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## An appraisal on Environmental Health and Janpad-udhvansa

**Pillewan S.**

Professor, Kayachikitsa Department

M. S. Ayurvedic College Hospital and Research Institute, Gondia.

### Abstract:

The branch of public health concerned with monitoring or mitigating those factors in the environment that affect human health and disease is called environmental health. According to the theory of "global warming," the ambient temperature is rising faster than it should be. This is having an impact on the environment in a number of ways, including the entry of UV rays, ozone depletion, and the greenhouse effect, which is both a cause and a result of global warming and creates a cycle that is very difficult to break. In Charak Samhita purvardh, in the section of Vimana sthana, chapter 3, the topic of janpad udhvansa is taken and explained in extreme detail along with the causes and all the factors included. Our ancestors have instilled practices like yagnya (purification of the environment through the smoke of purifying drugs), japa (flow of positive and healing sounds in the environment that pours such energy in the environment that everyone feels energized after reading or chanting those japas), the Dincharya, Rutucharya. (For a proper schedule that increases your immunity levels, and strengthens the body internally which then leads to the proper functioning of the body comparatively unaffected by the surroundings.)

**Keywords:** Dincharya, Rutucharya, japas, yagnya etc.

### Corresponding Author:

**Dr. Surekha Pillewan**

Professor

Kayachikitsa Department

M. S. Ayurvedic College Hospital and Research Institute, Gondia.

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**Introduction:**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the world is facing a notably important crisis regarding the environment that is surrounding us, the environment is a major part of our life which gives us the air we breathe, the land we get to live on, the food that we eat, and in today's world this environment of ours is ruined with various factors that are affecting the quality of our surroundings and thus our health as well. Our main aim with this article is to identify the importance of the environment and how is our environment affected by our actions, what can be done for its betterment, and how are all these things mentioned and tackled within our classical texts. The first question that comes up is, what exactly is environmental health? To understand this, the definition that is given is, "the branch of public health concerned with monitoring or mitigating those factors in the environment that affect human health and disease is called environmental health", so by the term "environmental health" and its definition, it is understood that any factor of environment that in any manner can affect the human health in a good or the bad way is said to be environmental health, but, one more point of view of the same term is that it represents that "what is the status of health of the environment itself as a whole, which includes forests, air quality, water quality, and everything else included in the environment and what are the effects of the human actions on the environment". If we look into this mutually, the two definitions when put together shows that what is the effect of mutual interaction between the two, like "what is the effect of environment on humans and humans on the environment".

This is how environmental health is explained.

**Status of environmental health in the 21st Century**

In the 21st century, the status of environmental health is not exactly healthy as might be said, there are some extremely severe environmental damages or changes being faced by the people in the 21st century and these problems even have the strength to change the course of life on this planet. Some of the most severe environmental challenges faced by people are as follows- global warming, toxic waste, water pollution, air pollution, acid rain, and shrinking energy supplies. When these are confrontations in front of everyone regarding the environment, their effect on human beings is even more dangerous. This is how human beings are affected by the above-mentioned changes in the environment-

**Global warming-** Global warming is a concept that states that the overall temperature of the surroundings is increasing more than normal and all of this is affecting the environment in several manners like, entering of the UV rays, ozone depletion, and the greenhouse effect, where the greenhouse effect is a cause of global warming as well as a by-product of global warming as well that creates a vicious cycle that is so difficult to break. This sudden and high increase in temperature then leads to various other factors like rapid melting of glaciers, increase in sea levels, leading to floods and other natural calamities at a much faster pace than normal, another important and devastating factor in it comes with the fact that even the seasons are not normal, the seasonal variations are so evident. All of these are the

result of just one of the challenges being faced, others that follow are much more.

**Toxic waste-** toxic waste, as the term suggests represents all those types of waste that are harmful to human health, i.e., radioactive waste or non-decomposable waste, etc. all these waste are toxic to human health in many ways, such as radioactive waste can lead to various diseases. The definition of toxic waste is explained as- “Chemical waste material that is capable of causing death or injury to life”. The source and the types of these toxic wastes are various some of those are- waste that can be carcinogenic, radioactive, poisonous, mutagenic etc, any such kind of waste is toxic in nature, and all these wastes are always present in our surroundings as one of the most common sources of such waste are industrial factories that use many raw materials and many of such processes that produce several harmful by products that are extremely harmful for the health like starting from the most general carcinogen that surrounds us all the time and is mixed in the air we breathe is the oxides of Sulphur and nitrogen, we might not see its effect in your daily lives, but when the first rain precipitates, then all these gases and dust, microbes etc all are precipitated along with the rain and if someone comes in contact with such acid loaded rain that harbors so many harmful substances then this will lead to increased skin disorders as the rain first touches the skin which is the first barrier that our body presents to any kind of harm. Radioactive or mutagenic etc waste is more likely to be released from pharmaceutical companies and if such waste is released untreated and not cared for proper disposal

these types of waste are extremely harmful to health.

**Pollution-** since, every factor of environmental health is connected to each other, then this is safe to say that all kinds of pollution that will be mentioned are connected and even their causes and effects are interconnected in a much more complex way. When the term “Pollution” is first presented or said, there are various factors that come to the mind of a person, like Air Pollution, Water Pollution, Noise Pollution, Land Pollution, Thermal pollution, Light Pollution, etc. there are so many different types of pollution and each type of pollution has their effects that are affecting not just the human health but whole of the ecosystem in an adverse manner, not just humans but also wildlife, animals, birds, reptiles, trees, plants, etc every single organism is suffering differently from the first. Air pollution represents the drop in the Air Quality that we breathe which is because of an increase in carbon dioxide concentration increase in the environment, and an increase in the particulate matter that leads to a higher concentration of inhalation of such matter that increases the chances and instances for lung disorders. Along with that, this has also increased the concentration of microbial creatures in the air which again leads to exposure to such disease-causing organisms much more frequently which can lead to various types of airborne disorders. Water pollution, on the other hand, shows how the quality of water, and this includes both the drinking water, as well as, the water that covers the surface of the earth and knowing that 71% of the world is all made up of water alone increases the concern, the way the water pollution is increasing each day by the



dumps from the industries, the plastic waste that is dumped into the sea daily, eutrophication of the water bodies (i.e. overgrowing of the algae on the water bodies) all these kind of causes that increases the water pollution leads to poisoning of the water around us and this is the water that is then used by many, like, one more cause is overuse of the underground water that has lead to exhaustion of such an important source of water and the water that is now received through the underground is the metal loaded water or the heavy water that is not suitable for daily use and again leads to various kinds of toxicity if such water is used by the people. Noise pollution, is another major concern arising in today's world, as the loud music systems, the continuous use of headphones and earphones by the youth, hours of blasting music, etc. all of this noise is not just affecting the one using it but also the surrounding people as well, this works in just the similar manner like the smoking, the person who is smoking is suffering from the 60% damage but his/her surrounding people are also taking in that poison in their body and are suffering the remaining 40 %, in the same manner, the loud sounds works as well. When the person hears a higher decibel of sound which is not suitable for the human ears this then weakens their hearing capability, also there might be sounds that might not affect us so badly but the animals, birds, etc that surround us are also suffering because of those noises because their hearing capability is not the same as us. These are just some of the examples that have been provided all these changes in the environment are not only disturbing human health but also destroying and disturbing the natural habitats for various other organisms

and this affects the equilibrium of nature adversely which leads to further damages and all these damages at the last proves to be the most dangerous for the humans in various manners.

All these environmental challenges are not at all small and require separate and proper attention and steps to be taken for their proper management to bring the environment to a sustainable level again. There are several things that the government is planning for the betterment of the whole ecosystem.

Now, because of all these changing factors in the environment, there is a rapid increase in all kinds of diseases and health problems and Ayurveda texts like Charak Samhita is the text that explains in detail how small environmental changes can eventually lead to major issue of the mass breakout of any kind of disorder, which is explained in texts under the name of janpad- udhvansa. Now, we will attempt to understand the concept of janpad udhvansa, how it is related and connected to the environmental changes seen today, how it affects the health of the population, and what are the solutions that are provided in the texts for the problem.

#### **JANPAD UDHVANS:**

In Charak Samhita purvardh, in the section of Vimana sthana, chapter 3, the topic of janpad udhvansa is taken and explained in extreme detail along with the causes and all the factors included. He even explains how to collect the medicines before any kind of disorder can take place occur and about how the properties of medicines can change if the medicines are not collected at the correct time and how to use it for the treatment of the masses they have even incorporated such practices in our daily lives and in festivities so

that the medicinal effects can reach to the masses. Now, janpad udhvansa is not exactly only a pandemic or epidemic as is hinted by many, but it can represent any kind of mass breakout of any type of disorder and deal with all the factors related to it.

**Causes of the janpad udhvansa.**- according to Acharya, there are 4 main causes of janpad udhvansa, which are as follows- vayu(air), Jala (water), desha(land), and kala(time). In this matter, acharya says, “though the community is different in various manners like, in their body constitution and other characteristic features present in the individual, there are some other common factors that can be affected and those affected factors bring about those affected factors results in a simultaneous outbreak of diseases having similar symptoms in the mass population, these mass factors are the vayu, jala, desh, kala.” Let’s see how these four factors are responsible for the janpad-udhvansa.

**Vayu(air)**- earlier we talked about air pollution. Now, what exactly is air pollution, we understand this part extremely well. We also know that there are different types of speeds and other properties of air as well, that affect the properties of air as well. What is said in the Samhita goes as follows- “the air that is totally calm or violently blowing, extremely rough, extremely hot or cold, dry, humid, violently spinning, the air that has a bad odor, moisture, sand, dust, smoke, etc.” these type of air are explained not to be natural and we already know how different components affect the properties of air and how those properties affect the human health as well, it is the air that is available to us is what we breathe, being so, the number of pollutants that are present in the air and our

surroundings and the way they lead to increase of different types of lung disorders and other fatal diseases and their incidences are increased. If we see then the instances of lung disorders, WHO states ambient air pollution is said to lead to 16% of lung cancer deaths, 25% of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) deaths, 17% because of ischemic heart disease and stroke, and about 26% because of respiratory infections. With this information, it is well accepted now that air quality is a major cause of any kind of mass breakout in any disorder in both communicable and non-communicable diseases.

**Jala (water)**- water, is a basic necessity of the body, a natural resource through which our body replenishes, a component through which 70% of our body is made up, when such an important source of life is polluted, in such a condition, what will happen to the body? The body needs water and thus it will drink water from the sources available. And when such sources become polluted and unavailable. The Samhitas say about it as follows-

Water that does not seem normal in smell, colour, taste, and touch, has excessive stickiness, is from a source devoid of aquatic animals and birds, or a drying up water reservoir without a pleasant and calming effect on the body that can quench the thirst and is devoid of normal attributes indicates polluted water.

Such type of water can lead to various types of disorders as have been described earlier.

**Desh(land)**- land pollution, is another important factor through which we get all the nutrient factors important for survival and leading a healthy life, through land pollution, the soil gets polluted and poisoned which

leads to absorption of such inadequate factors which then affects our overall health and also, such kind of pollution adds the bulk to the surface of the earth, that consumes excessive space, pollutes the air with its foul smell and rotting nature in case of biodegradable waste, as for non-biodegradable wastes, the bulk just keeps on adding without any outlet for it. The waste just keeps on increasing and finally just goes into the soil and stays there for a long time polluting the area internally. We have already talked about land pollution and what Samhita says about the desha ashuddhi.

Any land having abnormal colour, odour, taste and touch, that which is excessively damp and has an abundance of serpents, beasts, mosquitoes, locusts, flies, mice, owls, birds and animals such as jackal, and jungles of grass and weeds, is abounding in creepers, where crops have fallen, withered or have been destroyed in an unprecedented manner, where the wind is smoky, where (unusual) cries of birds and dogs are heard, where herds of animals and flocks of birds of various kinds are always in a state of panic and pain, where the people's virtues like religion, truth, modesty, custom, character have either declined or been given up, where the water reservoirs always alter and are over-flowing, where there is frequent exposure to meteorites, thunderbolts and earthquakes, where nature is full of menacing sound and sights, where the sun, the moon and the stars are frequently covered by dry and grey clouds and the general atmosphere is of constant confusion, excitement and lamentation, crying, fright and darkness as if seized by ghosts and ghouls.

This way, the lands that have been polluted lead to various types of disorders.

**Kala (time)-** Kala dushti, how can time be polluted now? Can time be polluted? What does the kala dushti term refer to? So, 1 year, consists of seasons, on pollution, one observes that the seasons are abnormal and the changes in the timing and order of seasons, each of these changes are concluded to be because of changes in the environment due to the pollution. So, kala dushti represents the change in seasons of natural processes in any way. In Samhita, it is described that, A time is said to be unwholesome if it exhibits characteristics that are opposite to normal or exhibits excessive or deficient characteristics (e.g. early rains, too little rain, excessively hot summers or cold winters, etc) These four environmental factors, are affected by the aforesaid way, can be considered the type that causes increasing incidences of diseases, and those having features contrary to these could be considered wholesome.

The way all these problems have been explained, in the very same manner, the solution to the problem has also been discussed and explained in ancient texts. Along with these solutions that are explained in texts many such practices have been included in our daily lives as well that helps us in protecting ourselves from various disorders and infective conditions from various point of view that will be explained in the next section-

Solutions to the problems faced due to dushti of vayu, jala, desh, kala-

Now, there are various solutions through which these problems can be tackled. But, to tackle such problems, we will follow and decipher the Samprapti for the issue and how can we work on it. On following the panchanidana, the first step to decipher is the cause

for the problem(nidana), the promordial symptoms (Purva-Roopa), the symptoms seen (Roopa), pathogenesis (Samprapti) and the upshaya-anupshaya. Now, we will understand all of these factors and then we will see how this can be treated. The way we see the diseases of the human body, we will see this as the disorder for our environment and will study this disorder and its treatment from the Ayurveda point of view.

### **Nidana-**

The nidana for such types of dushti in the environment are-

- ✓ The emissions from the industries of other such harmful emissions like the oxides of nitrogen, oxides of sulfates, etc.
- ✓ The disposal of waste in public places without proper treatment causes bad odor and an increase of microbial agents in the environment.
- ✓ Disposal of inflammable substances in water bodies without proper treatment and so these add to the wastage of water along with the waste that is disposed of by the public in those places like plastics, the harmful chemicals from detergents, etc.
- ✓ Nitrogen and Phosphate in higher quantities are washed away in the water bodies, which on receiving adequate environment increases their photosynthesis and increase the eutrophication in the environment.

These are just some of the factors that show what factors are responsible for the cause of this disorder in the environment, many many

more causes lead to such disastrous results in environmental health.

### **Promordial symptoms (poorvaroopa)-**

There are various symptoms that our environment shows us that it is deteriorating slowly from time to time and if we catch these symptoms at the right time then we can balance the dis-balance in the environment and cure this disease that is faced by our environment that doesn't only affect the health of the environment but also the health of the humans and other organisms as well.

These symptoms are as follows-

Less visibility in the night sky, happens due to a concept called light pollution which indicates the higher usage of light also the pollution in the air creates some opacity in the atmosphere which is the reason for this reduction in visibility in modern societies. This is an important poorvaroopa.

The difference in air quality in the various times of the day, to understand this poorvaroopa, it is observed by everyone that the air at the start of the day i.e. dawn is much more clear than the rest of the day and night, if we feel the air during the midday time, it feels heavy, with various types of smells to it and even the air seems somewhat dusty, while in the night-time the air again settles and purifies it throughout the night and due to reduction in activity the change is seen and observed.

The presence and absence of animals, animals that are normally seen like dogs, cats, cows, birds, etc will be seen more in quantity in the cleaner and greener environment while in the polluted areas, these animals are not normally observed.

These are some of the primordial symptoms that can be used easily to understand the changes in the surroundings and take proper



precautions at the right time to prevent further damage.

### **Symptoms (Roopa)-**

The Roopa or the symptoms observed are all mostly covered in the above sections, but those are not the only Roopa that can be observed various other symptoms can be observed, and such symptoms are said below as follows-

- ✓ Greenhouse effect
- ✓ Ozone depletion
- ✓ Increase in diseases in human beings
- ✓ Bad air quality
- ✓ Food contains fewer nutritional factors
- ✓ Increased temperature
- ✓ Varied disturbances in seasonal orders
- ✓ Increased numbers of natural disasters
- ✓ Eutrophication
- ✓ Decrease in groundwater level
- ✓ Faster melting of glaciers etc.

These are the symptoms most commonly observed in the environment when pollution increases and the environmental health decreases.

### **Treatment (Chikitsa)-**

Just like every disorder, this one also has proper and adequate treatment when the treatment is administered at the right time. Now, the disorder named pollution is a yapy disorder, the reason behind it being that the major cause of this pollution i.e. the humans are still present and surviving and thus the humans will make use of the environment from time to time for their benefits and as a by-product in one or the other form some type of pollution will keep on happening and this being the case we need to ensure proper

and time to time purification of the environment through various procedures that will then help in the maintenance of a healthy environment. These treatment procedures used are as follows-

**Dhoompan** – Dhoompan or dhooan is a procedure in which through lighting a few dried drugs of various beneficial properties like the antimicrobial properties, the ruksha, tikshna guna, tikta, katu rasa, etc. the smoke formed from this is allowed to spread in the surroundings and these smoke that arises from the dhoompan these smokes are responsible for the cleansing of the air, the question here arises that how can smoke which itself is considered a pollutant cleanse the air? The answer to it can be said as follows- the contents that are taken for the dhoompan are the drugs that have disinfecting and cleansing properties, so when these are burnt all these properties of drugs are transmitted from the drugs to the atmosphere in the form of smoke and this smoke then purifies the air by cleansing the microbes present in the air and atmosphere, this smoke enters our system through inhalation as well which even in modern science is said to be one of the best and fastest acting methods of drug administration, so when this smoke enters the system then it also acts on any kind of minor infections that might be happening in the body of the human being and also increases the immunity power of the individual.

Use of anti-microbial agents in various forms in the water bodies- Water bodies that are the main source of hydration in the world need to stay clean and usable. But because mindless dumping of waste in the water bodies leads to an increase of toxins in the water bodies and

for clearing these toxins, Ayurveda suggests various types of drugs that can be used for proper cleansing of the water bodies, like the plant called shigru (*Moringa oleafera*) this plant is used for proper purification of the water bodies, the plant of a common spice called turmeric is used for proper disinfection purposes in the water bodies and these all drugs used to be mixed in the soil to prepare idols of deities and when these idols are then immersed back in the water bodies for “visarjan” then all of these soil gets disintegrated and the mixed turmeric get mixed in water and improves the water quality overall, in this way many other medicinal drugs are used for the betterment of the society and the humanity and environment in all. These are the small steps that help in keeping the environment healthy. Varieties of trees and plants to be planted- This is one of the most advertised environment saving practice that has been promoted by the government of India, but the main reason that the government takes for planting the trees are the process of exchange of gases between the tree and the atmosphere, but there are various other important and unknown benefits of the trees to the environment that many are unaware of, these are, the variety of plants present in the environment are not just for the process of photosynthesis but just like the whole stem is made up of different types of cell, in the very same way these trees are all different types of cells of the world and all these cells work in a coordinated manner to create a whole system like all of these trees are connected to the soil and the roots are present so these roots are the cause of their connection and all of these connection are the reason for smooth and proper working of

the nature in the smooth manner, just like the nervous system of human body, so, Ayurved gives importance to this similarity between the body and the environment is called as “loka purush samya siddhanta” which states that the macro world and the micro world have similarities and all of these similarities help in the proper treatment of the environment itself and the humans as well.

Less usage of polluting agents- Nidan parivarjan is said to be the most important part of treatment according to the Ayurved for any kind of disorder in the human body, similarly, the environment is also suffering from the diseases named pollution, and for proper recovery and treatment environment needs to be rid of all the polluting agents and thus, the humans should not use and produce, more polluting agents

#### **Importance of Environment in Ayurveda:**

Ayurveda is a science that is very closely related to the nature and environment because the medicines that are used for the treatment, and their raw materials are obtained from natural sources alone, so, this becomes a more direct relation between Ayurved and the environment there are many more relations other than this like when we check the patient, we check the desha of the patient, the desh has great importance in prescribing the medicine and the rules that are needed for the treatment, when we check the desh of the patient what we exactly try to understand is the type of atmosphere the person is in right now so that proper prescription can be prepared accordingly. Many a time it also helps in understanding the exact cause of the disease. Aside from being helpful in the diagnosis of the disease, this is also helpful in the proper treatment of the disease as well in many ways like, when the

person sits in between nature and sees it, the happy hormones in the body i.e. serotonin, and dopamine and endorphins are released in the body and these hormones help reduce the mental stress in the body and this way the person feels happy is less stressful and this greatly helps in proper recovery of the patient.

#### **Discussion:**

The approach to nature that is seen in different societies are very different but one thing common between all of them is that every society equally works to prevent plants from extinction, if we see modern societies, they see nature as the one who gives us all that is needed for proper survival on this planet and a sustainable balance there is a need for proper management of the plants, trees and all the other kinds of diversities as well, thus, a need for preventing the environment from deteriorating any more. Similarly in ancient ayurvedic sciences as well, the importance of a clean environment and diversity is explained in a very different manner, like when we are informed about all that will be faced by humankind on the extinction of nature, humans will make more efforts towards the prevention and flourishing of the nature. So, we always see how it is important the preservation of nature and its quality is so important to all, and the ancient humans or the ancient sages knew the importance and thus they used the products only within the limits and never went overboard, so there was that balance between the utilization and production of the plants but in today's world that balance is lost and forgotten and this balance is very important to be maintained in every way possible for better survival of the planet itself. Our ancestors have instilled practices like

yagnya(purification of the environment through the smoke of purifying drugs), japa(flow of positive and healing sounds in the environment that pours such energy in the environment that everyone feels energized after reading or chanting those japas), the dincharya, rutucharya (for a proper schedule that increases your immunity levels, and strengthens the body internally which then leads to the proper functioning of the body comparatively unaffected by the surroundings.) etc. which should be practiced regularly for a healthy life.

#### **Conclusion:**

On observing the surroundings near us in the past few years we have observed drastic and major changes that should not have happened, and the effects that are observed are very disturbing as well. For the solution which this article aimed to understand in a better way the status of the environment, its causes, its effects, and its solution all of these points are discussed in detailed fashion in the text, and the solutions that our scriptures provide us with are explained in complete details and all of these treatment solutions should be practiced. All of the points that have been mentioned in this article are not solely based on the theoretical knowledge available but also the basis on the personal experiences of the author, Ayurveda provides a proper, sustainable, useful, caring processing technology that does not harm the environment in any way and the treatment of the patient is also done properly. The environment is one entity that believes in co-existence more than the rule that only the strong survive, it produces the tools for its proper survival and existence and also for helping the survival of others as well,

so, in this way, this environment is needed to be prevented for better survival chances.

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