



## **PRAKRTI: A DETERMINANT OF HEALTH AND PERSONALITY**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The modern medical system operates by addressing the indicators or parameters of a disease which brings about instant relief and comfort, hence making this form of remedy the most preferred and recommended one. However, despite its efficacy in providing immediate solutions, it is not devoid of drawbacks, one of them being the superficial nature of this system of treatment as it seldom delves deeper into the root cause of any infirmity or disorder, due to which oftentimes the condition of concern may be suppressed or temporarily subdued. On the contrary, the traditional medical system of cure incorporated a holistic approach by examining not only the symptoms of a disease, but also the reason for its onset and the factors sustaining it such as lifestyle practices, dietary habits and other biopsychosocial aspects. Such an all-encompassing approach makes it highly individualized to suit the needs of each person rather than generalizing it to the type of disease. Nevertheless, as these therapies have their origin in the Indian canonical scriptures, they are often dismissed as being unscientific, religious or spiritual. The present conceptual article is an attempt to minimize the misconceptions attached to the traditional medical system by highlighting the practicality and logic of the basic principles of *Ayurveda* which is the most popular and widely known among the various indigenous systems of healing and medicine.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda; Indigenous; Prakriti; Tridosha; Triguna; Triskandha; Trisutra*

## INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined Health as, “A state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” This definition aligns with the concept of health that was long conceived by the ancient physician *Sushruta*, known as the father of Indian medicine, who defined health as follows, “*Samadosha Samagnishcha Samadhatu Malakriyah. Prasannatmendriyamanah Svastha Ityabhidhiyate*” (*Sushruta-Sutra*, 15:48).<sup>[1]</sup> This definition is inclusive of the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of health or *Svasthya*, indicating complete psychosomatic equilibrium which necessarily entails the efficiency of the senses and *Prasannata* (cheerfulness) of the mind and spirit, in addition to the absence of any disease conditions. The senses in this context not only include the five *Jnanendriya-s* (sense organs of perception) namely sight, smell, hearing, touch and the tongue for taste, but also the five *Karmendriya-s* (motor organs of action) namely, the tongue for speech, hands, feet and the excretory and reproductive organs.<sup>[1]</sup>

The above definition of *Sushruta* clearly implies that the science of *Ayurveda* is not merely a system of medicine, but embraces complete positive health that promotes the accomplishment of all the cherished worldly

goals as well as spiritual upliftment. A *Roga* (disease) is a great obstacle in the achievement of these goals and objectives, and therefore *Ayurveda* aims not only at cure, but also the prevention of diseases and maintenance of absolute health and happiness. It is therefore a way or science of life, and this characteristic feature is evident from the very derivation of the word *Ayurveda*, where *Ayuh* refers to life or longevity and *Veda* refers to knowledge.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Brief History of *Ayurveda*:

*Ayurveda* is a traditional system of indigenous medicine that aims at treating the whole person rather than just the physical symptoms of a disease. It has a divine beginning wherein *Dhanvantari*, an *Avatar* (incarnation) of *Vishnu* appears in the *Veda-s* and *Purana-s* as the physician of the Gods. In fact, the *Bhagavata-Purana* honours *Dhanvantari* as the teacher who revealed *Ayurveda* to the world. He is depicted as holding a pot of *Amrta* or the celestial nectar that gives immortality, and is therefore deified as the embodiment of perfect health whose divine presence in herbal medicines is believed to remove the fear of old age, disease and death.<sup>[2]</sup>

The fundamental concepts and practices of *Ayurveda* were borrowed from the *Samkhya* philosophy by the ancient seers with the noble intention of curbing the suffering and lapses

caused by infirmity. This explains the concurrence of *Ayurveda* with *Yoga*, which is also derived from the same *Samkhya* philosophy that asserts the universe to be a combination of *Purusha* (spirit) and *Prakrti* (matter).<sup>[2][3]</sup>

While *Ayurveda* flourished in northern India, the practice of *Siddha* gained much popularity in the south, particularly in the Tamil-speaking region where its foundations were laid down by the saintly ascetics known as *Siddhar-s*. This *Siddha* system too, bears close similarities with *Ayurveda* since it is also believed to have come from the Gods, wherein it was first described by Lord *Shiva* to his consort *Parvati*, who then passed it on to her son *Murugan* who is considered to be the God of youth, beauty and divine freedom. Lord *Murugan* subsequently taught this knowledge to his disciple, Sage *Agastya* who then came to be known as the father of *Siddha* medicine. The scriptures written by him coincide significantly with the tenets of *Ayurveda* and all aspects of life, encompassing dietary habits and lifestyle practices like *Yoga*, and also the concept of salvation in life through medicine and meditation.<sup>[2]</sup>

#### **PRAKRTI:**

The word *Prakrti* or matter literally refers to Constitution that is comprised of the five gross natural elements known as the *Pancha-Mahabhuta-s*. These constitute the very

foundation blocks, involving *Akasha* (ether or space), *Vayu* (air), *Teja* (fire), *Apa* (water) and *Prthivi* (earth). Both *Siddha* and *Ayurveda* are based on these five basic elements that compose the entire universe and everything that belongs to it or is part of it and emanates from it. The term *Prakrti* can be used in various contexts connoting different meanings as in, *Sharirika* (bodily or physical constitution), *Svabhava* (nature) and *Arogya* (health).<sup>[1][2]</sup>

**Deha-Prakrti:** When the word *Prakrti* is used in the context of physical or bodily constitution, it is referred to as *Deha-Prakrti*, wherein *Deha* indicates body. The living body that is comprised of the *Pancha-Mahabhuta-s* determine the humoral composition influencing the body type and characteristics, classified into three components namely *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. They are referred to as *Dhatu-s* when they exist in dynamic equilibrium in a healthy human body. However, when this equilibrium gets disturbed, it causes malfunctioning of the body resulting in *Roga*, which is the common underlying assumption of *Ayurveda* as well as *Siddha*. In such an event they come to be known as *Dosha-s*, which is a classical Sanskrit term alluding to 'fault'. Thus, *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* may be alternatively referred to as either *Dhatu-s* or *Dosha-s*, depending on their effect on the functioning of the body.<sup>[1][4]</sup>

Therefore, maintaining or restoring the balance of these three humours referred to as *Dhatu-Samya*, is the prime goal sought to be achieved by *Ayurveda* and *Siddha*, where *Vata* is related to movement and the nervous system, while *Pitta* or bile is the force of the sun which is hot and rules the digestive processes and metabolism, and *Kapha* or phlegm is likened to the moon, which has a cooling effect and governs the various organs of the body.<sup>[2][3]</sup> The succeeding sections elaborately summarize these three *Dhatu-s* constituting the *Deha-Prakrti*:

**Vata:** *Vata* is associated with motion, and is therefore responsible for initiating and promoting all biological activities involved in body movements including bone tissues, circulation, cell division and excretion of wastes. The *Panchabhautika* structure of *Vata-Prakrti* is *Akasha* and *Vayu*, and is usually categorized as a *Hina-Prakrti* meaning fragile or poor constitution since the physique of these individuals is generally ectomorphic with a slender or an emaciated body frame and a feeble stamina. In fact, it is believed that individuals who are *Vata* type are most susceptible to chronic diseases, with a greater propensity to develop speech disorders and neurological problems related to locomotion, dementia, etc.<sup>[1][5][6]</sup>

The *Vata-Dosha* generally predominates in the lower region of the body, below the navel.

It is found to be the most prevalent *Dosha* during *Jirnavastha* (old age), when the elements of the body gradually succumb to deterioration and decay.<sup>[1][5]</sup>

**Pitta:** *Pitta* is associated with the process of catabolism and is therefore responsible for functions such as digestion, quick metabolism, thermal regulation and maintenance of the body's homeostasis. As *Pitta* is so closely associated with the blood which facilitates in transmitting the nutrients assimilated from the food consumed, it plays an important role in nourishing and energizing the body, thereby giving a healthy appearance. On the other hand, in the event of any imbalance in this *Dosha*, it can trigger bleeding disorders, ulcers and skin diseases among those with a *Pitta* body type. Its *Panchabhautika* structure is *Tejas* or *Agni* and *Apa*, and therefore another natural function of *Pitta* is heat production. However, *Pitta* has been classified as a *Madhyama-Prakrti* indicating moderate or mediocre constitution because despite having a muscular or mesomorphic body build, *Pitta* dominant individuals tend to be only average in physical strength with a medium capacity to perform activities.<sup>[1][5][6]</sup>

Hence, this *Dosha* is generally most prevalent during *Madhyavastha* (middle age) when a person is said to have attained a mature balance of both psychic and physical strength or energy. Furthermore, even in

terms of location, the *Pitta-Dosha* typically predominates in the mid-region of the body, between the clavicle and navel.<sup>[1][5]</sup>

**Kapha:** *Kapha* contributes to growth, maintenance of structure, storage and stability through its association with the adipose tissues of the body that serve to conserve energy in the form of lipids or fats. However, compared to *Vata* and *Pitta* the metabolic activity of *Kapha* is slower, and hence those with a *Kapha* body type have a propensity for weight gain and obesity which in turn is linked to various other chronic diseases like heart ailments, hypertension and diabetes, collectively referred to as the metabolic syndrome. The *Panchabhautika* structure of *Kapha* is *Apa* and *Prthivi*, and because of the strong physique of these individuals with an endomorphic structure, it has been categorized as an *Uttama-Prakrti*, literally meaning best but specifically translated as strong or robust constitution in the present context.<sup>[1][5][6]</sup>

Interestingly, the *Kapha-Dosha* is highly prevalent during *Balyavastha* (childhood phase) before the manifestation of adolescence, when the body is progressively undergoing a steady process of growth and development. It usually predominates in the upper region of the body, above the clavicle.<sup>[1][5]</sup>

These three *Dosha-s* together known as *Tridosha*, exist in all individuals without exception, but in varying permutations and combinations depending on the degree of predominance. The *Ekadoshaja* (single-*Dosha* typology) is one where there is an independent predominance of either *Vata*, *Pitta* or *Kapha*. In *Dvandvaja* (double-*Dosha* typology), any two *Dosha-s* may predominate concomitantly, and in *Tridoshaja* (triple-*Dosha* typology), all the three *Dosha-s* coexist equivalently. It is important to understand that in the former two typologies, while there may be a predominance of one or two *Dosha-s*, the other *Dosha(s)* are not absent. Rather, they are present in a lesser degree compared to the predominant one(s). It is this unique shuffling of *Dosha-s* that governs each individual person's general health, disease(s) if any, its prognosis and the likely cure.<sup>[1]</sup>

In fact, the effects of *Tridosha* are not limited only to the body and physiology. They also percolate the functioning of the mind, determining the characteristic personality that makes each individual so different and unique from the other. Thus, the *Prakrti* is also composed of three mental attributes known as *Guna-s*.

**Manasika-Prakrti:** When *Prakrti* is observed from the perspective of emotional and cognitive attributes, it may be referred to as *Manasika-Prakrti* or *Trigunatmaka-Prakrti*

since the *Guna*-s are three in number just as the *Dosha*-s, namely *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, collectively known as *Triguna*. Likewise, each *Guna* is also constituted and characterized by its distinctive *Panchabhautika* composition.<sup>[1][6]</sup>

**Sattvic:** *Sattva* is endowed with the qualities of cheerfulness, purity and clarity of thoughts and deeds, and a quest for knowledge. It bestows one with *Shuddha-Chitta* (crystalline mindset) and is therefore considered to be *Shreshtha* (supreme) among the three *Guna*-s, with *Akasha* being its *Panchabhautika* element.<sup>[6][7]</sup>

**Rajasic:** *Rajas* is the *Guna* of vigour that propels the mind towards action and performance, which provides the impetus to enthusiastically pursue goals and also indulge in various kinds of humanistic activities benefitting the society at large. However, when this *Guna* is churned with the hungers of lust and avarice, it can turn out to be a destructive force for the self and others as well. Thus, owing to the underlying traits of aggression and volatility, *Rajas* has been classified as a *Madhyama-Guna* (of mediocre category), having *Vayu* as its *Panchabhautika* element.<sup>[6][7]</sup>

**Tamasic:** *Tamas* is defined by inertia, delusion and ignorance that can overthrow the mind into dullness, confusion and affective upheavals. Due to such adverse effects, *Tamas*

has been described as an *Adhama* (inferior) *Guna*, characterized with the *Panchabhautika* element of *Prthivi*. Nevertheless, when channelized appropriately, it can also serve to provide respite and rest for the healthy functionality of the mind through its features of slumber and torpidity.<sup>[6][7]</sup>

As the *Rajo* and *Tamo-Guna*-s are prone to induce mental impurities, they are also referred to as *Manasika-Dosha*-s. Similar to the *Tridosha*, the *Triguna* also exist in differential degrees of predominance that distinguishes the *Svabhava* (innate nature or character) of each individual person. When there is a combined predominance of *Sattva* and *Rajo-Guna*-s, the *Panchabhautika* element presiding them is *Agni* and when *Sattva* predominates along with *Tamo-Guna*, the constituting *Panchabhautika* element is *Apa*.<sup>[6]</sup>

### **Correspondence of Deha-Prakrti and Manasika-Prakrti:**

It is evident from the aforementioned descriptions that both the *Tridosha* and *Triguna* are represented by their unique configuration of the *Pancha-Mahabhuta*-s that are essential to sustain life, and on account of this relationship with the five natural elements, both the *Deha* and *Manasika-Prakrti*-s are not completely independent of each other, but they function interactively indicating the interdependence of the body and mind. This correlation between the

*Dosha-s* and *Guna-s* has been depicted in the figure below:<sup>[6]</sup>

<i>Vata</i>	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Sattva</i>	<i>Rajas</i>	<i>Tamas</i>	<i>Sattva-Rajas</i>	<i>Sattva-Tamas</i>
<i>Akasha+Vayu</i>	<i>Agni+Apa</i>	<i>Prthivi+Apa</i>	<i>Akasha</i>	<i>Vayu</i>	<i>Prthivi</i>	<i>Agni</i>	<i>Apa</i>
	<i>Vata</i>	<i>Pitta</i>		<i>Kapha</i>			
	<i>Rajas+Sattva</i>	<i>Sattva+Rajas+Tamas</i>		<i>Tamas+Sattva</i>			

For instance, the *Vata-Dosha* is primarily associated with the *Rajo-Guna* through the common *Pancha-Mahabhuta* of *Vayu*, and hence such a person will possess extroverted qualities such as dynamism and exuberance, but which could impede the process of certain spiritual or contemplative practices like meditation and introspection. Nevertheless, because of its association with *Sattva* through the element of *Akasha*, this person may be bestowed with excellent concentration and a quick grasping power.<sup>[1]</sup>

*Pitta* on the other hand is chiefly associated with *Sattva* when it predominates jointly with *Rajas* and *Tamas*, through the common *Pancha-Mahabhuta-s* of *Agni* and *Apa*. Therefore, such a person may be endowed with a sharp intellect, clarity of mind, confidence and courage, but is simultaneously also prone to certain unfavourable tendencies such as anger and egoism.<sup>[1]</sup>

Likewise, *Kapha* is mainly associated with *Tamas* through the common *Pancha-Mahabhuta* of *Prthivi*. Hence, while a person with this type of a blend may exhibit the

psychophysical characteristics of excessive sleep and mental cloudiness, there is also a calmness and composure observed in their overt behavioural pattern, possibly because of the association of *Kapha* with *Sattva* when it predominates mutually with *Tamas*, through the common *Pancha-Mahabhuta* of *Apa*.<sup>[1]</sup>

The principal commonality between *Ayurveda* and *Yoga* is that they both seek to dilute the *Adhama* (lower) *Guna-s* of *Rajas* and *Tamas* which are the factors contributing to mental and physical disorders. *Yoga* strives to achieve this goal by dispelling spiritual ignorance through the enhancement of the *Sattva-Guṇa*, while *Ayurveda* addresses this goal by prescribing *Prakrti*-specific treatment and lifestyle regimens,<sup>[8]</sup> with emphasis on three important aspects that are regarded as the pillars of *Arogya* namely, *Ahara* (diet), *Nidra* (sleep) and *Brahmacharyam* (abstinence or non-indulgence), which when followed and practised optimally, can facilitate good health and a full lifespan. However, when the food habit and intake are inappropriate, they can predispose a person to *Dosha* disbalance

resulting in varieties of *Roga*, accompanied by sleep disturbances and an overall lifestyle disruption.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Practice in Clinical Setup

The principles of *Ayurveda* are embedded in three main texts namely, the *Charaka-Samhita* that enunciates the uses of drugs and healthy living, the anatomy of the body, pathology of diseases and diagnosis on the basis of sense; the *Sushruta-Samhita* that primarily discusses surgical techniques and procedures; and finally, the *Bheda-Samhita* that lists the names, properties and uses of medicinal plants.<sup>[2]</sup> These classical compendiums present *Ayurveda* as a trifurcated approach known as *Triskandha* that is shouldered by three aphorisms namely, *Hetu-Skandha*, *Linga-Skandha* and *Aushadha-Skandha*. These three aphorisms called *Trisutra*, form the very basis of the science of *Ayurveda* that concerns itself with the sustenance of health among the healthy and relieving the disease among those afflicted.<sup>[3]</sup> It is therefore essential to decipher the code of application of the *Trisutra* or *Triskandha*, as the two terms may be used interchangeably, in the assessment of *Prakrti*:

**Hetu-Skandha:** This aspect deals with the primary and secondary etiological factors that are detrimental to wellness by vitiating the *Dhatu-s*, resulting in *Dhatu-Vaishamya*. In other words, *Hetu* refers to the reasons that can damage health, which may impact

individually or cumulatively and could either be external or internal factors known as *Bahya-Hetu* and *Abhyantara-Hetu*. The external triggers may include seasonal effects, foods or toxins, types of activities or indulgences, etc., while the internal trigger usually revolves around one's natural propensity or vulnerability induced by the *Dosha* predominance. During clinical examination, knowledge of the exact *Hetu* is crucial to the diagnosis of a disease, planning the treatment protocol especially when similar disease conditions may be rooted to multiple factors and even predicting the prognosis depending on the intensity, duration and number of causative influences. Furthermore, it can also help in taking necessary preventive measures by addressing or avoiding the triggers.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Linga-Skandha:** Another important facet in diagnosing and deciding the treatment protocol is understanding the exact nature of the ailment itself, which is possible only through a thorough screening of the symptoms known as *Linga*, that serve as the clinical features manifested into a disease due to *Dosha*-disbalance. For e.g., the *Linga* for *Jvara* (fever) is increased body temperature, which in turn indicates an excess of the *Pitta-Dosha* called *Pitta-Prakopa*. Some of these indicators may be directly noticed by the *Vaidya* (physician), such as temperature



deviations, swelling, rashes, etc., while some indicators may be experienced by the patient but can be known by the *Vaidya* only upon inquiry, like pain, burning sensation, anxiety, etc. Here too, the length and strength of the clearly exhibited *Linga* determine the accuracy of analysis as well as the dispensing of curative remedies.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Aushadha-Skandha:** This is the actual treatment regimen to reestablish the harmony of the *Dosha-s*, and is therefore synonymously also referred to as *Prakrti-Sthapanam*. encompassing a wide gamut of *Hetu-Viparita-Chikitsa* (cause-counteracting therapies) which not only include medications but also other healthy habits like consuming a wholesome diet and following a proper lifestyle with regular exercising and practice of *Yoga*, in addition to certain spiritual and religious practices as well, depending on one's system of faith like chanting of hymns, offering oblations in the sacrificial fire, fasting, going on pilgrimages, use of amulets and gems, etc. When the right kind of medicines which may be based in extracts from *Jangama* (animals), *Audbhida* (plants) or *Parthiva* (metals and minerals), are taken in the appropriate dosage, they become an elixir of life by enriching both physical as well as mental health, and improving the likelihood of preventing or delaying the onset of future illnesses from occurring or recurring.<sup>[3]</sup>

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

*Prakrti* signifies the complete psychosomatic makeup of an individual that is responsible for all kinds of health and disease states. Dhiman and Dhiman (2012) conducted a literary research wherein the purpose of *Ayurveda* has been defined as protecting the health of a healthy person and eliminating the ailments of a diseased person. The removal of *Roga* results in *Duhkha-Nivrtti* (freedom from misery) which is the basic aim of *Ayurveda*. In the context of health maintenance, the authors' review emphasizes on the right type of company to be sought in order to sustain psychological wellbeing, such as those who have attained maturity by virtue of meditation, wisdom, righteousness, patience and who are devoid of anxieties. Likewise, the management of physical health has been ascribed to the right type of diet both quantitatively and qualitatively, that helps in the attainment of *Bala* (strength). Qualitatively, the diet must be antagonistic to that *Dosha* that is naturally high in a person's *Prakrti* and quantitatively, the amount of food consumed should be in accordance with the digestive capacity which differs between various *Doshic* constitutions. The authors affirmed that any prescription of diet, lifestyle modification and even treatment plans and medications have to be highly individualized and specific, since a universal management

approach may most likely be ineffective or could even prove to be contraindicated in case of discordance with any particular *Dosha*.<sup>[9]</sup>

In order to understand the *Ayurvedic* perspective on pathophysiology, Dhruva et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative study with thematic analysis on the causes of cancer and the supportive treatment measures, for which 10 experienced *Ayurvedic Vaidya-s* with rigorous university level training, advanced degrees in *Ayurveda*, with at least 5 years of clinical experience and having treated at least 50 cancer survivors during their career were individually interviewed for one hour each. The data revealed that the growth of tissue is usually induced by *Kapha* while *Pitta* plays the role of transforming the tissue from normal to malignant and *Vata* is involved in the spread of cancer outside the organ of origin. This summary led the authors to conclude that as per *Ayurveda*, cancer is a *Tridoshic* disorder resulting on account of the abnormal interplay of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*.<sup>[10]</sup>

The intrinsic *Manasika-Prakrti* can be the triggering cause for a disease to manifest itself or its disharmony can also be the effect of physical ill-health. In order to illustrate this bifold occurrence, Doshi and Jogsan (2017) performed a comparative study on a sample of 80 people, with 40 diabetics (clinical group) and 40 non-diabetics (normal group), who

were assessed for their *Triguna* personality and aggression. The results showed that the diabetic group scored lower than the non-diabetic group on the dimensions of *Sattva* and *Tamas* but scored higher than their normal counterparts on the dimension of *Rajas*. Likewise, the diabetic group also scored higher on aggression than the non-diabetic group. Thus, the researchers concluded that there are significant differences in *Triguna* as well as aggression between the clinically affected and normal groups.<sup>[11]</sup>

The *Prakrti* of an individual is determined at the time of conception itself but may be subject to minor variations due to some environmental factors, but the overall constitution remains unchanged throughout the lifespan. Mishra et al. (2018) performed a conceptual study by analyzing this *Prakrti* in relation to the *Rashi* (zodiac sign) which is also predetermined based on the planetary and stellar positions at the time of *Janma* (birth). Just as *Prakrti* is made up of five elements, *Jyotish-Shastra* also segregates all the *Rashi-s* based on *Agni*, *Apa*, *Vayu* and *Prthivi*. Hence, the authors undertook this research of correlating the *Prakrti* and the *Janma-Rashi-s* through the study of the *Charaka-Samhita* and the *Bhrgu-Samhita*, with the objective of drawing a guideline to understand illnesses in terms of severity, duration, the probable outcome and any additional means that could

be employed by a physician to counteract the disease. Their analysis revealed that the course of treatment can be planned by integrating the principles of *Ayurveda* encompassing *Rtucharya*, *Dinacharya*, and *Ratricharya*, (the healthy routines to be followed during the day and night, and suiting to the climate) and certain religious practices recommended in the *Jyotish-Shastra* such as the use of *Graha-Ratna* (planet relevant gems), the intake of *Bhasma* (holy ash), *Upavasa* (observing fasts) on specific days or occasions, worshipping specific deities associated with a particular *Rashi*, etc.<sup>[12]</sup>

Nimhan and Kulkarni (2019) conducted a retrospective analytical study on 120 banking professionals working for a minimum span of 10 years, by interviewing 60 candidates with complaints of health issues and 60 healthy candidates. Some of the occupational hazards of the banking profession include long hours of sedentary work, suppression of natural urges, irregular food habits, prolonged duration of computer work, job transfer and commuting long distances, all of which take a toll on the health condition leading to imbalance. The results of the study indicated that the cause or *Hetu* has a strong influence on *Prakrti* as well as *Vikrti* which is the state of imbalance. Both these concepts are unique to *Ayurveda*, and hence the treatment of any disease is chiefly steered towards the

elimination or alleviation of the underlying etiological factors known as *Hetu-Viparita-Chikitsa*, which tackles both *Aharaja-Hetu* as well as *Viharaja-Hetu*, that respectively refer to sicknesses caused by miscalculated food intake and physical activity.<sup>[13]</sup>

Mehra et al. (2020) studied about 200 patients who were identified as suffering from psychosomatic disorders such as hypertension, migraine, psoriasis and irritable bowel syndrome. They were all assessed for their *Manasika-Prakrti* in terms of their *Sattva-Bala* (strength of *Sattva*) which is graded into four levels namely *Pravara-Sattva*, *Pravara-Madhyama-Sattva*, *Avara-Madhyama-Sattva* and *Avara-Sattva*, using the *Sattva* assessment questionnaire. Such a *Sattva-Pariksha* of the psyche provides the *Triguna* status that determines the nature, belief and perception of an individual in different conditions and situations, and is also used as a parameter to evaluate a patient's physical strength during the treatment plan. The results of the study showed that 140 patients out of the 200 ranged between *Avara-Sattva* and *Avara-Madhyama-Sattva* which suggests that patients with psychosomatic disorders tend to have a low stress threshold and hence a greater vulnerability to disease due to the involvement of *Rajas* and *Tamas* that are also referred to as *Manasika-Roga-s*, because of their temperamental characteristics like lust,

anger, greed, delusion, jealousy, pride, neurosis, grief, anxiety, fear and euphoria. They conclude by summarizing that an understanding of the interrelationship between the two *Prakrti*-s of *Manas* (psyche) and *Deha* (soma) can be very handy in planning personalized preventive and curative mental and physical health programs that can provide room for improvement from *Tamas* to *Rajas* or *Rajas* to *Sattva*.<sup>[14]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The healthcare systems of *Ayurveda*, *Siddha* and *Yoga* are all parallel and complementary to each other that focus on treating the person who may be afflicted or ailing from a disease rather than attempting to cure the symptoms of the disease. Hence, these therapies and practices tend to be highly personalized in nature catering to the individual needs and constitutional makeup, and which adopt a holistic approach by addressing the entire range of physical, emotional, social, moral and spiritual dimensions that can facilitate cure and prevention. Thus, this concept of holistic health which is inclusive of the mind, body and soul is directed towards restoring and reestablishing the balance of the *Prakrti* or the essential composition and structure, which will ultimately expand the quality of life through the maintenance of good health and ensuring the longevity of lifespan.

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