Comparison of Charakokta Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Draya with the balanced diet

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ABSTRACT-

Acharya Charaka, described 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.¹ Since from Vedic period they gave importance to the food. Food is a substance consumed other than water and drugs for maintenance of the health, well-being and vitality of the individual. This article will highlight the importance of Ayurvedic nutrition in the form of Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Dravya and compare it with the modern concept of Balanced diet.

Keywords- Ahara, Balanced diet, Nitya sevaniya ahara dravya, Nutrients, Nutrition.

INTRODUCTION-

Ahara (diet), Nidra (sleep) and Brahmacharya (abstinence) are recognized as the three Upasthambhas (sub pillars) essential for the smooth running of life. Among the three Upasthambhas, Ahara is considered as the best sustainer of life⁴. Sushruta described that body as well as food are mainly constituted by five Mahabhutas. Body is the product of Food and Food is harbinger of Happiness and Suffering. All the dietary articles are composed of Panchamahabhutas and the Tridoshas (biohumors (Vata, Pitta, Kapha) are the biological derivatives of these five Mahabhutas. A balanced diet in Ayurveda is planned in relation to the known Panchabhautic composition and Tridoshic impacts in the living body. Food (Ahara) and lifestyle (Vihara) significantly affect one’s overall health and the upsurge of metabolic and degenerative diseases are the result of adaptation of modern life style.
In the present modern life, people do not take care of their health and the consequences of their eating habits and other styles of life, which are harmful for them. Unfortunately, today’s world has been adapted to a system of consumption of foods which has several adverse effects on human health. Lifestyle changes has compelled us so much that one has so little time to really think what we are eating is a healthy diet! Globalization has seriously affected one’s eating habits and enforced many people to consume fancy and high calorie fast foods, popularly known as Junk foods.3

This global problem of consuming unhealthy diet on a large scale and its impact on human health need to be emphasized and inculcate health education which can greatly contribute to its limited consumption and switching over to healthy eating habits for the better living. Knowledge emphasizing about the eating habits, nutritional diet, quality of unhealthy foods, their health impact and preventive measures should be given to create awareness and render health education for a change towards healthy food eating practices.4

Improving dietary habits is a societal, not just an individual problem. Therefore, it demands a population-based, multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary and culturally relevant approach.

AIM- To compare the Charakokta Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Dravya with the modern concept of Balanced diet.

OBJECTIVE- To study the dravyas mentioned in the Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Dravya and compare it with the modern concept of Balanced diet.

LITERATURE REVIEW-

Ayurveda states that all types of rasa (shadrasa) should be included in the Ahara to increase strength (bala) of an individual. These rasas are Madhura (sweet), Amla (sour), Lavana (salty), Tikta (bitter), Katu (pungent), Kashaya (astringent). These rasas apart from adding taste to food, also provides nutritional benefits to the body.5

Food when consumed contained of all rasas then transformed by the Ahara parinamkara bhava like Ushma (heat), Vayu (various movements during digestion), Kleda (moisture), Sneha (softness), Kala (time), Samyoga (equilibrium of all bhavas) and then absorbed by the body. These Ahara parinamkara bhava helps in the process of digestion of food.6

And also, for proper digestion one must follow some rules which are mentioned by Acharya Charaka in Ahara Vidhi Vidhana. These rules are, one must consume food which is Ushna (hot), Snigdha (unctuous), Matravata (in proper quantity), Jirne (consumed after the digestion of previously ingested food), Virya Aviruddha Aahara (compatible to each other), Taken in an Eshta Desha where it is provided with Sarvopakarana. (at proper place and hygiene), Natidruta (not taken speedily), Nativilambita (not taken too slowly), Ajalpa (do not speak during eating), Ahasama (taken without laughing), Tanmanma (taken with the concentration of the mind). Taken after paying due regard to oneself.7
Diet compatibility is also a main point according to Ayurveda. Acharya Charka has mentioned eighteen points regarding diet incompatibility which are Desha viruddha, Kala viruddha, Agni viruddha, Matra viruddha, Satmya viruddha, Dosha viruddha, Samskara viruddha, Virya viruddha, Koshtha viruddha, Avastha viruddha, Krama viruddha, Parihara viruddha, Upachara viruddha, Paka viruddha, Samyoga viruddha, Hrudya viruddha, Sampada viruddha and Vidhi viruddha.

According to Charaka if a person fails to follow these points then the intake of incompatible diet cause sterility, blindness, visarpa (herpes), udara (ascites), insanity, fistula in ano, coma or fainting, intoxication, abdominal distention, stiffness in neck, varieties of anaemia, indigestions, various skin diseases, diseases of intestines, swelling, gastritis, fever, rhinitis, and infertility.

In addition to this, Ayurveda pays special emphasis on the Hitakara and Ahitakara Ahara, because Hitahara is helpful in the growth of an individual and Ahitahara is the cause of growth of a disease.

Acharya Charka further explains the Ahariya dravyas which are Hitakara to the body and can be taken regularly. These dravyas are- Shashtika shali (Rice), Mudga (Green gram), Saïndhava (Rock salt), Amalaki (Phyllanthus emblica), Yava (Barley), Antariksha jala (Rain water), Sarpi (Ghee), Jangala mansa (Meat of animals from forest) and Madhu (Honey).

According to modern science-

In the modern science balanced diet plays a lead role in nutrition. 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 withstand short duration of leanness”.

As the definition suggests that a food should contain all the essentials nutrients required for the well-being of the body. These nutrients hold the essential formula for the health and development of the body which is called as nutrition.

Nutrition may be defined as the science of food and its relationship to health. It concerned primarily with the part played by the nutrients in growth, development and maintenance of the body. Good nutrition means “maintaining a nutritional status that enables us to grow well and enjoy good health”.

To help body grow and enjoy good health constant supply of nutrition is required. This nutrition which nutrients provide are scattered in variety of foods. But some foods are special in category of those nutrients.

Foods may be broadly classified as cereals, pulses, nuts and oilseeds, vegetables, fruits, milk and milk products and flesh foods. They contain in general fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, mineral salts and
water. Most foods contain all these principles but in varying proportions.

Proteins, fats and carbohydrates are often termed "proximate principles". Protein is called as the building block of the body. It helps body grow and build new tissues.\textsuperscript{14,15}

Fats cushions vital organs such as kidney against injury and helps body to maintain constant blood temperature. It also contains some unsaturated fatty acids like Omega 3 which helps in the maintenance of cholesterol and helps lowering cardiovascular diseases.\textsuperscript{16}

Carbohydrate is the main source of energy to the body and is also essential for the oxidation of fats. Crude fibre is the part of carbohydrate which helps in easy digestion and lower body weight.\textsuperscript{17}

Vitamins and mineral salts do not supply energy but they play an important part in the regulation of several essential functions in the body. Foods rich in vitamins are also rich in antioxidants.\textsuperscript{18}

Antioxidants are the substances that can prevent or slow damage to cells caused by free radicals. Thus, slowing ageing and preventing diseases like cancer.\textsuperscript{19}

Minerals such as calcium, potassium, sodium, phosphorous are also essential for the body. Calcium and phosphorous helps in the formation of bones. Potassium helps in regulation of blood pressure. Sodium is also an essential mineral, which helps in keeping balance of acid and base in the body and providing essential electrolytes. Iodine is required for the synthesis of thyroid hormone. Iron is also a major component in the minerals, essential for formation of haemoglobin and brain development.\textsuperscript{20}

According to modern in constructing balanced diet, the following principles are taken into consideration:\textsuperscript{21}

a) First and foremost, the daily requirement of protein should be met. This amounts to 10-15 per cent of the daily energy intake.

b) Next comes the fat requirement, which should be limited to 15-30 per cent of the daily energy intake.

c) Carbohydrates rich in natural fibre should constitute the remaining food energy.

Above mentioned proximate principles are also found in the \textit{Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas} stated by \textit{Acharya Charaka}. Table no. 1 shows the nutritive value of that drugs.

Table 1: Classification of \textit{Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas} by their nutritional properties.\textsuperscript{22}

| Nutrients-> | Protein (g) | Fat (g) | Carbohydrate (g) | Minerals (mg) | Energy (kcal) | Others |
|-------------|-------------|---------|------------------|---------------|---------------|--------|
| Per 100 g   |             |         |                  |               |               |        |
| \textit{Shashtika shali} | 6.4         | 0.4     | 79.0             | Ca-9 mg       | 346           |        |
|              |             |         |                  | P-143 mg      |               |        |
|              |             |         |                  | Fe-1.0 mg     |               |        |
| \textit{Mudga} | 24.5        | 1.2     | 59.9             | Ca-75 mg      | 348           | Potassium-1150 mg |
|              |             |         |                  | P-405 mg      |               |        |
| Dravyas          | Fe  3.9 mg | Sodium- 2400 mg | Ca- 50 mg | P- 20 mg | Fe- 1.2 mg | Vitamin C- 600 mg | Crude Fibre- 3.9 g |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Saindhava*      | -         | -               | -         | -        | -         |                   |                   |
| Amalaki         | 0.5       | 0.1             | 13.7      |          |           | 58                |                   |
| Yava            | 11.5      | 1.3             | 69.6      | Ca- 26 mg| P- 215 mg | 336               |                   |
| Antariksha jala| -         | -               | -         | -        | -         |                   |                   |
| Sarpi*          | 0.04      | 13              | -         | -        |           | 112               | Omega 3- 45 mg    |
| Jangala mansa   | 21.0      | 0.6             | 1.9       | Ca- 3 mg | P- 233 mg | 97                |                   |
| Madhu           | 0.3       | -               | 79.5      | -        |           | 319               |                   |

* Amount per tbsp (7 g)

**DISCUSSION**

The *dravyas* in the *Nitya sevaniya ahara* holds some prominent and defining nutrients which can benefit individual’s health and provide daily required nutrients needed for the body.

*Shashtika shali* provides high amount of carbohydrates among all the cereals and thus promoting good amounts of energy in the diet. *Mudga* provides excellent amount of potassium (1150 mg/100 g) which can help in controlling hypertension. *Saindhava* holds less amount of sodium and high amount of potassium among all the salts. Thus, consuming *Saindhava* on regular basis can help in prevention of cardio vascular diseases. Also, *Amalaki* provides vitamin C in large quantity. As, vitamin C is a good antioxidant it can help in the prevention of cancer and slows ageing. *Madhu* is also rich in antioxidants and *Madhu* due to its low glycaemic index could be used as a sweetener in diabetic patients. *Yava* provides generous amounts of crude fibre per 100 g among all the other cereals. Thus, consuming *Yava* on regular basis aids in digestion and lower weight. *Ghee* contains Omega 3 fatty acids which are mainly found in fishes. *Ghee* provide Omega 3 fatty acid in the vegetarian diet. This can lower cholesterol levels in the body thus preventing cardio vascular diseases. *Jangala mansa* contain all the essential amino acids.
required by the body thus providing adequate protein supply to body. These Ahariya dravyas constitutes all the nutrients mentioned in the modern science.

Table 2: Classification based on dietic factors of a balanced diet

| Carbohydrates | Shashtika Shali Yava |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Proteins      | Mudga Jangala Mansa |
| Fat           | Ghruta              |
| Vitamins      | Amalaki             |
| Minerals      | Saindhava Lavana   |
| Water         | Antariksha Jala    |

In Ayurveda the concept of Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Dravyas mentioned by Acharya Charaka clearly suggests the importance of nutrition in day today life. The definition of balanced diet indicates the role of carbohydrates, protein, fat, minerals and vitamins in the daily food. The nutritive value of Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Dravyas fulfils the balanced diet criteria when we critically analyse the nutritive value of each dravya. Daily consumption of Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Dravyas does the promotion of health in an individual and prevent the disease condition.

CONCLUSION-

Ayurveda stands no less behind in explaining the nutritional aspect and therapeutic nutritional concept. Nitya Sevaniya 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 nutritional disorders is necessary to adopt Ayurvedic nutritional management. Nitya Sevaniya Ahara Dravya plays important role in maintaining healthy life and prevention of the forthcoming diseases.

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