



A REVIEW ON OJA AND VYADHIKSHAMATVA

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ABSTRACT

According to Ayurveda human body is constituted of seven dhatu (tissues). Which is rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, majja and shukra. These dhatu are formed after digestion of ingested food (Ahara). When all the dhatus are formed, the last essences of these dhatus which form is called as Oja or oja. It is the essence of dhatu, which gives strength (bala) to the body, vigour, vitality, improves immunity power and takes care of well-being of the body. It is present all over the body like ghee exists in the milk or honey exists in the flower. Oja in Ayurveda is considered as the resistance to decay and degeneration of the body and immunity against diseases. Chakrapani has previously described immunity in terms of Vyadhikshamatva. In Ayurveda, Immunity as Vyadhikshamatva is defined as a condition of equilibrium of Oja, Bala, and Prakrit Kapha. The concept of immunology as described in ancient Ayurvedic literature is stated as vyadhikshamatva or ojabala of an individual. The sahaja bala may be clinically correlated as natural immunity whereas kalaja and yuktikrita bala as acquired immunity. Its Ayurvedic concept of Karya-Karna Sidhanta, the Aahara is Karya & Karana is Oja. Increase of Oja bestows Tusti (satisfaction), Pusti (good nourishment) and Baladaya (improvement of strength, physical, mental and capacity to resist disease). Ojas Kshaya on the other hand, weaken the body given to many diseases to develop, shortens life span and even kills the person. The following review article conducts a critical analysis of the ancient texts in order to assess the idea of Oja with regard to its Ayurvedic component and to establish how it relates to the Vyadhikshamatva.

KEYWORD: Oja, Vyadhikshamatva, Bala, Immunity.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is world's oldest science of herbal medicine. To promote good health of individual the concept of Oja and Vyadhikshamatva has been given by our Acharyas in Ayurvedic samhitas. Oja is defined as a vital energy and Sara (extract) of all Sapta dhatus, which nourishes all tissue and is responsible for the optimal functioning of our body, mind and spirit. Oja influences the body's Vyadhikshamatva or Immune system. Acharya Charaka's concept of Daspranayatana where Oja has been mentioned as Prana¹. According to Sthana (site) and Matra (quantity) Oja is divided into two types- Par oja – 8 drops matra, located in heart and Apra oja – Ardhanjali matra situated in whole body². Being located in Hridya, Oja mixed with Rasa dhatu and circulates through the Rasavahi dhamniya (Mahaphala) and provides poshana (nutrition) to the entire body³. Acharya Sushruta describes oja as the paramateja of the saptadhatus and as the bala or biological strength of an individual⁴. Oja act as resistance to roga prevents from abnormalities in body and acts as protection against various antigens & foreign bodies. It is the quite essential for our life, energy and exists on a subtle level in the body. Disease strikes at the location where there is derangement of oja. The diseases such as AIDS, Diabetes, Pandu, Rajaykshma, Ghrahani etc, can manifest features of decreasing immunity or rather Ojakshaya. Vyaadhikshamatva, literally means resistance (ksamatva) against disease (Vyadhi). Ayurvedic text describes the factor of immunity in terms of vyadhikshamatva⁵, which is considered as the natural or acquired biological defense of an individual against disease.

Oja has been described as Soumya (gentle), Snigdha (moist), Shukla (white), Sheet virya (cold in nature), Sthira (stable), Prasaransheel (spread), Vivikta (discrete), Mridu (soft), Picchila (sticky) and base of all Pranas⁶. All physiological components of human body is filled with Oja and In absence of Oja it will get destroyed. The Rasayanas and other Ayurvedic drugs and treatment methods strengthen Oja and promote natural resistance (Vyadhikshamatva) against ageing and disease.

MATERIAL & METHODS

This article is based on a review of ancient Ayurvedic literature in which main classical texts are Charaka samhita, Sushruta samhita, Chakrapani teeka etc. and also various magazines, journals.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Study of Oja as Vyadhikshamatva and its Ayurvedic aspect to boost the immunity.

To study the fundamental points of oja as physiological and pathological view.

DISCUSSION

Concept of Oja

Ojas: It is the Tejus all the 7 dhatus and considered as a major entity in body's defence mechanism. The loss of Oja is seen in many diseases like Madhumeha and Rajayakshma, were the patients are more susceptible for various other co-morbid degenerative disorders and infections. Those who indulge in healthy and regular regimen along with wholesome food will definitely achieve and maintain good health, whereas those who follow irregular and unhealthy regimen and unwholesome foods are more prone to suffer from diseases. But in some individuals,

it is observed that some people can tolerate and overcome diseases even after following unwholesome diet and regimen and the people who follows wholesome regimen and diet afflicted with diseases. This can be understood in terms of Vyadhikshamatva of different individual. It is observed that the food and regimens that enhances Oja will definitely enhances the strength resulting in stability of the body, growth of muscle tissues, nourishment, promotes strength and proper functioning of sense organs.

Types of Oja: There are 2 types of Oja explained by Acharya Chakrapani

1. Para Oja: It is located in Hridaya, Its quantity is considered to be 8 Bindus, Whitish or Yellowish red in colour and Prana resides in it. The loss of Para Oja will lead to death of the individual.

2. Aparaj Oja: It is ½ Anjali in pramana, it is circulated all over the body and of less importance compared to para Oja.

Functions of Oja: Oja plays an important role in Utpatti, Stithi and Pralaya⁷.

In Utpatti: It helps in

- a) Fertilization
- b) Growth and Development of foetus
- c) In Viability on Non Viability of foetus

In Stithi:

- a) Normal state of a body is considered as the equilibrium of Dosha, Dhatu and Mala. This equilibrium cannot be attained in the absence or diminution of Oja⁸.
- b) Kayika, Vachika and Manasika activities on living body is happens only in the presence of Oja⁹.
- c) The word Bala is used as a synonym for Oja because of the cause and effect relationship. Hence the term Bala represents the Vyadhikshamatva.

In Pralaya:

Any loss or decrease in the amount of Para Oja will directly leads to the death of the individual.

Qualities of Oja: Qualities of Oja mentioned by Charaka are White, slightly reddish or yellow resembling the colour of ghee, sweet in taste like honey and has the smell of laja¹⁰.

According to *Sushruta*, *Somatka* (cooling/watery) *snigdha* (viscous), *shukla* (white), *sita* (cold in potency), *sthira* (an ability to keep up the body organ in a perfect order), *sara* (permeating through), *viviktam* (best nutrition) *mrdu* (soft) *mrtasna* (slimy), *pranayatana* (seat of life) and *uttama* (best)¹¹.

Sushruta has explained *tat abhvasca shriryanta sarirani*, Oja circulates through the entire body, and the deficiency or loss will lead to wasting and degeneration¹². The above statement justifies the preservative function of Oja since it is located in *Hridaya*, combines with *rasa*, circulates all over the body and does the function of *Tarpana* and *Preenana* of the body.

Concept of Vyadhikshamatva

The word Vyadhikshamatva consists of 2 words, Vyadhi + Kshamatva. The Vyadhi carries the meaning, to harm, to injure, to hurt etc. The word Kshamatva means to suppress or to resist. For daily well being of humans the concept of Vyadhikshamatva is of utmost importance. When the body is exposed to etiological factors, they try to produce a disease. At the same time body tries to resist the pathogenesis. This power of the body to resist the pathogenesis or resist a developed disease caused by a pathogen is called as Immunity. Immunity can be included under the concept of Vyadhikshamatva, but Vyadhikshamatva is not merely the immunity against specific pathogens or diseases. It carries a broad understanding of resisting any kind of disease as well as power of maintaining the uniformity and integrity of Dosha, Dhatu and Mala¹³.

The word Vyadhikshamatva is used to express

- **Vyadhibala virodhitvam:** It helps to fight against diseases which have already affected the body by means of strength of the same and prevents the further complication of the disease is called as Vyadhibalavirodhitvam.
- **Vyadhi utpadaka prathibandakatvam:** This happens before the production of disease, it helps to resist the pathogenesis of a disease and prevent its manifestation¹⁴. In general, by means of strength, Vyadhikshamatva helps to maintain health and defences the body against production of disease.

Oja and Vyadhikshamatva:

Oja is the sara of all the 7 Dhatu, and it acts as a seat of strength, it is also considered as the mala of Sukra dhatu. Oja is also considered as Prakrita Shleshma, Rasa, and Rakta. Para and Apra Oja plays an important role in body's defence mechanisms and prevention of degenerative changes¹⁵.

Ojo Vikriti: 3 types of Ojo Vikriti explained by Sushruta are

1. Ojo Visramsas
2. Ojo Kshaya
3. Ojo Vyapat

1. Ojo Visramsas: Displacement of Oja from the Normal place is called as Ojo Visramsas and the clinical features are:

- I. Looseness of joints
- II. Weakness of body
- III. Displacement of Doshas.
- IV. Sluggish Behaviour

2. Ojo Vyapat: Dushta Dosha and Dushya vitiates the Oja, clinical features are:

- I. Stiffness & Heaviness of the body

II. Swelling due to Vata

III. Loss of Complexion

IV. Exhaustion

V. Stupor

VI. Excess sleep

3. Ojo Kshaya: According to Dalhana, It is the Quantitative decrease in Oja, and the symptoms are

I. Fainting

II. Wasting of muscles

III. Unconsciousness

IV. Delirium

V. Death¹⁶

Prakrita Kapha:

The Kapha which is naturally occurring in the body is considered as the strength of the body, or else called as Prakrita Kapha. In morbid state the Kapha takes up the Mala rupa and causes diseases. So the excellence of Oja can be considered as the excellence of Prakrita Kapha, which promotes Vyadhikshamatva¹⁷.

CONCLUSION

In ayurveda system of medicine, it is considered that a living system is made of Panch-mahabhuta, in the form of Vata, Pitta, Kapha at the physical level and Satwa, Raja, and Tama at the mental level. The imbalance in these body humors in the basic cause of any type of disease manifestation till date, several objective parameters have been proposed to monitor the level of these basic humor but none of them is complete. In this exercise, now it is proposed to consider free radical theory of disease as one of the objective parameters. Since the beginning of 20th century, the serious limitations of reductionist-mechanistic approach began to be realized in various fields. Attempts began at synthesizing and integrating ideas and observations of different fields into a composite whole. Gradually, a shift from reductionist to holistic approach started influencing every field of knowledge. In the field of medicine, it was realized that human health and its management is a very general problem. It can only be addressed by evolving a holistic paradigm of medicine and health-care. This realization resulted in reinvestigation of traditional systems of medicine, particularly ayurveda. It is being increasingly realized now that ayurveda fundamentally has a holistic approach to human health. As a result, serious attempts to develop interface between Ayurveda and modern scientific medicine are being made. Further some recent concepts of molecular medicine, immunology as similarities with certain concepts of ayurveda. Therefore, it is being realized that it might be possible to develop a dialogue between modern scientific medicine and ayurveda. It might be possible to specify the Ayurvedic concepts of dhatu and mala in mutually acceptable and yet chemically well definable forms. It might also be possible to better comprehend Ayurvedic concepts like Doshas or Dooshyas along with Rasa,

Gunas, Veeryas, Vipakas and Prabhavas of Dravyas in physico-chemical terms. Here a comprehensive review of the Ayurvedic classical texts was presented to understand the concept of the Vyadhikshamatva w.s.r. to immunity. Bala, Oja, Prakrit Kapha etc. are compared with immunity.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST -NIL

SOURCE OF SUPPORT -NONE

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