



Concept of panchamahabhautik Siddhant and its clinical application

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Ayurveda is a science of medicine in which many fundamental principles are given in respect to prevent the occurrence of disease or to treat one. Many studies have been done for elaboration of fundamental principles like tridosha, dhatu, srotas, agni, etc. panchamahabhautik Siddhant is also one of the important fundamental principle in ayurveda. According to which everything in the universe is made up of five basic elements. Therefore chikitsapurush (one to whom chikitsa is given) and dravyas (medicine) are also made of these five basic elements hence the aim of Ayurveda is fulfilled by this Panchabhautik Siddhant. therefore through this article evolution of panchamahabhuta, its relation with other fundamentals like dosha (humours), rasa (tastes), garbhotatti (embryonic development), diagnostic methods and samskara (biotransformation). So on the basis of thorough knowledge and understanding of panchamahabhut siddhant one can take an account of the causative factors for the imbalance of doshas and thereby discover the solution for the treatment. Panchamahabhutas are important components of the body both for physiological functions and in the pathogenesis of disease.

Keywords : Ayurveda, panchamahabhuta, Siddhant, tridosha, chikitsa.

Introduction:

In ayurveda the concept of panchamahabhautika Siddhanta is defined scientifically. It states that everything in the universe, may it be human body or food, non living or living it is made of panchamahabhuta (five elements).¹ when a person consumes food, it undergoes the process of digestion with the help of jatharagni (digestive fire) and along with this agni, bhautikagni also acts upon the corresponding element in that food. So that jaliya (jala mahabhuta dominant) properties of food nourishes the jala parts of the body and in this manner symmetrical properties of mahabhuta gives nutrition to respective symmetrical organs of the body.² the equilibrium of these 5 elements in the human body denotes the health whereas imbalance of these denotes the diseased condition.

Aim :

1. To study the concept of panchamahabhuta.
2. To study the clinical application of panchamahabhuta.

Material and methods:

All Samhitas, Ayurved texts, research papers, online sources are used as material for present conceptual review

Evolution of panchamahabhuta

From mahat, ahankara (ego) is formed. Which contains 3 characteristics viz. satwa (essence), raja (energy), tamasa (mass). Rajas motivates tamasa in specific quantities, the first product of ahankara by these two is Shabda tanmatra. After that sparsh, rupa, rasa, gandha tanmatra formation occurs. Tanmatra is a subtle quantum of mahabhuta category having a specific raja or tama. After this bhutantaranupraves (imitative pervasion) occurs to tanmatra. That is to form the premolecules of mahabhutas. Followed by panchikaran (pentamerization/ reciprocal pervasion) in which primary existent molecules of mahabhutas are combined with gross existents. These conjugate forms of tanmatras are termed as mahabhutas.

To form various panchabhautika dravyas, tanmatra undergo specific conjugation procedures which take place due to adrushta (some unknown power) as per aacharya chakrapani.³ panchamahabhuta plays important role in playing physiological properties along with physical properties.

In Charak Samhita, Sharirshatan Charakacharya mentioned the attributes of panchamahabhuta.

Panchamahabhuta and attributes:

Panchamahabhuta	Attribute
Aakash	Shabda
Vaayu	Sparsha
Agni	Rupa
Jala	Rasa
Prithvi	Gandha

Panchamahabhuta and tridoshas:

'Prakriti' a fundamental concept in ayurveda has three main types vata, pitta, kapha. These types are formed on the basis of dominant dosha in an individual. These doshas have specific dominant mahabhutas which make them different than the other. As given below,

Tridosha	Panchamahabhuta
Vata	Vaayu + aakash
Pitta	Agni
Kapha	Jala + prithvi

therefore various structure and functions of body are governed by panchamahabhuta. As health or diseased condition of an individual depends upon balanced and imbalanced level of doshas in body. These variations are ultimately due to differences in panchamahabhautika composition of doshas. In order to treat a patient or to maintained health of an individual dravyas can be used which are also composed of panchamahabhutas. Therefore alleviation⁴ or violation of doshas depend upon Dravya.

Tridosha	Alleviation	Violation
Vata	Prithvi, agni, jala.	Aakash, vayu.
Pitta	Prithvi, jala, vayu.	Agni.
Kapha	Aakash, agni, vayu.	Prithvi, jala.

Hence, by seeking accurate knowledge of properties of mahabhutas one can apply this knowledge to establish equilibrium of doshas.

Panchamahabhuta and trigunas:

As tridoshas, triguna also helps in deciding prakriti but specifically of manasik. Also helps in satwa parikshana (mental strength examination). Relation between trigunas and panchamahabhutas are as follows,

Trigunas	Panchamahabhutas
Satwa	Aakash
Rajas	Vaayu
Tamas	Prithvi
Satwa + rajas	Agni
Satwa + tamas	Jala

After assessing the manobala (mental strength) of the patient, one can decide what to intervene in the patient. By using appropriate dravyas, manovikara (psychiatric disorders) can be treated.

Panchamahabhuta and rasa:

Rasa are also composed of panchamahabhutas but predominately with two mahabhutas which becomes the reason of their variations.⁵

Rasa (taste)	Mahabhutas
Madhura (sweet)	Prithvi + jala
Lavana (salty)	Jala + teja
Katu (pungent)	teja + vayu
Tikta (bitter)	Vayu + aakash
Kashaya (astringent)	Prithvi + vayu
Amla (sour)	prithvi +teja

Rasa are responsible for doshaprakopa and hence pathological conditions or disease or vikaar. Hence with above table, pathya-apathya can be advised to the patient.

Panchamahabhuta and dhatu:

Seven datus in the body are panchabhautika.⁶ whenever there is dhatuvruddhi or dhatukshaya, which leads to the diseased condition. Appropriate bheshaj is used to treat the imbalance.

Panchamahabhuta and various components of the body:

Panchamahabhuta	Body Components
Prithvi	Nakha, Asthi, Dant, Mansa, purish, kesh
Aap	Rasa, Rakta, Kapha, Pitta, Mutra, Swed
Tej	Pitta, Prabha, Kanti, Agni
Aakash	Srotas, Shrotendriya, Karna
Vaayu	Nishwas, ucchawas, Sparsh, Vagindriya, Cheshta

Panchamahabhuta and diagnostic methods:

Panchamahabhuta	Diagnostic Methods
Prithvi	Mala, Mutra, Sweda, Kapha by gandhaTanmatra (specific smell). Also, in Diabetic coma, Diabetic keto acidosis. Weight and height measurement.
Aap	Rasa sarata Examination, CSF, sputum and ascitic fluid examination.
Tej	Fundoscopy (Colour etc. of eyes), digestion, body temperature.
Aakash	To examine the heart, lungs and abdomen and hollow structures like Ear, Nose, and throat.
Vaayu	Respiration and Cardiac sounds, ECG, peristaltic sounds.

The table shows ancient and modern diagnostic methods with respect to panchamahabhuta.

Panchamahabhuta and chikitsa-karma⁷:

Chikitsa karma	Mahabhuta
Shamana	Aakash
Dipana	Agni
Brumhana	Prithvi + jala
Vamana	Agni + vayu
Virechana	Prithvi + aap

Panchamahabhuta and Samskara of Dravya:

To treat a disease, one can modify panchabhautika composition of Dravya by performing samskara on them. That is by imbining different gunas on original.⁸ the alteration in panchabhautika composition takes place due to agni mahabhuta present in it. That is samskara. For example, adraka and shunthi are the same drug but with different mahabhautika gunas which has occurred due to agni samskara on ardra guna of adraka with guru guna and hence transformation into dried shunthi which has laghu guna.

Therefore with the help of Samskara, one can make modification in panchabhautika composition of a Dravya, thereby forming new Dravya according to the requirement.

Panchamahabhuta and embryonic development:

After fertilization of ovum by the sperm, it gets embedded in the wall of uterus along with Chetana. For the development of embryo, action of panchamahabhutas start in embryo. Such as vayu mahabhuta starts dividing cells in embryo to form dosha (humours) and avayavas (organs), Teja mahabhuta helps in biotransformation or provides energy, jala mahabhuta provides kledan (moisture), Prithvi mahabhuta provides strength by consolidation and Akash mahabhuta helps in overall embryonic growth by creating hollow structures of organs.

Clinical application of panchamahabhutas:

If any of these mahabhuta gets vitiated in the body and causes the disease, then that mahabhuta can be normalized by giving the dravya and ahar having mahabhuta of opposite properties than the vitiated one. As vayumahabhuta gets vitiated it can be treated by giving jala, Agni, prithvi mahabhuta Pradhan Dravya as they comprise opposite properties of vayumahabhuta.

Dhatusamyata (equilibrium state of dhatus)⁹:

As per samanya-vishesh Siddhanta¹⁰, in case of dhatuvruddhi condition one can use vishesha dravyas and in case of dhatukshaya condition one can use samana dravyas to achieve the dhatusamyata, the ultimate goal of ayurveda. To fulfill this purpose we must know the panchabhautik composition of therapeutic substances.

Tridosha Prakopa and Prashman (Vitiation and alleviation of humors):

Disorders present in different forms do not exist without Tridoshas. These variations are due to differences in the Panchabhautic composition of doshas. So, by seeking accurate knowledge of the properties of Mahabhutas one can apply these into Chikitsa.

Discussion:

The knowledge of panchamahabhautika Siddhanta gives appropriate diagnosis of a disease. Also it gives proper idea of drug (dravya) interventions for the disease. As chikitsapurush is made of panchamahabhuta and Chetana, his treatment is achieved by using panchamahabhautika dravyas and karma. Also one can give causative factor for the respective disease if reasoning can not be explained by tridoshas or saptadhatu. Therefore, knowledge of panchamahabhautika Siddhanta becomes essential for clinical approach to the patient.

Conclusion:

Panchamahabhautika siddhanata is an essential principle in ayurveda as it is helpful in Nidan and Chikitsa, thereby fulfilling its aim of dhatusamyata. With proper knowledge of Panchamahabhuta Siddhanta one can pursue an appropriate way to approach a disease and hence be able to achieve the aim of ayurveda which is preserving the health of an healthy and freeing the patient from his disease. The present review article also opens a new research window in the field of Ayurveda's fundamental research on this panchabhautik Siddhant.

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