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## SIGNIFICANCE OF PRAKRITI WITH RESPECT TO PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF DISEASES

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**Abstract:** The word Prakriti is derived from a Sanskrit word which means the natural form of our body constitution. Qualitative and quantitative, unchangeable Doshik predominance throughout the life of an individual is called as Prakriti. It expresses unique trait of an individual that is defined by specific and permanent composition of Dosha at the time of conception. In Ayurveda Prakriti of an individual has a genetic and acquired aspect. The genetic aspect depends up on Shukra and Shonita while acquired aspect depends upon environmental factors like climate, season, time factor, age and personal habits. Prakriti is an important concept of Ayurveda that includes physical constitution, psychological constitution, susceptibility to disease, life style, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases of an individual. Thus treatment considers the individual as a whole rather than just focusing on the disease only. Once Prakriti of individual is determined the treatment is carried in such a way that helps in obtaining an optimal health status. Tridosha are basic factors responsible for health and disease. Vaata, Pitta and Kapha i.e. Dosha are biological expression of Mahaabhoota. They govern all the functions of body and mind but on vitiation produce the diseases. Each Dosha possesses specific Guna or attributes. Prakriti assessment is not only categorization of individuals based on phenotypes but also evaluation of these attributes to estimate dominance of particular Dosha or Guna. These attributes are defined according to pharmacological actions and form base for diagnosis, treatment and diet and lifestyle advice.

**Keywords:** Prakriti, Lifestyle, Dosha, Health, Diseases.

**Introduction:** The word Prakriti means "nature" or natural form of the build and constitution of the human body. Pra means the "beginning", commencement" or "source of origin". kruthi means "to perform" or "to form"Put together, prakriti means "natural form" or "original form" or "original source" <sup>[1]</sup>. Disease occurs when there is a change in this original form at the psychological or physiological level <sup>[2]</sup>. A characteristic feature of Ayurvedic medicinal systems is that they consider the individual as a whole, rather than just the disease. Treatment is fine-tuned, taking into consideration the individual's constitution, susceptibility to diseases, mental makeup, lifestyle and other factors. This has been refined to a very high degree in Ayurveda with its powerful concept of Prakriti.

**Factors Affecting Prakriti:** Prakriti is created at fertilization and status of Dosha of male and female gamete in that time play important role <sup>[3]</sup>. Foetus has inherited characters from father (Pitrija), mother (Matrija), Soul (Aatmaja), mind (Satvaja), diet (Rasaja) and homologation (Satmyaja) <sup>[4]</sup>. Characters of individuals are resultant of these factors. In Charaka Samhita these influencing factors categorized into four types as Shukra shonita Prakriti (Characters from father and mother), Kalgarbhashaya Prakriti (season and uterine environment), Matura Ahara Vihara Prakriti (diet and lifestyle of mother), Pancha Mahabhuta Vikaara Prakriti (attributes of Mahabhuta <sup>[5]</sup>. All these factors affect the genesis of Prakriti. Vagbhata and Sushruta accentuate on inherited characters from parents. Charaka, Kashyapa and others highlight more on environmental factors for Prakriti determination.

Nagarjuna believes environmental factors in course of intrauterine life affect Prakriti. Kaashyapa Samhita has emphasized importance of diet of mother<sup>[6]</sup>. According to Bhela Samhita, diet and lifestyle of father and mother affect Prakriti of offspring<sup>[7]</sup>. Other factors important for Prakriti assessment are Jatiprasakta (Characters linked to race), Kulaprasakta (Familial characters), Desha Anupaatini (Characters related to geographical or agro-climatic location), Kala Anupatini (Seasonal variations at the time of conception), Vaya Anupatini (Characters dependent on age or stages of life) and Pratyatmaniya (Individual variations despite of any similarity)<sup>[8]</sup>.

**Types of Prakriti:** Types of Prakriti based on Tridosha, Triguna and Mahabhuta are termed as Dehaprakriti, Manasprakriti<sup>[9]</sup> and Bhautikprakriti respectively<sup>[10]</sup>.

**Role of Prakriti in Health and Diseases:** Knowledge about Prakriti is prerequisite for assessment of Vikriti (pathology) hence it is important for diagnosis and therapeutics. Treatment is called as Prakriti Sthapana as it reverses pathology and restores Prakriti<sup>[11]</sup>. Primary objective of Prakriti assessment is to estimate Bala Pramana and Dosha Pramana of an individual. Bala Pramana refers to judgment of physical and psychological potential that illustrates status of Dosha, Dhatu, Mala and related organs. Assessment of Dosha Pramana is associated to nature and extent of Dosha. Thus concept of Prakriti is important in preventive and curative aspects. Prakriti assessment is a part of Dashavidha Pariksha<sup>[12]</sup> (10-point evaluation) and is considered in totality with understanding of other minimum nine aspects.

**Prakriti as Part of Dashavidha Pariksha:** Ayurvedic classics like Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita have recommended extensive guidelines for assessment of disease (Vyadhi) and diseased (Rugna). These guidelines aim at precise understanding of physiology and pathology; hence are applied to healthy individuals for Prakriti assessment. Prakriti assessment is a part of patient examination (Dashavidha Pariksha) and that needs consideration of other factors like Vikriti (pathology), Dhatusarata (status of tissues), Samhanana (compactness), Pramana (quantitative examination of organs), Aaharshakti (digestive capacity), Vyayamashakti (capacity of exercise), Bala (strength), Kala (season) and Vaya (age). Considering all these dimensions, physician defines patient status,

which forms base of treatment. Prakriti evaluation coupled with all above factors gives complete information on which treatment (or health advice) is based. Thus Ayurveda emphasizes evaluation of patient in totality for perfect diagnosis, management of health and disease.

**Role of Prakriti in Health Preventive Aspects:** Prakriti has decisive role in Swasthavritta (restoration of health), which is the prime objective of Ayurveda<sup>[13]</sup>. Prakriti based guidelines for diet and lifestyle result in healthy tissues and homeostasis of Dosha.

**Role of Prakriti in Diagnostic Aspects:** Prakriti forms basis for understanding Samprapti (pathology), extent and Vikalpna (combinations) of vitiated Dosha and status of host factors. Prediction of proneness and severity of disease can be speculated that helps in prognosis judgment<sup>[14]</sup>.

**Prakriti and Disease Proneness:** Disease is a result of complex interplay between causative agents, environmental and host factors hence there are multiple factors that decide disease proneness. Sama Prakriti has good resistance and generally not prone to diseases. Other types are labelled as Aatura (diseased), as they have dominance of one or more Dosha and need regular preventive measures. Out of rest six types, Prakriti with one Dosha (Ek Doshaja) have better resistance than two Dosha Prakriti (Dvi Doshaja). Vata, Pitta and Kapha Prakriti are susceptible to disease in decreasing order<sup>[15]</sup>.

Manifestation of disease in different Prakriti will be different though causative factors are comparable. Similar Dosha in Prakriti and Samprapti (pathology) leads to severe disease. Vata, Pitta and Kapha Prakriti individuals may have severe Vata, Pitta and Kapha disease respectively. These assumptions are based on presence of potent and similar Hetu (causative factors). For example, Kaphavardhaka Hetu (excess Guru, Snigdha, Manda etc. Guna) cause severe Kapha disease to Kapha Prakriti<sup>[16]</sup> individual than any other Prakriti.

**Role of Prakriti in prognosis:** Prakriti is important for judgement of prognosis. If Vikara Prakriti (nature of disease) and Prakriti are similar then disease is difficult to manage (Kashtasadhya). When Prakriti and disease are of different origin, it is easy to manage (Sukhasadhya)<sup>[17]</sup>. Kashyapa Samhita has defined role of season (KalaPrakriti) in relation to Prakriti. If season, disease and Prakriti are of same Dosha, disease is untreatable and has bad

prognosis. Any two of these if similar, make disease difficult to treat<sup>[18]</sup>.

**Therapeutic Role of Prakriti:** Though healing design is based on multiple variables, Prakriti has a important role in selection of drug, dose, Anupana (vehicle) and Samskara (processing). Considering Prakriti (coupled with other factors) some drugs or procedures are indicated (Ghruta for Vaata and Pitta Prakriti) or contraindicated (Svedana for Pitta Prakriti). Prakriti of an individual illustrates numerous physiological functions. Agni (digestive and metabolic capacity), Koshta (digestive and excretory functions), Bala (Strength of tissues) and life span are specific for each Prakriti. Systematic objective clinical assessment is essential for considerate of Prakriti. Prakriti evaluation with other factors of Dashavidha Parikshaa should be contemplated for total perceptive of patient or healthy individual<sup>[19]</sup>.

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