

IJRAS-AMRITAM
July 2017
Volume - II (4) 145-203
ISSN : 2394-1812



International Journal of Research in Ayurvedic Sciences
AMRITAM
Peer Reviewed Quarterly Journal

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Literary Review of Prakriti as Body Constitution



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Abstract

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

Keywords: Prakriti, Deha, Dosha, etc.

Introduction:

Ayurveda¹, 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. Ayurveda defines health as a state of physical, psychological, social and spiritual well being and is based on the theory of Panchamahabhuta² and Tridosha³ which are present in each and every cell of the body along with mind and spirit. The equilibrium of Doshas is called health and imbalance is called disease.⁴ Together these three Doshas determine the physiological balance and constitution of the individual which is called as Prakriti in Ayurveda. Every person has all three Doshas and Trigunas⁵ in different proportions. However, depending upon the predominance of the five basic elements, three Doshas and mental qualities in sperm and ovum at the time of conception, the individual Prakriti is decided. Prakriti is an expression of one's own constitution, which is individual specific means it is controlled by its own physiology.⁶ Prakriti is enumeration of body features, internal as well as external.⁷ Prakriti is organized in accordance to attributes of predominant Dosa at the time of sperm ovum union.⁸ In development of fetus, due to its own reasons Dosa becomes intensified. Those non pathogenic intensified status of Dosha remains constant from birth till death and this is Prakriti.⁹ From the very time of conception, some persons are having equilibrium of Pitta, Vata and Kapha while others are seen Vatala, Pittala or having predominance of Vata or Pitta or Kapha.

Amongst them, those in the first category are disease free while others (Vatala etc.) are always ill. Ever attachment of a particular Dosha is known as body constitution.¹⁰ Dosha which are present in the male seed and female seed at the time of commencement of life, there arises three kinds of Prakriti 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 Dosha respectively; that constitution arising from equal proportion of all of them is the Samadhatu Prakriti, which is ideal; those arising from combination of two doshas are denounced.¹¹ Depending on the Dosha 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 Dosha that is dominant according to one's Prakriti does not harm the individual.¹² Prakriti is not output of those Dosha, which undergo constant variations. Dosha, which remain constant are responsible for Prakriti and they change only at the time of death.¹³

Material and Methods:

Classical texts of Ayurveda were referred for the compilation of literary data about Prakriti. The study undertaken here is literary type of research. All the contemporary journals and publications too were also referred for the literary work.

Types of Prakriti-

1. Deha Prakriti¹⁴
2. Manasik Prakriti¹⁵

3. Panchbhautik Prakriti¹⁶

4. Jatyadi Prakriti¹⁷

Factors affecting the formation and development of prakriti Factors for the formation of Prakriti 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 Mahabhutas. Dosha, one or more than one, which predominates in these factors, gets attached to the fetus. This is said as Dosha Prakriti of human beings emerged from the initial stage of fetus. Hence some persons are constitutionally having predominance of Slesma, some Pittala, some Vatala, some having combined Doshas and some with balanced Dhatu.¹⁸

Vata prakriti characteristics

Vata is rough, light, mobile, abundant, swift, cold, coarse and non slimy. Due to roughness the persons with predominance of Vata have rough, undeveloped and short body; continuously rough, weak, low, adhered and hoarse voice and vigils; due to lightness light and unsteady movement, activities, diet and speech; due to mobility unstable joints, eye brows, jaw, lips, tongue, head, shoulder, hands and feet; due to abundance talkativeness and abundance of tendons and venous network; due to swiftness hasty initiation, quick in fear, attachment and disattachment, quick in acquisition but with a poor memory; due to coldness intolerance to cold, continuously infliction with cold, shivering and stiffness, due to coarseness coarse hairs, beard mustaches, small hairs, nail, teeth, face, hands and feet; due to non sliminess cracked body parts and constant sound in joints during movement. Because of presence of these qualities the persons having predominance of Vata have mostly low degree of strength, life span, progeny, means and wealth.¹⁹

Pitta Prakriti Characteristics-

Pitta is hot, sharp, liquid, of fleshy smell, sour and pungent. Due to hotness the persons having predominance of Pitta are intolerant to heat, having hot face, delicate and fair organs, plenty of moles, freckles, black moles and pimples excessive hunger and thirst, early appearance of wrinkles, graying and falling of hairs, mostly soft, sparse and brown beard mustaches, small hairs; due to sharpness sharp prowess, intense fire, taking plenty of food and drink, lack of endurance, frequently eating; due to liquidity lax and soft joints and muscles, excess excretion of sweat, urine and feces; due to fleshy smell excessive foul smell in axilla, mouth, head and body; due to pungency and

sourness little semen, sexual act and few progeny, because of presence of these qualities the persons having predominance of Pitta are moderate in strength, life span, knowledge, understanding, wealth and means.²⁰

Kapha Prakriti Characteristics-

Kapha is unctuous, smooth, soft, sweet, essence, solid, dull, rigid heavy, cold, slimy and clear. Because of its unctuousness the person with predominance of Kapha has unctuous organs, due to smoothness smooth organs, due to softness pleasing, delicate and fair organs, due to sweetness abundant semen, sexual act and progeny, due to nature of essence excellent, compact and stable body, due to solidity all organs well developed and perfect, due to dullness dull in activities, diet and speech, due to rigidity delayed initiation, irritation and disorder, due to heaviness movements supported with essence and stability, due to coldness little hunger, thirst, pyrexia and perspiration, due to sliminess well united and strong joint ligaments, due to clarity clear eyes and face with clear and unctuous complexion and affectionate voice. Because of the presence of these qualities the Kapha persons are strong, wealthy, learned, brave, calm and long-lived.²¹

Importance of Prakriti-

Patient should be examined in respect of constitution, morbidity, sara, compactness, measurement, suitability, psyche, power of intake and digestion of food, power of exercise and age for the knowledge of the degree of strength.²²

Discussion:

The interpretation of Prakriti in Charaka is more systematic than other Samhitas. Charaka has emphasized more on the physical characteristic as compare to psychological traits. In Sushruta and Vagbhata the characteristics of Prakriti are described in terms of nature of other animals and description of dreams, which are not described in Charaka Samhita. Prakriti has prime importance in both healthy and diseased persons. The persons having predominance of Vata have mostly low degree of strength, life span, progeny, means and wealth. The persons having predominance of Pitta are moderate in strength, life span, knowledge, understanding and wealth. The Kapha persons are strong, wealthy, learned, brave, calm and long-lived. By understanding the individual constitution of every individual, we know which food, drink, exercise etc. are appropriate for maintaining their health.

Conclusion:



Prakriti is an unchangeable factor as it determined during the period of conception as remains unchanged for lifetime. Study of Prakriti will help clinician such as early prediction of disease susceptibility, Prevention of possible diseases, Successful prognostication in disease state and Selection of appropriate and specific treatment in a given disease.

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Publisher : Dr. Rajni