

The applied aspect of *Karma* in *Ayurveda*

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Abstract:

Karma is one of the important constituent among *Shat Karnas* also known as *Shat Padartha*, which are responsible for every phenomenon. It has its impact on human being, which is responsible for diseased and healthy state both. *Karma* is not only applied as *Nidana* of *Roga* (cause of disease) but also as *Chikitsa* of *Roga* (treatment of disease). Concept of *Karma* is essential to get status of *Dhatusamyā*, assessment of *Prakruti*, drug identification, nomenclature of *Mahakashaya*, status of wellbeing, origin of *Purusha* and *Roga*, *Utapatti* of *Rashi Purusha*, determination of *Doshawastha* and selection of drugs. *Karma* is also works as *Vyadhi Utpadaka Hetu* and *Vyadhi Lakshna Utpadaka Hetu*. So *Karma* can be considered as *Trisutra* because it can be a *Hetu*, *Lakshana* and *Chikitsa* of *Roga*.

Key words- *Karma*, *Chikitsa*, *Dhatusamyā*.

Introduction:

The concept of *Shat Padartha* which is also termed as *Karana* in *Charaka Samhita* is very important in *Ayurveda*. As it is responsible for every phenomenon so it termed as *Karna*. *Shat Padarthas* consist of six components and *Karma* is one of them and it is also responsible to attain state of *Dhatusamyā*. It is an important factor not only disease point of view but also to maintain the healthy state of a person. Generally the word *Karma* is applied for any action or process or mechanism which is finished with an outcome. So regarding this word *Karma* is used in various contexts in different meanings in Ayurvedic classics. In Ayurvedic texts *Karma* is used for *Karma* of *Dravya*, *Chikitsa Karma*, *Karma* of body part and organs etc. *Ayurveda* is a science based on not only existing life but also beyond life. So *Karma* has an impact on both life in form of *Daiva Karma* and *Purushkaar Karma*.

Review of literature on *Karma*:

The final desired result which is produced by the action of *Karta* is known as *Karma*. *Karma* is described under the heading of *Shad Padartha*. In *Charaka Samhita*, *Karma* is described as an entity which is responsible for *Samyoga* (addition) and *Vibhaga* (separation) and resides in the *Dravya* with *Samvaya Sambandha*¹ (non separable relationship). In the other definition *Karma* is defined as the action which is done by *Prayatna*². *Karma* is also used as synonym of *Chikitsa*. The ultimate goal of *Chikitsa* is to attain *Dhatusamya*. *Dhatuvaishmya* is described under *Dashavidha Parikshya Bhava* in form of *Karya Yoni*³. *Karya Yoni* means the cause of disease. *Chikitsa* itself defined as *Karya*.

Applied aspect of *Karma*:

1. *Karma* as Cause-

Acharya Charaka has mentioned in first chapter of *Sutra Sthana* that *Samanya*, *Vishesha*, *Dravya*, *Guna*, *Karma* and *Samavaya* are the causative factors (*Karanas*) for the whole universe. These six factors are responsible for action and reaction and various phenomena in this universe. Hence known as *Shat Karanas*⁴. *Karma* is one among these *Shat Karanas*. So it should be called as *Karana* for any kind of *Karya* whether it is *Bhautika* or *Adhyatmika* or gross or subtle level.

2. *Karma* as *Trisutra*-

In *Trisutra Acharyas* have mentioned about the *Hetu* (cause of disease), *Linga* (sign and symptoms of disease) and *Aushadha* (medicine)⁵. *Karma* can be a cause of disease if there is a repeated consumes of *Karma* which is the same of nature of *Doshas* then it will be responsible for disease. *Lakshnas* of diseases are marked by state of *Dosha*. If they are in *Vruddhi* or *Kshayaavastha* the *Lakshnas* of *Dosha* are appear in form of *Vruddhi* or *Kshaya* of their *Karma*. *Aushadha* or medicine is come under the treatment for which *Chikitsa Karma* is done.

3. *Karma* in relation of wellbeing-

Acharya Charaka described about *Sukhayu*, *Dukhayu*, *Hitayu* and *Ahitaayu*. These all are the characteristic features of wellbeing. A person, who shows same features, leads a happy life (*Sukhayu*) and useful life (*Hitayu*). The determination of *Hitayu* and *Sukhayu* is based on their characteristic features which are expressed in the form of *Karma*.

4. **Karma to attain the goals of Ayurveda (equilibrium state)-**

The primary aim of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the healthy status of a *Svastha Purusa* and to cure the diseases. *Dhatusamyata* is necessary for achieving both these aims. In the first chapter of *Sutrasthana* of *Charaka Samhita* stated that the main goal is to get status of *Dhatusamyata* for which *Shat Karanas* have been described⁶. So the six factors become the *Karanas* and *Dhatusamyata* is considered as *Karya* in *Ayurveda*. *Dhatusamyata* is an ultimate aim for which one has to use diet and lifestyle according to *Prakruti*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Vaya* and if the disease occurs then one should have identify the cause of disease and apply appropriate treatment on the basis of *Samanya* and *Vishesha*.

5. **Assessment of Prakruti on the basis of Karma-**

Assessment of *Prakruti* is comes under *Dashvidha Atura Pariksha* which is done to know the *Bala Pramana* (strength) and *Dosha Pramana* (status of *dosha*) of *Atura*⁷. The *Gunas* of dominant *Doshas* are represented by their different *Karmas* in the body and mind. That's why *Acharya Charaka* has given the concept of *Prakruti* for investigation and treatment too. *The Prakruti* is never changes through life span. While examining the patient for any kind of disease, first step is to do *Prakruti Parikshana*. It can be assessed with dominant *Dosha Lakshnas* and they are nothing else but their *Karmas* manifested in *Sharira*, *Indriya* and *Manas* levels. Due to *Karma* only one can assess the *Prakruta* and *Vikrutaavastha* of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*.

6. **Karma as Vyadhiutpadaka hetu-**

Hinayoga of *Karma*, *Mithyayoga* of *Karma* and *Atiyoga* of *Karma* are the root causes of vitiation of *Dosha*. Here *Karma* denotes three types of *Karma* i.e. *Kayika*, *Vachika* and *Manasika*. Person, who is desirous for his wellbeing in the present life and life after birth, should suppress urges of impulsive action of *Kaya*, *Vak* and *Manas*⁸.

7. **Karma as Vyadhi lakshna utpadaka hetu-**

In *Doshabhediya Adhyaya* *Acharya Vagbhata* has mentioned the *Karmas* of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. By knowing these *Karmas* one can identify the vitiated *Dosha* in pathogenesis. The physician should know these *Dosha Lakshanas* by three methods i.e. *Darshana*, *Sparshana* and *Prashana* (*Trividhapariksha*)⁹.

8. **Karma as Shadopkrama-**

Acharya Charaka has mentioned six types of therapy i.e. *Shadopkrama*¹⁰. In this *Acharya* described about reducing and nourishing therapies. These therapies are *Langhana*, *Brimhana*, *Rukshana*, *Snehana*, *Swedana* and *Stambhana*. All the therapies are given name according to their *Karma* (effect).

9. Name of *Mahakashaya* on the basis of their *Karma*-

Acharya Charaka, has described 50 *Mahakashaya* and 500 *Kashayas*. Here the 10 different *Kashayas* together form one *Mahakashaya* and it produces one action by combined effect of the ten drugs. Each group of drug has specific *Karma*. So the whole description of these *Mahakashayas* is dependent upon particular *Karmas* of the *Dravya* in it. This explanation is given by *Acharya* himself at the end of the chapter that, as a man is able to perform many functions. Being a doer whatever functions he performs, he attains specific nomenclature based on his function. Likewise, drugs also get various nomenclatures on the basis of their actions¹¹.

10. *Karma* as cause of diseases (*Pragyaparadha*)-

There are three causes of disease, *Asatmyendriyarthasamyoga*, *Pragyaparadha* and *Parinama*¹². *Pragyaparadha* is described as, when a person whose *Dhee* (intellect), *Dhriti* (patience) and *Smriti* (memory) are impaired, subject himself is responsible for his inauspicious action. It aggravates all the *Doshas*¹³. *Pragyaparadha* is considered one of the *Trividha Hetu* of disease. So for maintain the health one should not follow such *Karmas* which create imbalance between physical and psychic *Doshas*.

11. *Karma* and *Punarjanma* (Rebirth)-

Karma is not only related to the functions of present world or in the world but also the world after death or even the before birth too. As it is emphasize in the theory of rebirth that rebirth is a cause due to the deeds of previous life. It has been said in *Charaka Samhita* in context of epistemology that the progeny of same parents are different in physique, physiology and psyche too. The cause is mentioned as the deeds of previous life. In context of *Parlokesha* (world after death) it has been advised that one should lead the ideal life as mentioned in Indian ethical literature to avoid the adverse consequences of present life in the future birth. It would not be out of the way to mention here that whether there is any rebirth or *Parloka* is there but definitely it is important to lead a life like a wise man. This emphasizes the importance of all types of *Karma* in present life. Mother, father or the self are not able to effect at pleasure in respect of all entities of the embryo. Somewhat they do by themselves and other under the influence of the past deeds, at same places their instruments are potent while at others they are not. In causation of a particular psyche these factors operate- the psychic nature of parents, frequent acquisition (of information) by the mother, the past deed and the impact of a particular psyche due to practice (in previous life).

12. In *Utappiti* (creation) of *Rashi Purusha*-

Moha, *Ichchha* and *Dvesha* *Karmas* are responsible in creation of *Rashipurusha*¹⁴. *Moha* (affection) is the causative factor behind *Ichchha* (desire) and *Dvesha* (hate). *Pravritti* or *Karma* is performed according to this. *Pravritti* is responsible for origin of *Dharma* and *Adharma*. These *Dharma* and *Adharma* are responsible behind origination of *Rashipurusha*. The consequences of *pravritti*, mentioned in *Charaka Samhita Sharira Sthana* chapter 5th are *Ahankara*, *Sanga*, *Samshya*, *Abhisamplava*, *Abhyavapata* which overcoming the person engulf him due to which he become unable to transcend the worldly existence like a tender tree subdued by big and excessively branching trees. *Nivrutti /apavarga* (freedom from bondages) also known the supreme, highest bliss, unchangeable *Bramha*, it is *Apavarga* which is ultimate aim of human life in Indian tradition.

13. Concept of *Daiva Karma* and *Purushkar Karma*-

The life span of living beings depends on proper coordination because the stability or otherwise of life span is dependent on *Daiva* as well as *Purushakara Karma*. *Daivakarma* is the deed self-done in the previous life while *Purushakara Karma* is that which is done here itself¹⁵. In both these deeds also there are grades of strength and otherwise. Accordingly the deed is of three types –inferior, medium and superior. Coordination of both *Daiva* and *Purusakara Karma* of the superior type is the cause of long, happy and determined life span while that of the inferior type is the cause of the contrary (short, unhappy, and undetermined) life span. In case of medium type of the result also is medium. Weak *Daiva* is subdued by the stronger *Purusakara*. Likewise, by the distinguished *Daiva*, *Purusakara* is subdued.

14. Determination of *Dosha Avastha*-

Doshas when aggravated manifest their actions in the accordance with the degree of aggravation. Those in the state of diminution give up their normal functions and those in a state of equilibrium operate properly. The diminution of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* is indicated by the decrease in their respective normal action or increase in their respective opposite actions¹⁶. So this concept is helpful in the *Chikitsa* of *Dosha* because *Chikitsa* itself depends upon *Avastha* of *Dosha*. The concept of *Loka Purusha Samya* based on ‘*Yat Bramhande Tatha Pinde*’, is basic concept of *Ayurveda* where the living being is equated with the functional world, is also reflect the importance of both types of *Karma*. *Acharya Charaka* has grossly equated the *Purusha* with *Loka* with different entities on the basis of their *Karma* in general and *Karma* in particular. *Sushruta* has also equated the physiological entity *Kapha*, *Pitta* and *Vata* with the universal entities i.e. *Soma*, *Surya* and *Anila*¹⁷.

15. Drug identification according to *Karma*-

The *Dravya* is identified by the action whether it pacifies the *Dosha* (*shamana*) or eliminates the *Dosha* (*Shodhana*). *Dravya* is known by its properties and properties by their actions. Along with *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala* a physician should also have knowledge about *Dravya*. Because accomplishment of all objects i.e. actual prevention, cure of disease, application of proper medicine lead to success in treatment of disease. *Acharya Charaka* has given the basic classification of in chapter 1st of *Sutra Sthana*, there are three types of *Dravya* has been described on the basis of their effect on body. They are *Doshaprashamanam*, *Dhatupradushanam* and *Svasthavruthitam*. In the second chapter of *Sutra Sthana* *Acharya Charaka* has described the drugs which are useful in the *Panchkarma* therapy. In fourth chapter *Acharya* described about 50 *mahakashyas*. Each *mahakashaya* contains 10 drugs and it performing 50 different types of *karmas* in the body. For example, *Jivaniya*, *Brimhaniya*, etc.

16. Selection of drugs on the basis of *Karma*-

Dravyas which are used in a specific disease is selected on the basis of their action, by which they produce a particular effect. So for selection of a *Dravya* (drug), it is important to know the *Karma* of such *Dravyas*. Because the proper application of *Dravya* tends to that success in treatment of the disease. The drug use in a particular condition on the basis of their *karmas*. Eg in *Kaphaja roga* the drugs used are having the opposite properties of *Guna* and *Karma* of *Kapha dosha* to bring it at its equilibrium state which is desired. So *Karma* is the concept which is vividly applied in *Ayurveda* in various contexts related to health and disease.

Discussion:

In *Ayurveda*, *Karma* is described among *Karnas* i.e. responsible to attain *Dhatusamyas*. *Ayurveda* is a science which is related to health as well as disease perspective. So the description of *Karma* in *Ayurveda* is necessary to achieve the dual goals. In *Darshana* the sequence of *shat Padarthas* is *Dravya*, *Guna*, *Karma*, *Samanya*, *Vishesha*, and *Samvaya* while in *Ayurveda* the sequence is *Samanya*, *Vishesha*, *Guna*, *Dravya*, *karma* and *Samvaya*. The cause of this difference is that, in *Darshana* all knowable things are considered as *Padartha*, so they start it from *Dravya* because it is *Sattavana Padartha* (having existence) while rest are reside in the *Dravya*. The aim of *Ayurveda* is to maintain health and cure the disease. Because disease is caused either due to *Vridhhi* (increase) or *Kshaya* (decrease). *Samanya* & *Vishesha* are two main entities which are responsible for *Vridhhi* and *Kshaya* i.e. nourishing & depleting therapy. So due to the therapeutic importance, *Samanya* and *Vishesha* are placed first in the sequence of *Karnas*. *Karma* can be defined that all the process which are done with an outcome (conclusion), are come under *Karma*. The concept of *Karma* is

applied in various contexts not only in health perspective, but it can be a cause of disease (*Dhatuvaishmya*) too. Application of *Karma* is utilized to achieve the both goals of *Ayurveda* i.e. maintain the health and cure the disease. *Dhatuvaishmya* is the cause of *Roga* (disease). All the entities which hold sustain the life is called as *Dhatu*. It includes *Dosha*, *Sapta Dhatu*, as well as *Mala*. According to *Ayurveda Mana* (psyche) is also considered as *Ashrya* of *Vyadhi*, and *Chetna* is also considered as *Dhatu*. So in occurrence of disease not only physical elements but also psychic elements are responsible. All the procedures which are started to cure disease are resulted in a final response i.e. *Dhatusamyā*. The effort which are done for maintaining health like to follow *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta* etc. are come under the heading, *Karma*, which are performed by the desire or efforts of the doer. For cure of disease, the effort which is done by the physician is known as *Chikitsa*. In this process the *Karya* (*Dhatusamyā*) is achieved by various tools and techniques like *Ahara*, *Vihara* and *Aushadha*, which is the ultimate goal of *Ayurveda*. The *Karma* is of 3 types i.e. *Kaya* (bodily), *Vaak* (speech) and *Manasa* (psyche) which are mentioned in various ancient and *Ayurvedic* literature. In the *Kayika Karma*, the function of body includes, but here is a separate place of *Vachika Karma*. *Vachika Karma* shows psychology of an individual. So it is related to *Manasa*. These three types of *Karma* are described in the form of *Dharniya Vega* which are prescribed not to express by an individual to maintain the harmony in his environment and betterment of his existing life and beyond life. These three *Karma* which are done in the existing life are *Purushkar Karma* & *Karma* which was done in previous life are *Daiva Karma*. These two types of *Karma* are responsible for various diseases, as described in *Janpadodhvansa Adhyaya*(chapter), *Daivakarma* is described as main cause for it. Activities of an individual are in the form of *Purushkar Karma*. It may be a cause of disease if it is not done in proper way. In the *Trividha Hetus* of *Vyadhi Pragyaparadha* also included, which is originated from the *Ashubh Karma* of *Buddhi* or *Manas* of an individual, but the other two also related with the same directly or indirectly. So the *Karma* has a role as a preventing entity because if all the *Karmas* are followed in a proper way then there is no disease. As *Karma* is described in *Shat Karnas* to attain *Dhatusamyā*, it can be said as preventive as well as curative role of *Karma*. The second definition of *Karma* is described about *Karma* as an entity which resides in *Dravya* (matter) and responsible for *Samyoga* and *Vibhaga*. This seems more likely as *Karma* of *Dravya*. In other context this is more likely similar to the *Gatyatamaka Karma* (movement), in which conjugation and disjunction occurs. According to *Gangadhara*, *Kartvyasyakriya* is *Adhyatmika Karma* that should be followed by *Svastha* and *Atura* both. But practically it is applied for all conditions, *Adhyatmika* as well as *Bhautika Karma* also following the moral and ethics. *Aushadha dravya* should also act according to its properties, which is desired.

Conclusion:

Karma is a process which is done to achieve the goal of life in different contexts. In general it can be defined as the processes, which are done with an outcome or said purpose, come under *Karma*. *Karma* plays an important role in the life in general and *Trisutra* (*Hetu*, *Linga* and *Aushadha*) particular. *Karma* has its impact as *Hetu* of *Roga* and *Chikitsa* of *Roga* and it is also applied as *Chikitsa* according to *Roga*. Thus it is given an important place in *Shat Padartha* according to Indian philosophy and *Karanas* according to *Ayurveda*.

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