



ASSESSMENT OF PRAKRITI AND ITS CLINICAL RELEVANCE

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ABSTRACT

A great deal of diversity is seen in the physical, physiological and psychological attributes among the different human beings. Even identical twins are not similar in all respects. Our appearance, behavior and reaction to certain things; all these are due to a great extent influenced by our biological or genetic constitution. In *Ayurveda*, this genetic constitution of an individual, which remains constant throughout the life is called *prakriti*. *Ayurveda* mention numerous properties of *tridosha* (body humors) and how they affect *prakriti* or human's physiology, based on the dominance of one or more *doshas*. A good knowledge of *prakriti* is essential for the development of template for individualized diet, lifestyle counseling, and treatment. In the present descriptive literary review, a standard tool developed for *prakriti* assessment based on considering several aspects of the body constitutions. Characters and variables were collected from the *Ayurvedic* lexicons and some other related texts. These core concepts allow not only treatment modalities but also the implementation of personalized prevention and result in genetic testing to investigate the nature of newborns also, which would enable prevention of various chronic diseases for such children. Thus, ultimately, it can be an opportunity to practice personal preventive health, which is a unique model of Indian systems of medicine, because personal preventive health is a step ahead of personal medicine.

Key words: *Prakriti, Tridosha, Dosha, Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Dinacharya, Rutucharya, Constitution.*

INTRODUCTION

The qualitative and quantitative irreversible *dosha* predominance from birth to death is called *prakriti*. Physical form, mental condition and nature etc. of all persons are not same. In every human being, diversity and uniqueness are found in body length, breadth, effort, sleep, dream, diet, behavior, color of skin, hair style, voice, strength, intelligence, memory etc. Therefore, in short, the form of the body is called *prakriti* [1]. *Prakriti* is an important principle in *Ayurveda* to understand the nature and severity of diseases and the body's response to medicines. *Prakriti* also determines a person's response to environmental factors, drugs and susceptibility to diseases.

PRAKRITI

Prakriti is derived from *Pra* and *Kriti* which means natural origin. According to *Acharya Charak* *Prakriti* is called temperament and health [2]. *Ghanekar* stated that which produces other elements is called *Prakriti*. *Prakriti* originates during the union of *Shukra* and *shonita* (sperm and ovum) but they are determined by some accessory factors. *Charak* has mentioned several additional factors which determine the *Prakriti*.

CREATION OF PRAKRITI

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, formation of *prakriti* takes place by the prominence of *Tridosha* at the time of union of *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum) in the *Garbhashaya* (womb) of mother [3]. *Prakriti* is created due to the dominance of any one, two, or all of the three *Vatadi doshas* (*Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*) and *Satvadi* (*satva, raja* and *tama*) *Manas Gunas* [4].

Accessory factors affecting formation of Prakriti: Many factors are responsible for the creation of *prakriti*. Some of them are primary and others are secondary or accessory. These determinants of *prakriti* are divided into two parts by *Charak*:

Factors dominating in Intra-uterine life and hereditary factors:

- ShukraShonitaPrakriti* (Characters of Sperm-ovum or hereditary factors)
- Kala-Garbhashaya Prakriti* (Time of intercourse, fertilization and Age /nature of uterus)
- Matura Aharavihara prakriti* (Mother's diet/behavior during pregnancy)
- Mahabhutavikara Prakriti* (Influence of *Akasha, Vayu, Teja, Jala & Prithvi*) [5].

Due to special factors in postnatal period (Surrounding atmospheric factors)

- Jatiprasakta* (Racial factors)
- Kulprasakta* (Family factors)

Deshanupatini (Geological/ Demographic factors)

Kalanupatini (Seasonal factors)

Vayoanupatini (Age factor)

Pratyatmaniyata (Individuality)^[6].

TYPES OF PRAKRITI

Bhautik prakriti:

Sushruta has mentioned five type of *Bhautik prakriti* as *Vayvya* (characteristics like *vata*/wind), *Aagneya* (characteristics like *pitta*/ fire), *Jaliya* (characteristics like *kapha*/water), *Parthiva* and *Nabhas prakriti*, according to the dominancy of *panchamahabhutas*. *Parthiva prakriti* persons are stable, large-bodied and of forgiving nature; person of *Nabhas prakriti* are holy, long-lived, having broader mouth and nostrils.^[7]

Manas Prakriti: There are three type of *Manas Prakriti*; *Sattvik, Rajsik and Tamsik*. *Acharya Shushruta* has called it *Mahaprakriti*.

Sattvik Manas Prakriti: There are seven types of *Sattvik Manas Prakriti*; *Brahma, Arsha, Indra, Yamy, Varuna, Gandharva, Kaubera*. The predominance of *sattvik* qualities is that of a religious, loving, kind and pure mind, having good conduct and behavior, do not get angry easily. Do not exhaust even on hard mental work. They are theist, creative, polite and respect their teachers^[8].

Rajsik Manas Prakriti: There are six types of *Rajsik Manas Prakriti*; *Sarpa, Aasur, Rakhsa, Paishach, Shakun, Preta*. They are competitive and dominating hardworking, perfectionists but lacking proper planning, remain tense and soon lose their mental energy. They are short tempered, jealous and ambitious, self-centered, friendly and loyal only to those who help them^[9].

Tamsik Manas Prakriti: Three type of *Tamsik Manas prakriti* are *Pashu, Matsya, Vanaspatya*. These people are less intelligent; tend towards depression, excessive sleep during the day. They like jobs of less responsibility; slightest mental work tires them easily. They are greedy, possessive, love to eat, drink, sleep, and have sex, attached, irritable, and do not care for others^[10].

Daihih Prakriti /Doshaja Prakriti:

Acharya Charak, Sushrut and *Vagbhata* all have described seven types of *Daihih prakriti*. It is also called *Sharirik prakriti* and *Doshaja prakriti*, which remain unchanged from birth till death. Whichever the *dosha* is predominant in *shukra* and *shonita*; *Ekadoshaja prakriti* is created, *Dvandvaja prakriti* is formed by predominance of any two *doshas* and *Samdoshaj prakriti* is formed by equilibrium stat of all three *doshas*.

Ekadoshaja Prakriti : *Vata Prakriti, Pitta Prakriti, Kapha Prakriti*

Dvandvaja Prakriti : *Vata-Pittaja, Vata-Kaphaja, Pitta-Kaphaja*

Samdoshaj Prakriti : *Vata-Pitta-Kaphaj-* in equal proportions^[11].

ASSESSMENT OF PRAKRITI

An attempt made to develop the standard proforma for *Prakriti* assessment to ensure the psychosomatic constitution of the human based on considering several aspects of the body constitutions^[12].

Table 1: Proforma for Assessment of *Prakriti* :

No	Characters	Vataj	Pittaj	Kaphaj	V.	P.	K.
Physical /Anatomical Characters							
1.	Body structure	Short, thin, weak	Medium, fleshy, delicate	In proportion, well built, complete, beautiful			
2.	Body frame	Lean ,short	Medium, plump	Large, well built			
3.	Hair : body hair, beard or moustache	Scanty, dry, splitting	Scanty, soft, tendency to grey hair & baldness	Plentiful, wavy, glossy, do not fall or grey early			
4.	Hair :Colour	Dusky hair	Reddish brown hair	Black hair			
5.	Skin	Dry, cracking, rough, black coloured	Oily, soft with moles, pimples, freckles	Glossy, clear , smooth, glorious, fair, pinkish			
6.	Nails	Small, blackish, cracking, breaking	Small, reddish, smooth, flat	Big, pinkish, smooth, glossy, convex			
7.	Lips	Blackish, cracking, shapeless	Reddish, smooth, thin, soft	Pinkish, smooth, glossy, proportionate			
8.	Teeth	Very small or very big, cracking, broken, irregular	Medium size with gap	Even, glazing ,straight, smooth, shiny, white			
9.	Eyes shape and Colour	Small, round eyes blackish sclera, unsteady eyes, habit of raising eyebrows	White part reddish, brown eyes , reddish canthus of eyes sharp eyesight	Big eyes Elongated milky white sclera, edges reddish, calm, soft, gentle look			
10.	Eye Lashes	Thin and less eye lashes	Less in number/ Thin eye	Thick/Dense eye lashes			

			lashes			
11.	Eyes movements	Eyes remains half closed during sleep	Eyes get redden during anger /Alcohol consumption/Exposure to light	Steady gaze/Less blinking		
12.	Body temperature	Less than that of normal, palms and feet are cold	More than that of normal;palms, feet, face and forehead are hot	Normal; palms and feet are slightly cold		
13.	Joints	Protuberant, cracking, unsteady	Loose, moderately hidden	Strong, firm, compact, well hidden		
14.	Muscles	Prominent/ Hard calf muscles	Lax muscles	Well built muscles		

Physiological Characters

15.	Gait	Speedy/Swift gait/Small steps, Quick initiation	Moderate/Normal steps	Steady gait/Firm steps		
16.	Voice	Rough, hoarse, weak, dry	Clear, loud	Like lion, <i>mridanga</i> , deep, pleasant, soft		
17.	Body movements	Unsteady, like to wander here and there, habit of moving hands, legs and shoulders	Fast movements	Slow, steady		
18.	Sweat	Nothing particular/ less sweating	Very easily and a lot, in armpits, head, the body emits the foul smell and sweat	Less sweating		
19.	Appetite	Unpredictable, sometimes good, sometimes less, like to it fast	Good, has to eat after three to four hours, cannot tolerate hunger/thirst	Comparatively less, can tolerate hunger/thirst easily		
20.	Thirst	Frequently thirsty/ Drinks more water	Drinks more water/Intense thirst	Drinks less water/Less thirst		
21.	Quantity of food and drinks consumed	Not fixed, sometime more sometime less	Comparatively more	Comparatively less		
22.	Food preferred	Hot and wet	Cold and liquid	Hot and dry		
23.	Eating habit	Fast eating habit	Moderate	Slow eating habit		
24.	Stools	Blackish, hard, once in a day	Yellowish, loose, once/twice a day	Yellowish, well formed, once in a day		
25.	Sleep	Less than six hours, interrupted	Six to eight hours, sound sleep	Eight hours or more, sound sleep		
26.	Dream	Skies, winds, hurricane, hollowness etc	Fire, lightning, gold, red/yellow coloured views	Water, pools, gardens, faint coloured views		

Psychological Characters

27.	Work strength	Less, gets tired after small amount of work	Get tired quickly after medium amount of work, cannot withstand physical exertion	Good, after doing large amount of work does not feel tired		
28.	Pace of work	Fast, in hurry, in travail	Medium, fast	Steady, slow		
29.	Grasping power	Sometime grasps quickly, sometime grasps late	Always grasps quickly and neatly, very clever	Always grasps late but understands best		
30.	Memorizing capacity	Less, always forget quickly, unstable	Moderate, can remember the things, medium spam	Good, remembers for long time, thoughtful		
31.	Talkativeness	Very talkative, irrelevant speech, fast conversation, diffused speaking	Talkative, good and impressive speaker, good at arguments	Slow, soft, steady, firm but little speech		
32.	Temperament	Get angry and pleased quickly	Short tempered	Calm and patient		
33.	Greatfulness	Ungrateful	Moderate	Grateful		

Behavioral Characters

34.	Likings	Fond of travelling / Music and dancing/ Luxurious life	Fond of cosmetics	Fond of reading/Listening classical texts			
35.	Nature	Jealous, timid, ungraceful, start any work hastily, like to wonder here and there aimlessly	Short tempered, forgiving, egoistic, medium wealthy, self respecting, fearless, brave, very clever, good at decision making	Brave, patient, calm, withstands physical and mental exertion, give respect to teachers, thoughtful, generous			
36.	Dealing with problems	Worrying constantly, cannot take one fixed, stable decision	Can take firm decision, good at decision making	Can take right and firm decision with calm and stable mind, but take time			
37.	Tolerance	Having less tolerance and get frightened easily	Intolerance to heat/ Likes cold climate, food and drinks	Tolerant for physical and psychological strain			
38.	Social appearance	Jealous to friends/ Relatives/Neighbors	Fond of exaggerated praise	Feel shy while expressing			
39.	Friendship	Makes friend quickly /Fickle unstable friendship	Moderate friends and friendship	Less friends but Stable cordial friendship			
Total Marking							
Percentage							

On getting 80% or more of one *doshas* characters-*Ekdoshaj prakriti* (*Vataj, Pittaj or Kaphaj*)

On getting 40%-60% of any two prominent *doshas* characters-*Dwandaj prakriti* (*Vata-Pittaja, Vata-Kaphaja, Pitta-Kaphaja*)

On getting 30%-35% of all three *doshas* characters -*Samdoshaj Prakriti* (*Vata-Pitta-Kapha-* in equal proportions)

RELEVANCE OF PRAKRITI ASSESSMENT

Knowledge about health condition: A person with *Samdoshaj Prakriti* is healthy and persons with *Ekdoshaj prakriti* like *Vataj* etc. are often get affected by several diseases^[13].

Determination of drug doses and diet: After knowing the *Prakriti*, dose of the medicine is decided. In general the *Alpa* (minimum), *Madhya* (moderate) and *Pravara* (maximum) dose of medicine are adopted in *Vataj, Pittaj* and *Kaphaj Prakriti* individuals respectively^[14]. Appropriate diet may also be determined according to the of the *Prakriti*^[15].

Prognosis of diseases: When the causative *dosha* is similar to the *prakriti* of the diseased person, the disease becomes difficult to cure. Similarly if the vitiated *dosha* is different from one's *prakriti*, it is easy to treat^[16].

Susceptibility to disease: In a person with a particular *prakriti*, there is a possibility of early occurrence of *prakriti* specific diseases, due to the provocateur diet, which is an aggravating factor of similar *doshas*. For example, there is a possibility of early occurrence of diseases like arthritis in a *Vataj prakriti* person while nausea, indigestion in a *Kaphaj prakriti* person etc. Each *prakriti* person is prone to specific diseases^[17]. Thus *prakriti* determines that, how an individual is prone to a *dosha* specific diseases. As *Pittaja prakriti* persons are more prone to diseases like *Pandu*(Anemia), *Amlapitta*(Acidity), *Kaamla*(Jaundice). In view of this fact, the different diseases to which an individual is predisposed can be predicted timely and may be prevented by appropriate diet, drugs or regimen.

Knowledge about inauspicious sign: *Prakriti* remains unchanged from birth till death. But if there is a change in *prakriti*, then it should be considered as inauspicious sign^[18].

Determination the Strength (Bala): The *Kaphaj prakriti* persons have more strength than *Pittaj* and *Vataj prakriti* persons^[19] ^[20]. Determination of strength is important while treating a person.

Preventive Medicine: According to the rules of preventive medicine, *Vataj prakriti* persons should consume diet and behavior with qualities opposite to their respective *doshas*. For example, a person with *Vataj prakriti* should consume food having *madhur*(sweet), *amla*(sour), *lavana*(salt) taste, a person with *Pittaj prakriti* *madhur* (sweet), *tikta* (bitter), *kashaya* (astringent) and a person with *Kaphaj prakriti* should eat *katu*(pungent) *tikta*(bitter), *kashaya*(astringent). *Samdoshaj prakriti* persons may frequently consume foods having all type of taste^[21]. By determining the *prakriti* of individuals, their health can be maintained by advocating them *Pathya Ahara* and *Vihara* (Favorable foods and physical activities) and restricting them to take *Apathya Ahara* and *Vihara* (Unfavorable food and physical activities). It is helpful in understanding the health status of the person and following appropriate *Dinacharya* (Diurnal regime) and *Ritucharya* (Seasonal regimes) on the basis of one's *prakriti*.

For proper treatment: A wise physician should commence medical procedure only after thoroughly understanding and examining all the expressions and assessment of *prakriti* etc^[22] ^[23].

Agni status of persons: Acharya Charak has described four types of Agni (Digestive fire) according to individual's prakriti. Vishmagni (Disturbed) in Vata Prakriti, Tikshnagni (Increased) in Pitta Prakriti, Mandagni (Decreased) in Kapha Prakriti and Samagni (Normal) in Samadoshaj Prakriti persons^[24].

Career orientation: Prakriti assessment helps choosing a particular occupation, as each occupation demands certain qualities in the individual in terms of physical and mental constitution. For example pitta prakriti individuals have intolerance to heat and physical strain, so that they will be best for the sophisticated nature of work. The body built of kapha prakriti individuals are firm, so they can choose their occupation accordingly. Different sports are more suitable for a particular type of prakriti.

Harmony with the nature and society: According to one's prakriti, individuals can understand their attitude and can make a proper adjustment to the environment. Harmony with the family members, colleague and society can be developed appropriately on having knowledge of the prakriti of family members, co-workers and of oneself.

DISCUSSION

According to acharya charak and other scholars, Vata dosha have Rooksha (dry), Sheeta (cold) Laghu (light), Sookhsma (minute), Chala (movement) Parusha (Rough) Khara (rough) properties^[25]; Pitta dosha have Sneha (oily), Ushna (hot), Teekshna (sharp), Drava (fluid) Amla (Pungent) Sara (movement) Katu (Bitter) properties^[26] and Kapha dosha have Guru (heavy) Sheeta (cold), Mrudu (soft), Snigdha (unctuous), Madhur (sweet), Sthira (stiff) Picchil (sticky) properties^[27]. Vataj, pittaj and kaphaj prakriti individuals respectively have same properties in their physical, physiological, psychological and behavioral appearance because of the particular dosha predominance. So they are advised to indulging in such Aahara- Vihara (diet and behavioral regimen) which is having opposite properties to their respective prakriti and also following the Dinacharya- Ritucharya accordingly.

There is an event in Mahabharata, where Abhimanyu was able to decoding or breaking the six step of Chakravyuha, is the best example of (Mother's diet/behavior during pregnancy), as one of the factor dominating in Intra-uterine life. At present scenario we see pregnant women are advised to consume more Satvik Aahara; read, listen and see good literature story etc. to get better progeny. These activities also help to get better doshaj and manas prakriti offsprings.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has provided detail guideline in the form of Dinacharya and Ritucharya to maintain normal functioning of dosha related with specific prakriti. So prakriti emphasizes on the individuality and plays an important role in diagnosis, preventive medicine, and therapeutics. Lifestyle related disorders occur mainly because individual are not adopting way of life according to once own constitution. Prakriti plays major role in prevention as well as management of lifestyle disease. For maintenance of health, every person should know their constitution. If the daily activities, diet, occupation and behavior are not adjusted to balance this, then the constitutional doshas will increase, thus giving rise to its characteristic diseases^[28]. If the prakriti is known then, proper Ahara and Vihara can be advised correctly both for disease and treatment to promote healthy and long life, which is the prime goal of Ayurveda.

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