

CONCEPT OF VIRUDDHA-AHARA IN AYURVEDA AND ITS UTILITY IN PRESENT LIFESTYLE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has given prime importance to *Aahara* (diet) amongst three sub- pillars of life. Diet should be wholesome as well as in accordance with *Desh, Kala, Prakriti, and Vayah*. Diet plays an important role in our life. Ayurveda has described *Aahara* in detail in their various *Granthas*. **Objective:** The present article deals with concept, critical review, types, effects and treatment of *Viruddha Ahara* along with modern prospective of *Sanskara Viruddha, Samyoga Viruddha, Veerya Viruddha* and so on. It also enlists a variety of incompatible dietary preparations (*Viruddha Anna*) consumed in today's day to day life and its hazardous effects on health. **Methods:** *Viruddha Aahara* is one of the unique concepts described by Ayurveda. Ayurveda clearly defines that certain diet and its combinations which interrupts the metabolism of *Sharira Dhatus* (body tissues), which inhibits the process of formation of *Dhatus* and which have opposite property to the *Dhatus* are called as *Viruddha Aahara*. **Results:** The food which is wrong in combination, which has undergone wrong processing, which is consumed in incorrect dose, which is consumed in incorrect time of day and in wrong season, can act as *Viruddha Aahara*. **Conclusion:** This concept of *Viruddha Aahara* is similar to the concept of Agonist i.e. A substance that acts like another substance and therefore stimulates an action. So the use of the Antagonist to particular aahara dravya can be implemented as treatment, after thorough research.

Keywords: *Viruddha Aahara*, Food – food interactions, Incompatible diet, Agonist, Antagonist.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda gives prime importance to the prevention of diseases by elaborating the appropriate lifestyle in terms of *Dinacharya* and *Rutucharya*. This is meant for strengthening the immune system of the body. Right diet and regimen are essential components of this right lifestyle. In Ayurveda food is considered as the fuel for the maintenance of *Agni*. If used in directed manner it helps to increase *Bala, Varna* and *Oja* of an individual. The contrary conduct would lead to unwholesome results.

A most important faulty food intake is *Viruddha Aahara* (Incompatible Diet). *Charakacharya* and their commentators *Chakrapani* and *Gangadhara* have explained this unique concept of *Viruddha Aahara* in detail. They have described total 18 types of *Viruddha Aahara* with proper examples of food products and food to food interactions which is used by layman in day to day life. They have stated that regular consumption of the *Viruddha Anna*, plays a major role in causation of several types of diseases.

Along with that treatment which is useful to nullify the harmful effects of *Viruddha Aahara* caused on body is described. Aim of the article is to make people aware of harmful effects of *Viruddha Aahar* and ask them to take wholesome diet.

In present scenario the increasing complexity of modern industrial society and the wide ranging nature of the International food trade; has increased the risk of contamination of food by chemical and biological agents, in the form of changing *Veerya*, *Guna*, *Rasa* and *Swabhava* of that food item which in turn leads to Incompatibility i.e (*Viruddha Aahara*).

Therefore there is need to explore the concept of *Viruddha Aahara* with proper understanding of their types, their role in disease pathogenesis and line of treatment in present era.

Materials and Methods:-

Materials -

Ayurvedic Grantha—

- A) 1. *Charaka Samhita*
2. *Sushruta Samhita*
3. *Ashtanga Hridaya Samhita*
- B) Internet -Wikipedia
- C) Modern Medical Literature

Method – All the references of *Viruddha Aahara* from Ayurvedic Samhita are considered and compared to evaluate and enlighten the concept of *Viruddha Aahara* with modern medical literature.

Concept of *Viruddha Aahara* –

Viruddha literary means contrast or opposition in particular. *Charaka* has defined *Viruddha Aahara* as a certain food product or its combination, which interrupts the metabolism of tissues i.e. *Sharira Dhatus*, which inhibits the process of formation of tissue and which have the opposite property to the tissue are called as *Viruddha Aahara*.¹

The food which is wrong in combination, has undergone wrong processing, consumed in incorrect dose and /or consumed in incorrect time of the day and in wrong season can be termed as *Viruddha Aahara*.²

Those substances which aggravate *Doshas* but cannot eliminate them or pacify to their normal status and also contradicts with *Doshas*, *Dhatus*; yet remains inside the body are termed as *Viruddha Dravya*.³

It sounds that the food combinations of certain type of food may have –

- Opposite properties.
- Opposite activities on the *Dhatus*.
- Produces some unwanted effect on the body when processed in a particular form.
- May cause undesirable effects, when combined in certain proportion.
- May exhibit unwanted effect if consumed at wrong time.
- May show effects like food poisoning (*Gara Visha*).

Types of *Viruddha Aahara* –

Charakacharya has explained total 18 types of *Viruddha Aahara* with examples and mode of action, *Chakrapani* and *Gangadhara* have elaborated some of them in their own commentaries. Though they have explained number of examples of food incompatibility in their own Samhita but some of those food combinations are not used in today's era. It is essential to identify new food incompatibilities, which are used in day to day life with Ayurvedic perspective. These food incompatibilities can be categorized in different types of *Viruddha Aahara*⁴ as follows –

1. Desha Viruddha- The food items having similar properties to that of *Desha* is called as *Desha Viruddha*. It is stated that one should take food having properties opposite to corresponding *Desha*.

Charakacharya considered only *Bhumi Desha* as *Desha Viruddha* whereas *Gangadhara* has explained *Desha Viruddha* as *Bhumi Desha* as well as *Sharira Desha Viruddha*.

e.g:- *Ruksha*, *Tikshna ahara* in *Maru bhumi* - consumption of alcohol in desert land.

Snigdha, Sheeta ahara in *Anupa bhumi* – cool milkshakes and juices

2. Kaal Viruddha :- Consuming food items having similar properties to that of *Kaal* i.e. Season.

e.g.:- *Sheet ahara* in *Hemant Ritu* - consumption of Ice-creams in winter.

Katu and *Ushna ahar* in *Grishma Ritu* –spicy pav-bhaji and missal-pav in summer.

3. Agni Viruddha:- Food taken without knowledge of individual's *Agni* which may be either of 4 types *Mrudu, Madhyama, Tikshna* and *Vishama*.

e.g.:- *Laghu* and *Alpa Matra Aahara* for *Tikshna Agni* -consuming *Churmura* (popcorn etc.) in excessive hungry condition. *Guru* and *Adhika Matra Aahara* in *Manda Agni*.

4 Matra Viruddha:- There are some food items which act as *Viruddha Aahara* when mixed in equal proportion.

e.g.:- Cow's Ghee + Honey in equal proportion.

5. Saatmya Viruddha :-Consuming such food items for which that individual is not used to.

e.g.:- Chinese food by Indians. *Madhura* and *Sheeta aahar* by a person who is used to *Katu* and *Ushna aahara*.

6. Dosha Viruddha :- Food items having similar properties to that of *Doshas*, which causes *Dosha dushti* are called as *Dosha Viruddha*.

Gangadhara has elaborated this term in 3 types

1. *Dosha Viruddha according to Rasa - Kashaya Rasa* for *Vata*.

2. *Vyadhi Viruddha*-Curd mixed with rice for *Kushtha*.

3. *Dravya Swabhava*- Poison (*Dhatu pradushana dravya*).

7. Sanskara Viruddha :-Food prepared by wrong method is *Sanskara Viruddha*.

e.g:- Reheating Food items - French Fries, Reheating oil which is used once, Heated Honey (mixing with hot water, cooking biscuits).

8. Veerya Viruddha:- Consuming food items having opposite *Veerya* at the same time termed as *Veerya Viruddha*.

e.g.:- Fish of *Ushna Veerya* consumed with *Sheeta Veerya* Milk.

9. Krama Viruddha:- Food Consumed by wrong sequence is considered as *Krama Viruddha*.

e.g.:- Sweet Dishes after meal.

10. Koshtha Viruddha:- Here *Chakrapani* and *Gangadhara* said that any drug or food item taken without proper knowledge of individuals *Koshtha* termed as *Koshtha Viruddha*.

e.g.:- Strong Laxatives by *Mrudu Koshtha* person, Barbeque food and baked food consumed by person who is habitual to Constipation i.e. *Krura Koshtha* person.

11. Awastha Viruddha:- Consuming food without exact knowledge of own health and bodily conditions.

e.g.:- Alcohol consumption by Laborers.

12. Parihara Viruddha :- Consuming cold food items after hot and spicy food is *Parihara Viruddha*.

e.g.:- Cold drinks after Samosa,

13. Paak Viruddha :- Food which is not properly cooked i.e. uncooked, partly cooked , partly burned etc. Half baked food is *Paak Viruddha*.

e.g.:- Half fried egg

14. Upachaara Viruddha :- Consuming food items which are not supposed to consume after specific treatment or act is *Upachaara Viruddha*.

e.g.:- Drinking cold water after *snehapana*, after steam bath.

15. Samyoga Viruddha:- Consuming food items which are not supposed to combine with each other is *Samyoga Viruddha*. Especially *Amla rasa* fruits with milk.

e.g :- *Amla Rasa* with *Madhura Rasa* - Strawberry milkshake, Banana milkshake. Only the combination of Mango fruit with milk is advised in Ayurveda.

16. Hrut Viruddha :- Consuming food items which are not pleasant to consumer is *Hrut Viruddha* .

e.g. :- Bitter melon, Decoctions for Children.

17. Sampat Viruddha :- Food items prepared by using unhealthy ingredients is *Sampat Viruddha*.

e.g :- Sheera prepared in vegetable Oil., Food substance /fruits which haven't fulfilled their original taste or damaged taste or over ripped.

18. Vidhi Viruddha:- In Ayurveda there is detail explanation of rules for food consumption under *Aahara Vidhividhana* concept. Consuming food without considering those rules is *Vidhi Viruddha*.

e.g.:- Not consuming food which is hot and fresh - food from Lunch box.

Apart from all biochemical effects of *Viruddha Aahara*, a food substance which is not liked by the person; acts like *Viruddha Aahara*. This may lead to continual mal digestion too.

Acharya Sushruta has explained some different types as *Rasa Viruddha*, *Veerya Viruddha*, *Vipaka Viruddha*⁵.

Mode of Action:-

Charakacharya has stated that regular consumption of certain food items and drugs aggravates *Sharirastha Prakruta Doshas* but does not eliminate them from body, according to *Chakrapani* this is the unique characteristics of *Viruddha Anna*⁶.

As these vitiated *Doshas* stay in body, they interact with *Sharirastha Viguna Dhatus* and lead to many diseases.

Diseases due to Viruddha Aahara:-

From the above information it can be understood that regular consumption of any type of *Viruddha Ahara* can lead to number of disorders. *Acharya Charaka* has enlisted them in his *Samhita*. Some of them are acute while some are chronic diseases. All those can be classified as follows:-

- 1. Indriyopghatakara** – Disease which hampers function of *Indriya*.
e.g. - *Andhya*, *Shandhya*, *Bhagandara*, *Jwara*, *Pinasa*,.
- 2. Dhatu Parinamkar** - Diseases which hamper *Rasadi Sapta Dhatus*.
e.g. - *Dakodara*, *Visarpa*, *Pandu*, *Aamvisha*, *Kushtha*, *Santandosha*, *Visphota*, *Moorchcha*,

Aadhmana, *Galagraha*, *Kilasa*, *Grahani*, *Shotha*, *Amlapitta*, *Mrityu*.

- 3. Manasa Vyadhi** - Diseases which hampers Psychological condition of person.

e.g.:- *Unmada*, *Mada*.

It can be observed from above list that *Viruddha Aahara* leads to disorders up to impotency and infertility thus it has an impact up to *Shukra Dhatu Dushti*, moreover it can causes *Mrityu* (death) which means it has impact on *Oja* also.

If the above list of disorders is classified as per the body system according to modern, it can be said that Immune system, Endocrine system, Digestive system, Nervous system and Circulatory system all get affected by continuous consumption of *Viruddha Aahara*.

Does Viruddha Aahara affect everyone?

Though it is stated that regular consumption of *Viruddha Ahara* causes several diseases, in day to day life; it can observed that many people who consume *Viruddha Anna* remain unaffected by it. *Charaka* has explained this condition too.

He described that a person who is young in age and performs regular exercise, who is habitual to *Viruddha Aahara*, whose digestive power (*Agni*) is high and has consumed *Viruddha Aahara* in less quantity remains unaffected of it.⁷

Line of Treatment:-

Along with types and disease pathogenesis caused by *Viruddha Aahara*, *Acharya Charaka* has also stated treatment for it. Using this plan of treatment one can overcome the hazardous effects of *Viruddha Aahara*. *Charaka* has described 3 different ways to treat the patient.⁸

1. Shodhana- *Shodhana* means to exclude all the *Vigunita /Dushta Doshas* from body with the help of *Vamana* and *Virechana*. For *Viruddha Aahara*; *Virechana* is preferably used treatment than *Vamana*. But *Shodhana* can be useful only when there is long term history of regular consumption of *Viruddha Aahara*.

2. **Shamana**-When person is not a regular consumer of *Viruddha Aahara* and *Sharira Doshas* are not much aggravated; then by using drugs having exactly opposite properties to that of *Viruddha Aahara* can settle down the *Vikruta Doshas*.

3. **Nidanaparivarjana** - Prevention is always better than cure. By consuming healthy and *Pathyakara Aahara* and avoiding consumption of *Viruddha Aahara* one can prevent himself from all the hazardous effects of *Viruddha Aahara*. This is actually the first step towards the treatment of diseases caused by *Viruddha Aahara*.

Modern Concept of Incompatible food-

Concept of Incompatible food does not exist in modern dietetics; as given prime importance in *Ayurveda*. However in Modern Medicine; role of diet induced changes in the drug activity and exacerbation of certain disease conditions after consumption of particular type of food is well known. Some topics which have similarity with incompatible food are as follows-

1. Agonist and Antagonist
2. Free radicle formation
- 3 Food Allergies
4. Food poisoning
5. Food additives (preservatives)

Agonist: A substance that acts like another substance and therefore stimulates an action. Agonist is the opposite of Antagonist.

Antagonist: A substance that acts against and blocks an action. Antagonist is the opposite of Agonist. Antagonists and agonists are key players in the chemistry of the human body and in pharmacology.⁹

Food Allergies: These illnesses are sometimes called individualistic adverse reactions to foods because they affect only certain individuals in the population. These individualistic reactions are also termed as Food sensitivities.

Food poisoning: This type of illness arise from eating contaminated food. It may be contaminated by bacteria, viruses, environmental toxins or toxins

present within the food itself. e.g. mushrooms, seafood.

Food additives (preservatives): these are used to preserve the natural characteristics of food and to increase the shelf life of food and inhibit natural ageing and discoloration that can occur during food preparation .

DISCUSSION AND RESULT

As per *Ayurvedic text* certain food products or there combinations act as *Viruddha Aahara* which deteriorate *Sharirastha Dhatus*. There are total 18 types of *Viruddha Aahara* explained by *Charaka* and their commentators *Chakrapani* and *Gangadhara*. Consumption of *Viruddha Aahara* leads to several diseases by aggravating *Sharirastha Prakruta Doshas* and deteriorating *Prakruta Dhatus*. So, one should have proper understanding of all the types of *Viruddha Aahara* to avoid consumption of Incompatible dietary articles of today's fast food era.

Mode of Action of *Viruddha Aahara* can be explained in terms of modern concept of Agonist. Certain food item after consumption gets attached to the receptors of *Doshas* and aggravates *Doshas* just like Agonist substances which cause hormonal secretions in body by stimulating receptors. It is really very important to find out whether *Viruddha Aahara* actually acts as an Agonist as well as the treatment given in those conditions acts like Antagonist; through researches in Dietetics.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it is clear that *Viruddha Ahara* is an important aspect of today's improper dietary habits. *Viruddha Anna* can lead to disorders up to impotency and infertility, thus it has an impact up to *Shukra Dhatu Dushti*. This unknowingly can lead to several hazardous diseases even death in the patients. Therefore, it is important to enlist the causative incompatible dietary factors and advise the patients to avoid such etiological factors (*Nidana Parivarjana*) especially, the children who nowadays consume a lot of flavored food items and fried chips

(potato, corn) etc. Here the role of preservatives and the salts used are said to have carcinogenic effects.

By chance if any disease occurs *Shodhana* and *Shamana* type of *chikitsa* can be given to eradicate that disease. Similarly patients of food poisoning and adverse effects of preservatives may be treated with same line of treatment.

The article also opens a new research window in the field of *Ayurvedic* dietetics to research upon a variety of incompatible factors to observe their effects. Therefore in Ayurvedic system, the dietary guidance and restrictions have been elaborately described by all the *Ayurvedacharyas*.

Moreover, *Charaka* emphasizes that if a man controls his mind and senses and consumes good and restricted diet, he can live up to the very ripe age of one hundred years without any diseases.

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