

# Understanding Karya–Karana Vada in Relation to Prakṛti Sama Samaveta and Vikṛti Viṣhama Samaveta

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## ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* is an ancient science rooted in various schools of Indian philosophy. Being an applied science, it possesses a strong scientific foundation. The fundamental principles of *Ayurveda* were established through continuous observation and experimentation over time. This is why these principles remain relevant and applicable even in the present era. One such essential principle is *Karya–Karana Vada* (the theory of cause and effect). *Karya–Karana Vada* is based on two major philosophical doctrines: *Satkaryavada* (the theory of pre-existence of effect in the cause) and *Asatkaryavada* (the theory of non-existence of effect prior to its production). The principles of diagnosis and management of diseases in *Ayurveda* are founded upon this *Karya–Karana Siddhanta*. Its further aids in understanding the concepts of *Prakṛti Sama Samaveta* and *Vikṛti Viṣhama Samaveta*, which are fundamental to comprehending diagnosis, treatment, and health management in *Ayurveda*.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda*, *Satkaryavada*, *Asatkaryavada*, *Prakṛti Sama Samaveta*, *Vikṛti Viṣhama Samaveta*.

## INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda*, being the oldest living medical science, is founded upon numerous fundamental concepts that have guided its development and demonstrated its efficacy over time. It is not only a system of medicine but also a profound philosophical science. In essence, *Ayurveda* represents the applied dimension of philosophical principles. The functional, structural, pharmacological, psychological, and physiological aspects of *Ayurveda* are deeply rooted in the fundamentals of Indian philosophy, including the *Panchabhautika* theory, the concept of *Triguna*, and various *Vadas* (doctrinal theories).

In the present era, there is a pressing need to re-establish and reinterpret these foundational principles in the context of contemporary understanding. Explanation and prediction serve as essential steps in

comprehending basic science and facilitating its application in practical domains. Therefore, to truly understand *Ayurveda*, one must possess a thorough knowledge of the fundamental principles that existed during its evolution, as these principles remain valid even today. This view is supported by *Sushruta*, who states that anyone seeking a complete understanding of the science must rely upon the foundational sciences that prevailed during the period of *Ayurveda*'s development.<sup>1</sup>

*Karya–Karaṇa Siddhanta* is one of the fundamental principles of *Ayurveda*, supported by two major doctrines:

1. *Satkaryavada*
2. *Asatkaryavada*

These concepts provide insight into the methodological framework adopted in the formulation and interpretation of *Ayurvedic* knowledge. A thoughtful and critical understanding of this approach is essential for comprehending the classical texts at an optimal level and for expanding the scope of research in *Ayurveda*. The present article is an attempt to explore the theory of cause and effect- namely *Satkaryavada* and *Asatkaryavada* -in relation to the concept of *Vyadhi* (disease) and its management.

## OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

*Vada* refers to a theory established through logical reasoning (*tarka*) and one that does not contradict accepted principles.<sup>2</sup> Knowledge of *Karya–Karaṇa Siddhanta* enables a clearer understanding of the fundamental principles of *Chikitsa* (treatment). *Karya–Karaṇa Vada* is a core doctrine that explains the relationship between *Karya* (effect) and *Karaṇa* (cause).

*Karaṇa* is defined as the pre-existing and essential factor responsible for the manifestation of *Karya*.<sup>3</sup> Any instrument or factor that contributes to the production of an effect is also termed as *Karaṇa*. It is broadly classified into three types: *Samavayi Karaṇa*, *Asamavayi Karaṇa*, and *Nimitta Karaṇa*.<sup>4</sup>

1. ***Samavayi Karaṇa (Inherent/Intimate Cause)***: *Samavayi Karaṇa* is the cause that maintains an inseparable and intimate relationship with the *Karya* (effect). It exists throughout the entire process of the production of the effect (*Karyotpatti*).<sup>5</sup> For example, threads (*Tantu*) serve as the *Samavayi Karaṇa* of cloth (*Vastra*).<sup>6</sup>
2. ***Asamavayi Karaṇa (Non-inherent/Non-intimate Cause)***: *Asamavayi Karaṇa* is the cause that contributes to the production of the effect through its association (*samavaya sambandha*) with either the *Karaṇa* or the *Karya*. For instance, the conjunction (*samyoga*) of threads is the *Asamavayi Karaṇa* of cloth.<sup>7</sup>
3. ***Nimitta Karaṇa (Instrumental Cause)***: Any external or instrumental factor, apart from the above two causes, that facilitates the production of the effect is termed as *Nimitta Karaṇa*. Examples include the loom and the weaver in the production of cloth.<sup>8</sup>

*Karya* is defined as that which the *Karta* (doer) intends to achieve and toward which all actions are directed.<sup>9</sup>

When *Karya–Karaṇa Vada* is applied to the process of disease manifestation (*Rogotpatti*), the *Doṣhas* act as the *Samavayi Karaṇa*; the vitiation (*duṣṭi*) of *Doṣhas* and their association (*samyoga*) with *Dhatus* serve as the *Asamavayi Karaṇa* and the *Nidanas* (etiological factors) function as the *Nimitta Karaṇas*.

*Karya–Karaṇa Vada* is further explained through two major perspectives:

- *Satkaryavada*
- *Asatkaryavada*

### **Satkaryavada**

*Satkaryavada* is propounded by the *Sankhya Darshana* and is supported by *Yoga Dashana* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. This doctrine explains that the *Karya* (effect) exists in a subtle form within the *Karana* (cause) even prior to the process of manifestation (*Karyotpatti*). The effect is considered a transformed (*Parinama*) state of the cause. It remains unperceived before its manifestation due to its subtle nature.<sup>10</sup> In this view, primary importance is given to the *Samavayi Karana* (inherent cause).<sup>11</sup>

*Satkaryavada* is substantiated through five logical arguments (analogies):<sup>12</sup>

- a) *Asadakaraṇat*
- b) *Upadanagrahaṇa*
- c) *Sarvasambhavabhavat*
- d) *Saktasya Shakya Karaṇat*
- e) *Karaṇabhavat*

### **Asatkaryavada**

*Asatkaryavada* is propounded by the *Vaisheshika Darshana* and supported by the *Nyaya* and *Bauddha Darshanas*.<sup>13</sup> This doctrine asserts that the *Karya* does not pre-exist in the *Karana* and is instead produced as an entirely new entity.<sup>14</sup> Since the production of the effect is considered a new beginning, this view is also referred to as *Arambhavada*.<sup>15</sup>

In this perspective, the *Karta* (doer) and other instrumental causes (*Nimitta Karanas*) are regarded as essential for the manifestation of the effect. For example, a seed alone is not sufficient for the growth of a plant; additional factors such as sowing and watering are necessary for its development. To substantiate *Asatkaryavada*, five arguments are presented:<sup>16</sup>

- a) *Buddhi Bheda*
- b) *Samjna Bheda*
- c) *Karya Bheda*
- d) *Akara Bheda*
- e) *Samkhya Bheda*

At a superficial level, these two doctrines may appear contradictory. However, a deeper analysis reveals that they are complementary rather than opposing. When *Samavayi Karana* is considered the primary cause of the effect, *Satkaryavada* holds true. Conversely, when *Nimitta Karana* is regarded as the principal factor in the production of the effect, *Asatkaryavada* becomes applicable.

### **Application of Satkaaryavada and Asatkaaryavada in Ayurveda**

Since *Ayurveda* is an applied science, both *Satkaryavada* and *Asatkaryavada* are accepted with suitable modifications for their practical application in the field of *Chikitsa* (treatment). In *Ayurveda*, *Puruṣha* (the individual) is considered the *Adhikaraṇa* (subject), who constantly interacts with the *Loka* (external environment).<sup>17</sup> As both *Puruṣha* and *Loka* are *Panchabhautika* (composed of the five *Mahabhutas*), any alteration in the *Panchabhautika* composition of bodily elements leads to the manifestation of *Vyadhi* (disease). The restoration or proper rearrangement of these *Pancha Mahabhutas* is termed as *Chikitsa*.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, for effective treatment, it is essential to understand the *Rasa* (taste/property) of a *Dravya* (substance/drug) and the involvement of *Doṣhas* in a disease condition.<sup>19</sup> However, in practice, most *Dravyas* possess a combination of multiple *Rasas*, and diseases often manifest due to the vitiation of more than one *Doṣha*. Hence, to understand the interaction between *Rasa* in *Dravya* and *Doṣha* in *Vikara*

(pathological condition), it is necessary to comprehend the interrelationship between *Pancha Mahabhuta*, *Doṣha*, and *Rasa*.<sup>20</sup>

#### **Relation between *Pancha Mahabhuta* and *Tridoṣha*:**

- *Prithvi + Apa* → *Kapha*
- *Teja (Agni)* → *Pitta*
- *Vayu + Akasha* → *Vata*

#### **Relation between *Rasa* and *Tridoṣha*:**

- *Madhura, Amla, and Lavaṇa* increase *Kapha* and decrease *Vata*.
- *Katu, Tikta, and Kaṣhaya* increase *Vata* and decrease *Kapha*.
- *Lavaṇa, Amla, and Katu* increase *Pitta*.
- *Madhura, Tikta, and Kaṣhaya* decrease *Pitta Doṣa*.

#### **Relation between *Rasa* and *Pancha Mahabhuta***

- *Madhura* = *Prithvi + Apa*
- *Amla* = *Prithvi + Agni*
- *Lavaṇa* = *Jala + Agni*
- *Katu* = *Agni + Vayu*
- *Tikta* = *Vayu + Akasha*
- *Kaṣhaya* = *Vayu + Prithvi*

The above relationships between *Rasa*, *Pancha Mahabhuta*, and *Tridoṣha* guide the selection of appropriate *Dravya* (drug) for the management of vitiated *Doṣhas*, thereby restoring their equilibrium, which constitutes *Chikitsa*.

The interaction between *Rasa* in *Dravya* and *Doṣha* in *Vyadhi* is explained in *Ayurveda* through the principles of *Prakṛti Sama Samaveta* and *Vikṛti Viṣama Samaveta*.<sup>21</sup>

#### ***Prakṛti Sama Samaveta***

*Prakṛti Sama Samaveta* describes a type of interaction wherein the combined effect of *Rasas* in a *Dravya* and *Doṣhas* in a disease manifest in a manner similar to the inherent properties of their individual components.<sup>22</sup> In this case, the effect of a *Dravya* can be predicted by analysing the actions of its individual *Rasas*, and similarly, the nature of a disease can be understood by examining the involved *Doṣhas* separately.

For example, *Godhuma* (wheat), which possesses *Madhura Rasa*, *Guru Guna*, and *Madhura Vipaka*, exhibits *Vatahara Karma* (alleviates *Vata*).<sup>23</sup> Here, the effect is considered pre-existing within the cause, aligning with the principle of *Satkaryavada*.

#### ***Vikṛti Viṣama Samaveta***

*Vikṛti Viṣama Samaveta* explains an interaction where the combined effect of *Rasas* in a *Dravya* and *Doṣhas* in a *Vyadhi* results in a new outcome that is not similar to the individual properties of its constituents. Therefore, the effect of the *Dravya* cannot be predicted solely by analysing its individual *Rasas*, nor can the manifestation of *Vyadhi* be understood merely by examining individual *Doṣas*.<sup>24</sup>

For example, *Brhat Panchmula* possesses *Ushna Virya* despite having predominantly *Kashaya* and *Tikta Rasa*.<sup>25</sup> This seemingly unpredictable effect is explained by the following factors:

### 1. *Doṣha* and *Vyadhi*

Although *Doṣhas* are the *Samavayi Karaṇa* (inherent cause) of *Vyadhi*, the clinical manifestations (*Lakṣaṇas*) may not strictly correspond to the properties of the causative *Doṣhas* due to:

1. *Parasparena Upahatanam* – Mutual suppression among the involved *Doṣhas*.
2. *Nana Pramaṇanam* – Variation in the proportion of vitiated *Doṣhas*.
3. *Anyaiṣha Vikalpa Nairvikalpanam* – Variations arising from different combinations of *Doṣhas* with *Dhatus*.<sup>26</sup>

### 2. *Rasa* and *Dravya*

Although *Rasas* are the *Samavayi Karaṇa* of a *Dravya*, its overall action may not correspond directly to individual *Rasas* due to:

- a) *Parasparena Upahatanam* – Mutual suppression among *Rasas*.
- b) *Nana Pramaṇanam* – Differences in the proportion of constituent *Rasas*.
- c) *Anyaiṣha Vikalpa Nairvikalpanam* – Variations caused by different *Samṣkaras* (processing methods) such as *Swarasa*, etc.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the concept of *Vikṛti Viśama Samaveta* aligns with *Asatkaryavada*, wherein the effect of a *Dravya* or *Vyadhi* must be analysed as a whole rather than through its individual components.<sup>28</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*Ayurveda*, the oldest living applied medical science, is deeply rooted in philosophical doctrines that existed during its evolution. Among these, *Satkaryavada* and *Asatkaryavada* provide an important conceptual framework. *Ayurveda* adopts these theories with suitable modifications to serve the practical objectives of diagnosis and treatment. The concept of *Prakṛti Sama Samaveta* reflects the principles of *Satkaryavada*, where the effect is inherent in the cause, while *Vikṛti Viśama Samaveta* corresponds to *Asatkaryavada*, where the effect appears as a new manifestation. Together, these two doctrines form the foundation for understanding disease causation, clinical presentation, and therapeutic planning in *Ayurveda*.

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