

EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF *PRAKRITI*: ITS ROLE AND APPLICATION IN
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ABSTRACT

Prakriti, defined as an individual's natural state, which merely established during the period of conception. *Prakriti* formed due to the predominance of *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*) which shapes genetic constitution of individual. *Prakriti* encompasses physiological, anatomical, psychological and spiritual traits which influences susceptibility of individual towards the diseases. *Prakriti* helps in preventive and treating disease by guiding personalized medicine according to constitution of individual and diseased state. The understanding of *Prakriti* is essential for the diagnosis and treatment of *Vikriti*. Assessment of *Prakriti* helps in determining appropriate treatments interventions. Awareness about patient's mental and physical strength is required during the treatment and this knowledge can be acquired by *Prakriti Pariksha*. Analysis of *Prakriti* helps to determine disease severity, possible preventive measures, diet regimens and lifestyle recommendations, etc. Thus, therapeutic interventions and preventive measures can be planned with the help of *Prakriti Pariksha*. This article explores concept of *Prakriti* and its role in diseases management.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, *Prakriti*, *Pariksha*, *Vikriti*, *Dosha*, *Treatment*.

INTRODUCTION

Prakriti means inherent nature or internal constitution, which represents physical, mental and genetic makeup. *Prakriti* as a fundamental concept governs inherent characteristics of individual. The constitution of *Prakriti* determined during conception and remains throughout the life period. This takes place when *Shukra* and *Shonita* unite in the womb. The predominance of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* at this moment decides *Prakriti*. Here *Dosha* as combine unity of *Panchamahabhuta* (*Akash*, *Agni*, *Ap*, *Vayu* and *Pruthvi*) creates unique constitutions in varying proportions of each elements.^[1-3] *Prakriti* plays role in health maintenance of individual since disease susceptibility greatly influenced by inherent constitution (*Prakriti*). Similarly treatment plan and preventive measures can also be decided by considering *Prakriti* of person. Therefore *Prakriti* is considered as key factor in the prevalence of disease, their diagnosis, prevention and treatment. **Figure 1** depicted major role of concept of *Prakriti* in the management of disease.^[2-5]

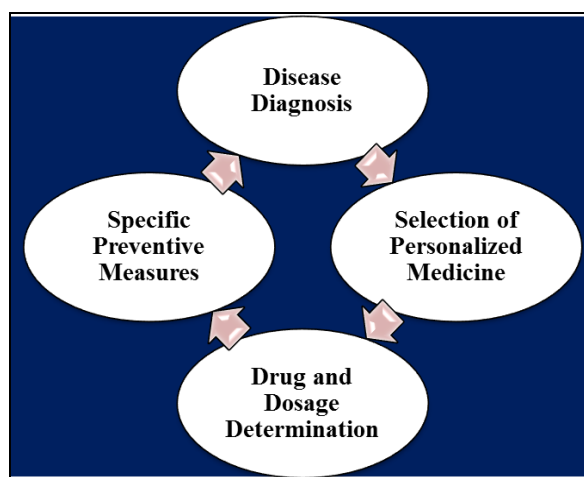


Figure 1: Major areas where concept of *Prakriti* helps in the management of disease.

Panchamahabhuta manifest in the *Tridosha* as combination of elements. These *Doshas* are present in every individual; however dominance of *Dosha* determines *Prakriti* of person. *Prakriti* classified based on psychological, physiological and physical manifestation, these manifestation depends upon the

predominant *Dosha* and combination of *Panchamahabhuta*. *Prakriti* is influenced by genetic factors (*Shukra* and *Shonita*) and also affects by acquired factors which includes race, heredity, age, season and climate, etc. *Prakriti* reflects unique traits and makes each person distinct from other one.^[4-6]

Types of Prakriti

The specific types of *Prakriti* include *Ekadoshaja Prakriti* (predominance of one *Dosha*), *Dvandvaja* (combinations of *Vata*, *Kapha* and *Pitta*) and *Samamishra* (all *Doshas* remain present in equal proportions).

Prakriti can also be categorized into *Shaaririka Prakriti* and *Manasa Prakriti*. *Shaaririka Prakriti* includes *Dosha*; *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* and their combinations (*Vata-Kapha*, *Pitta-Kapha*, *Vata-Pitta* and combination of *Vata-Pitta-Kapha*). *Manasa Prakriti* means psychological constitution which includes *Rajasika Prakriti*, *Tamasika Prakriti* and *Sattvika Prakriti*.^[6-8]

Impact of Prakriti

Prakriti impacts health and vulnerability to diseases as follows:

- ✚ *Vata Prakriti* individuals are more prone to disorders such as neurological issues, arthritis and other painful conditions.
- ✚ *Pitta Prakriti* individuals are susceptible to inflammatory conditions like skin rashes, hypertension, ulcers and digestive problems.
- ✚ *Kapha Prakriti* experiences problems of feeling of heaviness, congestion, obesity, respiratory problems and diabetes, etc.

In Ayurveda *Pariksha* is considered as a comprehensive system for the examination of clinical condition of patient. It includes assessment of *Prakriti* to understanding an individual's health. *Prakriti* serves as a guide for maintaining good health, offering recommendations related to the diet and lifestyle as preventive measure for certain diseases. These recommendations for health restoration are based upon the individual's unique constitution. Thus concept of *Prakriti* utilizes clinically for the maintenance of health and management of diseases.^[7-9]

Diagnostic Utility of Prakriti

The concept of *Prakriti* helps greatly in the diagnosis of disease and also play vital role to understand inherent strength of individual. For example the strength of *Agni*, *Bala* and *Koshta*, etc. can be assessed based on the *Prakriti Pariksha*. This assessment further helps to understand pathogenesis of disease and also provide guidance for treatment plan including selection of drugs and their dose regimen.

- *Kapha Prakriti* having superior *Bala* and *Vata Prakriti* having inferior *Bala*.
- *Agni* is considered as *Vishamagni* for *Vata Prakriti*, *Tikshanagni* for *Pitta Prakriti* and *Mandagni* for

Kapha Prakriti. *Samagni* indicates state of good health.

- *Koshtha* is considered as *Krura* for *Vata*, *Mridu* for *Pitta* and *Madhya* for *Kapha*, considering these conditions of *Koshtha* diet and treatment can be planned accordingly.

Clinical Utility of Prakriti

The treatment plan including drug and dose, purification therapies and preventive measures (*Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya*) can be planed according to the *Prakriti* of individual. This helps greatly in maintaining physiological balance and treating diseases. The details descriptions of clinical utility of concept of *Prakriti* are as follows^[2-4, 7-10]:

1) Drug and Dosage Determination

The selection of medicine and its dose regimen can be determined according to *Prakriti*. *Vataja Prakriti* needs drugs which offer properties to alleviate pain and helps to stabilizes *Vata*. *Pittaja Prakriti* individuals seek cooling herbs while *Kapha Prakriti* individuals respond well for medicines like *Haridra*, *Guggulu* and *Kanchnar*. Similarly dose of medicine can be determined as *Alpa*, *Madhya* and *Pravara* depending on the *Prakriti*. Generally, *Vata Prakriti* individuals receive *Alpa* doses, *Pitta Prakriti* individuals get *Madhya* doses and *Kapha Prakriti* individuals receives *Pravara* doses of similar drugs.

2) Disease Prognosis

The causative factors of diseases and *Prakriti* abnormalities often overlap. When *Dosha* aligns with *Prakriti*, the condition becomes *Krichrasadhya* (can be challenging to treat). Contrary to this if the vitiated *Dosha* differs from the inherent *Prakriti*, the treatment is feasible and considered *Sukhasadhya*.

3) Health Maintenance

Prakriti helps in maintaining good health by guiding dietary and lifestyle regimens that align with natural constitution of person. *Vata Prakriti* individuals should consume warm foods and *Pitta Prakriti* individuals benefited from soothing substances. *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya* are recommended on the basis of *Prakriti* of individual. Person with *Kapha Prakriti* should engage in exercise and avoid daytime naps, while individual with *Vata Prakriti* should consume nutritious heavy foods. These practices help to prevent diseases which are prone in person of specific *Prakriti*.

4) Personalized Medicine

Prakriti assessment helps to decide personalized medicine according to the individual's constitution and diseased state. This approach enhances effectiveness of treatment and minimizes side effects.

5) Determining Strength of Physiological Elements

The strength of *Agni* & *Bala* can be assessed by the analysis of *Prakriti* and disease treatment can be planned

accordingly. The *Vata Prakriti* mainly persist irregular *Agni*, *Pitta Prakriti* witnesses *Tikshnagni* and *Kapha Prakriti* possess *Mandagni*. Similarly *Kapha Prakriti* individuals having greater strength (*Bala*) compared to others. These all information can be utilizes for the prevention and treatment of diseases.

6) Genomic Medicine

Research has explored relationship between *Prakriti* and genomics. Research suggested correlations between *Prakriti* and genetic markers in genes related diseases. This correlation may help to suggest a genetic basis of *Prakriti* which further provides insights for future work in gene therapy.

7) Identification of Clinical Conditions

Individuals with *Vata Prakriti* exhibit *Ruksha* characteristic, lean physique and condition of insomnia. While people of *Pitta Prakriti* are considered sensitive to *Ushna*, tender skin, usually feels hunger and thirst due to the *Tikshana* state of digestion. Individuals with *Kapha Prakriti* having *Snigdha* and *Shlakshna* tissues, stable physique and calm in nature.

8) Assessment of Mental Behavior

Mansika Prakriti is shaped by the influence of the three *Trigunas*; *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. These *Gunas* form foundation of psychological behaviors of individual. The person with *Sattva Prakriti* possesses qualities like mental clarity, calmness, purity and spiritual awareness. *Rajas Prakriti* is associated with desire, passion and competitiveness, etc. *Tamas Prakriti* represents lethargy, confusion, and lack motivation, etc. The assessment of these *Mansika Prakriti* helps to manage psychological behavior. Ayurveda recommends to nurturing *Sattva Guna*, while managing *Rajas-Tamas Guna* in a way that promotes mental clarity and emotional stability.

CONCLUSION

Prakriti is very crucial to provides insight into individual's characteristics, diagnosis of disease, selection of drug and planning of preventive strategies for health restoration. *Prakriti* is considered as key factor of Ayurvedic therapeutics. Each individual with different *Prakriti* exhibits distinct characteristics thus needs different therapeutic and preventive approaches according to their inherent constitution. Ayurveda suggest specific guidance, diet, seasonal practices and preventive measures according to the one's *Prakriti*. These practices support overall health in a personalized way. Knowledge of *Prakriti* helps to identify strengths and vulnerabilities towards the disease. The appropriate assessment of *Prakriti* helps to plan regimen for maintaining health and effectively managing diseases.

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