

## CONCEPT OF *VISHA* AS *HETU* IN MANIFESTATION OF *VYADHI*: A LITERARY REVIEW

Dr. Neha Barua<sup>1\*</sup> and Dr. Vandana Thakur<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Rog Nidan, Patanjali Bhartiya Ayurvedigyan Evam Anusandhan Sansthan, Haridwar (U.K.).

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Rog Nidan, Patanjali Bhartiya Ayurvedigyan Evam Anusandhan Sansthan, Haridwar (U.K.).

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### \*Corresponding Author

Dr. Neha Barua

Assistant Professor,  
Department of Rog Nidan,  
Patanjali Bhartiya  
Ayurvedigyan Evam  
Anusandhan Sansthan,  
Haridwar (U.K.).

### ABSTRACT

The word *Visha* has been derived from 'Vis' *dhatu* after having 'kta' proportion. *Visha dravyas* are the substances which produce discomfort in body. *Visha* can be a *Hetu* for many diseases and it can also cause death. *Visha* has been classified into different types on the bases of origin, composition, potency etc. *Visha* shows its effects on all *Dhatus* after invading them one by one. *Visha dravya* easily spreads over the body and develops disease. *Visha dravyas* are also *Tridoshaprakopaka* due to their properties. These properties or *Gunas* are *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Aashu*, *Vishad*, *vyavayi Teekshna*, *Vikasi*, *Sukshma*, *Ushna*, *Anirneshaya*. When *visha* shows its effect immediately without undergoing stages of *Sanchay* and *Prakop* it can be called as *Pradhanik hetu*. But if it deteriorates the healthy *Dhatus*

and produces a disease after vitiating the *Doshas* then it will be considered a *Hetu* other than *Pradhanik*. Its *Gunas* are similar to those of *Madya* and opposite to that of *Ojas*. Therefore, it afflicts the essence of all *Dhatus* i.e. *Ojas* and produces different kinds of *vyadhi*. The effects of *Visha* are dependent on many factors like properties or *Gunas* of *Visha*, their potency, nature of the substance as well as *Prakriti* of the person affected.

**KEYWORDS:** *Visha*, *hetu*, *Vyadhi*, *Guna*, *Prakriti*.

### INTRODUCTION

The word *Visha* is derived from the root 'Vis' by having 'kta' proportion according to *Amarkosh*. Any substance which becomes the reason for *Vishad* or discomfort in body is

known as *Visha*.<sup>[1]</sup> Immediately after entering into the body, *Visha* causes either vitiation of the healthy *Dhatus* or killing of the healthy person. Therefore, *Visha* plays an important role in manifestation of *Vyadhi*. One of the synonyms of *Visha* is *Gada* which is also another name for *Vyadhi*.<sup>[2]</sup> There are several types of *Nidan* or *hetu* mentioned in our Ayurvedic literatures which have been broadly classified into four categories namely *Sannikrisht*, *Viprakrisht*, *Vyabhichari* and *Pradhanik hetu*.<sup>[3]</sup> *Visha* is such a substance that when introduced into body by any route or comes in contact with a body it will cause death or disease. It means *Visha* can either be a *Pradhanik hetu* when it causes death at once; or it can fall in other categories of *hetu* when it deteriorates the health of a person. Fatality and other effects of a *Visha dravya* can be attributed to certain properties or *Gunas* which are said to be ten in Ayurvedic classics.<sup>[4]</sup> *Visha* is believed to be originated at the time of *Samudra Manthan*.<sup>[5]</sup> Based upon its origin it has been classified into two categories i.e. *Jangham visha* and *Sthavar visha*.<sup>[6]</sup> Further, it is also classified as *Akritrim visha* and *Kritrim visha* where *Akritrim visha* is again subdivided into *Sthavar* and *Jangham*. *Kritim visha* is also called as *Garavisa*.<sup>[7]</sup> Other classification of *Visha* divides it into *Mahavisha* and *Upvisha*, which is also important. *Visha dravyas* having all ten *Gunas* or properties to its maximum extent are called as *Mahavisha*, while those having these *Gunas* to lesser extent are called *Upvisha*.<sup>[8]</sup>

Activity of a *Visha dravya* depends on the dominancy of the *Gunas* it possesses. e.g. Dominancy of *Ruksha guna* will lead to vitiation of *Vata dosha*. In present times, people are exposed to various forms of *Visha* having dominancy of different types of *Visha Gunas* in varied proportions. Accordingly, there occurs vitiation of *Doshas* in body and people fall prey to various dermatological, gastrointestinal and reproductive disorders etc. Based on the dominance of *Gunas*, dosage of the *Visha dravya*, time taken to show its effects; *Visha* or poison is said to be *Pradhanik hetu* or *Vyabhcharik hetu* in *Samprapti* of a disease. This paper aims towards exploring the role of *Visha* in manifestation of *Vyadhi*.

**Aim and Objective:** In the present paper a literary review will be carried out to understand the role of *Visha* in manifestation of *Vyadhi*.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS:** It is a literary review for which various *Samhitas* (*Laghutrayi* and *vrihatrayi*), scientific journals, internet sources have been consulted.

## DISSCUSION

*Vishachikitsa* is a well-developed branch of *Astangayurveda* since ages. In Ayurvedic science *Vishachikitsa* is known as *Agadatantra*<sup>[9]</sup>, which is same as *Vishgarvairodhikprashaman*<sup>[10]</sup> or *Danstrachikitsa*<sup>[11]</sup> told by *Acharya Charaka* and *Vaghbhatta*. The word *Agad* is formed by the combination of 'A' and 'Gada'. *Gada* means disease, discomfort, pain, *Visha* etc. It is very important to know about the properties and actions of *Visha* on the body to understand its role in causing further illness.

*Visha dravya* shows its effects on all *Dhatus* after invading them one by one. When *Dhatus* are affected by *Visha*, they produce specific signs and symptoms in body. Effect of *Visha dravya* depends on the manner in which specific *Gunas* of *Visha* act on *Dosha* and *Dhatus* inside body. These *Gunas* are *Laghu* (lightness), *Ruksha* (ununctuousness), *Aashu* (quickness), *Vishad* (nonsliminess), *vyavayi* (which pervades the whole body before getting digest), *Teekshna* (sharpness), *Vikasi*, *Sukshma* (subtleness), *Ushna* (heat), *Anirneshaya* (*avyakat*). With the help of these *Gunas*, *visha dravya* easily spreads over the body and develops disease or may lead to death. *Visha dravyas* are also *Tridoshaprakopaka* due to their properties.

*Acharaya Charak* and *Sushrut* have enumerated ten similar *Gunas* of *Visha* with one exception of *Apaaki guna* (*Acharya sushrut*) which is replaced by *Anirdeshya ras* (*Acharya Charak*). *Acharya Vaghabhatta* has attributed eleven *gunas* by including both *Apaaki* as well as *Avayakat rasa*.<sup>[11]</sup> *Sharangdhara* has stated some extra *Gunas* of *Visha* like *Chedi*, *Madavaha*, *Jivitahara* and *Yogvahi*.<sup>[12]</sup> *Gunas* of *Visha* are same as of *Madya*<sup>[13]</sup> but intensity or potential power of *Visha dravya* is more than *Madya*. Because of this *Visha dravya* is more fatal than *Madya*. One important thing is that all these *Gunas* of *Visha dravya* are opposite to *Ojas*.<sup>[14]</sup> *Ojas* is the essence of the all *dhatus* and it can be correlated to immune system of our body.<sup>[15]</sup>

Role of *Visha Gunas* in pathogenesis of disease<sup>[16]</sup>

*Ruksha Guna*:- Aggravates *Vata dosha*.

*Ushna guna*:- Vitiates *Rakta* and *pitta*.

*Teekshna guna*:- Due to *Teekshna guna* of *Visha*, *Marmasthana* get affected. *Marmas* are *Saumya* and soft in nature while *Teekshna guna* is *Aagneya*; hence it affects *Marmas*.

*Sukshma gunas*:- It helps to penetrate the *Srotas* and deranges the physiology due to increased or vitiated *Rakta dhatu*.

*Aashu Guna*:- Instantaneous in their action and prove speedily fatal.

*Vyavayi Gunas*:- Easily spread and absorbed in body like a drop of oil spreads over water.

*Vikasi guna*:- It breaks the bonds between various *dhatu*s and brings about looseness in the *dhatu*s (*dhatu*saitihilya) resulting in their improper function.

*Vishad guna*:- It does not adhere to any part of the body and does not stop anywhere inside the body, passes through all the *doshas* resulting in their vitiation, and cause *Tridoshaprakopan* and becomes very complicated to treat.

*Laghu guna*:- Due to *Laghu guna*, *Visha* does not remain static in a particular place (*Anavasthitatva*). This makes the treatment of *Visha* difficult because interaction between *Visha* and *Aushadhi* would not take place which is required for treatment.

*Avyakta rasa*:- *Avayakt rasa* of *Visha* is similar to *Kapha* and *Jal* which helps to increase *Kapha dosha*. Due to this *Guna*, *visha* becomes *Yogavahi* like water. Also, *Avyakta rasa* after combining with *Annarasa* contaminates the food.

Role of *Deha Prakriti* in manifestation of disease:- *Visha* are *Tridoshaprakopaka*, but according to *Sharira prakriti*, specific *dosha* will get vitiated and produce its harmful effects on body. E.g., if a person with *Vata Prakriti* comes in contact with *Visha*, it gets seated in *Vatasthana pakwashaya* and produces symptoms. *Acharaya charak* has also told about the relationship of *Deha Prakriti* and *Visha*.<sup>[17]</sup>

Nature (type) of *Visha*:- It is also important in manifestation of diseases. As told earlier *Visha* are mainly of two types i.e. *Sthavar* and *Jangham*. Effect of *Sthavar visha* is in downward direction and it will produce symptoms like *Jwar*, *Hikka*, *Dantaharsha*, *Galagraha*, *Vaman*, *Aruchi*, *Shwas* and *Murcha*. *Jangham visha* moves in upward direction and causes *Nidra*, *Tandra*, *Klam*, *Daha*, *Paka*, *Romanch*, *Shoth*, *Atisara*.<sup>[18]</sup> *Gara visha* is another type of *Visha* made up of two or more than two non-poisonous substances. *Gara visha* when introduced into body shows its effects later due to its slow digestion.<sup>[19]</sup>

All these factors discussed above are important in manifestation of diseases. *Acharya Vagbhatta* mentioned that *Visha* spreads in body, vitiates *dosha and dhatus*, produces signs and symptoms and cause a disease.<sup>[20]</sup> *Visha* when enters the body, immediately vitiates *Rakta* and specific *Dosha* by which it is predominant. Simultaneously, it vitiates all *Tridosha*, spreads all over the body and at last proves fatal for individual when it enters *Hrada*. The aggravated *doshas* lose their own specific functions. *Visha* never gets digested hence causes harm to the body and is complicated to treat. All these factors favor its categorization under *pradanik hetu*. *Visha* which can be fatal or produce *Vyadhi* without undergoing *sanchay* is considered *Pradhanik hetu*. Talking about other *Hetus* such as *Vyabhichrik hetu*, one can correlate it with *dushi visha*. *Dushi visha* can either be *Sthavar*, *Jhangam* or *Kritrim* but with less potency (*Alpa veerya*). When the administered *Vishaghna* drug does not get eliminated completely out of body, it may also act as a *Dooshi visha*.<sup>[21]</sup> According to *Acharya Sushrut*, *Visha drava* possessing all the ten *Gunas* is the most potent. It causes death of the person, therefore also known as *Sadyah Pranhara visha*.<sup>[22]</sup> *Visha* is considered a *Pradhanik hetu* if it possess all ten *Gunas* and is potent enough to produce acute symptoms or death. If a *Visha dravya* has 2, 3 or 4 *gunas* (*Gunaheen visha*), it is said to be *Dushi visha* which is less potent poison and it may serve as a *Vyabhicharik hetu*. It means such *Nidan* or *Hetu* is not potent enough to produce a disease right then but when it gets favorable conditions and triggering factors it can produce a disease. *Acharya Sushrut* has mentioned that when a *Dushi vishasth* (a person suffering from *Dushi visha*) comes in contact with *dushit desh*, *kala*, *Anna* or follows inappropriate *Vihar* he suffers from various disorders due to *Dushi vish*.<sup>[23]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Our study reveals that *Visha* acts as a *hetu* or *nidan* to produce diseases. Although *Visha* has been classified as *Pradhanik hetu* but this is again subjected to type, dose and potency of a *Visha*; because a low potent poison may serve as a *Vyabhcharik hetu* and produce its effects later after finding suitable conditions.

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