

# **Exploration of Shadkriyakala in Preventive Medicine: A Siddhantika Review**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The classical Ayurvedic concept of **Shadkriyakala** outlines six sequential stages of disease manifestation, offering a unique framework for early diagnosis and timely intervention. This concept, deeply rooted in **Samhita Siddhanta**, embodies the preventive spirit of Ayurveda, focusing on interrupting disease progression before irreversible pathology sets in. This paper explores the theoretical foundations of Shadkriyakala, its role in preventive medicine, and its relevance in contemporary healthcare. By highlighting early pathological indicators and Ayurvedic principles of disease prevention, the review aims to re-establish Shadkriyakala as a pivotal tool in early detection and preventive strategies.*

**Keywords:-** *Shadkriyakala, Preventive Medicine, Ayurveda, Samhita Siddhanta, Vyadhi, Pathogenesis, Early Diagnosis*

## **Introduction**

Ayurveda, the science of life, emphasizes *Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam*—maintenance of health—as its primary goal, with disease management being secondary (*Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam*)[1]. This preventive orientation is reflected in the concept of **Shadkriyakala**, a unique Ayurvedic doctrine explaining the six stages of disease evolution. Introduced in the *Sutra Sthana* of **Madhava Nidana**, and elaborated in other Samhitas like Sushruta and Charaka, it provides clinicians a roadmap for early intervention, long before clinical symptoms become evident[2].

In the era of rising lifestyle and non-communicable diseases, preventive medicine has gained global attention. This article explores Shadkriyakala from a **Siddhantika perspective** and contextualizes its relevance in the framework of modern preventive healthcare.

## **Materials and Methods**

This is a **conceptual review** based on classical Ayurvedic texts including **Charaka Samhita**, **Sushruta Samhita**, **Madhava Nidana**, and relevant **commentaries**. Secondary data were also sourced from peer-reviewed journals, WHO reports on preventive care, and contemporary Ayurvedic literature.

## **Shadkriyakala: Definition and Interpretation**

The term "Shad-Kriya-Kala" literally means **six stages (kala) of action (kriya)**—stages at which therapeutic intervention is most effective. These stages are:

1. **Sanchaya** – Accumulation of Dosha
2. **Prakopa** – Aggravation of Dosha
3. **Prasara** – Spread of Dosha from its Sthana
4. **Sthana Samshraya** – Localization in Dhatus
5. **Vyakti** – Clinical manifestation

## 6. **Bheda** – Complications or chronicity[3]

These stages describe the **progressive interaction** between **Dosha**, **Dushya**, and **Srotas**, culminating in disease expression. Ayurvedic diagnosis and management strategies are intricately linked to identifying and arresting the disease at earlier stages—particularly the first four—which constitutes **true preventive medicine**.

### Relevance of Each Kriyakala in Preventive Medicine

#### 1. Sanchaya (Accumulation)

- Characterized by subtle symptoms such as **heaviness, lethargy**, or localized discomfort.
- Intervention at this stage includes **Ahara-Vihara Parimarjana** (diet-lifestyle correction) and **Langhana** (lightening therapy)[4].
- Corresponds to the **primordial prevention** level in modern terms.

#### 2. Prakopa (Aggravation)

- Doshas become more active and produce distinct signs like **restlessness, thirst, irritability**.
- Therapeutic focus includes **Shamana** (pacifying) therapies and observance of **Ritucharya**.
- Early health check-ups and behavioral interventions align with **primary prevention** strategies[5].

#### 3. Prasara (Spreading)

- Dosha leaves its Sthana and begins to circulate, influencing Srotas and other tissues.
- Signs are more generalized; interventions like **Panchakarma** can be introduced here.
- Analogous to **risk-stage disease** in modern preventive frameworks.

#### 4. Sthana Samshraya (Localization)

- Dosha interacts with Dushya at a weak or vulnerable site (Khavaigunya), laying the foundation of a specific disease.
- This stage represents the **true prodromal phase**, where **Samprapti is forming**, but full-blown disease hasn't manifested yet.
- Targeted detox, Rasayana, and lifestyle discipline are highly effective here[6].

#### 5. Vyakti (Manifestation)

- Clinical features become obvious; diagnosis is easier but disease is now established.
- Focus shifts from prevention to **treatment**.
- This equates to **secondary prevention** in modern medicine (early detection and control).

#### 6. Bheda (Complication)

- Disease becomes chronic or leads to complications like **tissue damage, deformities**, or **multi-system involvement**.
- Efforts focus on **tertiary prevention**: limiting disability and enhancing quality of life[7].

### Comparative Analysis: Shadkriyakala and Modern Preventive Medicine

Shadkriyakala Stage	Modern Equivalent	Intervention Focus
Sanchaya	Primordial Prevention	Lifestyle Correction
Prakopa	Primary Prevention	Dosha Pacification
Prasara	Risk Reduction Phase	Detox, Prophylaxis
Sthana Samshraya	Subclinical Disease Phase	Rasayana, Immune Support
Vyakti	Early Disease Stage	Symptom Control
Bheda	Complication Stage	Rehabilitation

This table underscores the **preventive utility** of Shadkriyakala, showing that Ayurveda anticipated the concept of disease staging and prevention centuries before modern frameworks.

### Discussion

Modern healthcare systems are increasingly shifting focus toward **predictive and preventive medicine**, especially for **non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**. Ayurveda, through Shadkriyakala, not only predicts disease progression but also offers **stage-specific interventions** grounded in **Ahara (diet)**, **Vihara (lifestyle)**, and **Aushadha (medicine)**.

Several studies suggest that incorporating **Ayurvedic preventive tools** like **Dinacharya**, **Ritucharya**, and **Prakriti-based screening** could help detect early imbalances corresponding to **Sanchaya** and **Prakopa**, facilitating preventive intervention before irreversible damage occurs[8].

### Conclusion

Shadkriyakala is not just a theoretical concept but a **dynamic clinical tool** that integrates **early diagnosis, prognosis, and intervention** into a single preventive framework. Reintroducing this principle into the clinical and public health domain can significantly enhance the scope and efficiency of preventive medicine. Future interdisciplinary research should focus on developing **evidence-based tools** to detect Shadkriyakala stages using both **classical parameters** and **modern biomarkers**.

### References

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