



A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON THE ROLE OF PANCHAMAHABHUTAS IN SHARIR KRIYA AND PANCHAKARMA

Surbhi Raina¹, Arya.R. V²

¹BAMS, MD, Assistant Professor, Department of Kriya Sharir, Mai Bhago Ayurvedic Medical College, Sri Muktsar Sahib, Punjab, India

²BAMS, MD, Assistant Professor, Dept of Panchakarma, Mai Bhago Ayurvedic Medical College, Sri Muktsar Sahib, Punjab, India

Corresponding Author: draryapalazhi@gmail.com

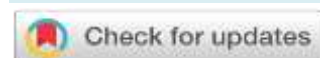
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ABSTRACT

The principle of Panchamahabhuta is one of the chiefs and ruling principles of Ayurveda. Panchamahabhuta is the five basic elements that are responsible for the manifestation of any matter. Matter or dravya can be Aahar or it can be Aushadhi. It can be animate or inanimate. The Ayurvedic texts say that each and every object in the universe is made up of these five basic elements which we call the Panchamahabhuta. This study is a methodological study in which the relationship between the Vata, Pitta, and Kapha with special reference to Panchamahabhuta is being analysed. Panchamahabhuta is one of the Maulik Principles of Sharir Kriya and Panchakarma.

INTRODUCTION

Acharya Charaka says that all the dravyas or matter in this world is made up of the five primordial¹. These are Aakasha, Vaya, Agni, Jala, and Prithvi. These are the fundamentals of matter, which constitute the matter. Ayurveda says that everything that exists in this universe is made up of these Panchama-

habhutas. Kriya Sharir is one of the streams of Ayurveda that emphasizes the functioning of the Sharir, it elaborates all the basic concepts like Triguna, Panchamahabhuta, Tridosha, etc. Pancha means 'five' and Karma means 'action' hence it refers to five different purifying and rejuvenating procedures in

Ayurveda. The Panchamahabhuta concept is more beneficial in the Chikitsa aspect as the body is made up of Panchamahabhuta any vitiation in this will result in Roga Utpatti. In Panchakarma, with the help of Shodhana procedures, we can treat the Roga Avastha with Dravyas which are having a different composition of Mahabhuta properties.

Aim and Objectives:

1. This is a comprehensive study on the role of Panchamahabhuta in Kriya Sharir and Panchakarma.
2. To study and analyse the importance of Panchamahabhuta and their relationship with Sharir and Tridosha.

Table 01: Gunas of Panchamahabhutas²

Mahabhuta	Guna/ Property
Aakash	Shabda
Vayu	Shabda + Sparsha
Agni	Shabda + Sparsha + Rupa
Jala	Shabda + Sparsha + Rupa + Rasa
Prithvi	Shabda + Sparsha + Rupa + Rasa + Gandha

Each Mahabhuta has its specific character.

Table- 2 Specific Characters of Panchamahabhutas³

Mahabhuta	Specific character
Aakasha	Apratighata
Vayu	Chala
Agni	Ushna
Jala	Drava
Prithvi	Khara

Kharatva, Dravatva, Ushnatva, Chalatva, and Apratighata are the specific properties of the respective Mahabhuta as mentioned above. In Ayurveda, the concept of Chikitsa is applicable only to Shad Dhatwatmaka purusha. i.e the Purusha having been formed from the five Mahabhuta and Aatma⁴.

Panchabhautika elements in the human body⁵:

1. Parthiva Elements: The elements in the body with these Gunas Sthula, Sthira, Khara, and Kathina are the Parthiv elements. Eg: Nakha, Asthi, Danta, Mamsa.
2. Aapya Elements:
The elements in the body having the Guna of Dravata, Sara, Manda, Snigdha, Mrudu, and Picchila are

3. The objective of this research is to understand the relevance of Panchamahabhuta in Shodhana Chikitsa. -

Literature review:

The Aatreya Bhadra Kapiya Adhyay of Charaka Samhita Sthana mentions that all the dravyas in this world are made up of five basic elements which we call Panchamahabhuta. Aakash, Vayu, Agni, Jala, and Prithvi these elements are derived from precursors (Tanmatras) by a special process called Bhutantaranupravesha. These five Mahabhutas have a special property/ Guna. Each element has an addition of one property from the previous substance as follows:

Apya elements. Eg: Rasa, Rudhira, Vasa, Kapha, Pitta, Mutra.

3. Agni Elements:

The body elements having these gunas of Ushna are Agni predominant. Eg: Pitta, Agni, Skin lusture, Eyes.

4. Vayu Elements:

The body elements responsible for Uchvas, Nishvas, Unmesha, Nimisha, and Dharana are Vayu elements.

5. Aakash Elements:

The body elements having the Vivikta guna are Aakashya elements. Eg: Stotra indriya, Strotas etc.

Relationship between Tridosha and Mahabhuta

Table 03: Panchamahabhutas and Tridoshas⁶

Tridosha	Mahabhuta
Vata	Vayu + Aakasha
Pitta	Agni + Jala
Kapha	Jala + Prithvi

Thus, the Tridoshas are also composed of Panchamahabhuta. Relationship between Panchamahabhuta and Triguna:

Table 04: Panchamahabhutas and its predominant Gunas⁷

Mahabhuta	Guna
Aakasha	Satva
Vayu	Raja
Agni	Satva + Raja
Jala	Satva + Tama
Prithvi	Tama

Thus, there is a mutual relationship between Tridosha, Triguna, and Panchamahabhuta in Sharira.

Relationship between Panchamahabhuta and Rasa

Table 05: Panchamahabhutas and Shat Rasas⁸

Rasa	Mahabhuta
Madhura	Prithvi, Jala
Amla	Prithvi, Agni
Lavana	Jala, Agni
Katu	Vayu, Agni
Tikta	Vayu, Akasha
Kashaya	Prithvi, Vayu

From this, it is clear that Panchamahabhuta predominance determines the specific Rasa of a Dravya. So, for normalising Doshas we can administer these Rasa predominant Dravyas. For example, for the vitiation of Vata and Pitta, we can administer Madhura Rasa Pradhana Dravyas which are Prithvi and Jala predominant, and for Kapha vitiation, we can administer Katu Rasa Pradhana Dravyas which are Vayu and Agni predominant. If all the dravyas are Panchabhautika then the Aahar and Aushadha are deemed to be Panchabhautika. When Tridosha and Triguna are vitiated then it leads to Vyadhi and Chikitsa being done to pacify Tridosha and Triguna. The Aahar and Aushadha are given to pacify the Vyadhi. Thus, there is a huge relevance of the role of Panchamahabhuta in Chikitsa as the Sharira is Panchabhautika, and Aahar and Aushadhi too are Panchabhautika.

Role of Panchamahabhuta in Panchakarma: Panchakarma's namely Vamana, Virechana, Niruha basti, Anuvasana basti, and Nasya helps in expelling Doshas properly from the body. Once the Doshas are expelled from the body with the help of proper Dravyas through these Karmas then its reoccurrence rate is very much less. For this proper understanding of Doshas, Dravyas chosen for Dosh Samana is also important. Here comes the importance of Panchamahabhutas. Dravyas itself is made up of Panchamahabhutas and also based upon the Rasa preeminence also we can choose Dravyas which is also based upon nothing but Panchamahabhuta. Prior to all Panchakarma procedures, Purvakarma plays an important role which helps in the easy elimination of Doshas from the body. These Purvakarma like Snehana and Swedana itself is based upon Panchamahabhutas. The properties of Snehana and even Swedana help in the

action of Vridhi and Vishyandana of Doshas which is possible by the Apya Mahabhuta. Paka of Doshas is occurring by the effect of Agni Mahabhuta and Sroto Mukha Vishodhana and Vayoscha Nigraha is possible by the action of Aakashya and Vayu Mahabhutas⁹. Thus, from this, the role of Panchamahabhutas is also visible. Acharya Charaka has mentioned the role of Panchamahabhutas in Shodhana Chikitsa. While explaining Vamana and Virechana Karmukata he has explained the role of Panchamahabhutas along with the gunas of Vamana and Virechana Dravyas. Vamana is the procedure in which doshas are eliminated through the Urdva bhaga¹⁰. It is mainly used for the treatment of Kapha dosha. The Dravyas used for

Vamana is having some specific properties based on their Pancha bhautatmakatva. These Vamaka Dravyas possess properties like Ushna, Tikshna, Sukshma, Vyavayi, and Vikashi¹¹. Ushna property help in Vishyandana, Tikshna helps in Vichindana, Sukshma helps in entering into minute channels, Vyavayi property helps Vamana drugs to get absorbed quickly and Vikashi property helps in Vimokshana. Udana Vayu also plays an important role in propelling the Doshas. But because of the predominance of Agni and Vayu Mahabhutas in these Vamaka Dravyas and because of their Prabhava to move upwards, the doshas are moved towards the Urdhwabhaga i.e through the mouth.

Table 06: Panchamahabhutas and Vamaka Dravyas

Vamaka dravya	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Mahabhuta
Madanaphala	Madhura Tikta	Ruksha Laghu	Ushna	Katu	Agni Vayu
Jimutaka	Katu Tikta	Laghu Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Agni Vayu
Ikshvaku	Tikta	Ruksha Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Agni Vayu
Dhamargava	Tikta	Laghu Ruksha Tikshna	Ushna	Katu	Agni Vayu
Kutaja	Tikta Kashaya	Ruksha Laghu	Sheeta	Katu	Agni Vayu
Kritavedana	Tikta	Laghu Ruksha Tikshna	Ushna	Katu	Agni Vayu

Virechana is a procedure in which doshas are expelled through Adhobhaga¹². It is mainly done for the elimination of Pitta dosha, Pitta associated with Kapha, and Pittasthanagata Kapha. Drugs used for Virechana also possess the same properties as Vamaka drugs. Also, these Virechaka dravyas are

having Prithvi and Jala Mahabhuta predominance. These Mahabhutas are having a natural tendency to move downwards and thus they can assist in the induction of Virechana. With the help of the Prabhava action of the drugs and the action of Apana Vayu Adhogati of Virechana drugs are happening¹³.

Table 07: Panchamahabhutas and Virechana Dravyas

Virechana dravya	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Mahabhuta
Trivrit	Kashaya madhura	Ruksha	Ushna	Katu	Jala Prithvi
Aragvadha	madhura	Guru Mrudu	Sheeta	Madhura	Jala Prithvi

Tilvaka	Kashaya	Laghu Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Jala Prithvi
Katuki	Tikta	Ruksha Laghu	Sheeta	Katu	Jala Prithvi
Haritaki	Kashaya pradhana Pancharasa	Laghu Ruksha	Ushna	Madhura	Jala Prithvi
Eranda	Madhura Katu	Tikshna	Ushna	Madhura	Jala Prithvi

Even in Basti Chikitsa also we can consider the role of Panchamahabhutas. Based on the Panchamahabhuta predominance we can select Dravyas for different Basti preparations and hence we can administer it for the different Dosha Shamana purposes. In Shamana Chikitsa also the role of Panchamahabhuta is there. For example, the dravyas used for shaman is having Aakasha Mahabhoota predominance, Grahi dravyas Vayu Mahabhuta, in Deepana drugs Agni Mahabhuta and in Brihmana drugs Prithvi and Jala Mahabhuta predominance is there.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we analysed the importance of Panchamahabhutas. Acharya Charaka has said "Sarvam Dravyam Panchabhautikam Asmin Arthe" means everything that exists in this Universe is composed of five Mahabhutas i.e., Aakasha, Vayu, Agni, Jala, and Prithvi. The Shaddhatvatmak Purusha is made-up of Panchamahabhutas and Atma, thus the Chikitsa for the Purusha is also done on the basis of Panchamahabhuta. The Sharira, Ahara, and even Aushadas are even based on Panchamahabhutas. Acharya Charaka has also emphasized the importance of Panchamahabhutas in Shodhana Chikitsa in Panchakarma. So, it can be concluded that Panchamahabhutas is said to be the root of everything, and it is having an important role in Sharira and even in the Chikitsa aspect.

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