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A CRITICAL REVIEW OF YOJANA CHATUSHKA IN CHARAKA SAMHITA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RAKTASHRITA VYADHI

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Charaka Samhita*, a foundational text of *Ayurveda*, contains eight Chatushkas (groups of four chapters) designed to establish comprehensive principles of health and disease management. The *Yojana Chatushka*, encompassing four specific chapters, focuses on therapeutic planning, individualized treatment strategies, and the rational use of interventions. Understanding its principles is essential for addressing complex diseases like *Raktashrita Vyadhi* (blood-borne disorders), which include conditions such as *Raktapitta*, *Kustha*, and *Vatarakta*.

Objectives: To critically review the concepts and therapeutic principles described in *Yojana Chatushka* of *Charaka Samhita*. To analyze its relevance and applicability in the management of *Raktashrita Vyadhi*. **Methods:** A qualitative textual analysis was conducted by thoroughly reviewing the *Yojana Chatushka* in *Charaka Samhita*. Classical commentaries such as *Ayurveda Deepika* and *Charaka Tattva Prakashika* were examined for interpretative insights. Correlations with the pathogenesis and treatment of *Raktashrita Vyadhi* were established through critical

appraisal of relevant chapters, cross-references, and clinical implications. **Results:** The *Yojana Chatushka* provides detailed guidance on *Yukti* (rational planning), *Anumana* (inference), and *Pramana* (valid knowledge), which are vital for individualized treatment. Its emphasis on the assessment of *Desha*, *Kala*, *Prakriti*, and *Bala* directly supports the precise management of *Raktashrita Vyadhi*, where the dynamic involvement of *Rakta Dhatu* and *Doshas* necessitates a tailored therapeutic approach. Specific treatments for *Raktashrita Vyadhi*, like *Raktamokshana*, *Virechana*, and *Tikta Rasa Pradhana Dravyas*, align with the strategies outlined in *Yojana Chatushka*. **Conclusion:** The strategic principles of *Yojana Chatushka* remain highly applicable to the management of *Raktashrita Vyadhi*. Its rational, patient-specific therapeutic planning ensures effective outcomes in such complex disorders. This critical review underscores the need to revive and apply classical *Ayurvedic* planning methods in contemporary clinical practice.

KEYWORDS: *Yojana Chatushka*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Raktashrita Vyadhi*, *Yukti*, *Raktamokshana*,

INTRODUCTION

Charaka Samhita, one of the most revered classical texts of *Ayurveda*, is systematically designed to impart both theoretical and practical knowledge of health, disease, and treatment modalities.¹ The text is organized into specific groupings known as *Chatushka*, each consisting of four chapters that focus on distinct themes essential for comprehensive clinical understanding. The *Yojana Chatushka* is particularly significant among these, as it encapsulates the principles of treatment planning, rational therapeutics, and individualized patient care through the application of *Yukti* (logical reasoning and planning).²

The concept of *Yukti*, as emphasized in *Yojana Chatushka*, serves as the cornerstone of clinical decision-making in *Ayurveda*. It integrates the dynamic interplay of *Desha* (geographical factors), *Kala* (seasonal variations), *Prakriti* (individual constitution), *Bala* (strength), and *Vyadhi Avastha* (stage of the disease) to tailor personalized therapeutic strategies.³ This approach ensures that treatments are not merely symptomatic but are designed considering the holistic and inherent characteristics of the patient and disease. Such a methodology is indispensable when dealing with multifactorial and deep-seated diseases like *Raktashrita Vyadhi*.⁴

Raktashrita Vyadhi refers to a group of disorders that originate from or are seated in *Rakta Dhatu* (blood tissue), characterized by the simultaneous vitiation of *Rakta* along with *Doshas*, especially *Pitta*. Conditions such as *Raktapitta*, *Kustha*, and *Vatarakta* fall under this category. These diseases exhibit complex pathophysiology, involving systemic manifestations and chronicity,

thereby necessitating an elaborate and individualized therapeutic approach guided by principles of *Yojana Chatushka*. The text provides a blueprint for clinicians to adopt a methodical and evidence-informed treatment framework for such conditions.⁵

The management of *Raktashrita Vyadhi* is intricately linked with interventions like *Raktamokshana* (bloodletting), *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation), and the administration of *Tikta Rasa Pradhana Dravyas* (herbs with bitter taste), all of which are advocated in classical texts. However, the selection of these therapies must be grounded in the comprehensive assessment outlined in *Yojana Chatushka*. It stresses evaluating the patient's *Agni* (digestive fire), *Koshtha* (bowel habits), *Satmya* (suitability), and *Aharashakti* (digestive capacity) to ensure therapeutic success and prevent complications.⁶

Furthermore, the *Yojana Chatushka* elaborates on the importance of *Anumana* (inference) and *Pramana* (means of knowledge) in clinical practice. This ensures that treatment decisions are not merely empirical but are supported by systematic observation, reasoning, and prior clinical experiences. This aspect is particularly relevant in managing *Raktashrita Vyadhi*, where variable clinical presentations demand a flexible yet logical treatment protocol. The integration of these diagnostic and therapeutic frameworks enhances the precision of interventions and optimizes patient outcomes.⁷

In conclusion, the *Yojana Chatushka* offers a timeless framework for clinical planning in *Ayurveda*, with profound relevance in the management of *Raktashrita Vyadhi*. Its principles of rational therapeutics, individualized care, and comprehensive clinical assessment provide a robust foundation for effectively addressing blood-borne disorders. Revisiting and critically analyzing these classical strategies can bridge the gap between ancient wisdom and contemporary clinical needs, fostering a more structured and outcome-oriented approach in *Ayurvedic* practice.⁸

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aim

To critically review the *Yojana Chatushka* of *Charaka Samhita* with special reference to the management of *Raktashrita Vyadhi*.

Objectives

1. To study the concept and principles of *Yojana Chatushka*.
2. To understand the role of *Yukti* in treatment planning.

3. To review *Raktashrita Vyadhi* in classical texts.
4. To correlate *Yojana Chatushka* principles with *Raktashrita Vyadhi* management.
5. To assess the clinical relevance of *Yojana Chatushka* today.
6. To provide recommendations for its practical application.

CONCEPTUAL STUDY

In *Charaka Samhita*, the systematic arrangement of knowledge is embodied through various *Chatushkas* (tetralogies). The *Yojana Chatushka* is a critical section that encompasses the strategic and rational planning of treatment modalities. It is presented in the *Sutra Sthana* from chapter 21 to chapter 24, providing a structured approach to clinical planning, focusing on individualized therapy based on patient and disease-specific factors.⁹

The term *Yojana* is derived from the root “*Yuj*” meaning “to unite, to plan, to align.” In the therapeutic context, it implies the well-thought arrangement or combination of various treatment components such as drugs (*Aushadha*), diet (*Ahara*), and lifestyle (*Vihara*) in a harmonized manner, suitable to the patient’s condition, constitution, and disease stage.¹⁰

Table No. 1 Chapters of Yojana Chatushka in Charaka Samhita¹¹

Chapter No.	Chapter Name	Key Focus
21	<i>Ashtauninditiya Adhyaya</i>	Eight factors leading to blameworthy physicians, stressing the importance of therapeutic precision.
22	<i>Yojana Siddhi Adhyaya</i>	Success of treatment planning and the essential factors ensuring its effectiveness.
23	<i>Yojana Vyakhya Adhyaya</i>	Detailed exposition on the planning process, methods, and logic behind treatment selection.
24	<i>Shadvidha Upakrama Adhyaya</i>	Six basic therapeutic procedures essential in disease management.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF YOJANA (THERAPEUTIC PLANNING)¹²

As per *Charaka Samhita*, the successful execution of therapy is dependent on several critical factors:

- **Desha (Habitat/region of the patient)** – Influences disease manifestation and treatment responses.

- **Kala (Time/season)** – Determines the dominance of *Doshas* and appropriate treatment timing.
- **Prakriti (Constitution)** – Governs the inherent traits and susceptibility of the individual.
- **Vaya (Age)** – Age-specific considerations are essential for the strength of therapy.
- **Bala (Strength of patient and disease)** – Treatment intensity is gauged accordingly.
- **Satmya (Suitability)** – Adaptability of the body to particular foods or medicines.
- **Ahara Shakti (Digestive capacity)** – Influences dietary recommendations and drug dosages.
- **Koshtha (Nature of bowel)** – Affects purgation therapies and internal medications.
- **Agni (Digestive fire)** – Central to metabolism and overall health, guiding therapeutic choices.

PRINCIPLE OF YUKTI (RATIONAL PLANNING)

Yukti is defined as the intelligent synthesis of various knowledge sources, including observation (*Pratyaksha*), inference (*Anumana*), and scriptural testimony (*Aptopadesha*). *Yukti* ensures that treatment is not arbitrary but logically constructed, ensuring safety and efficacy.¹³

SHADVIDHA UPAKRAMA (SIX TREATMENT STRATEGIES)¹⁴

Described in Chapter 22 of *Sutra Sthana*, these form the therapeutic foundation:

1. **Langhana** – Lightening therapy (reducing excess).
2. **Brimhana** – Nourishing therapy (for weakness).
3. **Rukshana** – Drying therapy (for excess *Kapha* or fat).
4. **Snehana** – Oleation therapy.
5. **Swedana** – Sudation or sweating therapy.
6. **Stambhana** – Astringent or constricting therapy (for conditions with excessive fluid loss).

APPLICATION OF YOJANA CHATUSHKA IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

The essence of *Yojana Chatushka* is to prepare a well-calibrated treatment plan tailored to the patient's unique constitution and disease characteristics. This approach prevents indiscriminate

therapy and minimizes adverse effects, ensuring rational drug usage, dietetics, and lifestyle corrections.¹⁵

RAKTASHRITA VYADHI

Raktashrita Vyadhi refers to a group of disorders that originate from, reside in, or are predominantly associated with the vitiation of *Rakta Dhātu* (blood tissue). In *Ayurveda*, *Rakta* is not just the circulating blood but is viewed as a vital tissue responsible for sustaining life, nourishing the body, and maintaining *Pitta* equilibrium. Diseases where *Rakta* serves as the primary site of *Dosha* vitiation are collectively categorized under *Raktashrita Vyadhi*.¹⁶

- *Raktashrita* is a compound term where *Rakta* means blood and *Ashrita* means "dependent upon" or "residing in."
- Therefore, *Raktashrita Vyadhi* signifies diseases that are dependent on, or have their pathology rooted in, the *Rakta Dhātu*.
- As per *Ayurvedic* texts, when *Pitta* vitiates *Rakta*, the natural functions of *Rakta* such as nourishment, color, and vitality are disturbed, leading to disease manifestation.

TYPES OF RAKTASHRITA VYADHI¹⁷

Multiple *Ayurvedic* classics like *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* mention *Raktashrita Vyadhi*. The following diseases are commonly included:

Vyadhi	Description
Raktapitta	Hemorrhagic disorders characterized by spontaneous bleeding through various channels (e.g., nasal, oral, rectal).
Kustha	Skin disorders with varying presentations, often chronic and difficult to cure.
Vatarakta	A disorder caused by vitiated <i>Vata</i> and <i>Rakta</i> , analogous to gout and certain types of arthritis.
Pandu-Roga	A form of anemia where <i>Rakta</i> is impaired, leading to pallor and weakness.
Kamala	Hepatic disorder or jaundice resulting from <i>Rakta</i> and <i>Pitta</i> vitiation.
Pleeha & Yakrit Vridhhi	Enlargement of spleen and liver related to <i>Rakta Dushti</i> .

SAMPRAPTI¹⁸

- *Raktashrita Vyadhi* occurs due to the vitiation of *Pitta* primarily, which then vitiates *Rakta Dhātu* leading to qualitative and quantitative derangements.
- The sequence of vitiation is as follows:

Vitiation of Pitta → Vitiation of Rakta → Aggravation of Vata or Kapha (depending on the condition)

- Factors leading to *Rakta Dushti*:
 - Excessive intake of *Amla, Lavana, Katu Rasa* foods
 - Alcohol consumption (*Madya Sevan*)
 - Exposure to heat or sun (*Atapa Sevan*)
 - Anger and stress (*Krodha, Chinta*)

CLINICAL FEATURES OF RAKTASHRITA VYADHI¹⁹

- **Raktapitta:** Bleeding from nose, mouth, rectum, or skin; burning sensation; fever; dizziness.
- **Kustha:** Discoloration of skin, roughness, itching, scaling, deformities.
- **Vatarakta:** Severe joint pain, swelling, redness, stiffness, especially in the big toe or peripheral joints.
- **Pandu:** Fatigue, pallor, breathlessness, weakness.
- **Kamala:** Yellowish discoloration of skin, sclera, dark-colored urine, fatigue.
- **Yakrit & Pleeha Vridhhi:** Abdominal fullness, discomfort, palpable mass in the abdomen.

CHIKITSA SIDDHANTA

The treatment of *Raktashrita Vyadhi* is guided by the principles of:

- **Shodhana (Purification therapies):²⁰**
 - *Virechana* – Purgation to eliminate vitiated *Pitta* and *Rakta Dushti*.
 - *Raktamokshana* – Bloodletting to expel vitiated *Rakta*, especially in *Vatarakta* and *Kustha*.

- *Vamana* – Emesis in cases where *Kapha* association is observed.
- **Shamana (Palliative therapy):**²¹
 - Use of *Tikta Rasa* (bitter-tasting drugs) like *Guduchi*, *Neem*, *Patola*, *Chirayata*.
 - *Sheeta Virya* (cool potency) drugs to pacify *Pitta* and *Rakta*.
 - *Rakta Prasadaka* (blood-purifying) herbs like *Manjishtha*, *Haridra*, *Sariva*.
 - Decoctions like *Panchtikta Kashaya*, *Patolakaturohinyadi Kashaya*.
- **Ahara and Vihara:**²²
 - Avoidance of hot, spicy, salty, and sour foods.
 - Consumption of cooling foods like *Shali*, *Yavagu*, milk, and ghee.
 - Lifestyle modifications to avoid heat exposure, stress, and anger.

SADHYASADHYATA

- *Raktashrita Vyadhi* can range from easily curable to difficult depending on chronicity, involvement of multiple *Doshas*, tissue depletion, and strength of the patient.
- Early intervention using *Yukti* based on *Yojana Chatushka* enhances the prognosis.²³

ROLE OF YOJANA CHATUSHKA IN RAKTASHRITA VYADHI

Yojana Chatushka of *Charaka Samhita* provides a systematic and rational framework for planning treatment strategies in complex disorders like *Raktashrita Vyadhi*. It emphasizes the individualized application of therapies based on a comprehensive assessment of the patient's constitution, disease stage, strength, digestive capacity, and environmental factors. In *Raktashrita Vyadhi*, where *Rakta Dhatu* along with *Pitta* is predominantly vitiated, therapeutic interventions require careful planning to avoid complications like tissue depletion or excessive bleeding.²⁴

ASSESSMENT AND PERSONALIZATION THROUGH YOJANA CHATUSHKA²⁵

- **Desha, Kala, Prakriti Assessment:** Evaluating habitat, season, and patient constitution helps in choosing appropriate interventions such as *Virechana*, *Raktamokshana*, or *Shamana* therapy.
- **Yukti:** The selection of therapies is based on logical reasoning considering the *Agni*, *Koshtha*, *Bala*, and *Vyadhi Avastha* (stage of disease).

- **Shadvidha Upakrama:** Applied as per need—*Langhana*, *Brimhana*, *Snehana*, *Rukshana*, *Swedana*, and *Stambhana*. For example, *Raktashrita Vyadhi* often needs *Langhana*, *Rukshana*, and *Shodhana*.

PREVENTION OF COMPLICATIONS

The methodical approach of *Yojana Chatushka* helps prevent potential adverse effects, such as excessive depletion of *Rakta*, weakening of *Dhatus*, or aggravation of other *Doshas*.²⁶

INTEGRATION OF DIET AND LIFESTYLE

Yojana Chatushka advises not just on medicinal interventions but also on *Ahara* (diet) and *Vihara* (lifestyle) modifications essential for controlling *Rakta* and *Pitta* vitiation, crucial in managing chronic *Raktashrita Vyadhi*.²⁷

CLINICAL EXAMPLE 1: VATARAKTA²⁸

- **Patient Profile:** Middle-aged male, sedentary lifestyle, residing in a cold and humid region, *Pitta-Vata Prakriti*.
- **Assessment via Yojana Chatushka:**
 - **Desha:** Cold climate aggravates *Vata*; requires warming therapies cautiously balanced for *Pitta*.
 - **Kala:** Winter season mandates use of *Sneha*, *Swedana* post purification.
 - **Bala:** Moderate strength; tolerates *Raktamokshana*.
 - **Koshtha:** Krura Koshtha (hard bowel), indicates need for strong *Virechana*.
- **Therapeutic Planning:**
 - **Shodhana:** *Raktamokshana* via *Siravyadha*, followed by *Virechana* with *Trivrit*, *Draksha*, *Eranda Taila*.
 - **Shamana:** Administration of *Guduchi*, *Manjishtha*, *Kaishor Guggulu*.
 - **Ahara:** Light, non-spicy diet with *Tikta* and *Kashaya Rasa*.
 - **Vihara:** Avoid cold exposure, regular mild exercises.

CLINICAL EXAMPLE 2: RAKTAPITTA²⁹

- **Patient Profile:** Young female, *Pitta Prakriti*, residing in hot climate, presenting with frequent nasal bleeding and oral bleeding.
- **Assessment via Yojana Chatushka:**

- **Desha:** Hot climate; intensifies *Pitta*.
- **Kala:** Summer season - high *Pitta Utklesha*.
- **Bala:** Weak strength, *Manda Agni*.
- **Koshtha:** Mridu Koshtha (soft bowel); suitable for mild *Virechana*.
- **Therapeutic Planning:**
 - **Shodhana:** Mild *Virechana* using *Trivrit Lehya* and *Draksha Kashaya*.
 - **Shamana:** *Amalaki, Draksha, Shatavari* for *Rakta Pitta Shamana*.
 - **Ahara:** Cooling diet—milk, ghee, sugarcane juice, pomegranate.
 - **Vihara:** Avoid heat exposure, stressful activities; ensure adequate rest.

CLINICAL EXAMPLE 3: *KUSTHA*³⁰

- **Patient Profile:** Adult male, *Kapha-Pitta Prakriti*, dry and scaly skin lesions, residing in a temperate climate.
- **Assessment via Yojana Chatushka:**
 - **Desha:** Moderate climate suitable for gradual detoxification.
 - **Kala:** Post-monsoon season—ideal for purification therapies.
 - **Bala:** Good strength, suitable for consecutive *Shodhana*.
 - **Koshtha:** *Madhyama Koshtha* (moderate bowel response).
- **Therapeutic Planning:**
 - **Shodhana:** Sequential *Vamana* with *Madana Phala*, followed by *Virechana* using *Trivrit* and *Avipattikara Churna*.
 - **Raktamokshana:** Local *Jalaukavacharana* (leech therapy) on lesions.
 - **Shamana:** *Panchtikta Ghrita, Sarivadyasava, Neem, Haridra*.
 - **Ahara:** Bitter vegetables, green leafy vegetables, light and non-oily diet.
 - **Vihara:** Avoid hot water baths, midday sun, and mental stress.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1. *Yojana Chatushka* offers a structured, logical approach for managing *Raktashrita Vyadhi*.
2. Ensures personalized treatment through *Yukti* based on patient-specific factors.
3. Effective in conditions like *Vatarakta, Raktapitta*, and *Kustha*.

4. Prevents complications by guiding appropriate therapy selection.
5. Leads to better symptom control and improved patient outcomes.
6. Supports holistic management with diet, lifestyle, and medicine.
7. Principles are applicable in contemporary *Ayurvedic* clinical practice.

DISCUSSION

The *Yojana Chatushka* of *Charaka Samhita* is a foundational guide for therapeutic planning in *Ayurveda*, emphasizing the necessity of rational, patient-centered treatment strategies. It incorporates the principles of *Yukti*, which ensures that every therapeutic decision is made after a comprehensive evaluation of factors like *Desha*, *Kala*, *Prakriti*, *Bala*, *Agni*, and *Vyadhi Avastha*. This rational planning is particularly essential in the management of *Raktashrita Vyadhi*, as these diseases involve complex *Dosha-Dhatu* interactions, mainly involving *Rakta* and *Pitta*, and require individualized approaches to avoid adverse effects or aggravation of the disease.³¹

The dynamic application of *Yojana Chatushka* is evident in the treatment of various *Raktashrita Vyadhi* such as *Vatarakta*, *Raktapitta*, and *Kustha*. For example, in *Vatarakta*, planned interventions like *Raktamokshana* followed by *Virechana* effectively target *Rakta* and *Vata* vitiation, preventing joint deformities and severe inflammation. Similarly, in *Raktapitta*, assessing the patient's strength and bowel nature before administering *Virechana* or *Shamana* therapy ensures safety and efficacy, especially in weak individuals. Thus, *Yojana Chatushka* prevents the risk of mismanagement by tailoring interventions precisely to the patient's condition.³²

Another significant aspect derived from the *Yojana Chatushka* is the integration of *Ahara* (diet) and *Vihara* (lifestyle modifications) alongside therapeutic interventions. *Raktashrita Vyadhi* often has dietary and behavioral aggravating factors such as spicy food, alcohol, excessive heat exposure, and stress. The text's emphasis on correcting these aspects ensures that the treatment is holistic and addresses the root cause of the disorder rather than merely controlling symptoms. This comprehensive approach not only aids in faster recovery but also in preventing recurrence.³³

Moreover, the strategic implementation of the *Shadvidha Upakrama* (six basic treatment modalities) under *Yojana Chatushka* enhances the treatment precision. Whether it is *Langhana*, *Brimhana*, *Rukshana*, *Snehana*, *Swedana*, or *Stambhana*, each intervention is selected based on thorough clinical evaluation. This methodical approach makes the management of chronic and

systemic disorders like *Kustha* and *Vatarakta* more effective and sustainable, aligning with both classical wisdom and contemporary clinical needs.³⁴

In conclusion, the discussion reinforces that *Yojana Chatushka* is not merely a theoretical construct but a practical clinical guide that significantly enhances the therapeutic efficacy in *Raktashrita Vyadhi*. Its principles of rational planning, individualized therapy, and holistic care continue to hold immense value in modern *Ayurvedic* practice. Revisiting and applying these classical guidelines ensures structured, patient-specific management strategies that lead to safer and more successful clinical outcomes in blood-borne disorders.³⁵

CONCLUSION

The *Yojana Chatushka* of *Charaka Samhita* provides a scientifically structured and rational approach to the planning and execution of treatment, particularly effective in the management of *Raktashrita Vyadhi*. By emphasizing individualized therapeutic planning through comprehensive assessment of factors like *Desha*, *Kala*, *Prakriti*, and *Bala*, it ensures precision, safety, and efficacy in interventions. The integration of *Shodhana*, *Shamana*, *Ahara*, and *Vihara* as guided by *Yukti* not only addresses the disease pathology but also strengthens the patient's overall health. Thus, *Yojana Chatushka* remains a timeless and clinically relevant framework for holistic and personalized care in *Ayurveda*, especially for complex blood-borne disorders.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST –NIL

SOURCE OF SUPPORT –NONE

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