

A Retrospect on *Prakriti* and Lifestyle

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Abstract

Ayurveda may be interpreted as a science in which the knowledge of life exists or which helps a man to enjoy a longer duration of life. If we look at different people in the world around us, we observe that all of us are not simply alike. In *Ayurveda* every individual is in unique form. Not only each individual has different size and shape but its physiological and even psychological characters are different. This is because they have prevalent *Panchmahabhuta*, *Dosha* or *Triguna* at the time of birth which decides their constitution. Once this fundamental constitution is set, it is like permanent stain on white cloth. Once this preponderance is decided, every tissue and every system in the body has this predominance in them and hence they function according to that. If proper care is not taken then, this slight predominance may lead to certain disorders. This is all because of *Prakriti* (constitution). According to this predominance every individual needs certain type of food, drinks and behavior to keep him healthy and 'way of life' redirects here. The term 'lifestyle' can denote the interests, opinions, behaviors and behavioral orientations of an individual group. The lines between personal identity and the everyday doing that signal a particular lifestyle become blurred in modern society. Through this article, I have made an endeavor only to evaluate inter-relationship between *Prakriti* and lifestyle or any other type of effect of lifestyle using on individual *Prakriti*.

Keywords

Ayurveda, *Prakriti*, lifestyle, *Doshas*, preventive, *Nidana-Parvarjana*



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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, which is based on philosophical & scientific background, is one of the most ancient medical systems of the world. *Ayurveda*, are full of gems of philosophy. One of the gems of *Ayurveda* is called *Prakriti*. *Prakirti* is qualitative and quantitative, unchangeable *Doshika predominance* from birth to death. It is decided at the time of conception. *Doshika* predominance, at the time of union of male and female gamete, forms the *Prakriti*. For illustration, at the time of birth if *Vata Dosh* is predominant (qualitatively and quantitatively) compared to *Pitta* and *Kapha*, then we call the individual having *Vataja Prakriti*. Therefore, *Prakriti* is of various types according to *Doshas* and in which *Samadoshaja* is a good one and homeostatic state, while others are nearer to diseases¹⁻³.

Prakriti affects each factor by which a person is going to interact and decides the status of health. It is clearly indicated in texts that lifestyle and various activities should be planned opposite to *Prakriti* & *Prakriti* also affects and decides the quality and scale of daily lifestyles. *Ayurveda* considers health and disease both as the

products of lifestyle. We can utilize this concept in the prevention and management of lifestyle disorders and make life idyllic and disease unconfined.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES-

1. To study the concept of *Prakriti* in contextual of lifestyle.
2. To establish the inter-relationship between *Prakriti* and lifestyle.

This conceptual study will be helpful in the various progressive survey studies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Only textual materials have been used for this study from which various references have been collected.
2. Modern texts and related websites have also been searched.

CONCEPTUAL STUDY

Concept of *Prakriti*- this constitution comprises of both “physical body” as well as “mental body” *Prakriti* means “nature” or natural constitution of the human body. ‘*Pra*’ means the ‘beginning’ or ‘source of origin’ and ‘*kriti*’ means ‘to form’. Put together *Prakriti* means ‘natural form’. *Prakriti* word derived from ‘*Prakarotiiti Prakiti*’ which means manifestation of special characteristics due to predominance

of *Doshas*, & in these *Prakriti* main shows *Doshaja Prakriti*. Dominance of one or more *Dosha* during conception of the baby in the womb decides the 'major *Prakriti*' in the individual. There are other factors which also determine the constitution of a body in minor way ⁴. *Veda* also says that *Prakriti* (body constitution) cannot be changed. Once formed at the time period of fertilization & constitution that formed are same till death. *Charaka* has mentioned following additional factors which determine the *Prakriti*-

1. Nature of the season.
2. Condition inside the uterus.
3. Food of mother, during pregnancy, other regimens adopted by mother during pregnancy.
4. *Sukra-Sonita* (sperm-ovum) of father and mother.
5. *Mahabhuta Vikara* ⁵.

These factors get afflicted with one or more of the *Doshas* which are dominantly associated with the above mentioned factors. Therefore, *Prakriti* of some people is dominated by *Vata*, some others by *Pitta*, some others by *Kapha* and some others by the combination of two *Doshas* and some cases, equilibrium are maintained by *Dosha* ⁶⁻⁷. Although all these factors mentioned above play an important role in determination of *Prakriti*. Characters which

are started first in a person of any specific *Prakriti* depend upon properties of the *Doshas* involved. There is natural prevalence of each *Dosha* in different seasons, age and time which affect child's *Prakriti* at the time of conception.

In the other stage of life, time, season, and age have transitional effects on *Dosha*. That is why you feel as a different personality in various situations of life.

Cycle of age-

Childhood - *Kapha* Predominant

Adult - *Pitta* Predominant

Old age - *Vata* Predominant

Cycle of Time ⁶-

Early morning/after sunrise- *Kapha* Predominant

Midday/mid night- *Pitta* Predominant

Evening/just before sunset- *Vata* Predominant

Cycle of seasons ⁷-

Autumn season- *Kapha* Predominant

Winter season- *Pitta* Predominant

Rainy season- *Vata* Predominant

Uterus (*Garbhashaya*); the condition of the uterus -

Cycle of uterus ⁸-

Proliferative /Safe phase - *Kapha* Predominant

Ovulation Phase - *Pitta* Predominant

Menstrual /Bleeding Phase - *Vata*

Predominant

Cycle of food – food habits and behavior of the mother during pregnancy has effect on body constitution ⁹-

Immediately after food intake-
Kapha Predominant

After hour or when digestion starts-
Pitta Predominant

After four hour or when digestion completes
Vata Predominant

TYPES

Type 1-

Physical *Prakriti*- According to predominance one or two *Doshas*, types of *Prakriti* are seven- 1.*Vataja* 2. *Pittaja* 3. *Kaphaja* 4. *Vata-Pittaja* 5. *Vata-Kaphaja* 6. *Pitta-Kaphaja* 7. *Vata-Pitta-Kaphaja* is same *Doshaja Prakriti* ¹⁰.

However, in practice we do find another 3 types viz – *Pitta- Kaphaja*, *Kapha-Vataja* and *Kapha –Pittaja*.

Type 2-

Bhautika Prakriti – According to predominance of *Panchabhautika* elements , there are 5 types of *Prakriti*- 1. *Parthive* 2. *Apya* 3. *Taijas* 4. *Vayaviya* 5. *Akashiya*.

Type 3-

Gunamayi Prakriti-According to predominance of *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*, *Gunamayi* or *Manas Prakriti* is decided.

Saativa Satva- Guna Predominant

Raajasika Raja- Dosha Predominant

Taamashika Tama- Dosha Predominant

Type 4-

This classification has mentioned in *Astang Sanghara* ¹¹-

1. *Jatiniyat Prakriti*- features according to caste like *Brahman*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, *Sudra*.

2. *Deshaniyat Prakriti* - habitation

3. *Kalaniyat Prakriti* –seasonal

4. *Vayaniyat Prakriti*- age

Childhood (*Kapha* increase)

Youth (*Pitta* increase)

Old age (*Vata* increase)

5. *Balaniyat Prakriti*- strength

6. *Pratyatmaniyat Prakriti*.

Quality Assessments of *Prakriti*-

In *Doshaja Praakriti*, *SamaPrakriti* or *TriDoshaja Prakriti* is the best. But this is found rarely.

Dual *Prakriti* is *Nindya* or bad. Out of this *Pitta –Kaphaja* is bad, *Vata –Kaphaja* is worse and *Vata- Pittaja* is worst.

Single *Doshaja Prakriti* is better. In these types *Vata Prakriti* is good, *Pitta* is a better and *Kapha* is best.

Quality assessment of *Prakriti* indicates-

1. Status of Health.
2. Difficulty in maintaining Healthy state.
3. Response to treatment in diseases conditions.

In all the above classification *Doshaja* types are more useful in day-to-day practice. According to these features, one can easily diagnose the predominance of single or dual *Dosha*¹². Out of all texts of *Brihatrayi*, only *Charaka* has mentioned, *Dosha*-predominant features, explaining its relation with properties of *Dosha*, e.g. due to dry properties, the body is dry and the person is undernourished (*Apachita*).

1. *Vata Prakriti*-

Dimension and Manifestations of *Vata*-

1. *Ruksha* (dry) and *Parusha* (hard)-Ununctuousness, emaciation and dwarfness of body; long drawn, dry-low-broken-obstructed and hoarse voice; always keeping awake or disturbed sleep.
2. *Laghu* (light): light, inconsistent gait and action, food and movement.
3. *Chala* (mobile): Unstable-joints, eyes, eyebrows, lips, tongue, head, Shoulder, hands, legs.
4. *Bahu* (abundance): Talkativeness, abundance in tendons and veins.

5. *Shigahra* (quick): Quick in initiating actions, getting irritated and the Onset of morbid manifestation, quick in likes and Dislikes, quick in understanding and forgetting.

6. *Shita* (cold): Intolerance for cold things often gets afflicted with Cold, shivering and stiffness.

7. *Khara* (rough) Roughness in the hair of head, face and hands and feet

8. *Vishad* (non-slimy) Cracking of the limbs and organs, production of Cracking sound in joints when they move.

Due to these qualities, individual having *Vataja* type of constitution have lessens strength, span of life, procreation capacity, accession of life and wealth.

1. *Pitta Prakriti*-

Dimensions and Manifestations of *Pitta*-

1. *Ushna* (hot):

- Intolerance of hot things,
- having hot face, tender and
- clear body of port-wine marks,
- Freckles, black moles
- Excessive hunger and thirst,
- Quick advent of Wrinkles,
- Graying of hairs and baldness.

2. *Tikshna* (sharp):

- Demonstration of physical strength,
- Strong digestive power, intake of food and drinks In large quantity,
- Inability to face difficult Situations and glutton habits.

3. *Drava*:

- Looseness and softness Joints and muscles,
- Voiding of sweet urine and face in large quantity.

4. *Visra*(fleshy smell):

- Unpleasant smell of axilla mouth head and body.

5. *Katu-Amla* (pungent and sour):

- Insufficiency of semen sexual desire and Procreation.

By virtue of this type of qualities in individual is *Pitta* constitution is endowed with moderate strength, moderate span of life, moderate spiritual and materialistic knowledge wealth and the accessories of life.

3. *Kapha Prakriti*-

Dimensions and Manifestations of *Kapha*-

1. *Snigdha* (unctuous)

- Organs, skin, and hairs are oily.

2. *Shalakshna* (smooth)

- organs, hairs, skin are smooth.

3. *Mridu* (soft)

- Pleasing appearance tenderness and celerity of Complexion

4. *Madhura* (sweet)

- Abundant quality of semen, desire for sex act and no. of procreations.

5. *Sara* (firm)

- Firmness, compactness and stability of body.

6. *Sandra* (dense)

- All organs properly nourished.

7. *Manda* (slow)

- Slow in action, intake of food and movement.

8. *Staimitya* (Stable)

- Slowness in initiating actions getting irritated and morbid manifestation.

9. *Guru* (heavy)

- Stable gait with the entire sole of the feet, present Against the Earth.

10. *Shita* (cold)

- Lack of intensity in hunger, thirst, heat and Perspiration.

11. *Achcha* (clear)

- Happiness in the look and face, happiness and Softness of complexion and voice.

By virtue of the above qualities, a man endowed with the excellence of strength, wealth, knowledge, energy, peace and longevity¹³.

Sama-Doshaja constitution- individual who has all the *Doshas* in the state of equilibrium is endowed with the good qualities of all the three types.

Like physical constitution; mental constitution are alike with an individual and its majority divided alike with an individual and its majority divided into three-

1. **Saativik Prakriti** and its qualities –want to do good for everyone, does work on time, good knowledge, respect for everyone, generally does not get angry, if ever they cool down very fast, do good conversation, take right decision.

2. **Raajasika Prakriti-** want to do everything for self only, do not forgive, get angry fast, like to sleep for very long, fear and eat a lot, more involved in sex, opportunist.

3. **Taamasika Prakriti-** do not care for self, no decision power, only likes to eat and eats stale food, unstable mind, lazy and sleeps lot, always involved in sex, angry minded.

CONCEPT OF LIFESTLYE

The term lifestyle can denote the interests, opinions, behaviors and behavioral orientations of an individual, group or culture. The lifestyle indirectly means ‘way of life’ the term derivative of that of style in modernist art. The term refers to combination of determining intangible or tangible factors. Tangible factors relates specifically to demographic variables, i.e. an individual’s demographic profile, intangible factors concern the psychological aspects of an individual such as personal values, preferences and outlooks. A total lifestyle varies from person to person. A rural environment has different life’s types compared to an urban metropolis. Location is another important even with an urban scope.

A lifestyle typically reflects an individual’s attitudes, values. Therefore, a lifestyle is a means of foregoing a sense of self and particular type that resonate with personal identity or with personality.

An individual’s health depends a lot on their lifestyle. Maintaining physical and mental health is crucial to an individual’s longevity. The more time spent on hygiene, physical fitness and diet regulation, the healthier lifestyle they have. Those who chose to participate in any kind of physical activity on a weekly basis are generally healthier

than those who don't. Poor habits may eventually lead to a poor or even dangerous lifestyle. More interestingly, a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle will most likely be transmitted across generations ⁽¹⁴⁾. According to the study done by case report 2002, when a 0-3 year old child has a mother who practices a healthy lifestyle, this child will be 27% more likely to become healthy and adopt the same lifestyle ¹⁵. The healthy lifestyle prescriptions for different personality types (*Tri-Dosha Prakriti* mainly) affects a lot. Intense efforts to offer lifestyle modification as per constitution of the person and if not diseases occurs. Ayurveda systems emphasis on elaborates lifestyle modification. The lifestyle modifications of *Ayurveda* include *Ahara* (food and drinks), *Vihara* (practices and habits) and *Vichara* (thoughts) that vary according to the type of the personality/*Prakriti* (physic-physio-psychological) of an individual and also the environment (*Ritucharya*-seasonal regimens). In this study, specific lifestyle relates with regard to different *Prakriti* were mentioned in classical texts of Ayurveda. It is always ponder in mind that the *Ahara*, *Vihara* and *Vichara* recommended for each of the *Prakriti* are totally different and specific. This validated module based on the

Tridosha theory of *Ayurveda* helps the modern medical system to individualize lifestyle prescriptions that vary widely according to different *Prakriti* and *Ayurveda* systems are always giving new points from old texts of positive health and prevention of diseases.

The parallel term for standard of living (style of living) in documents is "level of living". It consists of nine components:- health, food consumption, education, occupation and working conditions, housing, social security, clothing, recreation and leisure and human rights ¹⁶. These objective characteristics are believed to influence human wellbeing. It is considered that health is the most important component of the level of living because its impairment always means impairment of the level of living. The quality of life is a composite measure of physical, mental and social well being as prescribed by each individual (as per *Prakriti*) or by group of individuals.

Ayurveda, hygiene, lifestyle and diet are crucial to good health. To attain good and healthy lifestyle *Ayurveda* prescribes the daily routine and the seasonal regime. The daily routine is called "*Dinacharya*" in Sanskrit '*Din*' and '*Acharya*' means to follow or 'close to'. According to *Ayurveda* to maintain a healthy and disease free life

one should follow a daily routine or schedule. It is important to follow a daily regime in order to be optimally healthy. *Dinacharya* is one of the best things that you can do to prevent disease, stay in balance and treat almost every illness. The *Acharyas* considered daily routine to be a stronger healing force than any other medicine. Everyday two cycles of changes passes through us, each bringing a *Vata*, *Pitta* or *Kapha* predominance. Inadequate style of living can vitiate *Vata-Pitta Dosha* disturbs *Kapha* at physical level and at mental level, it can disproportionate *Raja-Tamas* and *Saatva* quality. Various studies support that improper lifestyle (*Ayoga –Atiyoga* and *Mithayoga* of *Kala – Budhi, Indriyath –dash* etc) can adversely affect the physical and psychological functioning of body.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda is not only medical science, it is the way that emphasize for ideal healthy living. *Prakriti* is one of the very essential postulates and play a very essential role in the artful and scheming of lifestyle of an individual for sustainment of health. Its determination helps in understanding the health status and to select a suit your susceptibility to diseases to become cautions

about and lifestyle deeds. As it help in prognosis and also help in management. It is a diagnostic tool and fix the health in equilibrium (*Prakriti –Samdoshaj Sthpanam*) is the aim. *Prakriti* remains stable during the whole life and affects every aspect of life. Thus, lifestyle according to individual's *Prakriti* is easy to handle and modulate lifestyle so; both are inter-related with a person and his health. It is contemplation process in which an individual constitution lifestyle is accordingly adopted and it is necessary for disease free life. Every individual is subjected to a constant interaction with his environment, which will affect the person's constitution at any time.

The term lifestyle incorporates *Ahara* (food habits) and *Vihara* (lifestyle including conducts). Lifestyle related disorders occur only because individual are not using or adopting way of life according to self constitution of body. It is interesting to note that the *Ayurvedic* classics have emphasized the role of faulty life style and inappropriate dietary habits in the causation and pathogenesis of diseases. It is noticed that most of the lifestyle related disorders lifestyle and dietary habits as opposite to individual's *Prakriti* described in *Ayurveda*; in terms of *Dincharya*, and *ritucharya* and

wholesome –unwholesome diet. So, it is clearly indicated that if a person wants to be healthy, he must design his lifestyle opposite to *Prakriti*.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of above the following are the points derived from the above discussion:-

1. *Prakriti* and lifestyle are natural phenomena as well as occur essentially.
2. All the physiological process are directly controlled by *Vata-Pitta* and *Kapha* and *Mansika Doshas* thus by the predominant *Dosha* is a particular type of *Prakriti*.
3. The principles of maintaining a proper well being of the body and lifestyle are two folds- the observance of personal, moral, seasonal conduct and for maintaining way of life it must be opposite to *Prakriti* of an individual as the objective of the science is establishing equilibrium of the body.
4. *Prakriti* has decisive role in *Swasthviritta* (restoration of health), which is the prime objective of *Ayurveda*. *Prakriti* based guidelines for diet and lifestyle result in healthy tissues and homeostasis of *Doshas*. Every healthy individual should know about his/her *Prakriti*, so that one can know what are the healthy lifestyle habits, eating habits for him, by adopting which he can maintain

his healthy state and prevent any disease which may come. For e.g., if a person is found to have *Pitta* predominant *Prakriti* he is advised all those food stuffs which produce more heat in the body. It is because he is having already increased heat in the body and by taking more heat producing regimens he may acquire many disease. This can be done only if we know the *Prakriti*.

5. By knowing the *Prakriti* we come to know about the strength of a person to combat with the lifestyle diseases person having *Sama Prakriti* it is said to be having best immunity and strength. Out of rest six types, *Prakriti* with one *Dosha* (*ek Doshaja*) have better resistance than two *Dosha Prakriti* (*Dvi Doshaja*). *Vata-Pitta-Kapha Prakriti* is susceptible to disease in decreasing order.

6. In general by knowing your *Prakriti* you can be aware of the do's and don'ts for daily routine and to be in healthy state you can be aware of, what type of disorders or ailments your body can have in future, so that you can change your lifestyle.

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