



UNKINKING THE CONCEPT OF *DOSHA* *KSHAYA* AND ITS IMPACT ON DISEASE CAUSATION

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ABSTRACT:

Ayurveda, the Life science is based on *Tridosha siddhanta* (*Vata, Pitta and Kapha*). Fundamentals of *Ayurveda* are explained in *Trisutras*- i.e. *Hetu*(cause), *linga* (symptoms) and *Aushadha* (medication). *Roganidana* comprises of 2/3rd among these *trisutras* of *Ayurveda* which deals with finding out the *hetu* or causative factors and *linga* or symptoms of the disease. A Physician should know to examine the disease by its features and later which helps to plan appropriate treatment. *Ayurveda* states that diseases are caused due to *vishama doshas* which includes *vruddhi* , *kshaya* ,*prakopa* etc. Clinically, often *vruddhi* is given more significance than *kshaya* in causation of disease, leaving behind the role of *ksheena doshas* in contributing to *vyadhi samprapti*. The objectives of article are fulfilled by reviewing the broader aspect of *dosha kshaya* which includes *kshaya karanas* and its clinical features (*lakshanas*). In this article an attempt is made to gather the complete information regarding *dosha kshaya* and to understand whether *dosha* in *ksheenavastha* is capable of producing disease or not.

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, *Trisutras*, *vishama doshas*, *dosha kshaya*.

INTRODUCTION:

The science of *Ayurveda* originated with the need to understand and cure diseases and to maintain health for human being. This basic *Ayurveda* is best expressed in order to achieve health stating “*swastasya swastya rakshanam, aturasya vikara prashamanam*” i.e. to maintain the healthy status of the normal person and to relieve the symptoms of patients who are suffering with the disease.¹The principles of *Ayurveda* is based on the concept of *Tridosha* (three humours) viz *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*. *Tridoshas* are responsible for sustenance of body. A lost equilibrium of *tridoshas* will lead to disease which includes *dosha kshaya* (state of diminution) and *dosha vruddhi* (state of aggravation) ².*Dosha kshaya* is a state where *doshas* undergo diminution due to various causes and manifests *lakshanas*. At times it contributes even to *samprapti* of *vyadhis*. According to the classics, *kshaya* is more troublesome than *vruddhi*, but because people don’t comprehend the significance of *ksheena doshas*, *kshaya* is clinically less significant. Fundamentals of *Ayurveda* are explained in *Trisutras*- i.e. *Hetu* (cause), *linga* (symptoms) and *Aushadha* (medication). *Roganidana* comprises of 2/3rd among these *trisutras* of *Ayurveda* which deals with finding out the *hetu* or causative factors and *linga* or symptoms of the disease.³ Hence, in this article an attempt has been made to explain the concept of *dosha kshaya* and its relevance in

causation or non-causation of the disease manifestation as per the classical references in detail on the lines of *trisutras* and to understand whether *dosha* in *ksheenavastha* is capable of producing disease or not.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the *Nirukti* of *Dosha Kshaya* and understand *dosha kshaya* on lines of *Trisutras*.
2. To know the Importance of *Dosha kshaya*.
3. Role of *Dosha* in *Ksheenavastha* in causation or non-causation of disease.
4. To know the *Ashtadasha* (18) *lakshanas* of *Kshaya*.
5. To know the *Karanaas* for *Dosha Kshaya*.
6. *Samanya* (general) and *Vishesha* (specific) *lakshanas* of *Dosha Kshaya* and role of *Ksheena doshas* in causation of symptoms.
7. Factors to elicit *Dosha Kshaya*.
8. To do the diagnosis of *dosha kshaya* based on *nidana* and *upashaya*.
9. Role of *Dosha Kshaya* in Differential Diagnosis.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Methods of collection of data:

The literary source for the present study was obtained from,

- ❖ *Charaka Samhita* with commentary
- ❖ *Sushurta Samhita* with commentary
- ❖ *Asthang Hrudaya* with commentary
- ❖ *Shabdha kalpa druma*.
- ❖ and other translated *Ayurveda* textbooks of *Roganidana*.

SOURCE OF DATA: Library, S.J.G. College of *Ayurveda* and Hospital, Research Centre, Koppal.

1. Nirukti of dosha and kshaya:

“**Dosha**”- *dush vaikrute* means that which is capable of vitiating.⁴

The meaning of *dosha* is defect. Actually these are endogenous factors which govern all the body activities right from conception till death. As they are able to produce defect in all the body elements they are called as *dosha*. They are named as *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha doshas*.⁵

“**Kshaya**”- *pralaya* (that which causes destruction) or *Apachaya* (which is in the state of diminution).⁶

According to commentator Chakrapani; *Kshaya* (diminution), *Sthana* (normalcy) and *Vruddhi* (aggravation) are the measure (*maana*) of *Doshas* and the variation (*vikalpa*) of *doshas* happens due to the conjunction and disjunction of the *doshas*.⁷

2. Understanding dosha kshaya on lines of trisutra:

Ayurveda has presented itself in the form of three basic forms i.e. *trisutras* which includes *hetu*, *linga* and *aushadha*. *Hetu* deals with etiological factors, *linga* refers to manifestation of *lakshanas*(clinical features) and *aushadha* is the medication for managing *vyadhi*(disease). So, understanding *dosha kshaya* concept on the lines of *trisutras* would render a gross idea about subject. Hence *dosha kshaya* is analysed on the basis of *trisutras* of *Ayurveda*.

3. Importance of *Dosha kshaya*:

Dosha kshaya is mentioned as one of the *trividha gati* (three types of movement of *doshas*), where *gati* has to be understood as “the state of *doshas*” rather than “movement of *doshas*”.⁸ “*Malochitatvaat dehasya kshayo vrudhestu peedanah*” – Both increase and decrease of malas are painful to the body. *Kshaya* is more troublesome than *vrudhi* as it is very uncommon and unexperienced.⁹ where it is further clarified that “*mala*” has to be understood as *dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala*. This is due to the reason that, body is *auchitya* (accustomed) to *vrudhi* whereas it is *anouchitya* (unaccustomed) to *kshaya*.¹⁰

Doshas which are not in state of equilibrium (*vishama doshas*) are capable of destroying the body. The word *Vishama* here refers to both *kshaya* and *vrudhi* of *doshas*. Hence, protecting oneself from *kshaya* is as equally important as protecting oneself from *vrudhi*.¹¹

Bala kshaya happens when there is *kshaya* of *doshas*, *dhatu* and *mala* in the body.¹²

It is explained that, an *abuddha* (ignorant person) cannot distinguish between *vrudhi* and *kshaya* and would instead treat any condition as *vrudhi*.¹³ Considering the above mentioned reasons, it is clear that understanding the concept of *dosha kshaya* is very important and plays a vital role in causation of disease.

Charakacharya explains regarding different states of *doshas* as,

“*Doshaaha pravruddhaaha swam lingam darshayanti yathaabalam/*

Ksheena jahati lingam swam, samaaha swam karma kurvate”¹⁴

Pravruddha dosha (aggravated *doshas*) manifest their *linga* (symptoms/ abnormal features according to degree of vitiation. *Ksheena dosha* (diminished *doshas*) give up their *linga* (features). *Samadosha- Doshas* in a balanced state maintain their *swakarma* (normal functions).

Chakrapani comments on the above verse as,(Role of *Ksheena Dosha* in causation or non-causation of disease);

“*Lingam swam jahateetyanena ksheenaanaam prakrutilingakshayavyatiriktam vikaarakartrutvam naasteeti darshayati; yatho vrudhaa unmargagaamiti doshaa dooshyam dooshayanto jwaraadeen kurvanti na ksheenaaha;*swayameva dusthitatvaat |”¹⁵

-“*lingam swam jahati*”- means give up own features. It suggests that their normal characteristic features diminished and can't produce any abnormality. The aggravated *doshas* only can move in the upward direction and vitiates *Dushyas* (*Rasa*, *Rakta* etc) and thereby manifests *jwara* (fever) and other disorders. But the *doshas* in their diminished state are unable to produce any disorder because they themselves are weak or in the ill condition.

Types of *Kshaya lakshanas* (*Ashtadasha*)¹⁶- There are 18 types of *Kshaya* (diminution) *lakshanas*;

“*vaataadeenam rasaadeenaam malaanaamojasastatha*”- The features of diminished state of *vata* and the other *doshas*(3), *Rasa* and other *doshas* (7) and *Trimalas-mutra*, *puresha* and *sveda* along with *khamalas* (7) and *Ojas*(1) are explained.

Kaaranas(causes) for dosha kshaya:

-Intake of substances having qualities opposite to that of *doshas* (*viparita guna abhyasa*) or intake of substances having qualities predominantly opposite to that of *doshas* (*viparita guna bhuyishta abhyasa*).¹⁷

-Excessive elimination therapy (*ati apatarpana nimitta*).

-*Ashraya ashrayi bhava sambandha* (*kshaya* in *ashraya* will lead to *kshaya* in *ashrayi* also).¹⁸

-Other *kshaya hetus* like exercise (*vyayama*), lack of intake of food (*anashana*), over thinking (*chinta*), intake of dry food (*ruksha ahara*), intake of less quantity of food (*alpa ahara*), consuming food pertaining to single taste (*ekarasa ahara*), exposure to wind (*vata*), sun (*atapa*), fear (*bhaya*), sorrow (*shoka*), consumption of dry natured liquids (*rooksha pana*), staying awake at night (*ratri jagarana*), excessive elimination of *kapha*(*phlegm*), *rakta*(*blood*), *shukra*(*semen*) and *mala*(*excretory products*), due to variation in time (*adana kala, vrudha avastha*) which is generally debilitating in nature, due to *bhuta upaghata* (infliction of *bhutagraha*).¹⁹ These are explained under *ojo kshaya lakshanas* in *Charaka samhita*.

Samanya lakshanas:

General symptoms of *dosha kshaya* are *swakarma hani* (diminution in normal functions of *ksheena doshas*) and *virodha karma vrudhi* (increase in the function that are opposite to *ksheena doshas*) where *Acharyas* state that *virodha karma vrudhi* does not necessarily take place every time.²⁰

Samanya Tridosha kshaya kaaranas are as follows,

“*vyayaamo anashanam chintaa rookshaalpaprimitaashanam/*

Vaataatapav bhayam shoko rookshapaanam prajaagara/

Kaphashonita shukraanaam malaanaam chaativartanam/

*Kaalo bhootopaghaatascha jnaatavyaaha kshayahetavaha/*²¹

-Indulging in physical exercise, fasting, worries, intake of dry food in less quantity and which has only one rasa or taste.

-Exposure to wind and sun, indulging in fear, grief and dry liquids and waking throughout night.

-Excessive excretion of *kapha, rakta, shukra and mala*.

-Time factor due to oldage or *Adanakala* and affliction by *Bhootopaghata* i.e. evilspirits.

Vishesha lakshanas :

The *vishesha lakshanas* according to various *Acharyas* are mentioned as follows in tabulated form,

Table 01- *Vishesha kshaya lakshanas* of *tridoshas*.^{22,23,24}

<i>Vata kshaya lakshanas</i>	<i>Pitta kshaya lakshanas</i>	<i>Kapha kshaya lakshanas</i>
Weakness of the body	Decreased body temperature	Laxity of joints
Feeble or reduced sleep	Decreased appetite	Lack of sleep/ wakefulness
Altered or loss of consciousness	Loss or decreased lustre	Thirst
Decreased activity	Feeling of coldness	Loss of strength
Lack of enthusiasm or happiness	Stiffness	Dryness in skin
<i>Kapha vrudhi lakshanas</i> can	Pain in uncertain types and	Feeling of internal burning

be seen	uncertain time	sensation
	Tremors	Palpitation
	Dryness	Feeling of emptiness in <i>sleshmakshaya</i>
	Whitish discoloration of nails and eyes	<i>Vata vruddhi lakshanas</i> can be seen
	Feeling of heaviness	

Role of Ksheena doshas in causation of lakshanas:

It can be discussed with the following examples;

-In *artava kshaya*, though *shodhana* is indicated, *acharya dalhana* specifically mentions *vamana* due to *pitta kshaya*. In *stanya kshaya*, *shleshma vardhana dravyas* are told due to *kapha kshaya*.²⁵

-In *vyadhis* like *pakshagata*, *gadgada vak* etc, the movement of *vayu* is affected. This is due to diminution in *chala guna* of *vata* leading to *gati karma hani* (decreased motor activity). Therefore, treatment should be focussed on increasing the *chala guna* of *vata*.

- In *rakta atipravrutti chikitsa*, sour foods are suggested to balance the *agni* and *pitta* because *rakta kshaya* might lead to *pitta kshaya* (*ashraya ashrayi bhava sambandha*).²⁶

-In *atyagni*, vitiated *pitta* and *maruta/ vata dosha* causes the disease in individuals having diminished *kapha*.²⁷ When *gunas* of *kapha* are analysed, there is diminution of *sneha guna* (unctuousness) of *kapha* along with increase in *ushna guna* of *pitta*, due to which *ahara parinama* takes place faster leading to *atyagni*.

From this, it can be inferred that *ksheena doshas* contribute in causation of *Vyadhi* (Disease) in the form of *lakshanas* (clinical features).

Eliciting dosha kshaya:

Dosha kshaya can be elicited in following ways –

When the person craves for the,

- samana guna bhuyishta dravyas* (*dravyas* with properties similar to *ksheena doshas*).²⁸
- Swayoni vardhaka dravyas* (*dravyas* that increase the source of origin of diminished *doshas*).²⁹
- When *swakarma kshaya* of *doshas* are observed.
- When *virodha karma vruddhi* of *ksheena doshas* are observed.

Desire on food articles during dosha kshaya:

Person having *vata kshaya* will crave for *dravyas* like *Yava* (barley), *mudga* (green gram), *harenu* (peas), *ruksha bhojana* (foods dry in nature), *laghu bhojana* (foods that is light in nature), and food having *kashaya* (astringent), *katu* (pungent) and *tikta* (bitter) *rasas* etc.

Person having *pitta kshaya* will crave for *dravyas* like *tila* (sesame), *masha* (black gram), *kulatha* (horse gram), food made of *pishta anna* (dough), *mastu* (sour buttermilk), *shukta* (fermented alcoholic preparations) and *amla takra* (sour buttermilk), *dadhi* (curd) etc.

Person having *kapha kshaya* will crave for *dravyas* like Meat of *mahisha* (buffalo), *varaha* (pig), *aja* (goat), *guda* (jaggery), *ksheera* (milk), heavy food articles, desire to sleep etc. ^{30,31}.

Dosha kshaya in the form of nidana and lakshana:

Dosha kshaya can be seen in the form of *nidana* as well as *lakshana* in patients. Ex:*Prajagara* (staying awake at night) is generally understood as *nidana* of disease, but it can be a *lakshana* of *kapha kshaya* also. So before coming to conclusion that *prajagara* as *nidana* in this case, it should be properly analysed and have to rule out for any pre existing *kapha kshaya* condition.

Diagnosis of dosha kshaya based on nidana and upashaya :

Understanding *nidana* and *upashaya* (that gives comfort-can be *ahara*, *vihara* or *aushadha*), will help us to find the involvement of *doshas* in *vyadhis*. e.g., *Kampa* is a *lakshana* which manifests due to *vata vruddhi*. However, *kshaya* of *pitta* and *kapha* will also be present in the manifestation of *kampa*. Establishing this is possible, only when *lakshanas* of *dosha kshaya vikalpa* are understood. In *dosha kshaya vikalpa* it is stated that *kampa* can manifest in *pitta kapha kshaya* even if *vata* is in *prakruta avasta*. Such conditions can be clinically understood when *nidanas* and *upashaya* are properly traced out. From this it can be understood that, *nidanas* as well as *upashaya* play a major role in diagnosing *dosha kshaya*.

Dosha kshaya as predisposing factor for diseases:

Ksheena doshas acts as predisposing factor for causation of diseases. e.g., *rikta (snehadi guna shunyata) srotases* acts as predisposing factor for causation of *vatavyadhis*.³² Similarly, *hikka roga* is more likely to occur in people who have *ksheena prana vata*.³³

Dosha kshaya in differential diagnosis:

It is very important to understand the role of *ksheena doshas* in causing various diseases which would help us in achieving differential diagnosis. e.g., clinically, diagnosing *sandhigata vata* and *amavata* might be bit confusing many a times. Morning stiffness is commonly seen in many people with *amavata*, which is one of the confirmatory sign. However, it is believed that extreme rigidity or stiffness (*stambaadhikata*) can occur even in *sandhigata vata* which is due to *chala guna kshaya* of *vata*.³⁴ But in *amavata*, the stiffness might be due to presence of *ama* localised in joints. So through the *roga rogi pareeksha* understanding the *chala guna kshaya* in this case would pave the way in establishing the differential diagnosis of the above conditions.

Dosha kshaya results in bala (strength) kshaya:

-Relation between *vata dosha* and *bala* -*Anupahata vata*, *ushma* and *srotas* are responsible for *bala*.³⁵ Also *vata* is responsible for carrying *poshaka bhaga* to *dhatu*s. So when *vata kshaya* happens, there might be loss of *poshana* to *dhatu*s leading to *dhatu bala kshaya*.

-Relation between *pitta dosha* and *bala*-*Pachaka pitta* is responsible for providing *bala*.³⁶ *Pachaka pitta* responsible for the proper digestion of ingested food thereby further leading to proper absorption of all essential nutrients and vitamins required for proper nourishment of all *sapta dhatu*s and to strengthen our body. So, when there is *pitta kshaya*, *bala kshaya* also takes place.

-Relation between *kapha dosha* and *bala*-“*Prakrutastu balam sleshma*”- *Kapha* in *prakruta avastha* provides *bala* to *sharira*.³⁷

Relation between dosha kshaya and rogartrutva (disease causation):

Vishama doshas are capable of causing *roga* where *vishama* refers to both *vruddhi* and *kshaya*. *Roga* in above context has to be understood as *rujartrutva*, or that which is capable of producing *ruja*/pain. This implies that *ksheena doshas* are capable of causing *ruja* and not *vyadhi* as such. In the context of *sharira gunas* the relation between *ksheena doshas* and *rogakartrutva* can be understood.

Mainly *Sharira gunas* are of two types -*prasada bhuta* and *mala bhuta*, where *mala bhuta* are *prakupita vata*, *prakupita pitta* and *prakupita kapha* which are capable of causing *badha* to *sharira*.³⁸ In the same context, *Acharya chakrapani* explains that the word “*kupita*” refers to both *vrudhhi* and *kshaya* implying that both *vrudhha* and *ksheena doshas* are equally capable of causing *badha* to *sharira*. From this, it can be interpreted that *ksheena doshas* can cause *badha*, but not *roga* to *sharira*. This can be substantiated further with reference “*ksheena doshas* cannot cause *vyadhi* as they are *dusthita* (weak by itself)”.³⁹

Conditions which mimicks *dosha kshaya* (Confusion in understanding *dosha kshaya*):

In *avarana*, the *avruta* (*doshas* which is obstructed by other *doshas*) *doshas* becomes weak. Hence initially decrease in functions of *avruta doshas* (*swakarma hani*) are seen which mimics like *ksheena doshas*.

e.g., in condition of *pittavruta vata*, where *pitta* as well as *vata* is vitiated, the symptoms of *vata kopa* cannot be very well elicited. Instead, *lakshanas* like *daha* (burning sensation), *bhrama* (giddiness), *trushna* (thirst) etc. manifests. Here *vata karma hani lakshanas* might initially manifest which may mislead the diagnosis as *dosha kshaya avastha*. In such conditions, proper *pareeksha* (examination) has to be done and *avarana* line of treatment has to be adopted as *ksheena dosha chikitsa* would further worsen the condition.

CONCLUSION:

Vishama doshas can be either *vrudhhi* or *kshaya* of *doshas*. *Vishama doshas* are capable of causing *roga*. *Roga* in this context means that which is capable of producing *ruja* (pain). Craving for *samana guna bhuyishta dravyas*, *swayoni vardhana dravyas*, *swakarma hani* of *doshas* and *virodha karma vrudhhi* are the ways through which *dosha kshaya* can be elicited. Understanding the permutations and combinations of *dosha kshaya* will help us to conclude the key points in diagnosis like establishing *pittakapha kshaya* in manifestation of *kampa*, in spite of *vata* being *prakruta*. *Dosha kshaya* can be a predisposing factor for diseases like *hikka* (hiccups), *vatavyadhi* (Neurological diseases) etc. *Dosha kshaya* helps in differential diagnosis of diseases. Thus it can be concluded that, though *ksheena doshas* are weak, they can produce *ruja*, *upaghata* (destruction) to *sharira* (body), but do not possess the quality of causation of disease as they are *duhsthita* (weak).

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