

A REVIEW ON CONCEPT OF PANCHABHAUTIC SIDDHANT IN AYURVEDA AND ITS APPLICATION IN CHIKITSA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient medical science has lots of theoretical and philosophical aspect. It is the science that propagates all the knowledge of life. It defines health and all the factors responsible for its maintenance and health promotion. The fundamental principles of *Ayurveda* are laid down after many times of tryouts. The concept of *Panchamahabhuta* (Five elements) is the foundation of *Ayurveda* to understand its physiology, pathology & pharmacokinetics. *Ayurveda* believes that everything in this cosmos is made up of five basic elements. These five elements which collectively termed as *panchamahabhuta* are *Prithvi* (earth), *Jal* (water), *Agni* or *Tej* (fire), *Vayu* (air) and *Akash* (space). The balance of these five elements in the body denotes health or *prakriti* while their Imbalance or disturbance

denotes disease or *vikara*. *Panchamahabhutas* are basic components of the human body both for physiological functions in the pathogenesis of disease. According to *Ayurveda* both the *Chikitsya purush* and *dravyas* used for treating him are created by *panchamahabhutas* only. Also *sharira*, *dosha*, *dhatu*, *updhatus* and *malas* are the *karya dravyas* of *Panchamahabhutas*. As the aim of *Ayurveda* is fulfilled by this concept of *Panchabhautic siddhant*. Hence sincere effort by essay author to explore the application of *Panchbhautic siddhant* in *chikitsa* in a systemic manner is done. It is very much essential for an *Ayurvedic doctor* to develop with this significant concept to make the basic things and fundamentals more clear and strong.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Panchamahabhuta*, Health, *Chikitsa*, *Charak*, *Shushrut*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science, which basically count on the holistic approach of naturally occurring alternative herbal formulations. It depends on the basic principle of *Panchmahabhuta* (five elements). The *Panchamahabhuta* revolves around the normal functioning of the body (physiology), diseases formation (pathology) and action of drugs in the various parts of the body (pharmacokinetics). According to *Ayurveda*, this holistic approach composed of five important elements of nature.

Acharya Charak has mentioned the attributes of *Panchamahabhut*:

महाभूतानिखंवायुरग्निरापिः क्षितिस्तथा।

शब्दःस्पर्शश्चारुपंचरसोगन्धश्चातद्गुणाः ॥ *Charak Samhita Sharirasthan 1/27*

The *Panchmahabhutas* are *Aakash*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Jala* and *Prithvi*. Their attributes are *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa* *rasa* and *gandha* respectively.^[1]

And also in *Charak Samhita Sutrasthan* chapter 26 *Atreybhadrakapiya*:

सर्वद्रव्यपान्चभौतिकमस्मिन्नर्थे;तच्चेतनावद्चेत्नंच,तस्यगुणाःशब्दादयोगुर्वादयश्चद्रवन्ताः।

Charak Samhita Sutrasthan 26/10

All the substances are constituted of 5 *bhutas*- *Prithvi*, *Ap*, *Tejas*, *Vayu* & *Akash*. It is of 2 types: sentient and insentient. Its properties are sound etc and those from *guru* to *dravya*.^[2]

According to *Ayurveda Chikitsya purush/Adhikaran purush/ Karama purush* comprises six *dhatus*, *panchamahabhutas* & *chetana*.

खादयश्चेतनाषष्ठा धातवः पुरुषः स्मृताः ॥ *Charak Sharirsthansutra 1/16*

Purush comprises six *dhatus* (elements), five *Mahabhutas* (in their subtle form) & *Chetana*.

Panchbhautic Siddhant in chikitsa

Therapeutical application of *panchamahabhutas*

Panchabhautik Chikitsa is a branch of *Ayurveda* offers a new dimension of examination and treatment. *Ayurveda* believes that all the substances of this universe including our bodies are composed of five *bhutas* which are *Prithvi* (earth), *Jal* (water), *Agni* or *Tej* (fire), *Vayu* (air)

and *Akash* (ether or space) and whatever diets we take those are also composed of *Panchabhutas*. Everything in universe, including drugs, animals, herbs and living beings are made of these basic elements.

Depending on the predominance of the substance, the matter is classified as *Parthiva*, *Apya*, *Taijasa*, *Vayaviya* and *Akashiya* (With predominance of earth, water, fire, air and space respectively). The organisation and combination of these five elements and their quantity in a given matter determines and establish its properties. Hence it is very necessary to know the nature of diet materials we take. Thus understanding this basic principle one can maintain the good health by eating healthy according to one's *bhuta* predominance and avoiding the apathy.

- Universal therapeutic utility of matter

अनेनोपदेशेनानौषधिभूतमंजगतिकिन्चिद्द्रव्यमुपलभ्यते

तांतांयुक्तिमर्थचतंतमभिप्रेत्य॥ *Charak Sutrasthan 26/1*

There is nothing in the world which does not have therapeutic utility in appropriate conditions & situations. At the same time everything cannot be used for treatment of every disease. A drug is useful in specific conditions and situations. So, the selection of drugs is to be made in accordance with the propriety & its administration & therapeutic needs.^[3]

Proyojana of Ayurved (Aim of Ayurveda)

कार्यधातुसाम्यमिहोच्यते।धातुसाम्यक्रियाचोक्तातन्त्रस्यास्यप्रयोजनम्॥ *CharakSutrasthan 1/53*

Dhatusamyata (equilibrium state of *dhatu*s) is the ultimate aim of our *Ayurveda* science. The very object of this science is the maintenance of equilibrium of tissue element.^[4] According to *Acharya Charak* principle of *samanyam* (similarity) helps in increasing degraded similar *dhatu*s in body and when there is *dhatu vridhhi* condition we have to use *vishesha dravyas* (opposite substances) in treatment. To achieve this purpose we must know the *Panchabhautik* composition of therapeutic matter.

Samanya Vishesh Siddhant

सर्वदासर्वभवनामसामान्यंवृद्धिकारणम्।

हासहेतुर्विशेषच, प्रवृत्तिरुभ्यस्यतु॥ *Charak Sutrasthan*1/44

The general (similar) is the cause of the increase of all things at all times and times and the particular (dissimilar) is the cause of the decrease, whereas the application of those principle in the treatment of the body lead to increase or decrease of body elements.^[5]

- ***Panchmahabhutas and Dravya uttpati***

Acharya Shushrut has described the *Dravya utpatti* (Genesis of substances) in *Shushrut Sutrastahn* 41 *Dravyavisheshvigiyanii*:

तत्र, पृथिव्यप्तजोवय्वाकाशानांसमुदायाद्द्रव्याभिनिर्वृत्तिः,

उत्कर्षस्त्वभिव्यञ्जको भवति इदं पार्थिवमिदमाप्यमिदं तैजसमिदं वायव्यमिदमाकाशीतयमिति॥

Shushrut sutrasthan 41/3

Substances (drugs) are born from the combination of *Prithvi, Ap, Teja, Vayu and Akash Panchamahabutas*, that which is predominant among these, becomes the cause for their classification such as *Parthiva, Apaya, Taijasa, Vaiyaviya and Akashiya*.^[6]

- ***Tridosha Prakopa and Prasham (Vitiation and alleviation of humours)***: According to *Acharya Sushrut* *Vata, Pitta and Kapha* are the main factors responsible for the induction of all pathogenesis inside the body, because of having their symptoms.

Dosha Chikitsa Siddhant (Principle of treatment of *doshas*)

दोषाः क्षीणाबृंहयितव्याः, कुपिताः प्रशमयितव्याः, वृद्धानिर्हृत्व्याः,

समाः परिपाल्याइतिसिद्धान्तः ॥ *Shushrut Chikitsasthan* 33/3

Doshas which as *kshina* (decreased) should be nourished (increased to normal), those *kupita* (slightly aggravated) should be mitigated, those *vridhdh* (highly aggravated) should be expelled out and those which are same (normal) should be protected (maintained normally), this is the principle of treatment of *dosha*.^[7]

Ayurveda science is based on *tridosha* theory and as the whole universe is *panchabhautik*, the entire disorders present in different forms do not exist without *tridoshas*. These variations are due to difference in *Panchabhautika* composition of *doshas*.

Acharya Shushrut has described about the relation of predominant *mahabhuta* in *dravya* with *doshas*.^[8]

| Sr. no. | Dominancy of <i>Mahabhuta</i> in <i>dravya</i> | Alleviate or reduce <i>dosha</i> |
|---------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. | <i>Prithvi, Agni and Jala</i> | <i>Vata dosha</i> |
| 2. | <i>Prithvi, Jala and Vayu</i> | <i>Pitta dosha</i> |
| 3. | <i>Aakash, Teja and Vayu</i> | <i>Kapha dosha</i> |

So by seeking accurate knowledge of properties of *Mahabhutas* one can apply this knowledge to establish equilibrium of *doshas*.

- ***Panchamahabhutas* and *Satvadi gunas* relation:** *Satva parikshan* is the diagnostic method to evaluate the *manobal* (Mental strength) of the patient. Hence by the assessment of the type and level of *satva* a *vaidya* can determine the method treatment of patient according to *satva pariksha*.

Acharya Shushrut has mentioned this relation in *Shushrut Sharirsthan*.^[9]

तत्रसत्वबहुलमाकाशम्, रजोबहुलोवायुः, सत्वरजोबहुलोऽग्निः,

सत्वरजोबहुलाआपः, तमोबहुलापृथिवीति ॥ *Shushrut Sharirstnan* 1/27

| Sr. no. | <i>Mahabhuta</i> Predominant | <i>Satvadi gunas</i> |
|---------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | <i>Aakash Mahabhuta</i> | <i>Satva</i> |
| 2. | <i>Vayu Mahabhuta</i> | <i>Raja</i> |
| 3. | <i>Teja Mahabhuta</i> | <i>Satva + Raja</i> |
| 4. | <i>Jala Mahabhuta</i> | <i>Satva + Tama</i> |
| 5. | <i>Prithvi Mahabhuta</i> | <i>Tamas</i> |

This table shows relation between *mahabhuta* and *satvadi guna* we can predict that certain *dravyas* can help in treating the *mano vikara* (psychiatric disorders) by using *Panchabhautika dravyas* according to this concept. Stress plays an important role in our hectic lives today. The research on stress related disorders and there treatment is a unique contribution of this principle and method.

Two more verses here-

अन्योऽन्यनुप्रविष्टानिसर्वाण्येतानिनिर्दिशेत्।

स्वेस्वेद्रव्येतुसर्वेषांव्यक्तंलक्षणमिष्यते ॥ *Shushrut Sharirsthan* 1/28

All these *bhutas* are intermingled with one another & express their qualities predominantly in substance of their own category.^[10]

Panchamahabhutas and Rasas relation: Each of the *rasas* originates with predominance of two of the *Panchamahabhutas*.

Relation of Panchamahabhut and Rasas relation according to different Acharyas^[11]

| Sr. No. | RASA | Mahabhuta Predominance | | |
|---------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | Charak Samhita Sutra 26/40 | Sushrut Samhita Sutra 42/3 | Ashtang Hridaya Sutra 10/1 |
| 1. | <i>Madhur(sweet)</i> | Prithvi + Jala | Prithvi + Jala | Prithvi + Jala |
| 2. | <i>Amla(sour)</i> | Prithvi + Teja | Prithvi + Teja | Prithvi + Teja |
| 3. | <i>Lavana(salty)</i> | Jala + Teja | Jala + Teja | Jala + Teja |
| 4. | <i>Tikta(bitter)</i> | Vayu + Akash | Vayu + Akash | Akash + Vayu |
| 5. | <i>Katu(acrid/pungent)</i> | Vayu + Teja | Vayu + Teja | Vayu + Teja |
| 6. | <i>Kashaya(astringent)</i> | Vayu + Prithvi | Prithvi+ Agni | Prithvi+ Vayu |

Even though the *rasas* are essentially constituted by the five *bhutas* (elements), the manifestation of certain *bhutas* in predominance during their origin results in the diversity. These *rasas* are accountable for *dosha prakopa* and manifestation of disease if they are used in improper way or by use of *apathyakar aahar*. Ultimately wise *vaidya* must know the *Panchabhautika* composition of *dravyas* to successfully treat the patient.

Panchamahabhut and Pariksha Bhava: The following table clearly shows the importance of *panchamahabhutas* in ancient and modern diagnostic Methodology.^[12] (*Shushrut Sharirsthan* 1/26).

1. *Prithvi*- *Mala, Mutra, Sweda, Kapha* by *gandha Tanmatra* (specific smell). Also in Diabetic coma, Diabetic keto acidosis. Weight and height measurement.
2. *Jala* - *Rasa sarata* Examination, CSF, sputum and ascitic fluid examination.
3. *Teja* - Fundoscopy (Colour etc. of eyes), digestion, body temperature.
4. *Vayu* - Respiration and Cardiac sounds, ECG, peristaltic sounds.
5. *Akash*- To examine heart, lungs and abdomen and hollow structures like ear and throat.

Panchmahabhutas and karma sambandh^[13] (Elements & Action of drugs)

| Sr. no. | Karma (Action) | Mahabhuta predominance | Shushrut Samhita Sutrasthan41/10 |
|---------|----------------|------------------------|---|
| 1. | Virechana | Prithvi & ap | विरेचनद्रव्याणिपुथिव्यम्बुगुणभुयिष्ठानि |
| 2. | Vamak | Agni & Vayu | वमनद्रव्याण्यग्निवायुगुणभुयिष्ठानि |
| 3. | Sanshaman | Akash | आकाशगुणभुयिष्ठंसशमनं |
| 4. | Sangrahika | Vayu | सांग्राहिकमनिलगुणभुयिष्ठम् |
| 5. | Dipana | Agni | दीपनमग्निगुणभुयिष्ठम् |
| 6. | Lekhaniya | Vayu & Agni | लेखनमनिलानलगुणभुयिष्ठम् |
| 7. | Brumhana | Prithvi & Jala | बृंहणं पुथिव्यम्बुगुणभुयिष्ठम् |

The number of medicines required to practise this method is the lowest. The contents are mainly herbs which are widely available and are not so costly. This makes *Panchabhautik Chikitsa* is very valuable and economical, as compared to modern medicines or other *Ayurvedic* methods.

DISCUSSION

Discussion is an important part of any scientific study. From the above review study it is very clear that *Panchamahabhutic Siddhant* is involved in each diagnostic and therapeutic step. On the basis of wise knowledge about application of *Panchamahabhautic Siddhant in Chikitsa* one easily found the causative factors for the imbalance of *doshas* and also fined out there solution for the treatment. According to *Ayurveda Chikitsya purush/Adhikaran purush/ Karama purush* comprises six *dhatu*s, via five *Mahabhutas* (in their subtle form) & *chetana*. *Prakriti* or constitution of a person depends upon the dominant *Mahabhuta* in the person. Both the *Chikitsya purush* and *dravyas* used for treating him are created by *panchamahabhutas* only.^[14] Also *Sharira, dosha, dhatu, updhatus* and *malas* are the *karya dravyas* of *Panchamahabhutas*. Quality of any *dravya* depends upon its constituent *Mahabhutas*. This knowledge is necessary to choose a drug in the treatment of diseases. The knowledge of the predominant *Mahabhuta* in the involved *dosha* causing a disease is essential in the diagnosis of a disease. Since the human body (*sharir*) and the nature are both created from the *Panchamahabhutas*, *Ayurveda* considers all substances found in the nature as medicine; provided that it is used for specific indications and with appropriate formulations.

CONCLUSION

The *Panchamahabhut Siddhant* is a basic principle of *Ayurveda*. It is well accepted & have general consideration that every *dravya* including *dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala*, *rasa* drugs as well as body (*sharir*) are made up of *Panchamahabhut* (*Akash*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Jala*, *Prithvi*). The equilibrium of *dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala* can be maintained by taking particular drugs & diet on the background of *Vridhhi* and *Kshaya Siddhant*, which can be managed by *Samanya* & *Vishesh Siddhant* (*Charak Samhita*). In the body the *Panchamahabhuta* acts on nuclear level & it is the primary thing which may balance in all aspects. Here with little effort author trying to express their own view and critical analysis of basic *Panchamahabhuta Siddhant* & their use in *Chikitsa* at scientific platform for suggestion & science improvement with understanding the gravity of concept. This may be help as a milestone in future in field of health care.

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