

**AHAR VIDHI VISHESHAYATAN - PRESENT SCENARIO IN CONTEXT TO DIET  
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**ABSTRACT**

Developing nation increases hassle of masses for wages and quality of life. This endeavor has led to marked shift in dietary habits. Ultimately it is been reflected on health of peoples. Change in lifestyle fuels disorders like metabolic syndrome, obesity, diabetes, hypertension and many more to count. Diet regime mentioned in Ayurveda classics throws light on healthy food habits which are *Prakruti* specific and also beneficial in long run. Many popular diet plans yields quick outcome but have heavy untoward effect on general health. Here an attempt is made to study specific diet regime - *Ahar Vishi Visheshayatan* to illuminate right dietary habits in present world which will be beneficial to our health.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda, Prakruti, Ahar Vishi Visheshayatan.***INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda is not only a health care science but a total holistic science of life. Apart from its disease and medicament part it also preaches total life principals. Importance to each aspect of life and its positive as well as negative effects are very well described in Ayurveda classics. Food – a basic entity of life is of foremost importance when it comes to maintain a healthy life or getting cured from a disease. Ayurveda is the only science which had studied food or diet regimes in its true magnanimity. In Ayurveda, basic substance – *Dravya* is classified in two types – *Aahar dravya* and *Aushadha dravya*. In it *Aahar dravya* are *Rasa Pradhan* while *Aushadha dravya* are *Virya Pradhan*. *Rasa* is nothing but taste types mentioned in Ayurveda. Unlike contemporary science, Ayurveda had mentioned *Rasa* –Taste of six types – *Madhur, Amla, Lavan, Tikta, Katu* and *Kashaya*. Each having its sets of *dravya* and also have different effects on *Tridosha*. *Acharya Charak* had mentioned eight factors determining the utility of food – *Astho Ahar vidhi visheshayatan*. The collective term - *Ahar Vishi Visheshayatan* unfolds the various aspects of each i.e. *Aharvishesh, vidhivishesh* and *Ayatanvishesh*. This aspects focuses on factors which are responsible for wholesome and unwholesome of food or method for the diet intake. This factors ultimately results in *Hitkar* – favorable and *Ahitkar* – unfavorable effects on human body.

**Concept of Ahara**

The word *Ahara* is derived from root “*HRN – HARNE*” means which is to be taken in or swallowed. This nourishes body as well as mind. *Ahara* comprises of six *Rasa* and further divided in four categories – *Ashit, Khadit, Pit, Lehya*. *Ahara* gets processed with *Jatahragni* to get *Aharrasa* which further nourishes all *Dhatu* by virtue of respective *Dhatvagni*. Here the right category and amount along with *rasa* type of *Ahara* helps to maintain optimum *Jatahragni* which is basis of sound health.

**Concept of Ashto Ahar Vidhi Visheshayatan**

*Acharya Charak* had elaborated factors which determine the right utility of food in order to have wholesome beneficial effect on body as well as mind. This term includes following aspects;

1. *Ahar vishesh* – having special properties, specific intended effects
2. *Vidhi vishesh* – special arrangement, set of rules to be followed
3. *Ayatan vishesh* – cause, relevance, *Hetu*

**Ashto Ahar Vidhi Visheshayatan**

1. *Prakruti* – nature of *dravya*
2. *Karana* - *samskara*
3. *Kala* – time
4. *Samyoga* - combination
5. *Rashi* – amount
6. *Desh* – regional specification

7. *Upayog Samstha* – ethics to be followed
8. *Upayokta* – individual entity

### **Prakruti**

It complies the nature of *Dravya – Ahar*. According to Ayurveda classics, *Dravya* has certain properties i.e. *Guna*. *Acharya* had mentioned twenty *Guruvadi Guna* – qualities of *Dravya*, among which *Guru-Lagu* and *Ushna-Sheet* this four are of importance regarding *Ahara*. *Guru – Lagu* qualities are bestowed to *Ahara Dravya* by the virtue of nature of *Jataharagni* – digestive fire. In simple language the food which are heavy to digest and produce *Guru Guna* in body are termed as *Guru Ahara Dravya* while those which are easy to digest and produce light effect in body are *Lagu Ahara Dravya*. *Ushna –Sheet* are the potencies of *Ahara Dravya* which produces warming effect or cooling effect in body after the process of digestive fire – *Jatharagni*.

### **Karana**

It implies *Samskara* – the processing. *Samskara* in Ayurveda are mentioned for change in the attributes of certain thing. Here it denotes the procedures undertaken to alter/imbibe desired qualities in given *Dravya*. *Acharya Charaka* and commentator *Chakrapani* had mentioned various types of *Samskara* which can be implemented to get desired quality *Ahara dravya*. *Agni – Kala – Patra* are some of the main *Samskara* used to get optimum quality food.

### **Kala**

It is consideration of factor – Time in determining food utility. According to Ayurveda *Kala* is seasonal variation and also dietary regimes for day and night. Which raw food is cultivated in which season and is beneficial to consume in which season is elaborately described. This have specific effects on *Tridosha*. In eastern culture the festivals are lined up in such a way that the cultivation and consumption of specific seasonal food is undertaken. This ultimately aids healthy living. Also the intake of food at proper timing in concurrence with day to day *Dosha* cycle helps to maintain optimum health.

### **Samyoga**

It denotes combination of two or more *Dravyas*. *Samyoga* results in manifestation of specific attributes in final food prepared in accordance to desired quality. This is taken in consideration as single individual *Dravya* is incapable to confer desired quality in food. These combination increases the palatability and also make *Dravya* beneficial to specific *Dosha prakruti*. There are many combinations mentioned in Ayurveda which produces *Hitkar* – favorable effects as well as *Ahitkar* – unfavorable effects on human body. Foods combined in specific quantity may act as poison e.g. honey and ghee combined in equal quantity.

### **Rashi**

It terms as amount/quantum of food to be taken. By observing and following above four factors in determining utility of food, one has to quantify the

amount of food one can take in order to have beneficial effects on body. It depends on the quality of digestive fire - *Jatharagni* one possess. The *Jaran Shakti* and *Abhyavaran Shakti* decides the amount which can easily be assimilated without any untoward effects. *Dosha prakruti* has its respective influence on *Jatharagni* and hence one has to consider *Rashi* according to it. This will produce optimum quality *Dhatu* and will maintain sound health.

### **Desh**

It refers to regional specifications. Here it implies to both food as well as *Upayokta* – one who consumes it. Food cultivated in certain regions are having specific properties. The *bhomi desh* mentioned – *Anup Desh*, *Jangal desh* and *Sadharan desh* have predominance of specific *Dosha* combination in all factors. Hence food cultivated in this regions or individual living in this regions will have to take food accordingly.

### **Upayog Sanstahn**

It is the process of consumption of food. Or the ethics to be followed. There are terms related to this – *Samashana*, *Vishamashana* and *Adhyashana*. This are the habits of diet which an individual follows. In *Samashana* habit, previously taken food is digested fully before taking next food. Other factors like food should be *Ushana* – warm, *Snigdha*, *Matravat*, from proper *Desha*, should be taken after full digestion of previous meal, without laughing or talking, calmly and paying full regards to oneself are considered under this section.

### **Upayokta**

Is the individual who takes the food. Habitual intake of certain food forms the *Satmya bhava* for each individual. This habits creates the wholesomeness of the diet taken and hence is beneficial to maintain the health.

### **Importance and relevance in present scenario**

Food is the prime source of energy to sustain the life. It provides nourishment for body and replenishes the mind. Intake of wholesome or unwholesome *Ahar* is responsible for maintenance of health or disease production respectively. This wholesomeness of *Ahar Dravya* depends upon this eight factors mentioned under the term *Ahar Vidhi Visheshayatan*.

*Prakruti* – according to nature of *Dravya* one should select the food to be taken. *Guru Guna* food are preferable for those people who have optimum digestive fire – *Jataharagni* to digest it. One should examine the *Agni* and then decide the food to be taken so that it will be beneficial for health. In present context, the processed and packed food comes under heavy category to digest. Also hybrid food add up to this list.

*Karana* – proper processing is expected to get benefited from the food consumed. The food processed in microwave or any other food processors fails to imbibe desired quality change in the food. Thus it is advisable to

avoid extra processing or unnatural processing over the mentioned processes – *Samskara* to make desired quality change.

*Kala* – taking into the seasonal variation in food cultivation. One should prefer those foods which are freshly available rather preserved foods.

*Samyoga* – one should thoroughly study this factor to avoid *Virudha Ahar* effect. Due to modernization and development of various kitchen habits, many new combinations of food are been practiced. Even though this changes are made to improve the taste of food but it fails to serve the purpose give a balanced sound health.

*Rashi* – as stated in above point, experiments are done to improve the taste of food. This also results in overeating and may cause serious health hazards in due long term. One should examine his nature of digestive fire – *Jathatagni* and then decide the right amount of food to be taken.

*Desh* – due to globalization one can have access to any food item from any part of world he desires. It is preferable to have food which is cultivated in his own native *Desh* in order to provide optimum nutrients to the body.

*Upayog Samstha* – change in lifestyle and increased standard of living has changed the food habits. It is always advisable to follow the sets of rules and ethics mentioned in Ayurveda to have maximum benefit of the food consumed.

*Upayokta* – one should nurture good diet habits which will be beneficial for his healthy body and mind.

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