



LITERATURE REVIEW OF AGRYA SANGRAHA (COLLECTION OF FOREMOST SUBSTANCES) WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DIETETICS

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ABSTRACT

Abstract - *Ayurveda Acharyas* explained superior qualities of drugs, causes of diseases, daily regimen, therapeutics, *Sadvritta*, some morals & ideals in *Agrya Sangraha*. *Agrya* means superior. In this article, we are emphasizing on dietetics mentioned in *Agrya Sangraha* of *Charaka Samhita* & *Ashtanga Sangraha*. In *Ayurveda*, proper digestion of meal is basic need of healthy life as all diseases starts from improper digestion. So, following diet rules like *Kalabhojana* (Timely meals), *Ekashana* (Single meal daily) can be considered as preventive measures for most of the diseases. Whereas avoiding *Vishamashana* (Irregular meals), *Pramitashana* (Reduced quantity of meals), *Virudhhaviryashana* (Taking meals with opposite properties) which are against *Aharavidhi Vidhana* (laws of do's & don'ts while taking food). Therefore, one should adapt these dietary rules accordingly for maintaining quality of life. The aim of this article to elaborate about dietary aspect of *Agrya Sangraha*.

Keywords: Diet, health, dietetic, wholesome diet, unwholesome diet, *Agrya*

INTRODUCTION: *Ayurveda* is one of the ancient yet healthy life style. It does not only promote good health but also manages diseases. *Agrya sangraha* is one of the main fortes of *Ayurvedic* literature & treatment principles. In *Ayurveda*, variety of drugs are used in *Sanshodhana* (Purification therapy) & *Samshamana* (palliative therapy) therapy, singular or in combinations, but *Ayurveda Acharyas* has given equal importance to single drug therapy. Where, one can use siOngle drug instead combination of drugs in managing a disease condition. E.g., *Vidanga (Embelia Ribes)* is best drug in management of *Krimi* (Worms).^[1] Similarly, it does not only focus on management of diseases but also prevention of them. Most of the *Agryas* includes dietary things which are best suitable for good health. E.g., in a group of leg-

umes, *Mudga* (Green Gram) is considered best in all of them.^[1] In *Brihatrayi*, *Acharya Charaka* includes 152 entities^[1] whereas, *Ashtanga Sangraha* has included 155entities²in *Agrya Sangraha*. *Ashtanga Hridaya* hasn't specified exact number of entities as *Vagbhata* explained them scattered throughout *Samhita* wherever necessary. *Acharya Charaka* described *Agrya sangraha* in order to distinguish between wholesome & unwholesome diet. In addition to that, *Acharya* also explained some regimen, drugs, *karma* like entities with their superior qualities. This collection of entities can be applied in our daily life to improve the state of physical & mental well-being as needed.

Meaning of Agrya: The entity which is more efficacious among all other similar working entities is said to be *Agrya* i.e. best of all.^[3]

Need for explaining Agrya Sangraha^[4]:-

Maharshi Atreya Punarvasu explains the distinction between *Hitakara* (Wholesome diet) & *Ahitakara* (unwholesome diet) *Aharain Charak Sutrasthana, Yajjapurushiya Adhyaya*. The diet which maintains the state of equilibrium in *Sapta dhatu* & helps in eliminating abnormalities or vitiation caused by them is considered as *Hitakara ahara* i.e., wholesome diet. Whereas, those acts in exact opposite manners by causing severe diseases are said to be *Ahitakara ahara* i.e., unwholesome diet. A person who has enough knowledge of difference between *Hitakara* & *Ahitakara ahara* can easily manage the disease conditions by administering proper diet with treatment. Thus, this chapter provided a detailed list which includes best of dietary substances, habits, therapeutic measures, ethical manners having superior qualities between those of similar entities that keep a person healthy. A skilful physician should prescribe the right dietary, regimental, *Sadvritta Acharana* or any therapeutic measures with proper understanding of these superior entities. This will lead the *Vaidya* to attain his *Dharma* (Duties) and *Kama* (All desires).^[5]

In *Ashtanga Sangraha*, *Vagbhata* explains importance of *Agrya* as one who has thorough knowledge of those 155 entities is enough capable of knowing benefits & pitfalls for a *Purusha Sharira*. Some dietetics explained here are important enough that one should adapt them daily for healthy sustenance of life.

Agrya related to Dietetics from *Brihat-trayi Charaka Samhita*^[1]

- *Annam vrittikaranam shreshtam* |

Food is superior in maintaining sustenance of life. This is the beginning

of *Agrya sangraha* after *Atreya Punarvasu* explained wholesome & unwholesome diet. As we know the main purpose of *Ayurveda* is to preserve the health of healthy individual first and then to cure the diseases of unhealthy, we can categorize these *Agryas* accordingly.

1. For healthy Individual: -

- *Yathagnyabhyavaharo Agnisandhukshananam* |

One should always have meal quantity according to their digestive power i.e., *Agni*.

This promotes proper digestion of meals & maintains the healthy state of *Agni*.

- *Yatha satmyam cheshtabhyavaharau sevyanam* |

Wholesome diet & regimen which are best suitable for someone & also beneficent and favourable to their nature are worth adapting on regular basis.

- *Kalabhajanam Arogyakaranam* |

The proper time for having meal is when one actually feels hungry. Intake of food in this time is considered as *Kalabhajana*.

This habit actually enhances quality of health as it helps in promoting good & proper digestion of meal taken.

- *Ekashana bhojanam sukhaparinamakaranam* |

Having single meal everyday keeps check on easy - proper digestion & assimilation of food. Here, Commentator *Chakrapani* explains that having two meals per day shows the same effect.

Ashtanga Sangraha^[6]

- *Ekasanashayana bhojanam sukhanashakaranam* |

Sleeping and having meal in the same sitting area with less body activity causes trouble to the body.

- *Sudarshanamannam shradhha janananam* |

A good looking, appetizing plating of food increases the temptation for having meal.

2. For Prevention of Diseases

Atimatrashanam amapradoshahetunam |

Atimatrashana is one of the types of *Vishamashana* which means as having meal in excessive quantity than a person digestive power can handle.

This habit always leads to causing serious indigestion & or inductive *Ama* disorders i.e. *Ama pradoshaj vikara*.

- *Gurubhojanam durvipakakaranam* |

Food articles which are heavy in nature for digestion, if consumed in excess quantity causes indigestion.

- *Anashanam ayushorhasakaranam* |
Anashana is also a type of *Vishamashana* meaning excessive fasting or withholding meals.

It tends to curtail life i.e. reduces longevity of life.

- *Pramitashanam karshaneeyanam* |
Pramitashana meaning under eating or intake of food in reduced quantity, usually tends to cause emaciation i.e. *Karshya*.

- *Ajirnaadhyashanam graha-nidushananam* |

Intake of meal even before the digestion of previous meal leads to assimilation disorder which causes impairment of *grahani*.

- *Vishamashanam agnivaishamyakaranam* |

Vishamashana is defined as combined 4 conditions –

= having quantity of meal more or less than actually required.

= having meal *Aprapta-kale* or *Atita-kale* i.e., before or after the digestion of previous meal.

– Regular habit of these irregular meals causes irregularity in digestive power.

– Commentator *Chakrapani* also considered *Vishamashana* as diet

which does not follow *Ashtau-ahara vidhi Visheshayatane*.

- *Virudhhaviryashanam nindita vyadhikaranam* |

• Intake of food having mutually contradictory properties or antagonistic properties leads to severe censurable diseases as *Shvitra* (Vitiligo), *Kushtha* (Skin diseases) etc.

- According to *Ash.Sangraha*, it can cause eight censurable diseases I.e. *Maharogas*.

Ashtanga Sangraha [6]

- *Pramitashanam gavedhukannam cha karshaneeyanam* |

Reduced intake of food & *Gavedhukanna* (Job's tear) mainly causes loss in weight.

Ashtanga Hridayam

- *Ashtanga Hridaya* is considered as 'Heart or essence of all the 8 branches of *Ayurveda*.

Because from all other *Ayurveda* literatures, only *Ashtanga Hridaya* is neither too short nor too elaborate making it easy to learn.

- *Agrya Sangraha* explained in *Uttaratantra Vajikarana Adhyaya* mainly includes dietary, therapeutic measures, sentiment,herbal & metal drugs.⁷

- Therefore, in *Ashtang Hridaya*, there is only concise version of *agrya sangraha* including drugs & therapy is explained which can be used by skilful *vaidya* in day-to-day practice.

Importance of *Agrya Sangraha* [1]

Agrya sangraha is one of the peculiarities of *Ayurvedic* literature. It consists of some dietary substances which are best in management of disease conditions.

e.g., Buffalo milk is best used to induce sleep in case of *Nidranasha* i.e., Insomnia.

Gavedhukanna (Job's tear) is best known for its *Karshana* (Emaciating) properties which can be used in *Sthaulya* management as a healthy diet. Similarly, *Uddalakanna* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*) which have *Virukshana* (Inducing dryness or reducing unctuous elements from the body) properties can also be used in *Sthaulya* (Obesity) management.

Apart from drugs & therapeutic measures, some *Sadvritta* (Code of Good conduct for mental health and social behaviour) & ethical manners are also explained in *Agrya sangraha* of *Charak Samhita* which are important to follow in our daily life as it helps with maintenance of our psychological health.

Benefits of *Agrya Sangraha*:

- In *Ashtang Sangraha*, *Vagbhata* explains importance of *Agrya* as one who has thorough knowledge of those 155 entities is enough capable of knowing benefits & pitfalls for a *Purusha Sharira*. Here, we will elaborate about dietary aspect of *Agrya Sangraha*.

Some dietetics explained here are important enough that one should adapt them daily for healthy sustenance of life. The *Agrya Sangraha* which is explained here as a treatment principle, is enough capable of treating disease.

It should be administered/used properly according to *Desha*, *Kala* with proper methods in corresponding diseases.^[8]

Clinical Significance of *Agrya Sangraha*:

This can be easily helpful to select first drug of choice in managing diseases.

All *Agryas* mentioned generally acts based on its potential or properties like

Rasa – Jambu Vatajananam due to *Kashaya Rasa*,

Guna – Mansam Brihaniyanam due to *Guru Guna*,

Virya - Rasna Vataharanam due to *Ushna Virya*,

Vipaka – Erandamoola Vrushyavataharanam due to *Madhura Vipaka*,

Prabhava – Shirisho Vishghnanam due to *Vishghna Prabhava*

& some entities by its *karma – Ksheeram Jeevaniyanam* due to *Jeevaniya Karma*.

Drugs mentioned here can be used as sole treatment for that disease or sometimes single drug is indicated in multiple drugs mentioned.

→ Ayurveda has explained specific management of all diseases but *Acharyas* also explained some basic rules/principles of treatment throughout every *Sthana* whenever necessary which are applicable for all diseases. E.g. As explained in *Shotha Chikitsa*, the physician expert in the knowledge of strength, *dosha* and proper time of treatment should treat the curable patients by prescribing such measures which are opposite to cause, *Dosha* and season. This principle can be used in treatment of all diseases.^[9]

These rules are generally practiced regularly by *Vaidyas*.

– *Hetu-Pratyanik chikitsa* & *Vyadhi-Pratyanik chikitsa* along with *Ubhaya Pratyanik chikitsa* are such basic but important therapeutic principles of *Ayurvedic* treatment.

1. *Hetu- pratyanik Chikitsa*

These measures help in managing disease by avoiding specific etiological factors responsible for pathogenesis of it.

e.g. *Jambu* (Java plum) causes vitiation of *Vata dosha* to a greater extent among all other *Vatakara Ahara-Vihara* due to its *Ruksha guna*.^[1]

Hence, *Vata Prakriti* person or person having any *Vata Vikara* should avoid consumption of it knowingly.

Rasna is considered as best drug which deals with vitiation of *vata dosha*.^[1]

2. Vyadhi-pratyanik chikitsa

This type of treatment is based on drug which is affective in certain conditions or diseases.

e.g., Excessive intake of *Kulattha* (Horse gram) can cause *Amlapitta* i.e., Acidity, due to its properties like *Katu Vipaka*, *Vidahi*, *Ushna virya* which vitiates *Pitta dosha*.^[1]

Khadira is considered chief drug in treatment of *Kushtha* or any skin disorders.^[1]

Apart from drugs & therapeutic measures, some *Sadvritta* & ethical manners are also explained in *Agrya Sangraha* of *Charak Samhita* which are important to follow in our daily life as it helps with maintenance of our psychological health.

E.g. *Sadvachanamnushtheyam* – *Anushtheyam* i.e. among the things that deserved to be practiced or required to be compiled with, *Sadvachana* (Good percepts or words of noble person) are considered to be the best at the top notch.

DISCUSSION: *Agrya Sangraha* is basically explained to distinguish between wholesome and unwholesome things at the first hand. It further useful in diagnosis & treatment of diseases & recognizing healthy lifestyle, moral and ideals. Dietary *Agryas* mentioned here are *Atimatrashana*, *Guru-Bhojana*, *Anashana*, *Pramitashana*, *Ajirna-Adhyashana*, *Vishamashana*, *Virudhha-Virya Ashana* always leads to improper digestion of food which further forms *Ama* by hampering the quality of digestive power (*Agni*) of a person. If a person is having any of these habits regularly, it can be useful for detailed diagnosis of a patient.

e.g., if someone has weight loss since few months, and we found a cause as *pramitashana* i.e., under-eating or reduced quantity of food in his habits then we will easily treat patient by doing *Nidana-Parivarjana Chikitsa* & further *Brihana Chikitsa*. So, one should avoid these dietary regimens so as to stop diseases caused by vitiated *Agni*.

Whereas, *Kalabhojana*, *Ekashana* or twice meals per day, Meal quantity as per person's digestive power together with diet / regimen best suited for them are the healthy habits. This helps in proper digestion of food which further maintains the healthy state of *Agni*. One should adapt these habits in way of life so as to keep up healthy life style. Also, According to *Ashtanga Hridaya*, concept of *Upashaya-Anupashaya* helps in diagnosis of a disease by aggravating or alleviating symptoms. It generally includes medicines, diet & regimen which either aggravate the symptoms of a disease or alleviate them.^[10]

CONCLUSION: *Agrya Sangraha* is clinically important to distinguish between wholesome & unwholesome *dravyas*, diet, regimen, medicines, therapeutics and some morals. It can be used for precise diagnostics & treatment of a diseases. For diagnosis purpose, the causes mentioned here can be found in patient's history so as for better understanding of *Dosha – Dhatu* involvement in *Vyadhi*.

Ekala dravya chikitsa, *Hetu -Pratyanika Chikitsa*, *Vyadhi Pratyanik Chikitsa* are the ways we can use *Agrya Sangraha* in treatment. As well as the foremost causes mentioned in *Agrya* can be avoided in certain diseases as *Nidana – Parivarjan Chikitsa*. A skilful *Vaidya* practicing pure *Ayurveda* always prescribes suitable diet and regimen along with proper drug

management of diseases. This leads to attaining of a *Vaidya's Dharma & Karma*.

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Source of support: Nil Conflict of interest:
None Declared

Cite this Article as : [Kengale Priyanka et al : Literature Review of Agrya Sangraha (Collection of Foremost Substances) with special reference to Dietetics] www.ijaar.in : IJAAR VOL V ISSUE V NOV-DEC 2021 Page No:307-312