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Concept of Food Consumption in Ayurveda: A Review Article

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ABSTRACT:

Ayurveda is a comprehensive system of natural health care that has its origins in the Vedas. Because it is a different aspect of life, it is not only a treatment system, but also an ideal way of life to achieve a healthy life. Ayurveda focuses on various rules and regulations. Helps improve health and improve lifespan. The Upanishads said that the purity of food helps to purify the inner self and thus the mind and intellect. *Aahar* is the life of living beings. *Acharya* defines *Aahar* in detail and explains how to consume *Aahar* for a long and healthy life. *Ahar* is the first and most important factor for *Swasthai Savasti Laksanam*. If the correct rules of *Ahar* are not followed, the body will lead to *Rogaavasta*. *Aahara* plays an important role in health and disease states. Therefore, it is very important to know that the concept of *Aharvidhi* is related to Ayurveda and the present.

Keywords: - *Aahar Vihdi Vidhan, Aahar Sevan, Ancient*

INTRODUCTION

Aahara is the most important requirement for all living things. Today, there is an increasing prevalence of lifestyle disorders in which bad eating habits play an important role. Ayurveda gives detailed disciplines and procedures for applying *aahara* to both the individual and the public. This discipline is entitled *Aaharavidhividhan* and all laws concerning food and drink are given.¹ Basically, Ayurveda has an introductory concept that both health and disease are products of this *Aahara*. As explained by *Acharya*, *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmcharya* are *Tryaupstambha* (three sub-pillars) that support the body itself.² Here he shows that *Aahara* is placed in his number one position and that maintaining and preserving life is paramount. *Aahara* supplies the body with bio-energy. This bioenergy in the form of its essential components (proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, vitamins, water, etc.)³ is supplied by adequate and sufficient nutrition.⁴ In Ayurveda, not only

aahara but also how to take it. The foods eaten according to the prescribed method are the satisfying place for life.

Ojas, *teja* (splendidness), dhatus, senses, bala (strength), *tushiti* (mind satisfaction), *arogya* (health), all depend on food.⁵ They are the fuel for *Agni* (the fire within the body), the main basis for sustaining the body. According to *Charaksamhita*, the life of all beings is food and the whole world seeks food. Skin tone, good voice, long life, knowledge, happiness, contentment, maturity, strength and intelligence are all established in food.⁶ In today's modern lifestyle, we don't care to our health and the consequences of our eating habits and other lifestyle activities, are harmful to us.

Aahar

Aahar is life of living being. Happiness, voice, life, satisfaction, strength, intelligence all depend on *aahar*. Any job that a person does for a living like farming, doing business has *aahar* as the



basis. So *aahar* is the basis of life.⁷

Classification of *Aahar*⁸

The sages of the vedic times, the rishis, had researched and categorized the gross and subtle qualities and effects of food in three categories 1. *Satvika* 2. *Rajasika* 3. *Tamasika*. They had also enjoined that those desirous of having the purity, piety and sagacity of thoughts, feelings and emotions along with the vibrant health of the body, should avoid *Tamasika* and *Rajasika* food and take only *Satvika* food.

1. Based on *Rasa*
2. Based on *Guna*
3. Based on *Vikalpa- aparisankheya(Charak)*
4. Based on *Varga*

Ashta ahar vidhi vishesha ayatanani⁹(eight aspects of dietic)

Prakruti: -

Prakruti is a *Swabhava*, or the natural attribute or trait of a substance which is inherited naturally, such as *guru* (heaviness), *Laghu* (lightness) etc. For example, the *Prakruti* of black gram or pork is heavy, while that of green gram or deer meat is light.

Karna: -

Karan (processing) is the making or refinement of the *Dravya*, or the *samskara* that are added to the properties of those substances These properties are imparted by contact of water and fire, by cleansing, churning, place, time, infusing, steeping, etc and also by the medium used for storage or processing (e.g., copper vessel, or earthen pot), etc. for example *Crud obstruct channels*.

Samyoga: -

Samyoga (combination) is the aggregation or combination of two or more *dravya* This exhibits peculiarity that are not seen in case of individual substances, such as combination of honey and ghee, and that of honey, fish and milk.

Raashi: -

Rashi (quantity) consists of *Sarvagraha* (account of a whole amount or unit) and *Parigraha* (account of part of a substance, or of individual parts (in case the substance is a combination of multiple ingredients or parts)) which ascertain the effect of any food article taken in proper or improper quantity

Desha: -

Desha denotes the geographic region relating that the substance(s) are local or endemic to, and thus, are

suitable to. There are basically three types of *Desha* explained in ayurvedic texts i.e., *Anoop*, *Jangala* and *Sadharan*.

Kala: -

Kala is time. It can be taken to be the evermoving time, as in seasons (e.g., suitable to seasons), or as duration from the standpoint of a condition (e.g., a condition that does not get treated within a specific duration becomes incurable). There are two types of *kala* i.e., one is *Nityaga* and other is *Awasthik*.

Upayokta:

Upayokta is the one who consumes the food. On him depends the *Oka-satmya* (i.e., habituation developed by practice). Thus, are described the specific factors of the method of dieting.

Upayoga -Samstha:

Upayogasamastha denotes the rules for dieting. This depends on the digestible features (of the food). Basically, indicates when to eat and when not to eat. It is expected that one should eat only when previous diet is digested.

Rules For Food Intake (*Aharavidhi Vidhanam*)¹⁰

All persons should follow these rules while eating the food to remain healthy and enhance the span of life.

1. *Ushnam Ashniyat*

Food should be warm and freshly prepared.

Significance

1. According to *acharya Charaka:* - *Swadista, Agnidipaka, Kshigrapachana, Kaphahara*
2. According to Modern science: -Appealing to senses, fresh food without contamination and highest bioavailability of nutrients will be suitable nourishment for everyone.

2. *Snigdham Ashniyat*

Eat food which is not roasted, hard to eat & dry to eat

Significance

1. According to *acharya Charaka:* *Agnidipaka, Vata anuloman, Balvridhikar, Varnaprasadar*
2. According to Modern science: - Food products which are hard, roasted are generally unwholesome in their nutritive value and satiety quotient is also very less hence are not recommended

3. *Matravat Ashniyat*

Adequate quantity either less or more.

Significance

1. According to *acharya Charka*: -*Ayurvedhak*, easily digested
2. According to Modern science: -Quantity based on calorific value and satiety quotient of particular food either alone or in combination with other must be kept in mind when ever food is consumed otherwise it will lead to excess nourishment or inadequate nourishment.

4. *Jirne Ashniyat*

Eat only when the food taken is digested

Significance

1. According to *acharya Charaka*: -*Ajir nabhojana-doshaprakopaka, Jirna-Ayurvedhak*
- 2 According to Modern science: - Digestion process has its own biological clock and pattern. Honouring it is very important to ensure smooth functioning of the organism

5. *Virya Avirudha Ashniyat*

Do not take food which is incompatible

Significance

- 1-According to *acharya Charaka*: -*Virudhaaharajanya* diseases can be avoided
- 2-According to Modern science: -Incompatibility of food must be viewed in light of bio-availability of nutrients. Sometimes the combination of different kinds of food together may cause local irritation or may result in toxic substances which may cause more harm than good.

6. *Ishta Deshe / Ishta Sarvopkarnam Ashniyat*:

Eat at a suitable and pleasant place where you are comfortable and happy.

Significance

1. According to *acharya Charaka*: -Gives happiness
2. According to Modern science: -Mood plays a vital role in eating digestion and even assimilation of food. Digestion is predominantly a parasympathetic activity which is activated and functions at its best when the organism is relaxed and calm. Hence it is must to be very relaxed clean and well settled before taking food

7. *Na Atidrutam Ashniyat*:

Avoid eating too fast (not paying attention to what you are eating and how much you are eating

Significance

1. According to *acharya Charaka*: -Food is tasteless when is consumed fast
2. According to Modern science: -Flight and fright are the responses to emergency. It is predominantly mediated by sympathetic activity. When this system is on, secretion are lowered blood circulation is shifted from central pool to periphery and person is very tense such situation is not

good for food intake.

8. *Na Ativilambit Ashniyat*:

Avoid eating too slow

Significance

1. According to *acharya Charaka*-Unsatisfaction
2. According to Modern science -Too slow eating may result in excess food intake, hence must be avoided. It may indicate depression and lack of attention. Hence must be attended appropriately

9. *Ajalpana, Ahasan, Tanmanabhunjitam*

Eat quietly

Significance

1. According to *acharya Charaka*-Food does not go to its place properly
- 2.Modern-Eating silently without taking, laughing will avoid aerophagy (engulfing air) and ensure proper eating and early satisfaction.

10. *Aatanam Abhisamikshya Bhunjitam*:

Paying total attention while you take food is essential it include what is your choice of food and adds spiritual dimension to the food

Significance

1. According to *acharya Charaka*-Maintains the Equilibrium of *Tridosha*
2. According to Modern science -Help to make choice regarding what to eat what not to eat how much to eat etc.

Proper Time to Intake Food: -

1. All *indriyas* are having *prasannata*
2. Body feels lightness
3. *Apaanvayu* is normal & eliminated
4. When "*kukshi*" is *shithil*
5. When there is desire of taking food
6. When there is *shuddhaudgara*
7. After urination & defecation

DISCUSSION

Unhealthy eating habits are the main cause of the increasing trend of health problems in this day and age. The consumption of frozen, canned and processed foods plays an important role. Therefore, it is necessary to raise people's awareness of the importance of fresh food. According to *Charaka Samhita*, the treatment of substances that leads to a change in the inherent properties of the substances is known as *Sanskar*.¹¹ During freezing, large ice crystals form that can damage cell walls and destroy the texture and flavor of foods. Although freezing is considered the simplest and most important presentation

process for fruits and vegetables, it is not a perfect process as it is known that some nutritional values (vitamins and minerals) substance) may be lost during freezing.). Losses of nutrients during freezing can be the result of physical separation (peeling during thawing), leaching (especially during blanching), thermal (during blanching) or chemical degradation ¹²(during storage). Currently, many new food processing methods are being applied. These methods bring about chemical and physical changes in the consumption of food substances. They certainly improve the appearance, taste, shelf life, preservation of food. At the same time, they change the properties of food ingredients, making them unsuitable for humans, causing many diseases. According to modern processing point of view, techniques are used to preserve food. increase digestibility, increase the color and flavor of the food by and increase the appearance of the food and finally increase the palatability and they reduce the cooking time but become the root cause root of many diseases. Food is heated in a microwave oven causing the water molecules in the food to resonate at a very high frequency, cooking food instantly and saving time, but at the same time changing the chemical structure of food. Many diseases are preventable, simply due to bad eating habits. According to traditional cooking methods prescribed by Ayurveda, gradual cooking makes food easier to digest, something that microwaves cannot achieve. Plastic food container used to reheat food repeatedly. Another problem with microwave ovens is that carcinogen can leak out of plastic and paper containers or lids and leach into food.¹³ The Nutrition Action Bulletin reported multiple toxic chemicals leaking from packages of popular microwave foods, including pizza, chips and popcorn. Original frozen foods lose less nutrients due to oxidation, even in the frozen state, while fresh foods provide more nutrients than frozen foods. and really scientific people like our *Acharyas* mentioned.

CONCLUSION

It is said that the human body is a biological product of food. A healthy life begins with a healthy diet. *Aahara* plays an important role in the state of health and disease. A person's strength and complexion will only improve if they practice the right diet and nutrition.

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