CONCEPT OF AHARA W.S.R. TO MATRA, DESHA, KALA AND THEIR IMPACT ON HEALTH

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Abstract

Ahara is considered as one of the vital entity of life along with Nidra and Brahmcharya, these three pillars of life plays pivotal role for the restoration and maintaining good health status physically as well as mentally. Ahara means diets or nutritional intake helps to establish intellectual and emotional balance. The health benefits of Ahara can be achieved when one it is consume in proper manner. In this regards time, amount and mode of intake of meal, etc. play important role. Ayurveda with respect to Ahara elaborated concepts of Matra, Desh and Kala, which indicates amount, place and time of meal. The food consumed inappropriately can hamper nutritional value of food and may leads health problems. The literature study suggested that consideration of Matra, Desha and Kala with respect to Ahara imparts many health benefits and provides all good properties of food.

Key-Words: Ayurveda, Matra, Desha, Kala, Ahara
Introduction

The current scenario witnessed many health issues related to the digestive and metabolic system due to the avoidance of dietary rules and lack of nutritional food. As per the ayurveda many diseases arises due to the faulty dietary habits and in this regards Ayurveda suggested many concepts to prevent consequences of awful dietary habits and Ashta Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatane is one such aspect of Ayurveda. The various theories and principles of Ayurveda suggested us about types of food to be consumed as per the Prakriti of an individual; timing of meal and appropriate quantity of meal should be consumed [1-5].

The Ayurveda concept of Samskara & Samyog helps to retain and improves qualities of food, the proper processing of food materials in desirable combinations provides most beneficial effects of Ahara. Ayurveda mentioned three important things as depicted in Figure 1, related to the Ahara.

![Figure 1: Factors responsible for qualities of Ahara.](image)

The term Rashi indicates Matra of Ahara, the appropriate quantity of food gets digested easily and promotes growth of body. Similarly concept of Desha indicates origin and properties of food material as well as place of food intake. The term Kala indicates time.
of food consumption, since food consumed in proper time only offers health benefits. The health effect of Ahara greatly depends upon their Matra, Desha and Kala [3-6].

The Ayurveda theory of Hita and Ahita ahara also merely depends upon Matra, Desha and Kala of Ahara. The consideration of these factors associated with Hitakara Ahara which maintains equilibrium of Dhatus and eliminates disturbance of Doshas, on the other hand avoidance of such factors imparts effects of Ahitakara Ahara leading to the pathological conditions. As per Charaka Hitakara diet is responsible for growth and development of body while Ahitakara diets are responsible for diseases [6-7].

Importance of Matra, Desha and Kala of Ahara:

Many diseases arise due to the inappropriate way of consumption of food, irregular habits of diet, improper food materials mixing, wrong method of food preparation and awful conduct of dietary rules. These habits can lead many diseases and affects process of growth & development. Therefore it is important to follows rules related to the dietary habits and preparation of food. In this regards Ayurveda prescribed concept of Hitkara & Matrayukta ahara responsible for wellbeing of society. These all aspect of Ayurveda related to good qualities of food come under heading of Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatane. These aspects of Ayurveda focuses on various factors related to the Ahara including properties of food, place of origin of Ahara, season, environmental factors, and method of food preparation and need of food according to the Prakriti of individual. The major factors related to the quality of Ahara solely depend upon three important things i.e.; Matra, Desha and Kala.

Desha and Kala are unavoidable causes related to the Ahara while Matra can be modified according to the need and conditions of individual. The Hita and Ahita Ahara can be fixed by altering Matra, Desha and Kala of Ahara. Matra, Desha and Kala affects Vipaka, Virya and Prabhava of Ahara therefore alter Panchamahabhautic level and quality of Ahara. Panchamahabhautic Ahara gets converted into Bhautika Gunas after digestion and finally into Trigunas which acts on Mana. Therefore Matra, Desha and Kala of Ahara not only affect somatic or psychological level of person but also affects spiritual level, so if person consume Ahara appropriately by following concept of Matra, Desha and Kala then synchronization between body and soul get established [6-10].
**Matra**

Ayurveda emphasizes that *Matra of Ahara* (quantity of food) as a vital aspect since excess food can lead to indigestion, obesity, and lethargy, etc. While less amount of food intake is responsible for lack of nutrients leading to the suppression of energy level, improper physiological activities, anemia, and depletion of strength, etc. Ayurveda described concept of *Matra* with respect to *Ahara* in both ways *Sarvagraha* as well as *Parigraha*.

The *Matra of Ahara* varies on the basis of types of *Ahara* either *Guru* or *Laghu Gunatmaka Ahara*. *Guru Ahara* are heavy to digest therefore one should take such substances in lesser amount. Elderly, children, and diseased persons should not consume *Guru Ahara* excessively to avoid health complications. On the other hand, *Laghu Gunatmaka Ahara* is easy to digest therefore one can consume in more amount as compared to *Guru Gunatmaka Ahara*.

**Desha**

*Desha* with respect to *Ahara* can be emphasized in three ways i.e. *Bhoomi, Ahara Dravya Desha* and *Atura Desha*. *Jangala Sadharana Desha* means dietary pattern according to the privileged climatic conditions. It is believed that *Jangala Sadharana Desha* offers predominance of *Tikta-Kashaya Rasa* and *Ruksha Guna*. It is suggested that one should consume food according to *Desha* or as per natural habitats.

The soil and climatic condition affects the quality of food, substances grown in hill or mountain area majorly come under category of *Guru Ahara* while substances grown in desert region are considered *Laghu* in nature. *Laghu ahara* advocated for diseased and elderly persons while children also advised to take such types of *Ahara*. It is also suggested to take *Ahara* according to *Bhoomi* as well as *Deha Desha*.

**Kala**

The *Kala* is a factor which also imparts proper benefits of *Ahara*, the *Kala* indicates time related to the consumption of *Ahara*. It is stated that food consumed in proper time only offers health benefits otherwise it causes health problems. The *Ahara* should be...
consume on empty stomach or when previously consumed food get digested, the morning hour at afternoon time is best for day time meal while night meal should be consume before 2-3 hrs. of bed time so to allow proper digestion of food materials. Kala requires consideration of Awastha (Swasthya or Rugna) and Vayah. The Rugna Awastha require intake of light and digestible food materials since in disease condition person only able to digest light food due to the improper functioning of digestive system. Nityaga Kala i.e. Rutu also need to be consider while selecting daily meal since some foods are to be avoided in particular Ritu while some food materials are best in specific Ritus. With respect to Ahara frequency, longevity of day and night and health status of person, etc. are also need to be considered.  

Prapta Kala is the time considered best for taking food, the consumption of Kalanusara Ahara increases peace, facilitate metabolic activities and body cycle remain in rhythm. While consumption of Ahara in Aprapta Kala or Atita Kala may leads metabolic or digestive irregularities.  

Time & seasonal variations also alter health status of person and physiological activities changes as per the timing, in particular hour the digestive and metabolic activities are predominant while some time they get suppress therefore one should consume Ahara accordingly.  

Ayurveda emphasizes Nityaga and Avasthika as two types of Kala, Nityaga indicates dietary pattern according to the Rutusatmya. The rainy season is Vataprakopak kala therefore Ahara possess Vatashamak guna is preferred in this season. While summer season associated with Rasa dhatu kshay thus Madhura and Sheeta Guna Ahara indicated. The other type of Kala is Avasthika which indicates consumption of food according to the condition of body. Langhana is suggested in diseased condition like Atisara, spicy and oily food is prohibited in condition like jaundice.  

Ayurveda Rules of Dietary Pattern:  

- **Ushna** and **Hridya** food should be consumed.  
- Food should be consumed when previously ingested meal get digested.
The dietary meal should consist of all the Rasas.
One should consume meal with full concentration.
Dining place should be neat & clean.
Food should be pleasant and not antagonistic to each other.
While eating one should not involve in laughing and talking.
Food should be consumed as per the season, Kala and Prakriti of person.

Conclusion

Ayurveda emphasizes Ahara as important factor of healthy and disease free lifestyle, in connection to this the Ayurveda scholar mentioned concept of Matra, Desha and Kala in relation to Ahara. The consideration of these three factors imparts beneficial effects of consume food while avoidance of concept of Matra, Desha and Kala in relation to Ahara can leads health problems including digestive and metabolic ailments. These three aspects; Matra, Desha and Kala play major role in context to the health and illness. Ayurveda focuses towards the achievement of goal of Swasthyaraksana and Vyadhiparimoksha, the consideration of concept of Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatanas can be helpful to acquire good health status.

References


