

A REVIEW ON FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PRAKRITI

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the ancient science which includes all the factors which are necessary for maintenance of health. *Prakriti* is the unique concept of Ayurveda, which means *Swabhav* i.e. natural condition or state. *Prakriti* or constitution of an individual is formed at the time of union of sperm and ovum inside the womb. This basic constitution remains constant throughout the life of that individual. *Prakriti* of a person differs from another person in anatomical, physiological and psychological factors. Thus the *Deha Prakriti* is essentially genetically determined and is likely to be influenced by a variety of environmental factors to some extent. Factors which take part in the formation and

development of *Prakriti* can be broadly classified in two groups i.e. Pre-natal (Intra uterine) factors and Post-natal (Extra uterine) factors. The first group of factors acts during the intrauterine life of the fetus, at the time of the union of the *Shukra* and *Shonita* while the second group influences the *Prakriti* after delivery of the fetus. So, all these factors should be considered while determining *Prakriti*. In this article a brief review on factors affecting the development of *Prakriti* will be discussed.

KEYWORDS: Prakriti, Shukra, Shonita, fetus.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of *Prakriti* has been described by almost all Acharyas in Ayurvedic classics. *Prakriti* refers to genetically determined physical and mental constitution of an individual.

The term *Prakriti* is formed from the words “*Pra*” and “*Kriti*”. “*Pra*” means the ‘beginning’, ‘to commence’, or ‘origin’ and “*kriti*” means ‘to form’ or ‘to create’. Thus word *Prakriti* denotes a state of natural form, or original form. It is opposite of ‘*vikriti*’ which indicates change or effect.

In Ayurvedic classics, term *Prakriti* is used for *swabhav* which means one’s own constitution and attitude.^[1] Commentator Arundatta has explained that *Prakriti* is expression of body functions, in the form of morphology, physiology and behavior of an individual.^[2] *Prakriti* is determined at the time of fertilization due to predominance of *doshas*. People are born with various proportions of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha dosha*. Two intermingling sets of *Doshas* can be considered as *Prakrut* or *Arambhak doshas* and *Vikrut* or *Ahar-mala-sambhavaja-doshas*.^[3] *Prakriti* is not output of those *doshas* which undergoes constant variations, but it is formed from the *doshas* which remain constant. Thus, *Prakriti* is individual specific and idiosyncratic.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study the pre-natal (Intra uterine) factors which affect on *Prakriti* at the time of the union of the *Shukra* and *Shonita*.
2. To study the post-natal (Extra uterine) factors which affect on *Prakriti* after delivery of the fetus.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

1. Classical Ayurvedic texts like Charaka samhita, Sushrut samhita, Ashtang Sangraham, etc have been used for this study, from which various references regarding *Prakriti* have been collected.
2. Related websites and modern references have also been searched.

REVIEW

FORMATION OF PRAKRITI

Prakriti is formed by the *Utkatata* (predominance) of one, two or all three *doshas* at the time of union of *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum) in the *garbhashaya* (uterus).^[4] Acharya dalhana commented that ‘*uttakatah*’ means dominance of *prakrita dosha*. As the predominant *dosha* is *prakrit* in nature, it do not harm the body as the poison of snake does not harm it.^[5] During conception, a few individuals present equal ratio of three *doshas*, which is called as *Sama Prakriti*. Few of them show predominance of one *dosha*. For example predominance of

Kapha dosha exhibits *kaphaj prakriti*. When one predominant, one less dominant and one recessive *dosha* is present in the body, then it is said to be *dwandwaj prakriti*. For example, at time of birth if *Kapha dosha* is predominant, *pitta* is less dominant and *vata dosha* is recessive, then individual is having *Kaphapradhan pittanubandhi prakriti*. Predominant *dosha* affect anatomy, physiology, psychology & immunity of that person. Features are seen according to properties & functions of the predominant *dosha*.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRAKRITI

Factors which take part in the formation and development of *Prakriti* can be broadly classified in two groups i.e. Pre-natal (Intra uterine) factors and Post-natal (Extra uterine) factors. The first group of factors acts during the intrauterine life of the fetus, at the time of the union of the *Shukra* and *Shonita* while the second group influences the *Prakriti* after the delivery of the fetus. So, all these factors should be considered while determining *Prakriti*. Factors like *Shukra prakriti* (sperm), *Shonita prakriti* (ovum), *Kala prakriti* (time or season), *Garbhashaya prakriti* (condition of uterus), *Maturahar-vihar prakriti* (diet and behaviour of mother) and *Mahabhutavikar prakriti* come under the first group i.e Pre-natal factors.^[1] While *jatiprasakta* (racial peculiarities), *kulaprasakta* (familial predisposition), *deshanupatini* (demographic), *kalanupatini* (seasonal effect), *vayonupatini* (natural changes according to age), *pratyatmaniyata* (personal habits and individuality) are post natal factors.^[6]

DISCUSSION

Acharya Charaka has described following intrauterine factors which affect *Prakriti*-

1. Prakriti of Shukra (sperm) and Shonita (ovum)

Prakriti is decided at the time of sperm and ovum union or at the time of conception. So, sperm and ovum should be in excellent condition. Abnormal semen and ovum affects conception and thus on *Prakriti*.

Prakriti or Constitution is primarily genetic in origin. Sperm and ovum carry with them the constitutions of both the parents. If both father and mother, i.e. sperm and ovum are of *vata* constitution, the progeny would inherit a dominant *vata* constitution. However, all the characteristics of *vata* would manifest in a far exaggerated form compared to those present in the parents.

2. Prakriti of Kala (season) and Garbhashaya (condition of uterus)

Normal uterus and the time of coitus affects fetus. According to Acharya Sushruta, a male should be twenty five years old and a female should be sixteen years old to indulge in the act of intercourse since by that age they are supposed to be mentally and physically matured.^[7] Also Acharya Sushruta has mentioned specific timing of intercourse in relation to menstrual cycle.^[8] Therefore planning of conception and consultation is important for healthy progeny.

3. Matru aahar vihar prakriti (food and regimen of mother)

Prakriti of a baby depends upon the diet and regimen adapted by the mother. Thus in pregnant status a mother has to take utmost care of diet and behavior.

4. Mahabhuta Prakriti (role of mahabhuta)

According to Ayurveda the *pancha mahabhuta* also play an important role in the formation of *prakriti*. *Mahabhutas* are necessary for building the body and nerve tissue. Now-a-days it is believed that the embryo is sensitive to sound. Solar eclipse and heavy cyclone also can damage the child lying in the womb. Thus repeated disturbances in the *mahabhutas* characters may harm the child. This is known as *mahabhuta Prakriti*.

Acharya Charaka has described six types of *jatyadi Prakriti* in Indriyasthanas. *Jatyadi Prakriti* is not actually *Prakriti*, but these are the six factors which influences the *Prakriti*. In Ashtangasangraha, all these are described as factors influencing the formation of *Prakriti*.^[9]

They are as follows-

1. Jaati Prasakta Prakriti

The Birth of child in a particular religion, race or cast can form certain kind of *prakriti*. Race may play a part in predisposition to diseases. Thus certain diseases are peculiar to the race. For example TB, AIDS, diabetes are said to be more common among black people or white women are more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer though black women are more likely to die from it.

2. Kula Prasakta Prakriti

The Birth in a particular pedigree also can play some part in the formation of *prakriti*. Persons having Madhumeha or diabetes mellitus can have a history of the same disease in their family. Therefore Madhumeha is said to be a *Kulaj vyadhi*.

3. Deshaanupatinee Prakriti

Prakriti formed according to the characteristic of certain place, region or geographical conditions is known as *deshaanupatinee prakriti*. People born in tropical countries or cold countries have typical body constitution and are liable to be particular type of diseases. For example people born in Punjabi are ultimately tall, strong and healthy due to soil, climate and diet of that region.

4. Kaala Anupatinee Prakriti

Time and particular season also play considerable role in the formation of *prakriti*. Season by its predominance of *dosha* affects plants, food, which after ingestion affects maternal organs including uterus, ovum and in turn ultimately affects embryo. For example, if union of sperm and ovum takes place in *grishma ritu*, then the child will be of *pitta prakriti* and in future he may get prone to problems like hyperacidity, ulcers etc.

5. Vayonupatinee Prakriti

It is believed in Ayurveda that there is predominance of *vata* in old age, *pitta* in young age and *kapha* in the childhood. So it can be observed that children are more prone to certain type of diseases due to provocation of *kapha*. Also there can be certain type of diseases which are very common in young age and in old age but may not be found in children. This is according to *vayonupatinee prakriti*.

6. Pratyatmaniyata Prakriti

When a subject has some distinct characteristics, then it is said to be *pratyatmaniyata prakriti*. For example, some people may have dextrocardia, some may have polydactylism, etc.

CONCLUSION

Understanding *Prakriti* is best guideline for healthy life. The intra uterine and extra uterine factors influence on *Vaikrut dosha*, therefore any flexibility in characteristics of *Prakriti* is due to only *Vaikrut doshas*. So, while deciding *Prakriti* of a person, it is necessary to know the factors which have influenced on his *Prakriti*. And then only by deciding ones *prakriti*, a person can manage his diet and lifestyle for maintenance of health.

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