A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW ON AGNI

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the science of life is based on several concepts. Concept of Agni is one of them. This study aims to explore the knowledge on Agni and mainly based on the authentic Ayurveda texts. Ayurveda has given prime importance to Agni (digestive fire) as it is one of the basic biologic elements of the living body. Agni has its own physical characteristics, location and functions in the body. Ayurveda emphasized that the balance state of Agni is essential to maintain the health of an individual. If Agni devoid of its normal functions it will leads to diseases. Different views have been suggested regarding Pitta and Agni by different Acharyas. Some Acharyas consider Pitta to be Agni while others speak Pitta is different from Agni. Although different types of Agnis are described in Ayurveda, thirteen types of Agnis viz 7 Dhatvagnis, 5 Bhutagnis and 1 Jatharagni are mostly considered. Jatharagni is also classified into four categories according to its performance of digestion in the human being namely Vishamagni, Teekshanagni, Mandagni and Samagni. Agni converts food in the form of energy, which is responsible for all the vital functions of our body.

KEYWORDS: Agni, Pitta, Diseases, Health.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda Agni has been stated as one of the seats of the Prana viz life or vital energy. In the text Bhagvat Geeta it is mentioned that the Lord Krishna says that he lives in the Agni. According to Charaka Acharya Kaya (body), represents the process of Agni in the human body. He also described Agni as Mool (root) of life. Chakrapani said that the Chikitsa is based on the concept of Agni. All these emphasize the vitality of Agni.

In Ayurveda point of view human body is considered as a replica of the universe. According to that whatever is available in the universe will represent in the human body. The physical Agni is directly linked up the biological Agni inside the body.

The theory of digestion and metabolism in Ayurveda is based on its concept of Agni. In Samkhya view, Agni is potentially present in the Rajoguna of the Mulaprakriti. All the active and productive aspects of evolution at the micro and macro cosmic levels are due to Rajas (energy). Ingested food must be digested and metabolized properly to maintain a healthy life. The main function of Agni is to digest food with the help of Samana Vayu and Kledaka Kapha. Maintenance of the physiological actions is depends on the normal state of Agni while the abnormal state of Agni contribute pathological changes in living body. When this fire extinguishers, man dies when a man is endowed with it adequately he lives long with good health and when it is deranged he falls ill.

MATERIALS & METHODS

This study is mainly based on Authentic Ayurveda Texts. Data were collected and analyzed.

RESULTS

Relation of Pitta with Agni

According to Charaka Agni is located in Pitta. Agni is reflected mostly in the concept of Pitta since it performs fire like actions. Chakrapani said that the Pitta of the body is Agni (flaming fire) and it only refers to the phenomenon of heat which is associated with fire. By implication, heat is seen to be associated with the function of Pitta.

Sushruta has mentioned that there cannot be any Agni without Pitta. Pitta is the same as Agni, since it possesses the properties of Agni and performs similar actions as performed by the Agni (digestive fire) itself. According to Bhoja, digestive fire is included within Agni. Therefore he considered Pitta as same as Agni.

Derivation of Pitta

The term Pitta is derived from the root “Tap” which gives the meaning of “to heat” or “to burn”. It comprises three different meanings.

Tap Santape- generation of heat
Tap Dahe- burning of the nutrition consumed
Derivation of Agni

Agni Gatau- Teja Padartha Visheshah (a kind of heat) 14

Synonyms for Pachaka Pitta

Jathara (Stomach) being its chief site Pitta is known as Jatharagni. Jatharagni is called as Koshtagni due to its site being Koshta (Alimentary tract) 15. Pitta is the fire like agency present in the body hence it is named as Kayagni (Dehagni). It attends to do the important functions of Ahara paripachana (digestion of the food).Therefore it is called Pachakagni. Pitta is also describes in the terms of Audaryagni, Audarya Tejas and Vaishvanara16.

Physical Properties of Agni/ Pitta

Some Acharyas has stated that Pitta and Agni has similar properties. The general physical properties are explained in Authentic Ayurveda texts in following manner as given in Table No 01.

### Table 1: Physical properties of Agni/ Pitta

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>KS</th>
<th>Sh S</th>
<th>BP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Varna</td>
<td>Shukla Aruna Varja (colours other than white &amp; red)</td>
<td>Neela (blue), Peeta (yellow)</td>
<td>Neela (blue), Peeta (yellow)</td>
<td>Neela (blue), Peeta (yellow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rasa</td>
<td>Amla, Katu</td>
<td>Katu, Amla</td>
<td>Katu, Amla</td>
<td>Katu, Amla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guna</td>
<td>Sara, Laghu, Teekshna, Ushna</td>
<td>Teekshna, Ushna, Drava, Sara</td>
<td>Laghu, Teekshna, Ushna</td>
<td>Ushna, Drava, Sara, Teekshna, Laghu, Snigdha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gandha</td>
<td>Visra (fleshy)</td>
<td>Puti (putrid smell)</td>
<td>Visra (fleshy)</td>
<td>Vaigandhya (unpleasant smell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other properties</td>
<td>Sattva, Sasneha</td>
<td>Vidagdha</td>
<td>Sasneha</td>
<td>Esthath Sneha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CS- Charaka Samhita 17,18, SS- Sushruta Samhita 19, AH- Ashtanga Hrudaya Samhita 20, KS- Kashyapa Samhita 21, Sh S- Sharangadhara Samhita 22, BP- Bhava Prakash 23

Functions of Pachaka Pitta

Pachaka Pitta performs actions similar to Analā (fire), in the course of the process of digestion, largely due to the actualization of the Tejas component discarding its Dravatva (liquidity). It digests food, separates Sara (nutrient fraction or essence) from Kitta (indigestible or undigested residue) of the food. Though Pitta is a liquid with the predominant qualities of Teja Bhuta it does not possess Snigdha (viscidity), Sheeta (coolant) and such other qualities of Ap Bhuta.

It directly participates in the digestion of food and at the same time lends support to and augments the functions of the remaining Pittas viz Ranjakā, Alochaka, Sadhaka and Bhrajaka present elsewhere in the body 24. In natural state Pitta helps in the digestion and metabolism of living beings. So it is called Dehoshma. If it is become morbid, it causes various diseases25.

Agni and Five Maha Bhutas

The general concept of Teja has two aspects viz Ushna (heat) and Bhashvara (a light). The Pittas of the body shares these two aspects of Tejas. The qualities of Teja are Samtapa (heat), Bhragishnuta (splendour) and Pakti (digestion) 26.

Bhutas are transformations of Prakruti and as such have the same attributes; they in turn, produce variously the entire group of beings having the same features27. Agni is predominant in Sattva and Rajas because it is enlightens and moves20.

Types of Agni

According to the classical texts the enumeration of the number of Agni is different.

Acharya Charaka has mentioned 13 types of Agnis viz, 1 Jatharagni, 5 Bhutagni and 7 Dhatvagni according to the function and site of their action29.

Acharya Shusruta has described five types of Agnis as the variety of Pitta namely, Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Alochakagni, Sadhakagni and Bhrajakagni. There is an indirect reference in Susruta Samhita to five Bhutagnis underlying in the brief description made to the transformation of food stuff. If these five Bhutagnis are taken into consideration the total number of Agni would be ten30.

Vagbhata is given 5 Bhutagni, 7 Dhatvagni, 3 Dhoshagni and 3 Malagni. Bhava Misra has expressed similar to Acharya Charaka and Vagbhata31. Sharangadhara has described only five Pittas. Those are Pachaka, Bhrajaka, Ranjaka, Alochaka and Sadhaka.

Agni Adhishthana (Place of Agni)

In the view of Vagbhata, Agni (power of digestion) is located in Jathara (Stomach) or Koshtha (Alimentary tract). Pachaka Pitta is in area between Pavkavashya (large intestine) and Amashaya (stomach and small intestines) 32.

Grahani is located between Pavkavashya (large intestine) and Amashaya (stomach and small intestines). Agni supports the functions of Grahani and Grahani supports the functions of Agni33. Grahani is considered as Shashti Pittadharana Kala. It holds the
ingested food for the duration of its digestion, before the Kitta (undigested food) is propelled in to the Pakvashaya (large intestine).

Identification of Kala is different according to Acharyas. It is variously identified as coverings, sheaths, aponeuroses, lining membranes and secreting membranes. In Ashtanga Samgraha the sixth Kala is named as Pittadhara Kala and it is located in between the Pakvashaya (large intestine) and Amashaya (stomach and small intestines). Being the abode of Agni it withholds by force, the movement of food material passing from Amashaya (stomach and small intestines) into the Pakvashaya (large intestine). Digests the food by the heat of the Pitta; absorbs the Sara and allows the digested food to move further. This is known as Grahani in view of its function of withholding the food. Its strength is from Pitta itself. Thus activated by the Agni it maintains the welfare of the body.

Charaka has localized the seat of Agni in the region above Nabhi (umbilicus). The seat of Agni is also terms as Grahani because it receives and retains the food till it is fully digested. The Grahani as such is said to be supported by Agni. Functionally, the Grahani retains the food which is still to be digested, while, the digested portion of it is moved down to the Pakvashaya (large intestine).炭The JJatharagni absorbs the Food which is still to be digested, while, the digested portion of it is moved down to the Pakvashaya (large intestine). Its strength is from Pitta itself. Thus activated by the Agni it maintains the welfare of the body.

The sixth Kala is called Pittadhara as it supports Pitta. It holds four types of food viz. Ashita (soft and hard catables), Khadita (chewable), Peeta (drinkable) and Leedha (lickables) released from Amashaya and directed towards the Kshudrantaya.

Functions of Jatharagni

Jatharagni performs fire like actions in the body viz. Pachana (digestion), Dahana (burning), Bhinna Samghata (splitting), Tapana (heat production), Parinamana (conversion), Paravruttia (transformation), Prakshanama (illumination), Ranjana or Varnakara (colouration) and Prabhakara (to cause luster) 39.

According to Charaka, Jatharagni is responsible for, Ayu (longevity), Varna (colour), Bala (strength), Svasthya (health), Utsaha (enthusiasm), Upachaya (plumpness), Prabha (complexion), Ojas (essence of all Rasas), Tejas (bodily heat or semen) and Prana (life/vital breath) 40.

According to Maricha, Agni represented Piita in the body brings about Pakti (digestion and metabolism) in its normal states and Apakti (indigestion) in its abnormal condition 41.

Charaka mentioned again Bala (strength), Arogya (health), Ayu (longevity) and Prana (vital breath) are dependent upon the Agni (power of digestion). When the food articles are taken in quantity commensurate with the Agni (power of digestion), it is properly maintained and resulting the maintenance of health too 42.

According to Vaghbata Pakti (digestion and metabolism), Ushma (production of body heat) Darshana (enables visual perception), Prabha (lustre of the body), Kshut (hunger and appetite), Ruchi (relish for food), Tanumardova (suppleness of the body), Dhaiyira (courage and valour) and Buddh (wisdom) are given by the Pitta.

Factors influence the action of Jatharagni

1. Prana Vayu- responsible for Anna pravesh (swallowing of food). 44
2. Samana Vayu- It is located near to the Agni and move throughout the Kosthha. It is responsible for the Anna Grahana (reception of the food), Anna Pachana (digestion of the food), Anna Vivechana (separation of Sara from Kitta) and Anna Munchana (propulsion of the food). 45
3. Apana Vayu- responsible for the Shakruth Nishkramana (evacuation of bowels). 46
4. Bodhaka Kapha- Bodhaka Kapha is located in the Mukha (mouth). It is important to Rasa Bodhana (perception of taste) and initiation of the digestion. 47
5. Kledaka Kapha- is located in Amashaya (stomach) and helps to Anna Samghata (disintegration of food) and Anna Kledana (liquefaction of food). Benefits the remaining Kapha Sthanas. Its cooling property countering the heat of Pitta Dosha, protecting Amashaya. 48
6. Pachaka Pitta- Pachaka Pitta is located between Pakvashaya and Amashaya. It performs action like Anala (fire). It helps to digest the food and separate in to Sara (nutritious part) and Kitta (waste products). 49

Importance of Jatharagni

Pachakagni (Jatharagni) is the leader of all Agnis. It is the main converting agent while the others viz Bhutagni and Dhatvagni are always depend on it. As long as the Jatharagni is in its normal state other Agnis viz Bhutagni and Dhatvagni also will be in equilibrium. If there is deficiency of Jatharagni other Agnis would also become less active.

As Charaka expressed, extension of the Jatharagni leads to death while its proper maintenance helps a person to live a long life and its impairment give rise to diseases 50.

To protect and maintain appetite and digestive power is essential to defense from all health problems. Therefore an individual must keep priority to attain normalcy in appetite. If Agni is maintained several other diseases are automatically controlled.

Even when a number of ailments attack an individual, he can protect his life if he maintains a regulated digestion. In other words, no number of diseases can harm an individual if he has proper digestion.

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Ahara Pachana (Digestion of food)

As described in Charaka Samhita the life of all living beings is food and the world seek food52. Food must be properly digested to support Deha Dhatu (tissue elements), Ojas (essence of all Dhatus), Bala (physical strength) and Varna (complexion) and it depends upon Agni.53

The food ingested at the proper time, is drawn into the Maha srotas (Alimentary tract) by the Prana Vata. The big masses of food are divided into small pieces and become soft by the liquid. Then the food is cooked in the pot because it is the organ of Agni where the food is cooked or digested. It is also known as Kshudranta or Grahana. The outcome of Jatharagni Paka is known as Vipaka. It is of three types Madhura (sweet), Amla (sour or acidic) and Katu (pungent or acrid) according to Charaka and Vagbhata while according to Susruta only two viz, Madhura (sweet) and Katu (pungent or acrid) 56.

At the end of the Jatharagni Paka all the six Rasas (tastes) of Ahara get reduced into above Vipakas. Outcome of Vipaka is tabulated below. [Table No 02]

Table 2: Outcome of Vipaka57

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avastha Paka</th>
<th>Place where started</th>
<th>Place where ending</th>
<th>Doshas Influencing</th>
<th>State of Anna</th>
<th>Outcome of Vipaka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madhura bhava of Prapaka</td>
<td>Mukha (oral cavity)</td>
<td>Upper portion of the Urdhva Amashaya</td>
<td>Bodhaka Kapha</td>
<td>Madhura</td>
<td>Madhura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amla bhava of Prapaka</td>
<td>Urdhava Amashaya</td>
<td>Adho Amashaya (Pachyamanashaya)</td>
<td>Pachaka Pitta</td>
<td>Vidagdha (Kinchit Pakva Kinchit Apakva)</td>
<td>Amla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatharagni Paka</td>
<td>Adho Amashaya (Pachyamanashaya)</td>
<td>Pakvashaya</td>
<td>Pachaka Pitta, Kledaka Kapha, Samana Vataya</td>
<td>Pakva</td>
<td>Madhura, Amla or Katu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship in between Rasa (taste) and Vipaka (end result of the digestion)

There are different views regarding the Vipaka and six Rasas. These are given in Table No 03.

Table 3: Relationship in between Rasa (taste) and Vipaka (end result of the digestion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rasa (taste)</th>
<th>Vipaka (end result of the digestion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhura</td>
<td>Madhura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amla</td>
<td>Amla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavana</td>
<td>Madhura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katu</td>
<td>Katu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tikta</td>
<td>Katu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashaya</td>
<td>Katu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CS- Charaka Samhita58, SS- Sushruta Samhita59, AH- Ashtanga Hrudaya Samhita60, AH- Ashtanga Samgraha61, P S on AS- Parashara Commentary on Ashtanga Samgraha62

Different states of Jatharagni

Jatharagni is classified into four categories according to its performance of digestion in the human being namely Vishamagni (irregular), Teekshnagni (sharp), Mandagni (mild) and Samagni (regular) 63-65.

Samagni- Agni which digests the consumed food within an appropriate period is called Samagni. It is due to the equilibrium state of Tridosha (body humours) viz Vata, Pitta, Kapha. This thus increases the quality of the Dhatus (supportive tissues of the body). Persons having Samagni are always hale and healthy.

Vishamagni (irregular state of Agni)- The Agni which sometimes digests food well and sometimes produce Adhmana (flatulence), Shula (colic), Udavarta (constipation), Atesara (diarrhoea), Jathara Gaurava (heaviness in the abdomen), Antra Kujana (borborygmi) and Pravahani (tenesmus) is known as Vishamagni (irregular digestive power). When the Agni is affected by the Vata Dosha Vishamagni is manifested.
Teekshnagni (sharp state of Agni) - Agni which digests food taken even in excessive quantities is called Teekshnagni (sharp digestive power). In Teekshnagni the action of Jatharagni is in the state is influenced predominantly by Pitta. The Agni of this condition is excessively exited and hence it is known as Teekshnagni. This Agni easily digests even a very heavy meal in a very short time. It causes voracious hunger; a condition usually spoken of as Atyagni (Bhushmakagni).

Mandagni (feeble state of Agni) - The digestive power which takes a long time to digest even a very small quantity is named as Mandagni. At the same time it produces Udara Gaurava (heaviness in the abdomen), Shiro Gaurava (heaviness of the head), Kasa (cough), Shvasa (dyspnoea), Praseka (excessive salivation), Chardi (vomiting) and Gatrasada (lassitude) in the body. If Kapha Dosha overpowers Agni, Mandagni will be resulted.

Mandagni gives rise to Kaphaja diseases, Teekshnagni to Pittaja diseases and Vishamagni to Vataja diseases\(^6\). Diseases due to different states of Jatharagni are listed in table No 04.

### Table 4: Diseases due to different states of Jatharagni

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States of Agni</th>
<th>Diseases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandagni</td>
<td>Arshas (piles), Udara (abdominal distention), Kushtha (dermatitis), Jvara (fever), Ama Ajeerana (type of indigestion), Grahani (sprue), Ateesara (diarrhoea), Visuchika (choleric diarrhoea), Alasaka (intestinal torpor)(^6)-(^7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teekshnagni</td>
<td>Grahani (sprue)(^75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vishamagni</td>
<td>Grahani (sprue)(^75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhushmakagni</td>
<td>Athi Sthauya (obesity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vidagdha Agni</td>
<td>Rakta Pitta (bleeding disorders)(^76), Amapitta (hyperacidity), Vidagdha Ajeerna (type of indigestion), Kamala (jaundice)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bhutagni and Bhutagni Paka

Ayurveda recognize five basic elements called Pancha Maha Bhuta viz, Akasha (ether), Vayu (air), Teja (heat), Ap (water) and Pruthuvi (earth)\(^77\). Human body as well as the dietary articles is composed of these five Maha Bhutas (five basic elements)\(^78\). This each of Bhuta contains their own Agnis named as Bhutagni. For an example Akasha Dravya contains Akashagni, Vayavya Dravya contains Vayavagni.

Ultimate products of Jatharagni Paka are suitably processed by Bhutagni Paka. Bhutagni Paka is commenced in the Adhah Amashaya or Kshudrantra (small intestines) it is continued and completed in Yakrut (liver).

As Acharya Charaka described, five Bhutagnis digest their own part of the substances present in the food materials. After the digestion digested materials containing the elements and qualities alike to each Bhutas nourish their own specific Dhatus of the body\(^79\).

Both Charaka and Susruta directly mentioned about Bhutagni Paka. But Acharya Susruta has given indirect reference only. The food which consists of five Maha Bhutas is digested in its turn by the five Bhutagnis and each of principle proceeds to augment its own homologue in the human organism.

### Dhatvagni (Bio energy in the cells) and Dhatvagni Paka

All the seven Dhatus contain their own Agni to metabolize the nutrient materials supplied to them through their related Srotas. These are called Dhatvagni\(^80\). Rasa Dhatu contains Rasagni, Rakta Dhatu contains Raktagni and Mamsa Dhatu contains Mamsagni and so on so forth.

By Dhatvagni Paka food substances are made alike to assimilation and nourishment for Dhatus. The Rasa essence circulated through the body and supplies nutritive elements to all parts viz Dhatu (tissues) viz again are made up of five Maha Bhutas. Dhatvagni regulate the metabolism thus performing all the functional activities from an individual cell to the entire body.

As described in Chakrapani, Dhatu is of two types viz Asthai (Poshaka; unstable) and Sthai (Poshya; stable). With the influence of their own Agni (Dhatvagni) Asthai or Poshaka Dhatu are undergone Paka (digestion) and transported via their own Srotas viz Rasavaha, Raktavaha and so on to nourish Sthai Dhatu\(^81\).

During the process of Dhatvagni Paka, Anna Rasa is divided into Prasada and Kitta. Asthai or Poshaka Dhatu of all Dhatus are formed by Prasada Bhaga while all the Mala (waste products) of Dhatus by Kitta Bhaga. Mala (waste products) resultant from each Dhatu is given in the following table. [Table No: 05]

### Table 5: Mala (waste products) resulting out of Dhatvagni Paka\(^82\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhatu</th>
<th>Mala</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rasa</td>
<td>Malabhuta Kapha (phlegm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakta</td>
<td>Malabhuta Piita (pitta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamsa</td>
<td>Kha Mala (excreta of the ear, eyes, nose, mouth and root of hair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medas</td>
<td>Sveda (sweat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthi</td>
<td>Kesham, Loma (hair and nails)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majja</td>
<td>Vit Sneha (the unctuous substances present in the eyes, stool and the skin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shukra</td>
<td>No waste produces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 6: Diseases due to Dhatvagni Mandya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Diseases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhatvagni Mandya</td>
<td>Prameha (polyuria)83, Galaganda (goiter)84, Madhumeha (diabetes mellitus), Medo Vruddhi (hyperlipidaemia), Atithaulya (obesity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effect of Agni on Dhatu

Jatharagni digests the food and prepares nutrient materials required for all the Dhatu. Each one of the Dhatu within it has an Agni like portion which is described as the portion of jatharagni.

Kayagni contributes the moiety of itself to the seven Dhatvagni and support and augments the functions of Dhatvagni. Their decrease and increase in quantity quality or functions give rise to increase and decrease of the Dhatus respectively.

Due to the identical functions this Agni present in Dhatu (Dhatvagni) also digests the nutrient materials prepared by the Jatharagni and transforms it so as to become suitable to the Dhatu. In this connection Dhatvagni receives strength from Jatharagni and both work in unison. If the Jatharagni very strong, the Dhatvagni will acts similarly and vice versa. Very strong Agni overcooks the food and thereby making available very little amount of nutrient. It leads to Dhatu Kshaya (decrease or loss of tissues). Very weak Agni fails to cook food properly and allows Ama (uncooked nutrients) to accumulate in the Dhatu leading in to Dhatu Vruddhi (abnormal increase of the tissues). Either these Kshaya or Vruddhi of Dhatus are abnormal conditions and give rise many diseases in the body.

Each preceding Dhatu helps the succeeding Dhatu. If the preceding Dhatu undergoes either Vruddhi or Kshaya by the effect of Agni the succeeding Dhatu will also undergoes similar changes respectively.

Impairment of Agni is responsible for the creation of diseases.

Effect of Agni on Mala

The ingested food stuff having reached the Pakvashaya is dehydrated and converted into lumps by the Agni. In the process Vayu become Katu Bhavita.

Relation between Agni and Vata Dosha

Vata Dosha in balance state will maintains the equilibrium of Dosha, Dhatu and Agni together 85. Samana Vayu is being associated with Agni helps to ingestion, digestion and separation of food 86.

Relation between Agni and Purisha

Purisha in normal state supports the body and maintain the Agni.

Agni and Panchakarma

Panchakarma therapy is meant for Samshodhana (purification) of the body through the elimination of Doshas which are vitiated and accumulated in Srotas (body channels). Purva Karma (preparatory procedures) are required to be undertaken before the Panchakarma is done. Pacana is the very first therapeutic procedure administered under Purva Karma to normalize the deranged Agni. It is necessary to examine the state of Agni prior to perform Panchakarma.

DISCUSSION

Solar energy is the source of any kind of conversion in the living beings. Like ripening of fruit results in the changes of colour, taste and smell. Agni represents this solar energy in living body. Agni has the capacity to convert a substance into any form due to its occult power.

Agni is reflected mostly in the concept of Pitta. But in fact as a matter of principle, Pitta and Agni both are supposed to be separate body constituents. Though both are separate substances, however on the basis of similar functioning like Dahana and Pachana both can be correlated together. The commentator Dahan has interpreted the term Dahana and Pachana as Daha (burning) and Paka (chemical actions).

Agni is not different from Pitta due to its Agneya property. In the conditions of depletion of Antaragni substances having Katu (pungent), Amla (sour), Lavana (salty) Rasa, Teekshna (sharp), Usna (hot) Guna used to enhance Agni. Therefore it can be justified that Agni is not different from Pitta. In the context of origin of different Doshas it has been mentioned that Pitta is supposed to be a substance, which is Agneya (fiery) and whose actions and properties are identical with those of Agni.

In modern physiological perspective the action of Jatharagni can be equated with the digestion in stomach, intestines and the liver. As the food consumed are foreign to the body (Vijateeya) they should be processed to convert organism specific form (Sajateeya) to get absorbed. Dhatvagnis support Dhatus to nourish and constitute themselves via nutrient stuff. A decrease or an increase of Dhatus occurs according to the Teekshna or Mandata of the aspects of Pachakagni present in Dhatus.

Out of the four different Agni, Samagni is the best. The remaining three Agnis produce illnesses. The majority of the illnesses are produced by Mandagni. Kapha and Agni are having opposite attributes and as a result of this duality the process of digestion slows down in Mandagni. In the young age, the stage of Agni is Manda due the influence of Kapha Dosh and as age advances the power of Agni increases thus resulting in better digestion and metabolism. This helps an increase in the size of the body.

Jatharagni Paka results the breakdown of food into five distinct groups viz Parthiva, Apya, Agneya, Vayavya and Akashiya. Bhutagni Paka completes the intestinal digestion. It is only after the completion of this Bhutagni Paka the formation of Ahara Rasa accomplishes and its absorption starts. The Bhutagni is thus activated and digests the substance of that
particular group. By this process of digestion the characteristic qualities of each Mahabhuta component get transformed and assumed Vilakshana Gunas.

The Dhatvagni or enzymes are located in the tissue elements of the body. They help in the assimilation and transformation of the nutrient materials received after the Bhutagni Paka into substance homelogous to the tissue elements. During the process of assimilation through the help of Dhatvagni many waste products are produced.

Diseases are caused by the obstruction of the channels of the body. The obstruction is due to the accumulation of waste products. These waste products can be eliminated if the Agni or the enzymes of that locality are stimulated. Thus the concept of Agni or the process of the digestion and metabolism is given lot of importance in Ayurveda.

Before starting the treatment of any disease in the first instance, the defects in these Agnis are located and efforts are made to correct them. It is true also that the body elements remain deprived of nutrients, unless and until the food is properly digested by Agni. When the vital air goes out of the body viz. when the individual dies the functioning of the Agni will stop.

Chakrapani described that the use of the word Shareereshu indicate that the Agni residing all over the body. However, in subsequent elaboration Agni is residing in the gastro intestinal tract are described.

CONCLUSION

Agni is an important entity in Ayurveda. The Prana (life forces) of an individual depends on Agni. Agni is one of the basic constitute of the body, which has an important role to play in conversion and is helpful in the maintenance and growth of the human body.

Agni is not stimulated by non eating or taking less quantity of food or by over eating just as the physical fire is not kindled without fuel or with too much of fuel or with dispropostate to its small burning capacity.

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