

FORMATION OF PRAKRITI AND ITS ASSESSMENT IN PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD - A
REVIEWARTICLEDr. Sunil P. Changle*¹, Dr. Swapnil Raskar² and Dr. Bharati S Changle³¹Professor and Head of the Department of KB, Parul Institute of Ayurveda, Vadodara.²Assistant Professor, Department of KB, Parul Institute of Ayurveda Vadodara.³PG Scholar Department of KB, Parul Institute of Ayurveda Vadodara.

*Corresponding Author: Dr. Sunil P. Changle

Professor and Head of the Department of KB, Parul Institute of Ayurveda, Vadodara.

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ABSTRACT

Prakriti is an important concept of *Ayurveda* that explains individuality and has role in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease. *Prakriti* is the buildup of constitution in human beings. *Prakriti* forms of genetic as well as environmental factors. *Kashyapa* has described about the formation of *Prakriti* depending on nourishment of pregnant woman. The ancient sages observed that although every individual is constituted of the three *doshas*, each of us inherits them in differing proportions. This accounts for our differences in appearance, preferences, aversions, behavioral patterns and emotional tendencies. The proportion of the three *doshas* present in an individual at birth will determine his or her essential constitution or *prakriti*. *Prakriti* represents the proportion of the *doshas* which represents the ideal state of balance and it serves as the goal. Thus considering the management and treatment point of view is adhering to *Prakriti* assessment. In children considering the growth and development, criteria in the form of questionnaire is set up. In this article we have highlighted the specific points for deciding the *Prakriti* type in Children.

KEYWORDS: *Prakriti*, *Ayurveda*, children.

INTRODUCTION

The word *Prakriti* means Nature or in build phenomena of human body. *Prakriti* of human beings based on integral part i.e. genetic as well as external factors. Genetic factors depend on *Shukra and shonita*.^[1] *Prakriti* is not output of those *dosha*, which undergo constant variations. *Dosha* which remains constant from birth till death are responsible for *Prakriti*. Once formed *Prakriti* is also influenced though not changed due to environmental factors.^[2] *Kashyapa* has described that what so ever eatables and drinkables are often consumed by the pregnant woman, identical *rasa* is derived i.e. properties, which is utilized in three ways, one part for nourishment of the mother, second part for growth of the fetus and third for the development of breasts. Thus the fetus is nourished by the mother, so the identical type of *prakriti* of human being is formed from embryonic life. These *Prakriti* are of three types having *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* humor as predominance.^[3]

For the development of human constitution *Kashyapa* lays emphasis on *panchbhautika nutrient-rasa* supplied by the mother to the fetus; *Sushruta and Vagbhata* have different opinion saying that the constitution is formed from the *dosha* predominant in *shukra and Shonita*, just at the time of fertilization.^[4,5,6] However *Charaka* has laid

emphasis not only on *shukra, Shonita and rasa* derived from material diet, but also on *kala and garbhasaya*.^[7]

This indicates that formation of *prakriti*, according to *Sushruta and Vagbhata* is purely genetic without any influence of external or environmental factors, while, in the opinion of *Kashyapa* it is produced only by external factors i.e. by *Panchmahabhutas* reaching through maternal diet. Opinion of *Sushruta, Charaka* seems to be logical and scientific, because human constitution is influenced by environmental and nutrients, besides being genetic has also envisaged the *bhautika* constitution due to *vayu, agni, jala, prithvi and akasa*, in which features of *vayaviya, jaliya and agneyaprakritis* are described similar to that of *vataja, kaphaja and pittaja prakritis* resp. The features of only *nabhas and parthiva* are elaborated.^[8]

Analyzing and diagnosing the *Prakriti* seems unique according to *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* inventories for *prakriti* have been developed and validated for adults. In the west classification of personality is done based on temperament, behaviors and characteristics such as introvert or extrovert.^[9]

Ayurveda classics propose a comprehensive outlook of personality, encompassing physical-physiological aspects like color of eyeball, texture of hair, appetite, sleep, behavior, attitudes and interests, intelligence, mental stamina of an individual based on *tridosha*. Texts suggest seven types of *prakriti* *vata*, *pitta*, *kapha*, *vata-pitta*, *vata-kapha*, *pitta-kapha* and *sama*.^[10,11,12,13,14,15,17]

Ayurveda considers balanced state of *tridoshas* as health. Person with predominance of single or dual *doshas* are prone to diseases and always ailing. Ayurveda recommends specific diet as well as daily regimen for different types of *prakriti*.^[18]

Superiority of *Sama prakriti* is emphasized as described by *Kashyapa* and the individuals of other *Prakriti* are said to be prone to diseases, because they had to use one such diet and mode of life which is congenial to their physical constitution, while those of *Sama prakriti* can use any diet etc. The *dosha* predominant in the body due to *prakriti* is vulnerable for aggravations due to seasonal variations etc. Besides respective physical characters i.e. dryness etc. in *vataja* individuals are not normalcies, thus, the individuals with predominance of one *dosha* in *prakriti* should be called as having *vatala*, *pittala* and *leshmala* and not *vataja*, *pittaja* and *kaphaja prakritis*.^[7]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study the concept of *prakriti* formation and assessment in childhood.
2. To establish interrelationship between *prakriti* and period of childhood.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The literary material related to *prakriti* has been collected from several Ayurvedic texts like *Kashyapa Samhita*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Shushrut Samhita* and *Ashtanga Samgraha* etc.

Formation of prakriti i.e. somatic constitution

Eatables and drinkables often consumed by pregnant women, identical *rasa* (in properties) are derived. It is utilized in three ways, one part for nourishment of the mother, second part for growth of fetus and third for the development of breast. Thus the fetus is nourished by the mother, and so identical type of *prakriti* of human being is formed from embryonic life. These *prakriti* are of three types having *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* as pillars (predominance).

For the development of human constitution *Kashyapa* lays emphasis on *panchbhautika nutrient-rasa* supplied by the mother to the fetus. Opinion of *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata* are entirely different, as they say that the constitution is formed from the *dosha* predominant in *shukra* and *shonita* just at the time fertilization (s.s.sa/63, a.s.su 1/27; a.h.su.1/9.2). However, *Charaka*

has laid emphasis not only on *Shukra*, *Shonita* and *Rasa* derived from maternal diet but also on *kala* (time) and *garbhashaya* (uterus) (c.s.vi.6/12-14, vi.8/95). This indicated that formation of *prakriti*, according to *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata* is purely genetic without any influence of external or environmental factors while in the opinion of *Kashyapa* it is produced only by external factors i.e., by *Panchmahabhutas* reaching through maternal diet. Opinion of *Charaka* seems to be logical and scientific because human constitution is influenced by environment (*Garbhasaya*, *kala*) and nutrients (*rasa*) besides, being genetic *Sushruta* has also envisaged that *bhautika* constitution due to *vayu*, *agni*, *jala*, *prthvi* and *akasa*, in which features of *vayaviya*, *jailya* and *agneya* are described similar to that of *Vataja*, *Kaphaja* and *Pittaja prakritis* respectively. The features of only *nabhasa* and *parthiva* elaborated (s.s.sa.4/80). However this description is not accepted by authors and also not in practice.

Factors Affecting the Growth and Development of Prakriti

According to Ayurvedic literature many factors take part in formation and development of *prakriti* which can be broadly grouped into two i.e. prenatal (intra uterine) factors and post-natal (extra uterine) factors. According to *Charaka* and *Vagbhata*, *prakriti* of an individual depends upon *Shukra prakriti* (sperm), *Shonita prakriti* (ovum), *kala prakriti* (time, season), *garbhashaya prakriti* (condition of uterus), *maturajahara* – *vihara prakriti* (diet and behavior of mother) and *panchamahabootas vikar prakriti*. These six factors come under the first group prenatal factors. *Charaka* and *Vagbhata* have also describes some other factors which plays important role in *prakriti* determination. These factors are; *jatiprasakta* (racial peculiarities), *kulaprasakta* (familial preposition), *deshanupatini* (demographic), *kulanupatini* (seasonal effect), *vayonupatini* (natural changes according to age) *pratyamaniyata* (personal habits and individuality, idiosyncrasy). All these six factors come under the second group i.e. post-natal factor. The first group of factor as during the intrauterine life of the fetus, at the time of union of the *Shukra*, *Shonita* and *Jivaas* they have definite role in the establishment of *prakriti* and active before prenatal period, so they are termed as pre-natal factors. While the second group of factors influence the *prakriti* after the delivery of the fetus and is responsible for the development of the *prakriti*, so they are termed as post-natal factors.

Effect of Somatic Constitution on Health

Some persons are of *Vatika prakriti*, some of *Pittaka prakriti* and some of *Kaphaja prakriti* and others are of *dwandwaja* (predominance of two doshas) and yet another of *Samaparakriti* (equilibrium of all the three doshas). Persons of *Samaparakriti* are always healthy and of *Vatika* etc. always ailing. On the basis of assessment of somatic constitutions of human being, we should plan treatment accurately and never gets confused in treatment. Subject regarding influence of *prakriti* on

health has been described by all Acharyas. Both *Vagbhatassay* that the persons with *Samaprakriti* are excellent, while with mixed prakritis are condemnable; the persons of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* predominance are said to be inferior, mediocre and good respectively (a.s.su 1/27, a.h.su 1/10). *Sushruta* citing the example of poisonous insects emphasizes that *prakritis* being genetic, do not harm individuals. *Dalhana* says that these cause little harm (s.s.sa.4/79, with *Dalhana commentary*). *Charaka* is emphasized as described, because he has presented a long discussion regarding *prakritis*, where in superiority of *sama prakriti* is emphasized as described

by *Kashyapa* and the individuals of other *prakritis* are said to be prone to disease because they have to use only such diet and mode of life which is congenial to their physical constitution while those of *sama prakriti* can use any diet etc. The *dosha* predominant in the body due to *prakriti* is vulnerable for aggravation due to seasonal variations etc. besides respective physical characters i.e. dryness etc. In *vataja* individuals are not normalcies thus the individuals with predominance of one *dosha* in *prakriti* should be called as having *vataja*, *pittala* and *slesmala* and not *vataja*, *pittaja*, *kaphajaprakriti* (c.s.vi.6/12-14).

Table 1: Based on physical and physiological features, assessment of prakriti can be done.

	Vatika	Paitik	Kaphaja
General (Wt. and Ht.) Examination	Tall Thin	Medium Medium	Short Strong and stout
Appearance	Blackish complexion	Pale yellow	Fair
Hair	Dry, brittle	Soft, sparse, early greying	Dense, silky
Specific features	Prominent veins	Moles, eruptions	
Forehead	Small	Medium	Large
Eye brows	Scanty	Thin	Thick
Lashes	Dry, scanty	Soft, thin	Long, thick
Sclera	Smoky, dry	Yellowish	White
Look	Sunken	Sharp	Soft
Nature	Unsteady	Normal	Steady
Teeth	Short crooked	Yellowish white, Moderate	White, Proportionate
Nails	Dry, fragile, cracked	Pink, smooth	Whitish pink smooth
Tongue	Dry, cracked, rough	Red, thin	Pinkish white
Lips	Dry, cracked	Thin, delicate	Soft
Nose	Blunt, short	Medium, sharp	Big and straight
Chin	Uneven	Thin	Broad thick
Chest	Small, narrow	Medium	Broad
Arms-legs	Short Unsteady	Medium	Long
Palms –soles	Dry, cracked, rough	Soft, Perspired	Smooth, Thick
Joints	Prominent	Loose	Strong
Voice	Shrill	Clear	Deep
Speech	Talkative	Debating	Slow steady
Appetite	Irregular	Excessive	Slow
Thirst	Variable	Excessive	Scanty
Bowel (Koshtha)	Krur (constipated)	Mrudu (Tendency for loose stool)	Madhyam (Normal Bowel activities)
Stool	Hard	Loose	Thick
Activities	Fast, unsteady	Fats	Slow
Sleep	Disturbed	Moderate	Deep
Concentration	Unsteady	Focused	Focused steady
Code of Conduct	Uncultured	Good, quarrelsome, kind	Calm
Anger	Quick	Quick	Not sudden

DISCUSSION

Above criteria implies to both growth and development of child. Thus it is totally dependent on mother's reply due to *Partantrata*. Henceforth one has to form a questionnaire and conclude accordingly. Various pathological conditions to be differentiated as it may be misleading for e.g. premature greying seen in *pitta prakriti* has to be differentiated with anemia, vitamin deficiency etc. The eight factors i.e. *moolaprakruti*

(undifferentiated *avyakta* state in zygote), *mahat* (endowment), the *ahankaara* (id of the individual) and the basic *Panchatanmastras* (vibrations) in the zygote are called "*prakritayah*". based on these assembled *tanmatras* the 16 *vikarasi*.e. 5 *mahabhootas* (with which the body tissues are made to form *angapratyangasstructure*) the 5 sensory organs and 5 motor organs are developed along with *mana* to constitute the individualized body of 24 *tatwaas*

(*susrutha*) *tatwa*). However functionally one should know that the body is the collective product of *Shadbhaavaas* (above genetic material expressions as modified by parents *satmyata* and individualize demand (*Satva*)), none of them are capable of acting independently at will. *Krmapreritavaayu* organizes all processes. At a tie immediately after fertilization with the zygote in uterine tube or uterus whole organization is done and a blue print of 24 *tatwas* laid, from an undifferentiated state of *avyakta* to the development of body with *shodasavikaraah*. All this happens with the continued reflection and flow of *Chichhakti* (gods will) which act as a catalyst such a single celled unit in uterus is called *Garbha*. This *garbha* in course of time governed by 16 laws of nature (*swabhava*, *iswara*, *kaala*, *yadruccha*, *niyati*, and *parinaama*) and with adequate nutrition from endometrium and placenta become differentiated into the body consisting of *dosha*, *dhaatu*, *malaas*, with *angapratyangas* in fetus.

CONCLUSION

Prakriti has prime importance in both healthy and diseased persons by understanding the individual constitution of every individual; we know which food, drink, exercise etc. are appropriate for maintaining of growth and development of child. Prakriti indicates the proportion of the doshas which represents the ideal state of balance and it serves as the goal. As health of child being dependent according to the Prakriti, thus assessment helps in facilitating management of disease. Thus considering the management and treatment point of view is adhering to Prakriti assessment. In children considering the growth and development, criteria in the form of questionnaire is set up. In this article we have highlighted the specific points for deciding the Prakriti type in Children as it remains unchanged one's lifetime and are genetically determined. So it is clearly indicated that if a person wants to be healthy, one must design own life style opposite to prakriti as Kashyapa has described about the formation of Prakriti depending on nourishment of pregnant woman.

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