Critical Study Of Chakras W.S.R To Shaarir Vigyan In Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT: The chakras are center of energy thought to be nexus of metaphysical and/or biophysical energy residing in human body and provides passage for energy to enter and exit from body regulating all types of energy flow i.e., physical, mental, emotional and spiritual and are connected to the network of psychic channels called ‘Nadis’ which corresponds to nerves but are more subtle. They are thought to be located along a central, vertical axis (Sushumna) at front of the body. Their interaction and manifestation of these chakras in the body is facilitated mainly by Nervous and Endocrine system. Ayurveda and Yoga consider five Vaayus - Apana, Prana, Samana, Vyana and Udana which are the vital air, active in all human beings responsible for existence & life. Thus, each chakra corresponds with specific vaayu. These chakras and glands believed to work together in co-ordination. Disturbances in the subtle energy of these chakras gets manifested in the various diseases which are likely associated with corresponding glands and organs. That is why these chakras have its own importance in Ayurveda. These chakras are six in number – Muladhara Chakra, Svadhishtana Chakra, Manipura Chakra, Anahata Chakra, Vishuddha Chakra, Ajna Chakra. Since Tantra Sharira is briefly described in textbooks of Rachana and kriya Sharira mostly on functional and spiritual aspects, so to highlight structural and the functional correlation of Chakras in view point of Ayurvedic Shaarir Vigyan this study was initiated.

Key words – Ayurveda, Chakras, Shaarir Vigyan.
INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, Yoga and Tantra are originated from the Vedas, therefore they have same fundamental principles of anatomy, physiology and treatment of human body. Ayurveda is the science of Ayu (life). This Ayu is described as combination of Sharira (corporeal body), Indriya (sensomotor organs), Mana (mind) and Atma (soul) \[1\]. Each component has been given due importance of health and prevention of diseases. Among these, Acharaya Charak has given utmost importance to Sharira (body), as it is chief aspect on which all other things are based. On the other hand, they also said Satva (mind), Atma (soul) and Sharira (corporeal body), these three are like a pod; The Loka is sustained by their combination; they constitute the substratum of everything \[2\]. The mind occupies a very important place in this trio as much as the entire activities related to the body are controlled by it \[3\]. Body has more materialistic aspect while mind and soul have both materialistic and spiritual prospective. There is also the description of Doshas in Ayurvedic literature as they compose the body, which are basically the physiological entity through which the body performs its function \[4\]. Among them Vaayu is most important which governs all the functions of the body and also helps other doshas to perform their activities properly. This Vata is of five types named as- Prana, Udana, Vyana, Samana, Apana \[5\]. They are five important subsidiary nerve centres in the brain and spinal cord. These centres unconsciously control the catabolic activity of the sympathetic portion through the fibres of the parasympathetic and are anabolic in nature. These centres are called
shaktis of the chakras[6]. The word chakra is derived from “kriyategatirenena”; one which has the action of movement is called chakra. Chakra denotes a centre of power or energy (pran) [7]. These chakras mentioned in the Tantric literature are six in number – Muladhara chakra, swadhisthana chakra, Manipura Chakra, Anahata Chakra, Vishuddha Chakra, Ajana Chakra. These are independent on their assign function. Each chakra has shakti (nerve plexus) controlling its own activity. In addition, there is a universal Shakti (spinal cord) has the power of controlling all these chakras.[8]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVE –

1. To explore concept of chakras as defined in various scriptures of contemporary science.

2. Make them relatable and easily understandable through the rational mind in view point of physio-anatomical resemblance in both modern and Ayurveda.

3. To prove their significance in shaarir vigyan of Ayurveda.

MATERIAL AND METHOD-

For the material classical texts of Ayurveda viz. Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Astanga Hridaya and their teekas are used to clear the concept of Sharira and mana. Supportive texts of contemporary science and journals were also utilized to comprehend the ancient concepts. These conceptual materials from both the streams of knowledge were compared and analyzed critically.

LITERARY REVIEW- (A) Concept of chakras - Being subtle, although these Chakras are not visible through the sense organs, so they have been assumed to be associated with various colors, symbols, animals, deities, sounds, elements, etc. so as to make them more relatable and easily understandable through the rational mind. In Tantric and Yogic teachings, each Chakra is symbolized by a lotus flower having different number of petals, representing number of Nadis leading to and from the Chakra. Thus, each of these Chakras is associated with an element, a sensory organ, and an organ of action. Coming to vibration, each of five elements has a corresponding seed sound or Beeja Mantra, thereby giving these Chakras a specific sound vibration. These chakras are located in various portions of Sushumna namely Muladhara Chakra, Swadisthana Chakra, Manipura Chakra, Anahata
Chakra, Vishuddha Chakra, Ajna Chakra.\textsuperscript{[9]}

**Muladhara chakra** – Appearance: Like a lotus of four petals, situated two fingers above guda and one finger below the medra. Four fingers in width. Color: All the four petals are blood red. Mahabhuta: At the center of this lotus is present square region of prithvi. Beeja: Cryptic letter lam. Beeja bearer: Airavata (King of elephants).

**Swadhishthana Chakra** - The second chakra is situated at the base of the penis. It has six petals. Its stalk is called Swadhishthana, the color of lotus is blood red, its presiding adept is called bala and its goddess- Rakini. He who daily contemplates on this chakra becomes an object of love and adoration to all beautiful goddesses. He fearlessly recites the various Shastras and sciences unknown to him before.

**Manipura Chakra** - This third chakra is situated near the navel; it is of golden color having ten panels. Its presiding adept is called Rudra- The giver of all auspicious things and the presiding goddess of this place is called the most scared Lakini. When the person contemplates on this chakra, he gets the power of called the Patal Sidhi, the giver of constant happiness. He becomes the lord of desire, destroys the sower. He becomes lord of desires, destroys sorrows and diseases, cheats death, and can enter the body of another.

**Anahata Chakra** - In the heart, is the fourth Chakra, the Anahat. It has twelve petals. Its color is deep blood-red; it has the seed of Vayu, yam, and is a very pleasant spot. In this lotus is a flame called Vanlinga; by contemplating on this, one gets objects of the seen and the unseen universe. Its presiding adept is Pinaki, and the Kakini is its goddess. He who always contemplates on this lotus of the heart is eagerly desired by celestial maidens. He gets immeasurable knowledge, knows the past, present and future time; has clairaudience, clairvoyance and can walk in the air, whenever he likes.

**Vishuddha Chakra** - This Chakra situated in the throat, is the fifth, and is called the Vishuddha lotus. Its colour is like brilliant gold, and it is adorned with sixteen petals. Its presiding adept is called Chhagalanda, and its presiding goddess is called Sakini. He who always contemplates it, is truly the lord of the Yogis, and deserves to be called wise; by the meditation of this Vishuddha lotus, the Yogi at once understands the four Vedas with their mysteries.
Ajna Chakra - The two-petalled Chakra, called the Ajña, is situated between the two eye-brows, and has the letters h and ksh; its presiding adept is called Shukla Mahakala (the White Great Time); its presiding goddess is called Hakini. The wise anchorite, by knowing this, is never pulled down. This is the great light held secret in all the Tantras; by contemplating on this, one obtains the highest success, there is no doubt of it.

Sahasrara chakra - The lotus which is situated in the Brahmarandhra is called Sahasrara (the thousand-petalled). In the space in its center, dwells the moon. From the triangular place, elixir is continually exuding. This moon-fluid of immortality unceasingly flows through the Ida. The elixir flows in a stream – a continuous stream. Going to the left nostril, it receives from the Yogis the name of the “Ganges.” From the right-side portion of the Ajna lotus and going to the left nostril flows the Ida. It is here called Varana (the northward-flowing Ganges).

(B) Concept of shaarir - In Ayurveda, shaarir term is affiliated to both anatomical and physiological bhaav. Knowledge of both would make a complete Ayurvedic physician. There is so many definitions of Sharira in Ayurveda from different point of view. If Sharira word is described from structural point of view it says that erosion of body occurs continuously because of continuous movement. It acknowledges the catabolic and anabolic processes. when it comes to functional point of view it says body is composed of balanced function of tridoshas, saptdhaatu, and thirteen agnis. According to Acharya Charaka, Sharira is composed of panchmahabhoota and atma. Panchmahabhoota i.e Akash, vayu, agni, aap and prithivi are to be considered as basic elements of body. This body (Sharira) is again divided in various parts (ang-pratyanga) for detailed study. According to Acharaya Sushrut, body is composed of dosha, dhatu and mala. As in Ayurveda said everything is panchbhautaik in the world. So, these dosha, dhatu, mala are also panchbhautik. Among these three doshas, Vata dosha has prime control over all functions of body. It has five divisions. Firstly, Prana vata located in head and moves in the chest, throat supports mind, heart, sense organs and intelligence attends to expectoration, sneezing, belching, inspiration and swallowing. Udana Vata is situated in the chest it moves in the nose, umbilicus, throat helps in initiation of speech, effort,
enthusiasm, strength, color, memory. *Vyana Vata* located in the heart moves all over the body and is responsible for all type of activities. *Samana Vata* located near digestive fire moves in *kostha* with holds, digests, absorbs and eliminates the food. *Apana Vata* located near large intestine moves in the waist, bladder, genitals and is responsible for elimination of semen, menstrual fluid, faeces, urine, fetus. Importance of *mana* and *shira* is also described in Ayurvedic text. *Shira* is called as *uttamaanga* because it works as the control centre of all senses through which all activities of body is done. It is also considered as resides of *mana* and *vata*. Somewhere *marma* points are also described under the chakras which are also the part of *Sharira vigyan*.

**DISCUSSION**

As we studied earlier that our *Sharira* is divided mainly in to two parts known as *Sthoola Sharira* and *Sukshma* or *Linga Sharira*. The *Sthoola Sharira* can be studied with the help sense organ by *pratyaksha pramana* whereas *Sukshma Sharira* cannot be studied with naked eyes. It can be seen by *Gyana-chakshu* or *Tapa-chakshu*. It has the predominance of *mana*. It also needs *Sthoola Sharira* because it works as basic constituent in the formation of *sthoola Sharira*. As we know *satva, atma* and *Sharira* are the tripods of *Loka* to sustained, shows the importance of *mana* and *Sharira* both. Acharaya Bhel told that man resides in *shira* and *taalu* both. In between *tridoshas Vaayu* is defined as the controller and co-ordinator of *mana*, means *mana* works through the *vata*. It co-ordinates between *mana* and *indriyas* with the help of branches (*nadis*) arises from *shira*. That is why *Shira* is called *uttamanga* which controls all the *indriyas* to do the activities (catabolic and anabolic) in the body. This can be compared with the Nervous System of the body in modern anatomy. There is no description of *ida*, *pingla* and *shatchakras* in Ayurveda, but in *Tantric* literature, these all have too much elaboration surprisingly. As described in *Tantric* scriptures these *ida, pingla* and *shatchakras* all are situated out of the *shira* and their functions also partially free from brain but their coordinating centre resides in brain. In *Shat chakra Nirupana* told that *Meru* has three *nadis*, which start from neck outside of *shira* and goes up to the spinal cord. From out of three middle one is known as *Sushumna* (spinal cord) which gives rise to too many *nadis*. These *nadis* cross each other before their respective
endings and their origin in plexus of nerves called chakras. As we saw Vayu is prime controller and co-ordinator of body system and is of five kind. They are five important nerve centres in the brain and spinal cord. These centres unconsciously control the catabolic activity of the sympathetic portion through the fibres of parasympathetic and are anabolic in nature. These centres are called shaktis of the chakras. Every involuntary act is governed by these two set of fibres; when their activity is evenly balanced, their presence is not felt. When that balance is disturbed by over-activity of any of these fibres, the reflex centre is overstimulated to generate an impulse which carries information to the highest centre in the brain.[19]

As we know chakra means ‘wheel’ is thought to be an energy point or node in the subtle body. They are considered loci of life energy, thought to vitalize the physical body and to be associated with interaction of a physical, emotional and mental nature. The nervous system, together with the endocrine system controls and integrates the activities of the different part of the body to maintain the homeostasis during the rest and the exercise.[20] It has been now proved that the chief centres, where the knowledge of action and sensation is manifested, are located in the cortex of the brain. These centres both receiving i.e. sensory and directing i.e. motor, and have their subsidiary centres in the two large swellings called the basal-ganglia in each hemisphere of brain. They are known as thalamus and the corpus straitum. The hypothalamus works as the connecting link between nervous and endocrine system because it produces the hormone to stop and start the production of other hormones throughout the body.[21] In this way if we consider the site of endocrine glands and shatchakra in the body, individual chakra might be controlling endocrine glands present in the same area through vata.

CONCLUSION

By considering the above discussion we may conclude that-

1. In various scripture of Tantra and Yoga, Shatchakra are defined as the energy producing centres which are present in the subtle body. These are independent units carrying on their assigned functions. A universal Shakti (Kundalini) is controlling all these chakras along with their individual Shakti. We can say their spiritual and functional aspect is more defined.
2. When these chakras are compared with Ayurvedic and modern literature we find that there is a relation between shira, mana and vata which are the originator and controller of chakras and in modern can compare with nervous system and endocrine system of the body.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Chakra</th>
<th>Anatomical resemblance</th>
<th>Endocrinal resemblance</th>
<th>Physiological resemblance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Muladhara or Root Chakra</td>
<td>Coccygeal Ganglion and Pelvic Plexus</td>
<td>Gonads</td>
<td>Site of Apana Vayu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Swadhishtana or Sacral Chakra</td>
<td>Hypogastric, Abdominal and aortic plexus.</td>
<td>Testes and Ovaries</td>
<td>Site of Apana Vayu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Manipura or Solar Chakra</td>
<td>Lumbar or Epigastric Plexus.</td>
<td>Pancreas and Adrenal Glands.</td>
<td>Site of Samana Vayu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Anahata or Heart Chakra</td>
<td>Superficial and deep cardiac plexus.</td>
<td>Thymus</td>
<td>Site of Prana Vayu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Vishuddha or Throat Chakra</td>
<td>Pharyngeal and Laryngeal plexus</td>
<td>Thyroid and Parathyroid</td>
<td>Site of Udana Vayu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ajna Chakra or Brow Chakra</td>
<td>Cavernous plexus</td>
<td>Pituitary and Pineal Gland</td>
<td>Site of Prana Vayu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. However ancient Ayurveda do not have many references about them but still the concept of Chakra has got its own importance in Ayurvediya Shaarir Vigyana. As discussed, and conclude above these chakras are present along the Sushumna (spinal cord) and formed by the groups of nadi (plexuses), which clears somewhere the anatomy of nervous system. They function under the control of panchvaayus and controls the body and mind whether an individual is conscious or
Yoga Shastra has references about certain concepts and procedure to get control over these Chakras in order to bring the state of Dhatusamyata and to avoid the occurrence of any diseases thus signifying the importance of these Chakras in the body.

Acknowledgement:- Nil
Financial Assistant:- Nil
Conflict of interest :- Nil
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