

A Critical Review of Swastha Chatushka in Charaka Samhita And Its Role in Health Preservation

Dr Ruita Sudhir Rande

Professor, Dept of Samhita & Siddhant

Mauli Ayurveda Medical College and research centre Tondar, Udgir, Dt. Latur (Maharashtra)

Dr Ajesh Sambhaji Tambule

SSVP Ayurved Medical College And Research Institute Hatta Hingoli

Abstract

Ayurveda is one of the oldest holistic medical sciences that emphasizes disease prevention, health promotion, and longevity. The fundamental objective of Ayurveda is the attainment of Swasthya, defined as the equilibrium of Dosha, Dhatu, Mala, and harmonious functioning of mind, senses, and soul. Among the classical Ayurvedic texts, the Charaka Samhita holds a unique place due to its systematic presentation of health-related concepts through the Chatushka methodology. Swastha Chatushka, the second Chatushka described in Sutrasthana, deals extensively with health preservation, lifestyle regulation, ethical conduct, and prevention of disease. It consists of four chapters—Matrashiteeya, Tasyashiteeya, Navegandharaneeya, and Indriyopakramaneeya—which collectively provide a comprehensive framework for maintaining physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being.

The present review aims to analyze the conceptual framework of Swastha Chatushka and highlight its relevance in contemporary lifestyle disorders. Classical references from Charaka Samhita and authoritative commentaries were critically reviewed. The study reveals that Swastha Chatushka offers timeless preventive strategies applicable across all ages and socio-cultural contexts. Its principles, when adopted in daily life, can significantly contribute to the prevention of chronic diseases, enhancement of immunity, and promotion of longevity.

Keywords: Swastha Chatushka, Ayurveda, Swasthavrtta, Preventive Medicine, Dinacharya, Ritucharya

Introduction

Ayurveda, literally meaning “the science of life,”

is a comprehensive medical system that aims not only at curing disease but also at preserving health and enhancing longevity. The ultimate goals of Ayurveda are the attainment of Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha through the maintenance of a healthy body and mind. Among the classical Ayurvedic treatises, Charaka Samhita is regarded as the most authoritative text of Kayachikitsa and preventive medicine.

One of the most distinctive features of Charaka Samhita is its organization of Sutrasthana into Chatushkas—groups of four chapters unified by a common theme. This systematic approach facilitates in-depth understanding and practical application of Ayurvedic principles¹. Seven Chatushkas and two Sangrahadhyayas together represent the condensed

essence of the entire Ayurvedic system, often referred to as the “Madhusanchaya”².

Swastha Chatushka occupies a central position among these Chatushkas as it focuses primarily on health maintenance and disease prevention. While the Bhesaja Chatushka deals with therapeutic measures, Swastha Chatushka emphasizes Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam—preservation of health in healthy individuals—along with Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam³. In the present era, where lifestyle disorders and psychosomatic diseases are on the rise, the relevance of Swastha Chatushka has increased manifold.

Objectives of the Study

1. To critically analyze the conceptual framework of Swastha Chatushka as described in Charaka Samhita.
2. To evaluate the preventive and promotive aspects of health emphasized in its four chapters.

3. To assess the applicability of Swastha Chatushka principles in daily life and modern preventive healthcare.

Materials and Methods

The present study is a descriptive and analytical review based on classical Ayurvedic literature. Primary references include Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Deepika commentary by Chakrapanidatta. Secondary sources such as Charaka Chandrika commentary and relevant Ayurvedic theses were also reviewed. Conceptual analysis was carried out to understand the practical significance of Swastha Chatushka in maintaining health and preventing disease.

Concept of Swastha in Ayurveda

Ayurveda defines Swastha as a state in which Dosha, Dhātu, and Mala are in equilibrium, and the Atma, Indriya, and Mana are in a state of Prasannata⁴. Swasthya is not merely the absence of disease but a dynamic balance between the internal milieu and external environment.

According to Ayurveda, health is a multidimensional concept involving physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. Swastha Chatushka addresses all these dimensions and provides a structured approach to achieving ideal health.

Swastha Chatushka: Structure and Components

Swastha Chatushka comprises four chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of health maintenance.

Table 1: Structure of Swastha Chatushka⁷

Sr. No.	Chapter Name	Major Contents
1	Matrashiteeya Adhyaya	Dietetic rules, daily regimen, Ahara Matra
2	Tasyashiteeya Adhyaya	Seasonal regimens, Ritu Satmya
3	Navegandharaneeya Adhyaya	Control of natural urges, Vyayama
4	Indriyopakramaneeya Adhyaya	Ethical conduct, sensory discipline

Matrashiteeya Adhyaya

Matrashiteeya Adhyaya is the first chapter of Swastha Chatushka and deals with the concept of Matra—appropriate quantity of food. According to Acharya Chakrapani, a Matrashee is one who consumes food in proper quantity regularly¹⁰. Proper

intake of food ensures optimal digestion, nourishment of Dhatus, and maintenance of Dosha balance¹¹.

Charaka emphasizes that even wholesome food, if consumed in excess or inadequate quantity, can lead to disease. Therefore, Ahara Matra plays a crucial role in health preservation. Daily intake of milk, ghee, honey, barley, green grains, and amalaki is advocated for promoting longevity and immunity¹².

This chapter also elaborates on Dinacharya—daily regimen—which includes personal hygiene, exercise, nasal medication, fumigation, and ethical behavior. These measures collectively strengthen the body and prevent disease occurrence.

Tasyashiteeya Adhyaya

Tasyashiteeya Adhyaya focuses on Ritucharya—seasonal regimens. Charaka explains that even a balanced diet may fail to maintain health if seasonal suitability is ignored¹³. Seasonal changes influence Agni, Bala, Dosha, and Rasa, making adaptation essential for health maintenance¹⁴.

This chapter classifies seasons into Adana Kala and Visarga Kala and prescribes specific dietary and behavioral regimens for each season¹⁶. By following Ritucharya, individuals can prevent seasonal disorders and maintain physiological equilibrium¹⁵.

Flowchart 1: Role of Ritucharya in Health Maintenance



Navegandharaneeya Adhyaya

This chapter discusses the importance of non-suppression of natural urges (Adharaneeya Vega) and suppression of harmful urges (Dharaneeya Vega). Suppression of urges such as urination, defecation, hunger, thirst, sleep, and sneezing leads to various disorders¹⁸⁻²¹.

On the other hand, mental and behavioral urges like anger, greed, fear, false speech, and violence should be restrained to maintain psychosomatic health²². Vyayama (physical exercise) is also emphasized as an essential component of daily

routine. Proper exercise enhances strength, digestion, and immunity, whereas improper exercise may cause disease²³.

Indriyopakramaneeya Adhyaya

Indriyopakramaneeya Adhyaya is the most distinctive chapter of Swastha Chatushka. It deals with sensory discipline, ethical conduct (Sadvratta), and mental control. The harmonious coordination of Atma, Buddhi, Mana, and Indriya ensures health, while their improper utilization leads to disease²⁴.

This chapter also emphasizes social conduct, moral values, and behavioral ethics as essential determinants of health^{25,26}. A socially harmonious individual is considered healthier than one who is socially isolated.

Importance of Swastha Chatushka in Daily Life

Swastha Chatushka provides universal guidelines applicable to all individuals irrespective of age, gender, or social status. Its principles help prevent lifestyle disorders, improve immunity, enhance mental health, and promote longevity.

Table 2: Preventive Aspects of Swastha Chatushka

Chapter	Preventive Role
Matrashiteeya	Prevention of metabolic disorders
Tasyashiteeya	Prevention of seasonal diseases
Navegandharaneeya	Prevention of psychosomatic disorders
Indriyopakramaneeya	Promotion of mental & social health

Discussion

Among the seven Chatushkas of Sutrasthana, Swastha Chatushka holds special importance due to its focus on Swasthavrtta. In the modern era, lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and मानसिक disorders are increasing due to improper diet, sedentary habits, and stress. Swastha Chatushka provides a holistic preventive framework addressing all these factors.

Unlike modern preventive medicine, which often focuses on isolated risk factors, Ayurveda emphasizes harmony between the individual and environment. Adoption of Swastha Chatushka

principles can significantly reduce morbidity and improve quality of life.

Conclusion

Swastha Chatushka represents a comprehensive preventive healthcare model in Ayurveda. Its principles of appropriate diet, seasonal adaptation, control of natural urges, ethical conduct, and sensory discipline are timeless and universally applicable. By adopting these guidelines in daily life, individuals can achieve physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being, thereby fulfilling the fundamental objectives of Ayurveda.

Acknowledgement

None

Financial Support

Nil

Conflict of Interest

None

References

1. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 30, Verse 12. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.322.
2. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 30, Verse 26. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.187.
3. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 5. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.36.
4. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 5, Verse 1–2. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.36.
5. Tripathi B, Pandey GS. *Charaka-Chandrika Hindi Commentary*. Vol. 1. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2006. p.6–7 (Charaka Sutra 5/6–7).

6. Tripathi B, Pandey GS. *Charaka-Chandrika Hindi Commentary*. Vol. 1. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2006. p.10–11 (Charaka Sutra 5/10–11).
7. Acharya JT, editor. *Charaka Samhita* by Agnivesha, revised by Charaka and Dridhabala, with Ayurveda Deepika Commentary of Chakrapanidatta. Sutra Sthana. Reprint ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Samsthan; p.43:2–7.
8. Acharya JT, editor. *Charaka Samhita* by Agnivesha, revised by Charaka and Dridhabala, with Gangadhara Commentary. Sutra Sthana. Reprint ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Samsthan; p.84:5–13.
9. Murthy KRS, editor. *Sushruta Samhita*. Vol. 1. Sutra Sthana. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2000. p.152:15–41.
10. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 5, Verse 3. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.36.
11. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 5, Verse 1–2. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.36.
12. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 5, Verse 12. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.38.
13. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 6, Verse 2. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.44.
14. Mallika KJ. *Critical study of Swastha-Catuska with special reference to biophysical and biochemical changes in Rtusandhi*. MD (Ayurveda) Thesis. Jamnagar: Gujarat Ayurved University; 2002.
15. Tripathi B, editor. *Acharya Charaka's Charaka Samhita*. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2007.
16. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 7. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.49.
17. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 6, Verse 6. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.45.
18. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 6, Verse 4. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.44.
19. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 7, Verse 4. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.49.
20. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 7, Verse 4. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.49.
21. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 7, Verse 25. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.50.
22. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 7, Verse 26. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.50.
23. Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 7, Verse 31. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi:

- Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.50.
- 24.Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 7, Verse 31. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.50.
- 25.Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 8, Verse 5. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.55.
- 26.Acharya Agnivesha. *Charaka Samhita* with Ayurveda Deepika Teeka of Chakrapanidutta. Sutra Sthana, Chapter 8, Verse 15. Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Acharya. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2019. p.57.

