

AYURVEDIC CONCEPT OF IMMUNITY AS VIKARA VIGHAT BHAVA

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary era, characterized by fast-paced lifestyles and increasing environmental challenges, there has been a notable rise in the prevalence of communicable diseases and autoimmune disorders. While modern medicine has developed a complex understanding of the immune system, Ayurveda offers its own conceptual framework to explain the body's defence mechanisms. In Ayurvedic philosophy, the ultimate goal of any medical system is the attainment and maintenance of health, which is achieved through the equilibrium of bodily constituents. Health (*Swasthya*) is defined as a state of balance among the *Doshas* (biological energies), *Agni* (digestive/metabolic fire), *Dhatus* (tissues), and *malas* (waste products), along with the harmony of the mind, senses, and consciousness (*prasanna atma indriya manah*). One of the foundational concepts in Ayurveda related to immunity is *Vikara Vighata Bhava*, which refers to the inherent resistance of an individual against disease formation. This principle explains the variability in disease susceptibility among individuals

based on multiple factors such as *Nidana* (causative factors), *Dosha* (vitiating bio-elements), and *Dushya* (affected tissues). The presence (*bhava*) or absence (*abhava*) of these pathological factors influences the body's ability to resist disease. This article aims to explore the concept of *Vikara Vighata Bhava* in relation to human immune status, bridging Ayurvedic thought

with contemporary understanding of immune function.

KEYWORDS: Immunity, Vikara Vighata Bhava-Abhava.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, the manifestation of disease is understood as a result of the interaction between specific causative factors known as *Nidanadi Vishesha*. These include *Nidana*, *Dosha* (bodily humors), and *Dushya* (susceptible tissues). For a disease to manifest, a strong association among these factors is required. However, the body's natural immunity, termed *Vyadhikshamatwa*, plays a vital role in counteracting this process. It functions by opposing the strength and progression of disease (*Vyadhi Bala Virodhitwam*) and inhibiting the formation of disease-causing elements (*Vyadhyutpad Pratibhandakatwam*).

Ayurveda also emphasizes the importance of *Satva* in disease resistance. *Acharya Charaka* categorizes individuals based on their ability to resist illness—*Vyadhisahani* (those with strong resistance) and *Vyadhyasahani* (those with weak resistance). Individuals with a strong physique, balanced diet, positive habits, and robust mental health are less likely to fall ill. In contrast, people with a weak body, poor diet, and negative mental states such as anger, jealousy, or fear are more prone to diseases.

Moreover, mental health significantly influences physical health. *Ayurveda* acknowledges that thoughts act as chemical signals in the body—positive emotions enhance immunity, while negative emotions can deteriorate it. A healthy lifestyle that includes *Ahara Sampat* (nourishing food), *Satmya Sampat* (adaptation to suitable environments), and strong psychological resilience strengthens overall immunity (*Bala*). Individuals with well *Dhatu Sara* are especially protected against specific diseases, showing how mind-body balance and preventive care are central to *Ayurvedic* understanding of health and disease. The term *Vikar* refers to illness or any kind of bodily imbalance. *Vighat* implies resistance, disruption, or neutralization. *Bhava* denotes a condition, characteristic, or presence.

Together, *Vikaar Vighat Bhava* describes the body's intrinsic capacity or quality that prevents the onset of disease, even in the presence of external or internal causes that might typically lead to illness.

Ayurveda classifies immunity into three main types

1. *Sahaja Bala* (Inborn Immunity)

- This is the natural resilience a person is born with.
- It's associated with genetics and one's inherent constitution (*Prakriti*).

2. *Kalaja Bala* (Time-Dependent Immunity)

- This form of immunity changes based on age, seasonal shifts, and time of day.
- For instance, immunity tends to be lower during childhood, old age, or during seasonal transitions.

3. *Yuktikrita Bala* (Acquired Immunity)

- This type of immunity is cultivated through a balanced diet, a healthy lifestyle, and the use of rejuvenate therapies like *Rasayana*.
- It can be actively developed through conscious practices.

Factors Influencing *Vikaar Vighat Bhava*

Several elements contribute to the body's disease-resisting strength in *Ayurveda*:

- ***Ojas*** – The vital essence derived from all *Dhatu*, regarded as the cornerstone of immunity.
- ***Agni*** – Proper digestion promotes robust tissue formation and defence against illness.
- ***Dosha Harmony*** – Maintaining the correct balance among *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* ensures overall well-being.
- **Mental Well-being** – A calm and balanced mental state is essential for supporting immune health.
- ***Ahara & Vihara* (Diet and Lifestyle)** – Consistent daily routines and nutritious food choices play a critical role in sustaining immunity.

From a modern standpoint, *Vikaar Vighat Bhava* can be likened to the synergy between

- Innate immune mechanisms
- Acquired (adaptive) immunity

Ayurveda focus on equilibrium, natural rhythms, and preventive care offers timeless insights—especially relevant in today's world of chronic diseases, environmental stressors, and mental health challenges.

DISCUSSION

Disease arises from the interaction of specific causative factors, while strong immunity (*Vyadhikshamatwa*) and mental resilience (*Satva*) prevent disease onset. *Charaka* classifies individuals by disease resistance. Positive thoughts, wholesome habits, and well-nourished tissues enhance immunity, while negative emotions, poor diet, and weak constitution increase susceptibility to disease.

In this context, whether or how a disease arises depends on how etiological causes interact with the body's *Doshas* and *Dushya*, and whether the individual has sufficient resistance factors. Timing also matters. For instance, if the etiological triggers are mild, the *Dosha* and *Dushya* counterbalance each other, and temporal influences are minimal, disease may either not develop or be significantly delayed. Even when symptoms do appear under these conditions, their intensity tends to be low, and not all typical signs fully materialize. In short, the interplay—and presence or absence—of these key factors determines whether the body can effectively ward off disease.

CONCLUSION

The interaction among *Nidanadi Vishesha* is essential for the development of a disease. However, it is the presence or absence of *Vikara Vighata Bhava* that either prevents or allows this interaction, influencing the progression of disease. Treatment focuses on two main principles: *Nidana Parivarjan* (avoiding the causative factors) and *Samprapti Vighatana* (disrupting the disease process). For effective treatment, a physician must thoroughly understand the disease pathogenesis, the factors influencing it, and the strength of both the *Dosha* and the patient's overall condition. Additionally, understanding the specific presence or absence of *Vikara Vighata Bhava* is crucial for assessing disease progression, determining *Sadhyasadhyatwa* (prognosis), and selecting the most appropriate therapeutic approach.

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