



## Review Article

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### A REVIEW ON AHARAVIDHI VIDHAN: INEVITABILITY IN MODERN ERA

Meghna Mandal <sup>1\*</sup>, Protiva Talukdar <sup>2</sup>, Sandip Halder <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Samhita Siddhanta and Sanskrit, Raghunath Ayurved Mahavidyalaya and Hospital, Contai, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, India

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Shalya tantra, Raghunath Ayurved Mahavidyalaya and Hospital, Contai, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, India

<sup>3</sup> Ayurveda Practitioner, Sanjivani Ayu Clinic, Nabapally, Bansra, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India

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#### \*Corresponding author

E-mail: meghna.mandal89@gmail.com

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#### ABSTRACT

Ahara, Nidra, Brahmacharya mentioned as trayapastambha (three pillars of life) for maintaining the health. Since Vedic period, food is in prime importance. It is considered as Brahma in Upanishad. Acharya Kashyap narrated it as Mahabhaisajya. Dharma- Artha- Kama-Moksha (4 attainments) all are dependent on healthy life. Intake of Chaturvidha ahara (four types of food) in proper method helps us to maintain the healthy life and also can prevent us from different morbidity. Charaka Samhita guides us with the light of its time-honored treasure trove of wisdom, the Ahara vidhi vidhan (dietary guidelines). The article tries to explain the healthy technique of eating for healthy body-mind and soul in present era also.

**Keywords:** Trayapastambha, Mahabhaisajya, Dharma-Artha- Kama-Moksha, Chaturvidha ahara, Ahara vidhi vidhan.

#### INTRODUCTION

Ahara is indhan or fuel of agni and proper intake of it maintains our health and vitality <sup>1</sup>. It provides bioenergy and nourishment to Dhatu (body tissue). Ahara (food) is the best among all which sustains life <sup>2</sup>. Proper diet provides us complexion, clarity, good voice, longevity, intelligence, happiness, satisfaction, nourishment, strength and intellect. <sup>3</sup> Ayurveda guides and encourages us to align our eating pattern with healthy rules. Like contemporary science, healthy food is not limited to just calorie intake, Ayurveda classifies the food based upon methods of consumption, quantity, quality and mainly individual's ability to digest that food or agni <sup>4</sup>. The amount of food which without disturbing the equilibrium of dosha-dhatu-mala, gets digested and metabolism in proper time is regarded as proper matra <sup>5</sup>. To describe the quantity, it is said that if the food article is guru (heavy), then only three fourth or half of the capacity is to be taken. Even excessive consumption of laghu (light) foods is not conducive to the maintenance of the power of digestion and metabolism <sup>6</sup> The effect of ahara is not only dependent on its quality or quantity but also such other factors and one of these the most important is way of intake of food <sup>7</sup>.

#### Ahara Vidhi Vidhan

Ahar vidhi vidhan described in our classics which are the foundation of dietetics. Individual should intake the proper amount of food which is ushna (hot), snigdha (unctuous), jeerna (after digestion of previous meal), virya aviruddha (not contradictory to potency). It should be in ista deshe (in proper place), with ista sarva upakaran (equipped with all the accessories), nati druta (not in hurry), nati vilamba (not too slowly), ajalpan (without talking), ahasan (without laughing), tanmana bhunjita (with concentration of mind) and atmanam abhisamiksha bhunjita (with self-confidence).<sup>7</sup>

**Ushnam ashniyat:** Warm meal provides us the proper taste, it stimulates agni (digestive power) and get digested in time. Vatanuloman (actual movement of vata dosha) and reduction of kapha are also the result of intake of warm meal.

**Snigdham ashniyat:** The meal should be Snigdha (Unctuous), The Snigdha Ahara causes Agnideepana, facilitates early digestion.

**Matravat ashniyat:** The proper quantity of food promotes longevity in its entirety without afflicting vata, pitta and kapha. It easily passes down to the guda (rectum), it does not impair agni and gets digested without any difficulty.

**Jirne ashniyat:** One should take meal after digestion of previous meal. If it is not done, then all the three dosha aggravated immediately. If it is maintained, then it promotes longevity.

**Virya aviruddha ashniyat:** Virya is the power of a substance by which the action takes place. We must eat those foods which are not antagonist in virya (potency).

**Ishta deshe / Ishta sarvapokaran ashniyat:** One should take food in congenial place provided with all the necessary equipment. By doing so one does not get afflicted with emotional strain which may be produced in unpleasant circumstances.

**Natidrutam ashniyat:** Food taken hurriedly may enters wrong passage, and it may be the cause of lack of taste of food and ingestion of foreign article with food.

**Nati vilambita ashniyat:** If the food is taken slowly, it becomes cold and causes irregular digestion.

**Ajalpana, Ahasan, Tanmanabhujitam:** Don't talk or laugh while eating, one who talks and laughs while eating is liable to suffer from the same disorders as the one who eats too hastily. Most importantly the food should be eaten with concentration. Talking and laughing divert the attention from the meals and the food is eaten too slowly or too hastily.

**Atmanam Abhisamikshya Bhujitam:** One should take food in prescribed manner, with due respect to his own self. Otherwise, it would result into indigestion.

## DISCUSSION

Improper dietary habit is the primary cause of increasing lifestyle disorder in current era. Now a days, lifestyle diseases (non-communicable disease or NCDs) are increasing rapidly. Various factors are responsible for that. Along with physical inactivity, disturbed biological clock, excessive consumption of junk food, alcohol, the unhealthy food habit is important responsible factor<sup>8</sup>.

Ayurveda says to take warm, fresh food. It is noted that warm fresh food kills microbes and nutrients from warm food are more easily absorbed. This makes more nutrients available to the body<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, different additives are added to keep the stale food fresh which are very dangerous. Scientific evidence is mounting that synthetic chemicals used as food additives may have harmful impacts on health. Food additives are chemicals that are added to food to keep it from spoiling, as well as to improve its colour and taste. Some are linked to negative health impacts, while others are healthy and can be ingested with little danger. According to several studies, health issues such as asthma, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), heart difficulties, cancer, obesity, and others are caused by harmful additives and preservatives. Some food additives may interfere with hormones and influences growth and development. It is one of the reasons why so many children are overweight. Children are more likely than adults to be exposed to these types of dietary intakes. Several food additives are used by women during pregnancy and breast feeding that are not fully safe. We must take specific precaution to avoid consuming dangerous compounds before they begin to wreak havoc on our health.<sup>10</sup>

On the topic of snigdha bhojan, we may correlate that Fats are required in food as it helps in absorption of vitamin A, D, E, K and consumption of fatty acid can boost metabolism<sup>11</sup>.

The more amount of food will remain in stomach for long time and be more likely to turn into fat and resulting various metabolic disorders<sup>11</sup>. So, we can conclude that adequate quantity of food is very important factor to stay healthy as it is said in Ayurveda. Digestion gets slow if the food is taken before the digestion of previous meal. It promotes excess fat deposition in the body<sup>11</sup>.

Incompatible food interrupts the metabolism of the tissues, and it inhibits the formation of it. Incompatible food impacts untoward effect on immune system, cellular metabolism, growth hormone, and dehydroepiandrosterone sulphate<sup>12</sup>. So, we should avoid the viryaviruddha ahara.

When the individual sits on floor during intake of food, the nerve performs better and transmits all signals effectively<sup>13</sup>. So, individual should not avoid the Ayurvedic concept of taking food in congenial place and with all necessary equipment.

Rate of consumption of food is another topic to be discussed. Fast eating is associated with overweight and obesity,<sup>14</sup> which is the

dreadful sign of different metabolic diseases. Fast rate of food intake may eventually promote overeating also.<sup>15</sup>

Slow eating rate is the cause of less energy intake.<sup>15</sup> This could be the cause of poor performance of daily activities. Eating slowly increases the postprandial response of the anorexigenic gut hormones, peptide YY and glucagon-like peptide-1<sup>16</sup>.

High well-being is associated with many benefits, including increased longevity, improved immune functioning, better personal relationship and increased career success<sup>17</sup>

Mindful eating is an opportunity to non-judgmentally become aware of internal and external cues, sensations, and emotions<sup>18</sup> And it nurtures PSNS dominance—the condition of the nervous system associated with reduced stress.

A third qualitative study of 22 women in the United Kingdom that incorporated both focus groups and interviews concluded that food choices influenced mood, but that mood also influenced food choices<sup>19</sup>. Thus, we can say that the last two factors of Ahara vidhi are also the serious factors of eating habit.

## CONCLUSION

Our classics are storage of intellectual thoughts. Diet is considered as basic most cause of life. Not only diet but also method of food intake has an important role in the continuity of healthy life. To overcome all the problems related to intake of food, Ayurveda explained specific code and conduct of taking of food. We all want a healthy long life to enjoy the Worldly things. So, we should follow that because in Caraka Samhita it is said that if human being follows the proper code of conduct related to intake of wholesome food, then he lives for 36,000 nights free from diseases. He lives healthy life and get blessings of good people. Thus, we can reduce the health budget and can serve the mankind for the long time by preventing unexpected death.

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