

Conceptual Review study of Peculiarities of Charak Samhita**Swapnali Dadaso Patil**

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Abstract:

Ayurveda is a branch of science which deals with maintaining health and treating the diseased condition of the body. Of this Ayurveda, Charak Samhita is one of the major text, which is treasure trove of Ayurveda knowledge having tremendous potential to fulfil the desired. Maintaining health and treatment of diseases is very well explained in Charak Samhita. With this, it has also many Peculiarities, which found in only this Samhita. It lacks in other Ayurveda Texts or other ancient texts. Present study is an attempt to review these peculiarities, which we found in mine of knowledge mentioned in Charak Samhita
Keywords: Ayurveda, Charak, Samhita, Peculiarities.

Introduction:

The Charak samhita is a Sanskrit text of Ayurveda. Along with the Sushrut samhita and Ashtang Hrudya, it is one of the fundamental text of this field that have survived from ancient India. Collectively, these three books are called as Bruhatrayee. The text is based on the Agnivesha Samhitā, an eighth century BCE encyclopedic medical compendium by Agniveśa. It was revised by Charaka between 100 BCE and 200 CE and renamed Charaka Samhitā.

The *Charaka-samhita* as it exists today is thought to have arisen in the 1st century CE. Studies on ancient Indian medicine indicate, however, that the original text was written several centuries earlier by Agnivesha, who was one of six [disciples](#) of Ayurvedic scholar Punarvasu Atreya (the other five disciples were Bhela, Jatukarna, Parashara, Harita, and Ksharapani). Each of the disciples went on to compose *samhitas*, incorporating ideas from Atreya's school of thought as well as their own understanding of the subject. Of those, the *Agnivesha-samhita*, composed by Agnivesha, was unique in depth and content. Later refined and [annotated](#) by Charaka, it came to be known as the *Charaka-samhita*. It has description of most important information regarding health and disease. It has some peculiar features

beneficial for the knowledge of Ayurveda valuable for human being.

1) Rational Attitude:

First time in the history, Charak Samhita was presented with no any blind beliefs and superstitions. Before that, there were so many blind beliefs and superstitions about the causation, curability of diseases. So people were confused about their maintenance of health and treatment. In early era, Supernatural (Daiva vyapashray) chikitsa was the most used line of treatment for many disorders. In addition to this, Charak Samhita came with another line of treatment, Rational (Yukti Vyapashray) ² chikitsa. It made it mainly logical and scientific.

For making foundation of this, 'Yukti' was presented as one of the means of Valid knowledge. Acharya Charaka has strictly emphasised all the concepts according to yukti (rationale). He has opined to move with knowledge in any treatment. ³ There should be well mannered correlation of theoretical knowledge and practical skill. Charak Samhita has elaborated the detail process of investigation. It is helpful for coming at scientific truth. ⁴ So he has used the word 'Pariksha' more than once instead of Pramana. ⁵

2) Symposia organisation:

Discussion is most important factor needed for the development of valuable knowledge. Acharya Charaka has adopted proper method of discussion

among great persons. They are called as Experts. For this, symposium were organised in different parts of the country at the regular interval. In this symposium, great experts participates. ⁶ These participants placed their views freely often contradicting the other's law. Acharya Atreya were seen as presiding over these symposium and gives the final conclusion after correlating all the put forth views. All the authors presented their work in the conference of expert scholars and then this study was approved as academic important after only validation in this symposium. This proper method of mutual discussions were beneficial for the advancement of the knowledge and research and broader scientific outlook, which was very effective for studying the problems from various angles and finally arriving at the truth.

3) Foundation of Basic concepts:

All the basic concepts of Ayurveda were came during the vedic period. They were captured, crystallized, studied, refined and redeveloped in the Charak Samhita. All were also placed on a scientific footing, so that all the prakrut (normal) as well as Vaikrut (abnormal) phenomena were analysed and interpreted logically. The basic concept of Panmahabhuta was studied in application of human body. Tridosha Siddhant were also studied in details by viewing properties, physiological function, pathological manifestations and therapeutic management of Vata, Pitta and Kapha. 'Lokpurush Samya' theory was established and it became great helpful in the applying physiological laws to the external biological world. ⁷ But it is a great hidden mystery about the laboratories and instrument utilised for arriving at all these scientific truths exactly. We can say that they used whole universe as their laboratory and their own keen reading, observations worked as instruments.

4) Unique term Prakruti:

Acharya Charak has given preference on individual psychic and somatic constitution in association with other general concepts. Every individual is unique and he can not be operated equally with the uniform law. Every personality has his own individuality and normal variations. It is not an abnormal factor. This forms his constitution which distinguishes him from other persons. This is termed as 'Prakruti'. It is unique concept mentioned in our

Ayurveda. The maintenance of health and treatment of any disorders has to be given by keeping in view the constitution of the concerned persons and his suitability towards concerned environment. ⁸ It can be used for studying the modern concept of allergy, anaphylaxis.

5) Psychosomatic approach:

Ayurveda has given preference on holistic view rather than individualistic view. Modern science is emphasised on the reducing in hundred parts and viewing as tiny cells of the human body. The final output of Health and disease is happiness and unhappiness respectively. These has effect on human body fully, not partially. Tridosha and Satva has effect on the whole body. Due to this, the person has to be considered as a whole for viewing the health and Disease state. It is known as 'Purusha' in Ayurveda. It had been given the psychosomatic approach towards health and Diseases. Sharir and Mana interact with each other and all the disorders have to be viewed accordingly. This psychosomatic approach is useful contribution in the field of medicine. Mind affects body and vice versa. So only partial view can mislead to faulty understanding and successful management of the problems. Along with Rationale treatment, psychotherapy (Satvavajaya) ⁹ has also been given due place.

6) Nature importance:

Ayurveda has given complete weightage to the nature. By using this, drugs and other therapeutic measures can be applied. ¹⁰ Acharya Charaka has given concept of Swabhavoparamavad (recession of nature). ¹¹ All drugs and dietetic programs are based on this principle. Due to this, proper emphasis is given on Samshodhana Chikitsa (evacuating therapy) and natural resistance of the patient. It is the main basis of Ayurvedic treatment from beginning to end of the Charak Samhita.

7) Expansion of the discipline:

Ashtang Ayurveda is a clear eight demarcated specialities, which are mentioned in the Charak Samhita. Other than this, the discipline of medicine expanded further in the light of knowledge gained in the course of time. Initially, Ayurveda is described in the form of Triskandh (three pillars) or Trisutra form (three threaded) having Hetu (aetiology), linga (signs and symptoms) and Aushadh (therapeutics). Later by seeing clearly, it is elaborated in the Pancha nidana

namely Nidana (aetiology), purvarupa (prodroma), rupa (signs and symptoms), upashaya (therapeutic suitability) and Samprapti (pathogenesis) which became as five instruments of examination of diseases.

8) Method of Diagnosis:

There is a very good scientific method of diagnosis of diseases. At the start, all the facts about the patient should be collected by all the means of authoritative scriptures, perception and inference. Dashavidha Pariksha bhava namely dosha, dushya, agni, bala, satva, satmya, prakriti, vaya, desha, Avastha etc. Is the tenfold entities to be examined which contains all the relevant facts.¹² The disease has to be examined in respect of etiological, prodromal symptoms, suitability and pathogenesis. Acharya Charaka has clearly indicated that there should be examination of patient first, then the drugs and thereafter he should proceed for treatment.¹³

9) Emphasis on promotion and prevention:

The first chapter of Charak Samhita is Deerghajivitiya Adhyaya. It has detail knowledge of promotion of life. For that, there is special branch, Rasayana, which has been dealt with in detail of the section of therapeutics. The second chapter namely Aragvadhya Adhyaya has the description of the formulation useful for the promotion of fertility and progeny. It shows the importance given by Acharya Charaka on promotion of life and prevention of disease. Also there is code of good conduct by which one can remain healthy and long lived. He has also described about prevention of diseases.¹⁴ For this, Acharya Charaka has devoted so many chapters dealing with daily routine, seasonal living etc. In the First half of the Samhita. Acharya Charaka showed the path by which a man, devoid of any ailment, can live happily for enjoying the normal life span.

10) Scientific study of drugs:

Most of the plants were studied analytically during the vedic period from Rigveda and Atharvaveda. The scientific study was actually started from after Vedic period. In this, the scientific study of morphology and pharmacological activity of the medicinal plants and other drugs studied. It is found in Charak Samhita. Study of plants, specifically name, form, properties, actions and therapeutic uses was essential for all physician. The classification of drugs was given in detail in Charak Samhita. Actually, the first

quadruplet of Sutrasthana is named as Bheshaja Chatushka. From this, we can see the importance of the drugs. Division of drugs in the fifty groups according to pharmacological action is the unique step in this direction. It is the most valuable contribution of the Charak Samhita. All the basic concepts of Charak Samhita like Rasa, Guna, virya, vipaka, prabhava were studied rationally for interpreting the drug action and are described in well manner in the text.¹⁵

11) Description of Mahakashayas:

Acharya Charaka have clearly described best ten drugs for each specific diseases and they were called as Mahakashayas. It was based on the Rasa – Guna – Veerya – Vipaka and Prabhava. It has become very helpful for Vaidya to give Chikitsa in easy way.¹⁶

12) Mentioning of three desires of life:

Charak Samhita has given clear description of three basic pursuits of life. A person of normal mental faculty, intelligence, strength, desires for his well being of pertaining to this world and beyond this. Every human being has three main basic desires namely Praneshana (desire to live), Dhaneshana (desire to earn his living) and Paralokeshana (desire to have superior position after death).¹⁷

13) Janapadodhwans description:

Acharya Charaka has described the signs of Epidemics. Third chapter of Vimanasthana is dealt with Janapadodhwans. Janapada means community and Dhwan means destruction. It shown by appearance of some adverse signs in stars, moon, sun, air, fire and directions.¹⁸

Conclusion:

Charak Samhita is one of the most renowned Ayurvedic ancient text. It is one of the main book of Bruhatrayee, other two are Sushrut Samhita and Vagbhat samhita. It has many peculiar features, which have given important contribution for advancement of Ayurveda.

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