

IMPORTANCE OF PRAKRITI IN MAINTAINANCE OF HEALTH

¹ Goswami Chandani, ² Vyas Mahesh, ³ Baghel Arjunsinh , ⁴ Vyas Hitesh

¹P.G. scholar, Basic principles department, IPGT & RA, Jamnagar, Gujarat,India.

²Head, Basic principles department, IPGT & RA, Jamnagar, Gujarat,India.

³Associate professor, Basic principles department, IPGT & RA, Jamnagar, Gujarat,India.

⁴Associate professor, Basic principles department, IPGT & RA, Jamnagar, Gujarat,India.

ABSTRACT :

Prevention of health is one of the most important issues for medical sciences in present era. *Ayurveda* has lot to contribute in this sector. The concept of *Prakriti* is such a concept which can be used for this purpose. This concept deals with physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects which in turn define health. In *Samhita* concepts of *Dinacharya*, *Rutucharya*, *Aaharvidhivisheshayatan*, *Aaharvidhi* etc. are described. They are key points to maintain health, as they have direct impact over human physiology. Implementation of them in daily regimen according to *Doshik* dominancy soothes individual's lifestyle. Each season have its dominant *Rasa* and *Guna* which affects differently to the different *Prakriti* persons. *Swasthavritta* varies according to *Prakriti* in every individual; for example, the dietary regimen and exercises for *Vata Prakriti* are entirely different than those of *Pitta* and *Kapha Prakriti*. The awareness about the *Prakriti* and lifestyle accordingly will definitely help to improvise one's own health. This particular work elaborates the relation among *Prakriti*, *Aahar*, *Vihar*, *Dincharya* and *Kaala* in relation to maintenance of health.

Keywords : *Prakriti*, *Ritu charya*, *Swasthavritta*, lifestyle, health maintenance.

Background: Ayurvedic system of diagnosing *Prakriti* offers a unique approach in understanding and assessing one's health. It is not merely a diagnostic tool but also a guide to take action for good health. It provides detailed instructions to adopt one's food and behavior to suit one's *Prakriti*. The clinical and the therapeutic utility of the knowledge of *Prakriti* have been described by Charaka, where the detailed schedules that are to be followed by different *Doshaja Prakriti* have been dealt separately.¹ Sushruta has advised that the patient should be treated by physician according to *Prakriti* of individual.

Importance of *Prakriti* have two aspects on the basis of Ayurveda- *Swasthyaraksha* and *Chikitsa*

Here, the concept of *Prakriti* can be used for the first aim that is prevention of

health. Environmental health is the branch of public health that is concerned with all aspects of natural and built environment that may affect human health. In *Samhita* concept of *Dinacharya*, *Rutucharya*, *Aaharvidhivisheshayatan*, *Aaharvidhi* etc. are described; which are key points to maintain health. If the diet, daily regimen, seasonal regimen etc. conduct by a person having opposite *Guna* to their *Prakriti*, than person can maintain their health for long time. *Ahara* is called *Mahabheshaja*, but this *Ahara* should be taken by person according to his own *Prakriti*, because *Hitakara Ahara* for one type of *Prakriti* person may be *Ahitakara* to the other *Prakriti*. In addition to that, *Agni* and *Kostha* of individuals also have impact of *prakriti*. On the basis of *Prakriti*, person can adopt *Swasthvritta* as per the need of *Prakriti* to keep the *Dosha* in equilibrium

state and to maintain the health. For example, the *Kapha Prakriti* persons need more exercise, *Laghu Ahara* to keep their body fit and they should avoid *Divaswapna*, whereas *Vataja Prakriti* persons are advisable to take nutritious and heavy food (*Guruahara*) and less exercise. In context of practicing regarding self-control, *Acharya charaka* has mentioned that one should always remember his own nature.

प्रकृतिं अभीक्षणं स्मरेत् Iⁱⁱ

Each person should know his *Prakriti*, if he/she wants to take benefits of Ayurveda in excess and right way because each person is unique so each person has some different regimen which may be more suitable to him/her.ⁱⁱⁱ

Purpose: To understand the relation among *Prakriti*, *Aahaara*, *Vihaara*, *Dincharya* and *Kaala* in relation to maintenance of health.

Methods used: Literature review from the classics like *Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* was done. Information from online sources was also collected.

Conceptual: As the major environmental changes are found in winter, summer and rain. Here, major three climacteric presentation are focused for *Prakriti* based discussion of *Ritucharya*.

Ritucharya: If we concentrate on climatic conditions according to *Visargakala* and *Aadanakala*, than it is observable that during *Aadanakala* not only the sun with its rays but also winds with their sharp velocity and dryness, absorb the moisture from the earth. Winds progressively bring about dryness in the atmosphere during the three seasons of this period. viz, late *Shishira*(winter), *Vasanta*(spring) and *Grishma*(summer).

Summer: At the end stage of *Aadankala*, i.e. in summer season, there is *Ushna* and *Ruksha Guna* dominancy is at peak level in atmosphere. Here, *Pitta Prakriti* persons have to be more conscious because they already have *Ushna* and *Katu Guna* dominancy in their body. So, they need comparatively more *Madhura*, *Sheeta* and *Snigdha* diet in this season. *Lavana*, *Amla*, *Katu* and *Ushna Veerya* diet should not be taken by them; as it will cause more harm to them in compare to *Kapha* dominant persons. Indication for *Divaswapa* is also more beneficial for *Vata* and *Pitta* dominancy persons, because *Shleshma* having *Snigdha* and *Shita* property counters the effect of *Ruksha* and *Ushna* property of this season. As a Wide-ranging mentioning for liquor, diluted liquor (*madya*) may be tolerable for *Kapha Prakriti* persons rather than *Vata* and *Pitta*. In *Visarga Kala*, during rainy season, autumn and winter the sun moves towards the and its heating power is slackened, but the moon is not affected. The earth is relieved of its heat by rain waters and unctousness in body grow during *Varsha*, *Sharada* and *Hemanta* respectively.

Rainy season: In *Varsha ritu*, the body is already weakened during the period of *Aadanakala* and the power of digestion is also weakened, that's why consequently *Vatadi Dosha* get vitiated. So, it is advisable to be moderate as regard to diet and regimen during this season. To counter *Dravata* and *Kleda* predominance of the season, it is said to mix *Ruksha* and *Madhura* honey in less quantity with food and beverages. This is comparatively more useful in *Pitta Prakriti* persons as it is opposite to *Drava* and *Amla* property of *Pitta*. But to control *Ushna* quality of honey, its quantity should be maintained.

Sour, salty and unctuous diet is more advisable in *Vata Prakriti* persons as it is beneficial over *Vata*. *Pitta* dominance people should not take more of sour and salty diet as it results in more *Pittasanchaya* for them. *Kapha Prakriti* people are more capable to have *Madhvika* or *Arishta* type of liquor, for their *Agnideepana* and *Ruksha* effect.

Winter: During this season the digestive power possessing good strength is enhanced due to restraint caused upon it by the cold wind. It is said capable of digesting any food stuff irrespective of its heaviness and quantity. For fulfillment of that good appetite, qualitatively heavy diet i.e. unctuous, sour and salty food items, new grains^{iv} are good for *Pitta* and *Vata* dominance persons. They can give less preference to *Shali*, *Shashtikadi* light diet. In the opposite side, Quantitative heavy^v diet i.e. *Shali*, *Shashtika* grains of *Amla*, *Lavan* dominant rasa and comparatively less *Madhur* dominant food articles may be more suitable for *Kapha Prakriti* persons. They should avoid more quantity of aquatic and marsh animals as it aggravates *Kapha*.

Dincharya: In ch.su.5 daily regimen is described which are essential for the maintenance of health. In present era it is not possible to conduct the regimen due to our fast life. So here few points are elaborated as per need according to different *Prakriti*.

Dhoompana: Eight times are prescribed for habitual smoking because *Vata Kapha* vitiation during this time.

After bathing (*kapha*)

After eating (*kapha*)

After Tongue scraping (*vata*)

After Sneezing (*vata*)

After brushing the teeth/*dantdhavan* (*vata*, *kapha*)

After Inhalation of medicated material (*nasya*) (*vata/kapha*)

After Application of collyrium (*anjana*) (*vata*)

After sleep (*kapha*)

According to Charkapani the time prescribed for unctuous and eliminative smoking is useful for *Vata* and *Kapha* diseases respectively.^{vi} *Vata* and *Pitta Prakriti* persons are more prone to have *Atiyoga Lakshana* of smoking. Specially, eliminative smoking is not much preferable for them. *Pittaprakopa* and *Ruksha* condition is contraindicated condition for smoking.^{vii} *Kapha Prakriti* person may need to smoke more number of times among listed eight times.

Nasya: *Pitta Prakriti* persons often have early development of baldness and early graying of hair. So, as preventive aspect *Anutala Nasya*^{viii} or any *Sneha Nasya* medicated with *Keshya* property drugs can be useful for them. *Anutala Nasya* can be also more beneficial for *Vata prakriti* persons as it is having properties to keep voice smooth, stabilized and Stertorous.^{ix}

Gandusha: According to different *Prakriti*, *Vata Prakriti* persons should have *Snehagandusha*, *Tilkalkodakgandusha* to counter *Rukshata*. *Pitta Prakriti* persons should have *Kashay* and *Ropan Kwathgandusha* like *Triphala* or *Panchvalkal*, or they can have *Madhugandusha* which heals mouth ulcers. *Kapha Prakriti* persons should have *Katu* and *Kashay Gandush* like *Ksharambugandusha* or *Madhugandush*. This can counter extra viscosity of saliva due to *Kapha* dominance.

Abhyanaga: Regular oiling on head is more needful and beneficial for *Pitta* and *vata* dominance *prakriti*. As hair loss and graying of hair is said to be preventive by regular oiling.^x Daily oiling of whole body

is also more beneficial for *vata prakriti*. Use of fragrances, perfumes are more necessary for pitta dominancy due to *visra* property of *pitta*. *Udvartana* is said *Kapha-Meda kshayakar* that is more beneficial for *Kapha* dominant persons.

Vyayama: Exercise is said to perform till half of the strength is used. Strength varies according to individual's prakriti. Less, moderate and good strength is mentioned for *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* dominant prakriti

respectively^{xi}. Aerobics are popular exercise in present era, which is said to improve cardiac function and increases fat metabolism in well oxygenated conditions of muscle fibers. According to *prakriti*, mild and moderate activity is preferable for *vata* and *pitta prakriti* respectively, while *kapha prakriti* persons can practice vigorous activities which need excessive stamina. Here are some examples,

Mild to moderate activities	Vigorous activities
Walking Slow speed bicycling Low impact aerobic dancing General home exercises Table tennis Badminton golf	Fast walking, jogging, running High speed bicycling Mountain climbing, rock climbing High impact aerobic dancing Karate, judo football, handball, rugby, most competitive sports

Yogasana practice: Here are some *Asana* and *Pranayama* useful for different *Doshik* dominancy.

Prakriti	Vata	Pitta	Kapha
<i>Aasanas</i>	<i>Vajrasana</i> <i>Tadasana</i> <i>Dhanurasana</i> <i>Shavasana</i> <i>Pavanmuktasana</i> <i>Pashchimottanasana</i> <i>Yognidra+Shavasana</i>	<i>Bhujangasana</i> <i>Gomukhasana</i> <i>Trikonasana</i> <i>Ardhachakrasana</i> <i>Uttanpadasana</i> <i>Shavasana</i>	<i>Sooryanamaskaar</i> <i>Dhanurasana</i> <i>Bhujangasana</i> <i>Vajrasana</i> <i>Setubandhasana</i> <i>Uttanpadasana</i>
<i>Pranayama</i>	<i>Anulom Vilom</i>	<i>Shitali</i> , <i>Shitkari</i> , <i>Chandrabhedana</i>	<i>Bhastrika</i> <i>Kapalbhati</i> (<i>Shudhhi Prakriya</i>)

Snana(bathing): *Vata* and *Kapha* dominant persons should use warm water in *shita kaala*, and lukewarm water warm seasons like *Grishma* and *sharad* also. *Pitta* dominant persons may feel comfortable with lukewarm water bathing instead of hot water bathing in winter season also. They need to have bath twice a day in warm seasons. They may use Bathing water flavored with *sheeta*, *sugandhi dravya*. As they require fragrance to pacify body odor, various

natural drugs having fragrance and cooling effect will give freshness.

CONCLUSION: In today's fast paced life, the origin of several new diseases has enabled all of us to focus on the curative as well as preventive aspects of health. Even if it is not practically possible to shift ourselves to an appropriate *Desha* or *kaala* according to the *Prakriti*, but it is definitely possible to mould ourselves with the necessary regimens of *Swasthavritta* prescribed according to *Prakriti*. The

awareness about the *Prakriti* and lifestyle accordingly will definitely help to improvise one's own health.

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Corresponding Author:

Dr. Chandani Y. Goswami

P.G. Scholar, Basic Principles Department,
IPGT & RA, Jamnagar, Gujarat, India

Email ID: chandaniayu90@gmail.com

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