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Review Article

A Review on Pitta Prakṛiti in Bṛihatrayī

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Abstract

Ayurveda has a holistic approach and includes all the factors which are accessory in the determination of health. Prakṛiti is a unique concept in Ayurveda. According to Ayurveda the psychosomatic constitution, as also known as Deha Prakṛiti, is represented by a description of the Physique, Physiology and Psychological make-up of an individual. The Deha Prakṛiti is essentially genetically determined and is likely to be influenced by a variety of environmental factors to some extent. Prakṛiti is one of the most important concepts and decided at the time of conception. Prakṛiti can be defined as body constitution. In this article derivation of Prakṛiti, formation, factor affecting the development of Prakṛiti, types of Prakṛiti, characteristics of Pitta Prakṛiti and importance of Prakṛiti will be described.

Keywords: Prakṛiti, Deha Prakṛiti, Dōṣa, Pitta Prakṛiti

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian holistic medical science, practiced since 1500 B.C deals with body, mind and spirit and aims at preservation-promotion of health and prevention-cure of diseases. It provides measures for a disciplined, disease-free, long life.^[i] Ayurveda defines health as a state of physical, psychological, social and spiritual wellbeing and is based on the theory of Panchamahābhūta^[ii] and Tridōṣa^[iii] which are present in each and every cell of the body along with mind and spirit. The equilibrium of Dōṣas is called health and imbalance is called disease.^[iv] Together these three Dōṣas determine the physiological balance and constitution of the individual which is called as Prakṛiti in Ayurveda. Every person has all three Dōṣas and Triguṇas in different proportions. However, depending upon the predominance of the five basic elements, three Dōṣas and mental qualities in sperm and ovum at the time of conception, the individual Prakṛiti is decided. Prakṛiti is an expression of one's own constitution, which is individual specific means it is controlled by its own physiology.^[v] Prakṛiti is enumeration of body features, internal as well as external.^[vi] Prakṛiti is organized in accordance to attributes of predominant Dōṣa at the time of sperm ovum union.^[vii] In development of fetus, due to its own reasons Dōṣa becomes intensified. Those nonpathogenic intensified status of Dōṣa remains constant from birth till death and this is Prakṛiti.^[viii] From the very time of conception, some persons are having equilibrium of Pitta, Vāta and Kapha while others are seen Vātala, Pittala or having predominance of Vāta or Pitta or Kapha. Amongst them, those in the first category are disease free while others (Vātala etc.) are always ill. Ever attachment of a particular Dōṣa is known as body constitution.^[ix] Dōṣa which are present in the male seed and female seed at the time of commencement of life, there arises three kinds of Prakṛiti just like poisonous worms arise from poison; they are weak or poor the medium or moderate and the best or strong from each of the Dōṣa respectively; that constitution arising from equal proportion of all of them is the Samadhātu Prakṛiti, which is ideal; those arising from combination of two dōṣas are denounced.^[x] Depending on the Dōṣa that is predominant in the semen or the ovum at the time of their union, in the food, activities of the pregnant women, uterus and season seven kinds of human constitution are produced. The insect born in the poison does not die due to its own poison similarly Dōṣa that is dominant according to one's Prakṛiti does not harm the individual.^[xi] Prakṛiti is not output of those Dōṣa, which undergo constant variations. Dōṣa, which remain constant are responsible for Prakṛiti and they change only at the time of death.^[xii]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This article is based on a review of Bhṛīhatrayī literatures. Materials related to Pitta Prakṛiti and other relevant topics were collected, compiled, analyzed and discussed for a through and depth understanding of Pitta Prakṛiti in Bhṛīhatrayī.

Types of Prakṛiti

1. Deha Prakṛiti^[xiii]
2. Mānasika Prakṛiti^[xiv]
3. Panchbhautik Prakṛiti^[xv]
4. Jātyādi Prakṛiti^[xvi]

Factors affecting the formation and development of Prakṛiti

Factors for the formation of Prakṛiti such as the body of the foetus is determined by the constitution of sperm and ovum, that of time and uterus, that of food and behavior of the mother and that of the products of Mahābhūtas. Dōṣa, one or more than one, which predominates in these factors, gets attached to the fetus. This is said as Dōṣa Prakṛiti of human beings emerged from the initial stage of fetus. Hence some persons are constitutionally having predominance of Śleṣma, some Pittala, some Vātala, some having combined Dōṣas and some with balanced Dhātu.^[xvii]

Characteristics of Pitta Prakṛiti in Charak Samhita

Pitta is hot, sharp, liquid, fleshy, smell, sour and pungent. They are intolerance for hot things, having hot face, tender and clear body of port wine mark, freckles, black moles, excessive hunger and thirst; quick advent of wrinkles, graying of hair and baldness; presence of some soft and brown hair in the face, head and other parts of the body. They have sharp physical strength, strong digestive power, intake of food and drink in large quantity, inability to face difficult situations and glutton habits. Looseness and softness of joints and muscles, voiding of sweat, urine and feces in large quantity. Putrid smell of axilla, mouth, head and body in excess. Insufficiency of semen, sexual desire and tastes procreation. Individual with Pitta Prakṛiti is endowed with moderate strength, moderate span of life, moderate spiritual and materialistic knowledge, wealth and the accessories of life.^[xviii]

Characteristics of Pitta Prakṛiti in Susruta Samhita

An individual with Pitta Prakṛiti perspires copiously emitting a fetid smell. His limbs are loosely shaped and yellowish in color. The fingernails, eyes, palate, tongue, lips, soles and palms of such a person are copper colored. He looks ugly with wrinkles, baldness and gray hair; he is heavy eater and is averse to warmth. He is a man of middling strength and lives up to middle age. He

is intelligent clever and loves to monopolize the conversation. He is vigorous. He remains unopposed in battle. He dreams about meteoroids, lightning flashes, fire, gold, palāśa plants. He is fearless personality. He tends to salute powerful dignity. He protects the suppliant and is very often afflicted with suppuration in the cavity of the mouth. The traits of his character resemble those of a serpent, owl, a heavenly musician, yaksa, cat, monkey, tiger and bear and of a mongoose.^[xix]

Characteristics of Pitta Prakṛiti from Astanghrīdaya

Pitta is fire itself or born from fire; hence persons having predominance of Pitta, have very severe thirst and hunger, are white and warm in body; possess coppery red palms, soles and face; are brave and proud; have brown and scanty hair; are fond of women, garlands, unguents; are of good behavior, clean, affectionate to dependents, desirous of grandeur, adventure have mental power of facing fear and enmity; highly intelligent, possess very loose and lean joints and muscles; do not like women; possess less of semen and sexual desire; possess grey hair, wrinkles and blue patches on the skin; consume food which is sweet, astringent, bitter and cold; hate heat; perspire heavily, emit bad smell from the body; expel feces frequently, have more anger, eating, drinking and jealousy; while in sleep dream of karnikara and palāśa, forest fire, meteor, lightening, bright sun rays and fire; their eyes are thin, brown, unsteady with thin and few eyelashes; eyes desirous of cold comfort, becoming red very quick by anger, drinking wine and exposure to sunlight. Persons of Pitta Prakṛiti are of medium life-span, medium strength, highly learned, afraid of discomfort and resemble animals like the tiger, bear, ape, cat and yaksa.^[xx]

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The interpretation of Pitta Prakṛiti in Charaka is more systematic than other Samhitas. Charaka has emphasized more on the physical characteristic as compare to psychological traits. While Ashtanghrīdaya and Sushruta Samhita emphasized more on psychological traits. In Sushruta and Vagbhatta the characteristics of Prakṛiti are described in terms of nature of other animals and description of dreams, which are not described in Charaka Samhita. In Sushruta Samhita characteristic of individual classified into nine parts such as colour of the body, situation of hairs, mental constitution, behavior, intelligence, bravery, dreams, ulcer in the mouth, resemble with animals and moderate life. Individual with Pitta Prakṛiti is endowed with moderate strength, moderate span of life, moderate spiritual and materialistic knowledge, wealth

and the accessories of life. By understanding the Pitta Prakṛiti person constitution, we know which food, drink, exercise etc. are appropriate for maintaining their health.

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