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A CONCEPT OF *PRAKRITI* AND *PRAKRITI* BASED *AHARA* IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT:

Prakriti is a unique concept of personalized medicine told in Ayurveda 5000 years back which highlights the predominance of *Dosha* in every individual. Concept of *Prakriti* plays an important role in deciding individual's *Ahara*, *Vihar* and *Achara* which ultimately leads to person's healthy life. *Ahara* is called *Mahabheshaja*, but it should be taken by person according to his own *Prakriti*. *Hitakara Ahara* (beneficial diet) for one type of *Prakriti* person may be *Ahitakara* (harmful*)* to the other *Prakriti* person. Hence the knowledge of *Prakriti*, its assessment and *Prakriti* wise diet & lifestyle is essential to maintain the healthy status of healthy person. Ayurveda believes in principle of *Purusham Purusham Vikshya* i.e., each individual has different needs. All the food is not beneficial for everyone due to different *Prakriti* according to Ayurveda. Same quality food can cause the vitiation of different Dosha. One should know the suitability for particular diet towards their body before consuming it. Hence knowledge of *Prakriti* and *Prakriti* based *Ahara* is very essential. **Aim & objectives:** Present study is aimed to compile various dietary articles suitable for the persons of different *Sharira Prakritis*. **Materials and Methods:** All the classical texts of Ayurveda with available commentaries, published research papers, PUB med, Google scholar, research Gate, subject related data on Internet and other sources were reviewed for the present study. **Results and Conclusion:** There is a definite interrelation of *Prakriti* with *Ahara* which is essential for maintaining health status of an individual. Specific food items as main diet as well as supplementary diet can be advised to the persons belonging to specific *Prakritis*.

Keywords: *Prakriti*, *Ahara,* Health

INTRODUCTION:

Ayurveda has a unique system of medicines for fulfilling its two aims i.e., preventive and curative aspects. There is a detail method described by Acharyas for achieving and maintaining the health as well as treating the diseases. For preventive aspect the complete routine during entire day and night and also during every season is mentioned under the heading of *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya* and *Swasthavritta*. While for curative

aspect, very minutely observing the different factors called "*Sukshma Avasthantarani*" which gives the success to physician in his career and *Prakrirti* factor is one of them. Acharya Charaka has narrated it as very first factor should examine by physician.

Concept of *Prakriti* plays an important role in deciding individual's *Ahara*, *Vihara* and *Achara* which ultimately leads to person's healthy life. Hence the knowledge of *Prakriti* is essential to maintain the healthy status of individual. Ayurveda believes in principle of *Purusham Purusham Vikshya* i.e., each individual has different needs. All the food is not suitable/ beneficial for everyone due to different *Prakriti* persons according to Ayurveda. *Ahara* is called *Mahabheshaja*, but it should be taken by person according to his own *Prakriti*. *Hitakara Ahara* for one type of *Prakriti* person may be *Ahitakara* to the other *Prakriti*. According to Ayurveda, the individual constitution or *Prakriti* classification is based on differences in physical, physiological and psychological characteristics and is independent of racial, ethnic or geographical considerations. Proper understanding of the concept of *Prakriti*, it becomes easier to prescribe an appropriate diet and lifestyle.

Ayurveda stressed that one must protect the body first by avoiding all harmful things because without healthy body there is nothing in the world to do and for live happy and healthy life, health it is very essential matter. Now a days to gain optimum health *Prakriti* based diet & life style is the first & prime need for society.

AIM & OBJECTIVE:

Present study is aimed to compile various dietary articles suitable for the persons of different *Prakriti*

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Conceptual study- All the popular classical texts of Ayurveda with available commentaries, published research papers, PUB med, Google scholar, research Gate, subject related data on Internet and other sources were reviewed for the present study.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Concept of *Prakriti*

According to Brahma Vaivarta Purana, *Prakriti* is formed from - three letters viz, *Pra*, *Kri* and *Ti*. *Pra* stands for the *Prakiashta Guna* i.e., superior quality- *Satva*, *Kri* for the moderate one the *Rajas* and *Ti* for *Tamas*. *Pra* also suggests the superior or best and *Kriti* stands for creation. So, the best of creation or the superior creation is *Prakriti*[1]. *Prakriti* is defined predominance of *Dosha* as the group of characters inherited prior to birth, right at the time of union of *Shukra* and *Shonita* but non applicatory just as an insect born in poisonous surrounding does not suffer from or die of that poison[2].

Factors responsible for making the *Prakriti*:

According to Ayurvedic literature many factors take part in formation and development of *Prakriti* which can be broadly grouped into two i.e., prenatal (intra uterine) factors and post-natal (extra uterine) factors. According to Acharya Charaka, *Prakriti* of an individual depends upon *Shukra Prakriti, Shonita Prakriti*, *Kala Prakriti*, *Garbhashaya Prakriti, Matruajahara –vihara Prakriti* and *Panchamahabuta Vikaraprakriti*[3]. These six factors come under the first group prenatal factors.

Acharya Charaka describes some other factors which plays important role in *Prakriti* determination. These factors are *Jatiprasakta*, *Kulaprasakta, Deshanupatini, Kulanupatini, Vayonupatini, Pratyamaniyata*[4]. All these six factors come under the second group i.e., post-natal factor. The first group of factors as during the intrauterine life of the foetus, at the time of union of the *Shukra*, *Shonita* and *Jiva* they have definite role in the establishment of *Prakriti* and active before prenatal period, so they are termed as pre-natal factors. While the second group of factors influence the *Prakriti* after the delivery of the foetus and is responsible for the development of the prakriti, so they are termed as post-natal factors.

Types of *Prakriti*:

Prakriti is mainly divided in three types:

1. *Sharira Prakriti* 2. *Manasa Prakriti* 3. *Bhautik Prakriti*

Prakriti with reference to *Dosha* is known as *Dosha* or *Deha Prakriti*. Depending on the dominance of *Doshas*, *Deha Prakriti* has seven subtypes and depending on the dominance of *Triguna*, *Manasa Prakriti* is mainly divided into three types. Similarly, by dominance of *Mahabhabhauta Bhautika Prakriti* is divided into five types. According to Acharya Vagbhatta *Sharira Prakriti* is divided into seven subtypes[5]- 1)*Ekdoshaja* is concerned with one dominant *Dosha* as *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*.

2) *Dvidoshaja* exhibit dominance of two *Dosha* and they are three *Vata Pitta - Pitta Kapha - Kapha Vata*, 3) *Sama Prakriti* has three *Dosha* in balanced state.

Importance of *Prakriti*:

There are two aspects on the basis of the two aims of Ayurveda: 1. For promotion of health purpose, 2. For treatment purpose.

1. For promotion of Health Purpose:

Prakriti plays an important role in the development of body, its complexion, behaviour, resistance power i.e. immunity, health status, reproductive capacity etc. *Bala* of an individual is also predicted by the study of *Prakriti* e.g., *Vatala* persons have less amount of strength[6]. *Prakriti* also has its impact on *Agni*[7] and *Kostha*[8] of individual hence *Agni* and *Kostha* of persons are decided by knowledge of *Prakriti*.

Hence the knowledge of *Prakriti* is helpful in maintaining the healthy status. If the diet, daily regimen, seasonal regimen etc. conduct by a person having opposite *Gunas* to their *Prakriti*, then person can maintain their health for long time.

2. For treatment purpose:

Prakriti is first *Pariksha* mentioned by Acharya Charaka in the list of *Dashavidha Pariksha* for investigating the patients. For a physician the knowledge of *Prakriti* is very much important to get the success in Chikitsa *Karma*[9].

Prognosis & diagnosis of the diseases is decided by the knowledge of *Prakriti*. Acharya Charaka has described the factors which determine the nature of the diseases which are easily curable (*Sukhasadhya*) & *Prakriti* is one of the factors which decide the *Vyadhi's Sadhyata- Asadhyata*. Means Acharya says that if the *Dosha* which is responsible for disease is not similar to the *Dosha* of *Prakriti* than the disease become *Sukhasadhya* & vice versa[10]. Acharya Sushruta says that treatment should be started only after receiving the knowledge of *Prakriti* of that particular patient. The selection of drug and its response to that particular patient are also decided by the knowledge of *Prakriti* and it helps in the prevention of diseases in time. Deciding the dose of *Bheshaja*/ medicine also depends on the base of *Prakriti*. *Anupana (*vehicle*)* should be fixed according to *Prakriti*. Hence the prognosis, diagnosis and treatment of the diseases are decided by the knowledge of *Prakriti*[11].

AHARA:

In Amarakosha, *Ahara* word can be concluded that the word *Ahara* means any substance which is taken in via the mouth and swallowed through throat[12].

Importance of *Ahara*:

The food is said to be cause of stability for all living beings. There is nothing else except diet for sustaining the life of living beings. *Ahara* is said to be *Mahabhaisajya* by Kashyapacharya, hence no medicament like diet is available. One cannot sustain life without diet even of endowed with medicine that is why the diet is said to be the great medicament by physician.

The body as well as diseases are caused by food; *Hita* (wholesome) and *Ahita* (unwholesome) food are responsible for happiness and misery[13].

Diet is said to be basis of life, strength, complexion, *Ojas*, growth and development, alertness of *Indriyas*, happiness, clarity of voice, lustre, pleasure, increase of *Dhatus*, intellect, health etc; entire life of individual

depends upon food, all the activities of this world, as well as efforts made for eternal emancipation depend upon diet, thus cereals are the greatest in the comparison of other thing. *Ahara* is believed to be one of the *Upastambha* (one pillar of three pillars) of life. It supports the body constantly just like the house is supported by the pillars. If it is faulty, the structure and functions of the body starts to get disturb and deteriorate. This is why while describing causative factors of diseases, dietary articles have been given prime importance.

Role of *Prakriti* in Diet:

Ayurveda advocates the way of well-being and it is aimed in fulfilling the following aspects. To maintain the health of a healthy person i.e., the preventive aspect and to cure the illness of a diseased person i.e., the therapeutic aspect. By *Prakriti* based diet, a person can achieve the first and prime aim of Ayurveda. i.e. (preventive aspect). Wholesome and unwholesome both the food articles bring about opposite effects; depending upon the variations in dose, time, method of preparation, habitat, constitution (*Prakriti*) of the body, disease and the age of the individual[14]. There are six tastes (*Rasa*) that makes the meal delicious and balanced. The right combination of these tastes depending on *Prakriti* helps in maintaining the health e.g., *Vata Prakriti* person should avoid eating bitter, because it aggravates *Vata*, but in *Pitta Prakriti* person it maintains the equilibrium state of *Pitta*. *Ginger*, *garlic*, *chili* etc. decrease the *Kapha* by reducing congestion and helping in losing weight, but when given to *Pitta Prakriti* person, it causes ulcers or irritability. That's why Acharya Charaka has mentioned a guideline for adaptation of *Ahara-Vihara* just after the description of *Prakriti*[15]. Acharya says that diet schedule which stand in contradistinction with *Dosha* forms the particular *Prakriti*. For individuals having equipoise state of *Dosha*, habitual intake of food articles consisting of all *Rasa* in proportionate quantity is prescribed[16]. The Same food which is good for one person can be inappropriate for another one. The reason behind this is *Prakriti* and that is why for getting the best out of food or wholesomeness of a diet, it must be consumed according to *Prakriti*[17]. In this modern era, society consumes the diet according to calorie counting. But when one chooses a diet according to *Prakriti*. Effect of *Ahara* depends on the person who consumes; it can produce, it can alleviate or can prevent disease depending on the *Prakriti* of the person and the quality of *Ahara* like hot or cold, heavy or light, moist or dry etc.

Table No. 1: Diet for different *Prakriti*[18]

Diet	*Vata*	*Pitta*	*Kapha*
Grains			
Wheat (*Godhuma*)	+	+	-
Rice (old) (*Shali*)	+	+	+
Nivara (one type of rice) Hygrorhyzaaristata	-	+	-
Millets (*Bajara*)	-	-	+
Barley (*Java*)	-	+	+
Lentil (*Masura*)	-	+	+
Sesame (*Tila*)	+	+	+
Chinese bean/cows peas (*Rajamasha*)	-	+	+
Aconite leaved kidney (*Makushtha*)	-	+	+
Peas (*Kalaya*)	-	+	+
Pink beans (*Nishpava*)	-	+	+
Horse gram (*Kulattha*) (Dolichosbifloruus)	+	-	+

Corn (*Maize*)	-	+	+
Jowar (*Yavanala*)	-	+	+
Kangu(Kanga-Setariaitalica)	-	+	+
Paspalumscrobiculatium (*Kodrava*)	-	+	+
Lemon grass (Jambira-Harichaya)	+	-	+
Japanese barn yard millet (*Shyamaka*)	-	+	+
Cereals/ pulses			
Black gram (*Masha*)	+	-	-
Green gram (*Mudga*)	+	+	+
Red gram/pigeon peas (*Tuvara*)	-	+	+
Sweet potato (*Shakkarakanda*) (Ipomoea batatas)	-	+	-
Tomato (*Raktavardhak*) Love apple/woif-peach	+	-	-
Onion (*landu*)	+	-	-
Garlic (*Rasona*)	+	-	+
Carrot (*Grunjanak*)	+	-	+
Lady's finger/Okra/Gobba (*Karaparnaphala*)	-	+	-
Beet root/ Garden beet (*Raktagrinjana*)	-	+	-
Indian bean (*Valora /Papadi*) (Hyacienth beans)	+	+	-
Cucumber (ripe)(*Karkati*)	-	-	-
Cucumber (unripe)(*Karkati*)	-	+	-
Spinach (*Palankya*)	-	+	-
Cauliflower (Botrytis camliflower)	-	+	+
Narrowleavedsepistan (*Sleshmataka Gund*),	-	+	+
Tritoscucunerinnas (*Paraval*)	+	+	+
Vetches (*Guvaka*)	-	+	-
Round gourd/ivy gourd - Tindora(*Gholu/Bimbi*)	-	+	-
Pumpkin /ash gourd (*Kushmanda*)	+	+	+
White gourd (*Alabu/Dudhi*)	-	+	-
Ribbed gourd/ghosby (*Turiya/Dhara Koshataki/ Raj Koshataki*)	-	+	-
Mooth gourd (*Galka/MahaKoshataka*)	-	+	-
Maranth (*Tandalajo*)	+	+	+
Karkotaki (*Kantola*)	+	+	+
Coriander (*Dhanyaka*)	+	+	+
Cumin seed (*Jeerak*)	+	-	+
Asafoetida (*Hingu*)	+	-	+
Redchillies (*Tikshna/Katuvira/Pittakar-ini*)	-	-	+
Green chillies (Capsicum annum)	-	-	+

Buck wheat (*Rajagara*)	-	+	+
Soybeans	+	+	-
Vegetables			
Drum stick (*Shigru*)	+	+	+
Radish (*Mulaka*)	+	-	+
Radish leaf (*Mulakapatra*)	+	+	+
Brinjal (*Vartaka*)	+	-	+
Bitter gourd (*Karavellaka*)	-	+	+
Cabbage (Dalamalini/*Gobhi*)	-	+	-
Potato (Solanumtuberosum)	-	+	-
Leptadeniareticulata (*Jeevanti*)	+	+	+
Dindisha -Tinsa /*Tendasa*	-	+	+
Yam (*Ratalu*)	-	+	-
Lambs' quarters (*Vastuka* /Tank)	+	+	+
Elephant‟s ear-alavi (*Aluka*)	-	+	-
Elephant‟s foot (*Surana*)	+	-	+
Asparagus racemosus (*Shatavari*)	+	+	-
Negtshode (*Kakamachi/makoy*)	+	+	+
Cissampelospareira (*Patha*)	+	+	+
Red Malabar nightshade/Indian spinach (*Upodika/Poi*)	+	+	-
Chivillika (*LuniniBhaji*)	+	-	-
Andropogonsquarrosus (*Ushira/Valo*)	+	+	-
Chakramardapatra (*KunvadiyaniBhaji*)	+	-	+
Indian sorrel (*Changeri*)	+	-	+
Spices			
Ginger (*Ardraka*)	+	-	+
Mustard (*Rajika*)	+	-	+
Fenugreek (*Methika*)	+	-	+
Clove (*Lavanga*)	-	+	+
Camphor (*Kapoora*)	+	-	+
Cardamom (*Ela*)	-	-	+
Fruits			
Indian gooseberry (*Amalaki*)	+	+	+
Mango (Raw)(*Amra*)	-	-	+
Mango (Ripe)(*Amra*)	+	+	-
Papaya (*ErandaKarkati*)	+	-	-
Orange	+	-	-

Black Pepper (*Maricha*)	+	-	+
Dill seed (*Shatapushpa*)	+	-	+
Turmeric (*Haridra*)	+	+	+
Celery leaves (*Ajmo/Yavani*)	+	-	+
Fennel seeds (*Misreya*)	+	+	+
Tamarinda (*Chincha*)	-	-	-
Mangosteen (*Vrikshamla/Kokam*)	-	-	-
Roots of piper longum (*PippaliMula/Ganthoda*)	+	-	+
Mint (*Pudina*)	+	-	+
Murrayakoenigil (*Mishta Nimba /Kaitarya*)	-	+	+
Cinnamon (*TajaPatra*)	+	-	+
Nutmeg (*Jatiphala*) and Mace (*Javitri*)	+	-	+
Poppy seeds (*Khasa-Khasa*)	+	+	-
Saffron (*Kumkum*)	+	-	+
Sacred basil (*Surasa/Tulsi*)	+	-	+
Soda bi carbonate (*Kshara*-PapadiyoKharo)	+	-	+
Plum (*Aloo*)	-	+	-
Sugar Cane (*Ikshu*)	+	+	-
Peach	-	-	-
Mulberry -Ripe (*Shetura*)	+	+	-
Litchi	-	-	-
Musk melon/sweet melon (Cucumismelo)	+	+	-
Custard apple/sugar apple/ sweet soap (*Seetaphala/Gandagatra*/Kris -hna beeja)	+	+	-
Bael (*Bilva* fruit)	-	+	+
Mimusopshexandra (*Rayana/rajadana/kshirika*)	+	+	-
Jujube (Ripe) (*Badara*)	+	+	-
Gromia (Falsa-*Parushaka*)	+	+	+
Wood apple (ripe) (*Kapittha*)	+	+	-
Apricot (*Jaradalu*)	-	+	-
Water chestnut (*Shringataka*)	-	+	-
Dates (*Kharjura*)	+	+	-
Cashew nut (*Vritarushkara/Kajutaka*)	+	-	+
Chirongiasapida (*Chironji/ Priyala*)	+	+	-
Walnut (*Akshotaka*)	+	+	+

Pineapple (*Paravati/Kaustukasangyaka/* Annana)	+	-	-
Apple (*Sev/Sinchitika*)	+	+	-
Banana (*Kadali*)	+	+	-
Grapes (*Draksha*)	+	+	+
Coconut (*Narikela*)	+	+	-
Strawberry	+	-	-
Cherry plum (Ripe)	+	-	-
Lemon (*Nimbuka*)	+	-	+
Pomegranate (*Dadima*)	+	+	+
Guava (Perukam/*Mriduphala/Dridhab -ijam*)	-	+	-
Jack fruit (ripe) (Fanasa-Panasa)	+	+	-
Citrus medica (*Bijapura/ Matulunga*)	+	-	+
Sweet lime	+	+	-
Pear (*Naspati*)	+	+	+
Water melon (*Kalinga/ Tarabuja*)	-	-	-
Rose apple/black plum (*Jamboo*)	-	+	+
Pistachio nut (*Nikochaka/Charuphala*)	+	-	+
Almond (Vatam/Netropamaphalam)	+	+	-
Fig (*Anjira*/Ficuscarica)	-	-	+
Ground-nut (*Bhushimbi/Snehabija*/Mand-api)	-	-	-
Betal nut/ areca nut (*Pugaphala*)	-	+	+
Sago (*Sabudana*)	-	-	-
Oil			
Castor oil (*ErandaSneha*)	+	-	+
Sesame oil (*Tila tail*)	+	+	+
Rape seed oil/Indian mustard oil(*Sarshapa tail*)	+	-	+
Coconut oil (*Narikela tail*)	+	+	-
Cotton seed oil (*Karpasbija tail*)	+	-	-
Ground nut oil (*Bhunimbi tail/ Snehabija tail*)	-	+	-
Sunflower oil (*Suryamukhi tail*)	+	-	+
Safflower oil (*Kusumbha tail*)	+	+	+
White mustard oil (*Rajika tail*)	+	-	-
Linseed oil (*Atasi tail*)	+	-	+

+ Indicated; - Contraindicated

DISCUSSION:

In general, individuals with *Vata Prakriti* should take warm, unctuous and sweet substances. *Pitta Prakriti* individuals should take heavy, cool, bitter, sweet and astringent food articles. *Kapha Prakriti* individuals should consume warm, dry, light, bitter, pungent and astringent food items. *Dvidoshaja Prakriti* like *Vata-Pitta*, *Pitta-Kapha*, *Kapha- Vata* type individuals usually follow a common approach. They should take food which keep balance of both *Doshas*. i.e., in *Vata- Kaphaja Prakriti* if a person takes excessive *Kapha* pacifying *Ahara* then it might increase *Vata*. So, in *Dwandwaja Prakriti Tara – Tamabhava* of *Dosha* should always be kept in mind similarly *Tridosha Prakriti* person should take diet by considering all the three *Dosha*.

CONCLUSION:

There is a definite interrelation of *Prakriti* with *Ahara* which is essential for maintaining health status of an individual. Specific food items as main diet as well as supplementary diet can be advised to the persons belonging to specific *Prakritis.*

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15. Charaka Samhita, Sutra Sthana, Matrashitiyam Adhyaya, 5/13; 38
16. Charaka Samhita, Sutra Sthana, Navegandharneeya Adhyaya, 7/41; 52
17. Sushruta Samhita, Sutra Sthana, Hitahitiya Adhyaya, 20/7; 95
18. Dravyaguna vigyana by priyavata Sharma, Nighantu Adarsha by bapalal vaidya, pathyapathya and Apnoahara