

CONCEPT OF ASHTA AHARA VIDHI VISHESH AYATANE AND IT'S IMPORTANCE IN HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda defines health as a balance Of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* and *Agni* as well as the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being and also definition by WHO-a state of complete Physical, Mental and Social Wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease. Healthy life depends on proper nutrition. According to *Ayurveda Aahar* is most important thing for healthy life. Type of *Aahar* we eat affect our body as well as mind. In *Ayurveda "Trividha Upasthambha"* are described as *Aahar*, *Nidra*, *Brhamcharya* are three pillars of *Sharir* and mind also. But in now days people adopting busy life style and that's why change in dietary habits. And lack of knowledge about proper diet and nutrition is a causative factor for many illnesses. For the diet *Ayurveda* mentioned about *Ashta Ahar Vidhi Vishesh Ayatane*. *Ahar*(food), *Vidhi*(method,) *Vishesh*(pecular), *Ayatan*(abode). *Ashta Vidha Ahar Vishesh Ayatane* includes, *Prakruti*(nature), *karan*(processing), *Samyoga*(combination), *Rashi*(quantity), *Desha*(place), *kala*(time/stage of disease), *Upayoga-Samstha*(rule for use), and *Upayokta* (consumer). For example, *Prakruti*, each individual has a fundamental *Prakruti*(constitution)determined at a time of birth, and denotes his or her basic physical, physiological and psychological behavior, similarly every food items has its own *Prakruti*. is a *Swabhava* or the natural attribute or trait of a substance which inherited naturally, such as *Guru*(heaviness), *Laghu* (lightness) etc. This *Aharvidhi Vishesh Ayatan* concept prescribed by *Acharya Charaka*. which involves different type of rule and regulations regarding to ingestion and preparation of food. Consideration of this concept helps to achieve nutritional value of food and provide all health benefits of ingested food.

KEYWORDS: *Aahar*, *Prakruti*, *Karan*, *Samyoga*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Upayogsamtha*, *Up*.

INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurveda Aahar*, *Nidra*, *Brhamcharya* are regarded as a *Trayopstambha*^[1] i.e., three pillars of healthy life and in that *Aahar* is most important factor. In *Ayurveda Aahar* is called *Prana* of living being. also *Agni* is important, *Bala*, *Arogya*, *Aayu*, etc are depend on *Agni* and proper functioning of *Agni* depend on food. Food In turn depends on *Agni* for its digestion and utilization, without proper *Agni Rasadidhatu* cannot form in proper manner. i.e., formation of *Dhatu* and nutrition of these *Dhatu* is depended on *Aahar*. but *Aahar* only provides its nutritional values when it prepares and ingested in proper way. And this rules and regulations regarding the diet i.e., preparation and ingestion of food is prescribed By *Acharya Charaka*, as *Ashta Aahar Vidhi Vishesh Ayatane*.^[2]

Food are substances consisting essentially of protein, carbohydrates, fat and other nutrients used in the body of

organisms to sustain growth and vital processes and furnish energy.

In broad terms, the substances which are swallowed are termed as food or *Aahar* –

Describing significance of *Aahar*, *Charaka Samhita* considers *Aahar* as the supporter of life, along with *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya*, which seems to be scientifically true since *Aahar* supports all the metabolic reactions occurring in the body. Even *Kashyapa Samhita* quotes that *Aahar* is vital for living and is the cause of strength, colour and *Oja*.

Although the strength, health, Longevity and vital functions also depend on the power of digestion but this power of digestion too requires food as its fuel. *Charaka* quotes that a person following wholesome diet plan lives a healthy life of 36000 fortnights. Here *Charaka* wants to implement that wholesome diet raises both the quantity and quality of life.^[3] *Aahar* sustains the life of the

individual and therefore the individuals are allured towards food. Colour, clarity, pleasant voice, longevity, talent, satisfaction, nourishment, strength and intellect are conditioned by food. Professional activities leading to happiness in this world, Even Kashyapa considers that none of the medications can be equivalent to *Aahar*. A person cannot sustain life without *Aahar* even if endowed with medications and this is the reason that Kashyapa praised *Aahar* by giving it a synonym of *Mahabhaishajya*.

Though *Aahar* is as mandatory as the nectar to the deities, the above-mentioned qualities of *Aahar* can be achieved only when the diet is wholesome and this ultimately causes the growth of the organism. Conversely unwholesome diets are responsible for the generation of diseases. Therefore, only those diets must be consumed whose color, smell, touch and taste are pleasing to the senses. If these diets are taken according to rules, then they actually represent the life of human being. There are 8 factors of the method of dieting.

1. *Prakruti/ swabhava*- nature of food/ quality of food.
2. *Karan*- processing of food.
3. *Samyoga*- combination of food.
4. *Rashi*- quantity of food.
5. *Desha* – habitat of food.
6. *Kala*- time and seasonal variation.
7. *Upayoga Samstha* – Rules for dieting
8. *Upayokta* – the person who consumes the food.

DISCUSSION

CONCEPT OF ASHTA AHARA VIDHI VISHESH AYTANE

Acharya Charaka prescribed *Ashta Aahar Vidhi Vishesh Ayatane* i.e., eight rules for ingestion and preparation of food. They's eight factors should be essentially considering before taking food.

1) *Prakruti*- nature of food^[4]

Prakruti means natural quality, which is inborn. *Prakruti* denotes natural quality of food and medicine like *Guru*(heaviness), *Laghu* (light) etc.

For example, *Mash* (black gram)-*Guru* i.e., heavy to digest

Mudga (green gram) - *Laghu* i.e., also for light for digestion.

Knowing the nature of food or medicine will help in choosing the foods according to our digestion capacity and we can eat a food which can digest easily by our body. i.e., if digestion is good, we can take *Guru Dravya* as well as *Laghu*. But digestion is poor we can take *Laghu* and avoiding the *Guru Dravya* which helps in proper digestion. And this is very important in maintaining health.

2) *Karan* - method of processing the foods

Some foods may not be suitable for direct consumption. Their form and inherent characters should be changed in order to make the food suitable for consumption. In order to do this the food need to be processed and transformed

in to a usable form (consumable form) these transformations are called *Samskara* or *Abhisanskara*. *Samskara* bring *Gunantardhana* or change in characters and quality of food substance. Some food has *Prakruti* of vitiation of *Doshas*, this property can be changed by different processing over food i.e., *Karan*. It includes the following *Sanskara*.

Agni Samskara; (contact of fire)

heating boiling, frying and roasting are different *Agni Samskar*. Different type of *Agni* causes different changes in the property of food. e.g., food cooked on coal or natural wood has better taste than food cooked over electrical one.

Jal Sanikarsh and Shauch(cleaning) *Samskara*

It includes cleaning of substances i.e. contact with water. It is done to remove impurities. e.g., Rice prepared of dusked paddy is *Laghu*, while rice prepared of nonboiled paddy is *Guru*.

Manthan (churning) *Samskara*

Churning or grinding changes properties of food. e.g., *Dadhi*^[5] is *Guru* and *Shothakrut* in nature. When *Dadhi* is churned it is converted into *Takra*.

Which is *Laghu* in nature. Also, it is considered as a *Shothaghna*. It is explained under term of bioavailability of micronutrients. Several cooking methods like thermal processing, fermentation etc. are used to increase bioavailability of micronutrients. These processes increase physiochemical accessibility of micronutrients and decrease content of anti-nutrients. For example; fermentation of organic acid such as citric acid and lactic acid are produced during fermentation which increases absorption of iron and zinc.

3) *Samyoga*: (combination / mixing) *Sanhatibhav*

Food combination is known as *Samyoga*. Combination of different foods items may enhance the qualities of the original substance or it may produce altogether new qualities. Appropriate combination of ingredients leads health benefits while incompatible combination leads to health problem. Food items should be combined judiciously, else may prove harmful.

- E.g., milk and fish are good for health if taken separately, it's *Samyoga* is worst for health.
- Consumption of fruits with milk like milk shakes.
- Honey and ghee are very useful if taken independently but if both are combined together, they can be equally harmful.
- *Dadhi* should be taken in combination with *Ghee*, Sugar, *Mudga*, *Madhu*, *Amalaki*.

Knowledge of the proper as well as improper combinations is essential, in order to prevent any of the disease resulting out of the latter.

4) *Rashi*

Sarvagrahaparigraha Matramatraphalavinischayartha.

It is described to know the importance of amount of food ingested.

Two methods

- To calculate the total amount of food eaten.
- To calculate each entity of food item eaten. If fewer amounts than required is consumed, it will not fulfill the body's needs. If consumed in excess it will cause health disorders. However, amount of food differs from individual to individual. *Parigraha* takes into consideration the quantity of each item and *Sarvagraha* means the total quantity to be consumed. According to Charaka one must eat in measure and the measure of food is determined by the power of digestion and his strength. He has further stated that 'A proper measure of food, when taken is digested in the time without impairing one's health'. Measured diet positively promotes strength, complexion, health and life. Man should always consume the proper quantity of food since it is the activator of Agni.

5) Desha- (Habitat)

"*Punhasthana Dravyanamutpattipracharau Deshsatyam*" It means place of origin of food. *Desha* also denotes the body which consumes food. Classics say that before consuming particular food stuff, it is essentially to know from which land or country it has been derived.

For example, the medicine which grow in Himalayas has different medicinal properties than any other drugs. Also, this about the place where the group of people living. Like *Sadharana Desha*, *Jangam* etc. Region wise disease pathology and strength of body also change. and that's why dietary habits must be followed accordingly. For healthy life. The soil has its own effect on the crop. Modern science is not thinking in a different way about *Desha* but presenting in own way. It also says that the study of disease is really the study of man and his environment. Hundreds of millions of people are affected by preventable diseases originate in the environment in which they live. The aspect of Human host is well defined in Ayurveda when Acharya said about *Vyadhita Desha Pariksha*. So *Vyadhita Desha Pariksha* is one of the vital aspects of understanding the patients before starting the *chikitsa*. Also before taking the food. Hence one should always take *Aahara* according to *Bhoomi Desha* as well as *Atura Desha*.

6) kala- (time/stage of disease)

Kaal may be *Nityag* and *Awasthik*. *Nityag* means according to *Ritu* (season). *Nityag* means daily, that is portion of the day and night can be considered as a *Nityag kaal*. *Nityag kaal* is important because the time of day when we can eat a food and in particular time, we can't consume the food. *Avasthik* means condition of the body *Avasthik* is conditional or situational. This concept applicable in condition and stages of disease and also the stages of life like in child need of more nutritious diet.

time of meal also affect the nutritional value of food so time and *Rutu* must be considered before taking food. Timing is everything. Only when the previous meal has been properly digested, one should consider eating the next meal. Everyone should change the type of food as well as the quantity and quality of food in accordance to seasonal changes.

7) Upyoga Samstha: (rule for use)

Food for specific purpose sometimes required to take in particular conditions. The dietic rules or *Upayog Sanstha* are totally depends on *Jeerna Aahar Lakshanas* i.e., symptoms of proper digestion.

Jeerna Aahar Lakshanas -Uddgar Shudhi- i.e., no taste in blech

Utsaha-Enthusiasm

Veg Utsarga- proper evacuation of *Mala*

Laghuta-lightness of the body

Kshut -manifestation of hunger

Pipassa- manifestation of thirst.

8) Upayokta: consumer -the person who take the food

Considerations of *Upayokta* also play vital role towards achieving health benefits of consumed food. *Upayokta* is one who is responsible for the habitual intake of food. i.e., "*Okasatmya*".

Food should be taken considering individuals place, digestive power, Season, *Kaal* and *Jeerna Aahar Lakshana*.

By following all these *Ashtavidha Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatan* one can enjoy health out of eating food. And get the nutritional value of what we eat. and these above-mentioned special directions can protect human body against certain type of disease, in particular the noncommunicable disease such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease etc. This knowledge about the *Aahar Vidhi Vishesh Ayatane* is very important to treat any type of diseased person.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of above-mentioned description and discussion we have to come conclusion that everybody should follow the rules and regulations whenever he takes any *Aahar Dravya* in daily routine. Some person having *Vataj Prakruti*, *Pittaj*, *Kafaj Prakruti*, and some individual are more prone to *Vataj Vyadhi*, some *Pittaj* and some for *kafaj Vyadhi*, so according to *Prakruti* food taken. this helps to avoid the disease. So they should follow rules of diet according to *Prakruti*.

State of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Agni* all are maintained by taking diet according to above mentioned rules by *Acharya Charaka*. An individual consuming wholesome food is not afflicted by disease. However, intake of wholesome food is not the only causative factor for a disease or can prevent diseases. Apart from

unwholesome food, there are many other etiological factors that lead to a disease, such as change in season, intellectual errors, unwholesome contacts, excessive, wrong and over-utilization of senses of sound, touch, vision, taste and smell.

These etiological factors can cause diseases in an individual despite wholesome intake of tastes (*Rasa*) and diet. Hence, an individual taking wholesome food has also been observed to have taken ill.

Similarly, consuming unwholesome diet does not immediately produce untoward effects. All unwholesome food articles are not equally harmful, all the dosha are not of equal strength, and all the bodies are not capable of preventing disease.

Unwholesome food can be more harmful depending upon the habitat, season, combination, potency, and intake in excessive quantity.

Individuals, who are excessively obese, emaciated, whose muscles, blood, bones are depleted, who are physically very weak, who are habituated to consuming unwholesome food, who take in inadequate quantities of food, and who have very weak mind cannot withstand diseases. Contrary to this, individuals having opposite qualities to the ones mentioned above are capable of resisting diseases. Thus, unwholesome diet, *Dosha*, and body constitution factors produce diseases of mild, severe, acute and chronic nature.^[6]

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