

COVID-19: Interpretation in View of Our Ancestors

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Abstract

COVID-19 is standing as a serious problem in front of the human society. Not leaving any class, age, sex and religion the virus is causing panic among the human society at all levels. The Governments are highly alert and the people are making aware about the dreadful virus in all respects. The hospitals are being uplifted and even new hospitals are being established by the Govt. with war like promptness. The news channels and the print medias, leaving all other fields, are concentrating on publicity of news and facts about "Corona Virus" with the aim to make the individuals updated, aware, and conscious on the topic. The whole world is searching for prevention and cure of this virus borne ailments. But till now no information of success in this direction is published.

A new understanding and concept development about the disease is felt to be necessary to fight with the situation as the idea till now is not proved to be sufficient for the purpose.

It is admitted that, the origin of Ayurvedic system of medicine is very difficult to fix. The great Ayurvedic scholar Charaka mentions that, Ayurveda was advised by "Lord Brahma", the creator initially and was brought to the earth by the great sage "Punarvasu Atreya" for the benefit of the human society. In Charaka Samhita there is a condition of suffering of the people of a wide area (city/district/state/province) with a group of similar signs and symptoms irrespective of social position, economic status, age, sex, religion, culture etc. with the nomenclature "Janapad Dhwangsa" the cause of which is very difficult to confirm. But the situation has close similarity with the present problem of "Corona Virus Outbreak". Understanding the present endemic "COVID -19" in light of similar situations described in the Ayurvedic classics may help the scientists to search for fruitful preventive/curative medicine/measure for the benefit of the society.

Observing the classical description of the situation it is felt that, at present situation of crisis a discussion on the descriptions of "Janapad Dhwangsa" and other similar situations described by the Ayurvedic scholars will not be irrelevant.

Keywords: COVID-19; Crisis; Lord Brahma; Janapad Dhwangsa; Ayurvedic Scholars

Introduction

"Corona Virus" is seemed to be the common and dreadful global enemy of the human society now. It has proved it's character as "most difficult to win". Challenging the scientists it is engulfing the whole globe and causing loss of a huge number of human life. Till now no vaccine/medicine has come to the human reach to fight against the virus. The tireless effort of the expert scientists is being humiliated. The situation is seemed to become more serious and grievous.

The number of diseased and deceased is gradually increasing instead of the continuous effort to hold. Hence a new understanding on the disease is felt to be necessary.

Ayurveda, the time proved system dealing with the human health is bearing its character of "Bahujana Sukhaya, Bahujana Hitaya" (For the happiness and benefit of the mass people). Most of the concepts of the ancient scholars are remaining unexplained till now. A good number of quotes are considered to be unscientific due to non-availability of explanation.

"Janapad Dhwangsa" is one of such situations mentioned by the great scholar, the father of Indian Medicine, Charaka, which is very difficult to explain scientifically. But a detail study gives sufficient ground to simulate the present situation with it. It is also to be mentioned in this context that, in the other pioneer books of Ayurveda, viz. Susruta Samhita, Ashtanga Sangraha and Ashtanga Hridaya also mention some situations that can be simulated with the present situation.

"Janapad Dhwangsa" is a situation that causes illness of a huge number of population and also death of majority of them. This is also the dreadful character of "Corona Virus Infection". So, both the conditions can be co-related and a search for the preventive measure/cure can be started.

Considering the descriptions of the classics a discussion on the concepts is considered to be beneficial for the human society.

Aim of the Study

This is a literary research conducted with the below mentioned aims:

1. To study the Ayurvedic literatures, viz. Charaka Samhita, Susruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya and Ashtanga Samgraha in detail.
2. To identify the conditions mentioned by the Ayurvedic scholars that can be simulated with the present situation "COVID-19".
3. To search for the preventive measures of the classical situations as mentioned in the classics.
4. To search for the treatment principles of the situation/situations as per classical conditions including diet, regimen, drugs etc.
5. To discuss the findings with justification for application in the present situation.
6. To try to prepare a protocol for prevention and treatment of the present situation basing upon the classical references.

Materials and Methods

Charaka Samhita, Susruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya and Ashtanga Sangraha were vividly studied in Central Library, Govt. Ayurvedic College, Guwahati-781014, Assam, India. The findings were arranged accordingly as mentioned in the "Aim of the Study" and finally presented as a scientific article.

At the time of presentation of the article the following things were kept in view:

1. Special attention was given on the situations/diseases described in the classics that can be co-related with the present situation.
2. Principles of management of the described conditions were considered in view of the present situation and their expected effectiveness were also kept in mind.

Observation and Result

From the study the below mentioned observations were noted.

Simulation:

1. The present situation, "Corona Virus Infection" has got close similarity with "Janapad Dhwangsa" [1]. This is a situation when a huge number of people irrespective of age, sex, religion, profession etc. develop same signs and symptoms which commonly ends at a fatal outcome.
2. The situation of induced poisoning by the enemy during war by using poison (Bisha) to cause contamination of grass (trina), water (jala), soil (bhumi -marga), food (anna) and air (vayu- dhuma, swasana) has got close similarity with the present situation by signs and symptoms [2].

Preventive and curative measures

1. Rejuvenation therapy (Rasayana chikitsa) [3].
2. Maintenance of mental health specially by following the codes of good conduct [4].
3. Purification of water, soil, grass and food and air by prescribed measures [5].
4. Use of mudga [6] (*Phaseolus mungo*), kulattha (*Dolichos biflorus*) [7], sangbatsaroshita dhanya [8] (one year old rice) as food.
5. Use of Tulasi [9] (*Ocimum album/sanctum*), Lashun [10] (*Allium sativum*), Draksha [11] (*Vitis vinifera*), Ardraka [12] (*Zingiber officinalis*), Gold water [13] (water prepared by dipping gold in water), Trikatu [14] (combination of dry *Zingiber officinalis*, *Piper longum* and *Piper nigrum*), Guggulu [15] (*Balsamodendron mukul*), Shirish [16] (*Albizia lebbek*).

Discussion

Observing the informations collected from the classics the following interpretations can be drawn:

1. Present situation "COVID-19" outbreak can be closely co-related with "Janapad Dhwangsa" as mentioned by Charaka by definition as both are characterized by "rapid outbreak of same signs and symptoms among the people of a large area/city/district/state/province/continent irrespective of age, sex, religion, profession etc". Corona virus is affecting a major population of the globe.
2. Among the signs and symptoms of exposure to poisonous water, soil, food and air it is observed that, the signs and symptoms of poisonous air has got close similarity with the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Like the COVID-19 exposure to poisonous air (Bishadushita Vayu) also causes cough (kas), excessive sneez with rhinorrhoea (pratishyaya) and headache (sirahshoola).

3. Any disease can be prevented by body resistance. Any deficit in resistance facilitates invasion of external disease causing agents (infection). Body and mind has got close relation. A weak minded person, even having a strong and stout body, may not be able to resist infection. Hence a strong mind is always necessary to prevent the diseases due to external factors. A strong mind can be developed only by following the rules of "Good conduct".
4. In the present situation air purification can be considered applicable as though not said as an air borne disease then also there is role of air in spreading "corona virus". For air purification the smoke of laksha (Shell lac), haridra (*Curcuma longa*), ativisha (*Aconitum heterophyllum*), tagara (*Valeriana hardwickii*), kustha (*Saussurea lappa*) etc. can be used as mentioned in the Ayurvedic classics. Considering the selter and spread of the virus spraying of the preparation as mentioned in Susruta Samhita can be considered to be beneficial.
5. As the role of immunity boosting to fight against COVID-19 cannot be denied therefore use of mudga (*Phaseolus mungo*), kulattha (*Dolichos biflorus*), sangbatsaroshita dhanya (one year old rice) can be considered as beneficial food both in healthy and diseased state.
6. As the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 closely indicate it's affinity towards the respiratory tract, considering the qualities and properties like hikkanashak (cures hiccough), kasnashak (cures cough) and swasnashak (cures breathing difficulty) of tulasi, lashun, draksha, ardrak, gold, trikatu, guggulu, shirish etc. it can be said that, for prevention and treatment of the present dreadful corona virus infection these drugs can be used in single or combined form.

The Department of AYUSH, Govt. of India, basing upon the Ayurvedic classical references, has already given some instructions to the people to follow as regular habit with an aim to prevent the spread of the infection. Yoga practice, Diet, Drink (drinking of warm water etc.), regular use of Rasayana (Chyavanprash) etc. are the important components of the instructions. Outcome of these instructions is awaited.

Summary and Conclusion

As summary it can be said that:

1. Like in present time, in the past also there were some conditions that caused suffering and fatal sequence among a huge number of people.
2. The scholars working for the human benefit, specially in the field of health science, observed and studied the situation with special reference to aetiology, signs - symptoms, preventive measures and treatment and found out many facts.
3. From their observations and study the Ayurvedic scholars identified some food, behavior and drugs for the benefit of the human society, specially in the situations causing suffering among a large number of people.
4. From the classical references it can be postulated that, the facts mentioned in the Ayurvedic classics about Janapad Dhwangsa (epidemics/endemics/pandemics) and Bishadushita Vayu, Bhumilakshana can give a way of remedy to the human society against COVID-19.

As the conclusion it can be stated that, "Scientific study on the facts mentioned in the Ayurvedic classics can be considered as the need of the hour and effort should be applied to evaluate them properly".

From the study “scientific evaluation of the concepts of the Ayurvedic classics” can be forwarded as recommendation to the modern researchers.

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