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REVIEW ARTICLE

## SATKARYA AND ASATKARYA VADA IN THE DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF DISEASE

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### Abstract

Ayurveda has evolved with the inputs from the then existing philosophical thoughts and has modified so as to suit its purpose. Satkaryavada (Theory of Existence) and Asatkaryavada (Theory of Non-existence) are two basic philosophical theories explain the concept of causality. The concept of causality is the base of the diagnosis and management of diseases in accordance to Ayurveda principles. Therefore these two principles have been used to understand the Ayurveda concepts of Prakruti Sama Samaveta and Vikruti Vishama Samaveta. The Prakruti Sama Samaveta and Vikruti Vishama Samaveta form the foundation of diagnosis and treatment principle of Ayurveda.

### Key words:

Ayurveda, Philosophy, Satkaryavada, Asatkaryavada, Cause and Effect Theory, Prakruti Sama Samaveta, Vikruti Vishama Samaveta.

### Introduction

Science is a systematic enterprise (activity) which builds and organizes the knowledge into a form of testable explanations and predictions about the universe. These explanations and predictions are the foundations of the basic sciences which have the subsequent use in the applied sciences. The same idea is supported by Sushruta who states that one who wants to comprehend the science completely needs to take the help of the basic sciences which existed during the times when Ayurveda was evolving.<sup>1</sup> So one should know the basic principles of those basic sciences for the thorough understanding of Ayurveda and henceforth know its application. One such fundamental principle which forms the foundation of Ayurveda is Karyakaranavada (Cause and Effect Theory) with its two complementary views— Satkaryavada and

Asatkaryavada. This basic principle helps us to know the method adopted by the preceptors of Ayurveda in framing this science. The retrospective study of this method may be useful in apt understanding of the text, which is the need of the hour and also help to further explore the areas of research in Ayurveda. This article is thus, an attempt to comprehend this Cause and Effect theory (Satkarya and Asatkarya Vada) in the concept of Vyadhi (Disease) Nidana and Chikitsa.

### Review

Vada is a theory put forth using different tools like Pramana (Source of Knowledge), Tarka (Logic) etc. and is the one which is not against an established concept<sup>2</sup>. Karyakaranavada is one such fundamental principle which explains about the Kārya (Effect) and Karana (Cause). Karana has been defined as the pre-existing, definitive



cause necessary for the production of Kārya<sup>3</sup>. Karana is of three types- Samavayi (Intimate cause), Asamavayi (Non-Intimate cause) and Nimitta (Instrumental cause)<sup>4</sup>. Samavayi Karana is one which has Samavaya relationship with both Kārya and Karana and exists throughout the process of Kārya utpatti<sup>5</sup>. For E.g.: Tantis (Threads) are the Samavayi Karana for Vastra (Cloth)<sup>6</sup>. Asamavayi Karana is the one which produces Kārya with the Samavaya Sambandha either with Karana or with the Kārya. For E.g.: Tantu Samyoga (Conjunction) is Asamavayi Karana for Vastra<sup>7</sup>. Apart from the above two any instrumental cause responsible for the production of Kārya comes under Nimittakarana. For E.g. In Vastra Nirmāna (Production) – loom, weaver etc. are the Nimittakarana<sup>8</sup>. Kārya is the one which the Karta (Doer) intends to obtain and aims his activities to accomplish the same<sup>9</sup>. Any tool that help in the production are termed as Karana.<sup>10</sup>

For Rogotpatti, Doshas (Humors) are the Samavayi kārana, Dushti (Vitiation) of Dosha and Samyoga with Dhatu (Tissue) is Asamavayi Karana and Nidānas (Etiological factors) are the Nimitta Kāranas.

This Kārya Karana Vada has two views as follows -

- Satkaryavada
- Asatkaryavada

### **Satkaryavada:**

The word Sat indicates existence as per Amarakosha. Satkaryavada is proposed by Sankhya Darshana (Philosophy) and supported by Yoga Darshana, Bhagavat Geeta and Upanishad. Satkaryavada propagates presence of Kārya in the Karana even before the process of Kāryotpatti. Kārya is the transformed (Parinama) form of the Karana which cannot be perceived before its production as it is subtle in nature<sup>12</sup>. In this Vada Samavayi Karana has been given importance<sup>11</sup>.

There are 5 analogies<sup>13</sup> to prove Satkaryavada namely:

1. Asadakaranat – One which does not exist in the Karana cannot be brought into existence.
2. Upadanagrahanat – To produce anything we should supply the material cause.
3. Sarvasambhavaabhavat – Only definite cause will yield definite Kārya.
4. Saktasyashakyakaranat – Even an efficient person cannot convert an in-efficient cause into Kārya. Only an efficient cause will give rise to effect.
5. Kāranabhavat – Karana when evolved is transformed into Kārya like a bud, when evolved becomes a flower.

### **Asatkaryavada:**

This Vada is postulated by Vaisesika Darshana and is supported by Nyaya& Bauddha Darshana<sup>14</sup>. According to this Vada, Kārya does not exist in Karana and is proclaimed as a new product<sup>15</sup>. As Kārya Utpatti is purely a new phenomenon, the term Arambhavada<sup>16</sup> is used. Here, Karta (Doer) & other Nimitta Kāranas (Instrumental causes) are considered essential for a Kārya. For E.g.: If seed alone is the cause for plant then if it is not sown, it cannot produce the plant. Further Asatkaryavada have been proved with 5 analogies<sup>17</sup> namely:

1. Buddhi Bheda:-Individually Kārya and Karana are perceived as two different objects.
2. Sajna Bheda:-The above two are designated with different names.
3. Kārya Bheda:-They are assigned with different purposes.
4. Akara Bheda:-They are identified with different forms.
5. Sankhya Bheda:-They are differentiated with difference in their number.

When we closely look at these two theories, it appears that both are not



contradictory to one another instead compliment on another. When the Samavayi kārana is considered as a prime cause for Kārya, then Satkaryavada holds good. When Nimitta kārana is considered as a prime cause for Kārya, Asatkaryavada holds good.

### **Application of Satkaryavada and Asatkaryavada in Vyadhi Nidana and Chikitsa:**

Satkarya and Asatkarya Vada are accepted in Ayurveda with a modification for its application in the field of Chikitsa (Treatment). Purusha (Person) is the Adhikarana (Subject) in Ayurveda who interacts with the Loka (world)<sup>18</sup> as he is influenced by everything that surrounds him. Both the Purusha and the Loka are composed of Panchamahabhutas (Five basic elements). So any variation in the Panchabhautik composition in the body elements leads to Vyadhi and replenishment of these Panchamahabhutas is regarded as Chikitsa<sup>19</sup>. It is this interaction of Mahabhutas (in terms of Rasa/Taste) of the Loka with the Mahabhutas (in the form of Doshas) in the Purusha which forms the base for Chikitsa<sup>20</sup>. So, it is necessary to have knowledge about the effect of Rasa and Dosha for understanding Vyadhi and its Chikitsa.

But practically Dravya (Drugs) is considered as a combination of many Rasas while Vyadhi is also manifested by the combination of Dosha. Hence one has to understand relations of Rasa-Dravya and Dosha-Vikara individually and also their mutual interaction<sup>21</sup>. The interactions between the above relations of Rasa-Dravya and Dosha-Vikara have been explained by the principles of Prakruti Sama Samaveta and Vikruti Vishama Samaveta<sup>22</sup>

According to Prakrutisamasamaveta concept, the interaction between Rasas in a Dravya or Doshas in a Vyadhi results in an effect which is similar to the individual Rasa and Dosha constituting

them respectively<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, the effect of Dravya can be known by analyzing the effect of individual Rasa forming the Dravya and the effect of Vyadhi can be understood by analyzing the effect of individual Doshas forming the Vyadhi. Eg: Godhuma (Wheat flour) which has Madhura (Sweet) Rasa, Guru (Heaviness) Guna (Attribute), and Madhura Vipaka (metabolic end-effect) will have Vātahara (Depletion of Vata) Karma (Action)<sup>24</sup>. So, in this concept the effect is already pre-existing in its cause therefore it goes in accordance with the concept of Satkaryavada. In a Vyadhi formed by the two (Samsarga) or three (Sannipata) Doshas will show similar Laxanas (Symptoms) of the Doshas constituting them, hence they have not been explained in the texts of Ayurveda giving us a hint that they should be presumed as per the Doshas involved.

According to Vikrutivishamasamaveta concept, the interaction between Rasas in a Dravya or Doshas in a Vyadhi results in an effect which is totally new and not similar to the individual Rasa and Dosha respectively. Therefore this new and unpredicted effect cannot be inferred from the cause<sup>25</sup>. Eg: Brihat Panchamulahas Ushna (Hotness) Virya even though it has Kashaya (Astringent) Tikta (Bitter) Rasa<sup>26</sup>. The unpredicted effect is explained with the following reasons:

1. Dosha and Vyadhi: Even though Doshas are the Samavayi Karana of Vyadhi, however due to the following three reasons, the effect (Laxana of the disease) does not occur in line with the cause (Dosha).<sup>27</sup>
  - a) The individual Doshas forming Vyadhi may suppress one another (Parasparena Upahatanam).
  - b) Difference in the proportions of the vitiation in the Dosha (Nana Pramananam).



c) Due to nature of combination of Dosha with different Dhatu (Anyaisca Vikalpanairvikalpitanam).

And hence, wherever the Laxanas of Samsarga and Sannipata Vyadhis are mentioned it is clear that they follow the rule of Vikrutivishamasamaveta concept.

2. Rasa and Dravya: Rasas are the Samavayi Karana of Dravya, however due to the following three reasons the effect (action of Dravya) does not occur in line with the causative Rasa<sup>28</sup>.

- The individual Rasas in a Dravya may suppress one another (Parasparena Upahatanam).
- Difference in proportions of Rasa (Nana Pramananam).
- Due to nature of various Samskaras (processing) like Svarasa etc (Anyaisca - Vikalpanairvikalpitanam).

So, Vikrutivishamasamaveta concept is based on Asatkaryavada and here the effect of the Dravya and Vyadhi have to be analyzed as a whole and not by its constituents<sup>29</sup>.

These two basic concepts of Ayurveda have their roots in Satkarya and Asatkarya Vada and are used for Vyadhi Nidana and Chikitsa. Nidanapanchakas are the diagnostic tools which form the base of Vyadhi Nidana.

**1. Nidana (Etiological factors):** Nidana, the first among the Nidanapanchakas (Five diagnostic tools) can be categorized into two<sup>30</sup>, i.e. Dosha Nidana and Vyadhi Nidana. Dosha Nidana is that cause which is a kin to the Dosha in respect to its Gunas and hence, causes the aggravation of the corresponding Dosha. This corroborates with Prakritisamasamaveta concept and hence follows Satkaryavada. For Eg: Pittala Ahara causes Pittaja Pandu (Anemia)<sup>31</sup>. However, Vyadhi Hetus (causes) are those atypical causes leading to a disease which do not have similarity with respect to Dosha involved.

They fall into the category of Vikrutivishamasamaveta and hence follow Asatkaryavada. For Eg: Mrudbhakshana (eating mud) causing Mrudbhakshana Pandu<sup>32</sup>. So, Dosha Nidana can be analysed and not the Vyadhi Nidana.

**2. Purvarupa (Premonitory symptoms):** Purvarupas can be grouped under two categories, those which project the Dosha involved in Vyadhiutpatti. For Eg: Nayanordaha (Burning sensation in the eyes) in Pittaja Jwara (Fever)<sup>33</sup> and those which do not manifest in line with the Doshas involved like Darshanam Anudakānām Udaka Sthānānām (in dreams seeing emptiness in the water reservoirs) in Rājajakshma<sup>34</sup>.

**3. Laxana (Symptoms):** They are categorized into Dosha Laxana and Vyadhi Laxana. Dosha Laxana is one which follows the Dosha involved in the Vyadhi and hence follows the rule of Prakritisamasamaveta and Satkaryavada. For Eg : Kashayasyata (Astringent taste in the mouth) in Vatajwara<sup>35</sup>. Vyadhi Laxana is a peculiar Laxana respective to Vyadhi which cannot be explained on the basis of the Dosha involved which falls into the category of Vikrutivishamasamaveta and hence Asatkaryavada. For Eg: Kinchit Vibaddha-Kincit Drava Malam (Sometimes hard and sometimes loose stools) in Grahani (Malabsorption syndrome)<sup>36</sup>.

**4. Upasaya (Explorative Therapy):** Hetu, Vyadhi and Ubhaya Viparita follow Prakritisamasamaveta (Satkaryavada) and Hetu, Vyadhi and Ubhaya Viparita Arthakari follows Vikrutivishamasamaveta (Asatkaryavada). So for Satkaryavada, Mamsarasa (Meat juice) in Vatajwara<sup>37</sup> is example for Hetu Viparita, Stambhana Masura (type of anti-diarrheal Pulse) etc Ahara in Atisara (Diarrhea)<sup>38</sup> is example for Vyadhi Viparita and Ushna Jwaragni Yavagu (hot and anti-pyretic gruel) in Seetha Jwara<sup>39</sup> is example for Ubhaya Viparita. For



Asatkaryavada, Vidahi Annam in Pacyamana Pitta Pradhana Sotha<sup>40</sup> is example for Hetu Viparita Arthakari, Virekakaarakam Ksheeram (purgative milk) in Atisara<sup>41</sup> is example for Vyadhi Viparita Arthakari and Madakaraka Madya in Madyapaanotha Madatyaya (Usage of intoxicating alcohol against alcoholism caused by consumption of alcohol)<sup>42</sup> is example for Ubhaya Viparita Arthakari.

**5. Chikitsa:** Chikitsa has been broadly classified as Hetu-VyadhiViparita which is Prakritisamasamaveta (Satkaryavada) and HetuVyadhi Viparita Arthakari which is Vikrutivishamasamaveta (Asatkaryavada)<sup>43</sup>. For Satkaryavada, Sramsana (mild purgative) in Snigdghoshnenodita Paittika Gulma<sup>44</sup> is example for HetuViparita, Silajatu in Madhumeha (Diabetes Mellitus)<sup>45</sup> is example for VyadhiViparita and For Asatkaryavada, Madyapana in Madatyaya<sup>46</sup> is example for

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HetuViparita Arthakari, and Haritaki Prayoga in Atisara (purgative Haritaki in Diarrhea)<sup>47</sup> is example for VyadhiViparita Arthakari.

#### Conclusion:

Ayurveda has evolved with inputs from the philosophical thoughts existing during the time of its development. Satkaryavada and Asatkaryavada are one such principle which forms the framework of Ayurveda. Satkaryavada and Asatkaryavada are not contradictory theories instead are complementary to one another. These theories have been used in Ayurveda with a modification, so as to suit the purpose of treatment. Prakruti Sama Samaveta and Vikruti Vishama Samaveta are the two basic concept which follow Satkaryavada and Asatkaryavada respectively. These two concepts form the base of diagnostic– treatment principle in Ayurveda.

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