



## Review Article

### A REVIEW ON ROLE OF *DEHA PRAKRITI* IN PREVENTING DISEASES

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#### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has a holistic approach and includes all the factors which are accessory in the determination of health. For the prevention of various diseases, selection of a preventive and curative regime is primarily based on phenotypic assessment of a person which includes one's body constitution termed '*Prakriti*'. *Deha Prakriti* is represented by a description of the Physique, Physiology & psychological make-up of an individual. *Prakriti* is a consequence of the relative proportion of three physiological entities (*Tridoshas*), *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* which are genetically determined & is decided at the time of conception and is likely to be influenced by a variety of environmental factors to some extent. *Prakriti* of a person is quite capable of providing a fair indication of physiological strengths and weaknesses, mental tendencies and susceptibility to illness of various types. Knowing *Prakriti* is a wonderful tool for understanding ones and others, and it also aids a person in making appropriate dietary and lifestyle choices for maintaining health. From a practitioners view, it is used in the selection of medicines and other therapies for a particular patient as well as in selecting appropriate dosage of the drugs. So *Prakriti* assessment can be used as best way for the prognosis and prevention of various diseases.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Ayurveda has been described as to protect the health of a healthy person and to eliminate the ailments of a diseased man<sup>[1]</sup> but the purpose of attainment of proper health is not the ultimate object of Ayurveda. Acharya Charaka regards health is the supreme foundation of *Dharma* (Virtuous act), *Artha* (acquirement of wealth), *Kama* (Gratification of desire) and *Moksha* (Final emancipation) as *Roga* (Diseases) are destroyer of health, and are great obstacles to attainment of these goals<sup>[2]</sup>. According to *Samkhya* (one of school of Indian philosophy), *Prakriti* (constitution) is the matrix of whole psycho-physical universe<sup>[3]</sup>. It is the equilibrium of *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* (*Trigunas*), which forms the ultimate ground for all existence<sup>[4]</sup>. The word *Prakriti* (constitution) has varying meanings in different contexts e.g. *Samya* (equilibrium), *Arogya* (health), *Svabhav* (nature), *Karana*, end stage of life, bodily constitution etc. The present context of description of *Prakriti* (constitution) is in concern

to the bodily constitution i.e. *Deha Prakriti* (physical constitution). The approach of Ayurveda on the subjects of determinants of *Deha Prakriti* (physical constitution) is quite detailed and vivid. Acharyas have enumerated a number of factors, which together lay the psychological and physical make up of an individual.

#### 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)<sup>[5]</sup>. For example, at time of birth if *Vata Dosh* is predominant as compare to *Pitta* and *Kapha*, then individual is having *Vataja Prakriti*. Predominant *Vata Dosh* affects anatomy, physiology, psychology & immunity of that person. Features are seen according to properties & functions of *Vata Dosh*.

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.<sup>[6]</sup>

### 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*<sup>[7]</sup>. These six factors come under the first group i.e. Pre-natal factors. Charaka and Vagbhata have also described some other factors which play important role in *Prakriti* determination these factors are; *Jati-prasakta* (racial peculiarities), *Kulaprasakta* (familial predisposition), *Deshanupatini* (demographic), *Kalanupatini* (seasonal effect), *Vayonupatini* (natural changes according to age), *Pratyatmaniyata* (personal habits and individuality, idiosyncrasy)<sup>[8-9]</sup>. 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 *Dehaprakriti*

#### ***Vata Prakriti* (constitution): *Heena* (Poor-weak)**

*Panchabhautika* structure of *Vata* is *Akasha* and *Vayu* and its function is *Rajasika* thus is concerned with the production of those somatic and psychic processes which are predominantly *Rajasika* or dynamic in nature, hence the presence of *Vata* is to be inferred in such mental phenomena as the exhibition of enthusiasm, concentration etc. It upholds all the supporting constituents and their due circulation throughout the body.<sup>[10-11]</sup> Anomalous diet and regimen causing *Vata Dosha Prakopa* results in *Vata Dosha* aggravation in *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum). The aggravated *Vata Dosha* leads to the development of fetus of *Vata Prakriti* (constitution) which is depleted in physical and psychological qualities principally due to *Apatarpana* (emaciating regimen) which leads to depletion in *Dhatu* (basic tissues), as a consequence of which various inferior qualities

are present in body and mind because of which *Vata Prakriti* (constitution) is deduced as *Heena*<sup>[12]</sup>.

#### ***Pitta Prakriti* (constitution): *Madhyama* (medium, moderate)**

*Panchabhautika* structure of *Pitta* is *Tejasa*; its functions are *Satvika* vision, digestion, heat-production, hunger, thirst softness, intelligence. Its presence is to be inferred in such mental phenomena as intellection and clear conception, as also such physical phenomenon as digestion, assimilation, heat-production, healthy appearance, courage, etc.<sup>[10-12]</sup> *Agni* in body is provided by *Pitta*.<sup>[13]</sup> This *Agni* is inferred in body by digestion and metabolism. In the process of digestion of food, complex substances are broken down to simpler one and later on useful part and excretory parts are produced. Thus *Agni* mainly causes process of catabolism. In balanced state of *Pitta Dosha* this process of catabolism is also in steady state equilibrium but if *Pitta* remains increased, the process of catabolism of *Dhatu* is more than their formation. As this *Agni* is also predominant in brain, thus some good qualities related to intellect are found, but side by side anger, egoism, etc. are also present. Therefore *Pittaprakriti* (constitution) is termed as *Madhyama* type.

#### ***Kapha Prakriti* (constitution): *Uttama* (best-strong)**

*Panchabhautika* structure of *Kapha* is *Apa* and *Prithvi* (A.S.Su.20), function is *Tamas*, is concerned with the production of those physical and mental processes which are predominantly *Tamasic* in nature i.e. conserving and stabilizing. Its presence to be inferred in such mental phenomena as the exhibition of courage, knowledge, understanding virility etc. and the physical phenomena as the production of bodily strength, build, integrities of structural elements of the body etc.<sup>[10-11]</sup>. Due to *Kapha* predominance, *Upachaya Karma* (anabolic function) is predominant in the body, as a result of which body of *Kapha Prakriti* (constitution) *Purusha* is firm, compact, plump. Muscles and joints are also well developed.<sup>[14]</sup> *Kapha* is increased due to *Santarpana* (diseases caused by over refreshing regimen) and therefore the person is not affected easily by *Apatarpana* (diseases caused by emaciating therapies) vitiating *Vata Dosha*. Due to *Sheeta* (coldness) and *Snigdha* (unctuousness) qualities of *Kapha*, *Pitta Vikara* do not influence easily. *Santarpanjanya Vikara* (diseases caused by over refreshing regimen) are less as compared to *Aptarpanajanya Vikara* (diseases caused by emaciating therapies). *Kaphaja Purusha* has increased *Tamasa* and *Satva Guna*. *TamasGuna* produces low grade qualities e.g.

excessive sleep and *Satva Guna* produce many *Sattvika* qualities e.g. calm and cool behaviour, excellent memory, dignity etc. Therefore, *Kapha Prakriti* (constitution) is considered *Uttama* (best) among *Doshaja Prakriti* (constitution).

#### **Sama doshaja or Sama dhatu Prakriti (Balanced constitution): Shreshtha (Ideal)**

According to Acharya Sushruta, enhanced *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* in their *Prakrita* form result in development of *SamaPrakriti* (constitution). When single or mixed *Dosha* predominance occurs, then superior and inferior both types of qualities are found in respective constitution. When predominant *Tridosha* in their balanced (*Prakrita*) form result in formation of *Prakriti* (constitution), then only superior qualities of *Doshas* are found. Hence *Sama Doshaja Prakriti* (constitution) is *Shreshtha* or best and rest are inferior.<sup>[15]</sup>

#### **Dvandaja Prakriti (Dual humoral constitution): Nindya (denounced)**

All three *Dvandaja Prakriti* (constitution) are said to be *Nindya* (denounced). *Vata Dosha* has *Yogvahi Guna* (catalytic property), then *Vata Pitta Prakriti* (constitution) should be *Madhyama* (medium) and *Vata Kapha Prakriti* (constitution) should be *Uttama* (best). Then why *Dvandaja Prakriti* (constitution) are labelled *Nindya* (denounced). This is so because *Vata* has *Balivta* (powerful), *Ashukari* (quick acting), *Vibhu* (pervading in all the parts of the body) and *Anyakopata* (tendency to aggravate other *Doshas*, *Dhatu*s and *Malas*) properties due to which it is able to independently produce many diseases and thus it is a very strong *Dosha*.<sup>[16]</sup> *Dvi-Doshaja Prakriti* (constitution) has *Viruddha Upkrama*.<sup>[17]</sup>

#### **Sannipatika Prakriti (Conglomerated humoral constitution): Jaghanya (Worst)**

*Sannipatika Prakriti* (constitution) results from abnormal predominance of *Tridosha* <sup>[18-19]</sup>. Most of the sages opine that abnormal predominance of *Tridosha* cannot result in formation of foetus.<sup>[20]</sup> Hence *Sannipatika Prakriti* (constitution) is not mentioned in *Brihatrayi*. Acharya Bhela and Harita have mentioned this *Prakriti* (constitution) and considered it as worst (*Jaghanya*) of all.

#### **DISCUSSION**

##### **Importance of Prakriti (constitution):**

##### **Maintenance of health**

Maintenance of health: In the explanation of base of diseases, *Asatmya Indriyarthasamyoga* (improper use of senses) is regarded as one of the causes<sup>[21]</sup>. *Asatmya Indriyarthasamyoga* (improper use of senses) is illustrated as excessive utilization, non-utilization and wrong utilization of

*Indriyas* concerned, which causes an impediment to the respective sense perception, and hence disease. When *Indriyas* (senses) are properly utilized, normality of sense faculties can be maintained and the perception of various objects are properly regulated.<sup>[22]</sup> 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<sup>[23]</sup>.

#### **Management of disease and Prakriti (constitution)**

Plan of use of medication varies from patients to patient due to variations in their strength. For instance, if powerful or strong medication be used in debilitated patient, detrimental consequences may be obtained and if weak drugs be used in powerfully built patient or in patient suffering from severe disease, no effect will be achieved. Thus treatment may fail if patient is wrongly assessed.<sup>[24-25]</sup> *Prakriti* (constitution) assessment is the chief factor for analysis of strength of patient.<sup>[24]</sup> It is also emphasized that while suffering from similar disease patients do not respond to similar treatment modality because of variation in their constitution. This stresses the fact that strategy of treatment modalities is different in diverging patients.<sup>[26]</sup> Universal management principle of disease also lays emphasis on role of *Prakriti* (constitution) i.e. if those drugs are used which are antagonistic to *Prakriti* (constitution), the disease is cured.<sup>[27]</sup> In the description of *Deha Prakriti* (body constitution), it has been stated that particular *Doshika Prakriti* (constitution) persons are prone to develop that type of *Doshaja Vikaras*.<sup>[28]</sup> Acharyas have also described measures for avoiding occurrence of these diseases by modifications in diet and lifestyle.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Hence, the development of diseases & *Prakriti* closely related with each other and the management as per *Prakriti* will have a significant role in preventing disorders. Thus, a better health can be achieved by maintaining the one's *Prakriti* in equilibrium state.

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