Role Of Ayurveda in Prevention of Communicable Diseases

Pratima Paudel, Shamsa Fiaz, Malashree S.G.

INTRODUCTION

The human civilization has progressed and developed to the extent of leading to a sophisticated life with latest gadgets evolved through science and technology. Humans have always been overpowering the lower class of living beings and ruling the world. But the diseases in the form of communicable or non-communicable have always been a threat for human existence and among these two,
Communicable diseases often go out of control due to contagious infection and rapid transmission. At present, due to the biotechnology, it is possible to control many infectious diseases like tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus etc. with the help of vaccinations and antimicrobial treatment, but the same is not effective against the emergence of a newer pathogen. For example, the current pandemic COVID-19, has taken lives of huge population even in developed countries with best health services. COVID-19 being a noble virus which is contagious and quickly spreads causing genetic mutation, the medical fraternity faced difficulty to control and manage it and therefore, the world has again looked back towards the traditional medicine and Ayurveda has emerged as a good substitute for prevention and control.

The Communicable diseases, epidemics and pandemics have been explained in Ayurveda as Aupasargika roga\(^1\), Janapadodhvansa\(^2\) and Maraka\(^3\) or Janamara\(^4\). Along with the explanation, the preventive measures and the treatment of those occurred are also well explained in Classics. When a disease is very fast spreading and difficult to control, Sthana Parityaga\(^5\) (leaving the place or staying in self isolation) has been explained in Ayurveda as a measure to prevent the healthy individuals from getting infected. Various measures of Vayu Shuddhi, Jala Shodhana etc have been well explained to prevent the spread of Air-borne and Water-borne diseases respectively in community level while for personal health protection and prevention, the use of Rasayana\(^6\) (for upliftment of Ojas\(^7\) and thus Vyadhikshamatva\(^8\)), Concept of Dinacharya\(^9\), Ratricharya, Ritucharya\(^10\), Sadvritta\(^11\), Swasthavritta, Adharaneeya vega\(^12\) etc have been explained.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This Literary review is attempted to highlight and correlate the Preventive aspect of communicable diseases described in Ayurveda Classics and modern preventive measures.

**Communicable Diseases**

A communicable (or infectious) disease is an illness due to the transmission of a specific infectious agent (or its toxic products) from an infected person, animal or inanimate source to a susceptible host, either directly or indirectly.\(^13\) They lead to around 14.7 million deaths worldwide (26% of global mortality) annually.\(^14\) Overcrowding, poor regional design and hygiene due to poverty, polluted water, unsafe food, rapid climatic changes, and natural disasters, can lead to favorable conditions for easier transmission of disease. An infectious agent may be transmitted from its natural reservoir to a susceptible host in different ways such as- Direct (direct contact, Droplet spread) and Indirect (Airborne, Vehicle borne or Vector borne).

Janapadodhvansa refers to a similar scenario where a large population of a particular area is afflicted with similar set of symptoms and illness which is probably highly infectious or communicable. Contamination of Vayu (Air), Jala (Water), Desha (Soil or place) and Kala (Climatic changes/ seasonal) are considered as the very responsible factors for Janapadodhvansha. The main cause of Janapadodhvansha is said Adharma\(^15\) which can be taken as a sin to self (Pragnyaparadha (committing some mistakes with ones knowledge) , Vegasandharana (controlling the natural urges), not following Dinacharya, Ratricharya, Ritucharya, Sadvritta etc) or to others (Dashavidha papakarma to other persons or animals or to the planet i.e. improper waste management leading to pollution and thus leading to various diseases.). Pertaining to the large number of casualties, Acharya Sushruta and Acharya Bhela termed Janapadodhvansha as Maraka and Janamara respectively. As a consequence of contamination of air, the symptoms like Kasa, Swasa (Respiratory symptoms), Vamathu (GI symptoms), Pratishhya (Allergic symptoms) and Jvara (fever/hyperpyrexia) are explained by Acharya Sushruta. Acharya Sushruta has also introduced the concept of Aupasargika roga as those diseases which are spread from person to person by repeated close contact, Droplet transmission, eating together (Salivary secretion), sharing bed (Sexual Transmission), Sharing clothes, Jewelry, Cosmetic products (Fomite borne).\(^10\) The diseases Kustha (Skin diseases), Jvara, Shosha and Netra-abhishyanda (contagious group of eye diseases) come under this category. Acharya Vagbhata coins the term Sanchari Roga for diseases with similar mode of transmission and gives example of eye and skin ailments.\(^16\)

**Prevention of Communicable Diseases**

The concept of prevention in community medicine is arranged in 3 stages; Primary (actions aimed at avoiding the manifestation of a disease), Secondary (early detection, screening, investigation and drug therapy) and Tertiary (Rehabilitation as per requirement. The aim of prevention is elimination of causative organism or prevention from its transmission along with reducing susceptibility of host (human) by proper nutrition and vaccination therefore minimizing the effect of any communicable disease.

With the time-tested medicines, Ayurveda aims towards the prevention of any affliction in first hand and then to the
treatment if any. Ayurveda considers Dhatu Samyata (homeostasis) as a state of well being and advices one to always work upon it. Concept of Ojas and Vyadhikshamatva stand similar to that of host immunity as per Ayurveda. Ojas is the essence of all the Dhatu while Vyadhikshamatva is the defense mechanism of body. Ayurveda accepts prevention as the first and cure as the second objective. The holistic science, Ayurveda accepts pharmacological means but also non-pharmacological ways like Yoga, pranayama, lifestyle improvement, and Sadwrittta for psychological, spiritual and social well-being. The concepts like Sutikagara (post partum ward), sthanaparityaga etc are said to enhance ones Ojas and Vyadhikshamatva.

The emerging nature of infectious agents is unforeseen therefore we have always been a threat to humans. The occurrence of epidemics, pandemics etc is unforeseen therefore we are normally not prepared to take those leading to devastating social and economic disruption. It takes time to discover and develop vaccines and treatment for any noble infectious diseases but from our end, strengthening the host immunity, and preventing the environmental transmission can be done. Rasayana potentiates ojas or in other words boosts the immune system, for example, it has been proved through various researches that intake of Amalki, Pippali, Haritaki, Shilajatu increases gamma globulins leading to increase in nonspecific resistance. Therefore, use of such Rasayanausadhis, implementation of Yoga and Pranayama into daily regimen and intake of healthy food and drinks need to be done. The appropriate lifestyle right from Brahma muhurta uttishteth (early rise from bed) to sleep at second prahara of ratri (early to bed and early to rise) is extremely beneficial in maintenance of healthy status.

CONCLUSION
The main motive of any branch of medicine is to benefit mankind. The conventional system of medicine which deals with post affliction has also given a special place for preventive aspect. The holistic science, Ayurveda accepts prevention as the first and cure as the second objective. Ayurveda not only implements pharmacological means but also non pharmacological ways like Yoga, pranayama, lifestyle improvement, and Sadwrittta for psychological, spiritual and social well-being. Among the four factors responsible for the development and transmission of infectious agent, Ritu (the favorable season) may not be under our control but Kshetra (Host body) can be made less susceptible by the measures told in Ayurveda. Ambu(Reservoir) can be destroyed by Vayu, Jala etc Shuddhi measures and Beeja (spores) can be removed by screening, isolating and treating any cases. Ayurveda thus needs to be implemented for “Swasthaya swasthya Rakshanam, Aturasyavikara prashamanam”.

Acknowledgements:- Nil
Conflict of Interest – None
Source of Finance & Support – Nil

ORCID
Pratima Paudel https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7847-9483

REFERENCES
1. Shastri AD, Sushruta Samhita with Ayurveda Tattva Sandipika Commentary by, Nidana Sthana, Chapter 5
12. Tripathi B, Nirmala Hindi Vyakhyaa on Astanga Hridaya of Vagbhata, Sutra Sthana, Chapter 4 Chowkhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, New Delhi 2019.
14. WHO estimates of Global Mortality from Infectious diseases 2001

**How to cite this article:** “Paudel P, Fiaz S, Malashree S.G Role Of Ayurveda In Prevention Of Communicable Diseases” *IRJAY*. [online] 2022; 5(5); 148-151.
Available from: https://irjay.com
DOI link: https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2022.5524