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A REVIEW OF DIETETICS AND FOOD TECHNOLOGY FOR AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

All living beings in the universe require food for sustenance of life. Ayurvedic concepts of Ahara and dietary (Pathya) guidelines are very vast, scientific, and on the basis of application. Nutrition is the science of food and diet is application of food in health and sick. Food, sleep, and expansion of mind are three subpillars or tripods (Traya-upastambhas) of life, and vividly described in classical texts. Each Ayurvedic prescription is based on Ahara (Diet), Vihara (Lifestyle), Aushadhi (Medicaments). Major texts exclusively deals with balanced diet, diet in different seasons, constitution, and age group, specific diet for all eight clinical branches of Ayurveda, classification of food sources, protection of food items, right and wrong rules of eating, incompatible diet etc. for healthy living on the basis of dietetic rules. But there is immense difference of dietary applications in ancient India and in the present digital era. For their survival, all living things in the universe need nourishment. The principles of Ahara and Pathya, or food recommendations, in Ayurveda medicine are extremely comprehensive, grounded in science, and practical. Diet is the application of food in health and illness, while nutrition is the science of food. These are well explained in classical writings. Major texts only address topics related to healthy living on the planet, such as balanced diets, diets for different seasons, constitutions and age groups, as well as specific diets for each of the eight clinical branches of Ayurveda, food source classification, food item protection, appropriate and inappropriate eating rules, and incompatible diets.

KEYWORDS: Ahara, Pathya, Nutrition, Traya-upastambhas, Ayurveda, Diet.

INTRODUCTION

In the present digital age, discuss some core concepts of Ayurveda dietetics of vast ancient knowledge system on health and healing is still venerable. It is a old shastra of Indian origin on life, health, happiness and quality of life; disease and cure; based on various philosophical and scientific principles. Lots of emphasis has been given to rational thinking on this subject. Every principle has a deep insight and firm foundation, but the theory of Tridosha i.e. Vata, Pitta and Kapha is most important one as it is the foundation of physiology, pathology, pharmacology, biochemical processes, diagnosis, diet selection and therapeutic management as per western thought. Ayurveda was part and parcel of Vedic literatures and has strong historical, cultural and traditional roots. It is the contribution of thousands of great Rishis through ages.[1]

Food sustains the life of living being. Complexion, clarity of mind, good voice, longevity, understanding, happiness, satisfaction, nourishment, strength and Intelligence are all dependent on food. Authorities of Ayurveda give maximum emphasis on digestion than nutrition, as the digestion of food by pachaka-pitta (Digestive juices and local gastric juice, hormones), the principal factor in the nourishment of the body.[2] The living body is the product of a continuous process of digestion and metabolism (Agni). In fact, most of the diseases are due to disturbance of Agni at some level. When Agni is physically powerful, our body fully assimilates nutrients and eliminates what it does not need. Every classical text of Ayurveda has incorporated different explanations on food such as 12 categories of sources, according to specific actions (Prabhava), according to mode of intake, six tastes in each meal to make it tasty, delicious, balanced and therapeutics; best and worst dietic items, effect on Vata, pitta and kapha and mental qualities, different processing methods of food, dietetic rules, effects of insufficient and excess food intake, food related diseases, diet suitable and to be avoided by persons of different constitutions (Prakriti), ideal time for meals etc. Life process and bodily strength directly proportional to the activity of Agni on ingested food through ahara pachana (Digestion), dhatu poshana (Nourishment), and dhatu parinama (Transformation and metabolism).[3]

Concept of Ahara

The term "Agni," or digestive fire, refers to the unit that transforms "food" into nutrients and serves as the foundation for the Ayurvedic system. Food is transformed by Agni to maximize the utilization of nutrients. Our body completely absorbs nutrients and gets rid of stuff it doesn't require when Agni is strong. The portion of the meal that is not fully digested generates a sticky, poisonous material called Ama if the digestive fire is weak.[4] Ama clogs the body's tiny channels and collects in imbalanced parts of the body, where it manifests as cysts, tumors, plaque in the arteries, and calcium deposits in the joints. Ama might manifest as a coated tongue, foul breath, and dullness of the senses, sadness, and hazy thinking. Be sure to consume lots of warm or room temperature water to avoid Ama from developing. Avoid eating at a late hour. Consume food that has just been made, and use seasonal, organic produce while cooking (avoid genetically modified foods). By "kindling" Agni with hot dishes and spices like Pippali (Piper longum), Maricha (Piper nigrum), and Ardraka (Ginger officinalis), you can strengthen it.[5] Take a small piece of fresh ginger and lightly sprinkle it with salt 30 minutes before having a larger meal. Since food is the foundation of life, one should carefully consider what they eat and only eat what is healthy for their body. One should never consume food out of passion or ignorance. According to Ayurveda, nourishment includes all that is absorbed by the five senses: the mouth (food, drink), the nose (breath), the ear (chanting, pleasant music), the skin (sunlight), and the eyes (nature). Eating a healthy diet extends our lives and keeps us looking young.[6] inadequate consumption leads to a rise in the creation of chemicals that are toxic to life. The first step to living a healthy life is eating the correct diet. However, eating the appropriate food is not sufficient. A person's proper meal mix and proportions are also crucial.[7] Food is divided into three categories by Ayurveda: Satvic, Rajasic, and Tamasic. The body and mind react differently to these kinds of nutrients.[8]

Essential Dietetic Principles

Five requirements must be met for a food to be considered a diet in Ayurveda: it must preserve bio-balance (dosha samya), be kind to macro and micro channels (pathyam), be healthy for the constitution of the body (hitam), and be appealing to the mind (manasa priyam).[9] Balanced diet refers to the articles of diet which as a whole maintaining health and prevent disease, increase strength of the body, health span, vitality, memory etc., and consists of six components namely: energy yielding/ jeevaniya, structure building/ brimhaniya, prevent fat accumulation/ lekhaniya, elimination of waste products/ bhedaniya, repairing damaged tissues/ sandhaniya, and promotes digestion/ deepaniya according to Charaka

Samhita, the principles and practice of Ayurvedic Medicine.[10] Since food is a product of both the body and disease, food plays a vital role in Ayurveda's preventive strategies. The Ayurvedic texts made it very evident that food should only be consumed after the previous meal has been fully digested. These texts emphasize four key points: eating the right food at the right time (kala bhojan), in the right quantity (hita bhojan), and controlling one's need and greed (jitendriya). The effectiveness of medication is secondary if nutrition is followed correctly.[11] To achieve the best outcome, an individual's diet plan should take into account eight criteria. These are the following: natural food of high quality (prakriti), processing (karana), combination (samyoga), amount (rashi), influence of time (kala), influence of region (desha), dietetic regulations (upayogasamstha), and the individual consuming (upoyokta).[12] these eight criteria establish a food's nutritional worth.[13] Diet suitable to the person of different physical and mental makeup or constitution/ prakriti enhances the health span and disease non-susceptibility. Prakriti is the inherent property or swabhava of an individual and is the sum of physical, physiological, psychological, immunological and spiritual aspects of life by which one person can be separated from other. Some have predominance of Vata, some of Pitta, some of Kapha and others are sama prakriti.[14]

Following chart represents the properties and effects of the food recipes on various health parameters[15]

Food Tastes	Dosha effect	Food Qualities
Sweet, sour, salty	Vata Pacifying	Heavy, light, hot
Pungent, bitter, astringent	Vata aggravating	Light, dry, cold
Sweet, bitter, astringent	Pitta pacifying	Cold, heavy, dry
Pungent, sour, salty	Pitta aggravating	Hot, light, oily
Pungent, bitter, astringent	Kapha pacifying	Light, dry, hot
Sweet, sour, salty	Kapha aggravating	Heavy, oily, cold

The food is best medicine

According to Ayurveda; food is more than fuel to keep you going, more than bunch of chemicals that supply essential vitamins and minerals. Wholesome food is a total experience that can nourish you physically as well as emotionally. All foods and beverages are imprinted with a vital memory. It remembers its whole life and through its DNA. Food that is organically grown and lovingly prepared carries more positive, nourishing energy (prana) than food that is degraded and adulterated, raised with artificial chemicals, genetically modified and impersonally grown on factory farms. Food passes through this rich store of knowledge to you when you eat it, providing a form of energy that connects it and you to

other people and to the mother earth. If your natural urge to have such positive emotional connection remains unfulfilled, you may try to get satisfaction by overeating or an excess of material things.[16]

❖ AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- **Aims**

This review aims to understand the Dietetics and Food Technology for Ayurveda.

- **Objectives**

➢ To understand the role of Dietetics for Ayurveda.

➢ To understand the role of Food Technology for Ayurveda.

❖ MATERIALS AND METHODS

Information was collected from Bhrihatrayee & Laghutrayee books, Review articles, various Research papers and related Journals.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda gives equal importance to drugs (Aushadha dravyas) and food substances (Ahara dravyas) and explained elaborately in the texts. As per Kashyapa Samhita, ahara is Maha bhaishajya, i.e. food is a great medicament. Diet is an art and science with multiple aspects such as nutritive value, effect on various body parts, and effect on emotions, mind, and spiritual qualities. It also connected to individual choice, dietary incompatibilities, seasonal, geographic, climatic, source, disease conditions and therapy. Aims of balanced and nutritious diet that assist in formation of Ojas, which is responsible for physical, mental and spiritual strength, maintenance and protection of the body of an individual. Therefore, entire life of an individual depends on food. The vital breath (prana), positive immunity (ojas), and cellular energy (tejus) are all expressions of proper nutrition via Agni.

Eating right food is important, as well as eating right food, at right time, within right manners are also equally important aspects. Many people always think a lot about what we eat and how much we eat. No doubt they are important factors, but there is something more than it. Most important here is to understand how much our body can digest and how much our body converts the diet in to nutrients – or dhatus. Whatever we intake, after digestion it must convert into tissues – like plasma, blood, muscle, bones etc. (we call it dhatu) with the help of agni. This shows importance of agni (digestive fire) in the body. Sometimes we see the

person eating highest nutrient food has body issues then the person eating very basic or less food. Food conversion in to body tissue is entirely depending on agni. Without agni, even a simple diet can't be digested and converted in to tissue properly. This is the basic rule of health in Ayurveda. But there is a great difference of dietary applications mentioned in the ancient classical Ayurvedic texts and in present digital Age. The concepts of nutrition and dietetics is a treasure trove in Ayurveda, which needs further exploration.

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