

A CRITICAL REVIEW ON SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF KASHYAP SAMHITA

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Abstract:

Kashyap Samhita is not only limited to the description about pediatric concepts but has detailed the social, moral, ethical and economical aspects at various places. Indiscrimination about caste, education, economical status was predominant in those days. Individuals identification on the basis of their work or profession was found like *Vanik*(Businessman), *Padakari*(shoemaker), *Ayaskari*(Black-smith)etc. Prediction of child's future on the basis of socio-economical status was predominant. Disorders like *Jatharini*, *Graharog* has its unique social impact in the form of fear. Treatment principles and *panchkarma* procedures were also advised on the basis of social status. This article bears the detailed description on all these issues and its relevance in those days.

Key words: *Kashyap samhita*, social, moral, economical status etc

Introduction:

Ayurveda is mentioned as the *upanga* of *atharvaveda* by *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata*, whereas *Kashyap* considers *Ayurveda* to be fifth *veda*. He has equated *Ayurveda* with thumb of palm while other four vedas with four fingers¹. While describing the *ashtangas* of *ayurveda*, *Kashyap* proclaims *Kaumarbhritya* on the top and compares its importance with *Agni* in various eminent Gods².

Kashyap Samhita is considered as the only source book of *Kaumarbhritya*. Although this text has described *Kaumarbhritya* with specialty, but it is observed that various other important aspects are explained here. Among them, social aspects, economical indiscrimination, ethical issues, moral strategies, religious importance etc have also been described.

Social-economical Aspects:

Apart from four major cast categories viz., *brahmin*, *kshatriya*, *vaishya*, *kshudra* another *mahakshudra* is added. Due to prevalence of inter-cast marriages amongst the invaders or tribal another another cast category *varnantara* was described with twenty eight subdivisions including *saka*, *yavana*, *huna* etc. In spite of vast fragmentation of society on caste basis; untouchability was not found in those days and women of different casts were freely mixing with each other³.

Regarding education it is observed that equal opportunity was given to all the casts. Even *Kshudras* were permitted for learning *ayurveda* which is not so in *Charaka* and *Sushruta*⁴. However it is noted that *Brahmanas* dominated the society which is evident from the fact that they reduced the days of *ritukala*; the period permitted for sex life⁵.

Drugs like *Brahmi* which is considered as the best *medhya* drug was contraindicated

for *kshudras* whereas *lahsuna kalpa* was advised to be used only by *devas*, physicians and *brahmanas*⁶.

Individuals engaged in specific profession were recognized by the same in the society as *Vanik*(Businessman), *Padakari*(shoemaker), *Ayaskari*(Blacksmith)etc. Various types of toys were made for children by craftsman. A tripod of physiotherapy for children suffering from *Phakka* can be considered as the expert creation of carpenter/craftsman⁷.

Family tradition was found in those days. This is evident from the fact that the individuals having knowledge of *siddha* drugs and birth in family of physician was considered prerequisite for the teaching of classics of *ayurveda*. Clear instructions were given not to discuss the subject before undeserving or unwanted persons⁸.

Use of wine was prevalent in those days and delicate women, women undergone difficult labour and even to the children during dentition were advised for wine⁹.

Peoples were entertained with music, wrestling, instrumentation, and story recitations. Especially music and instrument were played in the abode of pregnant women¹⁰. This also depicts that skill of playing music and instruments was highly developed in those days¹¹.

A psychosocial fear of infliction by *jataharini* was created to deter the individuals from unwanted social behavior. Besides fear from *jataharini* elaborative description of what is to be done and what is to be not is also given¹². *Tantrika* method to ward-off evil eye and *prakrita* mantras are mentioned¹³.

The birth of son in the family was most cherished and women who delivers girl were not given proper diet during post natal period, thus the author has to prescribed the *ghrit* and oil after delivery for daughter and son respectively¹⁴.

Hygiene was given at-most importance in the abode of pregnant women. Measures like fumigation, burning fire were adopted as a part of disinfection method¹⁵. Unpleasant smell was removed by cleaning with flour of pea and hot water¹⁶. To prevent infection, pregnant women were advised to bath in protected place¹⁷.

High importance was given for power and wealth. Children were divided in three categories viz. rich, average and poor and on the basis of economical status difference in treatment principles of diet, drug and fee was observed¹⁸. Treatment was advised on socio-economical grounds¹⁹. The parturient woman was advised to sit with money²⁰. Physical characteristics of child born in poor or middle class family are mentioned²¹.

Specific features of vulva and pubic hairs of the girls likely to become whore or harlot are also described²².

Social and moral rules were violated by prescribing *basti* to adolescents of rich persons having emaciation due to excess sex²³. The chapter entitled *rajaputriya siddhi* concerning cleansing measure is described²⁴.

Conclusion:

Kashyap Samhita is not only source-book of *Kaumarbhritya* but has described about various disciplines of *ayurveda*. Apart from *ayurvedic* principles for children it is observed that text has depicted about

social, economical, moral and ethical

issues which are evident in this article.

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