

**AYURVEDA CONCEPTS OF PANCHAMAHABHUTAS AND DOSHAS, THEIR
BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE: A REVIEW**

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Article Received on 19/08/2022

Article Revised on 09/09/2022

Article Accepted on 30/09/2022

ABSTRACT

The ancient Ayurveda described several concepts related to the health and disease management; concepts of *Panchamahabhutas* and *Dhatus* are amongst them which contributed significantly towards the understating of patho-physiology of diseases and physiological functioning of human body. The human body is composed by *Panchabhautika* components and these components are related with the *Doshas*, *Guna* and *Rasa*, etc. thus the concept of *Panchamahabhutas* can also be employed for the treatment of diseases. Similar to *Panchamahabhutas* the concept of *Doshas* also play vital role towards the normal and abnormal physiological functioning of body. There are three *Doshas* present in human body namely; *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. The balancing state of these *Doshas* helps to restore normal physiology while abnormal state of *Doshas* affects health status. *Doshas* associated with *Panchamahabhutas* thus contributed towards the biological constitution.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Doshas, Panchamahabhutas, Concept.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda presented several ways for healthy regimens and in this regards Ayurveda suggested many concepts of diseases and physiology of human body. Concepts of *Panchabhautik* and *Doshas* are important aspects of Ayurveda which are related with the normal and abnormal physiology of human body.

Panchamahabhuta siddhant is related with *Tridosha siddhant*, *Garbhoptatti*, *Guna- karma* and *Deha sanghatana*, etc. *Panchamahabhut siddhant* is accepted universally which helps to understand physiology of body as well as effects of elements. This theory also utilizes for therapeutic purposes since each drugs having specific correlation with particular elements thus possess desired therapeutic responses.^[1-4]

Similar to *Panchamahabhuta siddhant* Ayurveda also described concept of *Doshas* which referred to biological elements which helps to govern human physiology and also play role in pathological manifestations. Ayurveda described three types of *Doshas* at physical level; *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* these *Doshas* in equilibrium state resemble normal physiology while imbalance of these three causes diseases.

PANCHMAHABHUTA CONCEPT

According to Ayurveda the every object in universe is composed of five elements (*Panchmahabhuta*) i.e.;

Akash, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Jala* and *Prithvi*. The *Mahabhuta* are dominates to specific *Guna* amongst the *Triguna* as mentioned below:

- *Akasha Mahabhuta* is *Sattva* dominant
- *Vayu Mahabhuta* is *Rajas* dominant
- *Agni Mahabhuta* is *Sattva* and *Rajas* dominant
- *Aap Mahabhuta* is *Sattva* and *Tamas* dominant
- *Prithvi Mahabhuta* is *Tamas* dominant

Panchamahabhuta and Tridosha

- ✚ *Vayu* and *Akash Mahabhutas* are associated with *Vata dosha*.
- ✚ *Agni Mahabhuta* is associated with *Pitta dosha*.
- ✚ *Jala* and *Prithvi Mahabhutas* are associated with *Kapha dosha*.

The Ayurveda concept of *Panchamahabhuta* play vital role at the level of embryonic development. The *Vayu Mahabhuta* in embryo helps to form *Dosha* and *Avayavas*, *Teja mahabhuta* contributed towards biotransformation and provides energy. *Jala mahabhuta* is responsible for *Kledan* at embryonic development level. *Prithvi mahabhuta* gives strength while *Akash mahabhuta* contributed towards the embryonic growth and provides hollow structures of organs.^[4-7]

Role of *Panchamahabhuta* in biological action of *Dravya*

The specific *Dravyas* are related with *Panchamahabhuta* thus possess particular types of biological actions:

- *Virechan dravyas* are *Prithvi* and *Jala mahabhuta* predominant.
- *Vaman dravyas* are *Agni* and *Vayu mahabhutas* predominant.
- *Akash mahabhuta* contributed towards the *Sanshaman* action of substances.
- *Sangrahika* (astringent) substances are *Vayu mahabhuta* predominant.
- *Lekhaniya dravya* are predominates to *Vayu* and *Agni mahabhut*.
- *Brumhana dravya* are predominant to *Prithvi* and *Jala mahabhuta*.

Panchamahabhuta and *Rasa*

The combination of elements produces specific *Rasa*; combination of earth and water contributed towards the sweet taste, combination of earth and fire is responsible for sour taste, combination of water and fire gives salty taste, combination of air and fire provides pungent taste while combination of air and ether gives bitter taste and combination of air and earth provides astringent taste.

CONCEPT OF *DOSHAS*

Doshas are biological entity which helps to maintain balances of physiological activities and formation of *Dhatu*s. The *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are related with specific functions as mentioned below:

- ✚ *Vata* is mainly related with all the movements inside the body. It governs movements of food, fluids, air and waste materials, etc. *Vata* possess dry, light, cold, rough and mobile nature.
- ✚ *Pitta* is responsible for digestion of food and metabolic activities. *Pitta* possesses hot, sharp and intense characters.
- ✚ *Kapha* is related with the function of lubrication and provides stability. *Kapha* possess cold, heavy and stagnant characters.

Vata, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are described as *Shareerika Dosh*a which present in all over the body and dominate specific parts of body as follows:

- *Kapha* predominantly present in the region from head to chest.
- *Pitta* remain predominant between the chest and umbilicus
- *Vata* is predominant below the umbilicus part of body.

Similarly the *Doshas* remain predominate in specific time as depicted in **Figure 1**. This figure shows *Doshas* predominance according to the different part of day time; while during the time of meal and digestion the *Doshas* are remain dominate as *Kapha*, *Pitta* and *Vata* sequentially.^[6-9]

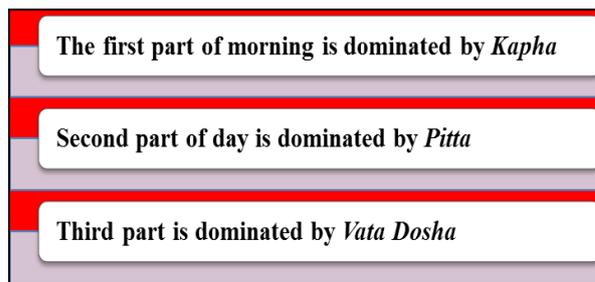


Figure 1: *Doshas* predominance in specific time of day.

As similar to *Shareerika Dosh*a Ayurveda also mentioned *Manasika Dosh*a as *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. *Satva* is described as *Manasika gunas* while *Rajas* and *Tamas* mentioned as *Manasika Dosh*as.

Doshas and *Prakriti*

- *Vata* person mostly possess slim and energetic characters, these peoples learn quickly and flexible in nature. Anxious, highly sensitive to the atmosphere, unstable mood, and irregular appetite and digestive, etc. are common problems of *Vata Prakriti*.
- *Kapha* person possess strong and thick-bone, *Kapha* people possess calm and cool behavior, slow and deliberate in nature. Possess caring, trusting and happy nature. Obesity, slow metabolism, lethargy, over-sleeping, risk of heart disease and lethargies, etc. are common problems of *Kapha Prakriti*.
- *Pitta* person possess muscular build, athletic personality, leadership quality, motivated, competitiveness and aggressive behavior. *Pitta* person are considered intelligent, self-determined and strong with good physical appearance. The *Pitta Prakriti* person also possess some problems like impatient behavior, feels hungry, quick mood swings, sensitive and anger, etc.

Subtypes of *Doshas*

1. *Prana*, *Udana*, *Samana*, *Vyana* and *Apana* are subtypes of *Vata dosha*.
2. *Pachaka*, *Ranjaka*, *Sadhaka*, *Alochaka* and *Bhrajaka* are subtypes of *Pitta dosha*.
3. *Avalambaka*, *Kledaka*, *Bodhaka*, *Tarpaka* and *Shleshaka* are subtype of *Kapha dosha*.

Doshas and Diseases

Aggravated *Vata* is responsible for emaciation, black discoloration, tremors, bloating, constipation, loss of sleep, irrelevant speech, timidity and dizziness, etc.

Aggravated *Pitta* is responsible for yellow discoloration of eyes and skin, hunger and thirst feeling, anger, restlessness and aggression, etc.

Aggravated *Kapha* is responsible for weak digestive activity, lassitude, laziness, heaviness, dyspnoea and cough, etc.^[5-7]

CONCLUSION

Panchamahabhuta principle is peculiarity of Ayurveda which helps to described action of body as well as action of *Dravya*. This principle can be used to understand disease pathogenesis as well as therapeutic role of specific *Dravya* (drugs). *Panchamahabhuta* is helpful in *Nidan* and *Chikitsa*, thus can be utilizes in clinical practice of Ayurveda for well being of society. Similarly the concept of *Tridoshas* play vital role towards the physiology of human body and pathogenesis of diseases. The balances of *Doshas* govern normal physiology while imbalance state of *Doshas* is considered responsible for abnormal physiology. The three *Doshas* of human body namely; *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are responsible for specific characteristics and pathological manifestations. Thus this concept can also be uses for knowing the physiology of human body as well as pathogenesis of disease. The concept of *Doshas* also play important role in the planning of therapeutic regimens for specific types of disease.

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