



A SYSTEMIC REVIEW ON AHARA AND ITS SIGNIFICANT ROLE ON HUMAN BODY

Dr Chakra Dhar Dubey¹, Dr. Devesh Kumar Tiwari²

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Kriya Sharir, Shanti Ayurvedic medical & College hospital Ballia, Uttar Pradesh.
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Rachana Sharir, Shanti ayurvedic medical & College hospital Ballia, Uttar Pradesh.

Corresponding Author - Dr Chakra Dhar Dubey, Assistant Professor, Department of Kriya Sharir, Shanti ayurvedic medical & College hospital Ballia, Uttar Pradesh.

ABSTRACT

The most significant aspect of life is ahara. The ahara has an impact on both health and sickness. An appropriate diet followed correctly can improve health or, conversely, can cause disorders. The source of life, power, beauty, and Oja for all living things is food. The six fundamental flavors that are inherent in the ingredients that make up food are where food gets its characteristics from. The components, as well as their distinct flavors, characteristics, potencies, and digestive transformations, are in charge of maintaining the balance of the Dosha and Dhātu. Since food plays a role in development, strength, good health, complexion, and sensory acuity, dietary inequity leads to disease.

KEYWORDS- Ahara, Ayurveda, Diet, Agni etc.

INTRODUCTION

Diet, or Ahara, is regarded as one of the Upastambhas of life. Body functions are altered as a result of a poor diet. This is the rationale for the emphasis placed on dietary components (apathya) while explaining the causes of illnesses. According to Acharya Charak, a food may maintain life if it is consumed properly and with discipline. Ahara plays a crucial part in both preserving health and treating a variety of diseases. The hāra, according to yurveda, is the nourisher of the body's constituents, including vital essence, vitality, complexion, and other things. However, the hāra's ability to do so depends on Jatharagni's healthy operation. Jatharagni's activity causes the six Rasas that make up the hāra Dravyas to change into three different types of Vipaka (Madhura, Amla, and Katu).¹

Diet continuously supports the body in the same way that the pillars of a home do. Complete nutrition or wholesome food promotes the growth of living things, whereas unwholesome food promotes the development of illnesses. A balanced diet is necessary for healthy body development and maintenance. Ahara and dietary

guidelines are fundamental elements in the causes of illness. Even while the restrictions of a fast-paced lifestyle prevent everyone from constantly abiding by the laws, understanding of the issue is necessary. Consequently, it plays a crucial role in the treatment of diseases by avoiding their root causes.²

CONSIDER THOSE INVOLVED WITH DIGESTION

USHMA: Vata dosha/Cheshta prerak bhava (Nervousness);

PACHAKAGNI (digestive enzymes);

SNEHA -Hydrolysing agent

KLEDA - Mechanism of digestion

AHARVIDHI SAMAYOGA- Rules for proper digestion

USHMA:

In the same way that raw food is cooked to make it edible in the natural world, the Jatharaagni contained in the Koshtha (mahastrotasa) is beneficial in transforming the food into the dhatu pushtikar bhava. This causes the Oja, bala, Varna, etc. to grow. Jaatharagni is crucial in preserving the harmony amongst the tridoshas. To keep things positive. The Jatharagni must be protected for the body to operate properly. According to the Charaka Sutrasthana (27/342), Agni is a crucial part of the body. This aids in maintaining the health of the entire body, including the Prana, Oja, Aayu, Bala, Varna, Utsaha, Upachaya, and Prabha.³

VAYU

The primary regulator of the kinetic processes that occur within the body is the vata dosha. The Vata dosha is in charge of controlling how much food is consumed as well as how much waste is produced during digestion. The digestive system is affected by the primary three forms of vata dosha (Prana vayu, Saman vayu, and Apan vayu).⁴

PRANA VAYU

One of the places where prana vayu is present is the oral cavity and the throat. Food enters the mouth cavity, is chewed, and then travels to the oesophagus. Under the influence of Prana Vayu, this swallowing and deglutition process occurs. (Cha Chi 15/6). Vayu carried ground food to Pachakagni, which aids in appropriate digestion, according to the Charak Samhita, Sharir Sthan, and Chakrapani's commentary. This is known as vayu apakarshati. (Su. Ni. 1/12) Udgara: The air that was consumed along with the food is expelled after full digestion⁵

SAMAAN VAYU

The Jatharagni's capacity for digestion is enhanced by samaan vayu. In other words, the samaan vayu helps digestion in an indirect manner (A. Hru. Su. 12/8). Saman Vayu transforms food into Parthiv, Aapya, Aagneya, Vayavya, and Nabhas form by storing it in the gut. (A.Hru.Su.12/8).⁶

PRUTTHKARAN:

Useful and waste compounds are produced throughout the digestive process. Saman Vayu performs this operation. Saman Vayu transports both the leftover waste products and the beneficial portion, or annarasa, to Hridaya. To the lowest part of the koshtha (mutra, purify). Indu, Su sangraha Ashtang. 20/4.⁷

SAMIRANO AGNEHE

The pachana Shakti (digestive force) of the jatharagni is also boosted by saman vayu. In nature, the force of fire is increased by a gentle breeze; similarly, the power of the jatharagni is increased by the prakruti samana vayu. Agnisandhukshan is the name given to this samana vayu function (stimulation of the digestive juices). The meal is separated into saara bhag (useful component) and kitta bhag when it has fully digested (waste products). The beneficial portion after digestion is known as Annarasa. Purish and mutra are two separate categories of the kitta bhaga. The Vata dosha's operation is what determines how this distinction occurs.⁸

APANA VAYU

There are many varieties of Ahara janya mala, including purish, mutra, and payu (dushit vayu). The Pakvashaya, where the purisha and other malas are stored for a while before their vegakala, is where Apan Vayu is mostly located (excretion). The malas are expelled through their respective excretion pathways after experiencing the urge to urinate. This entire procedure is carried out under the guidance of Apana Vayu.⁹

KLEDA

They facilitate digestion and safeguard the digestive tract. They are crucial to improved digestion in this way. These elements, which are symbolized by bodhak and kledaka kapha, wet or impregnate the consumed food, making it softer and easier for the pachaka pitta to work upon it. They also cause redness. (15 Cha. Sha. 6) (12/17 A. Hru. Su.).¹⁰

SNEHA

Saliva and stomach fluids both include mucin. Additionally, mucin is present in saliva and stomach fluids, which aids the jatharagni function by turning food into a liquid, smooth, and soft form. (Ch. Sha.6/15).¹¹

KALA YOGA

In order for food to be properly digested, time is also important. It takes 1-2 hours after consuming food and fully chewing it. To cause the stomach to chime. It need 4-5 hours. To ensure full meal digestion in the small intestine. The remainder of the undigested food is then converted into thik form, also known as pakwamala, by the large intestine after the majority of the water has been absorbed. This avastha's paka is known as katu avsthapaka.¹²

IT TAKE 12-14 HRS FOR ALL THESE PROCESS

It implies that one shouldn't consume anything until their previous meal has been fully digested. It is known as "yamadhe tu na bhoktavyam," which translates to "one should not eat for three hours after eating meals." (Ch.Sh. 6/15) (Ch. Chi. 5/7).¹³

SAMAYOGA

Samayoga refers to Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana's Samyakyoga. As a result, it highlights the significance of Visheshayatana in addition to Agni. Because Visheshayatana is not maintained despite Agni being in good alignment, ailments associated with Agni would undoubtedly result. Only when food is consumed correctly and in accordance with mealtime regulations can the advantages of Ahara be realized.¹⁴

AHARA UPYOGA NIYAMA

Any flaw in the diet, or even in how they are prepared, causes illness. The unhealthy food habit is a contributing cause of dosha. When a person consumes various food items without giving proper consideration to their Prakruti, manner of preparation, combination, amount, Desha, Kala, dietetic guidelines, and wholesomeness for the individual, their dosha becomes disturbed, and these doshas are what cause all ailments.¹⁵

The Ahara Upyoga Niyama also contains the guidelines for eating. Ahara, or diet, is as important regardless of how it is consumed. Food and nutrition are significant in other medical sciences, but dietary habits, or the etiquette around eating, are not. Ayurvedic beliefs are definitely a part of our old Indian culture's legacy. For Vikaraprashamana, the dietary guidelines can be regarded as Upaya or Adravabhuta Aushadhi. Ayurvedic texts have placed emphasis on specific examination techniques, dietary guidelines, and rules. Even when a guy consumes a healthy diet, the following factors must be taken into account to ensure effective digestion, assimilation, and eventually nutrient delivery to the body.¹⁶

USHNAM ASHNIYAT

This also applies to eating heated meals. It is made clear that the term "Ushna" here refers to the food's temperature rather than its ushna guna. If one adheres to this guideline and consumes warm food, the meal will taste good. Food ignites the digestive process and breaks down fast. Consuming warm food aids in vatanuloman, activates and releases pitta, and hence raises agni. Additionally, really hot food is not recommended since it may result in mada, daha, trushna, bhrama, etc. Another cuisine that may be labeled as Paryushita Anna is food that is prepared and then heated up once again. Ayurveda strongly advises against eating the dish. Similar characteristics may be seen in food that has been stored for a long period before being consumed.¹⁷

SNIGDHAM ASHNIYAT

Consumption of decadent cuisine is mentioned in this context. Here, the term "Snigdha" refers to foods that are not strictly Snehadravayas, such as ghruta and taila, but also Godhuma, Shali rice, etc. Snigdha aahar has a pleasant flavor, stimulates the digestive fire, aids in vatanuloman, stimulates kledak kapha owing to its kledan property, gives rigidity to the sense organs, boosts strength, and creates clarity of skin. On the other hand, excessive Asnigdha (Ruksha) or Snigdhatata (Atisnigdha) both impair the digestive process.¹⁸

Atisnigdha food is "Guru" by nature and requires more time and effort to digest, leading to Praseka, Hridayagaurava, Alasya, and Aruchi, among other conditions. On the other hand, asnigdha or ruksha food absorbs the digestive tract's moisture, which hinders digestion, reduces Bala and Varna, and results in dry skin and constipation.¹⁹

LAGHU ASHNIYA

Food is included in laghu ahara in both amount and quality. Laghu in this context refers to something that is simple to digest. i.e., which digests more quickly. Laghu Ahara travels through digestion without causing any problems and does not vitiate the doshas or enhance Agni. Even foods that are a little bit apathetic in nature don't trigger doshas.²⁰

CLASSIFICATION OF AHARA DRAVYA

Acharya Charaka divided the Ahara Dravya (diet/food items) into many categories. In terms of consumption, diet may be divided into two categories: Hitahara (wholesome) and Ahitahara (unwholesome), depending on the source: animal origin or plant origin. According to how they are consumed, they are further divided into four categories: Pan (drinkables), Asana (eatables), Bhakshya (chewable), and Lehya (lickable). According to the Panchamahabhutas philosophy, Acharya Kashyapa divided food items into five categories: Akasheeya, Vayavya, Agneya, Apya, and Parthiva. According to the Rasa it contains, Ahara is further divided into six categories: Madhur, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, and Kashaya. In addition, according to each of the twenty properties, Acharya Charaka divided each type into one of the following twenty groups: Guru, Laghu, Sheeta, Ushna, Snigdha, Ruksha, Manda, Tikshna, Sthira, Sara, Mridu, Kathin, Vishada, Pichhila, Slakshna, Khara, Sukshma, Sthula, Sandra, and Drava.²¹

PRINCIPLES OF BALANCE DIET

According to Ayurveda, the stomach should be divided into four sections: two sections for solid food, one section for liquid, and one section kept unoccupied for the doshas. A balanced diet is one that supports both the physical and mental structures. According to Ayurveda, a balanced meal is one that is "filled with Shadarasa, necessary Gunas, Veerya, and supplied to the individual after consideration of Prakrati, Agni, Kosta, and Ritu" (season variation). Matravatashniyata Ahara is regarded in Ayurveda as a balanced diet. One type of Matra (amount) is Sarvagraha (a whole amount), and the other is Parigrah. A balanced diet increases longevity, improves digestion, and passes through the body without any issues. Dietary intake should be in accordance with the body's Agni and Bala.²²

DUSTA AHARA

Dushta Ahara might be seen as a diet whose inherent qualities have been altered through a number of procedures. Two factors—appropriate food process selection and proper execution—determine the properties of processed foods. Error in these two causes detrimental qualities in food that has been processed and detrimental consequences on the food that has been ingested; this is known as Dushta Ahara. Overripe fruit, stale water, and stale Madhya Pradesh are just a few examples of over-mature products that might have negative impacts (alcohol). Never offer someone who is thirsty water that has been sitting out for more than a day since it grows stale and increases Kapha and Abhishyandi. Maharshi Sushrut has provided a detailed explanation on how to store food items in the appropriate utensils. According to a 1992 comparative study of food produced conventionally and in a microwave oven by Raum and Zelt, food cooked in a microwave includes molecules and energy that food

cooked in a regular oven does not. Under the influence of microwaves produced by ovens, naturally occurring amino acids have been seen to go through isometric change (change in shape morphing) as well as metamorphosis into a poisonous form. When reheating previously cooked food, microwave ovens are often used. If the required temperature is not achieved, bacterial contamination may not be destroyed, increasing the risk of food poisoning as with any insufficient warming technique. Processed foods, such as those that have been frozen, dried out, canned, baked, or made with refined.²³

ASHURI AHARA

Food should be consumed following cleansing. According to Acharya Charaka, if this process is not carried out properly, instant death results from the combination of flesh from "Haridrak" with ashes, dust, and honey. Water may continue to contain certain contaminants, which might have negative consequences. Long-term water storage raises the risk of contamination. Many times, contamination leads to widespread illness and disease. Water that has been stored for a long time, or that has become "Abhishyandi," increases Kapha and should not be consumed. Similar to this, eating unwashed vegetables and other food items increases the likelihood that they will be contaminated and infected with bacteria, parasites, etc.²⁴

AHARA VIDHIVISHAYATANA

Charaka said that all Dravyas are Aushadhis (Nanausadhibhutam), and that there are two different sorts of Aushadhis based on their makeup.

- Dravyabhuta Aushadhi
- Adravyabhuta Aushadhi

Therefore, for Vikaraprasamana, the dietary guidelines can be regarded as Upaya or Adravyabhuta Aushadhi. The term "Ahara Vidhi Visheshha Ayatanani" is used to describe the eight dietary factors that affect health and disease.

PRAKRITI

It denotes the properties of substances, such as their inherent qualities (heaviness, etc.), such as how Mudag is light and Black Gram is heavy. By combining the natural quality with other elements, it will change.

KARAN

Processing results from contact with water or fire, washing, churning, and the location, timing, method, and cooking vessel employed. Thus, the quality of the meal is also impacted by preparation procedures like soaking the rice in water, grinding it with dal, roasting, frying, health, burning, boiling in water, frying in fats, cooking in steam, baking, etc.

SAMYOGA

It is a mixture of two or more different things. This outcome is the manifestation of particular qualities that cannot be exhibited by a single substance, such as honey and ghee combined, etc.

RASHI

The quantity of a material, or its totality (Sarvagraha) or individuality (Parigraha), influences the outcome of its administration in the suitable or incorrect dose. Sarvagraha is the amount of food, while Parigraha is the amount of each element.

DESHA

Desha can refer to the user's home region as well as the region where a particular food item is grown. Desha also refers to the user's body, which implies taking into account his or her physical condition, strength, constitution, and digestive system.

KALA

Kala represents both time, expressed as day and night, and the states of people. The latter is pertinent to the illness, for example, the disease's childhood manifestation due to Kapha and fever.

UPAYOGSAMSTHA

Upayogsamstha refers to dietary regulations. They are primarily reliant on digestive symptoms.

UPAYOKTA

Upyokta is a person who eats. He is mostly in charge of the wholesomeness via his regular consumption of goods. These eight factors are specifically linked to beneficial and detrimental effects, so neither out of ignorance nor on purpose, should one turn to foods or other items (drugs, regimens, etc.) that are temporarily pleasurable but detrimental over time, resulting in unfavorable outcomes in the form of lifestyle disorders, etc. Similar to this, Sushruta lists twelve things to keep in mind when eating and calls them Dvadasha Asana Vidhi.²⁵

SEASONAL FOOD CONSIDERING

- **Hemant:** Light foods and beverages that can vitiate vata, paired with reduced calorie intake and a high gruel consumption.
- **Sisira:** Foods and beverages that are sour, bitter, astringent, stimulating to the vata system, light, and cold.
- **Vasanta:** Diets that are rich, sumptuous, sour, and sweet.
- **Grishama:** Foods that are spicy, sour, salty, or pungent.
- **Varsha** - Water from the river and Udamantha.
- **Sharad:** A preparation of alkaline salt, curd, fat, oil, and meat from aquatic and marshy animals.

DISEASE - AHARA AS A NIDANA

- **Prameha-** Idle sitting, over sleep, excessive use of curd, meat of domestic, aquatic animals, milk, new cereals, all other cough promoting regimens.
- **Kustha-** Intake of incompatible food and liquid, excessive use of cold and hot diet. Applied cold water immediately after intensive exposure to sun, take food during indigestion. Use of excessive new cereals, curd, fish, salt, sleep regularly in day.

- **Unmada-** Antagonestic, defective and impure food.
- **Apsmara-** Abundant morbidity due to intake unwholesome and unclean food, injury of mind by anxiety, passion, fear, anger.
- **Shotha-** Regular intake of alkaline, sour, irritant, hot and heavy substance, excessive use of curd, uncooked food.
- **Udara Roga-** Excessive use of hot, alkaline, burning, sour, poisoned, antagonistic and uncleaned food.
- **Grahani-** Eating during indigestion, over eating, intake of unsuitable, heavy cold, too rough, contaminated food.
- **Pandu-** Intake of alkaline, sour, salty, too hot, incompatible and unsuitable food, excessive use of black gram, oil, cake, Tila.
- **Vatarakta-** Excessive intake of salt, sour, pungent, alkaline, unctuous, hot and uncooked food, curd, Arnala, Sauwira, Sukta, Buttermilk, putrified, dried meat of aquatic or marshy land inhabiting animals, Virudhahara.
- **Swasa-** Use of cold water, habitual intake of dry foods, or intake of food deficient or excessive in quantity and before /long after the meal time.

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DISCUSSION

The Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatan conduction aids in preventing the development of several illnesses, such as metabolic irregularities, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular issues, anemia, infertility, and infectious infections. Ahara Vidhi's efficient operation stops the production of poisons and ama and increases Dhatus.²⁶

DIETARY RULES AND ITS EFFECT ON AHARA

- The proper use of dietary guidelines aids in calming vitiated Pitta, Vata, and Kapha.
- Diet that balances an individual's Prakriti Thus, Pitta aids in the treatment of diarrhea, indigestion, and hyperacidity.
- Diet balances Kapha, which helps to avoid heaviness, treat cough and cold symptoms, and calm anorexia symptoms.
- When food is consumed properly, it provides the life-giving energy.
- A healthy food raises Raja's quality, which increases his ability to think and make decisions.
- A balanced diet helps to regulate Tamas, which helps to regulate sleep, emotions, and mental stress.
- Similarly, an increase in Satva quality promotes tranquility and relaxation.
- Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatan prevents blockages in channels, which improves nutritional supply, and provides physical and mental strength.
- It also boosts Dhatus, which improves Balya/Oja, and improves sexual strength, vigor, and luster.
- It also provides immunity, improves the process of growth and development, and enhances sensory activities.

In order to maintain Dosha equilibrium, it is important to take into account Kala. For example, people with Balya Awastha should consume foods that balance their Kapha, while those with Madhyam Awastha should balance their Pitta, and those with Vriddha Awastha should eat foods that balance their Vata Dosha.²⁷

Consideration of the Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatan idea calms vitiated Vata, relieving pain and stiffness in the joints. Fever, diarrhea, and gastrointestinal symptoms are lessened when vitiated Pitta is calmed. Ahara Vidhi stops the vitiation of Kapha, which controls weight gain and anorexia. When food is eaten correctly, Doshas, Dhatus, and Agni are all balanced. Physical, mental, and spiritual wellness are synchronized by suitable food considerations. Ayurveda introduced the idea of Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatan as guidelines for cooking and eating that serve to maximize the nutritional value of food. According to Ahara Vidhi Vishesh considerations of ayurveda, ayatan offers lifespan, complexion, vigor, and immunity, among other things. Consuming meals in accordance with the rules has several positive effects on one's health and maximizes the nutritional content of the food eaten, while failing to adhere to the Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatan idea results in many health problems, including diarrhea.²⁸

CONCLUSION

Ahara is the third fundamental requirement for all living things in the cosmos, after Vayu and Jala. Since ancient times, Ayurveda has described both the positive benefits of Ahara and its negative ones. Ayurveda describes Ahara as Mahabhaisajya, but modern dietetics has specifically described Ahara according to the nutritional value of its components, having no scientific division on the basis of Prakruti, Desha, Kala, etc. what the Ayurveda describes which seems to be too much practical. As a result, modern science is moving closer to the concept but is still far from Ayurvedic aspects. Therefore, taking Hita Ahara is absolutely vital if one wishes to live a better life and become "Trayee Eshanas" or "Purusarth Chatushtaya". Simply put, a pure diet in the form of a balanced diet, a pure body with moderate exercise, a pure mind with stress management, and a pure devotion in terms of spiritual health help our body immunity to build up and shield people from various consequences that manifest in the form of lifestyle disorders and other nutritional deficiency disorders.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST –NIL

SOURCE OF SUPPORT –NIL

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