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Importance of Ayurvedic *Nutraceuticals* w.s.r. to *Ahara* and *Ahara Kalpana*

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ABSTRACT

Background: In the time of advancement in nutraceutical science, there is requirement of diet which should have palatability along with proper nutrition so that the people can easily consume it. Ahara, Nindra and Brahmacharya plays pivotal role in maintenance of health and alleviating the disease state. Ahara is said to be Prana (vital energy) of the living beings. It supports body and continues elegant with strength, complexion, proficient, satisfaction and intelligence. That's why, Ahara is at prime place among three pillars of life. These requirements can be fulfilled by Ayurveda as it describes about many varieties of Ahara along with different palatable forms.

Aim: To explore the concept of Ayurvedic nutraceuticals w.s.r. to Ahara and Ahara Kalpana. **Materials and Methods:** Classical texts along with available commentaries, other literature related to the subject, research papers, and material available on websites have been referred and critically analyzed.

Discussion: Understanding of nutrition according to Ayurveda is different from the modern nutraceutical concept. The basic focus of the modern concept of nutrition is on the physical attributes of food i.e. the quantity of the nutrients (mainly calorie basis) while Ayurveda not only focuses on quantity, but also emphasizes on other aspects like age, appetite, digestive power, contents of diet, season etc. Combination of these principles is more useful to provide optimum benefit of any diet substance to one self as it is the personalized protocol.

Conclusion: Implementation of concept of Ahara and Ahara Kalpana for maintenance of health and management of diseases can provide a better option for nutraceuticals science in upcoming future in terms of palatability, cost effectiveness and easy option for prevent many deficiencies, malnutrition and life style disorders.

KEYWORDS

Ahara, Ahara Kalpana, Nutraceuticals



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INTRODUCTION

Ahara, Nindra and Brahmacharya plays pivotal role regarding to maintenance of health and alleviating the disease. *Ahara* is said to be Prana (vital energy) of the living beings¹. It supports body and continues elegant with strength, complexion, proficient, satisfaction and intelligence. That's why, *Ahara* is at prime place among three pillars of life. If food is faulty, the structure and functions of the body start getting disturbed and deteriorated which can cause many deficiencies and lifestyle diseases. That is why while describing causative factors of disorders, food article and its preparation have been given more importance. Ayurveda refers to the knowledge of healthy diet and it actually provides the first approach of good health and decrease the symptoms of illness. Ayurveda prioritize diet and proper eating habits².

It is important to consider a food that is most favorable for the particular constitutional type. When *Ahara* is consumed properly according to *Prakriti, Desha, Bala, Kala* etc. then it retains a sound physical as well as mental health of body. Hence it has been described as “*Aharo hi Mahabheshaja*” by Acharya Kashyapa³. Acharya Sushruta has praised it as nourishing, instant health supplier,

sustains body, promotes life, imparts body glow. It also helps in advancing energy level, memory level, *Oja*, digestive power⁴. Acharya Vagbhata has also mentioned similar opinion about its importance. To achieve benefits mentioned above, one should consume proper *Ahara (Pathyakara Ahara)*. The *Pathyakara Ahara* is not only beneficial in healthy stage but also helpful in diseased condition for speedy recovery⁵. If it is consumed is taken inappropriately, then it leads to imbalance of *Doshas* which in turn develops a disease or symptoms⁶.

Requirement:

In the time of advancement in pills-based nutraceuticals science there is requirement of diet which should have palatability along with proper nutrition so that people easily taken it. Ayurveda can fulfill above requirement as it describes about many varieties of nutritious diet - along with different palatable forms like *Yusha, Yavagu, Mantha, Panaka, Vilepi* etc. which can maintain Health.

Aushadha Sidhha Ahara (medicated diet) is a unique combination of both *Aushadha* (medicine) & *Ahara*(diet). Though, *Aushadha Siddha Ahara* according to severity of the disease is very much helpful in the process of treating any disease or condition. for e.g. the patient of *Jvara*(fever) should be given *Peya* etc. after the proper digestion of the medicines but in



case of *Kaphaja Jvara*, *Peya* is contraindicated. It is because *Peya* increases *Kapha* not in quantity but in consistency. Hence, present review article has been planned with following aim.

This paper was aimed to explore the concept of *Ayurvedic* nutraceuticals w.s.r. to *Ahara* and *Ahara Kalpana*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Classical texts along with available commentaries, other literature related to the subject, research papers, and material available on websites have been referred and critically analyzed.

OBSERVATIONS

Difference between concept of nutrition in Ayurveda and modern medicine:

Ayurvedic thoughts of nutrition is different from that of the modern concept. The basic focus of the modern concept of nutrition is on the physical attributes of food, it means the amount of nutrients should be in same proportion. *Ahara* is concerned with the effects of many types of food on the quality of the mind, maintain of the *Dosha* and the digestion. *Ayurveda* describe that most of all the diseases arise on the physical level from improper metabolism and it leads to weak and improper functioning. Nutrition

plays major role in the maintenance of mental health.

In the modern era, the ways in which the food is prepared drastically. Because of the rapid lifestyle and the trend of urbanization, people have less access to fresh food. Today, the dominion on packaged and processed food has also increased substantial. It has some harmful effect on both mental and physical health.

From the *Ayurvedic* view, it is important to determine the equivalent balance of all the nutrients as it helps in finding out whether a food item is healthy or not. The body has difficult to digest the synthetic or inorganic substances in any food item. The body generate toxic residue as a result of the synthetic or inorganic substances that prevents the nutrients reaching to the *Dhatu*. These harmful chemicals can damage the *Dhatu* themselves. These responses actually disturb the entire system and decrease the capability of the immune systems.

Ayurveda says that the refrigerated foods or foods which have been left overnight as '*Paryushit*' food. These kind of food puts a strain on the digestive system of the body. It further impedes the metabolic process.

Ayurveda always gives insistence on fresh foods. Raw foods should not be excluded from the diet completely. They should



compose a quarter of the total food intake in a day.

Scientific Relevance of *Ahara Kalpana* (Diet Preparations):

Ayurvedic seers have described so many *Ahara Kalpana* (Diet Preparations) like

Manda, Yavagu, Peya, Panaka, Mantha, Vilepi, Yusha, Krushara etc. All these *Ahara Kalpana* are used as nutrition supplement for treatment of diseases.

Table 1 Quantity, properties and action of different diet form

Diet form	Quantity	Properties	Actions
<i>Peya</i> (Semisolid) watery consistency	Rice: 1 part water :14 parts	Quickly digestible Stop loose motions, Nourishes the tissues	<i>Laghava, Sweda-Agnijanana, Vatanulomana</i> ⁷
<i>Vilepi</i> (Solid form) thick paste	Rice: 1 part water: 4 parts	Nourishing Delicious	<i>Tarpana, Hridya, Grahi, Vrishya</i> ⁸ <i>Madhura, Pittanashini</i> ⁹
<i>Yusha</i> : (Semisolid) watery consistency	Grain Pulses: 1 part Water: 16 part	Quickly digestible Protein	<i>Kanthya, Laghupaki, Kaphanashaka</i> ¹⁰
<i>Yavagu</i> (Solid form) thick paste	Grain-rice :1 part Water :6 part	Strengthening Nourishing	<i>Grahi, Balya, Tarpana, Vatanashana</i> ¹¹
<i>Krishara</i> (Solidform)	Prepared by adding rice and green grain	Quickly digestible Supplements Carbohydrate Protein	<i>Kapha-Pittakara, Balya, Vatanashaka</i> ¹²
<i>Manda</i> : (Semisolid) watery consistency	Rice: 1 part water :14 parts	Quickly digestible	<i>Dipana, Pachana</i> ¹³ <i>Vatanulomana, Hridya</i> ¹⁴
<i>Mantha and panaka</i>	<i>Kharjural/ Chinchu,</i> Jaggery Water	Strengthening Nourishing Delicious	<i>Sadya Tarpaniya</i> ¹⁵

DISCUSSION

These days due to fast and competitive life style people are not aware about their dietary styles and their diet supplements. So, the big range of population is suffering from many diseases and complications in regular lifestyle. An year ago, *Ayurvedic* seers were well aware about this condition and to counteract it they had described different concepts regarding *Ahara*. *Ahara kalpana* is one important aspect amongst it. As one can use it daily and in routine life without any extra efforts.

Importance of *Ahara Kalpana* (Diet Preparations):

- **Palatability and easy availability:** *Ahara Kalpana* (Diet Preparations) can be prepared by very easy methods and ingredients like pulses and grains are easily available. *Krita* form of *Yusha* etc. makes it delicious so that it can be more palatable. Skilled knowledge of cooking is not required for their preparations.
- **Cost effective:** Economically it is very cheap as compared to packaged



protein powders or capsules etc. they are made from grains and pulses.

- **Good Nutrition value:** *Ahara Kalpana* (like *Yusha*, *Yavagu* made up with pulses and grains, *Mantha*, *Panaka* made up with fruits) nutritious substances like proteins, carbohydrates and vitamins.

- Good for Pediatric Practice as they are delicious and can be useful in protein malnutrition, vitamin deficiencies etc.

- **Different modifications:** *Ahara Kalpana* (Diet Preparations) can be modified according to age, diseases, and *Agni*. i.e, ***Aushadha Siddha Ahara Kalpana*** :

Aushadha Siddha Ahara (medicated diet) is a unique form of medicine. Medicines/Drugs are *Vyadhi Pratyanyika* (opposite to diseases) in nature and not only cure diseases, but they also help to reverse the pathogenesis of diseases. Therefore, it improves the strength of the patient.

Dietary items hence are *Rasa* (taste) dominant in nature so they are consumed in large quantity. Therefore, the *Agni* should be proper for their proper digestion. Medicines are *Virya* (potency) dominant in nature hence they are required in less quantity but there are certain conditions (e.g. Pregnancy, infants, old age etc.), where *Tikshna Aushadha Dravyas* (strong and penetrating) cannot be administered¹⁶.

Aushadha Siddha Ahara (medicated diet) can be a best & alternative best in above mentioned conditions as *Ahara Kalpana* (Diet Preparations) is used according to metabolism of the patient for maintaining his strength and drug is used for curing the diseases¹⁷.

CONCLUSION

Proper implementation of concept of *Ayurvedic* nutraceuticals in the form of *Ahara* (Diet) and *Ahara Kalpana* (Dietary preparations) for maintenance of health and management of diseases can be a promising in current nutraceuticals science. It can be turned out as a palatable, economically beneficial and easy option for prevention and management for many deficiencies, malnutrition and lifestyle disorders.



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