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Review Article

Kapha Prakriti in Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita & Ashtanga Hridaya – A Review

Simant Sourav ¹

H. S. Rai ²

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. Deha Prakriti is represented by a description of the Physique, Physiological characteristics and Psychological make-up of an individual. The Deha Prakriti is determined at the time of birth 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, characteristics of Kapha Prakriti and importance of Prakriti will be described.

Keywords: Prakriti, Deha Prakriti, Doṣa, Kapha Prakriti.

¹ Associate Professor, ² H.O.D & Professor, Department of Kriya Sharir, Gangasheel Ayurvedic Medical College, Bareilly, India.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Dr. Simant Sourav

Associate Professor,

Department of Kriya Sharir,

Gangasheel Ayurvedic Medical College,

Bareilly, U.P (India).

Email: drsimant.sourav@gmail.com



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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda provides measures for a disciplined, disease-free, long life.^[i] Ayurveda defines health as a state of physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being and is based on the theory of Pan-chamahābhūta^[ii] and Tridoṣa^[iii] which are present in each and every cell of the body along with mind and spirit. The equilibrium of Doṣas is called health and imbalance is called disease.^[iv] Together these three Doṣas determine the physiological balance and constitution of the individual which is called as Prakriti in Ayurveda. Every person has all three Doṣas and Trigunas in different proportions. However, depending upon the predominance of the five basic elements, three Doṣas 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.^[v] Prakriti is enumeration of body features, internal as well as external.^[vi] Prakriti is organized in accordance to attributes of predominant Doṣas at the time of sperm ovum union.^[vii] In development of fetus, due to its own reasons Doṣa becomes intensified. Those nonpathogenic intensified statuses of Doṣa remains constant from birth till death and this is Prakriti.^[viii] At the time of conception, some persons are having equilibrium of Pitta, Vāta and Kapha while others are predominance of Vāta or Pitta or Kapha. Amongst them, those in the Sāma Doṣa are disease free while others (Vātala etc.) are always ill.^[ix] Depending on the Doṣa 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 Doṣa that is dominant according to one's Prakriti does not harm the individual.^[x] Prakriti is not output of those Doṣa, which undergo constant variations. Doṣa, which remain constant are responsible for Prakriti and they change only at the time of death.^[xi]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This article is based on a review of Brihatrayi literatures. Materials related to Kapha Prakriti and other relevant topics were collected, compiled, analyzed and discussed for a thorough and depth understanding of Kapha Prakriti in Brihatrayi.

Types of Prakriti

1. Deha Prakriti^[xii]
2. Mānasika Prakriti^[xiii]
3. Panchbhautik Prakriti^[xiv]
4. Jātyādi Prakriti^[xv]

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 the products of Mahābhūtas. Doṣa Prakriti 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 Doṣas and some with balanced Doṣas.^[xvi]

Characteristics of Kapha Prakriti in Charak Samhita

Kapha is unctuous, smooth, soft, sweet, firm, dense, slow, stable, heavy, cold, viscous and clear. The manifestation of Kapha Prakriti person possess unctuousness of organs, smoothness of organs, pleasing appearance, tenderness and clarity of complexion, increase in the quantity of semen, desire for sex act and number of procreation, firmness, compactness and stability of the body, plumpness and roundness of all organs, slow in action, intake of food and movement, slowness in initiating actions, getting irritated and morbid manifestations, non-slippery and stable gait with the entire sole of the feet pressing against the earth, lack of intensity in hunger, thirst, heat and perspiration, firmness and compactness in joints, happiness in the look and face; happiness and softness of complexion and voice. By virtue of above mentioned qualities, a Kapha Prakriti person is endowed with the excellence of strength, wealth, knowledge, energy, peace and longevity.^[xvii]

Characteristics of Kapha Prakriti in Susruta Samhita

The complexion of a man of Kapha temperament resembles either the color of a blade of grass, blue lotus, polished sword, or that of the stem of the Sara grass. His appearance is good looking, fond of sweet tastes, grateful, self-controlled, forbearing, not greedy and strong; he does not hastily from any opinion, and is fast in his enmity. His eyes are white; his hair curly and raven black. He is prosperous in his life. His voice resembles the rumblings of a rain cloud, the roar of a lion or the sound of an Mrdanga. He dreams in his sleep of large lakes or pools decked with myriads of full blown lotus flower, swans and Cakravakas. His eyes are slightly red towards the corners; the limbs are proportionate and symmetrically developed with cool effulgence radiating from them. He is possessed of the qualities of the Sattvika stamp, capable of sustaining pain and fatigue and respectful towards his superiors. He possesses faith in the Sastras and is unflinching in his friendship; he suffers no

vicissitudes of fortune, makes large gifts after long deliberation and is true to his word and always obedient to his preceptors. The traits of his character resemble those of Brahma, Rudra, Indra, Varuna, a lion, horse, an elephant, cow, bull, an eagle and of the similar animals. [xviii]

Characteristics of Kapha Prakriti from Astanga hridaya

Kapha is soma means moon like, cool, mild; hence persons of Kapha Prakriti are mild in nature, possess deep sealed, unctuous and well knee joints and muscles; are not much troubled by hunger, thirst, unhappiness strain and heat; endowed with intelligence, right attitude and truthfulness; possess color like that of Priyangu, Durva Sarakanda, Sastra, Gorochana, Padma or Suvarna; have long arms, big and elevated chest, big forehead, thick and blue hair; soft, symmetrical, good looking body, of great vigor, sexual prowess, desire in tastes; more of semen, children and attendants; are of righteous, benevolent nature, do not speak harsh and abusively; harbor enmity, concealed and deep for long time; their gait is like that of an elephant; their voice like the roaring of clouds, ocean, Mridanga or lion; possess good memory, perseverance, humbleness, do not cry much even in childhood; are not greedy consume food which is bitter, astringent, pungent, hot, dry and less in quantity, and still remain strong; their eyes are red at the angles, unctuous, wide, long, with well-designed white and black spheres and with more eye lashes; have less of speech, anger, desire for drink, food and activities; endowed with more life, wealth, foresight and munificence; have faith in God; dignified, greatly charitable; of forgiving nature, civilized; very sleepy, slow grateful straight forward, learned, pleasant to look at, bashful, obedient to elders and of fast friendship; see reservoirs of water full of lotus and rows of birds and clouds; persons of Kapha Prakriti are similar in nature with Brahma, Indra, Rudra, Varuna, Tarkasya, Gajadipha, lion, horse and bull. [xix]

CONCLUSION

The interpretation of Kapha Prakriti in Charaka is more systematic than other Samhitas. Charaka has emphasized more on the physical characteristic as compare to psychological traits. While Ashtanghridya and Susruta Samhita emphasized more on psychological traits. In Susruta and Vagbhatta the characteristics of Prakriti are described in terms of nature of other animals and description of dreams, which are not described in Charaka Samhita. In Susruta Samhita characteristic of individual classified into several parts such as color of the body, situation of hairs, mental constitution, behavior, intelligence, bravery, dreams, resemble with animals and longevity.

Kapha Prakriti person is endowed with the excellence of strength, wealth, knowledge, energy, peace and longevity. By understanding the Kapha Prakriti person constitution, we can suggest which food, drink, exercise etc. appropriate for maintaining their health.

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