the

cause behind the imbalance between the two. That too has been told in Ayurveda as the *Prajnaparadha janya karma*. It is also said to be the root of all the physical and mental diseases.^[19] *Prajnaparadha* is the lack of rational mind, thoughtful offence or misdeed.

In these situations, It may be noticed that one or more among the four factors affected in *Janpadodhwansa* are involved. For an instance, following may be considered as altered factors of *Janpadodhwansa* for the respective incidents.

| S.no. | Event | Probable affected factors of <i>Janpadodhwansa</i> |
|-------|---|---|
| 1 | Cholera pandemic | <i>Jala</i> (water), <i>Desha</i> (land) as the disease spreads due to contaminated water and improper disposal of infected fecal material. |
| 2 | Influenza pandemic | <i>Vayu</i> (air) as the disease mainly spread through infected droplet in air. |
| 3 | Natural calamities like- earthquakes, cyclones, droughts and floods | <i>Desha</i> (land), <i>Vayu</i> (air), <i>Jala</i> (water) respectively. |

Increasing pollution

Persistent rise in pollution is world's major issue nowadays affecting health of every living being across the globe. The pollution of air, water or soil is of a big concern to the coming generations. Air pollution has both acute as well as chronic adverse effects on human health. The allergic diseases asthma, rhinitis are commonly occurring as a result of air pollution along with other respiratory diseases like bronchitis, lung cancer etc. In addition, short-term and long-term exposures have also been linked with premature mortality and reduced life expectancy.^[20] Similarly soil and water pollution also have unfavourable effect on the people and environment. Increasing air, water and soil pollution also adversely affects the environment and lead to climatic or seasonal changes. Thus, different types of pollution may be considered as a chief factor that affects all the four said components of *Janpadodhwansa*. Uncontrolled industrialisation and deforestation are the major elements for increasing pollution which may be taken as *Prajnapradha*, cause of *Janpadodhwansa*.

Role of Ayurveda

Adharma due to *Prajnapradha* has been described as the main cause for *Janpadodhwansa*. Uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources, rapidly increasing pollution, industrialisation and deforestation are some of the major activities of human kind that has imparted atrocious effects on environment and may be considered as *Prajnapradha*. Apart from this, unethical deeds, disregard or disrespect of elders and not abiding by the rules of code conduct has also been told as etiological factors for the diseases like *Kushtha*^[21], *Unmada*^[22] and *Udara roga*^[23] etc. In this regard, *Sadvriita* (moral code of conducts), and *Achara Rasayana* (behavioural conducts that imparts *Rasayana* likes effects) are important contribution of Ayurveda that has to be followed along with other

important Ayurvedic principles of dietetics, *Dinacharya* (daily routine regimen) and *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen).

'*Rasayana*' means a path or system to acquire *Rasa* or adequate nutrition for the body. *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) therapy is a special modality which provides proper nourishment to each and every cell or tissue of body. It also normalises cell functions and preserves health at molecular level. They provide immunity, strength and vitality to a person. *Rasayana* drugs like *Amalaki* (*Embllica officinalis*), *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) and *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*) have significant immuno-modulatory action^[24]. *Ritucharya*, *Panchakarma* and *Rasayana* may also be considered as important measures for occurrence of health related problems to enrich living standards of social community^[25].

CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that catastrophic conditions like spread of diseases resulting in endemic, epidemic or pandemic situation and natural calamities like Tsunami, Earthquakes, Cyclones, thunder-storms are covered under *Janpadodhwansa*, described in Ayurveda treatises. *Adharma* and *Prajnapradha* are the main causative factors for *Janpadodhwansa*. Rationalised and controlled utilisation of natural and man-made resources is the need of hour to maintain environmental balance. Adoption of Ayurveda dietetics and lifestyle, *Panchakarma* therapies, *Rasayana* therapies may effectively contribute to prevent and manage situations especially like disease outbreak. Further research studies are required to support the preventive and curative aspects of Ayurvedic management during epidemic and pandemic conditions.

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