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Review Article

A CLINICAL UTILITY OF *PRAKRITI PARIKSHAN-* AN AYURVEDIC DIAGNOSTIC TOOL: A BRIEF REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: Ayurveda, Prakriti, Dosha, Parikshan, Clinical Utility. Avurveda is science of life. Prevention and cure of disease is the aim of Avurveda. *Prakriti* is one of the major *Ayurvedic* principles derived from the *Veda*, *Purana*, Upanishad, and Darshana. Prakriti in Ayurveda refers to an individual's inherent nature; an inborn inclination that governs consciousness and activity. Prakriti is supposed to be fixed in every person. It is influenced by the status of *Tridosha*, at the time of union of ovum and sperm. Also, an individual's *Prakriti* is determined based on the predominance of any single or a combination of two or three *Dosha*. Every individual, like genetic coding, has a different combination and is thus a distinct entity. In Ayurvedic texts different Acharyas have described different features of Doshai, Manasa, Bhautika & Jatvadi Prakriti. For fulfilling the aim of Ayurveda and alleviating disorders in diseased states, knowledge of an individual's constitution and status of *Dosha* is required, and with this knowledge, we can prevent and cure disease stages by managing the diet, physical activities, and psychological conditions of the individual. Prakriti also determine an individual's reaction to environmental circumstances, lifestyle choices, medications, and illness susceptibility, making it one of the earliest known concepts in preventive and personalized or genomic medicine. To understand the pattern of susceptibility of an individual to different diseases, selection of drugs, their dose, drug reaction to the body, disease prognosis, course, and preventive measures, Prakriti analysis is performed first, followed by Vikriti analysis. Hence, Prakriti emphasizes uniqueness and plays a significant role in disease prevention and cure, as well as maintaining a healthy body throughout one's life.

INTRODUCTION

Prakriti is derived from two Sanskrit words "Pra" and "Kriti". Pra denotes the beginning or source of origin whereas Kriti denotes the act of performing or forming. So *Prakriti* denotes the nature or state of an individual in its original form^[1]. Prakriti is the presentation or expression of oneself in terms of the morphological, physiological, psychological, or social aspects. According to Ayurveda every individual is distinct in nature. Different Prakriti individuals have unique physiognomy^[2] depending upon the predominance of Dosha and Mahabhuta at the time of birth. Prakriti is an enumeration of body features, internal as well as external^[3]. *Samya* (equilibrium), Aragyo (healthy), Svabhav (nature), Sharir swarupa

(bodily constitution) and *Karana* (cause), are the synonyms of *Prakriti*.

Prakriti Formation of an Individual

Prakriti is a set of characteristics inherited by an individual from his or her parent's *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum) based on the predominance of *Dosha* present at the time of sexual intercourse^[4], and these attributes (physical and mental) remain with him or her until death^[5]. According to *Charaka*, *Purusha* is composed of six *Dhatu* (elements), viz. five *Mahabhuta* (in their subtle form) and *Soul* and the nature of this *Sharira* is known as *Prakriti*^[6]. The body is a *Vikara* of *Dosha* and the predominance of

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particular *Dosha* at the time of conception determines the Prakriti. In Ayurveda, Prakriti is the outcome of two factors- Prakrit Dosha and Vaikrita Dosha^[7]. Prakrit Dosha is a constant factor. It is a unique arrangement of Panchamahabhuta sets in paternal and maternal gametes during conception and that of a soul^[8]. This constant factor is the chief decisive of future *Prakriti*. Factors. such as climatic. periodic, and idiosyncratic influences, are claimed to play a role in determining individual differences. Dosha Prakriti is another name for Deha Prakriti^[9]. Thus, some people's bodily constitutions are dominated by Kapha (Sleshmala), others by Pitta (Pitala), and still others by Vata (Vatala), while some have a mix of the two Doshas (Samsrishta), and still others have Dosha equilibrium (Sama Prakriti). Sama Prakriti is superior compared to other Prakritis^[10]. For good health, knowledge of *Prakriti* is the best guideline and most important. Daily and seasonal regimens are prescribed in Ayurveda according to the Prakriti. They are mostly simple, easily executable, conservative and preventative measures.

OBJECTIVE

- 1) To understand the concept of the Prakriti.
- 2) To understand the different characteristics features of the *Prakriti*.

3) To understand the clinical utility of the *Prakriti*.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A review of literature regarding this is collected from the *Ayurvedic* classics viz. - *Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtang Hridaya* and different research journals. A possible correlation has been made between collected information and has been presented systematically.

Factors responsible for Determination of *Prakriti*

Ayurveda has explained many factors that play a role in the determination of *Prakriti*, as well as the development of the fetus. The factors that are responsible for determining *Prakriti* may be intrauterine as well as extra uterine. *Charaka* has described six *Bhavas* (aspects) responsible for development of fetus, which can be considered as determinants in the development of human organism and its personality^[11] *Vagbhata* has described four factors that influence the formation of *Prakriti- Bija* (sperm and ovum), *Kshetra* (uterus/site for lodgement), *Ritu* (proper timing) and *Aahara* rasa (nutrition) ^[12]. Among these *Bija* is the main factor, which carries the progeny of parents.



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Types of Prakriti

Table 1: Different types of Prakriti

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<i>Shaaririka Prakriti</i> ^[14] (Physical constitution)	<i>Manasa Prakriti</i> ^[15] (Psychological constitution)	Bhautik Prakriti ^[16]
Vata	Sattvika	Vataj (Vayu Mahabhuta predominance)
Pitta	Rajasika	Pittaj (Agni Mahabhuta predominance)
Kapha	Tamasika	Kaphaj (Prithivi Mahabhuta predominance)
Vata-Pitta	Sattva-Rajasika	
Vata-Kapha	Sattva-Tamasika	
Pitta-Kapha	Rajas-Tamasika	
Vata-Pitta-Kapha	Samaguna	

Characteristics of *Shaaririka Prakriti*^[17]

A) Features of Vata Prakriti

Table 2: Showing the physical characteristics of different Prakriti

Attributes	Manifestations	
Ruksha (Dry)	Dryness, dwarfishness and emaciation of the body, dry, low, obstructed, interrupted and hoarse voice, always keeping awake.	
Laghu (Light)	Their movements, acts, eating will be weak, light and unsteady.	
Chala (Mobile)	Unstable of joints, eyes, eye brows, jaws, lips, tongue, head, shoulders, hands and legs.	
Bahu (Abundance)	Incoherent speech, abundance and prominent looking of tendons and ligaments.	
Shighra (Swift)	Initiating of actions are quick, getting irritated quickly, quick onset of morbid manifestations, quick in distress with fear, quick in dislikes and likes of things, understanding and forgetting things quickly.	
Shita (Cold)	Intolerance for cold substances, often getting affected with cold, stiffness and shivering.	
Parusha (Rough)	Roughness and hardness in the hair, head, face and other parts the body like nails, teeth, hands and feet.	
Vishada (Non-slime)	Organs and limbs are cracking during movement always present production of cracking sounds in joints.	
Apart from this, these	Apart from this, these persons will be physically weak, lives short span of life, have fewer children, get fewer	

facilities for living.

B) Features of Pitta Prakriti

Attributes	Manifestations
Ushna (Hot)	Having hot face, intolerance for hot things, fair and tender body suffering from <i>Piplu</i> (tiny boils), <i>Vyanga</i> (facial melanosis), <i>Tilkälaka</i> (flat nevi), having excessive <i>Pidakas</i> (skin eruptions), have very keen hunger and thirst, quick advent of old age symptoms like wrinkles, having brown hairs, scanty (baldness) hairs on the head, face and other parts of the body.
Tikshna (Sharp)	Physical strength are sharp, digestive fire are strong, intake of food and drink in a large quantity in time to time with gluttonous habits and unable to face difficult situations.
Drava (Liquor)	Softness, lean and looseness of joints and muscles, voiding of feces and urine in large quantities and highly sweating.
<i>Visra</i> (Fleshy smell)	Offensive and putrid smell from mouth, head, axilla and other different parts of the body in excess amount.
Amla/Katu (Sour/	Possess less of semen, sexual desire and procreativeness.

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Pungent)

Apart from this, these persons are endowed with moderate span of life, moderate strength, moderate spiritual and materialistic knowledge, moderate wealth and accessories of life.

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C) Features of Kapha Prakriti		
Snigdha (Unctuous)	Unctuousness and glistening body structure.	
Shlakshna (Smooth)	Smooth and fine body parts.	
Mridu (Soft)	Pleasing appearance, charmful face and tender skin, organs and musculature.	
Madhura (Sweet)	Will have more of semen, great vigor, sexual prowess and a more number of children.	
Sara (Firm)	Stability, thickness and stability of the body.	
Sandra (Dense)	Well-formed and fully developed organs and muscles.	
Manda (Slow)	Slow in movement, slow in actions and intake of food.	
Stimita (Stable)	Slowness in initiating actions, slowness in getting irritated and morbid manifestations.	
Guru (Heavy)	Stable gait with the entire sole of the feet pressing against the earth, non-slippery.	
Shita (Cold)	Not much troubled by hunger, thirst, strain, heat and perspiration.	
Vijjala (Viscous)	Stability and compactness in the joints.	
Accha (Clear)	Lustrous and attractive eyes and face, happiness, softness of complexion and voice.	
Apart from this, these and longevity with pea	persons are endowed with the best strength, wealth, education, vitality, immunity aceful nature.	

D) Features of Dwandwaja Prakriti

Individual's having constitution dominated by the combination of two *Dosha* is characterized by the combination of the manifestation of respective *Dosha*. The dual *Dosha* combination is not considered ideal.

E) Features of Sama-doshaja Prakriti

An Individual who has all the three *Doshas* in the state of equilibrium is endowed with the good qualities of all the three type of individual (considered as very healthy and ideal). In a *Tridosha* balanced *Prakriti* (also called *Sama Dhatu Prakriti*), there is no chance of aggravation of any *Dosha* and thus person's *Dosha* will be in eqillibrium condition and enjoys best of health, immunity and longevity.

Clinical Utility of Prakriti

In *Ayurveda*, there is *Dasavidha atur pariksha*^[18] for the examination of patients in which *Prakrti* and *Sattva Pariksha* is one of them. *Prakriti* diagnosis in *Ayurveda* offers a unique approach in understanding and assessing one's health. *Prakriti* guides for good and healthy health. It provides detailed instructions to adopt one's food and behavior to suit one's *Prakriti*.

A) Role of *Prakriti* in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

1) In respect to Health Promotion: If a person indulges in activities with his *Prakriti*, he should also indulge in foods and activities with opposing characters in order to live a healthy lifestyle and lead a long life. *Panchakarma, Aachara*rasayan, *Sadvritta* and *Vajikarana* are beneficial when they are administered according to one's own *Prakriti*. According to *Charaka*, persons with *Kaphaja Prakriti* have a maximum life span, while those with *Vataja Prakriti* have the minimum life span.

2) Determination of *Bala* (strength/immunity)^[19] of the individual: *Bala* is classified into three categories based on an individual's workout capabilities. The Comparative strength of different individuals can be decided by the type of *Prakriti*.

- Pravara/Uttam Bala (superiority of bala): A person who is capable of completing all forms of physical and mental activities and never feels tired easily.
- Madhyma Bala- It is an approach that falls between Pravar and Avara bala.
- Avara/Heena Bala (inferiority of bala)-Condition opposite to the Pravara bala. Person

become tired even after a least physical and mental activity.

Superiority of *bala* is found in *Kapha Prakriti* individuals, compared to *Pitta* and *Vata Prakriti* individuals. According to the status of *bala*, mode of treatment and dosage of drug is decided.

3) To assess *Agni* and Metabolic activities of Individual^[20]: *Agni* (digestive capability) is an important factor in our body for digestion and metabolism. The *Agni* is responsible for digesting, absorbing, and assimilating ingested food, which is unavoidable for the maintenance of life. So wellness and illness of an individual depend on the proper and improper functions of the *Agni*. *Acharya Charaka* has described four types of *Agni* according to one's own *Prakriti*.

- Vishamagni in Vata Prakriti: Vitiated by Vata Dosha, irregular in nature, sometimes digests the food quickly and sometimes slowly.
- Tikshanagni in Pitta Prakriti: Vitiated by Pitta Dosha (physiological humor), very quick digestion of food, regardless of the type of food.
- Mandagni in Kapha Prakriti: vitiated by Kapha Dosha, Diminished digestive capacity, eat very little and are unable to digest even the smallest amount of food.
- Samagni in Samadosha Prakriti: Indication of the healthy condition of an individual, all the food materials are digested and absorbed properly and produces Dhatu uniformly.

4) To Assesses Koshtha^[21]**:** Koshtha is of three type's viz. Krura (hard), Mridu (soft) and Madhya (moderate). The type of Kostha can be decided by the type of Prakriti. In Vataja Prakruti, there is Krura Koshtha, In Pittaja, there is Mridu Koshtha and in Kaphaja, there is Madhyam Koshtha. Knowing and examination of Koshtha is very necessary because it reveals the predominance of Dosha and make the physician plan the line of treatment, advise appropriate line of diet, dosage and drugs of choice of *Emetics* and *Purgative* can be decided.

5) Susceptibility to disease/Prognosticative individual's Medicine: An basic constitution determines predisposition to diseases. Prakriti determines the reflection of an individual for Dosha specific diseases based on the properties of the three body types. The predominance of *Kapha* body types is more prone to weight gain, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, metabolic syndrome, Agnimandhya etc^[22] Similarly the predominance of *Pitta* body types is more prone to develop ulcers, bleeding disorders, skin disorders, anemia, *Raktapitta* etc^[23] and the *Vata* body types can have propensity to develop neurological problems,

dementia, speech disorders, Gulma, arrhythmias, and chronic diseases as well^[24]. *Vataja, Pittaja,* and *Kaphaja* disorders are more difficult to treat in *Vata, Pitta,* and *Kapha Prakriti* individuals, respectively. Because of this, the various diseases to which an individual is prone can be anticipated ahead of time and treated or postponed with the right food, medications or regimen.

6) For Preventive Medicine: Ayuveda offers various regimens including Dincharya (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (Seasonal regimen), *Sadvritta* (ideal routines) and *Aachara Rasavana* (Code of Conduct) etc. and these have been advised on the basis of *Prakriti*. These routines can be followed according to *Prakriti's* needs in order to maintain the body healthy and the Dosha in balanced condition. Also, once individual constitution detected his/her and predominant *Dosh* then we can able to prevent and cure the disease stage by managing the diet and encouraging them to take *Pathya Ahara* (favorable foods and drinks), Vihara (behavior and physical activities) and discouraging to take Apathya Ahara (unfavorable foods and drinks), *Vihara* (behavior and physical activities) and psychological conditions.

B) Role of Prakriti in Treatment

1) For Drug^[25] and Drug Dosage Determination: The medicine and dose of medicine are determined by the *Prakriti* of an individual. In *Vataja Prakriti*, medications such as medicinal oil with drugs like *Eranda*, *Devdaru*, *Guduchi*, *Rason*, *Rasna* are used which are *Snigdha* and *Ushna* in nature. In *Pittaja Prakriti*, one must administer *Chandana*, *Ela*, *Munakka*, *Yeshtimadhu*, which have relaxing, cooling, and mild oleative properties. It will be scientific to offer pharmaceuticals like *Haridra*, *Kanchnar*, *Guggulu* to *Kaphaja Prakriti*, who have greater bodily fatty materials. In general, in *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha Prakriti* persons, the *Alpa* (minimum), *Madhya* (moderate), and *Pravara* (highest) doses of medicine are used^[26].

2) For Disease Diagnosis: Because the causative factors of diseases and the changes factor for *Prakriti* are the same, So, *Prakriti* helps in disease diagnosis. This *Prakriti* diagnosis not only gives an idea of the vitiated *Dosha* but also gives the idea about the therapeutic principles for that individual. *Acharya Charaka* presented *Dashvidha Pariksha* for the diagnosis of the strength of a diseased person. When assessing a patient, the first thing to perform a *Prakriti* analysis and helps in diseases diagnosis.

3) For Diseases Prognosis: Causative factors of disease and the factors for abnormality of *Prakriti* are the same. So, if the disease's causative *Dosha* and the affected person's *Prakriti* are the same; the disease

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becomes *Krichra Sadhya* (difficult to treat). Similarly, if the vitiated *Dosha* is not the same as one's *Prakriti*, it is quite simple to treat i.e. *Sukhasadhya*.

CONCLUSION

Avurveda considers life to be the union of the body, senses, mind, and spirit. The concept of *Prakriti* has a central role in Ayurveda therapeutics. Vata, Pitta, Kapha Prakriti persons have different physical, physiological and psychological characters as mentioned above. Avurveda provides detailed guidance about food, nutrition, season and diet as per the individual constitution (Prakriti) for maintaining lifestyles in accordance with one's *Prakriti* and helps to continue healthy living in a personalized manner. Knowledge about *Prakriti* is an opportunity to practice personalized preventive health, which is not possible in other medical systems, particularly western medicine. Prakriti of a person can give a good idea of their physiological strengths and weaknesses, mental tendencies and susceptibility to illnesses of various types of diseases. Also, it provides the right regimen for individual covering all aspects of our nature, physical, psychological and spiritual, therefore, affords us a methodology for preventing, as well as curing of diseased. Hence, knowledge of Prakriti of an individual emphasizes to maintain health and cure the disease properly and logically.

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