

## THE EFFECT OF ATITKAALA BHOJANA ON HUMAN HEALTH - A SURVEY STUDY

Dr. Shital S. Dhote<sup>1\*</sup> and Dr. Milind D. Nimbalkar<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor,<sup>1</sup>Department of Sanskrit Samhita Siddhanta, D M M Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Yavatmal.<sup>2</sup>Reader and Head of Department, Department of Sanskrit Samhita Siddhanta, D M M Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Yavatmal.

\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Shital S. Dhote

Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit Samhita Siddhanta, D M M Ayurved mahavidyalaya, Yavatmal.

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a comprehensive, traditional system of Health that focuses on Healthy life. For total positive health, Ayurveda has given three secondary supporters of life called as Upsthambhas. These are Aahara, Nidra, Brahmacharya. Aahara is very important need of life. Complexion, clarity, good voice, happiness, intellect, immunity are all conditioned by food. Diseased and healthy condition both are Aahara dependent. For consumption of Aahara, specific Aahara seven kaala have been described in classics, which plays an important role in proper food digestion, nutrition upto tissue level and growth of the body. Ignition of Jatharagni is the exact time of a person to have meal. Skipping the Aahara seven kaala is responsible for Atitkaala Bhojana. Not taking diet on sensation of hunger is termed as Atitkaala Bhojana. In today's fast paced life, many norms and regime regarding diet have been compromised which is showing the overall declining status of health in the society. Following Atitkaala Bhojana, diminution of Agni occurs which can cause symptoms like Avipaka, Vishtambha, Aruchi, Karshyata. So, food should be consumed according to rules of Ayurveda and at proper time (Bhojana kaala) for promotion of health (Swasthya).

**KEYWORDS:** Aahara, Aahara seven kaala, Atitkaala Bhojana.

## INTRODUCTION

An individual can achieve his Karma, Artha, Kama and Moksha only if one is healthy.<sup>[1]</sup> For total positive health, Ayurveda has given three secondary supporters of life.<sup>[2]</sup> These are intake of food, sleep, and observance of Brahmacharya, which comes under the social medicine. Food (Aahara) is one of them. Aahara is stated to be responsible for both Aarogya [health] and Vyadhi [disease].<sup>[3]</sup> Diet taken in accordance with the rules of Ayurveda leads to normal Dosh, Dhatu, Mala etc. For this our Aacharyas explained the Aahara vidhi visheshayatana and Saptavidha Aahara kalpana. Various kaalas described in classic among them aahara seven kaala plays very important role in proper digestion of food, metabolism and excretion. Aahara seven kaala - According to Aacharya excretion of Malas, diversion of all Doshas to their Sthanah, occurrence of Vatanuloman, desire to take diet again i.e. hunger sensation, feeling light weighted, functioning of all the Indriya at optimum level, is the normal meal timing.<sup>[4]</sup> The time of taking food varies from person to person, according to season and job profile but feeling of hunger sensation is the ideal meal time for a person. The diet should be taken as a "Agnihotra. For example- In a

Havan (laukikagni), there is addition of ghee, season seeds, yava in morning and evening compulsorily. Similarly there must be meal for two times for maintaining the function of Agni.<sup>[5]</sup>

According to season, in Hemanta rutu (early winter) and Shishira (late winter) which have nights of longer duration, one should take food containing plenty of snigdha and ushna guna in the morning itself for resistance of bal pravutta dosha. In those which have days of longer duration like Grishma (summer) and Pravrt (early rainy season) one should take food prescribed in that season like drava, laghu, shita gunatmaka in the afternoon. Krutwa Samana Ahoratram means dividing day and night equally in Sharad (autumn) and Vasanta (spring). In these seasons, the meal should be taken only once a day preferably in midday. Those who take meal twice should consume delicious and light food 1/2 or 1/3 of total quantity of two meals, of these, the morning meal should be taken at 1 1/4 prahara while the second one after 4 1/2 prahara, where 1 prahara = 3 hours. However, equal division of day and night means taking food at 1 1/3 prahara in day and the same in night.<sup>[6]</sup> The rule of Aahara seven kaala holds good in the case of

person who take a single meal in the course of a day and night. Those who are used to take two meals a day, should eat light half meal at one and quarter Prahara in the morning and another between the third and the fourth Prahara in the afternoon.<sup>[7]</sup> According to time in hours in a day and night, the kapha kaala is from 4 am to 8 am., pitta kaala is from 8am to 12 pm and vata kaala is from 12pm to 4 pm respectively. Also these are same in evening time.<sup>[8]</sup>

So, in pitta kaala, there is a hunger sensation normally. And diet taken at that kaala digest properly due to secretion of digestive juice i.e. pachak pitta. Person of vata prakruti has vishamagni. Due to the laghu guna of vata, the vata prakruti person takes meal in small quantity repeatedly. Person of pitta prakruti has tishnagni. Due to tishna guna of pitta or intense fire, person has excessive hunger and thirst and they take plenty of food and drinks. They can not hold hunger sensation for long time and eat frequently. Person of kapha prakruti has mandagni due to shit guna of kapha. Hence they feel hunger and thirst sensation very slowly.<sup>[9]</sup> So, meal time is different according to constitution.

As per Ayurveda, lunch is the most important meal of the day, which should ideally be taken between 9 am and 12 pm, when the Sun is at its peak and so is the Pitta in our bodies, which take care of digestion, since that is the time the digestive Agni is working at its maximum potency. As the Sun goes down, so does our Agni. Dinner should be lighter than lunch and should ideally be taken before 8pm.

There must be a gap of 3 hours between the dinner and bedtime. This is explained in details by Sushrutacharya as the first session of the day i.e. pratham prahara, before 9 am meal should not be taken. And after 12 pm means after dvitiya prahara meal should not be taken. That means the ideal time for lunch is 9 to 12 in morning. The meal taken before 9 am do not get digested because of rasodvega.

Similarly, the meal taken after two prahara causes bala nasha.<sup>[10]</sup>

Food taken long after the usual (idea) time called as Atitkaala bhojana. It is one of the type of Vishamashana.<sup>[11]</sup> Atit means past. Hence atitkaala bhojana means intake of food, 1-2 hours after the meal time and sensation of hunger is past. This type of situation of not taking food when it is indicated and taking it afterwards, gives rise to a chain of events which in the end leads to Agnimandya. Not taking food at proper time leads to prakopa of Vata dosha and low quality of Pitta, which causes diminution of Agni. At this juncture if the food is taken, the Vatadosha, which has been moving in the Koshttha, blocks the food, hampers the proper movement, mixing of Kledak kapha and action of Agni. As the proper movement is hampered, pachana can not be completed, also it causes

speed of pachan to be slowed down which manifests in heaviness and lack of desire of food.

The common lakshanaas occurs due to atitkaala bhojana are- 1. Vishtambha, 2. Krucchat vipachyate (Avipak) 3. Karshyata 4. Aruchi.<sup>[12]</sup>

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To collect all references of Atitkaala Bhojna including Vishamashna from Bruhatrayi.
2. To study and assess the lakshanas of Atitkaal Bhojana in 100 volunteers following the above criteria.
3. To assess the importance of Bhojana kaala for improvement, maintenance and promotion of healthy state.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was carried out under two heading namely- 1. The Literary study which explains the review of available literature in Ancient text. The compiled literary material has been analyzed and critically evaluated to develop the concept. 2. For the survey study, 100 volunteers working in private sectors like IT Company, Doctors, Vaidyas, Students, Housemaids have been surveyed for Atitkaala bhojana and its effects on health. The method in this study is simple randomized selection by interview method. A special proforma (Questionnaire) was prepared for a present study to collect the relevant data from volunteers.

Assessment was done to understand the lakshanaas occurs due to Atitkaala bhojana. The data was consolidated by way of tabulation. Rearrangement and grouping according to requirement and standards are done.

### OBSERVATION

In the present study comprising of 100 volunteers, maximum persons; i.e. 54% of the population belongs to age 25-35 yrs and 28% from the age group 35-40 yrs. Most of the persons i.e. (61%) were females. It is found in the study as 18% were Doctors, 14% were BVG workers, 15% were Professors and 11% were Housemaids taking atitkaala bhojana. 11% professionals having morning shift and 11% having night shift. It was reported that maximum i.e. 33% and 32% persons were Vat-pittaja and Kapha -pittaja Prakruti respectively. Habit of irregularity of meal time was found in 55% person where they take irregular meal daily and 22% in person where they take 4-5 days in a week and 20% in person where they take 2-3 days in a week. The Aruchi were found maximum 22% where volunteers have aruchi 1-2 times in a week and 47% having no aruchi. 23% persons were had Vishtambha 1-2 times in a week, 19% had 4-5 times in a week and 17% had always complaint of Vishtmbha. 29% people found Avipak 4-5 times in a week, 26% had 2-3 times in a week and 26% had always avipak after every meal. In the whole study Karshyata were found in 23% where housemaids were suffering

most.

## DISCUSSION

Discussion consists of two parts, literary part and clinical observation part. They are explained as follows-

### Literary part

The importance of Improper dietary habits are the primary reason for the increase in trend of health disorders in current era. The Atitkaala bhojana is seen as a common sight in Today's World. It is observed in groups for example office workers, doctors etc. where the condition is usually forced upon them. The schedule is so packed that food is forgotten and is taken only when time permits.

### Survey part

Survey is done in 100 volunteers. These are selected as per selection criteria. The results obtained are discussed here.

1. Age - Maximum no of patients are from the age group 30-50. This group come under Madhya age as per classics.<sup>[17]</sup> Aacharyas said that there is prominence of pitta in this kaala, therefore there is more chances of pittaja vyadhi. People working in this age group are busy in their professions. Similarly Students and younger people take fast foods and junk food other than their regular meal. All these conditions lead to vishamashana, which is the major cause of ajirna via agni dushiti.
2. Gender- It is found that 61% females are taking atitkaala bhojana. Generally working females do indoor along with outdoor works after which they usually take their meal. After finishing their job work, having meal after completion of remaining household work becomes really late at night. These ladies are more prone to the lakshannas occurs due to atitkaala bhojana.
3. Occupation- Some professions like Vaidyas, Doctors, surgeons, are generally forced to have atitkaala bhojana. It is observed in groups that the condition is usually forced upon them. The Office workers like engineers in IT sectors etc. the schedule is so packed that food is forgotten and is taken only when time permits. Also the housemaids suffer from GIT problems because their work profile. Similarly, professors also has different lunch times as their period schedule.
4. Shifts-- people working in morning and night shifts are more in taking atitkaala bhojana as their shift times. In both the shifts people generally travel distance for 1-2 hrs in metro cities. They disobey the meal timing due to shift timing.
5. Prakruti- Kapha-pittaja and vat-pittaja prakruti patients are more prone to symptom like amlapitta, avipak, ajirna etc. In pitta prakruti, it is clearly mentioned as 'prabhutashanapana'<sup>[16]</sup> which means eating of more quantity food and they are foody in nature. They always like spicy, chatapata, junk, fermented foods to eat. vata prakruti person can not take more quantity of food at a time so they are

habitual to take food repeatedly in less quantity at improper time.<sup>[17]</sup> Hence these people are more prone to digestion problems.

6. Irregular meal timing- About 55% people found taking irregular meal. As they are working in private sectors they are not time bound. They have to finish their work before meal. Also they used to take other foods and drinks like tea, coffee along with breads, biscuits, vada, samosa instead of taking proper meal.
1. Aruchi – Aruchi is the symptom in which patient feels tasteless. In advanced cases it is observed that they refused to eat complete food which is served in plate. It is difficult to differentiate the symptom because aruchi occurs in jwara, pratishyaya, constipation, atisara etc. and people do not understand the symptom aruchi. So if they want to eat more spicy, sour, chatapata food then it also recognized a symptom Aruchi.
2. Vishtambha - Vishatambha is found to be minimum as compared to other symptoms. e.g. doctors, drivers, housemaids they are busy in their work. As they have a sensation of defecation they are not able to go for toilet at that time. This happens as a routine which cause constipation in such people. Also due to atitkaala bhojana the digestion process extends for 6-8 hours, as prakrut aahara rasa is not formed then there is formation of vikrut vata, purisha.
3. Avipak- This found in majority of people in survey study i.e overall 81%. Because mostly people take irregular meal and due to this they have avipak for 2-3 times or 4-5 times in a week or daily after every meal. This prove that by taking atitkaala bhojana and not following the rules of bhojana leads to digestion problems. Because pitta remain for longer time in Aamashaya without getting food for digestion, it loses its quality. Food taken after 1-2 hours or more after sensation of hunger, it do not get digested properly. This cause the above symptoms.
4. Karshyata- It is found that mostly housemaids are prone to karshyata. Because they come in contact with water in major part of the day eg while cleaning the cloths, utensils, floor. Also usually they take less amount of food which is stale at improper time. And as per Aacharya due to excessive vyayama and shit jala vihara, there is severe vataprakopa which ultimately causes weight loss means karshyata.<sup>[17]</sup>

According to the assessment criteria it is observed that the volunteers taking atitkaala bhojana regularly show the maximum symptoms like avipak, vishtambha, aruchi etc. This can be avoid by following the rules of bhojana vidhi.

## CONCLUSION

Aayurveda is the ancient science which explains the keys for healthy living. There is no exact time mentioned anywhere for a person to have meal. When he feels

hungry is the ideal time for taking meal for that person. It explains the Aahara sevan kaala, Aahara Vidhi Visheshayatana, Aahara kalpana which gives proper guidelines for preparation, preservation, consumption, unhealthy, poisonous diet etc which is useful to everyone in day to day life for promotion and maintenance of normal health. By statistical analysis, it is found that the person taking Atitkaala bhojana regularly are suffering from the Annavaha strotas dushti. Due to which person suffering from symptoms like Avipak, aruchi, vishtambha which if neglected converts to major diseases like Amlapitta, Grahani, Atisaar etc.

From the study it is proved that the food should be consumed only when there is-

1. Sensation of hunger
2. Digestion of previous meal
3. Eructation purified
4. Downward passage of flatus, Urine and faeces
5. Healthy/Happy mind.

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