

## A REVIEW ON ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF YOGIC DIET

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**\*Corresponding Author****Varsha**P.G. Scholar, PG Dept. of  
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Yogic diet is the wholly conducive to the practice of *yoga* & spiritual progress. This diet can also be called lacto-vegetarian, which means that it is made up of non-animal foods with the exceptions of dairy items and honey. Diet has intimate connection with the mind. Diet is of three kinds viz, *sattvic diet*, *rajasic diet* & *tamasic diet*. *Sattvic diet* is a diet based on foods in *Ayurveda* & *Yoga* literature that contain the quality (*guna*) *sattva*. *Sattvic* food is the purest diet; it nourishes the body & maintains a peaceful state. This calm & purifies the mind, at its maximum potential. Food play an important part in meditation. For purposes of meditation, the food should be light, nutritious &

*sattvic*. *Sattvic* foods form an ideal diet, keeping the body nourished while being easy to digest. They create new energy, clarity and calm mind, enabling us to use all our mental, physical & spiritual abilities. *Rajasic* or stimulating diet tends to raise level of physical activity & leads to emotional upsurges & are detrimental in the long term. They overstimulate the mind & excite the passions. *Tamasic* diet that mostly consists of foods that are *tamasic* in nature on can increase the *tama guna*. *Tamasic* meaning that they may cause certain potentially harmful mental & physical conditions to occur. *Mitahara* is a yogic virtue that centers on awareness while consuming food and drink, and the effects that nutrition and over-consumption have on the mind and body. Many yogis that practice a *sattvic* diet also implement the principle of *mitahara* by mindfully eating in moderation.

**KEYWORDS:-** Yogic diet, *Sattvic diet*, *Rajasic diet*, *Tamasic diets*, *mitahara*.**INTRODUCTION**

The yogic diet is a vegetarian diet which includes vegetables, grains, fruits etc. strictly excludes all meats (beaf, chicken, seafood etc) A yogic diet is a balanced diet that ancient

yogis believed had a huge influence not only over our physical well being, but also over our thoughts and ultimately our emotional and spiritual well being. In yogic literature foods that are beneficial to us are said to be *sattvic* or pure. *Sattvic* foods form an ideal diet, keeping the body nourished while being easy to digest. *Sattvic* foods include cereal, fresh fruit & vegetables, milk, butter, nuts, seeds, rice, grains & honey. A yogic eating regimen is an equalised eating methodology that aged Yogis accepted had a tremendous impact not just over our physical wellbeing, and yet over our consideration, and at last our zealous and profound well being.<sup>[1]</sup>

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

1. To discuss the concept of yogic diet.
2. To evaluate the role of yogic diet in present era.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 1. Literary study

- Classical text books of Ayurveda.
- Published articles from journals and authentic website.
- The Bhagavad Gita is an ancient Indian text.

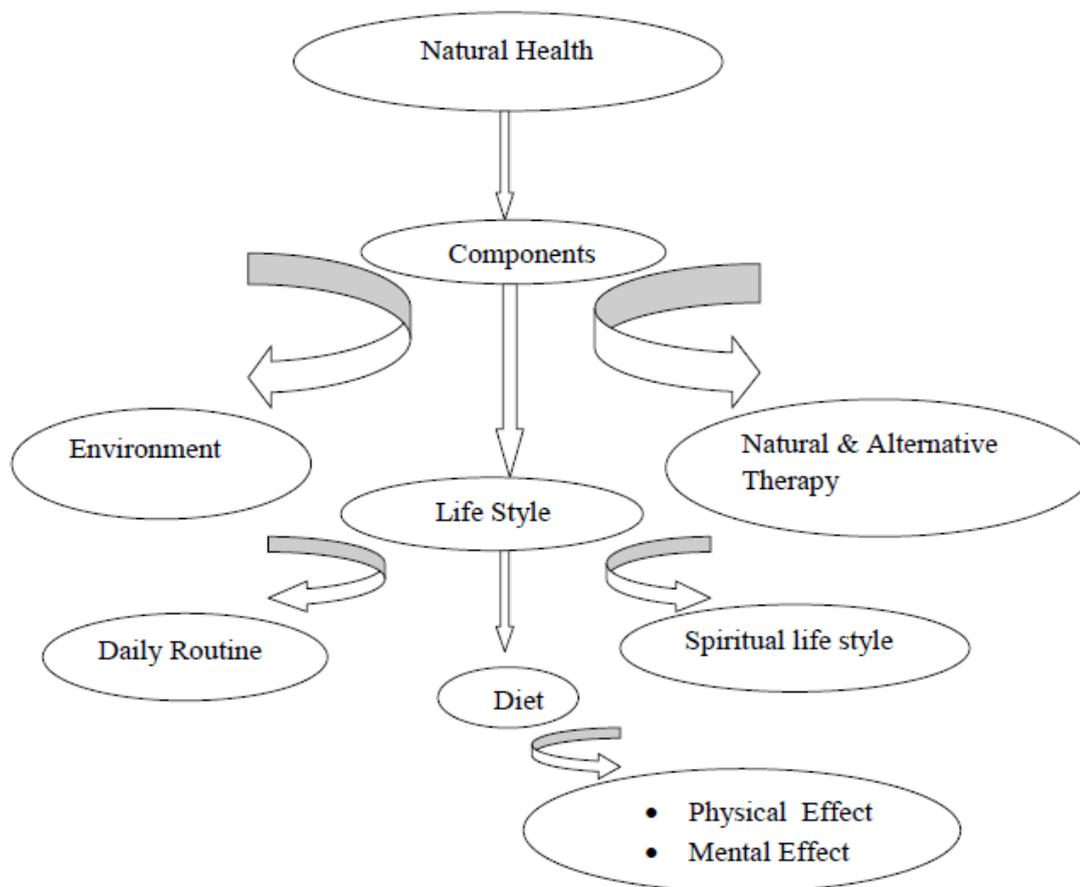
#### General concept of diet (Aahar)

Food has been given prime importance since Vedic period. Food is supreme or *Bramha*.

Food is the best among things which sustain life and it is one among the three pillars supporting life (*Trayo upstambh*) as per *Ayurveda*.<sup>[2]</sup> All living beings originate from food. Food is responsible for life of all living beings. Food helps in sustaining life of living beings. Food enhances vitality, strength and makes the body strong. It also boosts enthusiasm, memory, *Agni*, life span, luster and *oja*.<sup>[3]</sup> Food is necessary for healthy life and living.

#### Yogic diet

Diet is an integral part of *yoga*. Much of the yogic prescriptions for food come straight from the *Yama's* and *Niyamas*, yoga's do's and don'ts articulated in *Patanjali's Yoga sutra*. Yogic diet involves following of the principles of a balanced diet. However, in yogic term food is classified on the basis of its effect on body and mind, using the three *Gunas*.<sup>[4]</sup>



### ***Sattvic aahara***

The *Sattvic* diet (pure and balanced) is believed to increase energy.<sup>[5]</sup> *Sattvic* foods are fresh, juicy, light, nourishing, sweet and tasty, because these foods give necessary energy to the body without taxing it they are helpful in achieving a balanced body chemistry the foundation of higher states of consciousness, in which *satva* predominant. The psyche (*chitta*) is brought to a centered state by *sattvic* foods because they bring readily digestible and nourishing food materials to the system. For aspirants of *satva* and for spiritual growth and development, seasonal fruits, grains and vegetables that are juicy, light, fresh and sweet, as well as easily digestible are the only diet.<sup>[6]</sup>

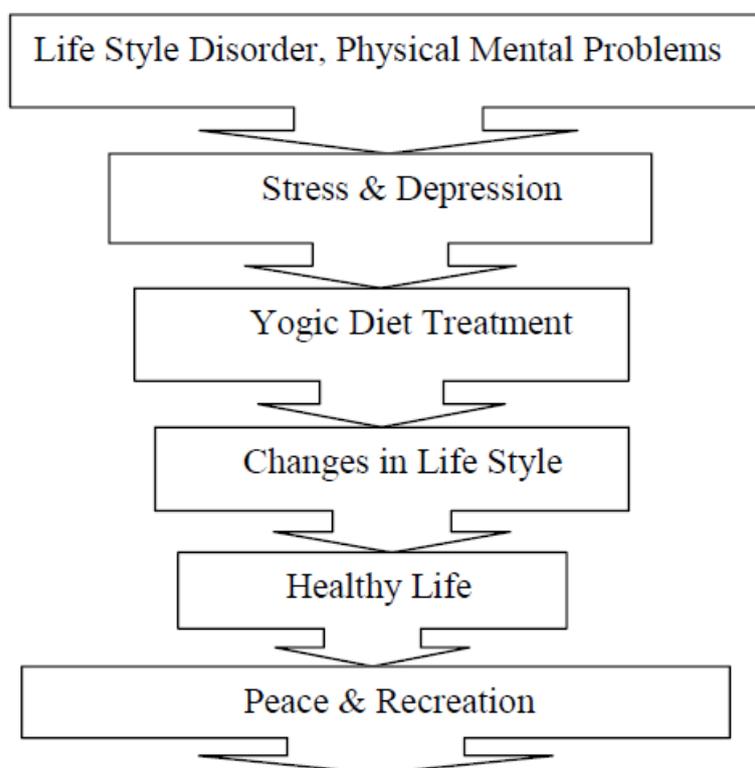
According to *Hatayoga pradeepika*, one has to take *Kshira* and *Ajya* during *abhayasa kala*, only *shudha ahara* has to use.<sup>[7]</sup>

### ***Rajasic aahara***

*Rajasic* foods are bitter, sour, salty, pungent, hot and dry. These foods create sexuality, greed, jealousy, anger, delusion, conceit, egotism and irreligious feelings. *Rajasic* foods are tasty only if a taste for them is developed otherwise, they are not palatable.

***Tamasic aahara***

*Tamasic* foods consume a large amount of energy while being digested. They are dry, old, bad smelling, decaying, distasteful and unpalatable. *Tamasic* food increases pessimism, ignorance, lack of common sense, greed, laziness, irreligion, criminal tendencies and doubt. *Tamasic* food creates a severe inferiority complex and antagonistic feelings. Meat, fish & eggs are tamasic foods. Candies, biscuits & bread more than eight hours old are *Tamasic*.<sup>[8]</sup>

**Diet table analysis<sup>[9]</sup>*****Pathya aahar***

The root term for *pathya* is '*patha*' means various channels in body and '*anapetam*' means not causing any harm to human body. So, any food which is not harmful for body channels and which is wholesome soothing for body can be labelled as *pathya*.<sup>[10]</sup>

**Need of *pathya***

- It is suggested in various places in *Ayurveda*.
- It is suggested in *Swasthavritta* as a routine to maintain the proper health.
- *Patha kalpana* must be used in *Dincharya* and *Ritucharya*.<sup>[11]</sup>

### **Constituent of well balanced diet**

*Acharya Charaka* has described the constituent of wholesome diet in chapter 5 of *Sutrasthana* which can be taken in daily diet. Good and fine rice like '*Shastika shali*', green gram, rock salt, gooseberry, rain water, milk, ghee, flesh of animals living in *jangala pradasha* and honey should be adopted in diet generally.<sup>[12]</sup>

### **Fundamentals of *pathya* (Ayurvedic diet)**

*Ayurveda* consists of three important factors for health and disease i.e. *oushadha* (drugs), *ahara* (diet), *vihara* (conducts). The diet has been advised based on the age, digestive power, constitution, habitat, season, disease and soon.

*Ayurveda* has minutely described qualities and effects of different food on human body. As per *Ayurvedic* principles diet should contain all the *Pancha mahabhutas* (five basic elements) as the body is made up of five basic elements.<sup>[13]</sup>

*Acharya Sushruta* described the food as the food which nourishes and gladdens the heart and directly increases the body strength. It improves memory, digestive power, and energy, strengthen mind, increases '*ojas*' and increases the longevity of life.<sup>[14]</sup>

### ***Mitahara***

*Mitahara* is a yogic virtue that centers on awareness while consuming food and the effects that nutrition & over- consumption have on the mind & body. Many yogis that practice a *Sattvic* diet also implement the principle of *Mitahara* by mindfully eating in moderation.<sup>[15]</sup>

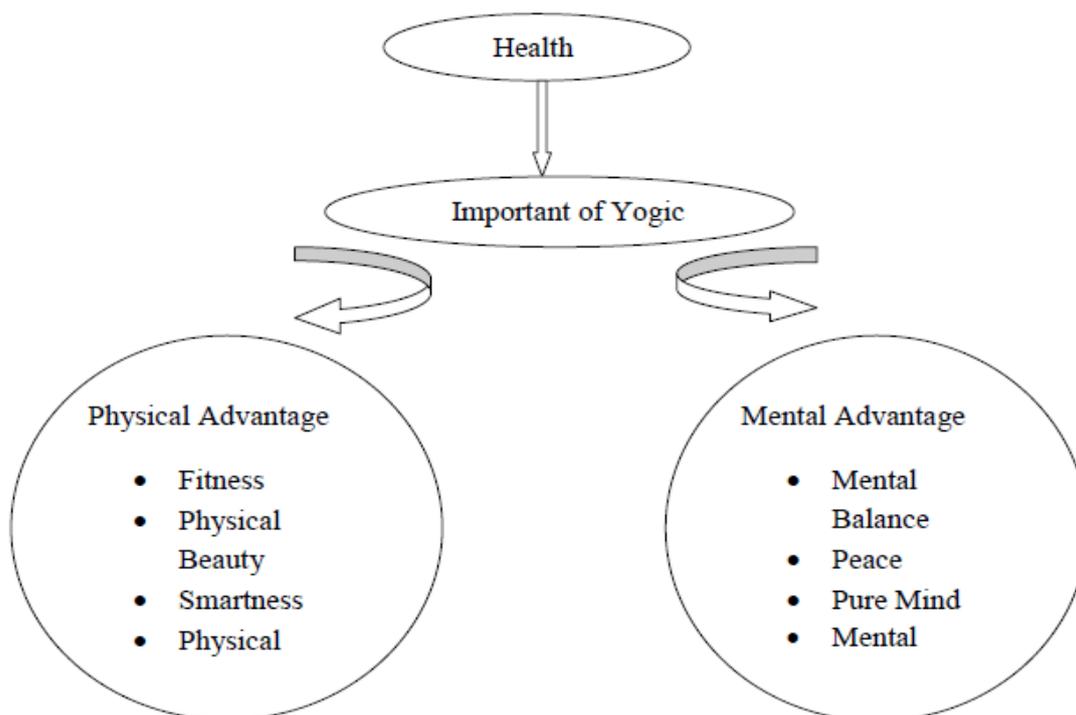
Controlled adequate diet (*mitahara*) which is pure, sweet, containing lubricants- quantity enough to fill only half the stomach and which is palatable and is eaten to please the self. One should fill half the stomach with food; one quarter should be reserved for the movement of the air.<sup>[16]</sup>

A moderate or self- disciplined diet which satisfies three- fourth of one's hunger with well-cooked food, containing ghee and sweets and which is unctuous food taken after offering it to Lord Shiva (one fourth part should be kept empty). This is called *Mitahara*, the limited food.<sup>[17]</sup>

**Incompatible foods**<sup>[18]</sup> – Incompatible foods (*viruddha*) are considered to be a cause of many diseases. In the *Charak Samhita*, a list of food combinations considered incompatible in the *sattvic* system is given.

**Examples of combinations that are considered incompatible include**

- Salt or anything containing salt with milk (produces skin diseases).
- Fruit with milk products.
- Fish with milk products (produces toxins).
- Meat with milk products.
- Sour food or sour fruit with milk products.
- Leafy vegetables with milk products.
- Milk pudding or sweet pudding with rice.
- Mustard oil and curcuma (Turmeric).



**DISCUSSION**

As per the classical text of *Yoga* consumption of food in excess quantity is act the obstacle in the pathway of yogic practices. Food is divided into *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic*. *Sattvic* diet is one that leads to clarity of mind and physical health. Due to predominance of *tamas guna* mind will be in dormant, inactive state which will lead to sleep and laziness. On the other

hand if there is predominance of *satva* mind will become stable, peaceful which is necessary to achieve benefits of *Yoga*.

## CONCLUSION

Yogic nutrition is a process to control and develop the body to gain good health. Proper understanding and practice one can reach the optimum level to keep physical fitness. Balance between exercise, diet and relaxation will provide the sound mental and physical capacities. Food is at the base of our morality thus this concept has also been associated with value like *ahara*, *satya* etc. Therefore *yuktahara- vihara & mitahara* have been recommended. Food has also been classified *Sattvic*, *Rajasic & Tamasic* have been prohibited. Thus yogic diet has tremendous potential for healthy life and living but one has to walk through it.

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