

A CRITICAL REVIEW ON CONCEPT OF PRAKRITI IN AYURVEDA**Shankar Lal Jat*¹, Savita², Sharma Kishori Lal³ and Sharma Ashok Kumar⁴**^{1,2}MD Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharir, MMM Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur.³Asso. Proffesor, Department of Kriya Sharir, MMM Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur.⁴Proffesor & HOD, Department of Kriya Sharir, MMM Govt. Ayurveda College, Udaipur.

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ABSTRACT

Prakriti means manifestation of special characteristics due to predominance of Doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha the functional component of body). All the physiological process are directly controlled by Vata-Pitta and Kapha (three body humors) and Mansika Doshas (functional psychic factors) thus healthy status can be maintained by maintaining normality of Prakriti. Prakriti is defined as the state of an individual in its natural form. Ayurveda classifies people on the basis of Prakriti as every person is supposed to have a fixed Prakriti that is formulated by the condition of Tridosha at the time of

union of sperm and ovum inside the uterus. Opposite to the Prakriti is Vikriti which means diseased state of an individual. According to Ayurveda the psychosomatic constitution, as also known as Deha Prakriti, is represented by a description of the Physique, Physiology & psychological make-up of an individual. Almost in all ayurvedic classics the concept of Prakriti (Constituent) has been described with its high thoughts since very beginning. Prakriti one of the most important concepts and decided at the time of conception. Critical review of information related with prakriti has been reviewed in this work. In this article derivation of prakriti, concept of prakriti, formation, factor affecting the development of prakriti, Importance of prakriti, types of prakriti will be described.

KEYWORDS: Prakriti, Vikriti, Ayurveda, Doshas etc.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda is one of the ancient science of life. It not only deals with the curative aspect but also with the spiritual and preventive aspect. So Ayurveda is the composition of various natural sciences with their fundamental principles and practicals. The prime aim of ayurveda

is to keep person healthy then to treat him various diseases.^[1] According to ayurveda, the constitution or dosha of your mind and body is decided at the moment of conception. Depending upon the predominance of the five basic elements, three doshas and mental qualities in sperm (Shukra) and ovum (Shonita) at the time of conception, the individual prakriti is decided. As a result, you are born with a unique or distinctive combination of the pitta, vata and kapha doshas that remains exactly the same during your lifetime. This is known as Prakriti – a Sanskrit word which means nature or the original creation.^[2,3,4]

In Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Prakriti is defined according to the word derivation that is it formed by three letters Pra, Kri and Ti. The letter Pra symbolizes Prakrashta Guna, the superior quality- Sattva, Kri for moderate Guna, the Rajas and Ti for Tamas.

Prakriti can be understood as Swabhava which means one's 'Pratyatmaniyatroop' i.e an expression of various body functions in the form of morphology, physiology and behavior of an individual. According to Acharya Sushruta, Prakriti is decided in the very initial stage i.e. during the union of Shukra and Shonit (sperm and ovum) itself, the dominant Dosha form the Prakriti of the individual.^[5]

Prakriti is an important concept of Ayurveda that explains individuality. It expresses unique trait of an individual that is defined by specific and permanent composition of Dosha right from birth. Prakriti makes every person unique therefore no two persons can be exactly identical. Anatomical, physiological and psychological characteristics differ from one person to other person depending on his/her Prakriti. Prakriti remains constant for each individual throughout his/her lifetime.

VYUTPATTI OF THE WORD „PRAKRITI“

Prakriti word is formed by the combination of two words „ PRA + KRITI „.

PRA word means beginning, source of origin and KRITI means to form or to perform.

Put together, Prakriti means “natural form” or “original form” or “original source”.

NIRUKTI OF PRAKRITI^[6,7]

It is specific for an individual and idiosyncratic that is expression of one's own characteristics.^[6]

Prakriti is enumeration of body features internal as well as external. In short, Prakriti means nature of an individual.^[7]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- .To emphasize the concept of prakriti in Ayurvedic classical literature.
- .To re-evaluate, discuss and elaborate the Ayurvedic concept of prakriti.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is based on a review of Ayurvedic texts. The Literary material related to prakriti has been collected from Several Ayurvedic texts like Charaka samhita, Sushrut samhita, Ashtang Sangraham, etc. We have also referred to the various websites and scientific journals to collect information regarding current researches on the relevant topics. Prakriti has two aspects, first one is genetic aspect and another one is acquired aspect. The factors affecting genetic aspect are shukra and shonita. While acquired aspect develops in relation to environmental factors like climate, season, time factor, age, race, familial inheritance. Prakriti can never be changed throughout life. Due to these factors different types of prakriti have been described.

WHAT IS PRAKRITI??

“Prakriti” a distinctive concept in Ayurveda is the innate constitution of an individual.^[8] It is the expression of body functions in the form of morphology, physiology & behavior of an individual. It is determined at the time of conception when the male & female gametes join.^[9] The state of existence of Dohas in dominance in the Sukra(male) & Aartava(female) during their union determines the prakriti. The prakriti formed here will be a qualitative, quantitative and unchangeable Doshik predominance from birth to death.

The concept of Prakriti

Ayurveda emphasizes on examining the Prakriti or the natural state of an individual. However, in terms of the functioning of living beings, Ayurveda sees all actions based on three basic functions called Doshas - namely Vata, Pitta and Kapha. Detailed description of each Prakriti type i.e. individual's personality is given for understanding of concept of Prakriti. Vata has characteristics such as dry, light, mobile, expansible, quick, cold, rough, clear and astringent in taste. Therefore, dry quality of Vata is manifested in the body as dry skin and thin structure i.e. lean body. The hair, nails, teeth and eyes appear dry. The voice is weak, low, crackling and hoarse. These individuals require little sleep and are hyperactive. The expansive nature is manifest in prominent blood vessels. Their memory is weak but they have a quick grasp. Due to the cold nature, the body temperature is low and body stiff. The natural desires and craving for food and environment are opposite to the qualities of Vata.

They have meager seminal fluid and have only a few children. They tend to have a short life span.^[10]

Pitta is hot, penetrating, slightly foul smelling, liquid, sour and pungent in taste. So Due to the inherent hot quality of Pitta, these individuals have a high metabolic rate, a tendency to eat and drink a lot and are often thirsty. They develop moles and skin eruptions. They possess soft and scanty hair and tend to be prematurely grey and bald. They are unable to bear even minimum heat. The high metabolic rate leads to excessive perspiration and excretion. The foul smell of the Pitta tends to give them a strong body odour. The quality of heat and pungent taste leads to limited sexual urge, scanty semen and limited progeny. Due to the sharp and quick action, they have a very good intellect, grasping power, memory and are of moderate strength and the life span is medium.^[11]

Kapha have attributes such as unctuous, smooth, soft, and sweet in taste, stable, dense, slow, rigid, cold and clear. Kapha Prakriti individuals tend to have soft limbs, slow gait and are slow to understand. Due to the unctuous nature of Kapha, the individuals of Kapha Prakriti possess unctuous and oily skin. The soft quality of Kapha makes the face soft, the looks gentle and clear. The stable and steady quality endows them with a well-built and steady body. The dense nature provides fullness to the body and organs. They have poor appetite and low body temperature. The steady and dense quality gives them steady joints and ligaments. All the qualities of Kapha endow the individual with strength, wealth and energy and also a long life.^[12]

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).^[13] For example, at time of birth if Vata Dosha is predominant as compare to Pitta and Kapha, then individual is having Vataja Prakriti. Predominant Vata Dosha affects anatomy, physiology, psychology & immunity of that person. Features are seen according to properties & functions of Vata Dosha. Sushruta has explained that the insect born in the poison does not die due to its own poison similarly Dosha that is dominant according to one's Prakriti does not harm the individual.^[14]

Factors Affecting the Formation and Development of Prakriti:- In Ayurvedic literature there is description of many factors which take part in formation and development of Prakriti

which can be broadly grouped into two i.e. Pre-natal (Intra uterine) factors and Post-natal (Extra uterine) factors. According to Charaka and Vagbhata, Prakriti of an individual depends on Shukra Prakriti (sperm), Shonita prakriti (ovum), Kala prakriti (time or season), Garbhashaya prakriti (condition of uterus), Maturahar-viharprakriti (diet and behaviour of mother) and Mahabhutavikar prakriti.^[15] These six factors come under the first group i.e. Pre-natal factors. Charaka and Vagbhata have also described some other factors which play an important role in Prakriti determination; these factors are; Jatiprasakta (racial peculiarities), Kulaprasakta (familial predisposition), Deshanupatini (demographic), Kalanupatini (seasonal effect), Vayonupatini (natural changes according to age), Pratyatmaniyata (personal habits and individuality, idiosyncrasy).^[16,17] All these six factors come under the second group i.e. Post-natal factors. The first group of factors acts during the intrauterine life of the foetus, at the time of the union of the Shukra, Shonita and Jiva. As they have a definite role in the establishment of Prakriti and act before the natal period, so they are termed as Pre-natal factors. While the second group of factors influence the Prakriti after the delivery of the foetus and is responsible for the development of the Prakriti, so they are termed as Post-natal factors.

Importance of Prakriti

Prakriti has great importance in both healthy and diseased persons. It is comprehensive in scope, spanning all physical, mental, psychological and social aspects. Prakriti and Sattva Pariksha (investigations) have been included in tenfold investigation methods i.e. Dashavidha Atura-Pariksha in Ayurveda.^[18] Determination of Prakriti not merely helps diagnosis but also provides detailed instructions to adopt a healthy life style for good health. The clinical and therapeutic utility of the knowledge of Prakriti has been vibrantly described by the Acharya Charaka.^[19]

Acharya Charaka has advised during the prescription of treatment the factors like Dosha, Bhesaj (drug), Kala (time), Desha (place), Bala (strength), Sharir (body), Ahara (diet), Satmya (homologation), Satva (mind), Prakriti (constitution), Vaya (age) should be considered. The psychosomatic constitution or Prakriti knowledge is helpful in achieving both the goals of Ayurveda i.e. prevention of diseases in healthy and in treatment.

Types of Prakriti

In Ayurvedic texts many types of classification have been described for Prakriti. These are as follows. 1. Doshaja/Deha Prakriti 2. Manasa Prakriti 3. Bhautika Prakriti 4. Jatyadi Prakriti

Doshaja or Deha Prakriti:- Doshaja Prakriti is also known sharirika Prakriti/deha Prakriti. Deha Prakriti are classified on account of dominance of dosha. There are seven types of doshaja Prakriti described in ayurveda, Vatala, Pittala and Shleshmala are ekadoshaja i.e. due to the predominance of one dosha. Vata-Pittaja, Vata-Shleshmaja, and Pitta-Shleshmaja are dvidoshaja i.e. due to the predominance of two doshas. Sama-Prakriti occurs due to the predominance of all three doshas.^[20] According to Vagbhata, individuals of Sama Prakriti are excellent while mixed Prakriti are disapprove. The person of Vata, Pitta and Kapha predominance are said to be always sick (sadaatur).

Manasa Prakriti:- On the basis of manas guna (satva, raja tama), there are three types of manasa Prakriti. Satvik, Rajas and Tamas. These three types of manas Prakriti are subdivided into sixteen/eighteen types. These are Brahma, Mahendra, Varun, Kaubera, Gandharva, Yama and Rishi Satva are comes under satvik manas Prakriti, Asura, Rakshasa, Paishacha, Preta, Sarpa and Shakuna are included in rajasa. manasa Prakriti. Pashava, Matsya and Vanaspathya are the subtypes of tamasa manasa Prakriti. Acharya Kashyap described two additional manas Prakriti, one is Prajapatya kaya under satvik group and another one is Yaksha under rajasa Prakriti.

Bhautika Prakriti:- Acharya sushruta has also described five types of Prakriti according to the dominance of Panch Mahabhuta.^[21] called Bhautika Prakriti. These are.

1. Parthiva due to the predominance of Prithvi mahabhuta. 2. Apya due to the predominance of Jala mahabhuta. 3. Taijas due to the predominance of Agni mahabhuta. 4. Vayaviya due to the predominance of Vayu mahabhuta. 5. Akashiya due to the predominance of Akasha mahabhuta.

Jatyadi Prakriti:- Jatyadi Prakriti are not actually Prakriti these are the six factors which influences the Prakriti. Acharya Charaka described six types of jatyadi Prakriti in Indriyasthan.^[22] these are:

1. Jatiprasakta (racial peculiarities) 2. Kulaprasakta (familial predisposition) 3. Deshanupatini (demographic) 4. Kalanupatini (Seasonal effect) 5. Vayonupatini (natural changes according to age) 6. Pratyatmaniyata (personal habits & individuality, idiosyncrasy) In Ashtangasangraha, all these are described as factors influencing the formation of Prakriti.^[23]

PRAKRITI NIRMANKAR BHAVA^[24,25,26]

Charakacharya in Vimansthana has described following Intra-uterine factors that are responsible for the formation of Prakriti^[24] -

a. Shukra-Shonit Prakriti (Dominance of doshas over shukra and aartava) b. Kal Garbhashaya Prakriti (Dominance of Raj kaal) c. Matur Ahar-Vihar Prakriti (Dominance of Aaharadi bhava) Mahabhutvikar Prakriti (Dominance of Mahabhuta comprising foetus) Charakacharya in Indriyasthana referred to Extra-uterine factors influencing Prakriti as^[25] -

a. Jati-Prasakta b. Kula Prasakta (Family disposition) c. Deshanupatini (Dominance of Sadharanadi desha) d. Kaalanupatini (dominance of Aadan Visargadi kaal) e. Vayonupatini (Age) f. Pratyatmaniyata (Genetic phenomenon).

Shukra (Sperm), Aartava (Ovum), Aahar and Vihar of Maatruj (Diet and behaviour of pregnant women), Rhutu (Season) and Kshetra (Uterus) are responsible for dominance or predominance of dosha. As per the predominance of dosha Prakriti is formed. There are seven types of Prakritis are seen.^[26]

In born metabolic pattern (Prakriti)

Life begins as a fertilized ovum, i.e. by fertilization of ovum by the sperm. Constitution is primarily genetic in origin. Sperm and ovum carry with them the constitutions of both the parents. At the time of conjugation, the dominant prakriti, i.e. dosha of sperm can either neutralize the dominant prakriti of ovum or exaggerate the dominant dosha or quality; e.g. a sperm with vata constitution can inhibit some of the characteristics of the ovum of kapha constitution, e.g. dry, light, rough and mobile qualities of kapha. On the other hand, the cold quality which is common to both would be exaggerated leading to extreme sensitivity to cold. The offspring in this case inherits vata-kapha constitution. On the other hand, 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.^[27]

Role of Prakruti knowledge in Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanm (Prevention of disease):- In the explanation of Rogayatana^[28] (base of diseases), Asatmyaindriyarthasamyoga (improper use of senses) is regarded as one of the causes. Asatmayaindriyarthasamyoga is illustrated as excessive utilization, non utilization and wrong utilization of Indriya (senses), which causes an impediment to the sense perception, and hence disease. When Indriyas are properly utilized, normality of sense faculties can be maintained and the

perception of various objects is properly regulated. To avoid the disturbance in them, efforts should be made to maintain their normal condition. One of these efforts is performance of duties in contradistinction with the qualities of one's own constitution including temperament.^[29] The diurnal and seasonal regimens (Dincharya and Ritucharya) have been advised in the classics for maintenance of healthy state of an individual. One should adopt Dinacharya and Ritucharya according to the individual constitution. As per need of Prakruti to keep body healthy and Dosha in equilibrium state, for example Kapha Prakruti persons need more exercise, Laghu Ahara to keep their body fit and they should avoid Divaswapna^[30], whereas Vata Prakruti persons are advised to take nutritious and heavy food (Guruahara), less exercise and can enjoy Divaswapna. This is in this context, that Ayurveda advocates extensive preventive measures in terms of Swastha Vritta, Sadvritta, Dinacharya, Ritucharya etc. By understanding the individual constitution of every individual, one can know which food, drink, exercise etc. are appropriate for maintaining one's health.

DISCUSSION

Superficially it may appear that some prakritis are better than others. Each type has its positive and negative aspects. We need to understand where we stand and accept it. Then we need to plan intelligently to attain the healthiest state by realizing our potential. The Ayurvedic understanding of prakriti provides a way to do both these - to analyze and assess where we stand and to provide guidance to attain perfect health. It is necessary to first decide prakriti, to understand an individual. By understanding the prakriti of a person, it is possible to detect the changes in the prakriti of the person. When prakriti is known it helps to live a healthy and peaceful life and also in diagnosis of disease.

There is difference in opinions of the Bruhatrayee's in the formation of prakriti.

According to Sushrutacharya and Vagbhatacharya the prakriti is formed from the dosha predominance in shukra and shonit at the time of conception.

However according to Charkacharya for the formation of prakriti not only shukra, shonit and rasa derived from matruj aahar is important but also kala and garbhashaya are important.

Psychological characters. While describing the characteristics of the prakriti the Sushrutacharya and Vagbhatacharya described characteristics resembles to other animals and

in terms of the dreams which is not explained by the Charakacharya. Sharangadharacharya has also emphasized on dreams in the description of characteristic of different Prakriti.

CONCLUSION

Prakriti is an important concept of Ayurveda that explains individuality and has its role in Pratishedha (prevention), Nidan (diagnosis) and Chikitsa (treatment) of disease. the concept of prakriti is well explained in the Ayurveda texts, there is the need of standardization of concept of prakriti as per the modern terms which will be suitable in modern world. But there is a wide scope in this field for research and further study. Prakriti also determines the response of an individual to environmental factors, drugs and susceptibility to diseases making it one of the earliest known concepts of predictive, preventive and personalized or genomic medicine. So Prakriti emphasizes on the individuality and plays an important role in diagnosis, preventive medicine, and therapeutics.

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