



SIGNIFICANCE OF *PRAKRITI* IN *AYURVEDA*: A REVIEW

UTKALINI NAYAK^{1*} PRADIP KUMAR PANDA²

^{1*}Associate professor, Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Govt. Ayurveda College & Hospital, Balangir, Odisha-767001

²Professor, Department of Rog Nidan Evum Vikriti Vigyan, Dean, Sri Sri College of Ayurvedic Science & Research Hospital, Sri Sri University, Cuttack, Odisha.

Corresponding Author Email: utkalini2006@gmail.com Access this article online: www.jahm.co.in

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ABSTRACT:

Prakriti, a fundamental concept in *Ayurveda*, plays a pivotal role in understanding an individual's unique constitution and its influence on health and well-being. This comprehensive review explores the significance of *Prakriti* in the context of Ayurvedic medicine, highlighting its role in personalized healthcare and holistic healing. We delve into the historical roots of *Prakriti*, its diagnostic methods, and its impact on physical, mental, and emotional health. Through an in-depth analysis of existing literature, this article explains how *Prakriti* can be used to customize treatment approaches, improve food choices, and advance preventative healthcare through a thorough study of the body of available evidence. By recognizing the profound importance of *Prakriti*, this review underscores its potential to bridge the gap between traditional Ayurvedic wisdom and modern healthcare, ultimately contributing to a more holistic approach to health and wellness.

Keywords: *Prakriti*, Genotype, *Ayurveda*, *Prakriti assessment chart*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda a holistic medical science has given emphasis on maintaining health of healthy individual and treating illness of diseased ones. The treatment principle depends upon so many fundamental factors of *Ayurveda*. *Prakriti* is one of them. The treatment of diseases occurs in a specific manner as it believes that every individual is unique and has different constitution and the treatment is based on the defined constitution.

Prakriti constitutes two words 'Pra' and 'kriti'. *Pra* means the beginning or commencement or source of origin and *kriti* means to perform. So *Prakriti* means natural form or original form or natural constitution of human body. *Prakriti*, which stands for genotype,^[1] is the culmination of all an individual's physiological, psychological, and physical traits. *Prakriti*, according to *Rasavaisheshika*, is a condition that arises during conception because of dosha's prominence ^[2]. From the time of fertilization till death, it doesn't change. According to *Acharya Charak* and *Sushrut*, *Prakriti* is determined at the time of fertilization due to increased status of *dosha* which is normal. ^[3-4] Some other factors influence *Prakriti* such as *Matur ahara vihara* (maternal diet and life style), *Kala garbhasaya*(season of conception)

and *Panchamahabhuta vikara*. ^[5] *Acharya Charak* also explained some other extra uterine factors which influence *Prakriti* are *Jati prasakta* (racial/Caste), *Kula prasakta* (Familial), *Desha-anupatinee* (Country or place), *Vayo-anupatinee* (Natural change according to age), *Kala-anupatinee*(Time period of life) and *Pratyatmaniyata*(Individual specific character).^[6] *Prakriti* of an individual is determined on the basis of these dominant dosha in the above mentioned factors when they initially unite in the form of fetus. Therefore Consequently, *Kapha*, *Pitta*, or *Vata* dominate some people's *Prakriti*. and a few more by the fusion of two doshas. In some cases, however equilibrium of *dosha* is well mentioned. Therefore *doshas* are the root cause in the initiation and formation of any individual.

Roga pareeksha(assessment of disease) and *Rogi pareeksha*(examination of patient) is the most important pillar for *Chikitsa* which aids a physician to determine the strength of patient as well as the severity of disease also. *Acharya Chakrapani* mentioned “*पुरुषं पुरुषं वीक्ष्य स ज्ञेयो भिषगुत्तमः*.”The best physician is who examines each patient accurately ^[7], so that one can prevent the medical error. *Acharya Charak* further elucidated *Dasavidha pareeksha*, emphasizing that "*Prakriti*" is the primary

component. He clarified that knowledge of *Prakriti* ^[8] is equivalent to knowledge of the *vikriti*. Furthermore, "*Navegadharaniya Adhyaya*" includes a reference to *Prakriti* or *deha Prakriti* ^[9] under the heading of "*swastha chatuska*." With the help of this *Deha prakriti*, a physician can learn about the *Kostha*, *Agni*, *Bala*, and *Ayu* of both patients and healthy individuals.^[10] Acharya Charak explained single *dehaPrakriti* (DP) persons are highly susceptible to their respective *dosha* dominating disorders and explained eating habits, lifestyle regimen and medications for distinct *DP* persons.^[11] The susceptibility and severity of disease may depend upon *DP*. It is stated that an individual is more prone to the disease influenced by the same *dosha* of his *Prakriti*, based on the presence of potent aetiology.^[12] For example *Kapha* aggravating etiological factors cause severe *Kapha* dominant diseases in *Kapha* predominant *DP* individuals easily and quickly when compared with other *DP* individuals. And it is difficult to treat. Similar problem arises in both *Pittaja Prakriti* person as well as in *Vataja Prakriti* person. Acharya Sushrut said that *Prakriti* is the temperament of person is of seven types ^[13]. It is determined by the preponderance of *dosha* at the time of fertilization and is also influenced by *Panchamahabhuta*, namely *Prithvi*, *Ap*, *Tejo*, *Vayu*, and *Akasha*.^[14] Acharya

Vagbhata said this *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Prakriti* are to be inferior, medium, and superior respectively. Whereas *samadhatu Prakriti* is described as the supermost and all the *dwandaja Prakriti* are considered to be *Nindya*.^[15] The individual with combination of any two *dosha* are susceptible to disease and these types are worst in terms of health. *SamaPrakriti* individuals are the best in terms of health and found to be least affected with hereditary ailments ^[16].

Distinct properties and function have been described to each *dosha* ^[17-18-19]. For instance *Vata* contributes to manifestation of shape, movement, cognition and excretion of wastes. It is also considered to be an initiator of the activities of *kapha* and *Pitta*. *Pitta* is responsible for metabolism, vision and host surveillance. *Kapha* is responsible for anabolism, growth and maintenance of structure, storage and stability.^[20]

People who are *Vata Prakriti* are more likely to have neurological system disorders. Because the lower limbs are the seat of *Vata*, these disorders primarily affect them. Additionally, *Vata* illnesses are observed in old age, which corresponds to the *Vata kala* era. *Pitta Prakriti* people also have higher rates of digestive and metabolic disorders. The disorders primarily affect the abdomen, and the *Pitta kala* phase of middle age is when they are first observed.

People with Kapha *Prakriti* are more likely to get respiratory illnesses, which typically affect the upper body. Additionally, it is more prominent in the early ages, during the Kapha Kala period.^[20]

The concept of *Beeja*, *Beejabhaga* and *Beejabhagavayava* is mentioned in *Ayurveda*.^[21] The *shukra* (male sperm) and *shonita* (Female Sperm) can be taken as the basic entity *Beeja*. *Beejabhaga* refers to the Chromosome. *Beejabhagavayava* is the most fundamental entity which can be grossly compared to a gene.^[22-23] It is responsible for the expression of a particular trait in an individual. *Prakriti* is mentioned as the genetically determined relative proportion of *Dosha* within the normal range.^[24] So it leads to the hypothesis that *Prakriti* (Phenotype) can be linked with the genotype of a human being.^[25] Patwardhan et al. (2005) hypothesized in a paper that there is a genetic link to *Prakriti* and as proof of this concept showed a correlation between HLA alleles and *Prakriti* type. This work is a promoter for a wider revolution in the scientific investigation of *Ayurveda* in India, referred to as Ayurvedic biology and AyuGenemics.^[26-27] Aurgenomics is an integrative approach of *Ayurveda* and Genomics for discovery of predictive markers for preventive and personalized medicine^[28]. It interprets the principles of *Ayurveda*

with the latest modern tools and thereby it covers the way for evidence based *Ayurveda* and thus attained better global acceptance. Personalized medicine remains an important concept of research and needs further perfection to make it more feasible for clinical practice. Recently a study reported complete absence of the HLA DRB1x02 allele in the *Vata* type and the HLA DRB1x 13 in the *Kapha* type. Higher allele frequency of HLA DRB1x10 was noted in the *Kapha* type than in the *Pitta* and *Vata* type.^[29] Patwardhan et al. have shown that the extensive metabolizer (EM) genotype of the drug metabolizing enzyme CYP2C19(x1/x3) was found only in *Pitta Prakriti*.^[30] A recent study shown that there is association between blood group of individual and risk of heart diseases.^[31] Supriya Valerao in her studies found that *Vata-Pitta* individual *Prakriti* had the maximum MPA (Maximal Platelet Aggregation) as compared to other *Prakriti* individuals. Presence of *Kapha dosha* lowers the aggregatory response as *kapha dosha* leads to slow metabolism. And *Vata dosha* responsible for rapid movement & *Pitta dosha* is responsible for metabolic activities.^[32] One genetic study shown that PGM1 gene is in the center of many metabolic pathways which directly correlates with the role of *Pitta* in metabolism as described in *Ayurveda*.^[33] Also it is found that *Vata-Kapha*

group had higher number of patients with cardiovascular risk diseases than other groups.^[34] Ghodke et.al (2011) demonstrated a probable genomic basis for metabolic difference attributed by *Prakriti* and concluded that *Pitta Prakriti* are fast metabolizers and *kapha* ones are slow and influenced by different doses of CYP2C19 substrates.^[35]

Importance of Prakriti

- Individualized Health Care: Ayurveda acknowledges that every person possesses a distinct *Prakriti* that defines their mental, emotional, and physical attributes. Knowing one's *Prakriti* makes it easier to customize therapeutic interventions, food, and lifestyle changes to preserve or restore balance and prevent disease.
- Susceptibility to Imbalance: *Prakriti* signifies an individual's innate propensities towards specific imbalances. People with a dominant Vata constitution, for example, might be more prone to disorders like anxiety, insomnia, or constipation that are associated with excess air and space elements, whereas people with a prominent Pitta constitution might be more susceptible to inflammation-related problems like skin rashes or acidity.
- Diagnosis of Diseases: In Ayurveda, the assessment of *Prakriti* is an essential aspect of diagnosis. Practitioners evaluate the balance of doshas to understand the root cause of diseases. Imbalances in the doshas from one's *Prakriti* can lead to various health issues, and diagnosis involves identifying these imbalances and correcting them.
- Treatment Approach: The goal of Ayurvedic treatment is to bring the dosha balance back in accordance with each person's *Prakriti*. This include applying herbal remedies, nutritional advice, lifestyle modifications, detoxification treatments, yoga, meditation, and other holistic methods that are customized to each individual's unique requirements according to their *Prakriti*.
- Preventive Healthcare: People can prevent diseases and maintain their health by taking preventive steps after they have a knowledge of their *Prakriti*. Eating and living according to one's constitution lowers the likelihood of illness by preserving the body's harmony and balance.

- **Mind-Body Connection:** *Prakriti* also encompasses mental and emotional characteristics. Imbalances in doshas can affect mental well-being, leading to conditions like stress, depression, or mood swings. By addressing doshic imbalances through practices like yoga, meditation, and stress management, one can promote mental health and overall well-being.

CONCLUSION

Prakriti is an important concept in *Ayurveda*. which is decided at the time of conception due to influence of various factors. The main goal of *Ayurveda* is to sustain health in a healthy person, hence Acharyas described certain dietary habits, lifestyle regimens, and pharmaceutical regimens for various *Dehaprakriti* individuals. The term *Beeja*, *Beejabhaga* and *Beejabhagavayava* is mentioned which can be taken as sperm, chromosome, and gene respectively. So, *Prakriti* (phenotype) can be linked with genotype. It is already researched by various researcher that there is a genetic link to *Prakriti* such as HLADRB1, CYP2C19, PGM1, Blood group and cardiac disorders etc. These parameters can help in confirmation of *Prakriti* which is decided by *Prakriti* characteristics-based questionnaires as described in *Ayurveda*. Hence a healthy and suitable

lifestyle for individual will be adopted for betterment of human being through *Prakriti*.

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