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## A Comparative Study on Importance of *AaharVidhi Visheshyatan* in Modern Scenario

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an oldest sustaining science of life, it is not only the ocean of knowledge which heals the disease but also it is a science which treats life and it is a preventive measure for healthy lifestyle. *Aahaar* (food) plays an important role in preventing diseases and enhancing healing property of the body. It nourishes the body; provides stamina and increases the age, digestive ability, immunity and ultimately gives us a healthy and prosperous life. *Aaharvidhivisheshyatan* is a unique and very beneficial conceptual principle of Acharya Charaka which is related with selection, adaptation and digestion of food. This basic principle of Ayurveda is based on Agni, dosh, dhatu, mala that maintains the equilibrium (*dosha-dhatu-mala samya*). To maintain the health all the eight factors are important but according to modern *kala* (time of meal), *karan* (processing of food) and *Rashi* (quantity) are the most important factors for fruitful and better digestion.

### KEYWORDS

*Ayurveda, Aahaar, AaharVidhiVisheshyatan*



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## INTRODUCTION

*Aahaar*, *Nidra* and *Bramhacharya* are the three sub pillars for maintaining the health. Acharya Kashyap mentioned *Aahar* as best for nourishment of body so it is also known as best medicine. The effect of food also depends upon the method of intake, quality, and quantity of food, if taken in a proper method and at a proper time the food works as medicine, vice versa imbalanced food will consequence as a poison due to their adverse and opposite effect on *Dhatu* (tissue), *rasa* (nutrient), *dosha* (vital factor). *Aahaar* (food) will keep the balance between *dhatu*, and *dosha*.

## AYURVED REVIEW

Veda described that age, liveability and vitality depends upon the *aahar*. Atharv veda describes the food as a heaven for human beings.<sup>1</sup> Rigaveda described food with values of goddess Ila, Saraswati and Bharti as it also helps to elongate the age of human beings.<sup>2</sup> Upnishada are descriptive format of hidden secrets of Vedas. Upnishada also described about importance of intake method, time and consequence of food on human. Tattiriyopnishad mentioned the food as a best medicine.<sup>3</sup> Puranas are also important manuscript which discloses the spiritual and intellectual thoughts of Indian culture along with the unique

concept and methodology of treatment. Agani Purana is most authentic among all of these; Agani Puraan considers *aahar* as an important pillar of tripod that is *Aahar* (Food), *Nidra*(Sleep) and *Brahmcharya*.<sup>4</sup> Ayurveda Samhitas elaborate the importance, effect, intake method, time, quality and quantity of food on scientific basis. These all mentioned factors are described under *aaharvidhivisheshyatan*. Charak described food in sutra sthaan in maatrashitiya, asthoninadniya, aatryebhadrakapiya chapter; where he said about balanced quantity, weight, quality, benefit and other relevant subjects with food. According to Charak balanced diet enhances the health and also maintains it and helps in preventing the diseases if the balanced diet is taken regularly.<sup>5</sup> Maharshi Shusruta described the importance of food and considered it as main manoeuvre to protect the life of human. Food nourishes the body and provides the age, aura, energy, memory, immunity and better digestive property.<sup>6</sup> in uttatantra of Shusrutasamhita, Maharshi Shusruta disclosed about twelve factors and rules regarding balanced diet. These twelve factors are specialized reason which answers about how food enhances the health, age, stamina and liveability. Acharya Sushruta described and distributed food material as absolutely suitable, absolutely unsuitable, suitable-



unsuitable.<sup>7</sup> *Aaaharvidhivisheshaytan* is a conceptual and fundamental principle related with food intake. There are eight components which are included in this *Aaaharvidhivisheshaytan* which are based upon beneficial and detrimental effect. Aacharya Charaka described *Aaaharvidhivisheshaytan* in *Vimaanstahn*.<sup>8</sup> Effect of food depends upon *prakrati* (natural Qualities of food stuff), *karan* (processing of substances), *samyog* (combination of different substances), *rashi* (quantity of food stuff), *desha* (Habitat), *kaal* (time as age, season and condition), *upyogsanstha* (dietetic rules), *upyokata* (user). *Aaaharvidhi* means, types, method and formation of food which will influence the quality and effect of food.<sup>9</sup> There are three words consisted in *Aaaharvidhivisheshaytan*, (Special Properties), (Distinguished effect) (Special System), (Special Methods), (Special Rules). It defines the method of selection of food, its consequences and digestion. Food will protect the health and prevent the diseases.

#### USEFUL FOOD COMBINATION

The combination of certain foods helps in the better absorption and utilization of nutrients. These Various combinations include<sup>14</sup>-

1. Both, cereal and pulses are a source of incomplete protein hence when taken

together they result in total proteins of high biological value.

2. Vitamin & mineral interaction – absorption and utilization of iron is linked to that of vitamin C, so the combination is considered beneficial.

3. Carbohydrate & Vitamin B interaction- Vitamin B is required for carbohydrate metabolism.

4. Calcium and phosphorous – utilization of calcium is closely linked with that of phosphorous and their consumption together is considered good.

5. Vitamin D and calcium – Vitamin D plays an important role in the absorption of the dietary calcium in the intestine and its deposition in the bone.

#### HARMFUL FOOD COMBINATION

In some parts of India (West Bengal), it was believed that consumption of milk & fish in the same meal will lead to the development of Leprosy and Leucoderma.<sup>15</sup>

#### TIME FOR TAKING FOOD

A diet with all the proximate principles may be with advantage taken three times a day. Indians generally take two principle meals, the lunch in the day and the dinner at night. Roughly interval between breakfast & lunch should be of 4 to 5 hours and that between lunch & evening meals should be of 5 to 6 hours.<sup>16</sup>



## DIETARY GUIDELINES TO REDUCE THE COST OF A MEAL

- Food Stuffs that are distributed through public distribution system (Ration shops) can be used.
- Cereals, since they are less expensive, can be increased to more than the normal amount present in a balanced diet.
- Unbranded foods can be included.<sup>17</sup>
- Broken rice, broken eggs (Fresh) left over vegetables and fruits (in the shop at the end of the day) cheaper cuts of meat can be bought.
- Recipes made at home are cheaper than brought. Homemade food can be carried to the workplace instead of buying from the canteen.
- Steamed foods are less expensive than fried foods. Low cost diets have fewer amounts of fatty oil and sugar.<sup>18</sup>
- Toned milk with low fat is less expensive but gives all the other nutrients except for fat.
- Jaggery can be used instead of sugar.
- Inclusion of locally available ingredients and seasonal foods reduce the cost of a meal.
- Inexpensive and nutritious fruits like papaya and guava can be included in the diet.
- Low Priced biscuits or buns can be used as snacks in the diet.

- Natural foods are less expensive compared to processed and preserved foods.

## DISSCUSION

All material which are taken through the mouth and swallowed into oesophagus is *Aahar*. According to the definition of food, it is also considered as a medicine as well. Food and its intake method both are responsible to maintain the health. The *aaaharvidhivisheshaytan* plays an important role to make useful and suitable food/diet. There are eight factors described by *aacharyaCharaka* which will maintain the effect and benefits of diet and termed as *ashtaaaaharvidhivisheshaytan*.

First factor is *Prakrati* (Natural qualities of food stuff). According to definition of *prakrati*, there are twenty qualities of *dravya* (material) and six *guna*, *guru* (heaviness), *laghu*(lightness), *snigdha* (unctuousness), *ruksha* (roughness), *sheet* (coldness) and *ushna* (hotness). These qualities and *gunas* play main role to evaluate the importance of the diet.

The second factor is *Karan* (Processing of substances); this is very useful for formation and transformation of qualities of food stuff. According to choice if the food materials are not beneficial it can be



converted into their favourite one by processing.

The third factor is *Samyog* (Combination of different substances); it is described about imbalanced and uncombined food/diet which will cause disease. *Aacharya vagbhata* considered this type of diet as sluggish poison which will cause disease and death. *Shwitra samprapti* is an important example unwholesome combination of milk and fish.

The fourth factor is *Rashi* (Quantity of food substance), it is an important factor which will directly affect and influence the benefit of food. Balanced diet will maintain the health and it will prevent the disease. Excessive and unbalanced diet will cause imbalance in physiology and pathology of human system. In modern era dieting is very popular habit by youngsters to maintain of body figure. It is very detrimental which vitiate *vaatdosha* and create *dhatukshaya*.

The fifth factor is *Desha* (Habitat), it described about the origin, convection and adaptation of food substance. By the meaning of origin it should be considered as origin of food stuff and habitat of consumer.

The sixth factor is *Kaal* (Time as age, season and condition). It is most important factor among all eight factors; kaal can be further divided into age, season and

condition. The food stuff which grows in particular season will present the best consequence in their particular season, it is concerned with daily routine and behaviour according the season. The patient should be administered the diet as stage of disease and the perfect season of medicine and diet. It is a most important factor in modern scenario. Most of population doesn't take food according to biological clock due to busy schedule and finally vitiated *Agni* will create different type of metabolic disorders. The seventh factor is *Upyogsanstha* (Dietetic rules), some of the dietetic rules or factors described by *Aacharya Charak* were *ushna*, *snigdha*, *tanmnabhunjeet* etc; but in modern scenario main factor is *tanmnabhunjeet*. People tend to watch television and converse while consuming food, it is mentally and physically not suitable and is detrimental to the body.

The eighth factor is *upyokata* (User), it is the most important factor among all the above mentioned factor because each factor depends upon the user. The user should take the diet after consideration of all other factors.

## CONCLUSION

*Aahar* is included in *Trayaupstambh*, these are *Aaahar* (food stuff), *Nidra*(sleep), *Brahmcharya*(control on sexual desires).



*Aaahar*(food stuff) is counted first and it shows its importance as well. According to all Aacharyas food is base of life in all humans and balanced food/diet will increase the stamina, immunity, age and health. Ayurveda describes not only the physical and mental benefits of food but it also describes about intellectual and spiritual benefits. Every factor described in *aaaharvidhivishesytan* has logical and scientific reason which plays an important role in maintaining healthy life. The food which doesn't follow the rule of *aaaharvidhivishesytan* will cause formation of diseases; because it will disturb the balance between *dhaatu* (tissue) and *dosha* (vital factors). *Prakriti* mentions the natural quality of human and food, so we can get the better knowledge from both of them and administer the better treatment as well. Practically the potency, nature and essence of food influence the benefit of food. Second factor which is *karan* (food processing) can change the benefits and effect of food as per desired and can develop or transform the new qualities. *Samyog* means combination of food stuff can be poisonous if we will combine the two or more different and adverse effect having food; simultaneously the two or more food stuff which have same and beneficial quality will increase the effect and efficacy of food. *Rashi* (amount of

food) is an important ingredient which will cause balanced and beneficial effect. Amount of food should be considered according to digestive capacity, amount and function of digestive enzymes digestive juice, nature and quality of food as well. *Desha* (habitat) describes about origin of food material and habitat of consumer. Different climate, soil have their respective effect which can regularize the balance between food and its effect in human body. *Kaal*(Time) is a important constituent which will have equal importance on origin of disease, health and livability. The best time to consume food is when one is hungry. *Upyogsanstha* (dietetic rules) provide beneficial effect and it will suppress the origin of disease. *Upyokata* (User) is last and most important factor of *aaaharvidhivishesyatan* because digestion and absorption both depend upon the user. The digestive capacity and absorptive property differs in individual. It can be regularize by the changes in life style, diet and also with the help of medicine. Ultimately all factors depend upon the user and it is most responsible for adaptation.



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