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A critical evaluation of *vyadhi kshamatva* (immunity) in *charak samhita sutrasthan*: a *karya-karana siddhanta* perspective

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ABSTRACT

The notion of *Vyadhi Kshamatva* (immunity), as articulated in the *Charak Samhita Sutrasthan*, aligns intricately with the doctrine of *Karya-Karana Siddhanta* (cause-and-effect principle), one of the fundamental philosophical underpinnings of *Ayurveda*. This theory states that every outcome (*Karya*) is rooted in specific causes (*Karana*), thereby offering a logical framework to understand immunity and disease resistance. Examining *Vyadhi Kshamatva* through this lens makes it possible to identify causative elements, trace mechanisms of disease prevention, and design approaches to strengthen natural defense. The present paper explores the theoretical foundation, types, contributing factors, and clinical applications of *Vyadhi Kshamatva* within the *Karya-Karana Siddhanta*, while also drawing connections to modern perspectives on immunity.

Keywords: *Vyadhi Kshamatva*, *Karya-Karana Siddhanta*, *Ojas*, *Agni*, *Bala*, *Ayurveda*, *Charak Samhita*, *Rasayana*

INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurveda*, *Vyadhi Kshamatva*—the

intrinsic ability of the body to resist disease and maintain equilibrium—plays a central role in both preventive and therapeutic domains. The *Charak Samhita Sutrasthan* (*Sutra* 28/6–7) defines it not only as the capacity to ward off illnesses but also as the ability to curtail their progression and prevent recurrence. Unlike modern biomedicine, which largely attributes immunity to cellular and molecular functions, *Ayurveda* views it as a holistic outcome influenced by *Ojas*, *Agni*, *Bala*, *Satmya*, and the harmony of mind, body, and environment.

When interpreted through the *Karya-Karana Siddhanta*, immunity emerges as the result of multiple causes. Balanced diet, disciplined routine, mental stability, appropriate adaptation to climate, and avoidance of disease-causing factors are all integral to this framework. Hence, immunity is not a static defense mechanism but a dynamic interplay of inherent and acquired qualities shaped by causal influences.

KARYA-KARANA SIDDHANTA AND VYADHI KSHAMATVA

According to *Ayurveda*, no effect exists

without a cause (*Na hi kaschit dravyam karanarahitam bhavati*). Thus, *Vyadhi Kshamatva* must be seen as an outcome (*Karya*) shaped by several categories of causes (*Karana*). The *Karya-Karana Siddhanta* provides clarity by classifying these causal relationships into distinct types.

1. SAMAVAYI KARANA (INHERENT/MATERIAL CAUSE)

Samavayi Karana is the inseparable cause directly responsible for the presence of an effect. In the context of immunity, *Ojas* is considered the *Samavayi Karana* of *Vyadhi Kshamatva*. Strong and untainted *Ojas* ensures resilience, vitality, and longevity, while depletion leads to vulnerability and disease proneness. Protection of *Ojas* requires a wholesome diet (*Ahara*), balanced daily regimen (*Vihara*), sufficient rest, and regular use of rejuvenative (*Rasayana*) therapies such as *Guduchi* and *Ashwagandha*.

2. ASAMAVAYI KARANA (NON-INHERENT CAUSE)

Asamavayi Karana refers to a supportive cause that aids the manifestation of an effect but is not inherently inseparable from it. *Agni* (digestive and metabolic fire) acts as an *Asamavayi Karana*, as it ensures proper assimilation and maintenance of *Ojas*. Impaired *Agni* leads to *Ama* (toxic residue), which obstructs bodily channels and undermines immunity. Strengthening *Agni* through *Deepana* (stimulation), *Pachana* (detoxification), and seasonal dietary regulation is essential.

3. NIMITTA KARANA (INSTRUMENTAL CAUSE)

Nimitta Karana encompasses indirect or external causes that shape an effect. In relation to *Vyadhi Kshamatva*, nutrition,

behavior, psychological state, and environment are key *Nimitta Karanas*. Examples include observing *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) to stay aligned with environmental changes, maintaining hygiene to reduce exposure to pathogens, and cultivating mental composure to protect *Ojas* and prevent immune suppression.

CLASSIFICATION OF VYADHI KSHAMATVA UNDER KARYA-KARANA SIDDHANTA

Based on the *Karya-Karana* framework, *Vyadhi Kshamatva* can be categorized into three distinct types:

1. Sahaja Vyadhi Kshamatva (Innate Immunity – Samavayi Karana)

The inborn capacity to resist disease, determined by constitution (*Prakriti*) and inherited *Ojas*. It may be strengthened through breastfeeding, proper early nutrition, and the use of gentle *Rasayanas*.

2. Kalaja Vyadhi Kshamatva (Time-dependent Immunity – Asamavayi Karana)

Immunity that changes with age, seasons, and phases of life, influenced by developmental processes and seasonal variations. Observance of *Dinacharya* (daily routine), *Ritucharya*, and lifestyle modifications helps maintain balance.

3. Yuktikruta Vyadhi Kshamatva (Acquired Immunity – Nimitta Karana)

Immunity gained through conscious practices such as diet, exercise, *Rasayana* herbs, yoga, meditation, and *Panchakarma* therapies.

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF VYADHI KSHAMATVA IN THE LIGHT OF KARYA-KARANA SIDDHANTA

The practical application of *Vyadhi Kshamatva* under the *Karya-Karana Siddhanta* can be observed in the following

ways:

1. Early Diagnosis and Prevention

Detecting disturbances in *Agni*, depletion of *Ojas*, or poor lifestyle choices allows preventive strengthening before illness manifests.

2. Individualized Care

The evaluation of *Samavayi*, *Asamavayi*, and *Nimitta* causes facilitates personalized regimens according to *Prakriti* and environmental conditions.

3. Holistic Disease Management

A therapeutic blend of dietary adjustments, lifestyle corrections, mental well-being, and *Rasayana* application ensures comprehensive immune support.

4. Public Health and Pandemics

Emphasis on *Nimitta Karana*—hygiene, dietary immunity boosters, stress management, and social conduct—has strong relevance during epidemics and pandemics.

LINKING KARYA-KARANA SIDDHANTA WITH MODERN IMMUNOLOGY

The traditional framework of *Vyadhi Kshamatva* shows striking parallels with modern immunological insights:

- ***Samavayi Karana* (*Ojas*)** corresponds to innate immunity, genetic strength, and constitutional robustness.
- ***Asamavayi Karana* (*Agni*)** aligns with gut health, microbiota balance, and metabolic fitness.
- ***Nimitta Karana* (Lifestyle, Environment)** reflects vaccination, hygiene, stress reduction, and preventive healthcare practices.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS ON VYADHI KSHAMATVA

1. Mind-Body Relationship

Emotional disturbances such as anger, grief, and fear weaken *Ojas* and thereby immunity. Modern psychoneuroimmunology confirms the impact of stress on immune suppression, validating *Ayurvedic* insights.

2. Concept of *Bala* (Strength)

Sahaja Bala (innate strength), *Kalaja Bala* (time-related strength), and *Yuktikruta Bala* (acquired strength) closely correspond with the three types of immunity discussed earlier.

3. *Rasayana* Therapy

Herbs like *Amalaki*, *Guduchi*, and *Ashwagandha* serve as *Rasayana*, rejuvenating tissues and promoting immune resilience. Contemporary studies show their immunomodulatory, antioxidant, and adaptogenic actions.

4. Public Health Perspective

The *Ayurvedic* principle of *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoidance of causative factors) parallels modern strategies of disease prevention such as vaccination, sanitation, and lifestyle regulation.

CONCLUSION

Applying the *Karya-Karana Siddhanta* to *Vyadhi Kshamatva* reveals immunity as a multifactorial outcome influenced by inherent, supportive, and external causes. Sustaining *Ojas*, nurturing *Agni*, strengthening *Bala*, and following disciplined regimens collectively ensure resilience against disease. *Ayurveda's* triadic causal model—*Samavayi*, *Asamavayi*, and *Nimitta*—clarifies classical thought while offering parallels to modern scientific paradigms. Ultimately, *Vyadhi Kshamatva* represents not only biological defense but a state of harmony encompassing physical vitality, mental balance, and adaptation to nature. This timeless concept continues to

guide preventive health and integrative medicine even today.

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