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# Different factors influencing *Deha Prakriti* (constitution) and influenced by *Prakriti* (constitution)

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## ABSTRACT

Complete psychosomatic architect of an individual is represented by his *Prakriti* (constitution) which starts to take shape at the very first step of conception in mother's womb. Deeds of previous incarnation, physical and psychological state of mother and father during conception, nutrition and regimen of mother, social milieu, practice of wholesomeness by mother (during pregnancy) and child in postnatal period and many more factors are attributed in the *Prakriti* formation. Thus generated *Prakriti* helps in understanding the health and disease state of an individual and facilitate in promotive and curative aspects. Not only this, inherited psycho constitution (*Manasik Prakriti*) is also very helpful in prediction and deciding the profession, effectiveness and efficiency evaluation too. Management education sector, Life and Health insurance sectors are now showing a keen interest in incorporating concept of *Prakriti* (constitution) in their business. Genomic relations of *Prakriti* concept of Ayurveda in the recent researches in India and abroad has established the facts that the difference in genomic make up is responsible for all variations in health and disease state of life which we have analyzed and summarized in this review. In the present literary research paper all the factors which influence the *Prakriti* are enumerated in classified manner and different types of psychosomatic contributions are detailed along with their effect on health and disease condition of life as well as preventive and promotive aspects.

**Key words:** *Prakriti, Constitution, Panchamahabhuta, Deha Prakriti, Manasika Prakriti.*

## INTRODUCTION

In Ayurvedic science *Dhatu* - building blocks of life viz. *Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Rasa, Rakta* etc. and *Upadhatu* like *Rajas* etc. contribute as quantitative and qualitative indicators of health (ease). Disequilibrium in both these measures lead to dis-ease. Thus state of balance is termed as *Prakriti - Arogya*.<sup>[1]</sup> Though absolute

equilibrium of *Dhatu* (basic tissues) is not possible e.g. *Kapha* invariably gets vitiated in the first part of the day and night, immediately after taking meals and in childhood, but a slight disturbance in the equilibrium of *Dhatu* (basic tissues) does not cause any distinct uneasiness or *Vikara*, hence an ordinary disturbance of equilibrium of *Dhatu* (basic tissues) does not cause any distinct uneasiness in the body and as such can be regarded as a normal condition or so.<sup>[2]</sup> In other words equilibrium of *Dhatu* (basic tissues) even includes conditions where there is only a slight deviation from normalcy.

The term *Prakriti* derives from the root '*kru*' - 'to do' prefixed with '*pra*' (denotes beginning, commencement or origin) and suffixed with '*ktin*' (denotes creation) and it signifies the meaning of personality with factual exposition. That is, the term *Prakriti* is derived from Sanskrit word that means "nature," "creativity," or "the first creation".<sup>[3]</sup>

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*Prakriti* is defined as the cluster of innate characteristics of an individual customary from birth till death, which is formed during conception as a net result of previous deeds. The prevalence of *Doshas* responsible for the determination of *Prakriti* is not harmful to the individual.<sup>[4]</sup>

*Panchmahabhutas* which combines in various proportions create three *Doshas* (basic components of the body). These are *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. The predominance of these *Doshas* in *Shukra* and *Shonita* at the time of fertilization produces certain indistinctive features in an individual which forms his basic constitution, viz, *Prakriti*.<sup>[5]</sup>

Every individual is a mixture of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas*. The percentage of these *Doshas* and the dominant and recessive part of them changes from person to person. This is the reason why every individual is different and unique.

The preponderance of *Doshas* at the time of the union of *Shukra* and *Artava* is not to be taken as abnormal condition. During their normalcy the *Doshas* are even called as *Dhatus*, it is the same *Doshas* are even called as *Dhatus* it is the same *Doshas* which become abnormal and are designated by the term *Doshas* in the real sense. The *Dosha* which is predominant at the instance of union of *Shukra* and *Artava* bequeath its characteristic features and affects the body through out his life.<sup>[6]</sup>

For the development of human constitution *Kasyapa* lays emphasis on *Panchabhoutika* nutrient *Rasa* supplied by the mother to the *Garbha*.<sup>[7]</sup>

#### Types of *Prakriti*<sup>[8]</sup>

*Prakriti* is of two types *Doshaja Prakriti* and *Manasa Prakriti*<sup>[9]</sup>

#### *Doshaja Prakriti*<sup>[10]</sup>

According to *Bruhatrayees*, depending on the predominance of a single *Dosha*, or different permutations and combinations at the phase of fertilization and their stay in *Garbhashaya*, one or more of the *Doshas* gets increased by the foods and activities of the mother give rise to the typical constitution, that *Prakriti* could be of seven types

- *Vata Prakriti*
  - *Pitta Prakriti*
  - *Kapha Prakriti*
  - *Vatapitta Prakriti*
  - *Kaphapitta Prakriti*
  - *Vatakapha Prakriti*
  - *Vatapittakapha Prakriti - Sama Prakriti*
- } *Ekadoshaja Prakriti*
- } *Dvidoshaja Prakriti*

#### Factors influencing individuals *Prakriti*

Certain factors which influence the potentialities of the temperament of constitutional traits of an individual are there. It is extremely tricky to provide any information in the authentic mechanism implicated in the process of segregation of the *Prakriti*.<sup>[11]</sup>

Major factors are;

- *Sukra - Shonita* - The state of *Doshas* (*Utkata*) present in *Shukra* and *Shonita* during conception.
- *Kala - Garbhashaya* - The time and the season of conception and the condition of the *Garbhashaya*.
- *Ahara - Vihara* - Food and regimen adopted by mother during pregnancy.
- *Mahabuta Vikara* - The way of combination of five elements at the time of fertilization.

#### Factors which influence the development of *Prakriti*<sup>[12]</sup>

Though the *Prakriti* of an individual is innate, it is also influenced by

- *Jaati*
- *Kula*
- *Desa*
- *Kala*
- *Vaya*

#### Prenatal factors influencing Constitution

##### *Atmaja Bhava* (factor)

While defining *Purusha* (individual), *Acharya Charaka* has regarded *Atma* (soul) as an integral part of an

individual along with *Satva* - psych and *Sharira* -<sup>[13]</sup> Body. The *Atma* shifts its ground from one body to another, bonds with mind and subtle forms of four proto-elements<sup>[14]</sup> and is confined in the uterus along with *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum), *Ashta Prakriti* (constitution) and *Vikara* leading to creation of *Garbha* (fetus).<sup>[15]</sup> Hence *Garbha* (fetus) is designated as *Atmaja*.<sup>[14]</sup> The *Atmaj Bhava* (factor) directly related to *Atma* (soul) are *Yoni* (taking birth in such and such womb), *Atmgyan* (self realization), *Chetana* (consciousness), *Ayu* (life span), whereas those related to higher order of psyche are *Ichchha* (likings), *Dvesh* (disliking), *Sukh-Dukh* (desire for happiness and sorrow) and *Prayatna* (efforts). Some of these belong to intellect e.g. *Dharana* (substenance of sense organs), *Buddhi* (intellect), *Dhriti* (courage), *Smriti* (memory) and some of these are regarded as essential signs of life e.g. *Prana* and *Apana* (to take things into and to excrete things out of the body).

#### **Purva Janmakrita Karmas (Actions performed in previous life/ past deeds)**

*Karma* invariably produces its consequence, which ends when the forces of those actions are spent out.<sup>[16]</sup> The transmigrating of soul from one body to other is affected by *Purva Janmakrita Karma* (Actions performed in previous life).<sup>[17]</sup> Specific traits of *Prakriti* (constitution) which have been narrated in Ayurveda to be influenced by the force of *Purva Janmakrita Karma* (Actions performed in previous life) are *Buddhi* (intellect) and *Svaroop* (form and shape).<sup>[17]</sup>

#### **Sattvaja Bhavas (factors derived from Satva - psych/mind)**

*Satva* or different psychological endowment of the child is determined by psychological state of mother and father, behaviour of mother during pregnancy and *Purva Janmakrita Karma* (Actions performed in previous life),<sup>[18]</sup> and the one which is stronger affects the psychology of child more.<sup>[18]</sup> These factors are *Bhakti* (likings), *Moha* (attachment), *Gambheerya* (seriousness), *Bhaya* (fear), *Sheela* (conduct), *Tyaga* (detachment), *Tikshanta* (sharpness), *Krodha* (anger), *Shoucha* (purity), *Matsara* (strong desire not to part with), *Mriduta* (softness), *Tandra* (drowsiness),

*Dvesha* (enmity), *Shourya* (Valour), *Smriti* (memory), *Utsaha* (enthusiasm).<sup>[19]</sup> These factors are purely psychological traits. If we compare the *Atmaja Bhavas* (factors) with the *Sattavaj Bhavas*, it seems clear that in *Atmaja Bhavas* (factors) most of those traits have been included, which are fundamental to the expression of consciousness.

#### **Panchmahabhutas**

*Sukshma Bhuta* (subtle proto-elements) are derived from past actions and are associated with the soul, along with mind/psych at the time of transmigrating of soul from one body to other.<sup>[20]</sup> Thus, *Sukshma* (subtle) *Bhutas* are linked with human organism from pre-embryonic period. *Mahabhuta* play a basic role in the constitution of *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum) of father and mother and they are also the elementary constitution of the nourishing material.<sup>[21]</sup> The union of sperm, ovum and the soul in the womb is designated as embryo which is regarded as the compound product of five *Mahabhuta* and the *Atma* (soul).<sup>[22]</sup> These five *Bhuta* instigate development of foetus by executing the functions of division, metabolism, lubrication, consistency and maturation in the embryo.<sup>[23]</sup>

#### **Matrija-Pitraja Bhava (Hereditary factors)**

*Acharya Charaka* has narrated the concept of hereditary transmission in depth by giving description of three micro fine constituents of *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum) viz. *Bija*, *Bijabhaga* and *Bijabhagavayava*.<sup>[24]</sup> These may be accepted as sperm or ovum, chromosomes and genes respectively. Different organs develop from different parts of *Bija*. Abnormality of the part of *Bija* leads to deformity of the organ from that particular region of *Bija* and if there is no abnormality which develops in *Bijabhaga*, there will be no abnormality in fetus.<sup>[24]</sup> For example, if there is abnormality in *Bijabhaga* concerned with development of *Artava* and uterus, the foetus will be sterile.<sup>[24]</sup> Thus it is acknowledged that different finer constituents for *Shukra* (sperm) and *Shonita* (ovum) (germoplasm) are responsible for the genetic or hereditary development. In modern fields of genetics it has been observed that all living things are a

complex of a large number of independent heritable units. These genes are transferred to the offspring from the parents and the individual has his full complement of genes.

#### **Pitrija Bhava (Paternal Source)**

*Kesha* (hair of the head), *Smashru* (hair of the face), *Nakha* (nail), *Loma* (small hair of the body), *Danta* (teeth), *Asthi* (bones), *Sira* (vessels), *Snayu* (muscles), *Dhamani* (arteries) are inherited by paternal inheritance in an individual.

#### **Matrija Bhava (maternal source)**

*Tvaka* (skin), *Lohita* (blood), *Mamsa* (flesh), *Medas* (fat), *Nabhi* (umbilicus), *Hridaya* (heart), *Kloma*, *Yakrita* (liver), *Pleeha* (spleen) *Basti* (bladder), *Purishadhana* (rectum), *Aamashaya* (stomach), *Pakvashaya* (colon), *Uttaraguda*, *Adhaguda* (upper and lower parts of the anus), *Kshudrantra* (mesentery), *Vapa Vapavahan* (omentum).<sup>[25,26]</sup> are inherited by maternal side. In Ayurveda, *Jatiprasakta* and *Kulaprasakta* are strictly viewed as hereditary factors and so both of them are responsible for the individual variations among persons.

#### **Rasaja Bhava ( Nutritional factor)**

The digested, absorbed and assimilated end product of the ingested food - *Rasa* is one of the important procreative factor for the healthy progeny. Here *Rasa* stands for that very fluid of the mother by which the foetus is nourished and this very factor has been recognized as one of the determinants for the development of foetus/ neonate. Mother's diet contains all the *Rasas* (tastes), thus the *Rasa* (nutritive fluid) derived from this diet gives strength and complexion to the fetus, and the foetus deriving its sustenance from this *Rasa* remains alive and develops in the uterus.<sup>[27]</sup>

#### **Post natal factors**

**Satmyaja Bhava (Congenious factor):** *Satmya* is elucidated as use of regimen and diet which is congruous with the body. Importance of *Satmyaja Bhava* (factor) can be ascertained from the fact that if *Asatmya* things are not taken, then couples do not

become infertile and also fetus is not defective. This factor thus has importance in preconception, prenatal and post natal phase of the mother especially. Following are the *Satmya* factors mentioned by *Acharyas*.<sup>[28]</sup>

*Arogya*, *Analasya*, *Alolupa* (freedom from diseases, laziness and greed) *Svara* (excellence of voice), *Varna*, *Medha*, *Indriya Prasada* (clarity of senses), *Ojas*, *Ayu* (life), *Bala* (strength).

*Vayo-anupatini* (According to age): *Acharya Charaka* enumerated *Kala* (time) as a factor which is responsible for formation of difference in constitution and nature of an individual *Kala* is the *Sharira Vriddhikara Bhava* (factor responsible for the growth of the body)) and *Bala Vriddhikar Bhava* (factors responsible for promotion of strength) i.e. proper development of body and vigor depends on *Kala* (time).<sup>[29]</sup>

**Importance of Prakriti (constitution):** Maintenance of health: In the explanation of base of diseases, *Asatmya Indriyarth Samyoga* (improper use of senses) is regarded as one of the causes.<sup>[30]</sup> *Asatmya Indriyarth Samyoga* (improper use of senses) is illustrated as excessive utilization, non utilization and wrong utilization of *Indriyas* concerned, which causes an impediment to the respective sense perception, and hence disease. When *Indriyas* (senses) are properly utilized, normality of sense faculties can be maintained and the perception of various objects are properly regulated.<sup>[31]</sup> To avoid the disturbance in them, efforts should be made to maintain their normal condition. One of these efforts is performance of duties in contradistinction with the qualities of one's own constitution including temperament.<sup>[32]</sup>

#### **Factors affecting human growth and development**

**Growth** - An increase in mass and height

**Development** - A gradual change in abilities, emotions and skills as people get older.

The following factors can affect human growth and development;

- Gender

- Income
- Pollution
- Ethnicity and religion
- Diet
- Genetic Inheritance
- Housing conditions
- Friendships
- Life Experiences (birth, marriage, death and divorce)
- Material possessions
- Employment / unemployment
- Family relationships
- Amount and type of physical activity
- Educational experiences
- Access to health and welfare services
- Experience of illness or disease

#### Factors affecting bone development, growth and repair<sup>[33]</sup>

##### 1. Minerals needed for bone remodeling:

- Calcium (component of hydroxyapatite matrix).
- Phosphorus (component of hydroxyapatite).
- Magnesium (needed for normal osteoblast activity).
- Boron (inhibits calcium loss).
- Manganese (needed for new matrix).

##### 2. Vitamins needed for bone growth, remodeling, repair

- **Vitamin D** greatly increases intestinal absorption of dietary calcium and retards its urine loss. Deficiency causes rickets in children and osteomalacia in adults.
- **Vitamin C** helps maintain bone matrix (collagen synthesis). Deficiency causes scurvy.
- **Vitamin A** is required for bone resorption, controls the activity, distribution and coordination

of osteoblasts and osteoclasts during development.

- **Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>** may play a role in osteoblast activity.
- 3. **Hormones** needed for bone growth and remodeling
  - **Human Growth Hormone (hGH):**
    - a) Secreted by pituitary;
    - b) Responsible for the general growth of all tissues;
  - Stimulates reproduction of cartilage cells at epiphyseal plate.
  - **Sex hormones**
    - a) Estrogens and androgens (testosterone);
      - aid osteoblast activity (i.e. promote new bone growth);
      - also degenerate cartilage cells in epiphyseal plate (i.e. close epiphyseal plate).
    - Estrogen effect is greater than androgen effect,
  - **Thyroid hormones (T<sub>3</sub> and T<sub>4</sub>)**
    - a) T<sub>3</sub> = Triiodothyronine
    - b) T<sub>4</sub> = Thyroxine, Stimulates replacement of cartilage by bone in epiphyseal plate.

- **PTH and Calcitonin**

##### 4. Exercise increases bone growth.

#### CONSTITUTION AND DIET

The appropriate quantity of diet is the one which when taken does not harm the *Prakriti* (constitution) and gets digested within due time<sup>[34]</sup> and leads to attainment of *Bala* (strength), *Varna* (colour), *Shukra* (sperm).<sup>[35]</sup> The quantity of diet also depends on power of digestion (*Agni*) and persons of different *Prakriti* (constitution) have different types of *agni* (factors responsible for digestion and metabolism) e.g. *Sama Prakriti* (constitution) has *Samagni* (regular). Thus if *Sama Prakriti* (constitution) person

takes *Apathya* (incompatible diet), his *Agni* gets abnormal. *Vata Prakriti* (constitution) has *Vishamagni* (irregular), hence digestion is irregular. Therefore they require less quantity of diet frequently. *Pitta Prakriti* (constitution) has *Tikshanagni* (sharp), which digests all types of diet, hence more quantity and *Guru* diet is required. *Kapha Prakriti* (constitution) has *Mandagni* (mild) which is not able to digest all types of diet, hence *Laghu* (light in weight) and less amount of diet should be given.<sup>[36]</sup> *Acharyas* have also mentioned the contraindicated diets, by enlisting the concept of *Viruddha Aahara* (Contradictory food) the diet which does not keep *Dosha* and *Dhatu* in balanced form i.e. in *Prakrita* form.<sup>[37]</sup> Thus *Viruddha Aahara* (Contradictory food) causes harmful effects on constitution by producing many diseases e.g. infertility, blindness, ascites, insanity, fistula, fainting, intoxication, anaemia, food poisoning, fever etc.<sup>[38]</sup> Constitution of person also matters while taking diet e.g. intake of *Ikshu Rasa* is indicated after meals in *Kapha Prakriti* (constitution), before meals in *Vataja* and *Pittaja* constitution.<sup>[39]</sup> Also same diet cannot be used in different type of *Prakriti* (constitution) e.g. use of honey is beneficial for *Kapha Prakriti* (constitution) and harmful to *Vataja Prakriti* (constitution).<sup>[40]</sup> If the person is naturally having excess of any *Dosha*, then he will be predisposed for disease with respect to that particular *Dosha* e.g. person of *Vata* constitution indulging excessively in causes vitiating specially *Vata Dosha* is more susceptible to *Vatika* disorders than person of *Paittika* or *Kaphaja Prakriti* (constitution).<sup>[41]</sup> Another example is occurrence of '*Prameha*' in *Kapha Prakriti* (constitution).<sup>[42]</sup>

**Pathogenesis and manifestation of disease:** When etiological factors and constitutional factors are antagonistic to each other, disease is not produced. When these factors are synergistic only in few respects, complete manifestation doesn't occur and mild or latent type of disease is produced. When the permutation of these factors takes prolonged time, the disease also takes prolonged course to manifest. When their combination is synergistic to each other in all respects, the disease is manifested fully with all its clinical features.

**Prognosis:** While describing *Sadhya-Asadhya* (curable and incurable diseases), *Acharya* have enumerated *Prakriti* (constitution) of patient as one of the factors required to categorize the disease as *sukha sadhaya* (one that can be cured easily), *Kricchra Sadhya* (one that can be cured with some difficulty), *Yapya* (one which is palliable) and *Asadhya* (one which is absolutely irreversible). When etiological factor and *Prakriti* (constitution) is not of same type the disease is *Sukha Sadhaya* (one that can be cured easily), when some similarity exists between the two, disease is *Kricchra Sadhaya* (one that can be cured with some difficulty).<sup>[43]</sup> *Acharyas* have also appraised that some of the diseases are *Yapya* (one which is palliable) by their *Prakriti* (constitution).<sup>[44]</sup> *Acharya Charaka* has specified an example of incurability of *Santata* type of *Jvara*, saying that when *Doshas* are homologous with the *Kala*, *Dhatu* and bodily constitution, incurable *Santata Jvara* (remittant fever) is produced.<sup>[45]</sup>

#### Management of disease and Prakriti (constitution)

Plan of use of medication varies from patients to patient due to variations in their strength. For instance, if powerful or strong medication be used in debilitated patient, detrimental consequences may be obtained and if weak drugs be used in powerfully built patient or in patient suffering from severe disease, no effect will be achieved. Thus treatment may fail if patient is wrongly assessed.<sup>[46],[47]</sup> *Prakriti* (constitution) assessment is the chief factor for analysis of strength of patient.<sup>[46]</sup> It is also emphasized that while suffering from similar disease patients do not respond to similar treatment modality because of variation in their constitution. This stresses the fact that strategy of treatment modalities is different in diverging patients. Universal management principle of disease also lays emphasis on role of *Prakriti* (constitution) i.e. if those drugs are used which are antagonistic to *Prakriti* (constitution), the disease is cured. In the description of *Deha Prakriti* (body constitution), it has been stated that particular *Doshic Prakriti* (constitution) persons are prone to develop that type of *Doshaj Vikaras*, *Acharyas* have also

described measures for avoiding occurrence of these diseases by modifications in diet and lifestyle.

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