



Review Article

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN *PRAKRITI* AND STRESS IN WORKING WOMEN: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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Abstract

Background: *Ayurveda*, the ancient science of life, emphasizes the concept of *Prakriti*. *Prakriti* influences not only physical and mental attributes but also the individual's susceptibility and response to various stressors. In females, hormonal fluctuations, societal roles, and biological responsibilities further modulate the stress response, making the study of *Prakriti* particularly relevant for women's health. This article explores the physiological and psychological aspects of *Prakriti* and its correlation with stress levels among working women, integrating Ayurvedic wisdom with modern psychophysiology. Understanding *Prakriti* can help in developing targeted lifestyle, dietary, and therapeutic interventions to reduce stress and enhance well-being.

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, *Prakriti*, Stress, Female Health, *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, Women's Mental Health

Introduction

Ayurveda, the system of Indian medicine, uses the assessment tool for individual examination of a person. This tool is known as *Prakriti*. According to *Ayurveda*, the definition of perfect

health is as follows; when all the *Dosha* - vital elements including hormones and biochemical secretions in the human body, *Dhatu* – all tissues, *Agni* – digestive and metabolic energy, and *Mala* – waste products in the human body in a person are in equilibrium along with a cheerful soul and mind, he is said to be in the condition of perfect health [1]. *Tridosha* and *Triguna* are the basic concepts of *Ayurveda*. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* are the *doshas* and they are the physical factors responsible for the healthy status of a person whereas *Triguna* i.e. *Sattava*, *Raja* and *Tama* are responsible for mental health [2]. Seven types of constitutions are formed with different combinations of *Doshas*. These combinations are known as *Prakriti*. These constitutions are further classified into seven types according to the dominance of the *Doshas* namely *Vataj*, *Pittaj*, *Kaphaj*, *kaphvataj*, *Kaphpittaj*, *Vatpittaj* and *Sama Prakriti*. *Vataj*, *pittaj*, *kaphaj* and *Sama Prakriti* occur in less population whereas *Kaphvataj*, *Kaphpittaj*, and *Vatapittaj* are more common. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned *Prakriti* in one of the *Parikshya Bhava*. *Acharya* has quoted in the very beginning - “*Purushampurusham vikshyam*”. Though two individuals are of same *Jati*, *Kula*, *Vaya* etc. still they may not have same characters, similarly even if their *Sara*, *Samhanana*, *Pramana*, *Satmya* etc. are similar they will be of entirely different personality which is observed in the society among various individuals. In this competitive era, everyone have suffered from stress in his/her phases of life. Stress is the prime and important causative factor behind any disease. List of diseases either *Sharirika* or *Mansika* , all having a stress factor behind. But no one focus on that so the present conceptual review focus on the relationship between stress and *prakriti* in working women. The modern era has witnessed a significant increase in the number of working women, who often face dual responsibilities - professional and domestic. This leads to chronic stress, which adversely affects both physical and mental health. Stress in *Ayurveda*, is a *manasika vyadhi* (psychological disorder) influenced by *Manas doshas* (*Rajas* and *Tamas*) and individual constitution or *Prakriti*. Table 1. presents the psychological traits of different *deha prakriti*. Understanding the inherent *Prakriti* of an individual provides insight into their stress coping mechanisms and susceptibility to mental health challenges.

Concept of *Prakriti* in *Ayurveda*:

Prakriti is defined as the natural constitution determined at the time of conception, governed by *Tridoshas* - *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. Each individual's *Prakriti* is unique and remains constant throughout the life. The physical body of the fetus formed in the womb is influenced by the combination of the father's sperm (*shukra*) and the mother's ovum (*shonita* –

aṇḍa/ovum). Depending on the dominance of a particular *doṣha* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, or *Kapha*) at the time of this union, the nature (*prakṛiti* – both mental and physical) of the child is determined.

Prakriti nirmana :

Factors responsible for formation of *Prakriti*, according to *Acharya Charaka* , for the growth of plant 4 factors are very much important similarly for the fertilization and development of *garbha* and these 4 factors are essential. They are: *Ritu*, *Kshetra*, *Ambu*, *Bija* i.e. *Shuddha Shukra & Shonita* , *Garbhashaya* , *Ahara Rasa & Ritu Kala* respectively [3].

"Shukrashoṇita samyogyo bhaveddoṣa utkṛtaḥ |

prakṛitirjāyate tena tasyā me lakṣaṇām srinu ||" (Su.Sha.4/62)

according to *Acharya Sushrut*, the union of *shukra* (sperm) and *shoṇita* (ovum), if any *doṣa* is dominant at that time, it manifests in the nature of the fetus [4] . Hence, the *prakṛiti* of the child is known by the characteristics governed by that *doṣha*.

The constitution formed from the dominance of a particular *doṣha* at the time of conception, as well as from the nature of the parents (their physical and mental constitution), the *ritu* (season), the *ahar* (food) and *vihar* (lifestyle) of the mother during pregnancy, and the proper development of body parts – all contribute to determining the *prakṛiti* (constitution) of the fetus. Major changes after birth are not seen in *prakṛiti*. However, the *prakṛiti* can be influenced during pregnancy by the dominance of *doṣhas* in the body, and improper combination of bodily elements (*dhatus*).

Table 1: Psychological traits of different deha Prakriti

Psychological traits	<i>Vata</i> (V)	Score	<i>Pitta</i> (P)	Score	<i>Kapha</i> (K)	Score
Indecisiveness	<i>Anvashita atma/avyavast hita mati.</i>	V		–		
Comprehension	<i>Shrutgrahi</i> (Good & quick comprehension)	V		–	<i>Chiragrahi</i> (delayed comprehension)	K
Memory	<i>Alpa smriti/Chala smriti</i> (feeble)	V		–	<i>Smritimaan</i>	K

	memory/unstable memory)				(good and long term memory)	
Krodha		–	<i>Krodhi/kshipra kopa-kshipra prasaad</i>	P	<i>Alpa krodha</i> (calm and patient/less anger)	K
Friendship	<i>Adridha sauhridya/man da mitra</i> (fickle friendship)	V		–	<i>Sthira sauhridya</i> (stable cordial friendship)	K
Intelligent			<i>Nipunm ati/med havi/dhi man</i> (skillfull /wise)	P		
	<i>Buddhiyukta</i> (intelligent)			P	<i>Buddhiyukta</i> (intelligent)	K
Total psychological traits	Vata score	04	Pitta score	03	kapha score	05

***Note:** Data adapted from “Manual of Standard Operative Procedures for *Prakriti* assessment” CCRAS, 2018, 2020

Understanding Stress:

Stress is the body's response to any demand or threat. Chronic stress leads to physiological changes as well as psychological changes. In biological terms, stress is defined as anything constituting a threat, real or apparent, which would adversely affect the organism. It can be induced by several factors like environmental changes, extremes of temperature, high altitude, restraints, fear, rage, anxiety, shock, grief, pain and so on. Stress induces a number of clinical conditions like, hypertension, coronary artery disease, asthma, migraine, ulcerative colitis, diabetes mellitus, irritable bowel syndrome, behavioral disorders like anxiety and depression.

Stress analysis is done using Perceived Stress Scale & Job Stress Scale (JSS).

PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE

A more precise measure of personal stress can be determined by using a variety of instruments that have been designed to help measure individual stress levels. The first of these is called the Perceived Stress Scale. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a classic stress assessment instrument. The tool, while originally developed in 1983, remains a popular choice for helping us understand how different situations affect our feelings and our perceived stress. The questions in this scale ask about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way; rather indicate the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate. [5]

JOB STRESS SCALE

This measure (Job Stress Scale) was developed by Parker and Decotiis (1983). The measure uses 13 items to measure job stress along two dimensions. One dimension is time stress (feelings of being under constant pressure) and the second dimension is anxiety (job-related feelings of anxiety) [6]. Jamal and Baba (1992) used a shortened version of the Job Stress Scale consisting of nine of the items.

Aim: To understand the correlation between *Prakriti* and the manifestation of stress in females, and to explore *Ayurvedic* approaches for individualized stress management.

Objective:

To study the concept of *Prakriti* with reference to stress level.

To assess stress level of working females in different *Deha Prakriti*.

Material and Methods: 1. A review of classical *Ayurvedic* texts (*Charaka Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*) and contemporary studies were undertaken to analyze the psychological traits associated with *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha Prakriti* in women. The influence of *Prakriti* on stress perception and expression, especially during key physiological events like menarche, menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause was evaluated.

2. Research articles and journals.

3. Manual of SOPs for *Prakriti* Assessment.

4.PSS (Perceived stress scale)

5.JSS (Job stress scale)

Result: *Pitta Prakriti* females may experience irritability, anger, and burnout due to stress. *Kapha Prakriti* females tend toward emotional withdrawal, depression, and lethargy. Women with *Vata Prakriti* are comparatively more prone to stress due to their inherent physiological and psychological traits. The dominance of *Vata*, characterized by qualities such as laghu (light), ruksha (dry) chala (instability), hyperactivity, sensitivity, and variability—makes them more susceptible to overthinking, anxiety, restlessness, mood fluctuations, and irregular sleep patterns. Their nervous system is highly reactive, which predisposes them to heightened stress responses when faced with emotional, social, or occupational challenges.

Conclusion:

Stress can be understood as a state of *manasika vikar* (mental disturbance) resulting from imbalance of *tridosha*. One must know the management of it. When the mind is disturbed homeostasis of hormones and other vital components of the body (*Dosha*) is also disturbed. Diseases like hypertension, heart disease, diabetes are stress induced. The psychosomatic constitution of a person describes his typical physical and psychological characteristics. The psychological characters of *Kapha prakriti* people are that they never get angry or very depressed. They are tolerant to hardships, patient, and hardworking. They can easily forgive people. They are matured, polite, and decent people. They have good sleeping habits. [7-9] The psychological characters of *Pitta prakriti* people are that they are brave, mighty, and radiant people. They are not defeated easily. They are fearless, short-tempered, unsparing to the bad people whereas soft hearted towards good people. These people have very high intellect. [10-12] *Vata Prakriti* people are mentally unstable, jealous, hot headed, and violent. The people of *Vata Prakriti* experience emotions like anger, fear, and irritability quicker. They tend to sleep less and the sleep pattern is not very good [13-15]. It is very rare that a person has one *Dosha Prakriti*. People generally have dual *Dosha Prakriti*. So they have psychosomatic characters of both the *Dosha*. One *Dosha* remains dominant in dual *Dosha Prakriti*. The dominant *Dosha* has more influence on the physical and psychological qualities of a person. People with *Sama Prakriti* have mixed type of characters.

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