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Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam through Swastha Chatushka

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ABSTRACT

The first and foremost prime aim of *Ayurveda* is to preservation of positive health in a healthy person.^[1] The *Sutrasthana* lies as the *Madhusancaya* of the *Samhita*. This nectar of knowledge has been stored by *Acharya Charaka* in very beautiful way i.e., *Chatushka* methodology. The *Swastha Chatushka* implying *Swasthya* of *Swastha* includes the four chapters (1)*Matrashiteeya*, (2)*Tasyashiteeya*, (3)*Navegandharaneeya*, (4)*Indriyopakramaneeya*, those which deals with different levels of maintenance of health. The *Swastha Chatushka* stands in 2nd position among the 7 *Chatushkas*, but it solely elucidates about *Swasthya Rakshanam* of *Swastha Purush* among *Sapta Chatushka*. The concepts which are described in *Swastha Chatushka* like *Matrayukta Ahara*, *Swasthavritta*, *Rutucharya Paripalan*, *Sadvritta*, can be considered as a actions (*Karya*) which help in maintenance of health in healthy person by balancing *Tridoshas*, *Dhatu*, *Malas*, and contexts of *Adharaneeya Vega*, *Dharaneeya Vega*, *Hetu Chatushtaya* can be considered as responsible causative factors (*Karana*) for either *Swasthya Samrakshana* or manifestation of diseases if not followed in the prescribed manner. *Swastha Chatushka* mainly explores such important principles which should be properly adopted to maintain all dimensions of health. Thus, *Swastha Chatushka* can be considered as a unique holistic principle of preservation of positive health and life.

Key words: *Swastha Chatushka*, *Matravat Ahara*, *Swasthavritta*, *Sadvritta*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the most ancient medical science of the world. It is practiced to attain *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, *Moksha*. It deals with preventive and curative aspect of disease, promotive aspect of health by its own principles and approach. *Charaka Samhita* is reputed to be the most ancient comprehensive authoritative original text. The whole text deals with various factors related with health, the measures to make a person

completely healthy and suggest the way by which one can attain longevity of life. This *Samhita* is rich in the principles. The whole *Samhita* is of prime importance but with respect to basic principles, the *Sutrasthana* is given more importance. *Sutrasthana* is the heart of whole *Samhita*. It is further divided into seven *Chatushkas* and last two chapters are grouped as *Samgraha Dwaya*. The methodology of *Chatushka* is the uniqueness of *Charak Samhita*, because no other *Samhita* has explained in this way. Elaboration of the concept and applicability every *Chatushka* is the prime necessity for the knowledge of *Charaka Samhita* in present era. The term *Chatushka* is referred to the group of four chapters having compilations of knowledge related to a specific subject and possessing the *Adhikara* all over the *Tantra*. The seven *Chatushkas* are named as *Bheshaja*, *Swasth*, *Nirdesha Kalpana Roga*, *Yojana* and *Annapana*. *Sangrahadwaya* are *Dashapranayataneeya* and *Arthedashamahamooliya*.

Aim of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the health of a healthy individual and cure of the disease of the patient.

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Maintenance of health of healthy individual will be achieved through *Swastha Chatushka*. It is quite natural for human being to cherish a healthy and happy life, but the *Swastha Chatuhka* is not aimed at mere happy and healthy life, the life so desired should be good leading to fulfillment of four main objectives of human life i.e., *Purushartha Chatushtaya*. If this fulfillment is set aside the pursuit of healthy life is worthless. *Swastha Chatushka* deals with *Matrashiteeya Adhyaya*, *Tasyashiteeya Adhyaya*, *Navegandharaneeya Adhyaya*, *Indiyopakarmaneeya Adhyaya* in which many advices mentioned which are required for maintaining health of individuals by proper knowledge of *Ahara*, *Vihara*, *Swasthivritta*, *Ritucharya*, *Adharaneey*, *Dharaneeya Vegas*, *Indriya Pancha Panchak*, *Sadvrittupalana* etc.

OBJECTIVES

To critically explore different concepts discussed in four chapters of *Swastha Chatushka* and its role in *Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam* i.e., to preserve the health of healthy person.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Present study is a descriptive literature study. Important contexts from four chapters of *Swastha Chatushka* of *Charaka Samhita* are reviewed and critically analyzed to understand the reason behind their explanation and application in different aspects of preservation of positive health.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The *Chatuskas* are designed in particularly aiming to fulfill the *Dwaya - Prayojana* of *Ayurveda Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam* and *Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam*, in which *Swastha Chatushka* is the important in elucidating the *Pra-Pratham Prayojana* of *Ayurveda*.

Table 1: Swastha Chatuska and its Important contents

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <i>Matrashiteeya Adhyaya</i> | Description of diet, personal hygiene, <i>Anjan Nasya Dhumpana</i> etc. Basically, deals with the daily regimen to be followed by healthy individuals |
|------------------------------|---|

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Tasyashitiya Adhyaya</i> | Condition of nature and body in 6 seasons, description of <i>Adanakala</i> and <i>Visargakala</i> , regimen of 6 season <i>Satmya Varnan</i> . |
| <i>Navegandharaneeya Adhyaya</i> | Description of non-suppressible and suppressible urges, description of exercise, etiology preventive and treatment method of endogenous and mental diseases. |
| <i>Indriyopakarmaneeya Adhyaya</i> | <i>Panchapanchak Varnan</i> , <i>Sadvritta Palan</i> (general code of conduct). |

Matrashiteeya Adhyaya

It is the *Prathama Adhyaya* of *Swastha Chatushka* which can be defined as *Matra* (Proper quantity) + *Ashi* (refers to *Khadya*, *Prashya*, *Lehya*, *Peya* etc) i.e., intake of proper quantity of diet and *Acharya Chakrapani* explains the word *Matrashee* as one who practices regular intake of proper quantity of food.^[2] Here we can see an interesting fact that, as there is a separate *Chatushka* for *Annapana* even though, *Acharya* explained about *Matravat Ahara* in *Swastha Chatushka* because *Acharya Chakrapani* elucidates that *Tatrapa Swasthyaparipalanheteshu Matravat Annam Pradhanam*^[3] which means that among all the factors for maintenance of positive health and food taken in proper quantity occupies the most important position. To maintain the normalcy *Acharya Charaka* has elaborated specific regimen to be followed in daily life in this chapter. Here it is proposed that, food taken in appropriate quantity helps the individual in bringing about strength, complexion happiness and longevity, without disturbing the equilibrium of *Dhatu* and *Doshas* of the body. This is possible only if one adopts the suitable diet and regimen according to seasonal homologation. *Acharya Charaka* also explains the food articles like *Shashtika* rice, *Shali* rice, green-gram, rock-salt, Indian-gooseberry, barley, rain-water, milk, ghee, meat of animals living in arid areas and honey can be regularly consumed for preservation of health and one should take those food articles daily,^[4] which maintain good health as well as prevent the onset of diseases. So, the concept of *Ahara* is dealt foremost in *Swastha Chatushka* vowing to its prime significance.

Swastavritta

Now days we see maximum health issues due to involvement of unhealthy lifestyle. Lifestyle of an individual can be considered as a scale of measurement of health. Healthy lifestyle with certain good habits takes one's quality of health par excellence. Proper healthy lifestyle promotes health and also helps in prevention of possible diseases that might occur as a result of imbalance in the body's circadian rhythm. So, our *Acharya's* already known about these factors that's why they expounded regimens to be practiced daily in the name of *Dinacharya*. But *Acharya Charaka* has uniquely put forth the theory of *Swasthavritta* with a scientific purview instead of the term *Dinacharya*.

The regimens described under *Swasthavritta* in *Matrashiteeya Adhyaya* mainly focus on the balancing of *Tridoshas*. As the entire body is the abode of all the three *Doshas*, the normal or abnormal states of which are responsible for good or bad outcomes respectively. Examples of good outcomes include growth, strength, complexion, happiness, etc. while the bad outcomes, manifested due to abnormal states of *Doshas*, cause various types of diseases.^[5]

Table 2: Daily regimen and its importance in preservation of health.

| SN | Swastavritta | Preventive and Promotive Role |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1. | Anjan | Sleshmahar, Netra Prasadak. |
| 2. | Dhoompana | Helps to alleviate all types of Urdhwa Jatrugata Vikaras. |
| 3. | Nasya | Indriyas get strengthened, and diseases related to head & neck will not get affected. |
| 4. | Dantapavan | This removes halitosis, dysgeusia, induces taste for food by removing the impurities from the tongue. |
| 5. | Jihvanirlekhan | Removes the impurities, deposited at the root of the tongue obstruct inhalation, causing halitosis. |
| 6. | Gandoosha | Strengthens the jaws, voice, excellent |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | | gustatory sensations, improves taste buds. |
| 7. | Abhyanga | Alleviates head-ache, premature graying, and alopecia, strong and good-looking body, while slowing his aging process. |
| 8. | Snana | Remover of fatigue, purifying, promotive of virility and longevity. |
| 9. | Nirmalambar Dharan (Vastra Dharan) | Enhances charm and personality of an individual, promotes longevity, prevents bad-luck/inauspiciousness, and brings about pleasure. |
| 10. | Gandhamalya Nishevanam (fragrant articles and garlands) | Enhances virility, promotes longevity, charm, plumpness and strength, is pleasing to the mind, and averts poverty. |
| 11. | Chhatradharan | Averts calamities, promotes strength, affords protection, cover and comfort, and serves as a shield against sun, wind, dust and rain. |

Tasyashiteeya Adhyaya

It has been observed that a person taking food even in proper quantity may suffer from diseases in different seasons. This implies that apart from the quantity of *Ahara* (diet), the knowledge of regimen for different *Ritu* (seasons) or *Ritusatmya* also plays a significant role in the maintenance of health and prevention of diseases.^[6] Thus the *Acharya Charak* put forward this *Adhyaya* as *Dwiteey Adhyay* of *Swastha Chatushka*.

Ritu, the season, classified by different features expresses different effects on the body as well as the environment. *Acharya Charak* has depicted various rules and regimens (*Charya*), regarding diet and behavior to acclimatize seasonal enforcement easily without altering body homeostasis. The prime principle of *Ayurvedic* system of medicine is preventive aspect, can be achieved by the change in diet and practices in response to change in climatic condition. This is a very important aspect of preventive medicine as mentioned in *Tasyasiteeya Adhyaya*.

With the change in season, the change is very evident in the environment we live in. If body is unable to adopt itself to stressors due to changes in specific traits of seasons, it may lead to *Dosha Vaishmya*, which in turn may render the body highly susceptible to one or other kinds of disorders.^[7] That's why in this *Adhyay* it is said that "*Tasya Shitadiya Ahaarbalam Varnascha Vardhate. Yasyartusatmayam Veditam Chestaharvyapasrayam,*" which means 'the strength and complexion of the person knowing the suitable diet and regimen for every season and practicing accordingly are enhanced.'^[8] As we see moon and wind are responsible for the dispersion of different seasons like *Shishira, Vasanta, Grishma* under *Adana Kala*, *Varsha, Sharat* and *Hemanta* under *Visarga Kala*.^[9] These seasonal shifts mainly influence variations in four factors viz., *Agni, Bala, Rasa* and *Dosha* in an individual.^[10] *Agni* and *Bala* either strengthen or weaken according to the seasonal changes as a response to the effect of nature. Specific *Rasa* achieves its predominance in specific seasons because of the impact of environmental changes.^[11] So the regimen prescribed for this period (six Seasons) is calculated to help in a smooth change over as to remain *Swasthya*. *Ritu* has its influence from the time of conception until death. Main theme of this chapter is to make people aware concerning the methods to live in accordance with the environment and adaptations according to the changes, is the key for survival the knowledge of *Ritucharya* (regimen for various seasons) is thus important for *Swasthya Rakshanam*.

Table 3: Seasonal guidelines

| Season | Using Diet | Vihara/ Lifestyle | Shodhana |
|----------------|---|---------------------------------------|----------|
| <i>Hemant</i> | Oil & ghee, <i>Brimhana, Madhura, Snigdha</i> , diet, jaggery, milk products. | <i>Abhyanga</i> , Warm rooms, sunbath | - |
| <i>Shishir</i> | Oil & ghee, <i>Brimhana, Madhur, Snigdha</i> , | Stay in less windy and warm shelters | - |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| | diet, jaggery, milk products | (homes). | |
| <i>Vasant</i> | Avoid heavy to digest, sour, unctuous and sweet food items, food made up of barley and wheat, | <i>Vyayama, Udwartan, Anjana Kavalgraha</i> | <i>Vaman, Nasya, Dhoomapan a</i> |
| <i>Greeshma</i> | <i>Madhur, Sheet, Drava, Snigdha</i> (Rice with ghee & milk) <i>Annapana</i> . | <i>Sheet Lepa of Chandana</i> etc. | - |
| <i>Varsha</i> | Consume sour, salty unctuous food, and old barley; wheat and <i>Shali</i> rice. | Practice of <i>Pragharsha, Udwartana, Snana</i> , use of fragrance, garlands, wearing light and clean clothes and should reside in the place which is free from humidity. | - |
| <i>Sharad</i> | Consume <i>Madhur, Laghu, Sheet</i> , slightly <i>Tikta</i> foods & Drinks, <i>Shali</i> rice, barley and wheat should be taken. | Avoiding, heat, day sleeping, curd, oil over eating. | <i>Raktamokshan, Virechana</i> |

Navegandharaneeya Adhyaya

As we see the explanations of *Hitakar Ahar Matra* and *Ritusatmya* in previous *Adhyayas*, the *Ahar* is said to be *Swasthyahita*, when body get excretes metabolic waste product like *Mutra-Purish* etc. without any suppression which is formed after *Aharpak*, so the *Adhyaya* named as *Na Vegandharaneeya*.^[12]

Adharaneeya Vega

Human body is a magnificent mechanism which has a number of ways to balance the substances which might be useful and or harmful to the body. To compose balance of these substances our body is

equipped with *Vegas*, those are natural urges appears naturally. *Vega* refers to urges and *Dharana* refers to restraining urges. As defined by *Chakrapani*, *Vega* is '*Pravritti Unmukhatwam*,^[13] which means those urges which are at the verge of getting expelled. So, in this third chapter within *Swastha Chatushka*, *Adharaneeya Vega*, and *Dharaneeya Vegas* are explained. *Adharaneeya Vega*, disorders due to their long-term suppression and their treatments are also described. Among thirteen *Adharaneeya Vega*, the first seven urges of *Mutra*, *Puresha*, *Shukra*, *Vata*, *Chardhi*, *Kshavathu* and *Udgara* expel the *Mala* accumulated in the body. Next six urges namely, *Jrumbha*, *Kshudha*, *Pipasa*, *Nidra*, *Bhashpa* and *Shrama Shwasa* occur as a response to physiological requirement and reflex of the body.^[14] *Acharya Charak* strictly insists that the person who desirous of preventing these diseases should not suppress any of these *Adharaneeya Vega*.^[15] So it is very important to respond to this *Adharaneeya Vega* for maintaining the homeostasis of the body which leads to positive health.

Dharaneeya Vega

Another set of *Dharaneeya Vegas* (suppressible urges) related to *Manasika* (*Lobha*, *Shoka*, *Bhaya* etc.), *Vachika* (*Parusha*, *Anruta*, *Atimatra Vachana* etc.) and *Kayika* (*Parapeeda*, *Streebhoga* etc.) are described in *Navegandharaneeya Adhyaya*. *Acharya Charaka* has given much more importance to *Dharaneeya Vega* that a person willing for his own well-being, in this life and after (death), should suppress these urges.^[16] It is quite interesting to note that these *Dharaneeya Vegas* are connected to emotional states of mind. The natural urges of mind are important aspect of living body and significantly determine the health or diseased state of an individual. Individual desirous of health should control these urges by gaining control over sense organs. These nine *Dharaneeya Vegas*, if not controlled can lead to *Tridosha Prakopa* (vitiation of body humours) and result in varied psychosomatic manifestations by provoking *Prajnaparadha* which in turn affects the body too. Thus, these *Dharaneeya Vegas* should be suppressed in order to achieve complete health in aspects of physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing in order to attain

four *Purushartha* viz, *Dharma*, *Artha Kama*, and *Moksha*.

Vyayama (physical exercise) is an important regimen explained in the context of *Dinacharya*. *Vyayama* plays key role in the maintenance of health and prevention of disease. It takes major role in humanizing and regulating mechanism of all systems of human body. Ayurved mentioned that proper physical activity, affects not only our body, but has a positive influence on *Mana* (mind), emotions, *Indriyas* (senses) and *Aatma* (spirit). When someone performs proper *Vyayama* as mentioned in Ayurvedic literature, then it helps to maintain the health and brings maximum benefits. If the same *Vyayama* is done improperly or in wrong method, then it will result in the formation of various serious diseases

Though the concept of *Vyayama* is a regimen to be adopted on a daily basis, *Acharya Charaka* has described it in *Navegandharaneeya Adhyaya*, considering it as a *Cheshta*.^[17] *Acharya Chakrapani* considers *Vyayama* as a *Vidharya-Avidharya Pravritti* (suppressible and Non suppressible) and justifies its placement after *Dharaneeya Vega*.^[18] *Vyayama* plays key role in the maintenance of health and prevention of disease. When someone performs proper *Vyayama* as mentioned in Ayurvedic literature, then it helps to maintain the health and brings maximum benefits. If the same *Vyayama* is done improperly or in wrong method, then it will result in the formation of various serious diseases.

Indriyopakramaneeya Adhyaya

This is the last and unique *Adhyaya* of *Swastha Chatushka* which deals with the mind and the senses, ethical & moral principles of behaviour & conduct It mainly deals with sensory perception and its means. The system of *Indriya Pancha Panchaka* (five components related to five *Indriyas*) in which the senses act as instruments for the mind to express itself as well as for the soul to acquire knowledge. Senses are controlled by the mind, which is further controlled by *Buddhi* (intellect) and ultimately by *Atma* (soul).^[19] When there is *Samayoga* of these four, it leads one towards proper health and on the

other hand *Hina*, *Mithya*, *Atiyoga* misguides one's intellect resulting in ill health.^[20]

The *Sadvritta* or ethical observances consist of self-control and proper activities. It includes self-reliance, auto suggestions *Kayika*, *Manasika*, *Vachika*, and all sorts of activities in daily life along with ability to discern and exercise control over *Dharaneeya* and *Adharaneeya Vega's*. So, the principles of good conducts (*Sadvritta*) aim to preserve all dimensions of health. It also provides unique insights into the correct way of managing life and health. It considers the person as a social organism. Their relationship with society is very important from the standpoint of life and health. Therefore, practice of virtues and behavior in accordance to prevalent social traditions is imperative for the prevention of diseases and promotion of good health. In a nutshell, this chapter describes unique ways and means of preventing diseases, preserving personal and social health, and leading a productive and useful social life.

DISCUSSION

Acharya Charak laid down some rules and regulations regarding how to start your daily routines and what you have to do in your day-to-day life so that first principal is achieved. The *Matrasiteeya Adhyaya* of *Charak Samhita* is devoted for the maintenance of health. Starting from food that we eat *Acharya Charak* explained it so widely that how quality and quantity of food effects in our body, like the quantity of food to be ingested depends on the power of digestion (*Agnibala*). The quantity of food that is taken, digested and metabolized in the proper time, without disturbing the equilibrium of *Doshas* and *Dhatu*s can be considered as the proper quantity of food. Therefore, the quantity of food to be consumed and its relation with *Agni* is expounded in *Swastha Chatushka* as a foremost context.

The regimens enlisted like *Anjana*, *Dhumapana*, *Nasya*, *Dantapavan*, *Jihvanirlekhan*, etc. specifically address any imbalance in *Doshas*, expels the excessively accumulated *Doshas* of Supraclavicular region and thereby maintain equilibrium mainly by preventing *Nija Vikaras*.^[21] *Acharya Charak* also

mentions that all the senses will become clearer and strengthened considerably, diseases related to head and neck would not attack him all of a sudden even though person might be aging.^[22] Few other regimens like *Nirmalambara Dharana*, *Gandhamalya Nishevana* etc. impart a protective effect from *Agantu Vikaras* on their regular practice,^[23] For *Swasthya Paripalana* it is essential to follow *Ritusatmya* i.e, the regimen told for the specific *Ritu* for specific duration along with *Ritusandhi*. So, with the knowledge of *Ritucharya* can surely avoid the *Vikara Utpatti* by practicing the regimen in accordance with the *Ritu* to maintain *Dhatu Samyata* and to be *Swasthya* ever. *Acharya Charak* also insists to evacuation and control of *Adharaneey Vega* and *Dharaneeya Vega* respectively in the proper time and place, is essential for the maintenance of perfect health and for the state of homeostasis of the body. Practices of such *Sadvritta* (regimens of right conduct and behavior) will not only help individuals to obtain and maintain their health but also help to build a most civilized society and nation, worthy of emulation. By appropriate utilization of *Sadvritta*, we can prevent various types of physical and psychological disorders and can achieve long and healthy life in terms of physical, psychological and social aspect. In the end we can conclude that *Sadvritta* is essential tool in modern era to prevent and eradicate the root cause of various diseases.

CONCLUSION

The *Swastha Chatushka* is one of the most important part of the *Sutrasthana*, that which fulfill the very first aim of Ayurveda i.e "Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam". The *Swastha Chatushka* which includes four *Adhyayas* makes complete elucidation on *Matrayukta Ahara*, *Swasthavritta*, *Ritucharya Paripalana*, *Sadvritta*, can be considered as a actions (*Karya*) which help in maintenance of health in healthy person by balancing *Tridoshas*, *Dhatu*s, *Malas*, and contexts of *Adharaneeya Vega*, *Dharaneeya Vega*, *Vyayama*, *Hetu Chatushtaya* can be considered as responsible causative factors (*Karana*) for either *Swasthya Samrakshana* (preservation of health). As long as individual follow these guidelines mentioned

here, diseases are kept at bay, and it assists in keeping one in healthy condition. Regimens described in four *Adhyaya* of *Swastha Chatushka* not only promote *Swasthya* but they equally have their own role to play in management of certain diseases. The principles explained in this *Chatushka* provides a holistic approach for health as well as life. Adaptation of these described regimens in day-to-day life takes care of all dimensions of health including *Kayika*, *Manasika*, *Samajika* and *Adhyatmika*, which in turn enhance the quality of life and helps to attain four *Purushartha* viz, *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*.

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