CONCEPT OF PRAKRITI: AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has a holistic approach and includes all the factors which are accessory in the determination of health. According to Ayurveda the psychosomatic constitution, as also known as Deha Prakrti, is represented by a description of the Physique, Physiology & psychological make-up of an individual. The Deha Prakrti is essentially genetically determined and is likely to be influenced by a variety of environmental factors to some extent. Prakriti is one of the most important concepts and decided at the time of conception. Prakriti can be defined as body constitution. In this article derivation of prakriti, formation, factor affecting the development of prakriti, types of prakriti will be described.

KEYWORDS: Prakriti, doshas, tri-gunas, psychosomatic constitution.

INTRODUCTION

The word Prakriti is derived from Pra + Kriti (to create or to act). Pra means the "beginning", "commencement" or "source of origin" and kriti means "to perform" or "to form". Put together prakriti means "natural form" or "original form" or "original source". Disease occurs when there is a change in this original form at the psychological or physiological level. In vedic literature (Brahmana & Upanishada) prakriti is used for meaning like Swabhava, Sharira, Utpatti etc. Ayurveda says each & every individual is unique. Their size and shape are different, even physiological and psychological characters are also different. This is because they have predominant pancha-mahabhutas, doshas (vata, pitta &kapha), tri-gunas (satva, raja & tama) at the time of birth which decides their
constitution. Once this constitution is set, it is permanent for that individual. These individualistic features are the manifestation of prakriti. In Ayurveda, prakriti represents the traits appearing at the time of union of Shukra (sperm) and Shonita (ovum). Prakriti in reference to the present study has been used with meaning Swabhava or nature of the individual, which covers the physical, social, mental and spiritual characteristics of life. Qualitative and quantitative, unchangeable dosika predominance from birth to death is called as prakriti.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Literary material related to obesity has been collected from Several Ayurvedic texts like Charaka samhita, Sushrut samhita, Ashtang Sangraham, etc. 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.

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).

For example, at time of birth if vatadosha is predominant as compare to pitta and kapha, then individual is having vatajaprakriti. Predominant vatadosha affect anatomy, physiology, psychology & immunity of that person. Features are seen according to properties & functions of vatadosha.

Shushruta 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.’

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 Charak and Vagbhata, prakriti of an individual depends on Shukraprakriti (sperm), Shonitaprapakriti (ovum), Kala prakriti (time or season), Garbhashayaprapakriti (condition of uterus), Maturahar-viharprakriti (diet and behaviour of mother) and Mahabhatavikar prakriti. These six factors come under the first group i.e Pre-natal factors. Charaka and Vagbhata have also described some other factors which plays 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).\cite{14,18} All these six factors come under 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 definite role in the establishment of Prakriti and active before 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.

**TYPES OF PRAKRITI**

In Ayurvedic texts many types of classification has been described for prakriti. These are as follows.

1. **Doshaja/DehaPrakriti**
2. **ManasaPrakriti**
3. **BhautikaPrakriti**
4. **JatyadiPrakriti**

**Doshaja or DehaPrakriti**

Doshaja prakriti is also known as Deha Prakriti/Sharirika Prakriti. There are seven types of doshaja prakriti described in Ayurveda on the basis of predominance of one or more doshas. Vatala, Pittala and Shleshmala are ekadoshaja i.e. due to the predominance of one dosha. Vata-Pittala, Vata-Shleshmala and Pitta-Shleshmala are dvidoshaja i.e. due to the predominance of two doshas. Sama-prakriti occurs due to the predominance of all three doshas.\cite{15} According to Vagbhata, individuals of SamaPrakriti are excellent while mixed Prakriti are disapprove. The person of Vata, Pitta and Kapha predominance are said to be inferior, average and good respectively.

**ManasaPrakriti**

On the basis of triguna, there are three types of manasa prakriti. Satvaja, Raja and Tama. These three types of manas prakriti further divided into sixteen types. Brahma, Mahendra, Varun, Kaubera, Gandharva, Yamy and Rishi Sattva are comes under satvajamanas prakriti. Asura, Rakshasa, Paishacha, Preta, Sarpa and Shakuna are included in rajasamanasa prakriti. Pashava, Matsya and Vanaspatya are the subtypes of
tamasamanasapракriti. Acharya Kashyap described two additional manasapракriti, one is Prajapataunader satvaja group and another one is Yaksha under rajasagroup.

**BhautikaPrakriti**

Sushruta has also described five types of Prakriti according to the dominance of PanchMahabhutas,[6] called BhautikaPrakriti. These are.

1. *Parthiva* due to the predominance of PrithviMahabhuta.
2. *Apya* due to the predominance of JalaMahabhuta.
3. *Taijas* due to the predominance of Agni Mahabhuta.
4. *Vayaviya* due to the predominance of VayuMahabhuta.
5. *Akashiya* due to the pre dominance of AkashaMahabhuta.

**JatyadiPrakriti**

Acharya Charaka described six types of jatyadiprakriti in Indriyasthana.[7] 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. *Pratyatmaniyyata* (personal habits & individuality, idiosyncrasy)

In Ashtangasangraha, all these are described as factors influencing the formation of prakriti.[8]

**CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF DEHA PRAKRITI**

Acharya Charaka, Sushruta, Vagbhatta, Sharangadhara, Bhela, Harita, Yogaratnakara have described the characteristics of different types of Deha Prakriti.[9, 10, 11,12,13,14]

**QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF PRAKRITI**

According to Acharya Charaka the ekadoshajaprakriti are rare. The persons having ekadoshajaprakriti is always prone to be sick while persons havingsamdoshajaprakriti is healthy. Among all types of doshajaprakriti, samdoshajaprakriti is the best but found rarely. Dvidoshajaprakriti is nindniya or bad. Out of this pitta-kapha is bad, vata-kapha is worse and vata-pittaja is worst. Ekdoshajaprakriti is better. Out of this vataprakriti is good, pitta prakriti is better and kaphaprakriti is best. Vagbhata has mentioned that the person having vata, pitta and kaphapredominance are said to be inferior, average and superior respectively.
CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAKRITI ASSESSMENT

Prakriti has prime importance in both healthy and diseased persons. Prakritipariksha is the component of Dashavidharpriksha.\textsuperscript{[15]} The clinical and therapeutic utility of the knowledge of prakriti has been vibrantly described by the Charaka, where the detailed regimen that is to be followed by different dosajaparikriti individuals and treatment according predominance of doshas is mentioned.\textsuperscript{[16]} Prakriti is not changeable; if it changes it indicates death of an individual within six months. Prakriti has prime importance in both healthy and diseased persons i.e., importance of prakriti in prescribing dietary regimen and life style management in healthy individuals and treatment point of view in diseased individuals.

By understanding the individual constitution of every individual, we know which food, drink, exercise etc. are appropriate for maintaining their health. If the daily activities, diet, occupation and behaviour are not adjusted to balance this.

Study of Prakriti will help clinician in the following respects.
1) Early prediction of disease susceptibility.
2) Prevention of possible diseases.
3) Successful prognostication in disease state.
4) Selection of appropriate and specific treatment in a given disease.

Prakriti and Sattva Pariksha (investigations) have been included in ten fold investigation methods i.e. Dashavidha- Atura-Pariksha in Ayurveda. The particular type of psychosomatic constitution with specific Dosik constituents predisposes a particular individual to a particular type of illness. In view of this fact, the different diseases to which an individual is predisposed may be prevented or postponed by appropriate diet, drugs or regimen. This is in this context, that Ayurveda advocates extensive preventive measures in terms of SwasthaVritta, Sadvritta, Dincharya, Ritucharya etc. The observations showing greater incidence of certain diseases in which the patients of certain prakriti are predisposed, support the fact showing greater susceptibility of Vatika individuals to anxiety neurosis, thyrotoxicosis, peptic ulcer and tuberculosis, Paiittik individuals to hypertension, peptic ulcer, bronchial asthma and rheumatoid arthritis and Kaphaja individuals to diabetes mellitus, obesity, osteoarthritis, hypertension, and ischaemic heart diseases.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The interpretation of prakriti in Charaka is more systematic than other Samhitas. Charaka has emphasised more on the physical characteristic as compare to psychological traits. In Sushruta and Vagbhatta the characteristics of prakriti are described in terms of nature of other animals and description of dreams, which are not described in CharakaSamhita. Prakriti has prime importance in both healthy and diseased persons. By understanding the individual constitution of every individual, we know which food, drink, exercise etc. are appropriate for maintaining their health.

REFERENCES


