



ROLE OF *AHĀRA* AND *VIRUDDHA AHĀRA* IN *DOṢHA* HOMEOSTASIS AND DISEASE CAUSATION: AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

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ABSTRACT:

Background: In Āyurveda, *Ahāra* (diet) is considered one of the foundational pillars of life (*Trayopastambha*), responsible for nourishment, tissue development (*Dhātu-puṣṭi*), and vitality (*Ojas*). However, the consumption of *Viruddha Ahāra* (incompatible food) is believed to disturb *Agni* (digestive fire), cause *Ama* formation, and lead to *Doṣha* imbalance, thereby initiating the disease process. Aim and Objectives: This review aims to explore the classical and contemporary understanding of *Ahāra* and *Viruddha Ahāra*, their role in *Doṣha* homeostasis, and their contribution to disease etiologic with evidence-based support. Material and Methods: Data were compiled from classical texts like *Charaka Saṃhitā*, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, and *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya*, along with modern scientific literature accessed through PubMed, Google Scholar, and SCOPUS. Observational studies, clinical trials, and review papers related to dietary incompatibility and health outcomes were included. Results: Numerous *Viruddha Ahāra* combinations (e.g., milk with sour fruits, yogurt at night) disturb digestive function and correlate with gastrointestinal disorders, metabolic syndromes, and autoimmune diseases. Scientific studies support the biochemical basis of these incompatibilities. Conclusion: Proper understanding and implementation of compatible *Ahāra* practices can help maintain *Doṣha* equilibrium and prevent disease. Avoidance of *Viruddha Ahāra* should be integrated into modern preventive healthcare protocols.

KEYWORDS:

Ahāra, *Viruddha Ahāra*, *Doṣha* Homeostasis, *Ama*, *Agni*, Incompatible Diet, and Nutrition etc.

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Importance of *Ahāra* in Āyurveda:

In Āyurveda, *Ahāra* (आहार, food) is one of the three fundamental pillars of life (*Trayopastambha*) along with *Nidrā* (sleep) and *Brahmacarya* (regulated lifestyle), essential for maintaining health and sustaining life functions [1]. The *Caraka Saṃhitā* articulates, “*Āhārah prāṇāḥ prāṇinām*” — food is equivalent to life itself [2]. Properly selected, prepared, and consumed food not only nourishes the *Śharīra* (body) but also sustains *Indriya* (senses), *Satva* (mind), and *Ātmā* (soul). The physiological processes including tissue formation (*Dhātu-puṣṭi*), immunity (*Ojas*), digestion (*Agni*), and elimination are critically dependent on food quality and compatibility.

1.2 Overview of *Doṣha* Theory and Health:

The unique concept of *Tridoṣa*—*Vāta* (wind principle), *Pitta* (fire principle), and *Kapha* (water principle)—forms the cornerstone of Āyurvedic physiology and pathology. These *Doṣas* regulate all biological and psychological functions, and their natural balance (*Sāmyāvasthā*) defines health (*Svasthya*), as stated in the classic verse from *Suśruta Saṃhitā* — “*Doṣa dhātu mala kriyāḥ prasannātmendriya manāḥ svastha ityabhidhīyate*”[3]. Any dietary disturbance can directly influence the balance of these *Doṣas*, thereby affecting physiological harmony.

1.3 Concept of *Doṣha* Homeostasis and Imbalance:

Doṣha sāmyāvasthā (homeostasis) is a dynamic equilibrium wherein *Vāta*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* function within their normal limits and locations. The correct choice of food based on *Rasa* (taste), *Guṇa* (qualities), *Vīrya* (potency), *Vipāka* (post-digestive effect), and *Prabhāva* (specific action) plays a crucial role in maintaining this equilibrium [4]. Conversely, incompatible dietary practices—whether in terms of food combination (*Yogaviruddha*), quantity (*Matra viruddha*), or timing (*Kāla viruddha*)—lead to *Agni-dushti* (digestive fire disturbance), *Ama* (toxins), and ultimately *Doṣha-vikṛti* (vitiation of *Doṣhas*) [5].

1.4 Aim and Objectives:

1.4.1 Aim:

- To explore and analyse the role of *Ahāra* (diet) and *Viruddha Ahāra* (incompatible food combinations) in the maintenance of *Doṣha* homeostasis and their contribution to disease causation, with support from classical Ayurvedic literature and modern scientific evidence.

1.4.2 Objectives:

- To review classical Ayurvedic texts regarding the concept of *Ahāra* and *Viruddha Ahāra*.
- To analyse the physiological role of *Ahāra* in maintaining *Doshā* equilibrium.
- To identify the etiological link between *Viruddha Ahāra* and disease manifestation.
- To correlate traditional Ayurvedic views with recent scientific research and clinical findings on dietary incompatibility and health outcomes.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS:

This is a narrative review based on classical Ayurvedic texts, including *Caraka Saṃhitā*, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, and *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya*, with interpretative commentaries. Contemporary scientific data were sourced through electronic databases like PubMed, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and AYUSH Research Portal. Relevant studies published between 2000 and 2024 were selected using keywords such as “*Ahāra*,” “*Viruddha Ahāra*,” “*Doshā*,” “Ayurveda diet,” “incompatible food,” and “disease causation.” The information was critically evaluated and synthesized to provide an evidence-based perspective.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF AHARA IN AYURVEDA:

3.1 Definition and Significance of Ahara:

Ahara (food) is one of the most essential pillars of life, regarded as a primary source of energy, nourishment, and vitality. In Ayurveda, *Ahara* is considered one among the **Trayopastambha** (three supportive pillars of life) alongside *Nidra* (sleep) and *Brahmacharya* (regulated lifestyle) [6]. Properly consumed *Ahara* sustains life, nourishes tissues (*Dhatus*), balances *Doshas*, and promotes *Ojas* (vital essence), which reflects overall health. On the contrary, inappropriate *Ahara* (*Ahita Ahara*) leads to *Dosha* imbalance (*Doshavikriti*), *Agni Dushti* (digestive impairment), *Ama* formation (toxic by-products), and disease causation [7].

3.2 Panchabhautik and Trigunatmaka Nature of Food:

In Ayurveda, all substances including food are composed of five *Mahabhutas* (*Panchamahabhuta*) — *Prithvi* (earth), *Ap* (water), *Tejas* (fire), *Vayu* (air), and *Akasha* (ether). The predominance of these elements in food determines its physical and chemical properties and its action on *Doshas* and *Dhatus* [8]. Additionally, food also carries the influence of **Trigunas** - *Sattva* (purity), *Rajas* (activity), and *Tamas* (inertia), which impact the psychological and spiritual state of an individual. For example, *Sattvika Ahara* enhances clarity and vitality, whereas *Tamasa Ahara* may promote lethargy and confusion [9].

Table 01: Panchabhautik Composition of Common Food Substances

Food Substance	Food Substance	Ayurvedic Property
Milk	Milk	<i>Balya</i> (strengthening), <i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous)
Honey	Honey	<i>Lekhana</i> (scraping), <i>Ruksha</i> (drying)
Fruits (raw)	Fruits (raw)	<i>Laghu</i> (light), <i>Rochana</i> (appetizer)

As shown in Table 01, the elemental dominance influences the functional qualities of food.

3.3 Classification of Food: *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, and *Prabhava*:

The pharmacodynamic classification of *Ahara* is explained based on:

- ***Rasa* (taste):** Sweet (*Madhura*), sour (*Amla*), salty (*Lavana*), pungent (*Katu*), bitter (*Tikta*), and astringent (*Kashaya*) ^[10]. *Rasa* acts immediately and influences *Doshas* differently — for example, *Madhura* pacifies *Vata* and *Pitta*. Ayurveda also correlates *Panchamahabhoota* elements with *Ahara rasa*; it is believed that each *Rasa* associated with specific *Panchamahabhoota* elements as follows: ^[11]
 - *Prithvi & Aap: Madhura Rasa*
 - *Prithvi & Agni: Amla Rasa*
 - *Aap & Agni: Lavana Rasa*
 - *Agni & Vayu: Katu Rasa*
 - *Vayu & Akash: Thikta Rasa*
 - *Prithvi & Vayu: Kashaya Rasa*
- ***Guna* (qualities):** Twenty *Gunas* in ten pairs (e.g., *Guru-Laghu*, *Snigdha-Ruksha*) determine heaviness, lightness, and other attributes of food.
- ***Virya* (potency):** The heating (*Ushna*) or cooling (*Shita*) effect of food, affecting *Agni* and *Doshas*.
- ***Vipaka* (post-digestive effect):** Transformation of food after digestion — *Madhura*, *Amla*, or *Katu* — influencing long-term metabolic effects.
- ***Prabhava* (specific action):** Unique, unexplainable effects of certain foods, such as the ability of *Shatavari* to promote lactation ^[12]

3.4 *Ahara* as One of the *Trayopastambha* and Its Role in *Ojas* Formation:

Ahara supports life not only at the physical level but also plays a vital role in forming *Ojas* — the superfine essence of all *Dhatus*, which contributes to immunity (*Vyadhikshamatva*), vitality, and mental clarity ^[13]. *Charaka* emphasizes that proper *Ahara* sustains *Ojas* and thus sustains life itself (*Ojo hi nāma tanu sthitiḥ*) ^[14].

Ojas is the ultimate product of efficient digestion and *Dhatu* metabolism. Improper diet leads to *Ama* formation and weakens *Ojas*, predisposing the body to diseases. Hence, wholesome

food (*Pathya Ahara*), taken mindfully and according to one's *Prakriti*, *Kala* (season), and *Agni*, ensures the nourishment and stabilization of body-mind health.

Table 02: Impact of Ahara on Ojas Formation:

Type of <i>Ahara</i>	Impact on <i>Ojas</i>	<i>Dosha</i> Response
<i>Sattvika</i> , wholesome	Enhances <i>Ojas</i> (positive)	Maintains <i>Dosha</i> balance
<i>Viruddha</i> or <i>Ahita Ahara</i>	Reduces <i>Ojas</i> , produces <i>Ama</i>	Aggravates <i>Doshas</i>
<i>Rajasika</i> or <i>Tamasika</i>	Disrupts <i>Ojas</i> , affects <i>Manas</i>	Promotes mental vitiation

As evident in Table 02, *Ahara* quality directly affects both physical immunity and psychological stability.

Ahara, being *Panchabhautik* and *Trigunatmaka*, plays a multidimensional role in sustaining life and health. The Ayurvedic classification of food using *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, and *Prabhava* provides a comprehensive framework to understand its impact on *Doshas* and *Dhatus*. As a key component of the *Trayopastambha*, *Ahara* significantly contributes to the formation and preservation of *Ojas*. Therefore, scientific understanding and mindful application of dietary principles are essential for maintaining *Dosha* homeostasis and preventing disease.

4. PRINCIPAL OF IDEAL DIET FOR *DOSHA* BALANCE:

4.1 *Satmya* and *Asatmya* Concepts:

In Ayurveda, *Satmya* (wholesome/compatible) and *Asatmya* (unwholesome/incompatible) form the foundation of individualized dietary planning. *Satmya* is defined as that which is accustomed to the body and conducive to health (*Deha-satmya*)^[15]. The habitual intake of certain foods, even if not ideal by classical standards, may become *Satmya* due to adaptation, and sudden withdrawal may cause disturbances. Conversely, *Asatmya* foods create vitiation of *Doshas* and disturb *Dhātu-sāmyata* (tissue homeostasis), thereby initiating disease processes^[16].

Table 03: Examples of *Satmya* and *Asatmya* Foods in Different Individuals^[17]

Sr. No.	Type of <i>Satmya</i>	Examples	<i>Dosha</i> Influence
1	<i>Desha-satmya</i> (Regional)	<i>Ghee</i> in colder climates	Pacifies <i>Vāta</i> and <i>Pitta</i>
2	<i>Kala-satmya</i> (Seasonal)	Buttermilk in spring	Balances <i>Kapha</i>
3	<i>Vyayama-satmya</i> (Exercise-based)	High protein for athletes	Supports <i>Mamsa-dhātu</i>

4.2 *Tridoṣa* Equilibrium and *Āhāra*:

According to *Tridoṣa Siddhānta*, the ideal diet must support the equilibrium of *Vāta*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* to maintain *Svastha* (health) [18]. Foods have inherent *rasa* (taste), *Vīrya* (potency), *Vipāka* (post-digestive effect), and *Prabhāva* (special action) which interact with *Doṣhas*. For example, *Madhura rasa* (sweet taste) pacifies *Vāta* and *Pitta*, but increases *Kapha* [19]. This understanding aids in diet planning that maintains physiological harmony and prevents pathogenesis.

4.3 Seasonal, Regional, and *Prakṛti*-Specific *Āhāra*:

Ayurveda emphasizes *Ritucharyā* (seasonal regimen), *Dehśa* (regional specificity), and *Prakṛti* (individual constitution) in dietetics. For instance, in *Grīṣma-ṛitu* (summer), light and cooling foods such as barley and cucumber are advised to pacify aggravated *Pitta* [20]. Diet according to *Prakṛti* is crucial *Vāta-prakṛti* individuals benefit from unctuous, warm meals; *Pitta-prakṛti* from cooling and sweet items; *Kapha-prakṛti* from light, pungent, and dry foods [21]. These variables are synergistically considered while recommending an ideal diet plan tailored to one's bio-psycho-spiritual constitution.

4.4 *Agni* and *Āhāra* Suitability:

Agni (digestive fire) is the gatekeeper of health. The strength of *Agni* determines *Ahāra-pācana* (digestion) and *Rasa-utpatti* (nutrient extraction). Diet should match the type of *Agni*:

- *Viṣama agni* (irregular) in *Vāta-dominant* types needs warm, moist, easily digestible foods.
- *Tikṣṇa agni* (sharp) in *Pitta* types benefits from cooling, sweet, and unctuous items.
- *Mandāgni* (slow) in *Kapha* types requires light, dry, and stimulating foods [22].

A mismatch between *Agni* and *Ahāra* leads to *Ama* (toxic byproduct), which is central in most disease pathways. The principles of an ideal diet in Ayurveda emphasize *Satmya*, *Tridoṣa* harmony, seasonal and *Prakṛti*-aligned eating, and compatibility with *Agni*. Personalized dietary choices that integrate classical wisdom with physiological adaptability can significantly contribute to disease prevention and *Doshic* homeostasis.

5. CONCEPT OF *VIRUDDHA AHARA*:

5.1 Definition and Classical References:

Viruddha Ahara refers to food combinations that are incompatible by nature, property, or mode of intake, and are likely to disturb the homeostasis of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Agni*. *Acharya*

Charaka defines *Viruddha Ahara* as the combination of substances that, although individually wholesome, when combined, become harmful due to incompatibility (*Viruddhānām ahārāṇām samyogo yāti vikāram*) [23]. It is considered a major causative factor (*Nidāna*) for the vitiation of Doshas and formation of *Āma* (toxins), thereby leading to a wide range of diseases [24].

5.2 Types of *Viruddha Ahara*:

Viruddha Ahara can be classified into several types based on various parameters. Each type highlights a specific form of incompatibility:

Table 04: Some types of *Viruddha Ahara* with examples:

Sr. No.	Type of <i>Viruddha</i>	Definition	Example
1	<i>Desha Viruddha</i>	Incompatible with region or habitat	Dry food in desert regions
2	<i>Kala Viruddha</i>	Incompatible with season or time	Cold items in winter
3	<i>Agni Viruddha</i>	Incompatible with digestive strength	Heavy food in low Agni conditions
4	<i>Dosha Viruddha</i>	Aggravates already imbalanced Doshas	Sour foods in Pitta Prakriti
5	<i>Manas Viruddha</i>	Mentally disturbing combinations	Unpleasant or culturally repulsive food
6	<i>Samyoga Viruddha</i>	Improper combinations of food items	Milk + fish, fruit + milk
7	<i>Virya Viruddha</i>	Opposing potencies in combined foods	Hot + cold potency items
8	<i>Krama Viruddha</i>	Wrong sequence of food intake	Dessert before meal
9	<i>Paka Viruddha</i>	Incompatibility due to method of preparation	Overcooked honey

As shown in Table 04, the incompatibility may arise due to time, region, preparation method, or the inherent nature of the food.

5.3 Nidana Perspective of *Viruddha Ahara*:

From the *Nidāna* (causative factor) viewpoint, *Viruddha Ahara* is considered a *Mānasika* and *Śārīrika Hetu* (both psychological and physical cause) of disease. It causes *Agni Mandya* (weakened digestion), leading to *Ama* formation and subsequent *Srotorodha* (obstruction of body channels). The prolonged consumption of *Viruddha Ahara* may result in chronic conditions such as *Amlapitta*, *Kushtha* (skin disorders), *Shwasa* (respiratory ailments), *Shukra Dushti* (reproductive disorders), and even *Raktapitta* (bleeding disorders) [25,26].

5.4 *Agni Dushti* and *Ama* Formation:

Viruddha Ahara exerts a direct impact on *Agni* (digestive fire). According to Ayurveda, the strength of *Agni* is crucial for health, as it governs digestion, absorption, and transformation of food into *Rasa Dhatu*. When incompatible foods are consumed, *Agni* becomes vitiated (*Agnimandya*), which impairs digestion and leads to the production of *Ama*, a toxic metabolic residue that initiates pathogenesis. Modern studies have validated that incompatible food combinations can lead to digestive disturbances, gut microbiota imbalance, food intolerances, and metabolic overload [27]. For example, combining proteins like milk with acidic fruits can impair digestion and produce harmful metabolites.

Viruddha Ahara, though often overlooked in modern dietary guidelines, is a cornerstone concept in Ayurvedic preventive medicine. Its multifaceted classifications based on *Desha*, *Kala*, *Agni*, and other factors demonstrate the intricate relationship between diet and disease. Improper combinations disrupt *Agni*, promote *Ama*, and vitiate *Doshas*, ultimately leading to various chronic and systemic diseases. Awareness and avoidance of *Viruddha Ahara* can serve as a simple yet powerful tool for maintaining *Dosha* equilibrium and enhancing digestive health.

6. AHARA AND VIRUDDHA AHARA: EVIDENCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE:

6.1 Scientific Studies Linking Incompatible Foods with Metabolic and Gut Disorders:

The traditional concept of *Viruddha Ahara*—incompatible food combinations causing disease—finds emerging validation in modern biomedical research. Certain combinations, such as milk with sour fruits, have been shown to impair enzymatic digestion, increase intestinal permeability, and provoke inflammatory responses [28].

Table 05: Scientific Correlates of Common *Viruddha Ahara* Practices

Sr. No.	Ayurvedic Combination (<i>Viruddha Ahara</i>)	Scientific Correlate	Reported Effect
1	Milk + citrus fruits	Protein denaturation, delayed gastric emptying	Indigestion, food intolerance
2	Milk + fish	Histamine overload, altered gut microbiota	Inflammation, gut distress
3	Cold items in winter	Seasonal mismatch, weak thermogenesis	Reduced metabolism, poor digestion

As shown in Table 05, many traditional dietary incompatibilities have validated physiological consequences.

These reactions can lead to metabolic dysregulation, bloating, dysbiosis, and food intolerances. Studies show that high-protein meals taken with acidic beverages delay gastric emptying and impair protein digestion, paralleling Ayurvedic views on incompatible combinations (*Samyoga Viruddha*) [29].

A clinical study published in *AYU Journal* observed that consumption of incompatible foods over time was significantly associated with symptoms resembling *Ama* formation, such as heaviness, indigestion, and flatulence, reinforcing classical Ayurvedic principles [30]. Furthermore, observational studies suggest long-term effects of incompatible diet on chronic inflammatory conditions like IBS, obesity, and autoimmune disorders.

6.2 Research on Food Combinations, Digestion Timing, and Microbiota:

Contemporary science supports the Ayurvedic concept that digestion is a timing-sensitive, enzyme-dependent process. Meal sequencing and timing (*Krama*) is crucial; for example, consumption of desserts before main meals alter blood glucose response and digestion kinetics [31]. This aligns with *Krama Viruddha*, where sequence incompatibility leads to *Agni-dushti* (digestive fire impairment). Recent studies have also demonstrated that disordered meal combinations negatively impact gut microbiota diversity, leading to impaired nutrient absorption and gut-brain axis disruption. Ayurveda's emphasis on sequential, appropriate, and seasonal eating habits (*Kala Viruddha*) finds support in chrono nutrition research, which

stresses that food timing aligned with circadian rhythm significantly impacts metabolic health [32].

6.3 Modern Nutrition Science Reflects Ayurvedic Dietary Rules:

There is growing convergence between modern nutritional science and Ayurvedic dietetics. Concepts such as individualized diet, seasonal eating, gut-focused health, and food synergy echo principles like *Prakriti-based Ahara*, *Ritu-Ahara*, *Agni-balavichara*, and *Viruddha Ahara*. Nutritional genomics (nutrigenomics) now supports personalized dietary recommendations—an idea core to Ayurveda’s concept of Ahara tailored to *Dosha* and *Agni*. Likewise, the emphasis on fermented foods, balanced macronutrient intake, and microbiota-supportive diet corresponds with Ayurveda’s use of *Deepana-Pachana* herbs and *Pathya-Apathya* considerations [33].

Table 06: Comparative Overview – Ayurvedic vs. Modern Perspectives

Ayurvedic Concept	Modern Equivalent Concept	Shared Insights
<i>Viruddha Ahara</i>	Food incompatibility	Inflammation, digestive disruption
<i>Agni Dushti</i>	Enzyme suppression/digestive imbalance	Malabsorption, bloating, metabolic load
<i>Ritu-Ahara</i>	Seasonal nutrition	Enhanced immunity and digestion
<i>Prakriti-based Ahara</i>	Nutrigenomics	Personalized dietary planning

Ayurvedic dietary science, particularly the principle of *Viruddha Ahara*, is increasingly finding resonance in modern research related to gut health, metabolism, and chrono nutrition. The congruence between food compatibility, timing, and digestive response is supported both in classical texts and recent biomedical literature. An evidence-based understanding of *Ahara* and its incompatibilities enhances the credibility of Ayurveda and provides practical guidelines for modern dietary therapy.

7. PREVENTIVE AND THERAPEUTIC ASPECTS:

7.1 Preventive Role of *Pathya-Apathya* Knowledge:

In Ayurveda, *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya* (unwholesome) Ahara are fundamental concepts that guide preventive healthcare. The knowledge of *Pathya-Apathya* helps in

maintaining *Tridosha* balance, preserving Agni (digestive fire), and preventing the formation of *Āma* (toxins). Acharya Charaka emphasizes that the cause of disease lies in the ignorance of *Pathya-Apathya* principles (*Rogaḥ sarvepi mandāgnau - Ahitāt ca pravartate*) ^[34]. Seasonal, regional, and *Prakriti*-based diet guidelines promote resilience and immunity. When practiced mindfully, dietary discipline acts as the first line of defence against a wide spectrum of metabolic and systemic disorders.

Table 07: Examples of *Pathya* and *Apathya Ahara* for *Dosha* Balance

<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Pathya Ahara</i>	<i>Apathya Ahara</i>
<i>Vāta</i>	Warm soups, ghee, sweet fruits	Dry snacks, cold drinks, raw vegetables
<i>Pitta</i>	Cooling herbs, coconut water, milk	Spicy, sour, fermented foods
<i>Kapha</i>	Barley, honey, bitter vegetables	Dairy, sweets, fried items

As shown in Table 07, dietary moderation based on *Dosha* is essential for preventive care.

7.2 Dietary Correction in Disease Management:

Ayurveda attributes a significant portion of disease causation to *Ahara Asatmya* (incompatible diet). Consequently, dietary correction forms an integral part of management. For instance, in *Amlapitta* (acid dyspepsia), avoiding *Viruddha Ahara* such as milk with salty or sour items is emphasized ^[35]. In *Prameha* (diabetes mellitus), *Pathya* such as barley, *Triphala*, and bitter gourd are advised. The role of diet as therapy is highlighted in *Charaka Samhita*, where it is mentioned that proper food can substitute medicines, but no medicine can compensate for improper diet ^[36].

7.3 *Ahara* as *Aushadha* (Therapeutic Dietetics):

The concept of *Ahara* as *Aushadha* (diet as medicine) underlines the therapeutic dimension of food in Ayurveda. Based on the pharmacodynamic principles—*Rasa* (taste), *Guna* (quality), *Virya* (potency), *Vipāka* (post-digestive effect), and *Prabhāva* (specific action)—certain dietary substances are used as primary treatments. For instance:

- *Yavagu* (rice gruel) is used in *Jwara* (fever) and digestive disturbances.
- *Takra* (buttermilk) is effective in *Arśas* (piles) and *Grahani* (IBS).
- *Mudga* (green gram) is *Pathya* in fevers and digestive ailments ^[37].

7.4 Role of *Agni Dīpana*, *Āma Pachana*, and *Rasāyana*:

Maintaining digestive health through *Agni Dīpana* (stimulation of digestive fire) and *Āma Pachana* (detoxification) is central to Ayurveda's preventive strategy. Herbs such as *Trikatu*, *Jeeraka*, and *Pippalī* are used for *Agni Dīpana*, while *Guduchi*, *Harītakī*, and *Chitraka* serve as effective *Āma Pachana* agents [38]. In chronic conditions or convalescence, *Rasāyana* (rejuvenative therapy) such as *Chyavanaprāsha*, *Brahma Rasāyana*, and *Āmalakī* are employed to restore tissue integrity and enhance immunity.

The Ayurvedic view of *Ahara* transcends mere sustenance, extending into the realms of prevention, cure, and rejuvenation. Awareness of *Pathya-Apathya*, timely dietary correction, and understanding food as a pharmacological tool contribute significantly to health maintenance and disease reversal. The incorporation of *Agni Dīpana*, *Āma Pachana*, and *Rasāyana* therapies further enhances Ayurveda's holistic and personalized approach to healing.

8. DISCUSSION:

The Ayurvedic principles of *Ahara* and *Viruddha Ahara* demonstrate profound insight into the complex relationship between food, digestion, and disease. Classical texts such as the *Charaka Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya* provide detailed accounts of food incompatibility (*Viruddha Ahara*) and digestive imbalance (*Agni Dushti*), which align closely with modern concepts like digestive health, nutrigenomics, and gut microbiota modulation. Contemporary scientific studies increasingly validate the physiological effects of improper food combinations, disrupted meal timing, and seasonal dietary mismatch, highlighting the relevance of Ayurvedic dietetics in current times.

In the backdrop of escalating non-communicable diseases, autoimmune disorders, and gastrointestinal disturbances, the classical understanding of *Ahara* offers valuable preventive and therapeutic tools. Modern dietary patterns—marked by ultra-processed foods, irregular schedules, and nutritionally incongruent meals—parallel the descriptions of *Apathya Ahara* and *Viruddha Ahara*. These habits often result in *Āma* formation and impaired metabolism. Ayurvedic interventions such as Dosha-specific diets, seasonal adaptations, and mindful eating serve as sustainable strategies to mitigate these disorders.

Furthermore, the growing intersection between Ayurveda and modern nutritional science paves the way for interdisciplinary collaboration. Integrating Ayurvedic dietary frameworks

with public health policies and clinical nutrition can enhance the efficacy of preventive and therapeutic dietary planning. Educational outreach that bridges classical principles with evidence-based insights may foster greater dietary literacy among both health professionals and the public. Ultimately, Ayurveda's individualised and time-conscious approach to diet has much to offer in advancing integrative and personalised nutrition.

9. CONCLUSION:

Ahara, as described in Ayurvedic literature, encompasses more than nourishment—it is a determinant of health, immunity, and longevity. The dual emphasis on *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Viruddha Ahara* (incompatible) highlights the systemic importance of food in both maintaining health and causing disease. Classical principles like *Agni* maintenance, *Dosha* homeostasis, and *Āma* prevention are increasingly substantiated by modern research in digestive physiology and metabolism.

Considering modern dietary challenges, the relevance of Ayurvedic dietary guidelines cannot be overstated. Enhancing awareness about *Ahara* and *Viruddha Ahara*—among clinicians, educators, and the public—can play a vital role in preventive healthcare. By synthesising classical Ayurvedic wisdom with contemporary scientific evidence, we can develop sustainable, individualised, and culturally grounded dietary frameworks for holistic well-being.

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- The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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- Dr. Neha Bhatt: Compilation of scientific data, correlation with contemporary research, and manuscript drafting and editing.