

THE ROLE OF *CHATUSHKA* METHODOLOGY IN STRUCTURING *AYURVEDIC* KNOWLEDGE: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF *CHARAKA SAMHITA*

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Abstract

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, is regarded as the oldest medical and health discipline. It serves not only as a preventive system but also as a curative one. Among its classical texts, the *Charaka Samhita* holds a significant place, comprising 120 chapters divided into eight sections (*Sthanas*). The *Sutrasthana*, positioned as the first section, is considered the foundation of this text. It presents the fundamental principles and methodologies of Ayurvedic living, forming the core doctrines of the science. Often referred to as the “head” (*Shira*) of *Charaka Samhita*, the *Sutrasthana* encapsulates the essence of the entire work, acting as a repository of essential *Ayurvedic* concepts. It is regarded as the nectar of knowledge, encompassing the basic principles necessary for understanding and applying *Ayurveda*.

The *Sutrasthana* employs the *Chatushka* methodology, wherein 30 chapters are systematically arranged into seven sets of four chapters, known as the *Sapta Chatushka*. These groups include *Aushadha Chatushka*, *Swastha Chatushka*, *Nirdesh Chatushka*, *Kalpna Chatushka*, *Roga Chatushka*, *Yojana Chatushka*, and *Annapan Chatushka*. This structured approach provides a comprehensive foundation for therapeutic practices. Here, an effort has been made to explain the *Chatushka* methodology of *Sutrasthana* in a clear and detailed manner, as it offers the essential principles required for treatment.

Key words: *Ayurveda*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Sutrasthana*, *Sapta Chatushka*, *Chikitsa*, *Roga*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is considered a divine gift to humanity. It was first revealed by Lord *Brahma* and then imparted to *Daksha Prajapati*. From him, the knowledge was passed on to the *Ashwini Kumaras*, who in turn taught it to *Indra*.¹ *Indra* brought *Ayurveda* to the earthly realm through the great efforts of *Bharadwaja*.² *Bharadwaja* then transmitted this wisdom to *Atreya Punarvasu*, who later taught it to his six disciples—*Agnivesha*, *Bhela*, *Jatukarna*, *Parashara*, *Harita*, and *Ksharapani*.³ Among them, *Agnivesha* composed a treatise known as *Agnivesha Tantra*. This work was later expanded and refined by Acharya *Charaka*, eventually becoming the renowned *Charaka Samhita*. The text was later revised by *Dridhabala*.⁴ The *Charaka Samhita* is organized into eight sections, known as *Sthanas*: *Sutrasthana*, *Nidanasthana*, *Vimanasthana*, *Indriyasthana*, *Chikitsasthana*, and *Siddhisthana*, respectively.⁵

Methodology

The study was conducted using literary review methods, with primary references drawn from *Sharirasthana* and *Kalpasthan*. The review mainly focused on the *Charaka Samhita* and its commentaries, as well as scholarly articles related to the *Chatushka* methodology.

CHATHUSHKA METHODOLOGY

A *Tantra* addresses a specific subject using a systematic approach to present its content in a clear, concise, and precise manner. The entire *Charaka Samhita* can be thoroughly understood by studying the *Chatushkas*

outlined in the *Sutrasthana*. This section comprises various sutras or shlokas that are interconnected with other *Sthanas* of the text, which is why it is also referred to as *Shloka Sthana*.

The *Sutrasthana* is divided into *Chatushkas*, or quartets, each consisting of four chapters. Altogether, thirty chapters are grouped into seven quartets known as the *Sapta Chatushka*, while the remaining two chapters form a collection called *Sangraha Dwaya*.

Within each *Chatushka*, the first chapter introduces fundamental and basic concepts of the topic. The second chapter delves deeper into the subject, the third chapter explores it in greater detail, and the fourth chapter provides the concluding explanations.

Table 1: Treatment and preventive aspect based on Chathushka

Sr.no	Chatushka	Prime Subject	Correlation
1.	<i>Nirdesha</i>	To make perfect diagnosis of <i>Dhatu Samya/ Vaisamy</i>	Diagnosis
2.	<i>Swastha</i>	To decide probable etiological factors	Etiogenesis
3.	<i>Roga</i>	To understand pathogenesis	Pathogenesis
4.	<i>Samgraha Dwaya</i>	To evaluate condition of <i>Pranayatanani</i>	Prognosis
5.	<i>Yojana</i>	To determine the principle of management	Pharmacodynamics
6.	<i>Bhesaja</i>	To select appropriate drug	Therapeutics
7.	<i>Kalpna</i>	To select appropriate formation and procedure	Posology, Chronology
8.	<i>Annapana</i>	To decide whole some diet and regimens	Dietetics

1. *Aushadha Chatushka*

This includes chapters 1 to 4. It explains the fundamental principles of *Ayurveda* such as *Shatpadartha*, *Tridosha*, *Rasa*, and *Dravya*, along with details about various medicines used in *Antahparimarjana* and *Bahiparimarjana Chikitsa*.

2. *Swastha Chatushka*

Once the patient is cured, the physician's responsibility is to maintain health, which is the focus of the *Swastha Chatushka*. It outlines various measures for preserving well-being, including *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, and dietary guidelines (*Ahara*). For this reason, it is called *Swastha Chatushka* and is placed second in order.

3. *Nirdesh Chatushka*

The previous *Chatushka* outlined the factors essential for maintaining *Dhatu Samya* (health) as well as those responsible for causing *Dhatu Vaishamy* (disease). For effective treatment, understanding how to identify these conditions is crucial. The *Nirdesha Chatushka* provides a comprehensive diagnostic approach, beginning with the physician's sensory observations and extending to the detailed characteristics of *Prakrita* and *Vikruta Doshas*. For this reason, it is placed immediately after the *Swastha Chatushka*.

4. *Kalpna Chatushka*

This section discusses various formulations along with their methods of preparation and associated treatments. In the final chapter of the *Nirdesha Chatushka*, *Vatakalakaliya Adhyaya*, the types and properties of *Doshas* are described. Building on this, the *Kalpna Chatushka* elaborates on different formulations suitable for specific *Doshic* conditions and diseases. Since *Snehana* is considered the best therapy for Vata Dosh, this *Chatushka* begins with *Sneha Adhyaya*, followed by *Sweda Adhyaya*. The

chapters *Upakalpaniya* and *Chikitsa Prabhrutiya* provide *guidelines* on the rules to follow after *Shodhana procedures* and the management of complications that may arise from *Shodhana* and related therapies.

5. *Roga Chathushk*

The selection of formulations and therapeutic procedures is based on management principles, which in turn rely on a clear understanding of pathogenesis. The *Roga Chathushka* offers a concise yet comprehensive explanation of the fundamentals of pathogenesis, which is why it is positioned as the fifth set.

6. *Yojana Chatushka*

The understanding of pathogenesis, along with the proper selection of drugs and their formulation with suitable procedures, is referred to as *Rogabhaisajya Yojana*. These aspects are governed by the principles outlined in the *Yojana Chatushka*, which is placed immediately after the *Roga Chatushka*.

7. *Annapana Chatushka*

The appropriate application of the preceding six *Chatushkas* leads to the state of *Dhatu Samyata* (balance of tissues). For the proper formation and maintenance of *Dhatu*, a complete understanding of the dietary regimen is essential, as “*Prana* depends on food (*Annam*).” Therefore, this *Chatushka* is described after the *Yojana Chatushka*.

8. *Sangraha Dwaya*

The state of *Dhatu samya* (balance) or *Asatmya* (imbalance) largely depends on the *Pranayatanani*, the vital organs of the body, as the entire system relies on their proper functioning. The seven *Chatushkas* mentioned above are closely related to these vital organs. Additionally, the 30th chapter discusses topics from other *Sthanas* and connects them with *Sutrasthana* to provide the foundational knowledge required for *Pratijna* (establishing principles).

Discussion

Textbooks serve not only as teaching aids but also as essential tools for self-directed learning. A teaching method consists of the principles and strategies used by teachers to facilitate student learning, and it is influenced by the nature of the subject matter. The arrangement and presentation of topics depend on the content being taught.

In the *Chatushka* methodology, the first chapter introduces the basic and fundamental concepts of the subject. The second and third chapters provide detailed insights, while the fourth chapter offers a concluding summary.

For example, the second *Chatushka*, known as *Swasthavritta Chatushka*, includes chapters 5 to 8, focusing on health guidelines essential for maintaining well-being.

- The 5th chapter (*Matrasheethiyam Adhyaya*) begins with topics on dietary quantities and daily routines.
- The 6th chapter (*Thassyasheethiya Adhyaya*) deals with seasonal regimens.
- The 7th chapter emphasizes the significance of *Dharaneeya* and *Adharaneeya Vegas* in disease prevention.
- The 8th chapter (*Indriyopakramaneeyam*) explains control of the sense organs, mind, and proper conduct in a holistic manner.

Chapters 5 and 6 illustrate fundamental dietetic principles, personal hygiene, and seasonal regimens for health maintenance. Chapters 7 and 8 address preventive healthcare, sensory control, and ethical conduct. The 5th chapter introduces the concept of *Swastha* and key factors for a healthy life, while the 6th and 7th chapters provide in-depth discussions on *Swasthavritta*, and the 8th chapter concludes the subject.

These four chapters are logically connected and arranged, making the content systematic and easy to understand. This structured approach to textbook writing significantly enhances learning. It fosters student interest and engagement with the subject. In medical education, the *Chatushka* methodology plays a vital role in promoting self-learning and comprehension.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that a *Pranabhisara Vaidya* must possess thorough knowledge of the *Sapta Chatushka* described in the *Sutrasthana* of the *Charaka Samhita*. For effective application of these fundamental concepts in clinical practice, it is essential to understand the science in its proper context and depth. The thirty chapters of *Sutrasthana* are systematically arranged into seven sets of four chapters each, collectively known as the *Sapta Chatushka*, which include: *Aushadha*, *Swastha*, *Nirdesha*, *Kalpna*, *Roga*, *Yojana*, and *Annapana Chatushka*.

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