

REVIEW ARTICLE

Scientific Approach of Ayurveda Dietary Regulations in Vachana Sahitya and its Impact on Health and Communities- A Literary Research

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ABSTRACT

Literature is the most powerful weapon which has the ability to transform the society and influence the opinions and beliefs of people over masses. The Vachana Literature of the 12th Century is a special genre of Kannada literature. There is no other genre like Vachana literature, simple and direct in its expression, written in the language of the common people, freed from the strangle hold of Sanskrit language. Ayurveda is an ancient science written in Sanskrit that guides us in maintaining a healthy mind and body. There are many secrets in Ayurveda knowledge for happy living and proper diet is one among them. Ayurveda and Vachana Sahitya describe food as the most important factor for sustenance of life. In the current scenario life style disorders are considerably increasing due to faulty dietary habits and it may be prevented by proper diet and eating habits as the diseases are the obstacles for individuals to achieve their desired goals. Vachanakaras were social reformers and they were aware about the importance of diet and its regulation for building healthy and prosperous society. Hence, we find many Vachanas which focuses on physical and mental health. This research article throws a limelight on scientific approach of popular Vachanas related to dietary regulations written by Sarvajnya who was the Legendary Vachana poet of Karnataka region of 16th Century and also it focuses their parallels in Ayurveda. Even today, the Vachanas are appealing to hearts and minds of common people hence by understanding their scientific view, common people can easily follow proper dietary habits mentioned in Ayurveda and can prevent many life style disorders.

Key words: Vachana Sahitya, Life style disorders, Ayurveda Dietary regulations, Ayurveda Ahara Vidhi Vidhanaa

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INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda Ahara (food) is considered as one of the key pillars (Upasthambhas) of life. Ayurveda places special emphasis on food and believes that healthy nutritional diet nourishes the mind, body and soul. According to Ayurveda the healthy living body and diseases that distress it are the outcome of food. In the 1st decade of life itself individual are prone to many physical and mental diseases due to sedentary life style and faulty dietary habits and many modern research works says that, faulty dietary habit is the major cause for increasing life style disorders like diabetes mellitus, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, over weight/obesity, cardiovascular diseases etc. Ayurveda, the science of life has not only described various forms of food but also emphasizes many rules and regulations of its usage which are titled as Ahara Vidhi (proper usage of food based on individual capacity of digestion/ rules and regulations of diet) but these concepts are in coded Sanskrit language which are difficult to understand by common people. As like Ayurveda, Vachana literature is also one of the life sciences of Karnataka region and which has flourished in the 12th century as a Bhakti movement and Sarvajnya, one of the Legendary Vachana poets of 16th Century, his many Vachanas focuses on importance of food and its proper usage to maintain the balanced state of physical and mental health in parallels with Ayurveda.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research work is comparative observational study of literature. Materials required are text books of Vachana Sahitya, Ayurveda Classical treatises like Brhatrayis, Laghutrayis and their commentaries, Kannada and English dictionary for understanding, transcription and transliteration of Vachanas was done.

Review of Literature:

Sarvajnya in his Vachana highlighted the faulty diet habit is the cause for the premature death as,

naaligeyanukattihanukaalanigedoorinaha

naaligeyurchiyamelaadutiralavankaalahattiravu sarvajnya.[1]

Translation: Who can control his tongue will remain away from death. Who always strive for tasty food without observing his hunger will become victim of many diseases like obesity, diabetes, early aging etc. Ayurveda also emphasizes the Adverse effects of AtiMatraAhara Sevana as, "Atimaatram Punah Sarva Dosha prakopanamicchanti Kushalah" Scholars opines that food taken in excessive quantity aggravates all the Tridoshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha) and gives rise to many kinds of diseases [2].

Ideal Frequency of Meal:

Ommeyudavatyaagiimmeyundavabhogi

Bhimmagundavanererogi yogi taasummanirutihanu sarvajnya [3]

Translation: One who partake once a day is considered as Tyagi (renunciate), who eats twice is considered as Bhogi (enjoyer) and one who eats often / tummy full or who eats inadequate quantity of food is Rogi (will become patient), Yogi is the one who has control over his tongue.

In Ayurveda, Acharya Charakaa described, "Ekaashan bhojanam Sukhaparinaamkaraanaam" Once a Day Meal helps for easy digestion [4] and Acharya Sushruta Under the twelve kinds of food administration, Ekakaalika Ahara (Once a Day Meal) and Dwikaalika Ahara (Twice a Day Meal) are explained [5]. Acharya Charakaa also described to take food in prescribed manner with due regard to his/her own self (Aatmanam Abhisamikshya Bhunjitam) and **Matrvat Ashniyat (Food in proper quantity)** under AharaVidhi Vidhanaa which stresses the importance of having food as per capacity [6].

Dietary regulations:

Hasiyadireunabedahasidumattirabedaa

Bisibedaatungalunabedavaidyanabesalebedasarvajnya [7]

Translation: One should not eat without hunger, should not suppress the urge of hunger, one should not eat too much hot as well as stale or previous day remained food which may cause harmful effects in the body and the individual who follow these will remain away from the physician.

In Ayurveda, Acharya Charaka explained, eating without appetite, eating on excessive hunger, Suppressing the urge of hunger, eating too hot food regularly, regularly eating night left over food or stale food are the major causes for manifestation of diseases. And also, under Ahara Vidhi Vidhana (dietary regulations) Acharya Charaka described, Jirne Ashniyat [8]. (Intake after digestion of previous meal) means one should eat only on hunger.

Importance of Buttermilk in a meal:

Majjigeutakkelesu, majjanakkemadilesu

Kajjayatuppaunalesu, manegobbaajjilesenda sarvajnya [9]

Translation: Buttermilk is best in a meal, clean (pious) clothes are best for bath, ghee and Kajjaya (Type of sweet) are delicious to eat and Grandmother is magnificent and needed for every house.

Ayurveda described Takra (Butter milk) as "Amruta (Nectar)" as one who uses buttermilk daily, never experiences any problem of health as diseases relieved by Takra, never occurs again. If Takra was available in the heaven or Kailasha, lord Shiva's throat would not have been appeared in blue coloured, similarly lord Keshava would not have been in Krishna Varna or blue in colour, the diseases like Kshaya to Chandra, Udara to Ganesha etc. would not have been occurred. Thus "Takra" has been highlighted in a classical sense, to focus on the curative values of Takra.

Schedule after Meals:

Undukendavakaasi, undushatapadnadedu

Undedadamaggulallimalagivaidyana

Bhandaatavilla sarvajnya. [10]

Translation: Sarvajnya opines, after meal one should warm themselves, walk for 100 steps and sleep in a left lateral position for a while, which will help for an easy digestion and that individual will remain away from the physician.

Similarly, in Ayurveda, Acharya Yoga Ratnakara described, one should walk at least for hundred steps immediately after taking full meals, this will help in relieving the congestion of food in the stomach. And also advised to sleep in left lateral position for easy digestion of the food as the Jathargni (digestive fire) is

located over the Nabhi region¹¹ and according to Acharya Sushruta, after partaking meal, the person should sit like a king (comfortably), till the fatigue of food is relieved, afterwards should walk for a distance of hundred feet and then lie on a bed on his left side.

Our history was more glorious than present day as our ancestors had more knowledge about the health and social wellbeing. Everything they documented in the past, was in a concise and coded manner. There is a need to re-establish and revalidate the health and philosophical aspects of the ancient literature, here a small effort to decode the hidden concepts and to uncover them to the present generation through this literature research.

Frequency of Meal [12]

Ayurveda recommends One Meal A Day for poor digestive capacity individual. This helps to facilitate for easy digestion and to kindle the digestive fire slowly, just like a dying fire is gradually increased by putting in small quantities of fuel and not bulk of fuel at a time. During convalescence period of any disease, there is always weak digestive power which cannot digest food which is consumed routinely so One Time Meal is advised and Two Meals a Day in a Proper quantity as per digestive capacity of a person is recommended for the individual having optimum digestive capacity. Diet of a person varies according to individuals work, age etc.

Many research publications of modern science on OMAD (One Meal A Day) or intermittent fasting proven effective in reducing abnormal body weight which is one of the major causes for lifestyle disorders. In addition to weight loss, it also helps to reduce blood sugar and certain heart disease risk factors, including LDL (bad cholesterol), helps for reduction in C-reactive protein (markers of inflammation), improves Circadian Rhythmicity (maintains biological clock) and improves stress resistance. Additionally, fasting may offers unique benefits for the health of the nervous system and also imposing fasting periods on experimental animal models found the evident in increased longevity. And even Two Meals a Day was associated with relatively lower BMI compared to Three Meals a Day. While earlier epidemiological evidence indicates the association between the higher meal frequencies and lower disease risk. But further more research has demonstrated as high meal frequency may exert adverse health effects by causing asynchronous with natural circadian rhythms. And also, in the relevance with this, Acharya Charaka, has described with the analogy as just like birds are attracted to the trees where they build their nest, Prameha (Diabetes) affects the individual who are 'Grudhum' means greedy i.e., the individual who are voracious eaters and 'Mahashana' means gluttons and are the major etiological factors for the Diabetes and also in such individuals the disease becomes incurable and may cause death. (Cha. Ni. 4/50-51)

Importance of Butter Milk in a Meal [13]

"Nectar is for Gods and Goddesses, Buttermilk is for human beings," a quote that sums up the importance of buttermilk in our lives. Healthy bacteria and lactic acid in buttermilk helps for digestion and improve metabolism and there by bestow health and wellness, as poor metabolism is the cause for many disorders and hence it has been also called "Grandma's Probiotic" due to its high gut friendly Microbial population. Even Ayurveda also deals that root cause of every disease is impaired Agni (poor digestive power) and the buttermilk is proven as a boon for digestive system hence it is described as nectar in Ayurveda. Keeping this scientific reason Sarvajnya said to have buttermilk in every meal.

Schedule after Meal: [14, 15]

According to Ayurveda Kapha Dosha increases immediately after consuming food hence soon after the meal naturally individual feels stuffed and lethargic. It is best to go for walk as walking fastens digestion process. As it boosts blood circulation throughout the body. If soon after meal sit down or lie down right, it may cause stomach troubles like acid reflux and gas.

Going for a light Walking just after a meal seems to be more effective for weight loss than waiting for one hour to walk after a meal as it stimulating metabolism and helps for burning calories. Modern research works says that sleeping on the left side is the best option for digestion. As, the natural position of the stomach is on the left side, where it can digest food more effectively. Gravity helps the waste travel from small intestine to the large intestine. It reduces the risk of heartburn by contracting the muscles between the stomach and the esophagus (food pipe) there by controls the acid reflux process.

CONCLUSION

- Both Ayurveda and Vachana literature (Bhakti movement of Karnataka region) are practical oriented life sciences.
- Ayurveda is the most ancient Indian Life science, has described many health secrets but are in the Sanskrit language, hence are difficult to understand and follow by common people but Vachana

literature are also having many health secrets in parallels to Ayurveda and are in simple regional language Kannada and freed from the strangle hold of Sanskrit language.

- Balanced diet and its proper usage are the important health secret and is the source for sustenance of life. Rules and regulations of the dietetics described both in Ayurveda and Vachana Sahitya are scientific and are relevant for even today.
- Vachana literature is blended with science. Since time immemorial are appealing to hearts and minds of common people hence by understanding the scientific view of Vachanas related to diet, common people can easily follow them and can prevent many life style disorders.

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