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A critical study on applied aspect of *vata dosha*

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Abstract

Dosha, Dhātu, and Mala are the components of the human body. *Vata Dosha* is regarded as the most significant of all the *Sharira Doshas* due to its special qualities and array of bodily functions. *Dhātu* and *Mala*, in addition to other *Doshas*, are governed by *Vata Dosha*. The *Vata Dosha* contributes to the preservation of the *Dhatus, Mala, and Dosha* balance. *Vata Dosha* carries all other *Doshas* to different places during the exacerbated phases where they cause illnesses. The *Vata Dosha* aids in the body's removal of *Mala*, which supports the preservation of the body's homeostatic state. Furthermore, *Agni*, which is said to be the primary force governing a number of physiological processes including digestion, absorption, and metabolism, is regulated by *Vata Dosha*. As a result, *Vata Dosha* controls all these vital processes necessary for life. *Vata Dosha* controls mental states and their activities as well as the healthy operation of the body's numerous sense organs. Additionally, *Vata Dosha* controls the actions of various *Srotas* and is in charge of various *Srotodusti*, which result in the development of various ailments. The capacity of the *Vata Dosha* to highlight the qualities of other *Doshas* without losing its own identity is what sets it apart from the other *Doshas*. Because of its special qualities, it can also cause various ailments when combined with other *Doshas*. Therefore, when *Vata Dosha* is in an aggravated state, it results in the greatest number of ailments, but when it is in a normal state, it aids in maintaining the body's equilibrium and is the most important component for life.

Keywords: *Vata Dosha, Dosha, Vata, Dhātu* etc.

Introduction

The three components of the human body are *Dosha, Dhātu, and Mala* [1], with *Doshas* being the primary element in controlling homeostasis inside the body. According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, illnesses arise from an imbalance between the *Doshas*, and homeostasis is preserved by their harmonious coexistence [2]. In his statement "*Deha Etaistu Dharyate*," *Acharya Sushruta* highlights the significance of *Doshas* in maintaining bodily equilibrium, adding that "the body is never without *Kapha, Pitta, and Maruta (Vayu)*, and even *Shonita* (blood); the body is always supported by these [3]."

The two main kinds of *Doshas* are *Manasa Dosha* (which governs mental activities) and *Sharira Dosha* (which governs somatic activities). Additionally, the three primary elements of the *Sharira Doshas* are the *Vata Dosha, Pitta Dosha, and Kapha Dosha*. Once more, *Manasa Doshas* is separated into *Raja Dosha* and *Tama Dosha*, which are the two main components [4]. While certain academics may sometimes refer to *Rakta* as the fourth *Dosha* in the human body, this idea lacks the essential principles needed to determine the element known as *Dosha*.

Two essential characteristics of *Doshas* should ideally be used to determine them:

- "*Swatrantreyana Drishti Kratritum Doshatum*" -the ability to vitiate oneself and others on its own.
- "*Prakrtyarambhakatwa Sati Drishti Kratritum Doshatum*" the ability to determine *Prakriti* (Phenotype) [5].

Since *Rakta* cannot vitiate itself and is instead vitiated by the affliction of vitiated *Doshas*, it cannot be referred to as a *Dosha*. Moreover, *Rakta* is not able to ascertain an individual's *Prakriti*. Because of its qualities, functions, ability to regulate other *Doshas*, and potential to cause the greatest number of ailments, *Vata* is regarded as the most significant and fundamental of the *Sharira Doshas*. All Ayurvedic scholars have documented the classical functions of *Vayu*; *Acharya Charaka* has made a substantial contribution. In addition to him, *Vagbhata* and *Acharya Sushruta* have highlighted the many roles that *Vata Dosha* plays. The name "*Vata*" derives its etymology from "*Va Gatigandhanayo*," which describes two

important aspects of the *Vata Dosha's* functioning in the human body: "*Gati*," which means movement, and "*Gandhana*," which means initiation [6].

Traditionally, *Ruksha* (Rough), *Shita* (Cool), *Laghu* (light), *Sukshma* (Subtle), *Chala* (Mobile), *Vishada* (Non-slimy), and *Khara* (Coarse) have been identified as the characteristics of *Vata Dosha* by *Acharya Charaka* [7]. *Acharya Hemadri*, the renowned *Ashtanga Hridayam* commentator, has delineated distinct roles ascribed to every *Gurvadi Guna*. Examining the roles ascribed to the *Gurvadi Gunas* that *Vata Dosha* has might provide insight on the general roles that *Vata Dosha* plays. A summary of this may be seen in table [8].

Table 1: Classical functions of the each quality possessed by *vata dosha*

	Guna (Quality) of Vata Dosha	Karma (Functions)
1.	<i>Ruksha</i>	<i>Soshan</i>
2.	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Stambhan</i>
3.	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Langhan</i>
4.	<i>Sukshma</i>	<i>Vivarana</i>
5.	<i>Chala</i> (can be compared with <i>Sara Guna</i>)	<i>Prerana</i>
6.	<i>Vishada</i>	<i>Kshalana</i>
7.	<i>Khara</i>	<i>Lekhana</i>

In the section that follows, we shall analyse the various *Vata Dosha* activities based on the roles of the particular characteristics mentioned above. Aside from this, some academics have provided in-depth descriptions of the broad roles of *Vata Dosha*. In the 18th chapter of the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sutrashana*, *Acharya Charaka* outlined the functions of *Vata Dosha*, which include: *Utsaha* (Enthusiasm); *Uchvas* (inspiration); *Nihswas* (Expiration); *Cheshta* (Movements); *Dhatugati Sama* (normal metabolic transformation of tissues); and *Samo Moksho Gatimatam* (Appropriate elimination of excreta) [9].

Furthermore, in the 12th chapter of *Charaka Samhita*, *Sutrashana*, he has detailed in detail the many actions of *Vata Dosha* as follows

1. *Vata* sustains all the organs of the body.
2. *Vata* prompts all types of actions.
3. *Vata* restrains and impels the mental activities.
4. *Vata* coordinates all the sense faculties.
5. *Vata* helps in enjoyment of all sense faculties with their objects.
6. *Vata* brings about compactness in all the tissue elements of the body.
7. *Vata* brings together different parts of the body.
8. *Vata* prompts speech.
9. *Vata* is in the origin of touch as well as sound.
10. *Vata* is the root cause of the auditory and tactile sense faculties.
11. *Vata* is the causative factor of joy and courage.
12. *Vata* ignites the digestive fire.
13. *Vata* absorbs *Dosha* i.e. *Kleda* (watery portion).
14. *Vata* eliminates the excreta.

15. *Vata* pervades the various macro and micro circulatory channels.
16. *Vata* mould the shape of embryo.
17. *Vata* is indicative of the continuity of the span of life [10].

The many roles of *Vata Dosha* have also been explained by *Acharya Sushruta* in *Sushruta Samhita*, *Nidansthana*, first chapter, as

1. *Doshadhatwagnisamtama* -*Vata* maintains the balance between *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Agni*
2. *Sampraptitit Visheshyeshu* - *Vata* coordinates sensory organs with their objects and
3. *Kriyananulomayam* - *Vata* is responsible for proper functioning of all the physical and mental activities [11].

In the eleventh chapter of *Ashtanga Hridayam*, *Sutrashana*, *Acharya Vagbhata* also listed the different purposes of *Vata Dosha* as follows: *Utsaha* (Enthusiasm); *Uchvas* (inspiration); *Nihswash* (expiration); *Cheshta* (Movements); *Vegapravartanam* (beginning of natural urges); and *Satmyagatya cha Dhatnamakshrananam Patavena cha* (maintenance of body tissues in their normal state and proper functioning of the sense organs) [12]. Similarly, several other academics have expounded upon the roles of *Vata Dosha*, drawing inspiration from the works of the three aforementioned luminaries.

Discussion

Dominancy of *vata dosha* among *sharira doshas*

- *Vata's* omnipresence, or "*Vibhutwad*," makes him the highest being. Because it can penetrate the minute pathways, when *Vata* becomes vitiated, it may more easily reach the minute portions of the body and produce ailments that affect those sections.
- *Vata* is regarded as the ultimate because of "*Ashukaritwad*," which enables it to swiftly go through all of the body's channels.
- *Vata* is regarded as supreme because of "*Valitwad*," which is stronger and more intense than the other two *Doshas*.
- *Vata* is regarded as the ultimate because of "*Anyakopanat*," which has the power to vitiate other *Doshas* as well. *Vata* assists the other two *Doshas* in their movement while in the *Prakopa* and *Prasara* states.
- Because of "*Swatantryad*," which is autonomous, *Vata* is regarded as the greatest. *Vata* does not require the support of other *Doshas* for its *Prasara*, *Prakopa*, or *Chaya*.
- *Vata* is seen as ultimate because of "*Vahu Rogatwad*," which has the ability to cause the greatest amount of a multitude of illnesses. *Vataja Nanatmaja Vikara* are the most numerous of all the *Nanatmaja Vikara* (diseases resulting from the vitiation of a single type of *Dosha*), numbering 80, as opposed to *Pittaja* and *Kaphaja Nanatmaja Vikara*, which come next at 40 and 20, respectively [13]. Chapter 28 of the *Charaka Samhita*, *Chikitsasthana*, states that there are countless ailments that result from vitiating the *Vata Dosha* [14].

Vata dosha act as a governing body to regulate the other *doshas*

Vata Dosha regulates the movements of the other two *Doshas*. When *Vata* is in its *Prakrita* or *Vikrita Avastha*

(normal or abnormal) state, it transfers other *Doshas* to the organs it targets, causing them to function normally or to manifest a variety of disorders. Within this framework, *Acharya Sharangadhara* has poetically explained how the lack of *Vata Dosha* causes *Kapha*, *Pitta*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* to remain lame, and how *Vata* carries them in a manner similar to how clouds are moved in the sky to a certain location to generate rain^[15].

Vata Dosha is the cause of *Prasara* (Spreading) among the *Tridoshas*; although devoid of sensation, it is predominant with *Raja Guna* and the *Raja Guna* is the activator of all things. *Acharya Sharangadhara* has described the role of *Vata Dosha* in the transportation of other *Doshas* in their normal condition, while *Acharya Sushruta* has described its role in the transportation of other *Doshas* in their vitiated states^[16]. The statement "in the body of the individual, *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* move through all the channels of circulation" is how *Acharya Charaka* characterizes the function *Vata Dosha* plays in the movement of *Pitta* and *Kapha* to generate various ailments. *Vata*, among them, impels the other two *Doshas* because of its delicate nature. After inciting these two *Doshas*, an agitated *Vata* disperses them throughout the body and blocks blood vessels, resulting in the development of various illnesses and the desiccation of tissue components such as *Rasa*, among other things^[17]. Therefore, it may be concluded that *Vata Dosha* controls the movement of *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha*.

Maintaining the Agni by vata dosha

In discussing the roles of *Vata Dosha*, *Acharya Charaka* stated that *Agni*, or "of fire" is ignited by *Vata*^[18]. Additionally, it has been stated that *Vata Dosha*, in the guise of *Samana Vayu*, is the one who advances *Agni's* power-"*Samano Agnibalaprada*"^[19]. In addition to delineating the several forms of *Agni* modification, *Acharya Charaka* has also referenced a particular ailment called *Vishmagani*, which arises from the vitiation of *Vata Dosha*^[20]. The significance of *Vata Dosha* in regulating *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Agni* is further highlighted by *Acharya Sushruta*, who states that "*Anila (Vata)* pervades the entire body and when not aggravated, maintains the normalcy of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Agni*"^[21].

In accordance with the views of the traditional academics, *Vata Dosha* therefore serves as *Agni's* ultimate regulator. Since *Agni* is thought to be the most important component for metabolism (As *Dhatvagni*), absorption (as *Bhutagni*), and digestion (As *Jatharagni*)^[22], it follows that *Vata Dosha* is the only factor that regulates all of these bodily functions that are necessary for life sustenance. *Vata Dosha* is the *elan vitae*, the strength, and the one who sustains living things, which is why *Acharya Charaka* honoured *Vata Dosha*^[23].

Maintaining the mana and indriya by vata dosha: *Vata's* all-pervading nature allows it to quietly reach the *Mana* (thinking) and *Indriya* (sensory organs) by infiltrating even the smallest region of the body. This feature has been well explained by *Acharya Charaka* under the *Vata Dosha* functions in वातकलाकलीयमध्यायं of *Sutrasthana of Charaka Samhita*^[24].

- “(वात) प्रवर्तकश्चेष्टा- नैवेत्तेऽस्मात् - *Vata* promotes all types of action.

- “(वात) विषेक्षिते जितेन से विषेष्टे”- *Vata* restrains and impels the mental activities.
- “(वात) एवैवापेक्षिते विषेष्टे, एवैवापेक्षिते विषेष्टे”- *Vata* coordinates all the sense faculties and helps in enjoyment of their objects.
- “(वात) प्रवर्तको वाचः, प्रकृतिः स्पर्शशब्दयोः, श्रोत्रस्पर्शनयोर्मूलं, हर्षोत्साहयोर्वाणिः - *Vata* is the "cause of joy and courage," "prompts speech," "is the origin of touch as well as sound," and "the root cause of the auditory and tactile sense faculties."

Act as a srotas regulator

Vata regulates each and every *Srotas* in the human body. According to *Acharya Charaka*, the word "*Srota*" comes from the *Sanskrit* word "*Sraavanat Srotamsi*," which refers to the channels that allow nutrients to pass through them^[25]. Any fluid or liquid that has to be transuded needs to be displaced, and this can only be accomplished by *Vata Dosha's Chala Guna*^[26]. As mentioned previously, the special quality of *Chala Guna* bestows to *Vata Dosha* the ability to shift the locations of the other two *Doshas*. Similarly, *Acharya Charaka* included "*Pravartanam Srotasam*," or the beginning of currents in water, as one of *Loka Vayu's* or the environment's functions^[27].

Since *Vata Dosha* and *Pitta Dosha* share the same elemental makeup, the same idea may be applied in both cases. Therefore, it may be claimed that *Vata Dosha* begins and controls the process of materials being sent through various pathways. *Acharya Charaka* states in the description of *SaMana Vayu* that it is present in the *Swedavaha*, *Doshavaha*, and *Ambuvaha Srotas*, or "*Swedadoshambuvahini Srotamsi Samadhishtita*"^[28]. Therefore, it may be claimed that *Vata Dosha* regulates several *Srotas*.

Conclusion

Vata Dosha is the most distinctive of all the *Doshas* in our body, because of which it carries out a variety of bodily activities. The *Sukshma Guna* of *Vata Dosha* aids in controlling the actions of several channels, allowing it to permeate even the smallest ones. Its *Ruksha Guna* facilitates the body's watery parts to be absorbed. It also aids in slowing down movement because of *Sheeta Guna*. These two characteristics make *Vata Dosha*, when it is intensified, responsible for blockages in *Srotas* and the emergence of many ailments. Because of its *Chala Guna*, which governs the movement of *Dhatu*s and *Doshas*, *Vata Dosha* aids in coordinating their movements.

Due to its *Vishada Guna*, *Vata Dosha* aids in the removal of diverse waste materials through numerous orifices. Owing to its *Laghu*, *Sukshma*, and *Chala Guna*, *Vata Dosha* controls the intellect and the various functions of the sense organs. *Vata Dosha* controls *Agni*, which in turn controls all biological processes like digestion, absorption, and metabolism that are necessary for life to exist. *Vata Dosha* is hence referred to by *Acharya Charaka* as the ultimate sustainer of the body and the controller of everything in the cosmos. Thus, it can be concluded that we can further analyse the functions of *Vata Dosha* in our body more thoroughly based on the classical descriptions of its various qualities and functions that are currently available. This will enable us to better understand the significance of *Vata Dosha* in preserving the human body's homeostasis and life

sustenance.

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