



## Conceptual study of Ahara w.s.r. to Panchamahabhuta and its clinical significance

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### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* is a branch of science which deals with maintaining health and treating the diseased condition of the body. Health of the human being is dependent upon *ahara*, which he takes daily for his live being. *Ahara* is an essential for life, satisfaction, joy, peace etc. So it is base of life. These *ahara* is base of life. Every *dravya* in this universe is made of all *panchamahabhuta*. But all this *mahabhutas* are not in equal quantities. One *mahabhuta* is more predominant in this proportion. Depending upon this, they are classified into *Parthiva*, *Aapya*, *agneya*, *Vayaviya* and *Akashiya*. All this *ahardravyas* have clinical significance. Present study is an attempt to conceptualize *ahara* with special reference to *panchamahabhuta* and highlight its clinical significance.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda, Ahara, Panchamahabhuta, dravya.*

### INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is a branch of science which deals with maintaining health and treating the illness of the body. *Ahara* is the basic need of any human being. It is essential for the continuation of livelihood. Without it, no one can sustain for more days. Our body is made up of *Panchamahabhuta* namely *Aaksha*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Aapa* and *Prithvi*. Both the living body and dead body are made up of *panchamahabhuta*. The only difference between these two is presence of *chetantatva*. Every human has to eat only biotic material as food. He cannot eat

non material as a staple food. He is own to eat only biotic components. Non biotic supplements can be added to food and taken internally as supplementary addition to food.

All the *ahara Dravyas* are made up of *Mahabhuta*. All the five *mahabhutas* are present in every *aharadravyas*. But, one or more *mahabhuta* can be predominant in the *Aharadravya*. Due to this, all the *Aharadravyas* are named according to predominance of the specific *mahabhuta*. For example, food item with higher proportion of *Prithvimahabhuta* is called as *Parthivaaharadravya*. In present study, a characteristic of each *mahabhuta* predominance *Dravyas* has been elaborated and its classical significance had been given.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

**Aims :** To study in detail the concept of *Aharaw* s.r. to *Panchamahabhuta*.

**Objective:**

1. To take various references related to *ahara* in various *Ayurvedic Samhitas*.
2. To understand this information and correlate with *Panchamahabhuta*.
3. To understand its clinical significance.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

Literature review is done through all available *Ayurvedic Samhitas*, texts, various research papers available in Journals and online data available.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*Ahara* is very important for our life. Without it, no one can live. *Ahara* is a life of living being. Happiness, voice, life, satisfaction, power, intelligence all are dependent on *ahara*. All work, which a man does for his life, like agriculture, business is on the base of the *ahara*. So *ahara* is base of life.<sup>1</sup> These *Aharais* made of all the five *mahabhutas*. So it is called as *Panchabhautikaahara*. Even though it is *panchabhautika*, there is one or more *mahabhuta* having prominent proportion. Depending upon these, it is classified into *Parthiva*, *Apya*, *Agneya*, *Vayaviya* and *Akashiyadravya*. They are as follows-

### 1) *Parthivadravya*:

If *Prithvi mahabhuta* is in excess quantity in any *Dravya*, it is called as *Parthiva Dravya* or predominant *Prithvi mahabhuta*. In this *Dravyas*, other *mahabhutas* are in less quantities. Also it has more properties of *Prithvimahabhuta* like Stout (*sthoor*), durable (*Sthira*), having specific shape (*Murtimad*), food taking long time for digestion (*guru*), rough (*khar*) and hard (*kathinam*).<sup>2</sup>

In human being, following entities have *Prithvi mahabhuta* in more quantity or they are *Parthiva*- nails, tendons, bones, teeth, *mamsa*, skin, hair on head, hair on body, beard etc. All these entities have specific odour. Nose and osmotic apparatus is also *Parthiva*.

*Acharya Sushruta* have stated about rasa or taste of *Parthiva* items. Mainly these food items are sweet and astringent. He also stated that *Parthivadravyas* have specific shape. Along with shape, it has specific odour and heaviness.<sup>3</sup>

*Acharya Vagbhata* in *AshtangHrudya* given importance to special sense of olfaction.<sup>4</sup>

#### Functions:<sup>5</sup>

- a) Attain heaviness
- b) Attain durability
- c) Attain property of binding together
- d) Attain growth and replenishment
- e) Attain strength
- f) Attain movement mainly in lower direction

*Ahar Dravya*, which shows these functions, is said as *Parthivadravyas*. Rice, wheat, black gram, meat, fruits are termed as *Parthiva*.

### 2) *Apyadravya*:

The substances which have predominantly fluid (*drava*), mobile (*sara*), dull (*manda*), unctuous (*snigdha*) and slimy (*pichhil*) properties is called as *Apyadravya*. Our body has so many entities, which are *apyadravyas* namely, rasa, blood, *kapha*, *pitta*, urine, sweat etc. These *Dravyas* are mainly fluid in nature. Rasa and taste perception is also *apya*.<sup>6</sup>

*Acharya Sushruta* has given importance to cool, unctuous, fluid, taste and heaviness properties.<sup>7</sup>

*AshtangHrudya* gives most preference to special sense, taste perceiving apparatus.<sup>8</sup>

**Functions:**<sup>9</sup>

- a) Attain moisture
- b) Attain unctuousness
- c) Attain togetherness
- d) Attain osmosis
- e) Attain freshness to body
- f) Attain softness

*Ahardravyas*, which shows above properties are said to be *apyadravyas*. They are namely soups, shakes, juices, buttermilk, oils, ghee, milk etc.

**3) Agneya Dravya:**

*Dravyas*, which have predominantly *Agneya* properties are called as *Agneyadravya*. It is same as our *Pittadosha* in human body, having hot & lustrous property. It is hot in nature and possess aura. Perception of image and colours by eyes are also *agneya*. *Agneya* body entities are nourished by *Agneya* part of food.<sup>10</sup>

*Acharya Sushrutahas* given rasa or taste of *Agneya* items. He said that such food items are slightly sour, slightly salty and principally spicy or *Katu*. On the other hand, he also stated that image, ophthalmic perception, heat, colour, lustre, bio – conversion, anger, sharpness and bravery are also related to *AgneyaDravyas*.<sup>11</sup>

*AshtangHrudya* gives anti – unctuous property, sharpness, heat, cleanliness and micro quality belongs to *Agneya dravyas*.<sup>12</sup>

**Functions:**<sup>13</sup>

- a) Attain burning reactions
- b) Attain digestive reactions
- c) Attain splitting reactions
- d) Attain heating reactions
- e) Attain illuminating reactions
- f) Attain lustre to skin
- g) Attains upper direction.

All the spices like black pepper, red chilli powder, *pippali*, garlic, fresh ginger etc are the *Agneyadravyas*.

#### 4) *Vayaviya Dravya:*

All the matters which contains *Vayaviya* specific properties, such as light (*laghu*), cool (*sheeta*), dry (*ruksha*), rough (*khara*), clean (*vishada*), minute or micro (*sukshma*) are called as *Vayaviyadravya*. Act of Respiration, contraction – relaxation, displacement of any entity of human himself, stimulation of any kind, act of holding something etc are the *vayaviya* entities present in our body. They are realized by act or movement. Touch or perception of touch is also *Vayaviya*.<sup>14</sup>

*Sushruta Samhita* has mainly described the taste of *Vayaviyadravya* or *rasa*. He mentioned *Vayaviya Dravyas* has slightly spicy and of astringent *rasa*.<sup>15</sup>

*AshtangHrudya* has described skin and inspiratory movements as the *Vayaviya dravya*.<sup>16</sup>

#### Functions:<sup>17</sup>

- a) Attain anti-unctuous reactions
- b) Attain fatigue
- c) Attain specific or various movements
- d) Attains cleaning reactions
- e) Attain feeling of lightness.

The food materials, which show above properties, are called as *Vayaviya Ahardravyas*. E.g. Gram, Pea, Horse gram etc.

#### 5) *Akashiya Dravya:*

*Dravyas* which contains properties like soft (*mrudu*), light (*laghu*), minute (*sukshma*), smooth (*shlashna*) and which has quality of procuring voice. Also in another language, systems having space, organs and spaces, which offer no resistance for the movement etc. Are *akashiya*. These entities are having space predominantly.<sup>18</sup>

*Acharya Sushruta* described as voice, words, all spaces in body and space between two substances is *akashiya Dravya*.<sup>19</sup>

**Functions:**<sup>20</sup>

- a) Attain softness
- b) Attain porosity
- c) Attain cleaning reactions
- d) Attains feeling of lightness

*Ahar Dravya*, which possess above properties is called as *AkashiyaDravya*. E.g. bitter guard, carilla fruit, toothache tree, maize, rice flex etc.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Every matter in the world, whatever generated from the animals or earth, is *panchamahabhautika*. It becomes medicine, only if it is used by rationally. It means proper admixture of water with medicine or proper heating of medicine or churning or triturating with some medicines etc. It is very useful for the appropriate management after diagnosis of the disease. In this way *Ahar Dravya* can be used to cure the disease. For this, *panchamahabhuta* predominance is considered. With proper use of this, it has effect on body as follows.

1. Drugs, which induce to open the bowels, are called as purgatives. These drugs have predominance of *Aapa* and *Prithvimahabhuta*. From this, it is clear that, *Dravya* which have predominance of *Aapa* and *Prithvimahabhuta* helps in downward movement.<sup>21</sup>
2. Drugs, which induce *vomitting* are called as emetics. These drugs has predominance of *Agni* and *Vayumahabhuta*. From this, it is clear that, *Dravya* which have predominance of *Agni* and *Vayumahabhuta* helps in upward movement.
3. Drugs which generally pacify the health are predominant of *AkashMahabhuta*.
4. *Dravyas*, predominant of *Agnimahabhuta* induce *agni* in digestive fire and helps in the digestion.
5. *Lekhanadravya*, described in *Ayurveda*, are responsible for decreasing body mass. They are predominant in *Agni* and *Vayumahabhuta*.
6. *Bruhanadravya*, described in *Ayurveda*, are responsible for increasing body mass. They are predominant in *Aapa* and *Prithvimahabhuta*. E.g. sweet and unctuous food.
7. *Ahardravyas* predominant of *Vayumahabhuta*, absorbs moisture and causes occurrence of Constipation.

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