



Panchamahabhut Siddhant : Conceptual Review and it's Applications in Ahar, Vihar and Aushadha

Kelkar S^{1*}, Nimbalkar M², Bhatkar A³, Bagde A⁴, Fulkar S⁵

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^{1*} Sonam Kelkar, Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant, Government Ayurved College, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

² Manoj Nimbalkar, Professor and HOD, Department of Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant, Government Ayurved College, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

³ Arun Bhatkar, Associate Professor, Department of Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant, Government Ayurved College, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

⁴ Ashvin Bagde, Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant, Government Ayurved College, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

⁵ Sonali Fulkar, Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit Samhita Siddhant, Government Ayurved College, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

Ayurveda is an ancient medical science has lots of theoretical and philosophical aspect. Ayurveda defines health and all the factors responsible for its maintenance and health promotion. Panchamahabhut Siddhant is a fundamental philosophical and scientific doctrine in Ayurved. All matter in the universe, including human body, is composed of five basic elements are Prithvi (earth), Jal (water), Agni or Tej (fire), Vayu (air) and Akash (space). These five elements which collectively termed as Panchamahabhuta. Equilibrium of Mahabhutas ensures health, while their imbalance denote Vikar. Panchmahabut Siddhant provides the basis for the classification of Doshas, understanding structures, function as well as properties of food, medicine and the environment. Panchmahabhut Siddhant serves as guiding framework for diagnosis, treatments, enabling a holistic and individualized approach to health and disease management.

Keywords: Panchamahabhut, Siddhant, Ahar, Vihar, Aushadh

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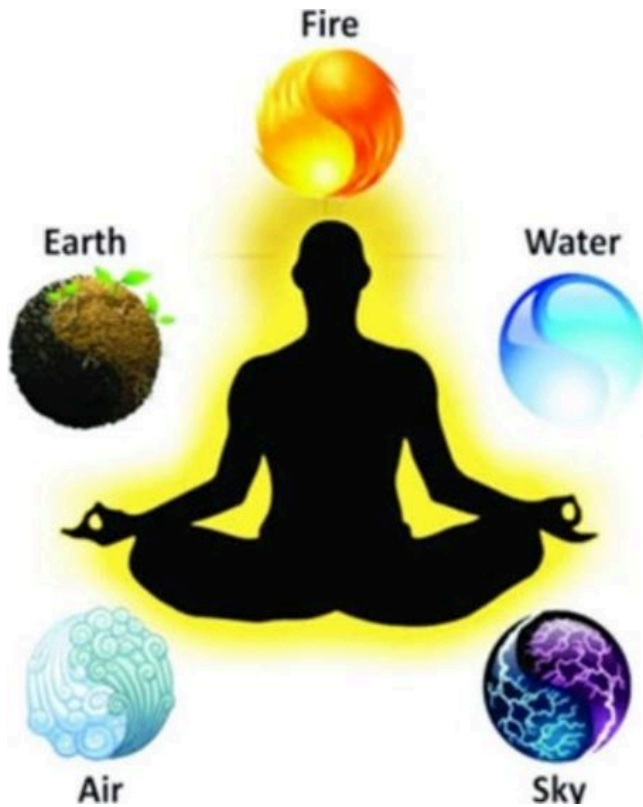
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Introduction

Panchmahabhut comprises of three words *Pancha* means "five", *Maha* means "Great", *Bhuta* meaning "to exist". *Prithvi*, *Aap*, *Tejas*, *Vayu*, and *Akash* are combinedly known as *Panchamahabhut*.

महाभूतानि खं वायुः अग्निः आपः क्षितिः तथा । शब्दः स्पर्शः च रूपं च रसो गन्धः च तद् गुणाः ॥ Ch. Sha. 1/27



All the substances are constituted of 5 *Bhutas* - *Prithvi*, *Aap*, *Tejas*, *Vayu* & *Akash*.

Ayurveda believes that all the substances of this universe including our bodies are composed of *Panchabhutas* which are *Prithvi* (earth), *Jal* (water), *Agni* or *Tej* (fire), *Vayu* (air) and *Akash* (ether or space).[1]

Diets we take those are also composed of *Panchabhutas*. When consumed food undergoes the process of digestion by *Jatharagni* (digestive fire), *Bhoutikagni* also acts upon corresponding element of body, so that the *Parthiv* (*Prithi* dominant) properties nourishes the *Parthiv* part of body, as symmetrical properties gives nutrition to the same organ having symmetrical properties.[2]

To achieve aim of *Ayurved* i.e., *Dhatusamyata* we must know the *Panchamahabhut Siddhant*.

Aim and Objectives

1. To enlightens the basic concept of *Panchamahabhut Siddhanta* and its application in *Ahar*, *Vihar* and *Aushadha*.
2. To review concept *Panchamahabhut Siddhanta* and its significance in *Ahar*, *Vihar* and *Aushadha*.

Materials and Methods

The literary material related to *Panchamahabhuta Siddhant*, *Ahar*, *Vihar* and *Aushadha* has been collected from *Ayurvedic* text like *Charak Samhita*, *Sushrut Samhita* and various books and research articles.

Evolution of *Panchamahabhuta*

The origin and evolution of *Panchmahabhutas* are described by many *Acharyas*.

First level: In *Sankhya* philosophy, *Avyakta* (the unmanifest principle) produce *Mahat* (cosmic intelligence) from *Mahat* emerges *Ahankar* (ego), *Ahankara* divides into three qualities, *Satva* (purity), *Rajas* (activity), *Tamas* (Lethargic and heavy). From *Tamsik Ahankar Tanmantra* evolve that finally, leads to formation of *Tanmatras*, *Shabda* (sound)- *Akash*, *Spars* (touch)- *Vayu*, *Rupa*- *Agni*, *Rasa* (taste)- *Aap*, *Gandha* (smell)-*Prithi*.[1]

Second level: In *Ayurveda*, evolution of *Panchmahabhutas* described by *Vyapedeshastu Nyay*, *Bhutantaranupravesha* (Imitative pervasion) at this level, *Tanmatras* undergo some reactions to form the premolecules of *Mahabhutas*.[3]

Third level: *Panchikaran* (pentamerization or reciprocal pervasion) - Five *Tanmatras* (molecules of the *Mahabhutas*) primary existents are equally combined with gross existents for evolution of *Panchmahabhutas*. This process is called as *Panchikaran* (pentamerization) due to equal presence of *Panch-Tanmatras*.[4]

Now the products which are going to act as single units in the manifestation of universe are formed. These conjugated forms of *Tanmatra* are termed as *Mahabhutas*.

Dravya Utpatti and *Panchamahabhut* relation

सर्वं द्रव्यं पाञ्चभौतिकं अस्मिन् अर्थे | Ch.Su.26/10

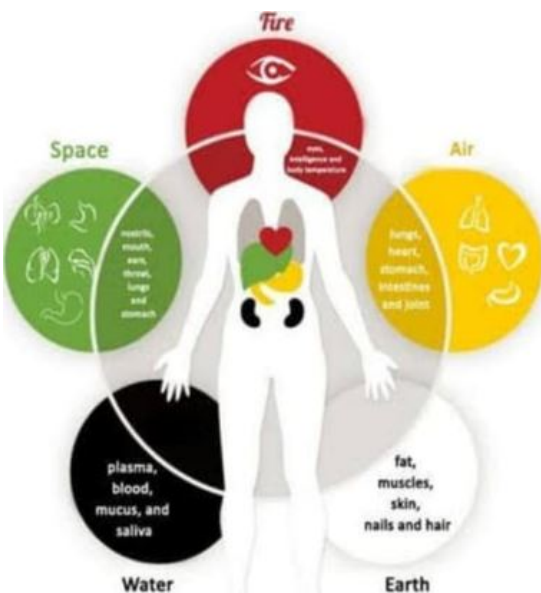
Substances are born form the combinations of *Panchamahabhutas*.

Everything in universe, including drugs, animals, herbs and living beings are made of these basic elements.[5] Depending on the predomination of the substance, the matter is classified as *Parthiva*, *Apya*, *Taijasa*, *Vayaviya* and *Akashiya* (With predominance of earth, water, fire, air and space respectively).[6] As all things are combination of *Panchamahabhut* for *Chikitsa*, *Panchabhoutik Dravyas* are best for treatment.[7]

Components of Purusha

खादयश्चेतनाषष्ठा धातवः पुरुषः स्मृतः। चेतनाधातुरप्येकः स्मृतःपुरुषसंज्ञकः। Ch.Sha.1/16

According to *Ayurveda Chikitsya Purush/ Adhikaran Purush/ Karama Purush/ Purush* comprises six *Dhatus* (components) i.e., *Panchamahabhutas* & *Chetana*. [8]



Panchamahabhut and it's characteristics

Mahabhut (Basic elements)	Specific Characteristic [9]	General Characteristics[10]	Chief Sense [1]
Akash (ether/space)	Apratighat (non-resistance)	Mrudu (soft), Laghu (light), Shlashna (smooth), Sushkma (subtle)	Shabda (Sound)
Vayu (air)	Chalatva (mobility)	Sparsh (touch), Laghu (light), Ruksh (dry), Khara (rough), Vishad (clear), Suksma (subtle)	Sparsh (touch)
Agni (fire)	Usnatva (Heat)	Roop (vision), Ushna (hot), Teekshna (Sharp), Sushma (subtle), Laghu (light), Ruksha (dry), Vishad (clear)	Rupa (Vision)
Jala (water)	Dravatva (fluidity)	Drava (liquid), Snigdha (oily), Sheet (cold), Manda (slow), Mrudu (soft), Picchil (sticky), Rasa (taste)	Rasa (taste)
Prithvi (earth)	Kharatva (roughness/hardness)	Gandha (smell), Guru (heavy), Khar (rough), Kathin (hard), Manda (slow), Sthira (stable), Vishad (clear), Sandra (dense), Sthula (grass)	Gandha (Smell)

Panchamahabhautik Aahar

Panchamahabhautik Aahar Vihar is concept in *Ayurveda* that emphasizes harmony with five great elements *Panchamahabhuta Prithvi (Earth)*, *Jala (Water)*, *Agni (Fire)*, *Vayu (Air)*, & *Akasha (Space)*.

पंचभूतात्मके देहे आहारः पांचभौतिकः। विपक्वः पंचधा सम्यक् स्वान् गुणान् अभिवर्धयेत् ॥ (Su.Su 46 /436)

Panchamahabhoutik Ahar (diet) nourishes the *Panchamahabhutatmak Sharir* (human body).[11] Diets we take those are also composed of *Panchabhutas*. *Ayurveda* believes that all foods contain a combination of these five elements. A diet should be customized based on an individual's *Prakriti* and *Rutucharya* (seasonal changes). It is a holistic approach to *Aahar* (diet) and *Vihar* (lifestyle) for maintaining health and preventing diseases i.e., *Swastha* (health) *Panchamahaabhautik Aahar* (diet Based on five elements).

SN	Mahabhuta	Ahara[12]
1.	Prithvi (Earth)	Solid and heavy foods like grains, root vegetables, nuts, and dairy provide nourishment and strength.
2.	Jala (Water)	Liquids, juicy fruits, soups, and hydrating foods maintain body fluids and aid digestion.
3.	Agni (Fire)	Spicy, pungent, and fermented foods help digestion and metabolism.
4.	Vayu (Air)	Light, airy, and dry foods like leafy greens and legumes help movement and circulation.
5.	Akasha (Space)	Fasting, mindful eating, and foods with subtle energy (like certain herbs) enhance mental clarity.

Panchamahabhut and Rasa relation

Shadrasas constituted by Panchmahabhutas, Panchamahabhoutik predominance accountable for Dosha Prakop and manifestation of disease. Vaidya can treat patients successfully by Knowledge of Shadrasas and its Panchamahabhoutik composition.

SN	Rasa	Mahabhuta Predominance		
		Charak Samhita[13]	Sushrut Samhita[14]	Ashtang Hridaya[15]
1	Madhur (sweet)	Prithvi and Jala	Prithvi and Jala	Prithvi and Jala
2	Amla (sour)	Prithvi and Teja	Prithvi and Teja	Prithvi and Teja
3	Lavana (salty)	Jala and Teja	Jala and Teja	Jala and Teja
4	Tikta (bitter)	Vayu and Akash	Vayu and Akash	Akash and Vayu
5	Katu (pungent)	Vayu and Teja	Vayu and Teja	Vayu and Teja
6	Kashaya (astringent)	Vayu and Prithvi	Prithi and Agni	Prithvi and Vayu

Panchamahabhautik Vihar

Panchamahabhautik chikitsa is incomplete without a balanced Ahar Vihar (Lifestyle Based on Five Elements). By aligning food and lifestyle with these five elements, one can achieve holistic well-being, better digestion, mental clarity and longevity.

Mahabhuta	Vihar
Prithvi (Earth)	Grounding activities like walking barefoot on grass, yoga, and spending time in nature.
Jala (Water)	Staying hydrated, bathing rituals, and practicing emotional fluidity.
Agni (Fire)	Sun exposure, exercise, and Pranayama (controlled breathing) to maintain vitality.
Vayu (Air)	Deep breathing, meditation, and living in well-ventilated spaces for mental clarity
Akasha (Space)	Silence, mindfulness and maintaining a clutter-free environment for mental peace.

Panchabhautik Aushadha

Mahabhutas	Examples of Aushadha
Prithvi-dominant Aushadha	Herbs rich in minerals, such as Shilajit, clay-based formulations, and earthy roots like Ashwagandha.
Aap-dominant Aushadha	Juicy or hydrating herbs like Aloe Vera, Brahmi, and Coconut Water-based preparations.
Teja-dominant Aushadha	Spices like Ginger, Turmeric, and Cinnamon, which generate heat and improve digestion.
Vayu-dominant Aushadha	Air-regulating herbs like Hing (Asafoetida), Ajwain (Carom seeds), and Dashmoola formulations.
Akash-dominant Aushadha	Light and subtle herbs like Tulsi, Camphor, and Guggul, which help in detoxification and mental clarity

Panchamahabhautik Chikitsa (treatment based on the five elements) aims to restore harmony using natural substances that contain these five elements in appropriate proportions.

Universal therapeutic use of matter

Every matter has therapeutic uses in appropriate conditions and situations. But everything cannot be used for treatment of every disease.[16] A drug is useful in specific conditions and situations. Drug selection is to be done accordingly propriety, administration and therapeutic needs.[17]

Aushadh Dravya and Panchamahabhut relation

Chikitsa karma	Panchamahabhut Predominance [18]
Vaman Dravya	Agni and Vayu
Virechan Dravya	Prithi and Jal
Samshaman Dravya	Akash
Lekhan Dravya	Vayu and Agni
Bruhan Dravya	Prithi and Jal
Dipaniya Dravya	Agni

Dosha and Panchmahabhutas relation

According to Ayurveda Tridosha-Vata, Pitta and Kapha play a crucial role in disease pathology. Each dosha correlates with specific elements among the Panchamahabhuta, which are responsible for their properties and functions. Doshas imbalance can lead to disease.[19] Ayurvedic treatment understanding which Dosha is aggravated and to restore balance, holds the Panchamahabhoutik Gunas of various Dravyas based on their corresponding Panchamahabhautik compositions.

SN	Dosha	Panchmahabhutas[20]
1.	Vata	Vayu and Akash
2.	Pitta	Agni
3.	Prithvi	Prithvi and Jala



Panchamahabhut and Dhātu relation

Sapta Dhātu (7 components) in human body are Panchamahabhoutik.[21] Dhātuvruddhi or Dhātukshay leads to diseased condition, according to Panchamahabhoutik composition appropriate Bhe-shaj used to treat Dhātu-Vaishyam i.e imbalance.

Dhātu	Panchamahabhut Predominance[22]
Ras	Jal
Rakta	Tej and Jala
Mamsa	Prithi
Med	Jala and Prithi
Asthi	Prithi and Vayu
Majja	Jala
Shukra	Jala

Malas and Panchamahabhut relation

Malas are also *Panchamahabhoutik*. *Malas* and *Panchamahabhut* relation are useful for diagnostic purpose.

SN	Malas	Panchamahabhuta Predominance [23]
1.	Mutra (urine)	Jal and Agni
2.	Purish (stool)	Prithvi
3.	Sweda (Sweat)	Jal

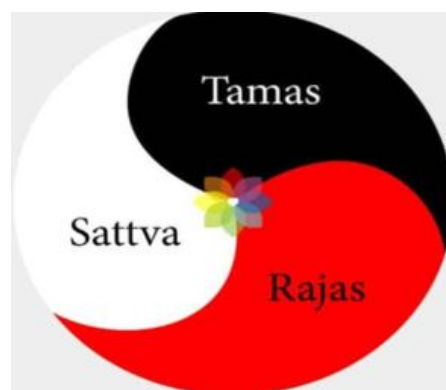
Diagnostic Method and *Panchamahabhut* Relation

Mahabhut	Diagnostic Method [24]
Prithvi	Mala, Mutra Swed by Gandha Tanmatra
Aap	Rasa Sarata Examination
Agni	Digestion, body temperature
Vayu	Respirations, cardiac sounds, Peristaltic sound
Akash	Heart, lungs and abdomen to examine hallow structure ear etc.

Disease and *Panchamahabhut* relation

Tridosh imbalance is the basic cause for disease manifestation. In this *Doshas* imbalance *Panchabhoutik* composition knowledge is important for achieve aim i.e., *Swastha* (health). In following table some examples of disease manifestation and *Panchabhoutik* composition imbalance.

Mahabhuta	Disease wise Vikruti characteristics[25]	Prakrut Characteristics of Mahabhut [9,10]
Prithvi	Arsh (hemorrhoids)-sthiarya vikruti Arbud (cyst/tumor)- Mansa Sthiarya Vikruti	Sthir (stable)
Aap	Medorog (obesity) -Snehan Vikruti Udar (ascites) -Dravata Vikruti	Snigdha (oily) Drava (liquid)
Agni	Amlapitta (hyper acidity)-Ushna Vikruti Pandu (anemia), Kamala (jaundice)- Varna Vikruti	Ushna (hot) Rup (vision)
Vayu	Karshya (malnutrition), Vatvyadhi (neurological disorder/musculoskeletal issues/digestive disorder)- Rukshata , Laghuta Vikruti	Ruksh (dry) Laghu (light)
Akash	Rudhpathkamala (obstructive jaundice) - Apritighat Karya Vikruti	Apratighat (non- resistance)



Triguna and Panchamahabhut relation (Panchamahabhut and Mental Health)

The relationship between *Panchamahabhutas* and *Satvadi Gunas* (mental qualities) further extends *Ayurvedic* principles into mental health.

Each of the *Panchamahabhuta* is associated with specific mental qualities, *Akash* relates to *Satva* (clarity), *Vayu* to *Raja* (activity) and *Prithvi* to *Tama* (heaviness).

To evaluate the *Rugnadi Manobal* (mental strength) *Satva Parikshan* is useful. *Vaidya* can decide the method of treatment according to *Satva Pariksha*. This understanding helps practitioners in (assessing the mental state of patients). *Satva Pariksha* and customizing treatments, particularly for psychosomatic disorders, by selecting appropriate herbs and therapies that influence the elemental balance within the patient.

SN	Gunas	Mahabhuta Predominant
1.	Satva	Akash
2.	Raja	Vayu
3.	Satva + Raja	Tej
4.	Satva + Tama	Jala
5.	Tama	Prithvi

Discussion

Panchamahabhut Siddhant is a fundamental universal concept in *Ayurveda*. According to *Ayurveda Chikitsya Purusha / Adhikaran Purusha/ Karama Purusha / Purush* comprises six *Dhatus* i.e., *Panchmahabhutas* & *Chetana*. As *Chikitsapurusha* is made of *Panchamahabhuta* and *Chetana*, his treatment is achieved by using *Panchabhautika Dravyas* and *Karma*. *Panchamahabhuta Siddhant* describes the five elemental principles that constitute the universe and all living beings. It explains the formation and functioning of the human body, nature, and cosmos.

It forms the basis for *Tridosha Siddhant* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*), which governs physiological and pathological processes.

By aligning food and lifestyle with these five elements, one can achieve holistic well-being, better digestion, mental clarity and longevity.

Understanding *Panchamahabhoutik Siddhant* is essential for *Ayurvedic* diagnosis, treatment, and health maintenance i.e *Swastha*. The knowledge of *Panchabhautika Siddhanta* gives appropriate diagnosis of a disease also for proper idea of drug (*Dravya*) interventions. Therefore, knowledge of *Panchmahabut Siddhanta* becomes essential for clinical approach to achieve the aim of *Ayurveda*.

Conclusion

The *Panchamahabhut Siddhant* underpins to every aspect of health physical, mental or emotional. Significance of these *Panchmahabhutas* (five elements) allows practitioners to diagnose and treat effectively by restoring balance within the body's systems.

By plan treatments with the principles of *Vridhhi* (increase) and *Kshaya* (decrease) i.e., *Samanya Vishesh Siddhant* in relation to the *Doshas*, *Dhatus* (tissues) and *Malas* (waste products) *Vaidya* can achieve *Dhatusamyata* i.e., aim of *Tantra* by applying appropriate *Ahar*, *Vihar* and *Aushadh*.

Ayurveda provides a framework through the strategic application of *Panchmahabhutas* for maintaining health. This foundational concept not only enhances understanding of *Ayurveda* but also establishes a pathway for future advancements in holistic health care.

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