Exploration of Basic Concepts of the Ayurvedic Dietetic

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Abstract

Acharyas had described that Ahara (food), Nidra (sleep) and Brahma Artya (celibacy) are Triupstambha (three sub pillars), which support the body itself. Here food has been placed first which represents its utmost importance to maintain and sustain life so, there is brief description in all Ayurvedic text regarding intake of food. As primary aim of Ayurveda belongs to maintain the health of an individual there is detailed information regarding food intake as per constitution of the body, seasonal food, quantity and quality of food, guidelines of intake of food, wholesome and unwholesome diet and incompatible diet. After following all these precautions, if some pathology still occurs, here is the second aim of Ayurveda works, that is to treating the diseased person, in this

Introduction

Acharyas had described that Ahara (food), Nidra (sleep) and Brahma Artya (celibacy) are Triupstambha (three sub pillars),[1] which support the body itself. Here food has been placed first which represents its utmost importance to maintain and sustain life. The science of applying knowledge in food and nutrition for improving and maintaining good health is called as Dietetics. As primary aim of Ayurveda belongs to maintain the health of an individual there is detailed information regarding food intake as per constitution of the body, seasonal food, quantity and quality of food, guidelines of intake of food, wholesome and unwholesome diet and incompatible diet. After following all these precautions, if some pathology still occurs, here is the second aim of Ayurveda works, that is to treating the diseased person, in this
treatment also food plays very role as wholesome and unwholesome diet as per diseased and Aharkalpana as per the procedure. Therefore, to fulfil both the aim of the Ayurveda food is the important factor. All of above concepts of food have very much importance in these days, as in present condition several diseases are not due to the intake of unhealthy food but it was due to the improper dietary habit, so it is important to knows the proper ways to avoid several complications. By this study,we can avoid the complication by improving the dietary habit

**Aim:** To explore the basic concept of the Ayurvedic Dietetic and its importance in modern society

**Methodology:** The data has been collected and reviewed from Charak Samhita and Ashtang Hrudaya, other validated textbooks and publication in international journals.

**Observation**

Information about intake of food are scattered in the Samhitas this can be studied in two way as a preventive and as acurative aspect. As per the body is concern first part which should first consider is Prakruti of the person. Prakriti is determined at the time of fertilization due to the predominance or increased status of Dosha so as per the food is concerned it is also different in different Prakruti as per predominance of Doshas.

**Table no 1 – correlation between Prakruti and elements of food for suppression of Doshas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prakruti Elements of food</th>
<th>Vata</th>
<th>Pitta</th>
<th>Kaph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ras&lt;sup&gt;[3]&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Madhura (Sweet), Amla (Sour), Lavana (Salt)</td>
<td>Madhura (Sweet), Tikta (Bitter), Kasaya (Astringent) rasa (taste).</td>
<td>Tikta (Bitter), Katu (Pungent), Kasaya (Astringent) rasa (taste).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virya&lt;sup&gt;[4]&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Ushna veerya</td>
<td>Sheeta veerya</td>
<td>Ushna veerya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vipak&lt;sup&gt;[5]&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Madhur vipaka</td>
<td>Madhura vipaka</td>
<td>Katu vipaka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quantity of the food**

This is also a important factor mentioned in Smahita, exact what quantity should be taken by person. Acharyas divided belly into three part, one for solid food item, one for liquid and one for Vat, Pitta, Kapha. There is again two types appropriate<sup>[7]</sup> and inappropriate<sup>[8]</sup> as per the quantity of the food.

**Table no 2 – Quantity of food and its signs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate</td>
<td>No obstruction in heart, no pian in side, no excessive heaviness in abdomen, saturation of sense organs, cessation of hunger and thirst, ease in standing, sitting, lying down, movement, inspiration, expiration, laughing and gossiping, easy digestion, promotion of strength, complexion and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate</td>
<td>Vat- colic pain, hardness in belly, bodu- ache, dryness of mouthy, giddiness, irregularity of digestion, stiffness in side, back and waist constriction and spasm in bold vessels. Pitta- fever, diarrhoea, internal heat, thirst, nacrosis, giddiness and delirium, Kapha- vomiting, anorexia, indigestion, fever with cold, lassitude and heaviness in the body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discipline of eating**


**Table no 3 – Factors of discipline eating and its principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nature</td>
<td>Natural existence properties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Processing : Refinement of the natural product through water, fire, cleansing, churning, place, time, infusing, steeping, duration, utensil

3. Combination : Aggregation of two or more substance

4. Quantity : 1) Sarvgrah (total count) - the accounting of the quantity of the entire food in totality 2) Parigrah (individual account) - individual items in food

5. Place : Related to growth, distribution and also the suitability in respect of place

6. Time : Eternally moving time related to seasonal and conditional time related to diseases

7. rules for use : Depends on digested food

8. Consumer : Who consume the food

The above proscribed method of dieting for the healthy and sick who take wholesome food timely and usually, one should eat warm unctuous, in proper quantity, after the previous food is digested, non antagonistic, in favorable place, with all the favorable accessories, not too fast, not too slow, not while talking or laughing and with full concentration after due consideration to the self.[10]

Wholesome and Unwholesome Diet

Pathya (wholesome) and Apathya (unwholesome) are defined as the substance or regime which do not adversely affect the body and mind are regarded as Pathya (wholesome); those which adversely affect them are considered to be Apathya (unwholesome). Charak had stated that wholesome food is one of the causes for the growth and wellbeing of humans while unwholesome food is the root of all disease. Charaka enlist product which are beneficial and non beneficial the human body [11]

Table no 4– Indicated and contraindicated food in day to day life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicated food</th>
<th>Contraindicated food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sastika shali (rice)</td>
<td>Milk products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mudga (pulse)</td>
<td>Dried meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saindhav (rock salt)</td>
<td>Dried vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalak</td>
<td>Pork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yava (barlely)</td>
<td>Beef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Buffalow meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee</td>
<td>Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>Curd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Viruddha Ahara (incompatible diet)

The substance, which are contradictory to Dehdhatu, behave like antagonist to them, this antagonism may be in terms of properties, combination, processing, place, time, dose or natural composition. Charak enlist the serval examples to explain the incompatible diet with their effect. Cilacima Fish with milk cause great obstruction of channels, Meat of domestic, marshy and aquatic animals with honey, sesamum, jiggery, milk, black gram, radish, lotus stalk or germinated grains causes deafness, blindness, tremors, coldness, indistinct voice, or death. After eating radish, garlic, Shigru, Tulasi one should not take milk because of the risk of leprosy. Protherb of Jatuka or ripe not be taken with honey or milk, it may cause death, loss of strength, lustre and impotency. Ripe of Nikuca not with black gram, pulse, jiggery and ghee and all sour liquid and non-liquid with milk, they all are antagonistic. Kangu, Vanaka, Makusthaka, Kulattha, black gram, Nispva are antagonistic to milk. Upodika with sesamum pest cause diarrhoea. Meat of peacock attached to the stick of Errand, cooked in fire with castor wood fuel and mixed with castor oil causes instantaneous death. Pipali with fish cooking media and Kaqkmacjhi with honey causes death. Hot honey, honey and ghee in equal quantity, honey and rain water in equal quantity all cause death. Hot water after taking Bhallataka, Kampallik cooked with buttermilk, Kakamachi and Bhasa roasted on iron rod all are antagonistic.[12]

Anagtaristic food is the cause of impotency, blindness, erysipelas. Ascots, pustules, insanity, fistula-in-ano, fainting, nacrosis, tympanitis, spasm in throat, anemia, Anamavish, leucoderma, leprosy, Grahani, oedema, acid gastritis, fever, rhinitis, genetic disorders [13]
Seasonal food
Diet leads to promotion of strength and complexion only if he knows the whowsomeness according to seasons depend upon diet. According to the movement of the sun two parts are their i.e. Adana and Visrga[14] Their is predominance of Saumya Guna in Visarga kala and Agneya Guna in Adan kala [thus the sun, wind and the moon are responsible for appearance time, season, Rasa, Dosha and bodily strength according to the nature.[15]

Table no 5 – Season and its relation with food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Parts</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Type of food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adana</td>
<td>Vasani[16]</td>
<td>Amla (sour), madhur (sweet) avoid</td>
<td>Barley and wheat, meat of Sarabha (wapiti), Sasa (Rabbit), Ena (antelope), Lava (common quail), Kapinjala (grey partridge), harmless vinegars and wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grishma[17]</td>
<td>Sweet, Snigdha (fatty) and Shit (cool) food should taken sour, Lavan (salty) and atu (pungent) food avoid</td>
<td>Cold and sweet Manth (unctuous drink), meat of wild animal and birds, Ghee and milk along with rice. Wine in little quantity of with plenty of water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varsha[18]</td>
<td>Sour, salty, and fatty food</td>
<td>Avoid cold drink. River water, old barley, wheat and rice along with wild meat and prepared soup, swine and other type of fermented liquor mixed with honeybodied and cooed water from well or tank or rain water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visarga</td>
<td>Sharad [19]</td>
<td>Sweet, bitter Ras Pradhvan</td>
<td>Laghu (light), cool, Pittanashan, meat of Lava (common quail), Kapinjala (grey partridge), Ena (antelope), Urbhra (sheep), Sarabha (wapiti), rabbit, rice, barley and wheat, avoid fat, oil, meat of aquatic and marshy animals, alkali, curd and Hamsodak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion
Food and drinks with desirable smell taste and touch and have been taken according to the prescribed method is said as vital strength by expert based on observation of their results. [22] So it is very important to study the structure related to the Annahava sttrotas and the products, which have interference with the digestive system Amashaya and the Annavahini Dhamini are the Moolshan of the Annavah Strotas here Amashaya is related to the stomach and Annavahi Dhamini related to the oesophagus and small intestine, [23] Pakwashya also plays an important function as it is the suite of Pittadhara kala and Purishdhara kala here Pakwashaya is related to the large intestine [24]. Even after normal structure of all this all thesethere are several problem related to the digestion due to the non-exploration of this basic fundamentals of Ayurvedic dietetics.

Prakruti is depend upon the fundamental constitution of the body and nature of food is also depend on it, nature of the food should always conflict to the nature of the Doshas. Like in Vataj Prakruti the qualities of Vata Doshas i.e Ruksha, Laghu, Shit, Khar, Chala, and Kshushma. so in food the qualities which are conflict to these qualities are used, like in Madhur, Amla and...
LavanRasa are used in Vata Prakruti because Snigdha, Shit, and Guru qualities in Madhur, Snighdha, Ushna, Laghu qualities in Amla Rasa, Snighdha, Ushna, Guru qualities in Vat Doshas which are opposite to that of Vata Doshas.[25] Similarly, Ushna Virya food is and Madhur vipak food used in Vat Prakruti. These kind of food used in maintenance of Doshasae per the Samanya Vishese Sidhanta present in the body.

After the quality of food quantity of food also one of the component which hamper the digestion process, as per Ayurveda belly is divide in to three parts for proper transmission of the Vata, Pitta and Kapha in the stomach, as per this transmission the food is divided in to appropriate and inappropriate diet. Appropriate diet leads to promotion of strength, complexion and development[8]whereas inappropriate diet into several diseases.[9]

Discipline of the diet is the main component of the ayurvedic dietetic in which nature is the existing property of the food related with the Ras, Virya and Vipak. Inprocessing of the food, it changes its quality and make it suitable to the individual. Combination is also the most essential element, which is to be considered while taking the food as the food changes its character and which may be fatal some time [26]. Quantity of food includes total count in which all type of constituent of food is present where as in individual count single constituent of food is present. Place, which is mentioned here in two way first related to the food where it grows and distributed and second related to place of the individual where he lives. Time is also an important factor, which should take in consideration while taking the food; here it is again divided in to two-circumstanceNityaga related season and Avasthik related to the diseases. In both of these condition assimilation of food is depend the nature. The basic rule for the intake of the food is depend upon the power of digestion of the individual. Lastly, these all rules are stick to the consumer who are taking part in assimilation so he is the utmost elements in the dietetics.

Wholesome And Unwholesome diet is used in curative as well as preventive aspect. Concept of these diet is two directional, if one is beneficial to some diseases, it may contraindicate to other. Like sweet and fatty food is indicated in thin person or to the Vat Doshas whereas same food is contraindicated to obese person or in Kaphas Doshas. [27] so each food has its two directional views as per their suppressive and expressive nature. Therefore, it is important to analyse each product, which are taken orally as per their property.

The concept of incompatible diet is also depend upon the combination of the product. Due to the mixture, the formed product has property very different to that of the single one, like milk and fish both are useful to body when they used separately. However, when they are used in combination the nature of this formed product is sweet in taste, Vipak is also sweet, and become a great obstructer for the channels due to antagonistic property of Virya, as milk is of Shitvirya and fish is of Ushna[13].

Season is also have an influence on the diet of an individual. The movement of the sun changes the nature of the season, as it moves towards the north produces roughness in ShisiraVasnataa and Grishma and by moving toward south, it cooled down by heavenly waters. It also affect the nature of the Doshas as environment changes from Ruksha rasa to Aruksha rasa. So the accumulation, vitiation and pacification of Pitta, Kapha and Vata occurs in seasons of rain respectively [28] so the food is also according to the presence of Doshas and nature.

Above all discussion it can clearly state that there are only two points which can be consider while taking the food is the user and the basic constitution of the consumer. Any food, which have been taken, shows their effect by two ways first by potential and second by qualities present in
food in terms of Gun, Ras, Viya and Vipak as it alter the balance of the *doshas* and balance the equilibrium of *doshas*. There are other several factors, which help in process of digestion like Vajraasan, Ardhmastedrasan etc. so it can also be consider as part of Ayurvedic dietetic.

**Conclusion**

Ayurvedic dietetic is the broad concept explain in all compendia, as it is consider as the basic pillar of the of the body. Without food, it is hard to consider the life, but without understanding the proper ways regarding the assimilation, it is hard to be healthy. Because in this era most of the disease are due to the bad eating habit. So while considering meal Prakruti, quantity of food intake, Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan, Pathyapathya, Viruddha Ahara and season plays and important role as it alter the basic constitution of the body. Therefore, consideration of these all elements are important for healthy life.

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