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Review Article

### CRITICAL REVIEW ON THE CONCEPT OF PRAKRUTHI

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#### ABSTRACT

Knowledge about *Prakruti* is prerequisite for assessment of *Vikriti* (pathology) hence it is important for diagnosis and therapeutics. Treatment is called as *Prakruti Sthaapana* as it reverse pathology and restores *Prakruti*. Assessment of *Dosha Pramaana* is associated to nature and extent of *Dosha*. Thus, concept of *Prakruti* is important in preventive and curative aspects. *Prakruti* assessment is a part of *Dashavidha Pariksha* (10-point evaluation) and is considered in totality with understanding of other minimum nine aspects. *Prakruti* forms basis for understanding *Sampraapti* (pathology), extent and *Vikalpana* (combinations) of vitiated *Dosha* and status of host factors. Prediction of proneness and severity of disease can be speculated that helps in prognosis judgment. *Prakruti* is important for judgement of prognosis. If *Vikaara Prakruti* (nature of disease) and *Prakruti* are similar then disease is difficult to manage (*Kashtasaadhya*). When *Prakruti* and disease are of different origin, it is easy to manage (*Sukhasaadhya*).

**Keywords:** *Prakruthi, Dashavidha Pareeksha, Dosha, Sukasadhya, Kastasadhya.*

#### INTRODUCTION

*Prakruti* is an important concept of *Ayurveda* that explains individuality and has role in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases. It expresses unique trait of an individual that is defined by specific and permanent composition of *Dosha* at conception. The word *Prakruti* is derived from *Pra* + *Kri* (to create or to act). *Prakruti* means constitution, disposition or fundamental form. Basic entity responsible for creation of universe is called as *Prakruti*. *Saamkhyia* and *Sushruta* describe it as *Avyakta Prakruti* or *Moola Prakruti* the state of equilibrium of *Triguna*. *Charaka* explains *Ashtadhaa Prakruti* as *Panchatanmaatra* + *Ahamkaara* + *Mahat* + *Avyakta*. Though the word *Prakruti* is referred in many contexts, focus of this review is *Deha Prakruti* or *Dosha Prakruti*<sup>1</sup>.

*Prakruti* is specific composition of *Dosha* that is permanent throughout the life. Dominance (*Utkata*) and unchangeable (*Avyabhichari*) nature of *Dosha* are called as *Prakruti*<sup>2</sup>. Status of *Dosha* at conception determines *Prakruti*. Though *Dosha* are dominant, they do not cause diseases but they are well tolerated being congenital in nature. *Charaka* specifies *Sama Dosha* as *Sama Prakruti*, in which *Dosha* are in state of equilibrium. Others are not termed as *Prakruti* but called as *Vatala*, *Pittala* and *Shleshmala* (and not *Vata Prakruti* etc.).

*Charaka* considers *Prakruti* as normal state hence describes *Sama* as only *Prakruti*. *Sushruta* describes *Dosha* is elevated (*Utkata*) but within normal limits. According to *Asthanga Hridaya*, in any *Prakruti*, *Dosha* are elevated but well tolerated and do not cause abnormality.

*Dosha* are classified in two components: *Prakrita* and *Vikrita Dosha*. *Prakrita Dosha* are congenital, maintain homeostasis, regulate physiological processes and responsible for health. *Vikrita Dosha* is generated in metabolic processes and is responsible for diseases. *Prakrita Dosha* is responsible for *Prakruti* hence it is unchangeable and constant nature of an individual. *Dosha*, though dominant are in physiological limits in *Prakruti*, abnormal (*Kshaya*, *Vridhhi* or *Prakopa*) in diseased state and completely changed in *Arishta* (alarming signs of death or grave prognosis of disease). *Tridosha* are basic factors responsible for health and disease. *Dosha* are biological expression of *Mahabhuta*. They govern all functions of body and mind but on vitiation produce diseases. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are three *Dosha*. Each *Dosha* possesses specific *Guna* or attributes. These attributes are defined according to pharmacological actions and form base for diagnosis, treatment and diet advice.

*Vata* is *Rooksha* (Dry), *Laghu* (Light), *Chala* (Mobile), *Sheeghra* (Swift), *Sheeta* (Cool), *Parusha* (Rough). *Pitta* is *Tikshna* (Penetrating), *Ushna* (Hot), *Visra* (Having musty

smell), *Drava* (Liquid). *Kapha* has *Snigdha* (Unctuous), *Guru* (Heavy), *Manda* (Slow) and *Sthira* (Stable) attributes. These attributes of *Dosha* are expressed in physical and psychological characteristics. The *Lakshanas* as per the *Gunas* are mentioned below:<sup>3</sup>

**Vata Prakruti:** *Ruksha* - dry, slightly built physique dry, low, broken obstructed and hoarse voice, alert in approach. *Laghu* - light and inconsistent in actions, movement, likes and dislikes. *Chala* - unstable joints, eyes, eyebrows, jaws, lips, tongue, head, shoulder, hands and legs. *Bahu* - Talkativeness, abundance in visibility of tendons & veins. *Vishada* - Cracking of the limbs & Organs, production of cracking sounds in joints when they move. *Sheeghra* - Quick in initiating actions, Quick in getting irritated and quick in the onset of ailments. Quick in affliction with fear, Quick in likes & dislikes, Quick in understanding and forgetting things. *Sheeta* - Intolerance for cold things, often getting afflicted with cold, Tendency towards shivering and stiffness. *Khara* - Roughness in the hair of the head, face and other parts of the body, nails, teeth, face, hands & feet. Due to all these properties of *Vata*, persons of *Vata Prakruti* are physically weak, lives short span of life, and are creative minded and at times crooked minded people.

**Pitta Prakruti:** *Ushna* - Intolerance for hot things. Tender and clear body. Abundance of freckles, black moles and birthmarks. Excessive hunger and thirst. Quick advent of wrinkles, graying of hair and baldness, the hair will be soft and will have a tinge of light brown colour in the scalp and face. *Teekshna* - Sharp (demonstration) of physical strength, Strong digestive power, Intake of food and drink in large quantity, intolerance to stressful conditions. *Drava*- Looseness and softness of joints and muscles, voiding of sweat, urine and feces in large quantity. *Katu And Amla Pradhana* - Insufficiency of Semen, less sexual desire and procreation power. By virtue of the above mentioned qualities individual with *Pitta Prakruti* is endowed with moderate strength, moderate span of life, moderate spiritual and materialistic knowledge, wealth and the accessories of life.

**Kapha Prakruti:** *Snigdha* - Unctuousness of Organs. *Slakshna* - Smoothness of Organs. *Sheeta* - Lack of intensity in hunger, thirst, heat and perspiration. *Mrudu* - Pleasing appearance, tenderness and clarity of complexion. *Madhura* - Semen of good quality, desire for sexual act and number of procreation. *Saandra* - Plumpness and roundedness of all organs. *Manda* - Slow in action, intake of food and movement. *Stimita* - Slowness in initiating actions, getting irritated and morbid manifestations. *Guru*- Non slippery and stable gait with the entire sole of the feet, pressing against the earth. *Saara* - Firmness, compactness and stability of the body. *Vijjala* - Firmness and compactness in joints. *Accha* - Happiness in the look and face, happiness and softness of complexion & voice. *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tama* are *Triguna*. These are mainly psychological attributes, which also affect physical characteristics. *Satva* is related to consciousness, intelligence, perception and memory, *Rajas* is responsible for kinetic energy and impetus; *Tamas* is mass, inertia and responsible for stability. These *Guna* are expressed in characters of body and mind, as *Prakruti* is manifestation of composition of *Dosha* with specific *Guna*. *Prakruti* assessment is not only

categorization of individuals based on phenotypes but also evaluation of these attributes to estimate dominance of particular *Dosha* or *Guna*.

*Prakruti* is formed at fertilization and *Dosha* status of male and female gamete play important role. There are other factors, which influence *Prakruti* determination. Foetus has inherited characters from father (*Pitrija*), mother (*Maatrija*), Soul (*Aatmaja*), mind (*Satvaja*), diet (*Rasaja*) and homologation (*Satmyaja*). Characters of individuals are resultant of these factors. *Charaka* has categorized influencing factors in to four types as:<sup>4</sup>

1. *Shukrashonita Prakruti* (Characters from father and mother)
2. *Kaalgarbhaashaya Prakruti* (season and uterine environment)
3. *Maaturaahaara Vihaara Prakruti* (diet and lifestyle of mother)
4. *Pancha Mahabhuta Vikaara Prakruti* (attributes of *Mahabhuta*)

All these factors affect the genesis of *Prakruti*. *Vaagbhata* and *Sushruta* emphasize on inherited characters from parents while *Charaka*, *Kashyapa* and others highlight more on environmental factors for *Prakruti* determination. *Nagarjuna* believes environmental factors in course of intrauterine life affect *Prakruti*. *Kashyapa Samhita* has emphasized importance of diet of mother. According to *Bhela Samhita*, diet and lifestyle of father and mother affect *Prakruti* of offspring.

*Charaka Samhita* describes method of procreation and development of healthy child by controlling possible affecting factors. The process for elective pregnancy includes *Panchakarma* and *Vaajikarana* to produce healthy gametes. Procedures like *Pumsamvana*, *Garbhasthaapana* and *Garbhini Paricharyaa* (Obstetric nursing guidelines) are meant for equilibrium of *Dosha* for healthy child.

Other factors are important for *Prakruti* assessment. They are quoted by *Charaka*<sup>5</sup>

1. *Jaatiprasaktaa* (Characters linked to race)
2. *Kulaprasaktaa* (Familial characters)
3. *Deshaanupaatinee* (Characters related to geographical or agro-climatic location)
4. *Kalaanupaatinee* (Seasonal variations at the time of conception)
5. *Vayaanupaatinee* (Characters dependent on age or stages of life)
6. *Pratyaaanmitaa* (Individual variations despite of any similarity)

These criteria define baseline for *Prakruti* assessment and needs methodical attention. For example, average height and weight of Punjabi and Nepali are different; diet habits are specific for some communities. Considering above variables, each needs different weight, age and generalized approach sometimes leads to confusion or false positive / negative results.

## DISCUSSION

### *Prakruti* in Health and Diseases

Knowledge about *Prakruti* is prerequisite for assessment of *Vikriti* (pathology) hence it is important for diagnosis and

therapeutics. Treatment is called as *Prakruti Sthaapana* as it reverse pathology and restores *Prakruti*.

Primary objective of *Prakruti* assessment is to estimate *Bala Pramaana* and *Dosha Pramaana* of an individual<sup>6</sup>. *Bala Pramaana* refers to judgment of physical and psychological potential that illustrates status of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* and related organs.

Assessment of *Dosha Pramaana* is associated to nature and extent of *Dosha*. Thus, concept of *Prakruti* is important in preventive and curative aspects. *Prakruti* assessment is a part of *Dashavidha Pariksha* (10-point evaluation) and is considered in totality with understanding of other minimum nine aspects<sup>7</sup>.

#### **Prakruti as part of Dashavidha Pariksha**

*Ayurvedic* classics like *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* have recommended extensive guidelines for assessment of disease (*Vyaadhi*) and diseased (*Rugna*). These guidelines aim at precise understanding of physiology and pathology; hence are applied to healthy individuals (*Svastha*) for *Prakruti* assessment. *Prakruti* assessment is a part of patient examination (*Dashavidha Pariksha*) and that needs consideration of other factors, like *Vikriti* (pathology), *Dhaatusaarataa* (status of tissues), *Samhanana* (compactness), *Pramaana* (quantitative examination of organs), *AahaarShakti* (digestive capacity), *VyaayaamaShakti* (capacity of exercise), *Bala* (strength), *Kala* (season) and *Vaya* (age). Considering all these dimensions, physician defines patient status, which forms base of treatment<sup>8</sup>. *Prakruti* evaluation coupled with all above factors gives complete information on which treatment (or health advice) is based. Thus *Ayurveda* emphasizes evaluation of patient in totality for perfect diagnosis, management of health and disease.

*Prakruti* has decisive role in *Swasthavritta* (restoration of health), which is the prime objective of *Ayurveda*. *Prakruti* based guidelines for diet and lifestyle result in healthy tissues and homeostasis of *Dosha*.

#### **Diagnostic Aspect and Prakruti**

*Prakruti* forms basis for understanding *Sampraapti* (pathology), extent and *Vikalpana* (combinations) of vitiated *Dosha* and status of host factors. Prediction of proneness and severity of disease can be speculated that helps in prognosis judgment.

#### **Prakruti and Disease Proneness**

Disease is a result of complex interplay between causative agents, environmental and host factors hence there are multiple factors that decide disease proneness. Hence to speculate disease proneness, other factors as causative factors (*Hetu*), immunity (*Dhaatubala*) etc should be considered, however some generalized assumptions can be made.

*Sama Prakruti* has good resistance and generally not prone to diseases. Other types are labelled as *Aatura* (diseased), as they have dominance of one or more *Dosha* and need regular preventive measures. Out of rest six types, *Prakruti* with one *Dosha* (*Ek Doshaja*) have better resistance than two *Dosha* *Prakruti* (*Dvi Doshaja*). *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Pitta Prakruti* are susceptible to disease in decreasing order<sup>9</sup>.

Manifestation of disease in different *Prakruti* will be different though causative factors are comparable. Similar *Dosha* in *Prakruti* and *Sampraapti* (pathology) leads to severe disease.

*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Prakruti* individuals may have severe *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* disease respectively<sup>10</sup>. These assumptions are based on presence of potent and similar *Hetu* (causative factors). For example, *Kaphavardhaka Hetu* (excess *Guru*, *Snigdha*, *Manda* etc. *Guna*) cause severe *Pitta* disease to *Pitta Prakruti* individual than any other *Prakruti*.

#### **Prakruti and Prognosis**

*Prakruti* is important for judgement of prognosis. If *Vikaara Prakruti* (nature of disease) and *Prakruti* are similar then disease is difficult to manage (*Kashtasaadhya*). When *Prakruti* and disease are of different origin, it is easy to manage (*Sukhasaadhya*). *Kaashyapa Samhita* has defined role of season (*Kaala Prakruti*) in relation to *Prakruti*. If season, disease and *Prakruti* are of same *Dosha*, disease is untreatable and has bad prognosis. Any two of these if similar, make disease difficult to treat.

#### **Role of Prakruti In Treatment**

Though treatment design is based on multiple variables, *Prakruti* has a role in selection of drug, dose, *Anupaana* (vehicle) and *Samskaara* (processing). Considering *Prakruti* (coupled with other factors) some drugs or procedures are indicated (*Ghrita* for *Vata* and *PittaPrakruti*) or contraindicated (*Svedana* for *PittaPrakruti*). *Prakruti* of an individual illustrates numerous physiological functions, as *Agni* (digestive and metabolic capacity), *Koshtha* (digestive and excretory functions), *Bala* (Strength of tissues) and life span are specific for each *Prakruti*.

Systematic objective clinical evaluation is essential for understanding of *Prakruti*. *Prakruti* assessment with other factors of *Dashavidha Pariksha* should be contemplated for total understanding of patient or healthy individual.

## CONCLUSION

Knowledge about *Prakruti* is prerequisite for assessment of *Vikriti* (pathology) hence it is important for diagnosis and therapeutics. *Prakruti* forms basis for understanding *Sampraapti* (pathology), extent and *Vikalpana* (combinations) of vitiated *Dosha* and status of host factors. Prediction of proneness and severity of disease can be speculated that helps in prognosis judgment. *Prakruti* is important for judgement of prognosis. If *Vikaara Prakruti* (nature of disease) and *Prakruti* are similar then disease is difficult to manage (*Kashtasaadhya*). When *Prakruti* and disease are of different origin, it is easy to manage (*Sukhasaadhya*).

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