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Review Article

AAHARA PARINAMAKARA BHAVAS AS FUNCTIONAL UNITS OF DIGESTION: AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW WITH MODERN PHYSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has always placed a great deal of emphasis on *Aahara*, *Agni*, and *Prakriti*. Acharyas describe the idea of *Aahara vidhividhana* and *Aahara Parinamakara bhavas*, which must be adhered to in order to be *Swastha*. Cooking and burning are caused by external fire. The modification of matter by altering its properties, while the body's internal *Agni* facilitates food digestion and the conversion of digested food into bodily entities for assimilation. Food that has been consumed is bio transformed into bodily tissues. Food can nourish and replenish bodily entities if it possesses features that facilitate them. Food that has the opposite characteristics keeps these bodily entities undernourished or occasionally has the power to destroy them. *Charakacharya* has subsequently described the *Aahara Parinamakara bhavas*, which are multiple steps which convert food from a complex form to one that is absorbable and consumable. The right operation of *Vayu*, *Kleda*, *Sneha*, *Kala*, *Samayoga*, and *Ushma* is crucial for maintaining one's health. One of the main causes of the current rise in the incidence of the majority of lifestyle problems is the disruption of *Aahara parinamakara bhavas*. Here, using knowledge from modern science, an effort is made to investigate the idea of "*Aahara parinamakara bhava*" within a physiological framework.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda intends to treat illnesses and promote and preserve the health of the healthy individual (*Swastha*) [1].

प्रयोजनं चास्य स्वस्थस्य स्वास्थ्यरक्षणमातुरस्य विकारप्रशमनं च ||२६|| (Cha.Su.30/26)

The two main variables that affect our health and cause diseases are *Aahara* (diet) and *Vihara* (lifestyle). According to "*Trayopastambha*" *Aahara* is one of the fundamental pillars of the human body [2].

त्रय उपस्तम्भा इति- आहारः, स्वप्नो, ब्रह्मचर्यमिति (Cha.Su.11/35)

In this *Trayopastambha* (*Aahara*, *Nidra*, *Brahmacharya*) as stated in Ayurveda, *Aahara* is kept first, indicating that it is the primary of the three for sustaining human existence. In the twenty-first century, the prevalence of lifestyle problems has sharply increased globally. These don't have a single cause or a single remedy. It is treated with a combination of medication, exercise, a healthy diet, and behavioural modifications. Digestive system problems are also very widespread in the current era of lifestyle disorders like diabetes mellitus, obesity, etc. The main reason behind them is poor eating habits. According to Ayurvedic scriptures, digestive issues are the primary cause of all illnesses[3]. The primary cause of this chain reaction is the absence of *Aahara Parinamakara bhava*, or digestive factors, which are necessary for healthy digestion. *Acharya Charaka* describes *Ahara Parinamakara bhava* both directly in *Sharira sthana* 6th *Adhyaya* and indirectly in *Grahani chikitsa adhyaya* [4].

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According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Panchabhoutika* substances nourish the corresponding *Guna* of *Panchamahabhuta* in the body following *Vipaka* (digestion), which is referred to as *Aahara*[5].

Parinama is the last phase or full process of food digestion and metabolism [6].

Components found in the body parts known as *Bhava*. Thus, *Ahara parinamakara bhava* refers to the elements in our bodies that are in charge of the full digestion and metabolism of food [7].

The human body's digestive system is heavily influenced by a number of variables that are together referred to as *Aahara parinamakara bhava*. They are *Ushma*, *Vayu*, *Kleda*, *Sneha*, *Kala*, and *Samyoga* [8].

Aahara Parinamakara Bhava

***Ushma*:** *Ushma* is a crucial component of digestion. Acharyas refers to the digestive enzymes as *Agni*, which highlights the significance of heat in this process.

ऊष्मा पचति (Cha.Sha.6/15): *Ushma* breaks down food in the same way that fire turns grains into rice. *Pachana prakriya* is aided by *Ushma*. Normal complexion, longevity, growth, health, natural glow, and *Ojus* are all attributed to *Agni* [9]. When the functional condition of *Agni* declines, the individual vanishes. A person can live a long and healthy life if their *Agni* is functioning properly. As a result, *Agni* is said to be the primary element influencing longevity and health [10].

***Ushma* correlated with modern science:** *Ushma* symbolizes the body's entire cellular metabolism in addition to digestive enzymes and gut bacteria. Food particles are broken down by a variety of enzymes. Numerous enzymes aid in the catabolism and anabolism of dietary particles. Salivary lipase, maltase, and amylase aid in digestion in the mouth. Pepsin, gastric lipase, gelatine, and nuclease all aid in digestion in the stomach. Proteases, lipases, and amylases also aid in the breakdown of food particles [11]. The body's microorganisms, referred to as microflora, are sources of *Agni*, live in the gastrointestinal tract (*Mahasrotasa*), and are involved in metabolism. Overall, the gut microbiota exhibits particular traits in the synthesis of several nutrients and compounds such as SCFAs (short-chain fatty acids), which depend on the kind and quantity of medication as well as the food [12]. Digestive enzyme deficit is a disorder caused by a lack of digestive enzymes. Digestive enzyme shortages include lactose intolerance, isomaltase deficiency, and exocrine pancreatic insufficiency[13]. Enzyme supplements and natural foods high in enzymes, such as pineapple, papaya, mango, honey, ginger, cumin, and turmeric, can help to manage such a disease. Bromelain, a digestive enzyme found in pineapples, is a protease that breaks down proteins into their component parts, including amino acids. This facilitates the absorption and digestion of proteins. Amylases, a class of digestive enzymes found in mangoes, convert carbohydrates from starch into sugars like glucose and maltose. Honey is rich in a variety of advantageous substances, such as digestive enzymes [14]. *Agni* may be stimulated by foods like turmeric, ginger, and cumin. For instance, by promoting stomach motility and boosting the release of digestive enzymes, ginger might improve digestion [15]. Papaya's papain enzyme makes proteins easier to digest. Papaya is frequently used in tropical areas as a treatment for constipation and other IBS symptoms [16].

Vayu

वायुरपकर्षति (Cha.Sha.6/15): The food is moved to the subsequent organ by *Vayu*. "*Vayurapakarshati*" signifies that food is transported close to the place of *Agni* to aid in digestion. Additionally, it increases *Agni*, which makes food digestion easier [17].

According to *Chakrapani*, the role of *Vayu* is *Agni uttejana*. It stimulates *Udarya agni*. For the digestion and assimilation of food particles, *Prana*, *Samana*, *Vyana*, and *Apana vayu* function as a single unit [18]. *Anna Praveshana Karma* (deglutition) is aided by *Prana Vayu*. *Samana vayu* aids in the reception, digestion, and separation of *Pakwa aahara* and *Ama*. The functional state of *Samana vayu* is responsible for the digestive power of *Jatharagni*. Dietary digestion and absorption are aided by a variety of cyclical changes that occur in dietary material. *Vyana vayu* facilitates the movement of produced *rasa dhatu* throughout the body. It aids in keeping *Kitta* and *Sara Bhaga* apart. Following food digestion, *Apana vayu* aids in the appropriate removal of waste.

Relevance of considering the concept of *Vayu* in contemporary terms: Among the *Aahara parinamakara bhava*, the gastrointestinal tract's functions fall under the broad category of *Vayu*. Increased contact between food and gastric juice is facilitated by propelling motions of the stomach muscles. The stomach moves during hunger contraction, receptive relaxation, and peristalsis [19]. *Vayu* activities include segmentation contractions and intestinal movement-related peristalsis[20]. Any disturbances will manifest as a variety of ailments.

Kleda

क्लेदः शैथिल्यमापादयति (Cha.Sha.6/15)

Kledaha "*Saithilyamapadayati*" indicates that *Kleda* breaks down food into droplets by hydrolysing the globules of dietary ingredients, making it easier to digest. Both *Kledaka kapha* (in the stomach) and *Bodhaka kapha* (in the oral cavity) perform this job. By creating a bolus, it also aids in the deglutition of food ingested through the oral cavity[21]. *Prakrut Kleda* helps to maintain the *Kayagni* in the body and is directly related to *Jatharagni*, *Mahabhootagni*, and *Dhatvagni*[22].

The significance of the term "*Kleda*" in contemporary contexts

The mucous and water content of digestive fluids is referred to as *Kleda*. A solvent that dissolves the digested substance is provided by watery secretion. This liquid medium is necessary for food absorption. For enzymes to retain their natural shape and exhibit full performance, a certain amount of water must be present in their molecular structures. Additionally, up to a certain point, water can change solvent properties including polarizability, polarity, and the solubility of reactants and products by serving as a solvent modifier [23].

Sneha

स्नेहो मार्दवं जनयति (Cha.Sha.6/15)

"*Snehomardhavamjanayati*" Food ingredients are softened by the unctuous factor (*Sneha*) and improves the action of *Agni*. Therefore, the digestive enzymes function smoothly. improves the action of *Agni* [24].

The latest interpretation of the term "*Sneha*" in modern science that mucous integrity is essential to gut health, and neurological conditions can alter its characteristics. In essence, mucus is a network of hydrated polymers that includes glycosylated mucin proteins. The volume, consistency, and permeability of mucus can all be impacted by factors affecting the nervous system, which can then have an impact on the makeup of gastrointestinal (GI) bacterial populations. Maintaining intestinal health is largely dependent on the enteric nervous system (ENS), a neuronal network that is inherent to the entire GI tract and innervates the mucosal epithelium. This system regulates the secretion and regeneration of mucous, among other aspects of intestinal function [25].

Kala

कालः पर्याप्तिमभिनिर्वर्तयति (Cha.Sha.6/15)

"*Kalahaparyaptinbhinirvartayati*" refers to the amount of time needed for food digestion. This indicates that, depending on the type of food consumed, three to six hours are needed for proper breakdown of food. Digestion takes time to come to an end even when all other variables are present [26]. Acharya Charaka asserts that eating at the right time (*Kala bhojana*) aids in healthy digestion. The digestion of *Guru aahara* takes longer than that of *Abhojana* and *Laghu aahara*. These eating habits can cause *Agni-dushti* by impairing the *Kala bhava* of the *Aahara Parinamkara Bhavas*.

The application of *Kala* in process of digestion: The ailment known as gastroparesis occurs when the stomach takes too long to empty its contents. Unwanted items are eliminated by the faeces process after proper digestion[27]. *Adhyashana*-related illnesses will result if a suitable time interval is not given in these circumstances. People eat quickly and swallow food without properly masticating it because of their hectic schedules. Hard food enters the stomach as a result of improper mixing with saliva.

Samayoga

समयोगस्त्वेषां परिणामधातुसाम्यकरः सम्पद्यते (Cha.Sha.6/15)

"*Samyogastwesham parinamadhatusamyakara sampadhyate*" refers to proper food administration. It causes the dhatus to reach normal levels. All of the guidelines outlined in *Aahara Vidhividhana* and *Asta Aahara Vidhi Visheshayatana* must be followed in order to administer food appropriately[26]. *Aahara Vidhi visheshayatana* consists of *Prakriti* (the intrinsic quality of food), *Karana*, *Samskaram*, *Samyoga* (combination), *Rashi* (amount), *Desha* (location), *Kala* (time), which encompasses the patient's condition and season, *Upayoga samstha*, and *Upayoga niyama*. *Aahara Parinamakara Bhavas* can properly carry out their responsibilities when they follow these guidelines. All of the aforementioned *Aahara parinamakara bhava* should be combined with *Samayoga*. Improper *Pachana* will result if any of these things are problematic [28].

DISCUSSION

Agni distributes the act of *Pachana*, or digesting. Digestion depends on elements like *Aahara parinamakara bhavas*. *Ushma bhava*, which is essential for the full digestive process, can be understood as the energy or heat needed for a chemical or metabolic reaction. Among *Vayu*, *Prana*

vata is primarily responsible for processing the *Karma* "*Anna praveshana kriya*," in which food enters the GIT with the aid of *Prana vata*. *Kledata* aids in the breakdown of coarse food particles into smaller ones. *Kledaka Kapha* does this. Food is softened by *Sneha*. *Samana vata*, which is close to *Agni*, both maintains and stimulates it. *Samayoga* incorporates all of the elements listed under the eight *Aahara visheshayatanas*. *Kala* participates by holding onto food for the purpose of mixing with the enzymes and is linked to appropriate motions of the GIT.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has consistently emphasized the utmost significance of *Aahara* and *Agni*. *Aahara* plays an important role in maintaining the health of an individual. The process of digestion of food is carried out by *Aahara parinamakara bhava*. The ancient sages elaborated on the concepts of *Ahara Parinamakara Bhavas* as essential guidelines for achieving and maintaining good health. It includes *Ushma*, *Vayu*, *Kleda*, *Sneha*, *Kala* and *Samayoga*. These elements play an important part in the digestive process. Consuming food causes the body to change, which eventually affects the body's many tissues and entities. Food may replenish and revitalize these physical entities when it has properties that support and nurture them. In the end, it helps to maintain a condition of equilibrium in terms of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* by facilitating the correct transition of *Aahara* into Dhatus. Therefore, maintaining an individual's health depends critically on the right functioning of *Vayu*, *Kleda*, *Sneha*, *Kala*, *Agni* i.e. *Ushma* and *Samayoga*.

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