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Panchamahabhuta - Aadharbhut Siddhant and their application in Chikitsa

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ABSTRACT

For true exploration and validation of Ayurveda in all its aspects, scientific inputs should confirm to Ayurveda's basic principles and philosophy. Till date so many studies have been done for elaboration of fundamental principles like *Tridosha*, *Dhatu*, *Strotas*, *Agni*, *Oja*, *Ama* etc. No any rewarding work has been done on *Panchamahabhuta Siddhanta* and it is a still stalemate for us. In this perception, present attempt is enlightened on its basic concept and clinical application and its importance in Ayurveda. Ayurveda depends on the concept of *Panchamahabhutas* i.e. *Aakaash*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Prithvi*, *Jala*.^[1] The *Panchmahabhut* revolves around the normal functioning of the body (physiological), occurrence of disease (pathological) and action of drug in various part of the body (pharmacokinetics).^[2] According to Ayurveda this holistic approach comprises five elements of nature. The food, the planets and every living and non-living things are made up of these five elements. *Tridoshas* (*Vata*, *Pita*, *Kapha*) also comprises *Panchmahabhuta*. On the basis of thorough knowledge and understanding of *Panchmahabhuta Siddhanta* one can take an account of the causative factor of imbalance of *Doshas* and thereby discover the solution for the treatment.

Key words: *Panchamahabhuta*, *Aadharbhut Siddhant*, *Tridoshas*, *Chikitsa*.

INTRODUCTION

Panchmahabhutas are basic principle of Ayurveda which bases the analysis and treatment based upon the principle of *Panchmahabhuta*. The concept of *Panchmahabhuta* is defined vividly and scientifically in Ayurvedic compendia. As we know everything in this universe is made up of *Panchmahabhuta*. There is a fundamental harmony at the macrocosm level and microcosm level and our body is a very minute image

of the universe. The only thing which differentiates living and non-living things is soul. Human body is also composed of *Panchmahabhutas* and food we eat is also *Panchabhautic*. When food undergoes digestion with the help of *Jatharagni*, *Parthiv* (*Prithvi Mahabhuta*) properties of food nurses the *Parthiv* part of body. In this manner symmetrical properties of *Panchmahabhutas* give nutrition to corresponding symmetrical part of body (corresponding *Mahabhuta*).^[3] The variation in these *Panchmahabhutas* will cause the symptoms of different type of diseases. Sometimes the symptoms are mild and suddenly they appear in severe form which is difficult to cure before adopting the treatment. It is important to know the *Karya* upto *Karma* i.e. *Nidana* till the *Lakshana*. *Chikitsa* is to be given from its root and also *Karana Vishesh*, *Prakriti* is to be considered. After studying *Moulika Siddhanta* of Ayurveda and continues practice in the field of it, an establishment in particular *Roga Pariksha* and *Chikitsa* was came in existence called *Panchmahabhautic Chikitsa*. *Panchmahabhautic*

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Chikitsa is a treatment modality pioneered by Brihatrayiratna Vaidyaraj Datarshastri. In this concept of using *Panchmahabhuta* as basic principle for diagnosis and treatment of any disease were used in which *Bala* of any one *Mahabhuta* can create disease. Here “*Yat Pinde Tat Bramhande*” law is applied practically e.g. increase in water on earth causes flood or draught same in the body causes *Madhumeha* or any other disease. We generally talk in terms of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* but here we speak in language of *Mahabhut* as it is said “*Sarvam Idam Panchmahabhautikam Asmin Jagate*”.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. To interpret the basic concept of *Panchmahabhuta Siddhanta* to its full perspective.
2. To understand this concept and utilize it thoroughly in *Chikitsa*.

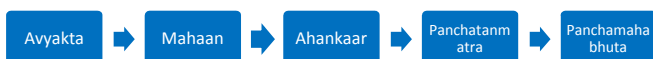
MATERIALS AND METHODS

Mahabhuta is the smallest part of matter, which is divisible. The various types of *Mahabhutas* are *Akashmahabhuta*, *Vayumahabhuta*, *Agnimahabhuta*, *Aapamahabhuta* and *Prithvimahabhuta*.

Evolution of *Panchamahabhuta Theory*^[3]

It takes place in 3 levels

- First level :** Evolution of *Panchatanmatra* (Subtle elements)
- Second level :** *Bhutantaranupravesha* (Imitative pervasion)
- Third level :** *Panchikarana* (Reciprocal pervasion) from *Avyakta* (indistinct), a short look up to evolution of *Mahabhutas* is as shown below.^[4]



Evolution of Matter *Mahabhuta* is the smallest divisible part of any matter. *Akasha Mahabhuta* is the space without which matter cannot exist. Its main sense attribute is sound (*Shabda*) and Nonresistance (*Apratighatatva*) is its main property.^[5]

Vayumahabhuta evolved from *Aakashamahabhuta*. Touch (*Sparsha*) is its chief sense attribute and as it evolved from *Aakasha* it also inherits attribute of sound (*Shabda*). *Chalatva* or movability is its chief property.

Agnimahabhuta evolves next from *Vayumahabhuta*. The main sense attribute of *Agni* is Vision (*Roopa*) and the chief property is *Agni* (*Ushnatva*). It also inherits the sense attributes of sound (*Shabda*) and touch (*Sparsha*) from the *Akasha* and *Vayu Mahabhuta* respectively.

The next *Mahabhuta* to evolve from *Agnimahabhuta* is *Aapamahabhuta* (*Jalmahabhuta*). Taste (*Rasa*) is its main sense attribute and liquidity (*Dravatava*) is the chief property, along with that inherited from earlier *Mahabhuta*.

The last to evolve is *Prithvimahabhuta*. Roughness (*Kharatva*) is the chief property and Smell (*Gandha*) is the main sense of this *Mahabhuta* besides properties inherited from the earlier once.



Properties of *Panchmahabhuta*^[6]

<i>Panchmahabhuta</i>	<i>Tanmatra</i>	<i>Indriya</i>	<i>Gunas</i>
<i>Akaash</i>	<i>Shabda</i>	<i>Karna</i>	<i>Aprtighaat</i>
<i>Vayu</i>	<i>Sparsh</i>	<i>Twak</i>	<i>Chaltva</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Roop</i>	<i>Chakshu</i>	<i>Usantva</i>
<i>Prithvi</i>	<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Jihwa</i>	<i>Kharatva</i>
<i>Jala</i>	<i>Gandh</i>	<i>Nasa</i>	<i>Dravtva</i>

Thorough review of literature on *Panchmahabhuta* is found to be beneficial for *Chikitsa*. Based on the *Panchmahabhuta* concept, people are distinguished into three categories with unique characteristics. These are *Kapha*, *Pitta* and *Vata*. People with *Kapha* characteristics have *Jala* and *Prithvi* as their predominant components. The ones with *Pitta* characteristics have *Agni* and those with *Vata*

characteristics have *Vayu* and *Aakash* as their dominating components. And thus, the various functioning and structures of the body and the existence as well are very well governed by the *Panchmahabutas*.^[7]

Dosha	Mahabhuta
Vata	Vayu + Aakash
Pitta	Agni
Kapha	Jala+ Prithvi

Characteristics of Panchmahabhutas^[7]

- 1. Aakash (Ether)** - Present in hollow cavities within body and empty areas of cosmos, transmits sound, non-resistant to anything, frictionless or smooth, subtle, soft and abundant. Any diet, food or herbs with similar properties will increase *Aakashmahabhuta* within the body.
- 2. Vayu (Air)** - Light, Dry, Subtle, Mobile, Transparent, and Rough are the properties of *Vayu*. It is responsible for movement, dryness in the body. Any diet, exercise, medicine which has such properties will increase "*Vata*" or *Vayumahabhuta* in the body.
- 3. Agni (Fire)** - It is hot, sharp, intense, dry, and light. It emits light and heat. Any food, diet, exercise, herbs which has similar properties will increase this element in our body. For example - Chillies, Ginger, Garlic, Peppers, will increase "*Pitta*" or *Agnimahabhuta* in the body.
- 4. Jala (Water)** - Water is moist, cohesive or sticky, cool, soft and oily (unctuous). Water is present in many foods, milk and herbs as well as in our body. Excess of water increases the above mentioned characteristics in our body and decreases the opposite. Water intake is useful in diseases caused by *Agni* or '*Pitta*' and *Vayu* or '*Vata*'. For example, acidity, skin problems, constipation, dryness, excessive breakdown or accumulation of metabolites / endotoxins. In other words it acts as detoxifying agent.

- 5. Prithvi (Earth)** - It is solid, dense, stable, heavy, hard, dull and slow. It constitutes the solid structures in the universe and our body. Any food, exercise, herbs which have similar properties will provide nutrition, support and cause heaviness in the body. It will also improve strength and stability.

Sthana Vishesh

As earlier we have been described that our whole body is made up of *Panchmahabhutas*. Beside that in our body every *Mahabhuta* is dominantly residing in a particular area of the body. So we can say that every *Mahabhuta* have their own *Sthaanvishesh* in our body. That is as follows.

- *Prithvi* - *Adhosakha*
- *Jala* - Below *Nabhi* / *Katipradesh*
- *Teja* - Surrounding to *Nabhipradesh*
- *Vayu* - Above *Nabhi* up to *Jatrupradesh*
- *Aakash* - *Urdhjatru Pradesh*

DISCUSSION

The concept of *Panchamahabhutas* (Five elements) is the foundation of Ayurveda to understand its physiology (normal functioning), pathology (disease formation) and pharmacokinetics (movement of drug within the body). Ayurveda believes that everything in this universe is made up of *Panchamahabhuta*. *Panchamahabhutas* are earth (*Prithvi*), water (*Jala*), heat (*Agni* or *Tej*), air (*Vayu*) and space (*Aakash*) and collectively they are termed as *Panchmahabhutas*. These are the minutest elements, which constitute living and non-living matters. Everything including drugs, herbs and living beings are made of these basic elements. Every matter contains all of these *Panchamahabhutas*. A single cell of a living organism has combination of the five components. The earth or the *Prithvimahabhuta* forms the major structure of the cell. The *Aapamahabhuta* or the water forms the cytoplasm of the cell. The various metabolisms of the body cells are governed by the *Agnimahabhuta*. The space inside the cell is governed by the *Aakashmahabhuta*. And finally the channel through

which the waste materials and nutrients get transported in various parts of the body is given by the *Aakashmahabhuta*. Thus, these five components of *Panchmahabhuta* form the structure of the living organisms. These are basic blocks of body.^[2] Imbalance of these five elements in the body can cause different symptoms in accordance with attributes inherent in that or other elements which are called *Gunadwandva* (duality of attributes). *Sharir* as well as *Loka* is made up of *Panchmahabhuta*. As we earlier said that, based on *Panchmahabhuta Siddhant* people are distinguished in to three categories with unique characteristics these are *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*. People with *Vata* characteristic have *Vayu* and *Aakashmahabhuta* as there dominating components. Those one with *Pitta* have *Agnimahabhuta* and those with *Kapha* characteristics have *Jala* and *Prithvimahabhuta* as their predominating components.

Clinical application of *Panchamahabhutas*

1. If any of these *Mahabhuta* gets vitiated in the body and cause the disease, than that *Mahabhuta* can be normalized by giving the drug and food having *Mahabhuta* of opposite properties than the vitiated one. As *Prithvimahabhuta* gets vitiated it can be treated by giving *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Aakashmahabhuta Pradhan Dravya* as they comprises opposite properties of *Prithvimahabhuta*. As per *Samanya Vishesh Siddhant*, *Samanya* is the main cause of increase and *Vishesh* is the main cause of decrease. So opposite *Chikitsa* of the every *Mahabhuta* as we discussed can be like this as shown in table.^[8]

Mahabhuta Chikitsa

<i>Mahabhuta</i>	<i>Opposite Mahabhuta</i>
<i>Aaakaash</i>	<i>Prithvi + Jala</i>
<i>Vayu</i>	<i>Prithvi + Jala</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Prithvi + Jala</i>
<i>Prithvi</i>	<i>Aakaash + Vayu + Agni</i>

<i>Jala</i>	<i>Aakaash + Vayu + Agni</i>
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2. *Dhatusamyata* (Equilibrium state of *dhatus*): is the ultimate aim of our Ayurvedic science. According to *Acharya Charaka* principle of *Samanyam* (similarity) helps in increasing degraded similar *Dhatus* in body and when there is *Dhatuvridhi* condition we have to use *Vishesha Dravyas* (opposite substances) in treatment. To fulfill this purpose we must know the *Panchabhautic* composition of therapeutic substances.
3. *Tridosha Prakopa* and *Prashman* (Vitiation and alleviation of humors): According to great *Acharya Sushruta*, *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are the main factors for the initiation of all pathogenesis inside the body, because of having their symptoms, their subsidence and scriptural evidence. As the entire universe is *Panchabhautic*, the entire disorders present in different forms do not exist without *Tridoshas*. These variations are due to difference in *Panchabhautic* composition of *Doshas*. *Dravyas* composed of *Prithvi*, *Agni* and *Jalamahabhuta* helps in alleviation of *Vatadosha*; *Dravyas* having dominancy in *Prithvi*, *Jala* and *Vayumahabhuta* alleviates *Pitta Dosh* and *Dravyas* having predominance in *Aakash*, *Agni* and *Vayu Mahabhutas* reduces *Kapha Dosh*. *Dravyas* which are rich in *Aakash*, *Vayumahabhuta* violates *Vata Dosh*, *Agni Mahabhuta* predominant *Dravyas* creates *Pitta Prakopa* (Increases *Pitta*) while *Prithvi* and *Jalamahabhuta* predominant *Dravyas* aggravates *Kapha*. In this way all *Dravyas* are having different composition of *Mahabhuta* properties. So by seeking accurate knowledge of properties of *Mahabhutas* one can apply these in to *Chikitsa*.^[3]

CONCLUSION

Under the present circumstances Ayurvedic approach for etiopathogenesis would be of great use. The fruitful conclusions, which have automatically emerged through the discussion of the conceptual review study, are being presented here. *Panchmahabhutas*

are basic elements of the body. Imbalance of these five elements in the human body can cause different symptoms in accordance with characteristics or attributes inherent in that or other element, which are called *Gunadwandva* (duality of attributes). *Shareera* as well as the *Loka* is made up of *Panchmahabhuta*. Intake of *Prithvipradhana* and *Jalapradhana Dravya* will increase the same quality in the *Shareera*. As per the *Samanya Vishesh Siddhanta*, *Samanya* is the main cause for the increase and *Vishesh* is the cause of decrease. Hence treatment protocol should be according to *Panchmahabhuta* dominance in body. And we can say that *Panchmahabhuta Siddhanta* plays an important role in *Chikitsa*.

All the available *Dravyas* can be used as medicine but it requires proper logic (*Yukti*), also this is possible only after deep understanding of *Panchamahabhutas* as it forms the foundation base of all other *Siddhantas* (principles). The concept of *Panchamahabhuta* principle is peculiarity of Ayurveda. Though, Ayurveda is having similar views with *Darshanashastras* like *Vaisheshika*, *Sankhya* etc. in many aspects, but the concept of *Panchamahabhutas* in Ayurveda is molded in such a way that, it becomes helpful in *Nidana* and *Chikitsa*, thereby fulfilling its aim of *Dhatusamya*. *Mahabhuta* dominance of a *Panchabhautic Dravya* can be detected, but it is not possible to understand or predict the configuration of *Mahabhutas*, shapes and size of *Mahabhuta* - molecules due to limitations of human senses and intelligence. So in this regards the present review article also opens a new research window in the field of Ayurvedic fundamental research on this *Siddhanta*.

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