



REVIEW ARTICLE

PRAKRITI – A CLASSICAL REVIEW

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 11th March, 2017

Received in revised form

13th April, 2017

Accepted 10th May, 2017

Published online 30th June, 2017

Keywords:

Prakriti,

Panchmahabhuta.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian holistic medical science, practiced since 1500 B.C deals with body, mind and spirit and aims at preservation-promotion of health and prevention-cure of diseases. It provides measures for a disciplined, disease-free, long life. Ayurveda defines health as a state of physical, psychological, social and spiritual well being and is based on the theory of *Panchamahabhoota* (the five basic elements – Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth) and *Tridoshas* (three biological humors – *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*) which are present in each and every cell of the body along with mind and spirit. The term *Prakriti* is made from two words '*Pra*' means the 'beginning' and '*kriti*' means 'to form'. In *Prakriti*, the word '*Pra*' signifies *Satva Guna*, the word '*kri*' signifies *Raja Guna* and word '*ti*' signifies *Tama Guna*. In this way the term *Prakriti* formed.¹ In this study, it has been tried to compile the knowledge of *Prakriti* from various ancient texts.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda believes that every individual is a unique phenomenon. The individual is indivisible from the cosmos. Whatever is there in the macrocosm, the same thing exists in the microcosm. Every individual is a manifestation of cosmic consciousness i.e. Man is miniature of nature. *Panchamahabhutas* which are five basic elements are manifested into the three biological organizations known as *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. At the time of fertilization, *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* determine the constitution of an individual by their permutations and combinations, which is called '*Prakriti*'. The term '*Prakriti*' means *Shreshtha*. In every organism, these three *Doshas* regulate the functions of each and every cell and govern all the physio-pathological changes. The concept that we are all different is unique aspect of *Ayurveda*. Every individual observes different physical, physiological and psychological functions. Maintenance of health, prevention of disease, achieving longevity and treatment of ailments depend upon this fundamental theory of understanding individuality. *Ayurveda* advocates different program for each individual based on his constitution and the nature of imbalance within him. The healing science of *Ayurveda* is based upon the knowledge of '*Prakriti*'.

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Review of Literature

Few important references addressed in various Ancient texts written by ayurvedic sages, which are as follow:

Prakriti in Epics

- Soul and *Prakriti* are formed by Brahma.²
- All deeds take place with the help of *Satva*, *Raja* and *Tama gunas* of *Prakriti*.³

Prakriti in Darshanas

- *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are two chief elements and their union leads to creation.⁴
- *Prakriti* is the cause of all.⁵
- *Mahata*, *Ahankar* and *Panchatanmatras* are *Prakriti* and *Vikriti*.⁵
- *Prakriti* is the most delicate thing in the creation.⁶
- Origin of *Panchatanmatras* and *Panchamahabhutas* from *Prakriti*.⁷

Prakriti in Vedic Period

- *Prakriti* has names like *Mata*, *Prithvi*, *Aditi*.⁸
- Two other terms have come for *Prakriti* in one of the *Richas* of *Rigveda*.

Janitridevi - Constructing the world and
Bhadra - *Kalyan Karini Prakriti*⁹

- *Panchamahabhutas* and *Mahantatwa* have been formed from this *Prakriti*.¹⁰
- *Sthula Prakriti* evolves from *Sukshma Prakriti* and this *Sukshma Prakriti* emerges from *Brahma*.
- This world rests on the stability of great *Mahaprakriti*.¹¹

Prakriti in Samhita Kala -Post-Vedic Period

Charak Samhita

Prakriti is *swabhava* and this is nothing but the properties found in foods and drugs. like *Urada is guru*; *Mung is laghu*.¹²

He described 7 types of *Prakriti* and said that due to preponderance of respective *Doshas*, the three constitutions i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are always prone to illness.¹³

- The equilibrium state of the *Dhatus* is *Prakriti*.¹⁴
- In the *Dashvidha Pareeksha* of a patient, the *Prakriti* occupies the foremost place.¹⁵
- Span of life has been said according to *Prakriti*
 - Vata Prakriti* - *Alpayu*
 - Pitta Prakriti* - Average life span
 - Kapha Prakriti* - Long lifespan¹⁶
- If a disease occurs opposite to the *Prakriti*, then it is (*Doshaj*) easily curable.¹⁷
- *Akash*, *Vayu*, *Teja*, *Jala* and *Prithvi*, *Buddhi*, *Avyakta* and *Ahamkara* are collectively known as *Bhuta Prakriti* by *Acharya Charaka*.¹⁸
- The normal condition of a person is considered under 6 aspects.¹⁹
 - 1) *Jati prasakta*
 - 2) *Kula prasakta*
 - 3) *Deshanupatini*
 - 4) *Vayoanupatini*
 - 5) *Kalanupatini*
 - 6) *Pratyatmaniyata*
- *Prakriti* gets changed when the person shows noticeable signs of death, hence *prakriti* remains same throughout life except just before death.²⁰
- Complexion, voice, smell, taste, touch, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, mind, likes and dislikes, purity, conducts etc. in a patient should be examined considering *Prakriti* and *Vikriti*.²¹
- *Panchmahabhutas*, *Avyaktam*, *Mahana* and *Ahamkara* are called *Bhuta Prakriti*.²²

Sushruta Samhita

Detailed descriptions of philosophical, physical and mental constitutions are available in this great treatise.

- There are eight type of *Prakriti* and sixteen type of *Vikaras*. *Avyakta*, *Mahana*, *Ahamkara* and *Panchatanmatras* form *Ashta-Prakriti*.²³
- Both *prakriti* and *purush* are eternal.²⁴
- *Prakriti* is *trigunatamak*.²⁵
- Three types of *Manas Prakriti*²⁶
 - *Saatvika Prakriti* - 7 types

- *Rajsika Prakriti* - 6 types
- *Tamasika Prakriti* - 3 types

- The general characteristics of the psychological constitutions are actually the features of *Trigunas* (*Satva*, *Raja* and *Tama*).
- *Satvika*, *Rajasika* and *Tamas Prakriti* have been called as *Maha Prakriti*.
- A *Doshaja* disease opposite to the physical constitution is easy to cure.²⁷

Ashtang Samgraha

- Seven types of physical constitution get formed from the *Doshas*, and at the time of union of *Shukra* and *Artava* and their stay in the uterus, one or more of the *Doshas* which get increased by the foods and activities of the mother, gives rise to the constitution which persists till death. Just on the worms, born in a poisonous plant, or poisonous creatures from poison or just as the poison in the bodies of a scorpion and snake, the human body also gets its constitution formed from its on *Doshas*. This *Prakriti* never undergoes changes till death.²⁸
- Because the *Shukra* and *Artava* are the causes for the future body and are full of *Doshas* and being natural to the body, these *Doshas* do not cause any harm to the body.²⁹
- Seven types of *Manasika Prakriti* are formed from the *Trigunas* which are *Satva-Raja* and *Tama* just like the seven physical constitutions from *Tri-Doshas*.³⁰
- *Acharya* has mentioned seven *Jatyadi* constitutions also, arising from *Jati*, *Kula*, *Desh*, *Kala*, *Vaya*, *Bala* and *Pratyatmaniyata* individual peculiarity and the typical features of each of these factors are noticed specifically in such person.³¹
- There is possibility of emergence of innumerable constitutions from innumerable combinations.³²

Ashtang Hridaya

- By the *Doshas*, present in the *Shukra* and *Artava* at the time of commencement of life, there arises three kinds of *Prakriti* just like the poisonous worms arise from poison and they have been labeled as *Hina*, *Madhya* and *Uttam* from each of the *Doshas* respectively.³³
- Constitution arising from equal proportion of all the *Doshas* is the *Sama-Prakriti* and those arising from the combination of two *Doshas* are *Nindniya* i.e. denounced and despicable.³⁴
- Seven types of *Prakriti* are produced depending upon the *Doshas*, predominant in the *Shukra*, *Asrika* at the time of their union, in the *Bhojya*, *Chesta* of the *Garbhini*, *Garbhashaya* and *Ritu*.³⁵

Bhava-Prakash

- *Avyaktam* is the *Prakriti* and *Mahatyadi* elements are called *Vikriti*.³⁶

Kashyap Samhita

Manas Prakriti are of three types which are in total eighteen types.

- *Satvika Prakriti* - Eight sub types
- *Rajas Prakriti* – Seven sub types
- *Tamasika Prakriti* - three sub types.³⁷

Conclusion

After studying the concept of prakriti in various classics it came to notice that base of individual totally depends on ones prakriti. Acharayas always focus on prakriti in every aspect of treatment means we have to choose drug depending on the prakriti.in swastha purush aahar n vihar also depends on the prakriti of particular individual. Even while doing examination of patient prakriti attains the foremost place in Dashvida pariksha. This work is just a initiative to know the concept of prakriti in different classics. Still there is huge knowledge hidden in the classics in the context of prakriti which is yet to be explored.

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