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CONCEPT OF AHARA W.S.R. TO MATRA, DESHA, KALA AND THEIR IMPACT ON HEALTH

Dr Pandhari Uttamrao Ingle¹, Dr Gajanan Sopanrao Wayal², Dr Pratiksha Sudhakar Dhurgude³, Dr Anant Ingle⁴

¹Lecture (Dravyagun Vigyan) SRC Ayurved College, Chikhali, Maharashtra, India.

²Professor (Sharir Kriya), SRC Ayurved College, Chikhali, Maharashtra, India.

³MD (Dravyaguna) Chikhali, Buldhana, Maharashtra, India.

⁴Ph.D., Genetics, Research Associate, Cotton Improvement Project, MPKV, Rahuri, Maharashtra, India.

Abstract

Ahara is considered as one of the vital entity of life along with *Nidra* and *Brahmcharya*, these three pillars of life plays pivotal role for the restoration and maintaining good health status physically as well as mentally. *Ahara* means diets or nutritional intake helps to establish intellectual and emotional balance. The health benefits of *Ahara* can be achieved when one it is consume in proper manner. In this regards time, amount and mode of intake of meal, etc. play important role. Ayurveda with respect to *Ahara* elaborated concepts of *Matra*, *Desh* and *Kala*, which indicates amount, place and time of meal. The food consumed inappropriately can hamper nutritional value of food and may leads health problems. The literature study suggested that consideration of *Matra*, *Desha* and *Kala* with respect to *Ahara* imparts many health benefits and provides all good properties of food.

Key-Words: *Ayurveda, Matra, Desha, Kala, Ahara*

Introduction

The current scenario witnessed many health issues related to the digestive and metabolic system due to the avoidance of dietary rules and lack of nutritional food. As per the ayurveda many diseases arises due to the faulty dietary habits and in this regards Ayurveda suggested many concepts to prevent consequences of awful dietary habits and *Ashta Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatane* is one such aspect of Ayurveda. The various theories and principles of Ayurveda suggested us about types of food to be consumed as per the *Prakriti* of an individual; timing of meal and appropriate quantity of meal should be consumed [1-5].

The Ayurveda concept of *Samskara & Samyog* helps to retain and improves qualities of food, the proper processing of food materials in desirable combinations provides most beneficial effects of *Ahara*. Ayurveda mentioned three important things as depicted in **Figure 1**, related to the *Ahara*.



Figure 1: Factors responsible for qualities of *Ahara*.

The term *Rashi* indicates *Matra* of *Ahara*, the appropriate quantity of food gets digested easily and promotes growth of body. Similarly concept of *Desha* indicates origin and properties of food material as well as place of food intake. The term *Kala* indicates time

of food consumption, since food consumed in proper time only offers health benefits. The health effect of *Ahara* greatly depends upon their *Matra, Desha* and *Kala* [3-6].

The Ayurveda theory of *Hita* and *Ahita ahara* also merely depends upon *Matra, Desha* and *Kala of Ahara*. The consideration of these factors associated with *Hitakara Ahara* which maintains equilibrium of *Dhatus* and eliminates disturbance of *Doshas*, on the other hand avoidance of such factors imparts effects of *Ahitakara Ahara* leading to the pathological conditions. As per *Charaka Hitakara* diet is responsible for growth and development of body while *Ahitakara* diets are responsible for diseases [6-7].

Importance of *Matra, Desha* and *Kala of Ahara*:

Many diseases arise due to the inappropriate way of consumption of food, irregular habits of diet, improper food materials mixing, wrong method of food preparation and awful conduct of dietary rules. These habits can lead many diseases and affects process of growth & development. Therefore it is important to follows rules related to the dietary habits and preparation of food. In this regards Ayurveda prescribed concept of *Hitkara & Matrayukta ahara* responsible for wellbeing of society. These all aspect of Ayurveda related to good qualities of food come under heading of *Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatane*. These aspects of Ayurveda focuses on various factors related to the *Ahara* including properties of food, place of origin of *Ahara*, season, environmental factors, and method of food preparation and need of food according to the *Prakriti* of individual. The major factors related to the quality of *Ahara* solely depend upon three important things i.e.; *Matra, Desha* and *Kala*.

Desha and *Kala* are unavoidable causes related to the *Ahara* while *Matra* can be modified according to the need and conditions of individual. The *Hita* and *Ahita Ahara* can be fixed by altering *Matra, Desha* and *Kala of Ahara*. *Matra, Desha* and *Kala* affects *Vipaka, Virya* and *Prabhava* of *Ahara* therefore alter *Panchamahabhautic* level and quality of *Ahara*. *Panchamahabhautic Ahara* gets converted into *Bhautika Gunas* after digestion and finally into *Trigunas* which acts on *Mana*. Therefore *Matra, Desha* and *Kala of Ahara* not only affect somatic or psychological level of person but also affects spiritual level, so if person consume *Ahara* appropriately by following concept of *Matra, Desha* and *Kala* then synchronization between body and soul get established [6-10].

Matra

Ayurveda emphasizes that *Matra* of *Ahara* (quantity of food) as a vital aspect since excess food can leads indigestion, obesity and lethargy, etc. while less amount of food intake is responsible for lack of nutrients leading to the suppression of energy level, improper physiological activities, anemia and depletion of strength, etc. Ayurveda described concept of *Matra* with respect to *Ahara* in both ways *Sarvagraha* as well as *Parigraha*.

The *Matra* of *Ahara* varies on the basis of types of *Ahara* either *Guru* or *Laghu Gunatmaka Ahara*, *Guru Ahara* are heavy to digest therefore one should take such substances in lesser amount. Elderly, children and diseased person should not consume *Guru Ahara* excessively to avoid health complications. On other hand *Laghu Gunatmaka Ahara* is easy to digest therefore one can consume in more amount as compared to *Guru Gunatmaka Ahara*.

Desha

Desha with respect to *Ahara* can be emphasizes in three ways i.e. *Bhoomi*, *Ahara Dravya Desha* and *Atura Desha*. *Jangala Sadharana Desha* means dietary pattern according to the privileged climatic conditions. It is believed that *Jangala Sadharana Desha* offers predominance of *Tikta- Kashaya Rasa* and *Ruksha Guna*. It is suggested that one should consume food according to *Desha* or as per natural habitats.

The soil and climatic condition affects quality of food, substances grown in hill or mountain area majorly comes under category of *Guru Ahara* while substances grown in dessert region are considered *Laghu* in nature. *Laghu ahara* advocated for diseased and elderly person while children also advised to take such types of *Ahara*. It is also suggested to take *Ahara* according to *Bhoomi* as well as *Deha Desha*.

Kala

The *Kala* is factor which also imparts proper benefits of *Ahara*, the *Kala* indicates time related to the consumption of *Ahara*. It is stated that food consumed in proper time only offers health benefits otherwise it causes health problems. The *Ahara* should be

consume on empty stomach or when previously consumed food get digested, the morning hour at afternoon time is best for day time meal while night meal should be consume before 2-3 hrs. of bed time so to allow proper digestion of food materials. *Kala* requires consideration of *Awastha* (*Swasthya* or *Rugna*) and *Vayah*. The *Rugna Awastha* require intake of light and digestible food materials since in disease condition person only able to digest light food due to the improper functioning of digestive system. *Nityaga Kala* i.e. *Rutu* also need to be consider while selecting daily meal since some foods are to be avoided in particular *Ritu* while some food materials are best in specific *Ritus*. With respect to *Ahara* frequency, longevity of day and night and health status of person, etc. are also need to be considered.

Prapta Kala is the time considered best for taking food, the consumption of *Kalanusara Ahara* increases peace, facilitate metabolic activities and body cycle remain in rhythm. While consumption of *Ahara* in *Aprapta Kala* or *Atita Kala* may leads metabolic or digestive irregularities.

Time & seasonal variations also alter health status of person and physiological activities changes as per the timing, in particular hour the digestive and metabolic activities are predominant while some time they get suppress therefore one should consume *Ahara* accordingly.

Ayurveda emphasizes *Nityaga* and *Avasthika* as two types of *Kala*, *Nityaga* indicates dietary pattern according to the *Rutusatmya*. The rainy season is *Vataprakopak kala* therefore *Ahara* possess *Vatashamak guna* is preferred in this season. While summer season associated with *Rasa dhatu kshay* thus *Madhura* and *Sheeta Guna Ahara* indicated. The other type of *Kala* is *Avasthika* which indicates consumption of food according to the condition of body. *Langhana* is suggested in diseased condition like *Atisara*, spicy and oily food is prohibited in condition like jaundice.

Ayurveda Rules of Dietary Pattern:

- ✚ *Ushna* and *Hridya* food should be consumed.
- ✚ Food should be consumed when previously ingested meal get digested.

- ✚ The dietary meal should consist of all the *Rasas*.
- ✚ One should consume meal with full concentration.
- ✚ Dining place should be neat & clean.
- ✚ Food should be pleasant and not antagonistic to each other.
- ✚ While eating one should not involve in laughing and talking.
- ✚ Food should be consumed as per the season, *Kala* and *Prakriti* of person.

Conclusion

Ayurveda emphasizes *Ahara* as important factor of healthy and disease free life style, in connection to this the Ayurveda scholar mentioned concept of *Matra*, *Desha* and *Kala* in relation to *Ahara*. The consideration of these three factors imparts beneficial effects of consume food while avoidance of concept of *Matra*, *Desha* and *Kala* in relation to *Ahara* can leads health problems including digestive and metabolic ailments. These three aspects; *Matra*, *Desha* and *Kala* play major role in context to the health and illness. Ayurveda focuses towards the achievement of goal of *Swasthyarakshana* and *Vyadhiparimoksha*, the consideration of concept of *Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatanas* can be helpful to acquire good health status.

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