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Concept of Dwadasha Ashana: A Review

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ABSTRACT

In ancient Ayurveda; conceptual study on food has been discussed in multidimensional aspect. A variety and divergent type of description is available on *Aahara*. It is discussed and classified into various ways and parameters. Few of those are like *Dwividha, Trividha, Chaturvidha, Panchvidha, Shadavidha, Ashatavidha*, and so on. Although all classical texts covered concept of diverse diet; but style of *Acharya Susruta* is unique and intellectual. *Susruta* is having objective approach regarding description of any concept, which can be accepted without any hesitation. One has to assess the type of diet in views like property, utility, advantage and drawback on individual's health. Food has to be taken in to account in different angles for the sake of sustaining health. Not only qualitative analysis of food is taken in to mind but also its benefit for health is to be considered. *Aacharya Susruta* in *Uttantantra* chapter 64 as *Swasthvritam Aadhyaya* introduced a new thought regarding classification of food. It is divided in twelve different points of considerations termed as *Dwadasha Ashana Vicharana*. If we go through the conceptual review of the same a new outlook on the horizon of diet classification can be seen; this type of classification is important in subjective and objective aspect. Discussion of food is dealt with goodwill of diseased and healthy person. This article is enlightened on deep prudential approach of *Susruta* about narration of *Dwadasha Ashana*.

KEYWORDS

Dwadasha Ashana, Ushna Aahara, Swasthvriti Aahara



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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a science of life that deals with healthy human life. Basic motto of this science is prevention of disease, more care has been taken in this sector and emphasis has been given. All the concerned subjects were narrated in preventive aspects; drug remedy was kept in second line of management. Stress was given on the fundamental principles like following *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Hitakra Aahara* (proper diet), *Vyayaama* (exercise), *Aadhytma* (ritual living), *Aachar rasayna* (following ideal life style protocol). They act as a potent shield for protection of disease. Strong belief of all the ancient sages was that food is the only probable cause of life and morbidity. Food is termed as nectar; everybody tries to get it for the sake of life. Though the food is termed as nectar; one should take care before selecting it; it is to be assessed in various aspect. Human should think about wholesome and non wholesomeness of food, property and utility of food material should be examined before taking it. For the sake of wellness of human; ancient seer of Ayurveda has told valuable recommendations so as to feed, nourish and protect life. It was strongly stressed that food must be selected on the basis of

several factors *Prakriti* (physique), *Agnee* (digestive power), *Desha* (source of food), *Kala* (time of consumption), *Hitakarvatva* (wholesomeness). All the above aspects should be taken in account. In the same fashion concepts of *Ashtavidha vidhivishesaayana*, *Aaharvidhividhana*, *Aahaarparinaamkara Bhavas* were discussed in various compendiums. All the comprehensive description is available in different compendium; besides this doctrine approach of Aacharya *Susruta* is beneficial and rosy type. *Susruta* described concept of *Aahara* in various peculiarities. He postulated effect of time being on the properties of *Shukadhanya* (awned grains) and *Shimbidhanya* (legumes) plants. He is the person who introduced the concept typical of *Anupaana* (intake of liquid after food) on the specific food example *Sthula* (obese) persons use honey with water, *Krishha* (thin built) should use *Sura* (a type of self generated alcohol). Rules of *Anupaana*, hygiene and sanctity before having meals, selection of alone but comfortable location of eating food, specific property and effect of utensils on food, rules of having food were the points of specialties of *Susruta*. *Susruta* has introduced one innovative concept of classification of diet which covers all the wholesomeness of diet.



This article will cover different types of indications in which one has to follow type of diet in order to regain health.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To have a detailed review of *Dwadasha Ashana* with special reference to different type of conditions in which one has to follow dietary rules.
- To highlight on certain specific features of *Dwadasha Ashana* which are mentioned by *Susruta*.
- To discuss how such specific features will help to study a different type of angle regarding concept of diet.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As it is a review article author has gone through different *Samhitas* and especially *Susruta Samhita* in order to explain importance of certain specific points raised by *Susruta* which are unique.

2) Available Literary material has been also observed in aspect of *Aahara* description.

OBSERVATION

All the three major compendiums cover the concept of *Aahara* in a comprehensive manner. Style of each scientist is different and unique. If we go through the description of concept of classification of

diet; *Aacharya Susruta* has covered so many different points which may help in study of diet. Food has been divided in to twelve subtypes which can be preferred as per the condition of health termed as *Dwadasha Ashana Vichara*.^[1] Food is divided in to twelve different types as follows:

1) ***Sheeta Aahara***: Those persons who are suffering from unhealthy conditions like *Trishna* (excessive thirst), *Ushnam* (heat), *Mada* (intoxication), *Daha* (burning sensation), *Raktapitta* (internal bleeding), *Visharta* (poisoning), *Murcha* (fainting), and *Streeshu kshinaan* (had excessive sex indulgence) can be treated with cold food and drinks. *Aacharya* has indicated *Sheet* diet to those persons who were having morbidities of *Pitta* vitiation

2) ***Ushana Aahara***: Those persons who are suffering from diseases caused by vitiation of *Kapha* and *Vata dosha* should use hot food and beverages. Besides that hot food is also indicated in induction of *Virechana* (purgation), and *Snehapana* (oleation) therapy, *Aklinna kaya* (unmoistened body). All these attempts will give comfort to indicated persons.

3) ***Snigdha Aahara***: Persons possessing *Vata Prakriti*, diseases caused by dominant vitiation of *Vata dosha*, *Ruksha deha* (possessing excess dry body),



Vyavayaupahata (feeling of fatigue due to intercourse) and *Vyayamina* (practicing exercise) should consume food which is having abundant amount of *Sneha* (fat).

4) ***Ruksha Aahara:*** *Medovriddha* (persons who are obese and possessing excess amount of oily body), *Pramehi* (suffering from diabetes), and *Kaphabipanna* (whose body is deposited by excess amount of moisture and stickiness) are indicated by *Ruksha Aahara* dry food.

5) ***Drava Aahara:*** Persons who are *Shushkadehan* (dehydrated and skin became dry), *Pipasartan* (feeling very thirsty), and fatigued may feed with plentiful liquid diet.

6) ***Shushka Bhojana:*** *Praklinna Kaya* (those possessing with excess fluid for sloughing in a body), *Vranina* (wounds) and diabetic condition should be treated with dry diet.

7) ***Ekakala Aahara:*** Those persons who want to empower own *Agni* (stimulation of gastric fire) should consume food once in a day.

8) ***Dwikala Aahara:*** That person whose gastric fire is in a balanced condition and seeks to maintain it in uniform pattern should consume food for twice a day.

9) ***Aushadhdweshina:*** That person who is not willing to consume medicine

and hates it; should be treated with a diet in which medicine is added.

10) ***Matrahina:*** *Mandagni* person (whose digestive capacity is hampered and could not digest a light food) should be treated with a pattern of scanty amount of food quantity. He should take food below the average quantity.

11) ***Rutudatta Aahara:*** One has to follow the diet according to season that will help to sustain health.

12) ***Swasthvriti Aahara:*** Exclusive of all the eleven types described above one more is there; in such pattern one has to consume diet with all type of tastes so that body should be maintained in state of *Swasthya*.

DISCUSSION

Abundant description and narration regarding classification of food is available in ancient science. Food is classified in different categories on the basis of various parameters like *Shuka* (monocotyls), *Shimbi* (dicotyls), *Krutaana* (prepared food), *Ikshoovarga* (sugarcane products), *Shakavarga* (vegetables), *Falavarga* (fruits), *Mansavarga* (flesh), etc. Food is also classified on the basis of dominance of *Panchamahabhuta*, *Rasa*, *Virya* and *Sharir guna*. Though the information is plenty; it is not in a comprehensive



manner. *Susruta* is the only person who concisely covered food classification under a single roof.

- Acharya has indicated *Sheet* diet to those persons who were having morbidities of *Pitta* and *Rakta* vitiation. Such type of food and liquid having taste like *Kashaya, Tikta* and *Madhura* (astringent, bitter and sweet) can be consumed in summer season. Old *Shali* rice, wheat, green gram, milk, sugercandy, ghee, amla, orange, coconut water are the few examples of such food.
- Hot Food (in both manner; possessing properties of *Ushna virya* and served in a hot state) is useful to treat persons who are having health problems due to vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha*. Hot food is *Vatanulomak*, gastric fire enhancer so that food can be easily digested without increase in morbidity. There will be no chance for creation of *Aama*. Hot food is indicated in all types of *Panchakarma* so as to ease the procedure. If food is consumed in hot condition it will digest easily. Bajra, Chana, Maize, Black gram, garlic, ginger, til oil, jaggery, buffalo milk are the few examples of hot diet.
- Those persons who are having dominance of *Vata dosha* and possessing *Vaat prakriti* must be served with food rich in fat. As there is excessive dryness in

body and manifestations like dry skin, hairs, nails, hard stool, can be easily seen in such cases. Due to exercise and sex indulgence body get dry and fatigued in such cases diet rich in fat is indicated along with external massage of oil in order to overcome fatigue. Wheat, rice, ghee, til oil, milk, animal fat, almonds, peanuts, curd, coconut, black gram are the few substances readily used as *Snigdha aahara*. Now a day fat soluble vitamins can be included in such division.

- Those person whose body is having excess amount of oil and fat must be treated with *Ruksha* (dry substances); dry food is a type of food which enhances absorption of excess moist and oil of body; it also regulate water content of body, it also reduces slough and pus from wounds and enhances healing. *Chana, Yava, Bajra, Takra, Honey, Gomutra, Trifala, Shilajit, Guggul, Turmeric*, are the few examples of dry food and drugs. Honey is a proved wound healing drug.
- Liquid diet is indicated in conditions like dehydration; in classical texts conditions like *Rasakshaya, Atisara, Kaphakshya* in which there is severe depletion of water from body; *Drava aahara* is indicated. Coconut water, *Takra, Mantha, Panaka, Yavagu, MudagYusha, Peya* are certain examples of



Drava aahara. It is stated that liquid diet get quickly digested.

- Persons who are having morbidities due to aggregation of excess *Aama*, whose wounds are having excess discharge and oozing, itching of skin and oozing from it discharge from nose, edematous body. In all mentioned conditions there is excess accumulation of water in body; in such cases dry food is indicated. Here *Shushka* means diet exclusive of oil and fat. It is somewhat more epic than *Ruksha aahar*. Bajra, Jowar, *Warai*, Maize, Chana, *Trikatu*, *Trifala*, *Musta*, Honey, *Kankshi* (Alum) are few examples of *Shushka Aahra*.
- *Durbalagni* (person whose gastric fire has been depleted due to some pathology) should follow the rule of consuming once a day meal. *Mandagni* (Suppressed gastric fire) is the root cause of all diseases; so one has to take care in order to prevent future consequences.
- One has to consume meals twice a day in order to maintain proper stimulation of gastric fire; ultimately it will help to maintain the health. Food must be consumed twice a day like performing *Agnihotra Vidhi* (type of *Yajna* performed twice a day).

- Those people who hate to engulf medicine due to bitter taste and crude form should be treated with medicine added with food. Such phenomenon is called *Aushadhyukta bhojana*. In routine practice medicated ghee is added with *Khichadi* or rice so as to overcome unwanted taste; *Lavana Bhaskar Churna* is added with ghee and rice in first bit of food.
- *Mandagni* (gastric fire is more delicate and suppressed) means condition is more epic than *Durbalagni*. In such situation a limited and small amount of food is indicated which will help to simulate gastric fire. It is said that such practice of limited diet will easily digest the food and regain health.
- One has to follow diet and regime as per the season; in practice it is called as *Rutucharya*. As the *Rutu* get changed alteration in consistency of *Dosha* occurs; *Sanchaya* (Accumulation), *Prakopa* (aggregation) and *Prashama* (suppression) of *Dosha* is bounded to change in season. Diet consumed as per the season helps to prevent undue increase in *Dosha*.
- *Swasthavrittikar Aahara* means one has to follow all the rules mentioned in different texts at the time of diet consumption. In order to maintain the state of equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* one has to follow golden guidelines drawn



by Ayurveda. Consuming all types of Rasa, following regulations of *Agnisapeksha aahara*, *Viruddha Aahara*, *Anupaana*, *Asthvidh vidhivisheshyatana*, *Vidhividhana* all these wise aspects comes under *Swasthvrittikara Aahara*.

CONCLUSION

Narrations regarding food and properties are available according to different parameters; one could not summarize it under one head. Properties and use of food is mentioned according to class wise distribution is available in so many texts; for example; under the head of *Shukadhanya* grains are described with their properties, useful and hazardous effects on health. Likewise other topics were covered in different compendiums. *Susruta* is the only one who concisely covered food classification under a single roof. *Susruta* has introduced one innovative concept of classification of diet which covers all the wholesomeness of diet. He has described concept of *Dwadasha Aashana*; food can be classified in to twelve types on the basis of different points. If we go through the description of these types we come to know that all the facts regarding before selection and having food were covered in a comprehensive manner. All the subjective and objectives

criteria and indications were narrated in the description. A specific type of food is indicated in a typical situation of health; property of food may get changed according to status of different morbidities, *Prakriti*, *Agnee* etc. All the concepts get cover under the theme of *Dwadasha Aashanavichara*.



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