

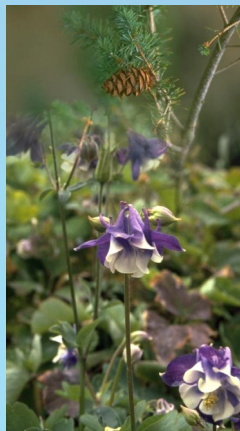
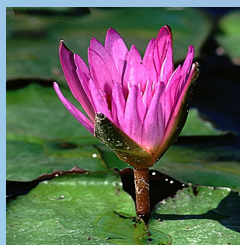
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# Pedagogy of 21<sup>st</sup> Century COVID-19 on the Rationale of 6000 BCE Indian Medical Heritage

## Abstract

**Objective:** Ayurvedic texts were documented ages ago, hence they have no specific cure to the diseases of the present day, as they are not described in the texts – this is the most dominant myth which is used to shut the voices of the researchers and practitioners of the Indian System of Medicine. The homo sapiens of the Planet Earth are under the constant fear of a single stranded RNA virus, reported for the first time on December 31, 2019, presenting as pneumonia of unknown origin which broke out exponentially and was declared a public health emergency of international concern on January 30, 2020, further renamed as COVID 19 in place of 2019 Novel Coronavirus on February 11, 2020. This strain is new for the present day researcher as its human transmission is reported for the first time but not for the science which cures the diseased (who are not new) unlike others who seek treatment for the diseases (which are innumerable and keep on emerging). As the virion is Novel and Ayurveda is ages old, these opposites do attract each other, and the present study aims at highlighting the principles laid in the texts of Ayurveda based on which COVID 19 and other newly emerging diseases could be understood and further added to the compendium to pave way for the future researches including drug development for the same. **Data Source:** SARS CoV 2 and COVID 19 were studied through reliable online sources and published research works. Classical texts of Ayurveda and available commentaries were explored to analyse the Ayurvedic perspective of COVID 19. **Review Methods:** Analytical review of the analogies was done to establish the hypothesis. **Results:** Analogies to the spread, transmission, prevention, and control of COVID 19 in texts of Ayurveda could be decrypted and the Etiopathogenesis of the disease based on the principles of Ayurveda was established. **Conclusion:** COVID 19 was found to be analogues to Vata Kapha Pradhan, Agantuja Abhishangaj jwara of Aupasargika category as per Ayurveda.

**Keywords:** Aupsargika roga, COVID-19, SARS-Cov2, immunity, IMS, Roga pareeksha

## Introduction

COVID-19 caused by the SARS CoV-2 strain of Corona virus could successfully germane its name, being the most focused disease of 2020 it literally bagged the Crown. As of August 15, 2020, there have been 763,836 confirmed deaths and 21,379,517 confirmed cases in the COVID-19 pandemic out of which 14,164,241 have recovered.<sup>[1]</sup>

After 7 months of first reporting, 5 months of pandemic status, multiple extensive researches and on/off lockdowns all over the globe, there is no specific cure of the disease till date which calls for an urgent need for the exploration of the principles of prevalent medical sciences.

The texts of Ayurveda, documented thousands of years ago are believed to be a complete thesaurus of medicine encrypted in such a beautiful way that it has codes for all the diseases including their prevention as the primary goal and treatment of the diseased as secondary.<sup>[2,3]</sup>

This system of medicine with most extensive history has successfully offered cure to the diseases such as hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and hormonal dysfunctions having no alternative in any medical system beyond lifelong Drug dependency. There is a myth that since the Ayurvedic texts were documented ages ago, they have no specific description to the diseases of the present day which has been busted multiple times by not only offering a cure but a

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cure free from manmade chemicals, to the diseases of modern era.

It has been clearly stated that each and every disease cannot be named or defined as there can be n-number of diseases due to the same dosha with a slight variation in the etiological factors or the site of manifestation of the disease.<sup>[4]</sup> The classical text hereby admits that there can be infinite number of diseases and each and every one of them cannot be named at a particular time, but there are tools to examine the disease after which the treatment can be planned and implemented based on the principles of Ayurveda.<sup>[5-7]</sup>

The present study aims to ascertain if the newly reported disease of this century, COVID-19 could be understood by decrypting the sutra of thousands of years old classical Ayurvedic texts. It further aims at highlighting the methodology of Ayurveda to understand the innumerable diseases through various tools depicted in the texts and hence add further to the vast data already compiled by the Acharya. It was hypothesized that COVID-19 can be understood easily under the light of Ayurveda principles through thorough understanding of the sutra and reading in between the lines which was established uninterruptedly through observations and result analysis.

## Materials and Methods

COVID-19 along with its causative pathogen was studied from the authentic sources available online including the WHO proclamations and other published research works which were further analyzed to collect the data of the presentation of the disease and its manifestation. The classical texts of Ayurveda along with the available commentaries were thoroughly explored and critically analyzed to decrypt the pathophysiology of COVID-19 from the perspective of Ayurvedic system of medicine.

Further, the COVID-19 was critically analyzed through the tools of *Roga Pareeksha* to present the disease in the context of Ayurveda.

## Observations

The classical texts of Ayurveda, on analyzing depict a compendious form of documentation where a lot of knowledge has been transferred in least words. It is clearly stated at many instances that whatever is mentioned here is merely an example for the wise and can be expanded manifolds on those lines while others may practice the same as cited.<sup>[8,9]</sup>

It was observed that only 8 diseases/syndromes were mentioned in the Nidana Sthan of the Charaka Samhita to explain the principles linked to the etiopathogenesis of diseases while 30 Chapters covered various diseases in Chikitsa Sthan where the treatment modalities were dealt with. Another interesting observation in this context was that 140 Nanatamaja diseases and 48 Samanyaja diseases

along with their subtypes were enumerated in the Sutra Sthana itself.<sup>[10,11]</sup> These observations substantiate it further that there were a lot many more diseases known to the researchers of that time but all could not be named or documented in a stretch so the text was written in such a proficient manner that it entirely covered the principles of treatment citing some examples, based on which innumerable diseases could be unlocked by a learned Vaidya using Yukti as a tool.

Aforesaid observations pave a way for the critical analysis of the texts to unravel the etiopathogenesis of COVID-19 based on the principles of Ayurveda to uphold the hypothesis and open the doors for future researchers. The analogies of 21<sup>st</sup> century Viral Disease and 5000 BCE Doctrines are summarized in Table 1. After careful exploration of the Samhitas, the etiopathogenesis of COVID-19 as per the Indian System of Medicine (ISM), based on the presentation of the disease is compiled in Table 2.

## Discussion

Ayurveda wisdom believes in the individualized approach of treatment, i.e., the treatment cannot be universal for every individual with same disease because it treats the diseased not the disease. In the situation of pandemics, endemics or epidemics when the individual's constituent dosha remain different from each other, there is still a lot that affects them in common, i.e., the disease which is due to the fact that the population as a whole is exposed to factors like vitiated air/vayu, water/jala, land/desh, or season/kaal.<sup>[29]</sup>

The calamities due to the contamination of vaayu/jala/desh/kaal are advised to be managed by the drugs collected before the time of these calamities as these factors to leave an impact on the aushadh too.<sup>[30]</sup> This can be seen as an example of hygiene maintenance at the time of contagious diseases by not using even the drugs at the time of exposure to the contamination. Their precontamination collection and proper storage for later use during the times of calamities highlight the responsiveness of the then physicians toward the prevention of the spread of the disease. The treatment of the suffering population is summarized as Shodhan by panchkarma followed by the administration of Rasayan drugs and following of the Sadvritta regimen.<sup>[31]</sup> Sadvritta includes the measures of prevention and control of the infection in general along with the mental health maintenance.

The text of Sushruta Samhita highlights the factors responsible for the spread of communicable diseases along with the spread of certain types of fevers, skin disorders, conjunctivitis, etc., as spread through contact, respiratory droplets, eating meals together and sitting very close to the carrier of the causative organism which is similar to the factors of the spread of COVID-19 as per the reports.<sup>[15]</sup>

**Table 1: COVID-19 analogies in Ayurveda**

<b>COVID-19</b>	<b>Ayurveda textual references</b>
Severity of spread Pandemic - A pandemic is an epidemic occurring on a scale that crosses international boundaries, usually affecting people on a worldwide scale <sup>[12]</sup> A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease (WHO)	Janpdodhwansa and Maraka are akin terms which explain the spread of the diseases among huge numbers beyond borders <sup>[13,14]</sup>
Transmission Surface to surface communicable disease - transmission by contact, droplet and air borne (WHO)	Acharya Sushrut has explained the modes of transmission of Communicable diseases (Aupsargika Roga) along with diseases like fever which coincide with these modes clearly <sup>[15]</sup>
Prevention of spread Surface disinfectant Hand hygiene Social distancing Personal protective equipment	Multiple instances state the measures of prevention and control of spread Pada prakshalan <sup>[16]</sup> Sadvritta <sup>[17]</sup> Achar rasayana <sup>[18]</sup>
Control Contact tracing Quarantine	The modes of transmission of the diseases explained by Acharya Sushrut, on application of Viparya tantrayukti depict the tracing of the diseased and maintenance of distance from them <sup>[15]</sup>
Mental stressors Diseased - fear due to the fatality of the disease and unknown outcome Healthy - fear of getting diseased	Mental stressors play a role in the disease as Jwar as such is said to effect both body and the mind <sup>[19,20]</sup>
Social distance	
Economical loss	

In another context, pandemics are termed as “Marak” and the treatment to these is moving away from that area of contamination, i.e., isolation and social distancing.<sup>[32]</sup>

The preventive aspect of the COVID includes maintenance of contact and respiratory hygiene which are documented well in the texts of Ayurveda. Washing of feet and hands is a routine habit to be followed which is said to be Rakshoghna, i.e., prevent the diseases caused due to invisible pathogens.<sup>[16]</sup>

It is evident that out of the present infected active patients most of the cases of COVID-19 are in mild condition (99%) while a few are critical.<sup>[1]</sup> It can be understood on the principle laid in Prameha nidana that a disease and the speed and severity of the manifestation will vary on the basis of the factors like Nidan-Dosha-Dushya which are nothing but the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of the modern science of epidemiology.<sup>[33]</sup> The epidemiological triad of agent-host-environment governs the emergence of the disease.

On keen observation of the clinical manifestation it was observed that the site of accumulation is majorly the seat of kapha and symptoms such as headache (shiroruka), sore throat (kanthodhwansa), mild diarrhea (vidbheda), Ageusia (arasagyata), and Anosmia (ghrananasha) are Vata nanatamaja diseases.<sup>[34]</sup> Further it is observed that the penetration of fever (Jwar) to deeper tissues (Dhatus) account for its bad prognosis and severe symptoms like

difficulty in breathing (Shavas), cough, entering into darkness (tamaha pravesha), pathogenesis in vital organs such as heart and lungs (marmacheda), feeling of cold externally and internal burning sensation which coincide with the moderate-to-severe COVID-19 symptoms.<sup>[35]</sup>

Along with the physical symptoms a lot more is suffered by the healthy as well as diseased individuals as pandemics trigger disastrous socio-economic and political crises in the infected countries owing to the changes in national behavioral patterns and shutdowns of usual day-to-day functioning. Various research works quote the need of psychosocial assessment and monitoring including queries about COVID-19-related stressors (such as exposures to infected sources, infected family members, loss of loved ones, and physical distancing), secondary adversities (economic loss, e.g.), psychosocial effects (such as depression, anxiety, psychosomatic preoccupations, insomnia, increased substance use, and domestic violence), and indicators of vulnerability (such as preexisting physical or psychological conditions).<sup>[36]</sup> Ayurveda is the only system of medicine to which emphasizes on the mental health and hence it is far more advanced than other present sciences in terms of understanding and knowledge.

Along with hygiene maintenance, the immunity boosting drugs and regimens are also a part of the system of medicine which remains the contributions of Ayurveda only. The present treatment modalities of the modern system of medicine include symptomatic treatment and



**Table 2: COVID-19 Roga Vinishchaya**

Tool for Roga Pareeksha	COVID-19	Ayurveda
Nidana Panchaka		
Hetu	SARS CoV-2	Agantuka
Purvarupa	Incubation period of 5 days on average	Avyakta purvarupa
Rupa (WHO)	Major symptoms include <sup>[21]</sup>	
	Fever (98%)	Jwara
	Cough (76%)	Kasa
	Sore throat	Kanth Bheda/Kanthodhvasa
	Headache (8%)	Shirashoola/shiroroga
	Malaise	Klama
	Myalgia/fatigue (44%)	Angamarda
	Anorexia	Annanaabhilasha
	Nausea	Hrillasa
	Mild diarrhea (3%)	Viddbheda
	Anosmia	Ghrananasha
	Ageusia	Jihvopghata/Arasagyata
Upashaya	Symptomatic treatment	Ushna peya, drava laghu supachya ahara, etc.
Samprapti		
Sanchaya	Stages of virus entry <sup>[22]</sup>	
	Virus host contact	
	↓	
	Entry of virus in the body	Accumulation of the disease causing factors at their site <sup>[23]</sup>
	↓	
	Cell entry by receptor binding-virus envelop fusion with cell membrane through endosomal pathways	
Prakopa	Multiplication within the cell <sup>[24]</sup>	
	Release RNA in host cell	
	↓	
	Genome RNA translate into viral replicase polypeptides and finally replication and translation result into relevant viral protein	Aggravation of the disease causing factors at their site
	↓	
	Viral protein and genome RNA assemble into virions in ER and Golgi	
	↓	
	Assembled virion transported via vesicles	
Prasara	The virion containing vesicles fuse with the plasma membrane of the cell to release the virus through exocytosis <sup>[24]</sup>	Spread of disease causing factors from their site to the location of the disease
	The virion invades the subsequent healthy cell and the cycle continues	
Sthan Sanshrya	SARS-CoV primarily infects epithelial cells within the lung <sup>[25]</sup>	Localization of the disease causing factors at the site of disease
	This virus can enter the human body through ACE 2 receptors which are present in various organs such as heart, lungs, kidneys, and gastrointestinal tract, hence these are the major target cells <sup>[22]</sup>	Prodromal symptoms arise at this stage

*Contd...*

Table 2: Contd...

Tool for Roga Pareeksha	COVID-19	Ayurveda
Vyakti	Presentation of disease with symptoms like fever, cough, malaise etc. The median incubation period of SARS CoV-2 is 5.1 days while maximum patients tend to develop symptoms within 11.5 days <sup>[26]</sup>	This is the stage of clinical manifestation of the disease and its symptoms emerge at this point
Bheda	Cytokine storm <sup>[27]</sup> ARDS <sup>[28]</sup>	This is the stage of differentiation

ARDS: Acute respiratory distress syndrome, ACE: Angiotensin converting enzyme, ER: Endoplasmic reticulum

trials on nonspecific drugs which is adopted for the Ayurvedic system of medicine too to clinically establish the efficacy of the drugs of the system.

## Conclusion

Owing to the fact that the Ayurveda and modern medical systems are documented in different languages because of a huge time lag in their era of emergence, the terminologies of these systems do not accord but it would be impulsive to conclude that there is no cure to COVID-19 in ISM as it is not described in the same. The texts of Ayurveda are a complete thesaurus of medicine which cover each and every aspect of health from preventive to curative and from body to mind and soul in total.

Disease (Vikara) is categorized as Karya Yoni and its analysis (Pareeksha) is based on the Vyadhi karaka dosha pareeksha, and analysis of the symptoms of the disease and categorizing it as mild moderate or severe.<sup>[37]</sup>

The present work could successfully complete the Rogapareeksha of COVID-19 and on Rukvinishchaya it was categorized as Agantuka, Abhishangaja Jwara of Aupsargika category which is Curable (Sadhya) in the initial stage of the disease but on advent of complications (Updrava) it might emerge as life-threatening (Asadhya) like any other disease. Fatality rate of SARS CoV-2 is very low compared to the other major virus outbreaks but the rate of the spread is quiet high owing to its high infectivity and transmissibility. Although it is Agantuka (bhutanubandh) jwar still it exhibits the symptoms of Dosha only hence treatment should be planned accordingly. The major symptoms of COVID-19 are in relation to the Vata-Kaphaj Vikar hence treatment should be planned on that basis.<sup>[38,39]</sup>

There is urgent need to understand and categorize the newly emerging diseases on the principles of Ayurveda and expand the available data for further research on the principles of Ayurveda.

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## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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### सारांश

**परिचय:** आयुर्वेदिक ग्रंथों को युगों पहले प्रलेखित किया गया था, इसलिए उन में वर्तमान समय के रोगों के लिए कोई विशिष्ट इलाज नहीं है, क्योंकि वे रोग ग्रंथ में वर्णित नहीं हैं-यह सबसे प्रमुख मिथक है जिसका उपयोग भारतीय चिकित्सा पद्धति (आईएसएम) के शोधकर्ताओं और चिकित्सकों के स्वर को बंद करने के लिए किया जाता है। मानव एक single stranded RNA virus के निरंतर भय के अधीन हैं, जिसे 31 दिसंबर 2019 को पहली बार अज्ञात मूल के निमोनिया के रूप में पेश किया गया जो तेजी से फैल गया और 30 जनवरी 2020 को अंतर्राष्ट्रीय चिंता का सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य आपातकाल (public health emergency of International concern) घोषित किया गया। ११ फरवरी २०२० को 2019 Novel Coronavirus के स्थान पर COVID-19 के रूप में नया नाम दिया गया। यह Virus वर्तमान समय के शोधकर्ताओं के लिए नया है क्योंकि यह पहली बार मानव संचरण की सूचना दी गई है, लेकिन उस विज्ञान के लिए नहीं जो रोगग्रस्त का इलाज करता है, उन लोगों के विपरीत जो बीमारियों का इलाज करते हैं (जो असंख्य हैं और उभरते रहते हैं)। Virus नया है परन्तु आयुर्वेद सदियों पुराना है, ये विरोध एक-दूसरे को आकर्षित करते हैं। वर्तमान अध्ययन का उद्देश्य आयुर्वेद के ग्रंथों में दिए गए सिद्धांतों को उजागर करना है जिसके आधार पर COVID-19 और अन्य नई उभरती बीमारियों को समझा जा सके और तथा drug development का मार्ग प्रशस्त किया जा सके। **सामग्री और तरीके:** SARS CoV-2 और COVID-19 का अध्ययन विश्वसनीय ऑनलाइन स्रोतों और प्रकाशित शोध कार्यों के माध्यम से किया गया। COVID-19 के आयुर्वेदिक परिप्रेक्ष्य का विश्लेषण करने के लिए आयुर्वेद ग्रंथ और उपलब्ध टीकाओं की खोज की गई और परिकल्पना की आलोचना के लिए उपमाओं की आलोचना की गई। **परिणाम और चर्चा:** आयुर्वेद के ग्रंथों में COVID-19 के प्रसार, संचरण, रोकथाम और नियंत्रण की उपमाओं को डिक्रिप्ट किया जा सकता है और आयुर्वेद के सिद्धांतों के आधार पर रोग की Aetiopathogenesis की स्थापना की गई। **निष्कर्ष:** COVID-19 को आयुर्वेद के अनुसार वात-कफ प्रधान, आगंतुक-अभिषगज-औपसर्गिक ज्वर के अनुरूप पाया गया।