

## TRISUTRA: A FUNDAMENTAL APPROACH TO DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT IN AYURVEDA

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### ABSTRACT

The fundamental aim of Ayurveda is to preserve *Dhatusamyā*, which implies health. Towards the path of healthy wellbeing, Ayurveda focuses on the many principles and concept of *Trisutra* is one of them. This concept comprises *Hetu*, *Linga* and *Aushadha*. These three principles form the basis of both the preservation of health in the healthy and the treatment of diseases in the sick. *Hetu* are the causal factors of health maintenance as well as etiologic factors of disease. *Linga*, in a healthy person, denotes physical and mental health, evaluated by the various *Pariksha*, which determines the normal constitution and health status of an individual. In a patient, *Linga* encompasses cardinal or fatal symptoms of disease. *Aushadha* includes activities aimed at maintaining and enhancing health in a healthy individual and therapeutic intervention in a sick individual through either *Shodhana* or *Shamana* therapies. The aim of this research is to explore utility of concept of *Trisutra*.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda*, *Samhita Siddhanta*, *Trisutra*, *Swastha*, *Linga*.

### INTRODUCTION

The key objective of Ayurveda is to sustain *Dhatusamyā*, which is the key to wellness. For its achievement, Ayurveda delineates the principle of *Trisutra*; *Hetu*, *Linga* and *Aushadha* which forms the very basis for sustaining health in the healthy and treating disease in the sick. This indicates that *Trisutra* is relevant to both *Swastha* and *Atura*, and lies deep within Ayurvedic wisdom. The *Trisutra* principle is presented right at the outset of classical Ayurvedic texts, such as the *Charaka Samhita*.<sup>[1-3]</sup> This is because each concept, principle, and process in Ayurveda naturally comprises three basic elements; *Hetu*, *Linga* and *Aushadha*. *Hetu* described causes of disease; *Linga* denotes characteristic features and *Aushadha* potential solutions or effects. The order of presentation of these elements is most important, in that it happens in a logically ordered process of understanding.<sup>[3-5]</sup>

### HETU

The word *Hetu* includes meanings like cause, argument, purpose, reason for inference and mainly etiological factors of disease. In Ayurveda, it has a different meaning in a different context. If used for describing diseases, *Hetu* means their causes, and if for concepts, it means the reasoning or the logic behind their creation.

Proper understanding of *Hetu* is required to grasp theoretical as well as practical components of Ayurveda. If all these aspects are not accepted, Ayurvedic knowledge remains incomplete.

Reason is important in framing Ayurvedic principles so that they are logically meaningful and coherent. It is realized by understanding *Pramanas* and is the foundation of all scientific thought. *Hetu's* clear understanding makes it easier to value Ayurvedic principles, so they become acceptable and usable. Acceptance and comprehension of them make viable for implementation and, ultimately, to produce hoped-for health improvements. This logical rationale is the basis of *Shastrartha*. According to Ayurveda, *Hetu* is differentiated into three groups as depicted in **Figure 1**.<sup>[4,6]</sup>

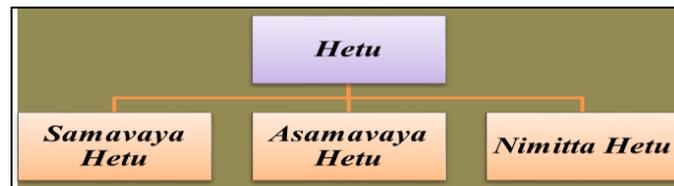


Figure 1: Various types of Hetu.

As mentioned above *Samavaya Hetu* is inherent or intrinsic cause, *Asamavaya Hetu* means indirect cause and *Nimitta Hetu* resembles external or instrumental cause. Besides, *Hetu* also categorized depending on how it acts to promote health or disease. *Trividha Nidana* includes.

*Kala* as seasonal and life-stage factors, *Indriyartha* as sensory factors and *Karma* denotes behavioral aspects.

Ayurvedic scholars define *Hetu* as the *Beeja* which either supports good health or becomes causes of disease. *Upyogi Hetu* is the primary determinant in maintaining *Dhatusamyā*, consisting of two main components; *Adharabhuta Hetu*, which include the mind and body, and *Sahakari Hetu* which encompass environmental and external influences. The key aspects of *Upyogi Hetu* for sustaining health involve *Samayoga*, or the proper alignment of *Indriya* with their respective *Artha*; *Pragya*, which refers to the balance of *Dhi*, *Dhriti* and *Smriti*, along with the equilibrium of *Doshas*; and *Parinam*, or adaptability to *Ritukala* and *Aharakala*. Conversely, factors leading to disease are classified under *Utpadaka Hetu*, which is further divided into *Samvayi Hetu* and *Nimitta Hetu*. *Samvayi Hetu* pertains to internal imbalances caused by *Ayoga*, *Atiyoga* or *Mithyayoga* of sensory functions, intellect, or time. *Nimitta Hetu*, on the other hand, refers to external influences specific to each disease, including diet, lifestyle habits, and environmental factors that negatively impact health.<sup>[5-7]</sup>

### LINGA

The *Linga* principle identifies the identifying features of a concept, condition, or disease in context. *Linga* is a word used to denote symptoms, signs, marks, or features. Whereas *Hetu* describes the reason for a happening or a state, *Linga* gives us a system for detecting and assessing it. Knowledge of *Linga* is essential to reach *Aushadha*, the curative side of Ayurveda. Ayurveda explains health in terms of perceptible signs. In disease state *Linga* signifies three types of symptoms resulting from *Dosha* imbalance as mentioned below<sup>[6-8]</sup>

- ✓ *Samanya Lakshana*: General symptoms prevailing in most diseases.
- ✓ *Vishishta Lakshana*: Specific symptoms characteristic of a disease.
- ✓ *Arishtha Lakshana*: Symptoms indicating a fatal outcome.

For instance, fever has general symptoms of weakness and loss of appetite as *Samanya Lakshana*, heat or burning sensation in *Pittaja Jwara* manifested as

*Vishishta Lakshana* and high morning fever along with wasting of muscles in terminal stages is an example of *Arishtha Lakshana*. *Lakshana* supports diagnosis, prognosis and planning for treatment. Minor symptoms represent a favorable prognosis, whereas intermediate or severe symptoms indicate a worsening prognosis. It is not possible to diagnose accurately or treat without having a clear concept of *Lakshana*, hence it is an integral part of *Trisutra* Ayurveda which play key role in disease management.<sup>[7-9]</sup>

### AUSHADHA

The final aim of analysis is to define the right remedy or solution, which can be done only when the other two principles, namely *Hetu* and *Linga* are mastered. Medicines designed to preserve health or to heal disease, divided into *Shodhana* and *Shamana*. *Aushadha*, being a *Karana* in Ayurveda, includes diet, habits, and drugs for prevention and cure. Ayurvedic literature describes a number of principles for health preservation, such as *Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana*, adherence to seasonal and daily regimens, and the regulation of suppressible and non-suppressible desires play a crucial role in maintaining health.<sup>[8-10]</sup>

*Swasthavritta* and the prevention of dietetic incompatibilities further contribute to overall well-being. Additionally, exercise and lifestyle should be adapted according to one's *Prakriti*, while mental control can be achieved through *Sadvritta* and *Achara Rasayana*. Strengthening *Ojas* is essential, which can be accomplished through seasonal *Panchakarma* and *Rasayana* therapies. From a therapeutic perspective, Ayurveda classifies treatments into *Shodhana* and *Shamana*, with greater emphasis on *Shodhana*. Furthermore, therapies are individualized based on three key principles including *Hetu-Viparita*, *Vyadhi-Viparita* and therapy based on the severity of disease.

Ayurveda classifies medicinal interventions into several broad categories based on their source and function. *Ahara* emphasizes the role of food as medicine, considering both wholesome and unwholesome dietary choices. *Aushadhi* includes both single-drug formulations and complex herbal compositions for therapeutic use. *Kashta Aushadha* refers to remedies derived from plant sources, such as *Churna*, *Kwatha* and *Avaleha*. In contrast, *Rasa Aushadha* incorporates mineral-based preparations like *Bhasma* and specialized *Kupipakwa* medicines. *Rasayana* drugs focuses on enhancing vitality and longevity, utilizing herbs like *Guduchi*, *Ashwagandha* and *Amalaki*, etc.<sup>[1,5,10]</sup>

**CONCLUSION**

The *Trisutra* principle of *Hetu*, *Linga* and *Aushadha* is the basis of Ayurvedic philosophy, which governs both health maintenance and disease treatment. *Hetu* is concerned with knowing the causative factors of disease, *Linga* with recognizing symptoms for proper diagnosis and *Aushadha* with the tools for healing and prevention. This methodical approach guarantees a rational and efficient approach in Ayurveda, supporting its holistic and individualized treatment modalities. By incorporating these principles, Ayurveda maintains its core objective of maintaining *Dhatusamyā*, thus enhancing wellness and longevity.

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