Prakriti is defined as the state of an individual in its natural form. Prakriti is a unique concept in Ayurveda. Prakriti is formulated by the condition of Tridosha at the time of union of sperm and ovum inside the uterus. Prakriti means manifestation of special characteristics due to predominance of Doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha the functional component of body). All the physiological process are directly controlled by Vata-Pitta and Kapha (three body humors) and Mansika Doshas (functional psychic factors) thus healthy status can be maintained by maintaining normality of Prakriti. By knowing the Prakriti one will know about the strength of a person to combat with the lifestyle diseases as person having equilibrium in Prakriti is said to be having best immunity and strength. Disequilibrium in Prakriti greatly increases the risk of lifestyle diseases. Hence in present work an attempt has been made to elaborate the concept of Prakriti in Ayurveda and its significance in evading lifestyle disorders. Prakriti is directly responsible for constitutional, temperamental, psychological and spiritual state of each individual. Disease occurs when there is a change in this original form at the psychological or physiological level. Prakriti remains same throughout life. Acharya Charaka has mentioned Dashavidha Pariksha in which Prakriti analysis is done first and Vikriti analysis next to understand the nature and severity of disease, reaction of body to the drugs (pharmacogenomics), selection of drugs and their doses, prognosis of the disease and preventive measures such as diet, diurnal and seasonal regimes. So Prakriti emphasizes on the individuality and plays an important role in diagnosis, preventive medicine, and therapeutics.

Keywords: Prakriti, Ayurveda, Vikriti, Vata, Pitta, Kapha Dashavidha Pariksha

INTRODUCTION

Prakriti is an important concept of Ayurveda that explains individuality and has role in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the disease. The concept of Prakriti is unique to Ayurveda. It expresses unique trait of an individual that is defined by specific and permanent composition of Doshas right from birth. Prakriti makes every person unique therefore no person can be exactly like other person. Physical, physiological, psychological characteristics differ from one person to other person depending on his/her Prakriti. Prakriti helps us to become aware of the disease we may become prone to, and to follow a preventive lifestyle. Once form Prakriti re-
mains constant for each individual throughout his/her lifetime. 

Panchamahabhoota (the five basic elements) are manifested into the three biological entities known as Vata, Pitta and Kapha. In every organism, these three Dosha regulate the functions of each & every cell and govern the all physio-pathological changes. At the time of fertilization, Vata, Pitta and Kapha determine by their permutations and combinations the constitution of an individual, which is called ‘Prakriti’. The ‘Prakriti’ means ‘the first creation’. Every human being is the first creation of the cosmos, and that’s why every human being is a separate entity, a unique phenomenon. Constitution, Biotypeology or Body-mind typology is a very important concept of Ayurveda. This concept is unique to Ayurveda.

Nirukti (Etymology):

➢ “Pra” means “First” and the “Kri” means “Creation”. That is first creation is Prakriti.

➢ Equilibrium state of Satva, Raja and Tama Guna.

➢ “Prakriti” word is for Nature or Sign. (Shabdastoma)

➢ Prakriti means virtue.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

Present work has been done based on critical review of classical information, published research works, modern literature and research works conducted at various institutes. The possible correlation has been made between collected information and has been presented in systematic way.

FACTORS AFFECTING FORMATION OF PRAKRITI:

Factors which play direct or indirect role in the formation of Prakriti can be grouped under two headings:

1. Garbhakalaj Bhava 2. Jatiprasaktadi Bhava

1. Garbhakalaj Bhava:

These factors are as follow1 –

A. Shukra Shonita Prakriti  B. Kala Garbhashaya Prakriti  C. Matu-Ahara-Vihara Prakriti  D. Mahabhuta-Vikara Prakriti

A. Shukra Shonita Prakriti:
Shukra and Shonita are the main component for formation of foetus and they possess Prakriti deciding factors naturally. Characteristics & traits of parents are present very minutely in the Shukra and Shonita, which are responsible for similarities between offspring & parents.

B. Kala Garbhashaya Prakriti:
This Kala can be considered in three ways –

a. Sambhoga Kala: Postures during sex and the Dosha present in the uterus have closely interrelated because certain Dosha get vitiated by different postures and thus influence the Prakriti.2

b. Garbhadharana Kala: Seasons have their effect on body by increasing or decreasing Vatadi Dosha. So, at the time of fertilization, season also influences the formation of foetus through Shukra and Shonita.

c. Age of parents: Tridosha remain in the body according to the age and affect the whole body along with the Shukra and Shonita.

C. Matu-Ahara-Vihara Prakriti:

Some scholars say that formation of foetus is influenced not only by mother’s foods and activities but also by the regimens adopted by father. Acharya have told certain methods & principles like Punsvana Samskara, Ritumaticsarya, Garbhadvana method etc., in order to have desired progeny. All these things also affect the Prakriti of the foetus.

D. Mahabhuta-Vikara Prakriti:
The Matrijadi bhava of the foetus are product of the Mahabhuta. Five types of Bhautika Prakriti are possible as per predominance of one of the Mahabhuta like this3 –

a) Vayavya Prakriti - Vatika Prakriti

b) Tejas Prakriti - Paitika Prakriti

c) Aapya Prakriti - Shleshmika Prakriti

d) Parthiva Prakriti - Having strong, large body built
Nabhasa Prakriti - Holy, pure, long-lived, having mouth, nose and ear with big openings

2. Jatiprasaktadi Bhava:
After birth several changes occur in physical and mental status of an individual which later become a part of his/her personality. This is known as Jatiprasaktadi Bhava or JatSharira Prakriti. These can be temporary and changeable. Jatiprasaktadi Bhava are described by Acharya Charaka & Vagbhata respectively.

TYPES OF PRAKRITI:
Prakriti is formed at the time of fertilization but it get influenced by the after birth situations. Although, original Prakriti is gestational and no changes can occur in this throughout the life.

Grossly, two main categories of Prakriti are –
A. Deha Prakriti (Physical constitution)
B. Manas Prakriti (Psychological constitution)

A. Deha Prakriti (Physical constitution): Deha Prakriti is also known as Dosha-Prakriti.

According to different Acharya Deha Prakriti is of following types –

a. Charaka
- 7 types
  1. Vataja Prakriti
  2. Pittaja Prakriti
  3. Shleshmaja Prakriti
  4. Vata-Pittaj Prakriti
  5. Pitta-Shleshmaj Prakriti
  6. Vata- Shleshmaj Prakriti
  7. Sama Dhatu Prakriti

b. Sushruta
- 7 types as Charaka (Su.Sh.4/62)

c. A.S. & A.H.
- 7 types as Charaka (A.S.Sha.8/2 & A.H. Sha.3/83)

d. Sharangdhara Samhita
- 7 types

e. Bhrer Samhita
- 7 types

f. Bhava Prakash
- 7 types

g. Yogratnakara
- 7 types

h. Harita Samhita
- 4 types (Ha.S.I 5/15-16)
  1. Vata Prakriti
  2. Pitta Prakriti
  3. Kapha Prakriti
  4. Sannipata Prakriti

i. Kashyapa Samhita
- 7 types of Prakriti but mainly
  3 types- (Ka.Su. Lehadhyaya)
  1. Vata Sthuna
  2. Pitta Sthuna
  3. Shleshma Sthuna

Table 1: B. Manas Prakriti (Psychological constitution):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charak Samhita (Ch.sha.4/36-39)</th>
<th>Sushruta Samhita (Su. Sha.4/80-95,97)</th>
<th>Ashtanga Samgraha (A.S.Sh.8/16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satvika Prakriti (7)</td>
<td>Satvika Kaya (7)</td>
<td>Manas Prakriti- 7 types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Varuna Satva</td>
<td>5. Varuna Kaya</td>
<td>5. Satva-Tamasika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasika Prakriti (6)</td>
<td>Rajasika Kaya (6)</td>
<td>Ashtanga Hridaya: (A.H.Sh.3/7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Aasura Satva</td>
<td>1. Aasura Kaya</td>
<td>No description about Manas Prakriti.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rakshasa Satva</td>
<td>2. Sarpa Kaya</td>
<td>Only qualities of Satva, Raja &amp; Tama are given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Paishacha Satva</td>
<td>3. Shakun Kaya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sarpa Satva</td>
<td>4. Rakshasa Kaya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Praet Satva</td>
<td>5. Paishacha Kaya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamasika Satva (3)</td>
<td>Tamasika Kaya (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pashav Satva</td>
<td>1. Pashav Kaya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Vanaspayta Satva</td>
<td>2. Matsya Kaya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bhela Samhita: 7 types of Manas Prakriti are explained as Divya Kaya (Bhe.Vi.4):
1. Brahma Divya Kaya
2. Deva Divya Kaya
3. Varuna Divya Kaya
4. Gandharva Divya Kaya
5. Pishacha Divya Kaya
6. Asura Divya Kaya
7. Maharaja divya Kaya

Bhava Praksh: three types –
1. Satva 2. Rajas 3. Tamas

Kashyapa Samhita: 3 types – (Ka.S. Lakshnadhaya)
1. Satva - 8 subtypes    2. Rajas - 7 subtypes    3. Tamas - 3 subtypes

Harita & Sharangdhara Samhita: No description about Manas Prakriti is available.

FEATURES OF DIFFERENT PRAKRITI PEOPLE:

Table 2: Characteristics of Vata Prakriti:7 (Ch.Vi.8/98)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of Vata</th>
<th>Specific manifestations in the body of the individual having Vatala type of constitution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ununctous (Ruksha)</td>
<td>Ununctuousness, emaciation, and dwarfness of the body; long drawn, dry low broken obstructed and hoarse voice; always keeping awake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light (Laghu)</td>
<td>Light and inconsistent gait, action, food and movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile (Chala)</td>
<td>Unstable joints, eyes, eyebrows, jaws, lips, tongue, head, shoulder, hands and legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abundance (Bahu)</td>
<td>Talkativeness, abundance in tendons and veins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swift (Shighra)</td>
<td>Quick in initiating actions, getting irritated and the onset of morbid manifestations, quick in affliction with fear, quick in likes and dislikes, quick in understanding and forgetting things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold (Shita)</td>
<td>Intolerance for cold things; often getting afflicted with cold, shivering, and stiffness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough (Parusha)</td>
<td>Roughness in the hair of the head, face and other parts of the body; nails, teeth, face, hands, and feet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-slime (Vishada)</td>
<td>Cracking of limbs and organs, production of cracking sound in joints when they move.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of the above-mentioned qualities, individuals having Vatala type of constitution are mostly possessed of strength, span of life, procreation, accessories of life and wealth in lesser quantity.

Table 3: Characteristics of Pitta Prakriti:8 (Ch.Vi.8/97)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of Pitta</th>
<th>Specific manifestations in the body of the individual having Pittala type of constitution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hot (Ushna)</td>
<td>Intolerance for hot things, having hot face, tender body of portwine mark, freckles, black moles, excessive hunger and thirst; quick advent of wrinkles; graying of hair and baldness, presence of some soft and brown hair on the face, head, and other parts of the body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp (Tikshna)</td>
<td>Sharp physical strength, strong digestive power, intake of food and drink in large quantity; inability to face difficult situations and glutton habits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid (Drava)</td>
<td>Looseness and softness of joints and muscles; voiding of sweat, urine and feces in large quantity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flesh smell (Visram)</td>
<td>Putrid smell of axilla, mouth, head and body in excess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pungent and Sour tastes (Amlam, Katukam)</td>
<td>Insufficiency of semen, sexual desire and procreation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By virtue of the above-mentioned qualities, a man having Pittala type of constitution is endowed with moderate strength, moderate span of life, moderate spiritual and materialistic knowledge, wealth and the accessories of life.
By virtue of the above-mentioned qualities, a man having Shleshmala type of constitution is endowed with the excellence of strength, wealth, knowledge, energy, peace and longevity.

**Characteristics of Dwandaja Prakriti:**
Individuals having constitution dominated by the combination of two Doshas are characterized by the combination of the manifestation of respective Doshas.

**Characteristics of Sama Prakriti:**
Samadhatu type of individual is the one who has all the Doshas in the state of equilibrium is endowed with the qualities of all the three types of individuals described above.

**IMPORTANCE OF PRAKRITI:**
The determination of Prakriti has significant importance in the healthy / unhealthy states of an individual. This information can be successfully applied clinically in diagnosis, treatment (for deciding appropriate drug, dose, duration, diet and lifestyle), and prognosis of the disease. Even the daily and seasonal regimens adopted for promotion of health also very according to Prakriti.

Further, the person to person variations in the manifestation of disease and, in turn, the response of medicines have led modern scientists to look forward to understand the individualized approach of Ayurveda in treating the patients. Hence, the concept of Prakriti i.e. “Individual constitution” has emerged as in interesting area for modern researchers, which was well established in Ayurveda thousands of year back.

1) **Diagnosis of diseases:**
Dashvidhapariksa has been mentioned by Acharya Charaka while diagnosing the strength of the diseased person. Prakriti analysis is first one to be done while examining a patient.

2) **Prognosis of diseases:**
If the causative Dosha of an ailment is same as the Prakriti of the diseased person, the disease becomes Krichrasadhya i.e. difficult to cure. Similarly if the vitiated Dosha is different from one’s Prakriti, it is very easy to treat.

3) **Management of diseases/ Individualized Medicine:**
Acharya Charaka has mentioned ‘Prati Purusha siddhanta’ considering one’s Prakriti and other factors specific to the diseased person while treating his/her ailment. The knowledge of Prakriti helps in drawing a line of treatment for diseased person. E.g. In Amajavyadhi like Jvara, for Kaphaja person one can adopt complete Apatarpana Chikitsa whereas in case of Vataja person that cannot be adopted completely.  

### Table 4: Characteristics of Shleshmala Prakriti:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of Kapha</th>
<th>Specific manifestations in the body of the individual having Shleshmala type of constitution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unctuous (Snigdha)</td>
<td>Unctuousness of organs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth (Shlakshna)</td>
<td>Smoothness of organs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft (Mridu)</td>
<td>Pleasing appearance, tenderness and clarity of complexion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet (Madhura)</td>
<td>Increase in the quantity of semen, desire for sex-act, and number of procreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm (Sara)</td>
<td>Firmness, compactness and stability of the body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dense (Sandram)</td>
<td>Plumpness and roundness of all organs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow (Mandam)</td>
<td>Slow in action, intake of food and movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy (Guru)</td>
<td>Non-slippery and stable gait with the entire sole of the feet pressing against the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable (Shhimitam)</td>
<td>Slowness in initiating actions, getting irritated and morbid manifestations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold (Shita)</td>
<td>Lack of intensity in hunger, thirst, heat, and perspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viscous (Vijjala)</td>
<td>Firmness and compactness in joints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear (Achha)</td>
<td>Happiness in the look and face; happiness and softness of complexion and voice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4) **Promotion of Health:**
Ayurveda encourages a person to take foods & indulge in those activities which are opposite to his/her Prakriti to live a healthy life style. The rejuvenative therapies like Rasayana and Vajikarana benefit most when they are administered according to one’s Prakriti.

5) **Agni status of individual:**
Acharya Charaka has mentioned four types of Agni (Digestive fire) according to one’s Prakriti. Vishmagni (Disturbed) in Vata Prakriti, Tikshṇagni (Increased) in Pitta Prakriti, Mandagni (Decreased) in Kapha Prakriti, and Samagni (Normal) in Samadosha Prakriti.

6) **Management of diseases/ Individualized Medicine:**
Acharya Charaka has mentioned ‘Prati Purusha siddhanta’ considering one’s Prakriti and other factors specific to the diseased person while treating his/her ailment. The knowledge of Prakriti helps in drawing a line of treatment for diseased person. E.g. In Amajavyadhi like Jvara, for Kaphaja person one can adopt complete Apatarpana Chikitsa whereas in case of Vataja person that cannot be adopted completely.

7) **Determination of Drug doses** –
The dose of the medicine is decided according to one’s Prakriti. In general the Alpa (minimum), Madhya (moderate) and Pravara (maximum) dose of medicine are adopted in Vata, Pitta and Kapha Prakriti individuals respectively.

8) **Preventive Medicine**-
In Ayurveda Dinacharya (Diurnal regime) and Ritucharya (Seasonal regimes) have been advised on the basis of Prakriti. The person can adopt these regimes as per need of Prakriti to keep body healthy and Dosha in equilibrium state. For example Kapha Prakriti persons need more exercise, Laghuahara to keep their body fit and they should avoid Divasvapna, whereas Vata Prakriti persons are advised to take nutritious and heavy food, do less exercise and can do Divasvapna. Ayurveda advocates extensive preventive measures in terms of Sadvrita, Svasthavrita, Dinacarya, Ritucharya etc. By determining the Prakriti of every individual, their health can be maintained by advocating them Pathya Ahara (Favorable foods and drinks) and Vihara (Behavior and physical activities) and simultaneously restricting them to take Apathya Ahara (Unfavorable food and drinks) and Vihara (Behavior and physical activities).

9) **Susceptibility to disease/Predictive Medicine:**
Each Prakriti type is prone to specific diseases. Prakriti determines proneness of an individual for Dosha specific diseases. For example, Kapha Prakriti persons are more prone to Kaphaja vikara like Agnimandhya, Pratishyaya, Medoroga, Prameha etc. similarly Vata Prakriti persons are more prone to Gulma, Aaṭopa, Sandhigatavata etc and Pittaja Prakriti persons are more prone to diseases like Amlapitta, Pandu, Kaamla, Raktapitta etc. The various observations show that there is more susceptibility of Vata Prakriti individuals to anxiety neurosis, thyrotoxicosis and tuberculosis, Pitta Prakriti individuals to hypertension, peptic ulcer, bronchial asthma and rheumatoid arthritis and Kapha Prakriti individuals to diabetes mellitus, obesity, hypertension and ischemic heart diseases. Vataja, Pittaja and Kaphaja diseases are a little difficult to treat in persons belonging to Vata, Pitta and Kapha Prakriti respectively. In view of this fact, the different diseases to which an individual is predisposed can be predicted timely and may be prevented or postponed by appropriate diet, drugs or regimen.

10) **Genomic Medicine**-
The concept of Prakriti and its relationship with genomics was hypothesized over a decade ago. Subsequent studies have attempted to correlate Prakriti classification with genetic information and association of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) in HLA DRB1, CYP2C19, EGLN1, inflammatory and oxidative stress related genes, CD markers for various blood cells, DNA methylation alterations and risk factors of cardiovascular or inflammatory diseases have been reported. A preliminary study suggests that the Prakriti classification, as a founda-
tion for the practice of Ayurveda, has a genetic basis and does provide clues for further studies.24

**CONCLUSION**

*Prakriti* has prime importance in both healthy and diseased persons. By understanding the individual constitution of every individual, we know which food, drink, exercise etc. are appropriate for maintaining their health. *Prakriti* is an important concept in Ayurveda to understand the nature and severity of disease, reaction of body to the drugs (pharmacogenomics), selection of drugs and their doses, prognosis of the disease and preventive measures such as diet, diurnal and seasonal regimes. *Prakriti* also determines the response of an individual to environmental factors, drugs and susceptibility to diseases making it one of the earliest known concepts of predictive, preventive and personalized or genomic medicine. So *Prakriti* emphasizes on the individuality and plays an important role in diagnosis, preventive medicine, and therapeutics. Thus *Prakriti* definitely has an important role in 21st century in dealing with the health problem.

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