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## Review Article

### ANALYSIS OF PRAKRITI IN AYURVEDIC CLASSICAL TEXTS

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#### ABSTRACT

*Prakriti* is an integral part of Ayurveda, which is an eternal science based on absolute principles. It is essential for the selection and formation of all factors for which a person will interact from conception to death, such as lifestyle, diet, etc. It represents the character of the body in relation to the *Dosha* and is determined at the moment of conception based on the predominant *Dosha*. This character does not change throughout a person's lifetime and is responsible for their physical and mental attributes. *Tridosha* says there are seven types of *Prakriti*. People with certain *Prakriti* have different bodies in terms of how they work, how they act, how they react to things in their environment, how likely they are to get diseases, and so on. *Prakriti* identifies how an individual reacts to environmental conditions, lifestyle changes, and drugs, and how susceptible they are to different diseases. It's one of the first ideas in preventive and personalized (or genomic) medicine. To figure out how susceptible an individual is to different diseases, what drugs to use, how much to take, how the drug reacts to the body, how the disease will progress, and how to prevent it, first *Prakriti* is done, then *Vikriti* is done. *Prakriti* focuses on uniqueness and plays a big role in preventing and curing diseases, as well as keeping you healthy throughout your life. Analysis of the concept of *Prakriti* is made to find out through this paper.

#### INTRODUCTION

'*Prakriti*' is a Sanskrit term that is often used in Indian philosophy and spirituality. It is a fundamental concept in several Indian religious and philosophical traditions, including Hinduism and Jainism. The word '*Prakriti*' is usually translated as 'nature' or 'the natural world,' but its meaning goes beyond the physical world and encompasses the broader concept of cosmic or metaphysical nature. In Hinduism, *Prakriti* is

associated with the material world and is often contrasted with '*Purusha*,' which represents the spiritual or divine aspect. According to some Hindu philosophical systems, the entire universe is created and sustained by the interaction between *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. In Jainism, *Prakriti* refers to the physical and material aspects of reality, including the substances and forces that make up the physical world. It is an integral part of *Jain* cosmology and is central to understanding the nature of existence and *Karma* in Jain philosophy. The concept of *Prakriti* is complex and has different interpretations in various philosophical schools within these traditions. It is important to understand the creation, evolution, and interplay of the material

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and spiritual aspects of existence in these Indian philosophical systems.

## REVIEW

*Prakriti* means the *Swabhava* or temperament or the physical and psychological makeup of an individual.

## Etymology:

"प्रकरोति इति प्रकृति।" (*Dalhana*)

*Pra*- Beginning, Commencement

*Kruti*- to form, Creation

Therefore, *Prakriti* means natural or original form.

"प्रकृति स्वभाव इति उच्यते।"

The term *Prakriti* means *Swabhava* or the nature of the individual.

प्र + कृ + क्लिच् (वाचस्पत्यम्)

*Pra*- Satva, *Kri*- Rajas, *Ti*- Tamas

## Definitions

- According to Acharya *Vagbhata*, equilibrium or constancy in proportion to the *Doshas* is known as *Prakriti*. Further, *Chakrapani* has commented equilibrium of the *Dhatus* is known as *Prakriti* and it is responsible for health.
- The integrated organization of all the physical, psychological, intellectual, and emotional characteristics of an individual.

## Prakriti Nirmana

शुक्रशोणितसंयोगे यो भवेद्दोष उत्कटः।

प्रकृतिर्जायते तेन तस्या मे लक्षणं शृणु॥ (Su.Sha. 4/62)

प्रकोपो वाऽन्यथाभावो क्षयो वा नोपजायते।

प्रकृतीनां स्वभावेन जायते तु गतायुषः॥ (Su. Sha. 4/72)

The dominance of *Doshas* or the proportion of *Doshas* during the union of male & female gametes manifests the *Prakriti* of an individual. This *Prakriti* remains unchanged throughout the lifespan of the being but is influenced by external factors.

The factors responsible for the *Prakriti* of an individual are the *Prakriti* of male and female reproductive tissue, season, uterine factors, diet and lifestyle of the mother, and the proportion of five elements viz. *Akash*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Jala*, *Prithvi*.

Apart from these, Acharya *Charaka* also states six factors responsible for determining the *Prakriti* of an individual viz. race, family, habitat,

age, seasonal variations, and individual Factors. [1,2]

## Prakriti determining factors

*Prakriti* is determined by the

### 1. *Garbha Kalaja Bhava*

तद्यथा शुक्रशोणितप्रकृति कालगर्भाशयप्रकृति मातुराहारविहारप्रकृति, महाभूतविकारप्रकृति च गर्भशरीरमपेक्षते। च.वि 8/95

### *Garbha Kalaja Bhava* includes:

#### • *Shukra and Shonita Prakriti*

*Prakriti* is inherited from birth.<sup>[3]</sup> The main feature involved in the formation of *Garbha* is *Shukra-Shonita Samyoga*. *Stree Beeja* and *Pumbija* possess *Beeja Bhaga* and *Beeja Bhaga Avayavas*, from which different parts and organs of the embryo are formed. Characters inherited from mother and father contribute to the formation of *Shukra-Shonita Prakriti*. These are transmitted to the child through *Beeja Bhagas*. Only healthy *Shukra-Shonita* is capable of developing a fetus without any defects.

#### • *Kala and Garbhashaya Prakriti*

The nature of *Kala* has also been stated as a determinant of *Prakriti*.<sup>[4]</sup> From the time of copulation throughout the pregnancy to birth, the nature of *Kala* is responsible for the natural variation of the state of *Doshas* in the body which further influences the *Prakriti*. Also, the days of copulation for the healthy and desirous sex of the child have been described.

#### • *Matura Ahara and Vihara Prakriti*

Food regimens aggravating different *Doshas* during pregnancy also affect the *Prakriti* of the individual.<sup>[5]</sup> It has been stated that the indulgence of pregnant mothers in *Vata's* aggravating diet causes the *Garbha* to be a hunchback, blind, lazy, or dwarf-heighted. The diet that aggravates *Pitta* will lead to bald-headedness or brown eyes of the *Garbha*. A diet that increases *Kapha* will lead to pale skin or *Pandu* in the baby. Similarly, the physical activities of the mother also have an effect on the determination of the *Prakriti* of the individual.

#### • *Mahabhuta Vikara Prakriti*

The *Prakriti* generated by the predominance of the three *Deha Doshas* is greatly influenced by the basic constituent materials of the universe i.e., the *Pancha Mahabhutas*.<sup>[6]</sup> *Vata* is composed

of the *Vayu* and *Akash*, which are characterized by the qualities of movement and absence of resistance respectively. *Pitta* is primarily composed of the *Agni*, which is characterized by the quality of heat. Similarly, *Kapha* dosha originated by the predominance of *Prithvi* and *Jala*, characterized by heaviness and fluidity respectively. These specific qualities of *Mahabhutas* are visualized in individuals born with the predominance of the *Doshas*. This can be seen in the physical as well as the psychological levels. *Manasika Gunas Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas* also influence the *Panchabhutas*.<sup>[7]</sup> The *Akash* is predominately constituted by *Satva* while the *Vayu* is predominated by *Rajas* and *Prithvi* by *Tamas Guna*. *Satva* and *Rajas* together coexist in the *Agni Mahabhuta* and similarly, *Satva* and *Tamas* in *Jala*. These qualities can influence the psychic makeup of an individual. Hence the individual born with the dominance of these five *Mahabhutas* since the time of fertilization positively exhibits the respective qualities of *Mahabhuta* in his or her physical and mental status.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Classification of Prakriti

*Prakriti* is broadly classified into two types

- *Deha / Sharirika Prakriti*

1. *Vataja* 2. *Pittaja* 3. *Kaphaja* 4. *Vata-Pittaja* 5. *Pitta-Kaphaja* 6. *Vata-Kaphaja* 7. *Sannipataja*

- *Manasa Prakriti*

1. *Satavika* 2. *Rajasika* 3. *Tamasika*

### *Deha Prakriti*

#### *Vata Prakriti*

*Vayu's* traits are thought to be represented by *Ruksha, Laghu, Chala, Bahu, Shighra, Parusha, and Vishada*. Being *Ruksha* causes the body to become dry, skinny, and short; such individuals speak with a dry, hazy, and constrained tone and are alert. Because of their '*Laghu*' *Guna*/character, their movements, and actions are frequently hurried. Because it is '*Chala*', it makes their bodily parts move erratically, including their joints, chins, lips, brows, tongues, shoulders, and limbs. People start talking more as a result of it. The '*Shighratva*' results in an unstable temperament; such a person is easily angry or scared; he can pick up any subject rapidly and then forget it just

as soon. Such people are always sensitive to colds and cold-related illnesses as a result of the '*Shita Guna*'.<sup>[9]</sup>

*Vatika* constitution persons tend to be too alert, cold-phobic, unlucky, thieving, jealous, illiterate, and music-loving. They also have cracked hands and feet, sparse and coarse beards, moustaches, nails, and hair, and grind their teeth. They have a little collection of gems, wealth, and a select group of friends, but they are impatient with fickle friendship, ungrateful, lean, rough, with noticeable veins, chatty, quick to move, and with shaky body, mind, and eyes. In his dream, he floats through the air. Characteristically, people with *Vatika* constitutions are similar to goats, jackals, rabbits, rats, camels, dogs, vultures, crows, asses, etc.<sup>[10]</sup>

### *Pitta Prakriti*

*Ushana, Tikshana, Drava, Visra, Amla, and Katu* are thought to exemplify the qualities of *Pitta*. Due to their high body heat content, those who have '*Ushana Guna*' cannot handle the heat. have a fragile build, a pale complexion, moles, red or black patches all over their bodies, a propensity for wrinkles, and grey hair. These people frequently have silky, fine hair that is golden in hue. Due to the '*Tikshana Guna*', they get exceedingly hungry and are unable to do challenging tasks. Due to '*Drava Guna*', their joints are lax, and they frequently perspire. '*Katu*' and '*Amla Rasa*', have a low sperm count, sexual capacity, and progeny. Due to the combination of all of these qualities, these people have a medium level of knowledge, lifespan, wealth, and stamina.<sup>[11]</sup>

The *Paittika* constitution is characterized by excessive sweating, bad body odour, pallor, slackness, coppery nails, eyes, palates, lips, palms, and soles. It is also unlucky, and prone to wrinkles, hair greying, and baldness. The *Paittika* constitution person eats a lot, dislikes heat, gets angry easily, then quickly loses it, and has average strength and longevity. He possesses unstoppable power in battle and is intelligent, shrewd, competitive, debating, and smart. He has nightmares about riches, the *Palasha* and *Karnikara* flowers, as well as fire, lightning, and meteors while he is sleeping. Although he is unyielding and severe, he is kind and forgiving to

people with *Paittika* constitutions. Characteristically, people with a *Paittika* constitution resemble snakes, owls, *Gandharvas*, *Yakshas*, cats, monkeys, tigers, bears, and mongooses.<sup>[12]</sup>

### **Kapha Prakriti**

The traits of *Kapha* are thought to be embodied by *Snigdha*, *Shlakshana*, *Mridu*, *Madhura*, *Sara*, *Sandra*, *Manda*, *Stimita*, *Guru*, *Sheeta*, *Pichhila*, and *Swachcha*. Due to the fact that it is

"*Snigdha*", the skin seems oily. These people are "*Shlakshana*", which means that their joints are well-connected. They are "*Mridu*", which makes them lovely and fair-skinned. Due to the "*Madhura*" *guna*, they have a large sperm count, sexual capacity, and progeny. They are '*Sara*' because they are strong, healthy, and have a constant personality. Well-grown organs are given to them by "*Sandra Guna*". They are "*Manda*", thus everything they do and say is sluggish.

They take longer to begin any work since "*Stimita Guna*" inhibits them from doing so right away, making them slower. The "*Guru Guna*" is in charge of thirst, hunger, and perspiration. Their physique is robust and their joints are properly connected because of the "*Picchila Guna*".

"*Achha Guna*" is a charming name. Additionally, their voice is deep. All of these qualities contribute to the longevity, riches, good looks, and good health of these individuals.<sup>[13]</sup>

The character of the *Kaphaja* constitution is fortunate, attractive, sweet-loving, appreciative, patient, tolerant, greedless, strong, with delayed acquisition and stable hostility, and has a complexion like that of one of these: the *Durva*, *Indivara*, sword, fresh *Nimba* fruit, and stalk of *Sara*. His beautiful features include white eyes, firm, curled, and thick black hair. He sees lotus, swans, *Cakravaka*, and lovely lakes in his dreams. A person with a *Kaphaja* constitution has well-defined organs, unctuous brilliance, crimson eye corners, and a predominance of *Satva* qualities. He is understanding of challenges and respectful of elders and teachers. One should classify such a person as having a *Kaphaja* constitution. He is steadfast in his knowledge and opinions of the religion has dependable friends and wealth, and gives generously after careful thought is always careful when picking

his words and sentences, and always shows respect for elders and teachers. They have features that are similar to *Brahma*, *Rudra*, *Indra*, *Varuna*, lions, horses, elephants, bulls, *Garuda*, and swans.<sup>[14]</sup>

### **Manasa Prakriti**

#### **Satvika Prakriti**

People with a strong '*Satvika*' trait tend to be religious, kind, sympathetic, and pure-minded. They behave themselves and have high morals. They don't get angry or agitated easily. They exert a lot of mental effort, but they do not feel mentally worn out. They are imaginative, modest, and respectful of their instructors. They love and care for everyone, and they worship God and humanity.<sup>[15]</sup>

#### **Rajasika Prakriti**

People with a lot of '*Rajas*' traits tend to be egoistic, arrogant, ambitious, competitive, and have a tendency to dominate others. They are perfectionists who take pride in their position, power, and status. Despite their diligence, they don't have enough strategy or direction. They experience emotional rage, jealousy, and ambition. They are anxious, agitated, and mentally exhausted because they are frightened of failure. They are caring, peaceful, and patient, but only as long as their personal interests are satisfied. They are only found to be good, loving, friendly, and faithful by people who are advantageous to them. They just think about themselves when they behave.<sup>[16]</sup>

#### **Tamasika Prakriti**

*Tamasic* mental states produce less intelligent people. They can become depressed, lazy, or overly sleepy at any time of the day. They can readily become exhausted by light mental work. They enjoy eating, drinking, sleeping, and having sex, and they favour careers with fewer obligations. They are uncaring, unselfish, attached, possessive, and irritable.<sup>[17]</sup>

### **DISCUSSION**

In Ayurveda, an ancient system of traditional medicine that originated in India, "*Prakriti*" is a fundamental concept used to describe an individual's unique constitution or natural state of being. Ayurveda believes that each person is born with a specific *Prakriti*, which is a combination of physical and

psychological traits that define their inherent nature and predisposition to certain imbalances and diseases.

A person's *Prakriti* is determined by the relative dominance of three fundamental bio-energetic forces or *Doshas*, known as *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. These doshas represent different combinations of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether) and are responsible for various physiological and psychological functions in the body.

- **Vata:** *Vata* is associated with the elements of air and ether. People with a dominant *Vata Prakriti* tend to be creative, energetic, and quick-thinking. When *Vata* is out of balance, it can lead to issues like anxiety, digestive problems, and insomnia.
- **Pitta:** *Pitta* is primarily composed of a fire element with a small amount of water. Individuals with a predominant *Pitta Prakriti* are often determined, focused, and have a strong digestion. Imbalanced *Pitta* can lead to conditions such as acid reflux, anger, and skin disorders.
- **Kapha:** *Kapha* is primarily related to the elements of earth and water. Those with a dominant *Kapha Prakriti* are typically calm, steady, and have good physical strength. Imbalanced *Kapha* can result in weight gain, lethargy, and respiratory problems.

In Ayurveda, the *Prakriti* is considered the baseline constitution, and understanding it is vital for tailoring dietary, lifestyle, and therapeutic recommendations. By recognizing their unique *Prakriti* and its potential imbalances, individuals can make choices to maintain or restore balance and well-being in their lives. Ayurvedic practitioners often assess a person's *Prakriti* through a detailed examination of physical characteristics, mental traits, and personal history. While Ayurveda offers personalized recommendations based on *Prakriti*, it's important to note that modern medical science may have different approaches and diagnostic methods.

"Classification of Human Population Based on HLA Gene Polymorphism and the Concept of *Prakriti* in Ayurveda" by Bhushan Patwardhan, Kalpana Joshi, and Arvind Chopra in Journal of Alternative and Complementary

Medicine (2005). In this study, it is stated that Ayurveda classifies the whole human population into three major constitutions *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, and their possible combinations. Their homologous relation to human genetic structure needs to be studied for validation. If validated, our hypothesis would have far-reaching implications for pharmacogenomics, modern genetics, human health, and Ayurveda.<sup>[18]</sup>

"Genome-wide analysis correlates Ayurveda *Prakriti*" by Govindraj, Nizamuddin, Sharath, Jyoti, etc. in Scientific Reports Journal (2015). In this study, it is stated that the practice of Ayurveda, the traditional medicine of India, is based on the concept of three major constitutional types (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) defined as "*Prakriti*". To the best of our knowledge, no study has convincingly correlated genomic variations with the classification of *Prakriti*. In the present study, we performed genome-wide SNP (single nucleotide polymorphism) analysis (Affymetrix, 6.0) of 262 well-classified male individuals (after screening 3416 subjects) belonging to three *Prakritis*. We found 52 SNPs ( $p \leq 1 \times 10^{-5}$ ) were significantly different between *Prakritis*, without any confounding effect of stratification, after 106 permutations. Principal component analysis (PCA) of these SNPs classified 262 individuals into their respective groups (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) irrespective of their ancestry, which represents its power in categorization. We further validated our finding with 297 Indian population samples with known ancestry. Subsequently, we found that PGM1 correlates with the phenotype of *Pitta* as described in the ancient text of Charaka Samhita, suggesting that the phenotypic classification of India's traditional medicine has a genetic basis, and its *Prakriti*-based practice in vogue for many centuries resonates with personalized medicine.<sup>[19]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the concept of *Prakriti* in Ayurveda is a fundamental and profound idea that underpins the entire system of traditional Indian medicine. *Prakriti* represents an individual's inherent constitution, a unique combination of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* doshas, which govern both physical and psychological

traits.<sup>[20]</sup> Understanding one's *Prakriti* is a crucial step in Ayurvedic healthcare, as it enables individuals to make informed choices regarding diet, lifestyle, and therapeutic interventions to maintain or restore balance.

By recognizing one's *Prakriti*, individuals gain valuable insights into their predispositions and vulnerabilities. This insight empowers them to take a proactive role in their health, helping to prevent imbalances and the onset of diseases. Ayurvedic practitioners use this knowledge to offer personalized recommendations tailored to an individual's specific constitution.

*Prakriti* extends beyond the physical realm, influencing one's mental and emotional nature as well. It acknowledges the holistic connection between mind and body, emphasizing the importance of a balanced and harmonious life.

While Ayurveda offers a unique and comprehensive approach to health and well-being through the understanding of *Prakriti*, it's essential to approach it with an open mind and consult qualified Ayurvedic practitioners for personalized guidance. Integrating Ayurvedic principles into one's life can complement and enhance conventional medical care, ultimately promoting a more holistic and balanced approach to health and wellness. Embracing the wisdom of *Prakriti* in Ayurveda opens the door to a deeper understanding of oneself and the path to achieving optimal health and vitality.

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