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# Critical analysis of *Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Dravya's* - Balanced diet in Ayurveda

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## ABSTRACT

*Acharya* Charaka describe that the whole world runs towards food, as complexion, happiness, pleasant voice, life, talent, health and satisfaction, maintenance of body, body strength and even intellectual capacities of the individual depends on food. Since from Vedic period they gave importance to the food. In Upanishad food is considered as Brahma. Food is a substance consumed other than water and drugs for maintenance of the health, well-being and vitality of the individual. Present paper highlights the importance of Ayurvedic nutrition in the form of *Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Dravya* and critical analyses on the importance of it in day today life.

**Key words:** *Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Dravya*, *Ahara*, Balance diet.

## INTRODUCTION

World Health Day will be celebrated on 7 April, with WHO highlights the challenges and opportunities associated with food safety under the slogan 'From farm to plate, make food safe.'<sup>[1]</sup> Promotion of proper nutrition is one of the eight elements of the Primary Health Care. Ayurveda is not only a medical science but also a complete science of life, which deals with health promotion, prevention and management of the disease. *Ahara* is one of the *Trayopasthambha*<sup>[2]</sup> described by our *Acharyas*. Daily consumptions of *Hita*, *Avirudha*, *Satmya* and *Nitya Sevaniya Ahara*

makes the person disease free condition, so one should plan our diet according to the *Asta Ahara Vidhi Visesaayatana*. *Acharya* Charaka and Vagbhata explained the *Nityasevaniya Dravyas* which is similar to the balance diet. To bring global attention towards Ayurvedic system of medicine in concern to nutritional programme, to implement and to develop more nutritional programme in our system, a great interest has to be focused on the role of dietary factors in the promotion of health.

### Scope for Nutrition in Ayurveda

Classification of *Ahara* has yet to be done on their nutritive value. The classification of the *Dravyas* based on the functions such as *Jiivaniya*, *Brumhaniya* etc. clearly indicating classification based on the nutritive values. Ayurveda, the life science, is having many references regarding the *Nithyayogya* and *Swasthahita Dravyas*. Scholars of Ayurveda had a clear idea about the malnutrition and over nutrition and their effect which is explained mainly in the context of *Santarpana Apararpana Janya Vyadhi*. Ayurveda explain concept of *Astaaharavidhi Visesyatana*, *Viruddhaahara*, *Satmyaahara*, *Nityasevaniya Dravyas*.

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### Balance diet

Balance diet is defined as one which contains a variety of food in such quantities and proportions that the need for energy, amino acid, vitamins, minerals, fat, carbohydrate and nutrients is adequately met for maintaining health, vitality and general wellbeing and also makes a small provision for extra nutrients to with stand short duration of leanness.<sup>[3]</sup>

### Nitya Sevaneeya Dravya

According to *Acharya Charaka* the list of foods those are advisable to consume daily are *Shashtikashali* (rice grown in 60 days), *Godhuma* (wheat), *Yava* (barley), *Mudga* (green gram), *Saindhava* (rock salt), *Amalaki* (*Embllica officinalis*), *Antarikshajala* or *Divyodaka* (rain water), *Ghrita*, Cow milk, *Madhu*, *Jangalamamsa* (meat of animals from arid land).<sup>[4]</sup> Can be correlated as balance diet in today's era. *Acharya Vagbhata* explains some extra *Dravyas* like *Godhuma* (wheat) *Sunisannaka*, *Jivanthi*, *Balamulaka*, *Pathya*, *Mrudwika*, *Patoli*, *Sharkara* (sugar), *Dadima*<sup>[5]</sup> can be consumed habitually.

**Table 1: Classification based on dietic factors of a balanced diet**

<b>Carbohydrates</b>	<i>Shali</i> <i>Shashtikashali</i> <i>Godhuma</i> <i>Yava</i>
<b>Proteins</b>	<i>Mudga</i> <i>Shali</i> <i>Shashtikashali</i> <i>Godhuma</i> <i>Jangalamamsa</i>
<b>Fat</b>	<i>Ghrita</i> <i>Milk</i>
<b>Vitamins</b>	<i>Amalaki</i> <i>Draksha</i> <i>Dadima</i>

	<i>Patoli</i>
<b>Minerals</b>	<i>Triphala</i> <i>Pathya</i>
<b>Water</b>	<i>Antariksha Jala</i>

### According to WHO ranges of nutrient intake goals<sup>[6]</sup>

- Total fat - 15-30%
- Saturated fatty acids - <10%
- Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) - 6-10%
- Total carbohydrate - 55-75%b
- Free sugars - <10%
- Protein - 10-15%d
- Cholesterol - <300 mg/day
- Sodium chloride - <5 g/day
- Fruits and vegetables - 5400 g/day

1. **Shashtika Shali (rice grown in 60 days)** is main source of energy and also contributing significant quantity of protein, minerals and B group vitamins. It contributes 70 to 80% of total energy intake. Rice proteins are rich in lysine, which is an essential amino acid than other cereals protein.<sup>[7]</sup>
2. **Mudga (green gram)** is main source of protein, which has 25% of protein in it. But regards to quality, vegetable proteins are inferior to animal protein. It is also rich in minerals and vitamin B complex.<sup>[8]</sup>
3. **Saindhava Lavana (rock salt)** is pure natural salt with no release agents, free-flow agents, bleaching agents or any other additives. The colour may be reddish white and clear. The red coloration is from the natural iron content. It increases appetite and adds taste to the food. It is considered superior to the normal cooking salt as it has less water retention capacity thus considered good for those suffering from cardiac diseases, hypertension and renal diseases.
4. **Amalaki (*Embllica officinalis*)** is the most concentrated source of vitamin C in the plant kingdom. The active ingredients in *Amalaki* are phyllembin, gallic acid, tannins, pectin and

ascorbic acid (Vitamin C). Vitamin C has a special form that makes it very easy for the human body to assimilate. Vitamin C in *Amalaki* fruit is precisely bonded with tannins that protect it from degradation from heat and light. It is well known for its ability to boost bio-availability and absorption of calcium for yielding healthier bones, teeth, hair and nails. It also improves assimilation of iron for healthy blood. It is especially nourishing for the eyes, heart and digestion. *Amalaki* is also extremely effective for balancing stomach acids. *Amalaki* has a special action to promote strength and lean muscle mass when used with a diet rich in protein and quality nutrients.

5. **Yava (barley)** is having *Madhura, Kashaya Rasa, Laghu, Ruksha Guna* and *Ushna Veerya*. It is *Mutrala, Kapha Shamaka*, used in *Sthaulya*.<sup>[9]</sup>
6. **Antariksha Jala (rain water)** is the basic requirement. It is the prime source of all the water and purest water in the nature.
7. **Sarpi (cow's ghee)** is easier to get absorbed. It can bond with lipid-soluble nutrients and herbs to penetrate the lipid-based cell walls of the body. It is also *Pitta-Vatahara*, good for *Rasa, Sukra, Oja, Swara, Varna, Nirvapanam, Sanskarasya Anuvartanam* in nature.<sup>[10]</sup>
8. **Jangala Mamsa (Animal meat)** has 20% protein and 3-5% of fat, 100gm of meat if used will yield 194 calories of energy. *Jangala Mamsa* is a rich source of protein of a high biological value and also has all the amino acids and vitamin B complex. Riboflavin and nicotinic acid from vitamin B complex group, iron and phosphorous are present in an adequate quantity in such meat.
9. **Madhu (Honey)** is composed of 38% of fructose, 31% of glucose, 1% of sucrose, and 9% of other sugars, along with water and small amounts of vitamins, minerals and acids. Honey has also been used topically as an antiseptic therapeutic agent for the treatment of ulcers, burns and wounds. It is a best food that reduces cholesterol and thus prevents the diseases like coronary artery diseases and also prevents obesity.<sup>[11]</sup>

10. **Dugdha (cow's milk)** is considered as complete food. It has a fine blend of all nutrients. It is a good source of protein, fat, sugar, vitamins and minerals. Milk protein contains all the essential aminoacids. It is also a rich source of calcium

## DISCUSSION

Modern science states that so much carbohydrate, fat, proteins, vitamins and minerals are required for well balanced diet. Their classification of food is too crude, when to the classification of all food materials according to Ayurveda. In every food there are certain factors developing the mental faculties and certain other factors developing the physical built of the body. The modern scientists are still ignorant of even the fundamental principles guiding this classification. Certain factors in diet excise the mental faculties and certain other retards these faculties. According to Ayurveda, the diet which nourishes both the mental and physical built is called balanced diet.

Charaka Samhita mentions in nutshell all the constituents of a well balanced diet determined by modern experts. Based on his version good and fine rice like *Shasti* and *Shali*, *Mudga* (green gram), *Lavana* (salt), *Amalaki* (goose berry), *Yava* (barley), rain water, milk, ghee, flesh of animals living in forests and honey should by habit be adapted in diet generally.

In Ayurveda the concept of *Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas* mentioned by *Acharya* charaka and *Vagbhata* clearly indicates the importance of nutrition in day today life. The definition of balance diet indicates the role of carbohydrates, protein, fat, minerals and vitamins intake in daily food. The nutritive value of *Nitya Sevaniya Dravya's* fulfils the balance diet criteria hence when we critically analyse the nutritive value which are told by WHO. By daily consumption of *Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas* does the promotion of health of healthy individual and prevent the disease condition.

## CONCLUSION

Ayurveda stands no less behind in explaining the nutritional aspect and therapeutic nutritional concept. *Swasthahita* and *Nityasevaniya Dravyas* show solid evidences of the concept of the nutrition. Effort should be made to put Ayurvedic menu of nutritional supplements into the National nutritive programmes.

Ayurvedic method of understanding and analysing *Kuposhanajanya Vikaras* (nutritional disorders) is necessary to adopt Ayurvedic nutritional management. *Nitya Sevaneeya Dravya* plays important role in maintaining healthy life and prevents the forthcoming disease.

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