

International Research Journal of Ayurveda & Yoga



An International Peer Reviewed Journal for Ayurveda & Yoga

SJIF Impact Factor : 5.69	ISRA Impact Factor : 1.318	ISSN:2581-785X	
Review Study		Volume: 3	Issue: 12
Imperative Secretes Of Comestibles In Ayurveda W.S.R. To Ashta Ahara			

Vidhi Visheshayatana.

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ABSTRACT: *Annam Vritikaranam Shrestam*" *Ahara* is the most essential demand necessary for the sustenance of human life. Food acts as a spur for body development, transformation and health maintenance. Ancient classics emphasize the importance of wholesome food responsible for the complexion, pleasant voice, longevity, nourishment, and happiness of the human. *Ahara* is one of the significant *Upastambha* of the body that mainly pivot on the knowledge of dietetics. Congenial and uncongenial effects of food depend upon these eight factors of diet defined as *Astha Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana*. If the rules and regulations explained under these factors, adopted properly will result in well being of the person otherwise leads to the manifestation of varied diseases. *Acharyas* has explained the eight factors of diet, determining the detergence of *Ahara*. The present paper highlighting the concept of *Astha Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana* and also throws light on the significance of Food nature, Food processing methods, Tropology, Quantity of food intake, and Rules of eating.

KEY WORDS: Astha ahara vidhi visheshayatana, Comestibles, Dietetics, Food processing

Article received on-23 Dec Article send to reviewer on-23 Dec. Article send back to author on-31 Dec. Article again received after correction on -2 Jan. **Corresponding Author** :, **Neha Jolly,** PG Scholar, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur302002, Rajasthan.

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How to Cite the Article : Neha Jolly, Punita Sharma, Kashinath Samagandi, Imperative Secretes Of Comestibles In Ayurveda W.S.R. To *Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana*, IRJAY, December : 2020 Vol- 3, Issue-12; 190-203,

Doi: https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2020.31220

INTRODUCTION

Ahara is the elemental of the three Upastambhas(support of life) mentioned in Ayurvedic texts. It has given more importance and is considered a source of energy responsible for the formation of body, happiness and dejection. An appropriate and optimum use of these triads, leads the human body to maintain its integrity, being enriched with physical, immunological strength, growth, and nourishment till the full length of life.⁽¹⁾ The magnitude of comestibles can be well recognized during intrauterine life, since from the very day of conceiving .During these days it is mainly met by mother but comestibles as diet embodies all the congenial rasas which generate and control all the seven body tissues. Acharyas says that the scatheful acts & unwholesome diet are responsible for the causation of diseases .In the absence of these factors ,the individuals become free from all diseases.⁽²⁾ Recognizing the biological response of comestibles, Ayurveda also states that it nourishes as well as instantly promotes strength, keeps up the integrity of the body ,the span of life, enthusiasm, memory, *ojas* & disease-free state of the body governed by it.⁽³⁾Even the perseverance of Agni (digestive fire) is only because of comestibles that keeps up the body healthy.⁽⁴⁾Biogenic contribution of comestibles in terms of anabolic as well as catabolic transformation being directly governed by *Jatharagni* and the resultant effects seen in the maintenance of body tissue elements employing its growth and repair process. According to Ayurveda food articles are composed of *Panchmahabhuta*. Respective Agni digest their ingredients during the process of digestion and metabolism but only when they are stimulated by Antaragni.⁽⁵⁾

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1. To explain the concept of Asth Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana in Ayurveda and modern science.
- 2. To scrutinize the impact of Asth Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana on health.

MATERIAL & METHOD

Search engine used was classical books of Ayurvedic, modern text along with electronic data bases includes Pub med, Google Scholar, Ayush dhara and various websites contains the information in context to our topic. Relevant data is collected, compiled and discussed through and in depth understanding the concept of Asth Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana.

Concept of Asth Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana

Ayurveda has explained eight specific antecedent of method of dietetics which are discussed below⁽⁶⁾—

- *Prakriti* (Nature of comestibles)
- *Karana* (Method of their processing)
- Samyoga (Combination)

- Raashi (Quantities)
- Desha (Habitat /Place where food is grown and cultivated)
- Kaala (Time i.e stage of disease or the individuals & seasonal variations)
- Upayoga samstha (Rules governing intake of food)
- *Upayokta* (Wholesomeness • to the individual who takes it)

Prakriti (Nature of comestibles)

Indicates the nature of the substance i.e. inherent attributes(Heaviness & lightness) diet and drugs.⁽⁷⁾ .Guru Guna of Comestibles like *Mash*(Black grams), *Ikshu*(Sugar cane), Meat of animals living in *anoop desha*(Aquatic and marshy places) like *sukar*(pork) & birds are heavy to digest. Laghu Guna Comestibles like Mudug (Green grams), Rakt Sali (red rice), Shasthik Sali(oryza sativa), Meat of ena(deer)& Lava(flakes) are light to digest .⁽⁸⁾

Significance

This factor is very important to know the nature of food or medicine it will help the individual in choosing the comestibles according to digestion power and capacity .One should always eat easily digestible food. Hence this factor is responsible for promoting health .If the digestive capacity

of individuals is exemplary then a person can take heavy as well as light *Ahara* but if the digestion is penurious then it is recommended to take light *Ahara* to avoid pernicious impact on health .As an example If the person suffering from *Vataja* disorder then one should be advised to take *guru ,snigdha* or *abhishyandi* comestibles.

Karana(Method of processing)

At the time of creation, the creative *bhutas* place their properties in the product and after that, the processing modifies it by superimposing some other properties. This is done by subduing the natural property such as cooking makes the rice light .Nature creates substances with their definite properties .Karan means processing food substances which replaces only noninherent ones and characters to make the ideal and good for consumption where there is the transformation of the substances itself modification in properties can be explained accordingly called as *samsakara* or *abhisamsakara* ⁽⁹⁾. Thus it is clear that the change in properties can be affected in two ways-

• By effecting change in the substance itself.

• By subduing the natural non inherent properties and replacing them with other stronger ones.

Food Processing Method

- i. Jal sannikarsha (Dilution) Solid and hard food items become soft and smooth with the application of water. Panch vidh kashaya kalpa can be prepared according to sheet guna requirement by this method..
- *Agni sannikarsha* (Application of heat)
 The guru properties of rice can be changed to laghu guna by shodan, jala and agni sannikarsha.
- iii. Shauch (Washing)---Acharya chakrapani has given an example of naveen shali rice is guru but after cleansing ,these rice are cooked and mand is separated from the cooked rice then after this process it becomes laghu (light) in nature. After roasting the water present in rice is evaporates and rice is transformed into laza.
- iv. *Manthan* (Churning)-- Dahi (curd) is said to be shothkrit (Edema) or heavy in digestion so after churning it relives from edema and easy to digest.
- v. *Desha* (Place)—Alteration in the place of its origin also leads to the transformation of the attributes. As rice

grown in burnt land is light in digestion where as rice is grown in the land of marshy region is heavy to digestion.

- vi. *Kala*(Time &season)—Time, period and season etc too will bring changes in the food substances. As an example, new rice is indicated in an emaciating person, Old rice is indicated in an obese person, Ripe banana is always wholesome where as Unripe banana is always unwholesome.
- vii. *Vasana*(Fragrance)--- Addition of the flavoring or sweet-smelling agents.
- viii. *Bhajana*(Storage)--- Container or vessels used for the storage of food . For example when *trifala* paste is stored in an iron container the whole night then the concentration of iron increases in the pate due to *gunantradhan*. Poison is fatal for a person and if it is placed in cow urine for three days it will decrease the fatal property of the poison.
- ix. *Kalaprakarsha* (Impregnation & Preservation)---Storing food items for specific time. As the case for sprouting of grains and pickling specific time is required. Similarly with time the property of (*Sandhan kriya*) *aasava* and *arishta* increases.

Significance

Food processing is a tangible means of reducing food wastage with the increase in food supply by improving the processing efficiency and quality. Processing along with preservation aids in the destruction or removal of in-edible parts & conversion to edible forms as per the desire of the consumer. Apart from this also has health benefits includes prevents the growth of harmful microorganisms and decelerating fat oxidation causing rancidity results in free radical production ultimately damage body cells manifests various ailments and also promotes longer shelf life of comestibles , reducing hazards from food consumption. By these techniques, space food is prepared which can easily be consumed under zero gravity. Fortification is a part and parcel of food processing used as a major contrivance to correct the nutrient scarcity in the food material .Hence to combat the nutritional deficiency, food is fortified with essential micro and macro nutrients including fiber, vitA, vitD, omega 3 fatty acids, iron, folic acid, calcium, etc. responsible for maintenance of health and reducing incidence of the nutrient deficiency diseases.

Samyoga(Combination)

Combination of two or more food items results in the manifestation of specific attributes which cannot be manifested by individual substances. New properties will automatically induce in the substance. Sometime this mixing may be beneficial or may be dangerous.⁽¹⁰⁾ As an instance fish and milk when taken alone is wholesome but when both are taken together then they will prove lethal and unwholesome for body. Although both of them have sweet taste but contradictory potencies they pervert the blood and due to abhishyandi properties they barricade the movement of strotas and leading to so many harmful disorders like skin disorders.⁽¹¹⁾Similarly when milk and curd taken induces vomiting and irritate the stomach.

Samyoga viruddha (Incompatible food combining)

Food incompatibility is a unique concept well defined in *Ayurveda.Samyoga viruddha* is one of the components of *viruddha Ahara*. Refers to the food interactions harms the health. Such food or processing instructions which is unwholesome through combination will be of great value for the consumer, ignorant in the field of dietetic incompatibilities results infertility,blindness,visarpa,ascites,eruption s,fistula,insanity,fistula, intoxication ,skin disorders etc.⁽¹²⁾

Significance

Principles various of combining comestibles together mentioned early by the Ancient scholars in the Ayurvedic texts, more widely popularized in 1800s with the term Trophology defined as a nutritional approach that advocates specific combinations of food articles. Common rules of Hay diet includes avoid combination of starches with proteins or acidic food, eat proteins, fats and carbohydrates in moderation etc. Samyoga incorporating various fundamental tenets of food combination become a foundation for modern dietetics. Combination of fast digesting comestible with slow digesting comestible results tailback in GIT tract leads to various gastrointestinal ailments. In the same way different food items require different enzymes during digestion process generally activates at different pH levels because the body is not able to digest both at same time. Adoption of these guidelines is mandatory for achieving good health.

Raashi (Quantum of substance)

Rashi is the quantum of the total (sarvagraha) or individual (parigraha) food articles which determines the results of their administration in proper and improper dosage. The quantity of food taken in its entirety is *sarvagraha* and the quantity of each of its ingredients is parigraha.⁽¹³⁾ Acharya charaka also says that the quantity of heavy and light food is based on the digestive fire of an individual .So one should suggest filling the stomach 1/3 or $\frac{1}{2}$ with food and light food should also be taken in less quantity.⁽¹⁴⁾The stomach should be filled up with two parts of solid food, one part with liquids and the fourth part should be let free for the movement of air or vayu. Hence food taken in proper quantity leads to strength, complexion, happiness, and longevity.

Significance

A well balanced diet ward off various disorders and their complications, also maintain the weight, provide energy for work, and improves mental function. Calorie restriction is a term for reducing food intake without causing malnutrition. This dietary regime is typically adopted to reduce weight in specific conditions includes life style disorders etc. Excess of everything is bad, while there are many shortcomings of excess eating but consuming food in less quantity is also a burning issue .When one goes on an extremely restricted diet. depriving essential nutrients slowing the metabolism and leads to various ailments. While planning the diet all necessary guidelines of appropriate calorie intake or food intake should be kept in mind to protect the health from negative health consequences.

Desha (Habitat of comestibles)

According to Merriam Webster, habitat is defined as the place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows. *Desha* determines attributes due to proliferation or movement of substances in a particular locality or climate, environment or soil of that region .⁽¹⁵⁾ Example drugs of Himalaya are *saumya*(cool) and the drugs obtained from vindhyachala are *agneya*(hot).

Significance

Climate and soil directly influence the crop or medicine. During soil formation climate is one of the important factors. Soils in warmer or wetter climates are more developed than the soil in cooler or dry climate. Healthy soil produces healthy crops that provide nourishment to the people. The concept of *desha satmya* is explained in the terms of opposite attributes, drugs ,and regimens of particular habitat and disease .One should advise habitual use of such prophylactic and therapeutic regimens, opposite in the qualities of the respective habitat of the individuals and disease they are suffering from.

Kaala (Time /state of diseases or individuals and seasonal variations)

Kaala stands for both the time in the form of day and night and states of individuals such as the condition of health and age ⁽¹⁶⁾.This is relevant to the disease e.g. manifestation of disease due to kapha dhosha during childhood due to dietetic error, whereas the former for the determination of the wholesome to different types of seasons .*Nityaga* and *avasthika* are two types of *kaala*. In *nityaga kaala Ahara* is consumed according to ritusatmya and age whereas in Avasthika kaala food is consumed according to the condition of the body either healthy or diseased. During the summer season, the sun rays draw up excessively moisture from nature. Hence one should be advised to take shali rice, cold and sweet food articles, coconut water, milk, ghee and avoid excessive exercise,

salt, sour food articles, honey, wine, etc. If the person suffers from *jvara* one should be advised to take old red *shali* rice, gruel, rice flakes etc.⁽¹⁷⁾ as mentioned in *Ayurvedic* texts.

Significance

Seasonal eating makes us more aware of body requirements and it brings our nutritional well being as a result we feel more happy, healthy, and energized. Nutrition is required during the life cycle and the demand of nutrients varies from one life stage to another. *Prakriti* is one of the imperative factors which should be assessed before planning a diet. Diet consumed by a person should comprise of the attributes opposite to the attributes of *dosha* that forms the *prakriti* of a person. In the present scenario, many people have a dietary concern because of some specific health problems. Because in disease condition digestive power and metabolism are slow and the person is not able to digest the food so they try to improve the overall health and well being by consuming food specifically recommended according to their ailment.

Upayoga samstha (Dietetic rules)

Upayoga samstha stands for the dietetic rule. They are for the most part dependent

on the symptoms of digestion ⁽¹⁸⁾ such as clear belching, enthusiasm, easy evacuation of bowls, lightness in the body, timely initiation of hunger and thirst. *Acharya Sushruta* says that consumption of food before the appearance of lightness results in *mandagni*, indigestion or death.

Rules of taking food

Agni is the allegory for all the metabolic transformations. Acharya *Charaka* says that Agni is not enhanced by fasting nor by the intake of excessive food as an absence of fuel extinguishes the existent fire or excess of fuel extinguishes mild fire. So wholesomeness of food is of no value if it is consumed in a way that the digestive fire cannot receive it properly such as when we are eating the comestible without adopting the rules of dietetic. Acharya *Charaka* says that healthy individuals should follow the following rules while intake food.

- 1. One should eat only the food in proper quantity which is hot, unctuous and contradictory in potency.
- One should eat only when the last meal has been digested.
- Food should be taken in a proper and pleasant place equipped with all the accessories, without talking and

laughing with the concentration of mind and paying due regard to oneself.

4. Food should not be taken too hurriedly or too slowly.

Significance

When warm and unctuous food is taken, it is delicious and incites the factors in the abdomen responsible for digestion. Quantity of food based on the concept of calorie value leads to excess or malnutrition, food that is taken in proper quantity promotes longevity in its entirely without afflicting vata, pitta and kapha. If the food is taken before the digestion of the previous meal, resulting in the production of *ama*(undigested food material) accumulate in the body and obstruct the channels causing the vitiation of all three doshas instantaneously results in various diseases. When the food is taken too hurriedly, it may have the chance to enter into a wrong passage and delays the digestion process.

Upayokta (Habit of the individual)

Upayokta is that who takes food and mainly responsible for the wholesomeness by the habitual intake of things (*okasatmya*).⁽¹⁹⁾

Significance

Dietary habits are the habitual decisions of an individual for the food choices preferred by the person and differ from one to another. The action of food consumed depends upon the physical and psychological aspects of humans. Wholesome dietary habit help the person to stay healthy and fit throughout life where as the habit of eating unhealthy food results in various diseases.

DISCUSSION

"Arogyam Bhojanadinam" Food convention includes the compatibility of food items are determinant factors for the maintenance of positive health as the health depends on the food. According to *Tetariya* Upanishad Ahara is considered as Brahma or supreme responsible for the origin and life of all beings. In this world occupational activities leads to happiness whereas various Vedic rituals lead to heaven and observance of truth and abstinence lead to salvation. Similarly, the individuals' indulging in healthy food practices receive the liberation. Now a day's people are not concentrating on the significant eight factors of diet and eat whatever they get to eat without knowing the harmful effects of uncongenial food. Acharya Kashyap considered Ahara as Mahabhaishjya .No

medicine is equivalent to food and is possible to make a person disease-free with just a proper diet. So it is very necessary to accentuate more on the concept of *Astha Ahara Vidhi Viseshayatan*.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda describes the desirable and undesirable effects of comestibles for each individual. Modern dietetics more emphasizes the concept of the nutritional value of comestibles and goes only with the aspect of *Parigraha matra* indicates the quantities of CHO, Fats, Proteins, Vitamins, Minerals, etc. Ayurveda explains both the Parigraha and Sarvagraha aspect of Ahara Matra. Apart from this factor of Asth Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan, Ayurveda gives a scientific explanation of the wholesome and unwholesomeness of food. Inappropriate adoption of rules and regulations of food results in poor digestive fire ultimately leads to various diseases. In the present scenario, we are not following these Ancient principles and keep on practicing unhealthy food practices without knowing the quality, quantity, caloric value, nutritional value and negative impact on health leads to various metabolic disorders. The concept of Asth Ahara Vidhi Viseshayatan is more scientific and the need of the hour to combat the

deleterious effects of unwholesome dietary habits.

Acknowledgement- we would like to extend our sincere thanks to the faculty of

Swasthavritta and yoga department NIA Jaipur, for their valuable guidance. we are also grateful to our Director Prof. Sanjeev Sharma, NIA Jaipur for the kind support.



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