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Review Article

A Review on Doṣaja Prakṛti in Ayurveda

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Abstract

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

Keywords: Prakṛti, Deha Prakṛti, Doṣa, Kapha Prakṛti.

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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 wellbeing 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 Prakṛti in Ayurveda. Every person has all three Doṣas and Trigūṇas 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 Prakṛti is decided. Prakṛti is an expression of one's own constitution, which is individual specific means it is controlled by its own physiology.^[v] Prakṛti is enumeration of body features, internal as well as external.^[vi] Prakṛti is organized in accordance to attributes of predominant Doṣas at the time of sperm ovum union.⁷ 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 Prakṛti.^[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 Prakṛti does not harm the individual.^[x] Prakṛti is not output of those Doṣa, which undergo constant variations. Doṣa, which remain constant are responsible for Prakṛti and they change only at the time of death.^[xi]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

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

Types of Prakṛti

1. Deha Prakṛti^[xii]
2. Mānasika Prakṛti^[xiii]
3. Panchbhautika Prakṛti^[xiv]
4. Jātyādi Prakṛti^[xv]

Factors affecting the formation and development of Prakṛti

Factors for the formation of Prakṛti 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 Prakṛti 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 Prakṛti in Charaka Samhita

Kapha is unctuous, smooth, soft, sweet, firm, dense, slow, stable, heavy, cold, viscous and clear. The manifestation of Kapha Prakṛti 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 Prakṛti person is endowed with the excellence of strength, wealth, knowledge, energy, peace and longevity.^[xvii]

Characteristics of Pitta Prakṛti in Charaka 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 Prakṛti is endowed with moderate strength, moderate span of life, moderate spiritual and materialistic knowledge, wealth and the accessories of life.^[xviii]

Characteristics of Vāta Prakṛti in Charak Samhita

Vāta is rough, light, mobile, abundant, swift, cold, coarse and non-slimy. Due to roughness the persons with predominance of Vāta 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 swiftiness 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 Vāta have mostly low degree of strength, life span, progeny, means and wealth.^[xix]

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The interpretation of Kapha Prakṛti, Pitta Prakṛti, Vāta Prakṛti in Charaka is more systematic than other Samhitas. Kapha Prakṛti person is endowed with the excellence of strength, wealth, knowledge, energy, peace and longevity. Individual with Pitta Prakṛti is endowed with moderate strength, moderate span of life, moderate spiritual and materialistic knowledge, wealth and the accessories of life. The persons having predominance of Vāta have mostly low degree of strength, life span, progeny, means and wealth. Prakṛti is an unchangeable factor as it determined during the period of conception as remains unchanged for lifetime. Study of Prakṛti 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. By understanding the Kapha Prakṛti, Pitta Prakṛti, Vāta Prakṛti person constitution, we can suggest which food, drink, exercise etc. appropriate for maintaining their health.

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