

Application of Pathya- Apathya Ahara in Modern Era at Different Stages of Life

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Abstract :

The aim of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the health of healthy person and to cure diseases. To achieve this aim *Ayurveda* has described *Trayopstambhas* i.e. *Ahara* (food), *Nidra* (Sleep), and *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy). *Ahara* is given prime importance and is said to be the first among the three sub-pillars that supports life. Food promotes health in both diseased and normal people, so it is considered as *Mahabheshaijya*. The Concept of *Pathya* (Wholesome) and *Apathya* (unwholesome) is peculiarity of *Ayurveda* to fulfil aims and objectives of *Ayurveda*. Substances or regimens which do not adversely affect body and mind are called as *Pathya* and those which adversely affect them are called as *Apathya*. *Pathya* and *Apathya* include both material substances and specific regimens, but in general these words have been particularly used for food articles in the texts of *Ayurveda*. As per *Ayurveda* most of the ailments develop due to faulty eating habits so *Ayurveda* deals with *Pathya -Vyavastha* in a very specific and scientific way.

Keywords:- Ahar, Pathya Ahar, Apathya, Prevention

Introduction:

Ayurveda is not merely a medical science, but it is complete science of healthy life. The aim of ayurveda is to maintain health of healthy person and to cure diseases.⁽¹⁾ So the first aim is preventive in nature than curative. To achieve this aim ayurveda has described various do's and don'ts such as *Rutucharya* (seasonal regime), *Dincharya*(daily regime),etc and *Trayopasthambhas* i.e. *Ahar* (food), *Nidra* (sleep) and *Brahmacharya* (celibacy). *Ahara* is first among three sub-pillars that supports life. Food promotes health in both diseased and normal people, so it is called “*Mahabhaishaijya*”⁽²⁾ (healthy body and healthy mind depends upon healthy food.)

The concept of *Pathya* (wholesome food) and *Apathya* (unwholesome food) is the peculiarity of *Ayurveda* to fulfill the aim of *Ayurveda*. The substances are the regimens which do not adversely affect the body and mind are called as *Pathya* and those which adversely affect them are called as *Apathya*⁽³⁾. *Pathya* and *Apathya* include both material substance and specific regimen but in general these words are particularly used for food articles in text of ayurveda⁽¹⁸⁾. As per ayurveda most of the diseases occur due to faulty eating habits so ayurveda deals with *Pathya - vyavastha* you know very specific and scientific way. **The science of Pathya and Apathya is based on concept of Agni, and panchbautikatva of Shadrassa and Dashavidha bhavas..**

In ayurveda the complete lifespan of a person is broadly divided in three stages - *Balyavastha* (early stage of life), *Madhyavastha* (middle stage), *Vridhivastha* (later stage of life). At these different stages of life there is predominance of different doshas. The first two stages are constructive while the last one is degenerative.

According to Acharya Charaka *Pathya* ahar is one of the causes of growth and well-being of human while *Apathya* ahar is root cause of diseases.⁽⁴⁾ and Acharya Sushruta has supported this fact by stating that food is cause of vitality, strength, complexion and oja⁽⁵⁾.

Every person has to pass through these stages. So while passing through these stages one should maintain equilibrium of doshas, by following *Pathyavyavastha* explained in ayurveda.

Material and Method:-

Ayurvedic Samhitas ie. *Bruhatrayee* and *Laghutrayee* Yogratnakar, various. Ayurvedic texts, journals and articles, database were reviewed for *Pathya- Apathya* concept.

Result :-

Pathya is the term that is elaborated as good conduction of dietary and living regimen to maintain normal physiological functions of body. These good conducts correct the irregularities that may occur in the body due to ageing or environmental diversity. *Pathya* creates healthy environment in body which helps to keep the body healthy and prevents many diseases. Following *Pathya Ahara* helps to maintain health and also cure diseases.

Discussion:- Concept of Pathya :-

The word *pathya* is derived from the root word “Path” which literally means a way or channel. According to *Shabdakalpadruma pathya* means which is beneficial for person while *apathya* harms them⁽⁶⁾. In Charaka Samhita while explaining about *chikitsa*⁽⁷⁾ Charaka has used *pathya* as synonym of *chikitsa*. The *pathya* keeps the person healthy,maintains normal body functions, lead to proper

functioning of the organs, nourish mind and intellect, helps to fight against sickness and also amends the anomalies that may happen in the body. The ahara vihara which is not harmful (*Anapetam*) and are useful for strotas and body are called as Pathya. Pathya ahar is *manomukul* and on the contrary *Apathya are apetam*. Acharya Sharangdhara⁽⁸⁾ explained some pathya kalpana like manda, Peya, vilepi, yavagu these kalpanas are generally used in different diseases, according to the state of disease and capacity to digest the food in that disease. Acharya Charaka divided dravyas as Hitatam (Pathyatam) and Ahitatam (Apathyatam). Acharya Sushruta enlisted some ahariya dravyas which are Pathyakar. Acharya Vagbhat explained Pathya and Apathya ahariya dravya in *Agryasangraha* to all in general.

Yogarathakar⁽⁹⁾ has given utmost importance to Pathya than medicine.

About different stages of life :-

Vaya (age) has been defined as duration of time since birth to the present of living individual. The Bruhatrayees (Table 1, Table 2) have classified Vaya with three major categories as Balyavastha (childhood), Madhyamavastha (youth) and Jaravastha (old age). But there are different opinions regarding the range of ages that are placed in these categories.⁽¹⁰⁾ (Table 3, Table 4, Table 5) The following major classifications of ageing according to different Ayurvedic texts is as follows:-

Table 1: According to Acharya Charaka⁽¹¹⁾ :-

Avastha	Sub- types	Age limit
Balyavastha	Aparipakva dhatu	Birth to 16 yrs
	Vivardhman dhatu	16 yrs to 30 yrs
Madhyamavastha		30 yrs to 60 yrs
Vrudhavastha		60 yrs to 100 yrs

Table 2:- According to Acharya Sushruta:-⁽¹²⁾

Avastha	Sub- types	Age limit
Balyavastha	Shirap	Birth to 1 year
	Shirannad	2 yrs -3 yrs
	Annad	4 yrs -16 yrs
Madhyamavastha	Vruddhi	16-20 yrs
	Yavain	20-30 yrs
	Sampoornata	30-40 yrs
	Hani	40 -70 yrs
Vrudhavastha	Jara	70 yrs till death

Table 3 :- According to Kashyapa Samhita:-⁽¹³⁾

Avastha	Age limit
Garbhavastha	From Garbhadhan to birth
Balyavastha	From birth to 1 year (till child drinks milk)
Kaumaravastha	1 yr -16 years
Yavainavstha	16 yrs -34 yrs
Madhyamavastha	34 yrs-70 yrs
Vruddhavastha	70 years onwards

Table 4:-According to Bhavprakasha :-⁽¹⁴⁾

Avastha	Age limit
Bal	Up to 16 years
Tarun	16 yrs -32 yrs
Praudha	32yrs -50 years

Table 5:-According to Harit Samhita:-⁽¹⁵⁾

Avastha	Age limit
Bala	Up to 16 years
Yuva	16 yrs -25 years
Madhyam	25 years – 70 years
Vardhakya	Above 70 years

From this it is clear that the total lifespan can be divided into three major classes i.e. Balyavastha, Madhyamavastha, and Vrudhavastha.

Role of Tridosha in ageing:- According to Ayurveda during childhood Kapha dosha is predominant, in middle age Pitta and in old age vata dosha becomes dominant.

Need of study:-

As per Ayurvedic point of view the anatomy and physiology of the body is completely dependent on four factors called as *Sharirvrudhikarbhavas*, these are Kala yoga (favourable time), *Swabhavasamsiddhi* (natural tendencies), *Aharsousthava* (diet of good quality), *Avighat* (absence of obstructive factors in growth and development of body). Among these *Aharsousthava* is very important, as it nourishes dhatu and is responsible for the maintenance of compactness, strength and formation of an excellent form of

Dhatu. This excellent form of dhatu reflects in the terms of *Sara* (Absoluteness of body tissues) which makes a person look young and beautiful. When the diet is defective and when the rules are not followed regarding diet as well as lifestyle, there is vitiation of *Tridosha*, which leads to various progressive pathological changes due to improper utilization of diet. Some specific Pathya-Apathya Ahariya dravyas are mentioned in ayurveda, at different stages of life, at Balyavastha (Table 6), at Madhyamavastha (Table 7), and Vriddhavastha (Table 9), to maintain the equilibrium in tridoshas and to avoid the age related diseases. In female, especially there are different stages, like Rajaswala, Garbhini, Sutika, menopausal stage, specific ahariya pathya-apathya dravyas are mentioned (Table 8) to maintain health at that stage of life. Hence to maintain the normal functioning and equilibrium in doshas one should follow *Pathya-aharavyavastha* mentioned in Ayurveda.⁽¹⁶⁾

Pathya- Apathya According to Age categorization^(17,21,22,23,25) :-

Table 6:- Balyavastha

Awastha	Pathya ahar	Apathya ahar
Shirap (Up to 1 year)	Matrustayna (mother's milk) Upto 6 months), godugdha, after 6 fruits like Dadim, kadali phala (banana) etc.	Food articles other than milk and sweet fruits
Shirannad (2 years to 3 years)	Milk, mudga, Godhum, Navneet⁽²⁰⁾ ,goghрут,laja,khadisakhar,madhu, Priyal (Prinan modak), saidhava lavan, Dry ginger, balantshepa, amalaki, kushmand, almond, walnut etc.	Biscuits, bread, chocolates, fermented, processed, packed food, stale (Paryushit) food, Samudra lanvan,
Annad (4 years to 16 years)	Godhum, jwari, rice (Puran dhanya), dadim, ghrita, all green vegetables (Phalbhajya), amalaka, coconut, pumpkin, (kushmanda), date s(kharjura) etc	

Table 7:- Madhyamavastha⁽²⁵⁾

Conditions	Pathya ahar	Special pathya Ahar	Apathya Ahar
Sedentary lifestyle (doing Desk work) For IT professionals	Java, mudga, takra, jawar, amala, dadima, manuka, laja , Saidhava (Shadrasatmak and Agnisapeksha ahar)	Java, laja , Manukka, dadim, Amlaki, goghrita,	Atimadhur ahar, Ati Katu rasa (as it causes back pain), milk and Milk products like cheese, paneer etc Ati Lavan rasa e.g. fermented, processed, packed food, stale (Paryushit), Samudra lavana
For students and professionals like doctors, lawyers (doing intellectual work)	Kushmanda, Goghrita, Almond walnuts, Amalaki		Ati Katu, amla, and lavan rasa
Sports persons, and doing more physical activity	Udid (masha), mansrasa, dugdha, til, Mkhana (padmabeeja), kadali, kharjura, coconut, milk, ghrita,		Ati tikta rasa (as it causes Dhatukshya), atikatu rasa (causes Bala kshya) atikshaya rasa meda dhatu shoshan)

Table 08 :- Female Special

Avastha	Pathya ahara	Apathya		
Rajaswala ^(21, 19)	Satu, fresh food , godhum , puran shali, green vegetables, mudga, Laghu ahara etc	Bread, Biscuits ,cheese, fermented food like Idali, dosa, fried, processed, stale food, Vatana (pea), Chanka, mataki, vidahi, abhishandi, food items like pani puri, chat, more spicy food , guru ahara , ati lavan rasa		
Avastha	Month	Masanumasik vrudhi	Vishesh pathya	Vishesh Apathya
Garbhini ^(19,20,22,23)	First two months		Madhur rasatmak ahar like milk, ghrita, and navneet, rice, fresh home made food.	Frozen, Junk, Fermented food, stale food, Chinese food items, cold drinks , ice-creams, food having artificial colours, flavours, fruits like Papaya, Pineapple, etc
	Third month	Appearance of all organs	Laja, Shrungataka, Walnut, Dadima, dates, Kushmanda , Saindhava lavan Navneet, dadhi + rice	
	Fourth month	Dauhruda, Sthiratva		Vidahi food like Panipuri, chat, pav bhaji etc Chinese food As it contains Monosodium glutamate salt which is harmful for ANC

Fifth Month	Mans -shonit upachay, mana	Above + Makhana , Shatavari, Ghruta, milk + Rice	
Six Month	Buddhi (Intellect), Bala and Varna upachaya	Ghruta ,Safron, Almond , Walnut, Kushmanda	Frozen,Junk, Fermented food,stale food must be avoided
Seventh month	All organs develops completely	Ghruta, Saidhava lavan, coconut	Avoid Samudra lavan like papad, pickle, salty nuts, etc
Eighth month		Godhum, masha, ghruta,	Avoid fast food,Junk food
Nineth month	Complete growth of fetus	Take laghu hitakar ahar	Avoid guru Ahara

Avastha	Pathya Ahara	Apathya ahara
Sutika	Milk,Payas (khir) like Ahliv (halim)khir, Khaskhas, almond,dates, goghruta, payas,ajavayan,coconut,Methika, Edible gum(Acacia), cumin seeds, Tabulsevan (Nagveli patra) Balantshepa, dry ginger, khadisakhar,saidhav lavan, shatavari, shatavha etc	Avoid guru Ahara, Avoid fast food, Junk food, preserved, stale food, avoid vatvardhak ahar like vatana, val,chanaka,
Rajonivrutti (Menopausal stage)	Milk, ghruta, shatavari, Shatapushpa, Til , Navneet, Amalaki, Flax seeds, cumin seeds etc	Vatvardhak ahara like chanka, vatana, etc . Ati vidahi, abhishyandi food items, Caffeine, Samudra lavana,Guru ahara

Table 09 :- Vruddhavastha

Avastha	Pathya Ahara	Apathya ahara
Vruddhavastha	Proper method of using Rsayana food items like, ghruta ,Amlaki. Milk, Til , Navneet⁽²⁰⁾ ,Mudga,helps to maintain Bala	Jav, guru Ahara, Avoid fast food, Junk food, preserved, stale food, avoid vatvardhak ahar like vatana, val,chanaka etc.

Conclusion:-

In the present lifestyle, where everyone is busy in achieving the goals, The most

neglected thing is the normal food and food habits, due to which they are facing various lifestyle disorders. Ayurveda has given prime importance to Ahara and also stated that Pathya-ahara is more important than medicine for curing the disease. The review suggests that for maintenance of overall health and prevention of diseases one should follow *Pathya Ahara* and refrain from *Apathya* as prevention is better than

cure. So even in the modern era though food items may change we can follow the concepts of Ayurvediya Pathya-Apathya based on Agni, panchbhautikatva of shadrasa, dashvidha bhavas to maintain good health.

Conflict of Interest: Nil

Source of Support: Nil

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