CRITICAL STUDY OF ROLE OF REGULAR USE (SHEELAYET) OF WHOLESOME DIET IN PREVENTION OF LIFESTYLE DISEASES

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ABSTRACT
Trayopsthambha (Three sub-pillars), advised by ancient sages, are essential to maintain health. Diet is one of these three sub-pillars, plays important role in maintenance of physical and mental health and thus to get longevity of human being. Many Ayurvedic texts have mentioned wholesome diet with its qualities and functions in detail. Vagabhata mentioned the list of shilayet ahara dravya, i. e., wholesome food for regular use including food items of all tastes. Not following rules of diet mentioned in ayurvedic texts may be the reason for these life style disorders. It is necessary to review the shilayet ahara dravya, i. e., wholesome food for regular use as given in major ayurvedic texts i. e. Charaka Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya in detail and to study its role in prevention of life-style disorders. Review of shilayet dravya i. e. wholesome diet according to Vagbhatacharya shows that diet should include all six tastes and sweet is prominent. Guna (quality), Virya (potency), Vipaka (taste at the end of digestion), and Prabhava (special effect) all equally support for maintenance of health and prevention of disease to achieve the life’s aim. Shilayet dravya i. e. wholesome diet certainly helps in prevention of lifestyle disorders by maintenance of balance of dosha-dhatu-mala.

KEYWORDS: shilayet ahara dravya, wholesome food, life-style disorders.

INTRODUCTION
Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medicinal system remains the most ancient yet living tradition with sound philosophical and experimental basis. Brihattrayi, i. e. three major
treatises of Ayurveda namely – Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Vagbhata Samhita (Ashtanga Samgraha and Ashtanga Hridaya) emphasize mainly on Tri-sutras- Hetu (etiological factors), Linga (symptoms and signs) and Aushadha (treatment). To achieve four goals of life (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha), health is given the prime importance.[1] The first aim of Ayurveda is to maintain health as well as to prevent Diseases.

As it is said, ‘prevention is better than cure’, Ayurveda has given prime importance for the maintenance of health and prevention of diseases. Various preventive measures like Dinachrya (daily regimen), Ritucharya (seasonal regimen), proper diet and dietary habits, Sadvritta (code of conduct) are the described in detail in major texts of Ayurveda.

Trayopsthambha (Three sub-pillars), advised by ancient sages, are essential to maintain health. Diet is one of these three sub-pillars, plays important role in maintenance of physical and mental health and thus to get longevity of human being.

Many Ayurvedic texts have mentioned wholesome diet with its qualities and functions in detail. Charakacharya has classified food items into twelve Ahar vargas (food groups) and in that each group one food article is said to be pathyatama (most wholesome).[2] Nityasevaniya dravya (daily consumable) food items are advised for maintenance of health. Sushrutacharya has also mentioned Ahar vargas (food groups) with their qualities and functions in detail.

In Ashtanga hridya, Vagbhatachrya collected only the essence of knowledge from numerous texts written by sages scattered in the various major texts. He gave practical approach to many ayurvedic principles mentioned in Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita. Vagabhata mentioned the list of shilayet ahara dravya, i. e., wholesome food for regular use including food items of all tastes.[3]

In present time, due to changing life style, dietary pattern has got changed. Various food articles are introduced in our daily diet like junk food, processed food, frozen food etc. Due to unhealthy and improper eating habits, competition in all fields and stress at all levels, which lead many health problems called as life style disorders such as hypertension, cardiac disorders, obesity etc. Not following rules of diet mentioned in ayurvedic texts may be the reason for these life style disorders.
The present paper is an attempt to review the *shilayet ahara dravya*, i.e., wholesome food for regular use as given in major ayurvedic texts i.e. *Charaka Samhita* and *Ashtanga Hridaya* in detail and to study its role in prevention of life-style disorders.

**Literature Review**

According to *Charakachrya*, ‘Ahara’ (Wholesome diet) is one which maintains the equilibrium of Bodily *dhatus* and helps in promotion of health and prevention of diseases.[4]

*Ahara dravya* are classified into six categories depending upon the *Rasa* (Tastes) - *Madhura* (sweet), *Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (salty), *Katu* (pungent), *Tikta* (bitter), and *Kashya* (astringent) *rasas*. All *rasas* are included in *sada shilayet ahara* in proper quantity.[5]

*Charakachrya* has described eight factors *In Ashtau Ahara vidhi visheshayatana* (principles of diet) as follows[6]

1. *Prakruti* (Natural quality)  
2. *Karana* (Preparation)  
3. *Samyoga* (combination)  
4. *Rashi* (quantity)  
5. *Desh* (climate)  
6. *Kala* (temporal factor)  
7. *Upayoga Sanstha* (rules of use)  
8. *Upayokta* (the user)


*Acharya Vagabhata* has described ‘*Aharavidhi’* (regimen of diet) for consumption of food. Food should be consumed at the proper time, it should be the accustomed, clean, partaken with attention, and contain all the six tastes with predominance of sweet taste.[8]

In “*shilayer”* food all six tastes food articles are included. This is the basic requirement of wholesome diet.

*Dravyas* (Substances used as food / drugs) are of three kinds *Shamana* (those which alleviate the doshas), *Kopan* (which aggravate the *dosas*) and *Swasthahita* (Suitable for health / maintain health).[9]
Swastha hitakar ahara is necessary to maintain balance of dosha, dhatu and Malas. Vagbhatacharya advised some food items for regular use as “shilayet” diet which can be considered as the most wholesome.\textsuperscript{[10]}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Food article Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
<th>Rasa (Taste)</th>
<th>Guna (Quality)</th>
<th>Virya (Potency)</th>
<th>Vipaka</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Karma (Action)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Shali</td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Unctuous, heavy</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>Vrisya (Aphrodisiac), Mutrala (diuretic), Vrisya, Jivaniya (nourishing), Sandhankar (unites the broken parts), Stharyakar (gives strength), Pathya (good for health)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Godhuma</td>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Unctous</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>Vrisya, Jivaniya (nourishing), Sandhankar (unites the broken parts), Stharyakar (gives strength), Pathya (good for health)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Yava</td>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Dry, Sara, Guru</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>Vrisya, Stharyakar, Sara (laxative), Shira (stays long inside the body), Ghrarhi (constipating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Sastika</td>
<td>Rice mature in Sixty days</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Unctous</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Cereal</td>
<td>Sthira (stays long inside the body), Ghrarhi (constipating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Jangala mansa</td>
<td>Meat of animala of desert like land</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Unctous, light</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>Constipating, Hitakar (good), pittakar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Sunisannaka</td>
<td>Sweet, astringent</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>cold</td>
<td>Pungent</td>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>Agnikar (increase hunger), Vrisya, mitigates three doshas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Jivanti</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Dry, heavy</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>Chaksusya (good for eyes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Balmulak</td>
<td>Bitter</td>
<td>Light, hot</td>
<td>Hot</td>
<td>Pungent</td>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>Mitigates the doshas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Vastukam</td>
<td>Astringent</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>cold</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>Varchobhada (breaks up the hard faeces)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Haritaki</td>
<td>Chebulic Myrobalan</td>
<td>Five tastes except Lavana</td>
<td>Light, Ruksha</td>
<td>Ushana</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Dipani, pachani, budhiendriya balapradha (improves intelligence, strengthens the sense organs), Ayushya (best for long life)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Amalaki</td>
<td>emblic myrobalan</td>
<td>Sour, Dry</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Vrisya, Chaksusya, helps elimination of urine and faeces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Mrdvika</td>
<td>Dry grape Raisins</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Unctous, heavy</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Slightly astringent</td>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Vrisya, Chaksusya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Patola</td>
<td>Bitter</td>
<td>dry, heavy</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Pungent</td>
<td>Vegetable</td>
<td>Hridya (good for the heart), Krumihar (destroys the worms), ruchiprada (gives taste)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mudga</strong></td>
<td>Green gram</td>
<td>Sweet, astringent</td>
<td>Light, cold</td>
<td>Cold</td>
<td>Pungent</td>
<td>Pulses</td>
<td></td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sangrahi (absorbs water), mitigate fat, kapha, blood and pitta.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. **Sarkara**  
Sugar  
Sweet  
Heavy,  
Cold  
Sweet  
Sugar  
Vrisya, Bruhana (promoting body bulk),

16. **Ghrita**  
cow Butter fat  
Sweet  
Unctous, heavy  
Cold  
Sweet  
Fat  
Vayasthapan (retaining of youth), improving intelligence, memory, long life, good for eyes,

17. **Divyodak**  
Rain water  
Sweet  
light  
Cold  
Sweet  
Water  
Jivaniya (enlivening), tarpana(satiating), healthy for heart and mind, refreshing, stimulating the intellect

18. **Kshira**  
cow Milk  
Sweet  
Unctous, heavy  
Cold  
Sweet  
Milk  
Ojasa (invigorating increase the tissues of the body), mitigate vata and pitta, aphrodisiac.

19. **Ksoudra**  
Honey  
Sweet, astringent  
Dry  
Hot  
Sweet  
Honey  
Good for eyes, chhedi (breaks up hard masses), decreases kapha.

20. **Dadim**  
Pomegranate  
Sweet, sour  
Light, unctuous  
Not very hot  
Sweet  
Fruits  
Mitigates vata and kapha, Hridya, ghrahi, rochan dipanam (stimulate appetite and digestion

21. **Sandhava**  
Salt  
salty  
light  
not hot in potency  
slightly sweet  
salt  
Vrisya, Hridya, Mitigates all doshas, pathya, avidhahi (not causes burning sensation during digestion), kindles digestion.
DISCUSSION

Dravya pradhanya (Importance of substance)- Dravya (Substance) is Panchabhatatmaka (composed of, born from the five elements).\[^{11}\] Achrya Susruta described Prana (Vital energy) depends upon the Ahara and Ahara is dependent upon the Rasa.\[^{12}\]

Any Dravyas or food articles function according to their quality like Rasa (tastes), Guna (quality), Virya (potency), Vipaka (taste at the end of digestion) and Prabhava (special effect). Among these all, Rasa is given prime importance.

Substance clearly manifest is designated as rasa.\[^{13}\]

Shadrasatmaka ahara consists of proper quantity of Madhura (sweet), Amla (sour), Lavana (salty), Katu (Puungent), Tikta (bitter) and Kashaya (astringent) rasas and each one is more strengthen to the body in their order of priority.\[^{14}\]

In Ayurvedic classics, many wholesome food articles are described. Vaghabhatacarya has given special Shilaye (regular use) food which is most wholesome and advised to consume regularly. Most of the Food articles under shilayet ahar are Madhura rasa (Sweet in taste).

Rasas get formed from the preponderance of two Bhutas. Madhura rasa is Parthiva (earthy) and Apya (watery).\[^{15}\]

Sweet is understood by its adhering to the inside of the mouth when put into it, providing a feeling of pleasure to the body and comfort to the sense organs.\[^{16}\]

It being familiar since birth (aajanma satmaya) produces greater strength in the dhatus (tissues), is very valuable for children, the aged, the wounded the emaciated, is good for the colour complexion, hair, sense organs and Ojas (essence of the tissues), Bruhana (promoting body bulk), good for the throat. It helps life activities (Jeevana), Prolong life (Ayushakara), and mitigates Pitta and Vata.\[^{17}\]

Due to above mentioned qualities of sweet taste, majority of food articles advised by Vagbhata are madhura. Substance of sweet taste cause aggravation of Kapha but In sada shilayeta ahara all included food articles are exceptional food articles like old shali (rice), Yava (barly), Mudga (Green beans), Ghodhuma (wheat), Kshaudra (honey), Sita (sugar) and...
meat of animals of Jangal land (desert like) they mitigate Tridosha and maintain the equilibrium of Doshas.

Amla rasatmak dravyas cause aggravation of Pitta dosha, except Dadima (Pomegranate) and Amalaki (Amala) and only these two food articles are included in shilayet food so it will be beneficial for the maintenance of the equilibrium of doshas.

Salts are bad for the eyes (vision) except Saîndhava salt and only it is advised in practice as a regular food article.

Pungent and Bitter tastes are non aphrodisiacs and aggravate Vata except Patola which is included in shilayet food.

Astringents are usually cold in potency and have obstructive quality except Abhaya (haritaki) and it included in shilayet food.

Gunas (qualities) – Gunas actually pertain to the bhutas (elements) present in the substance and gunas are ascribed to the tastes because of intimate co-existence.[18]

Virya (potency) is of two types -mcold and hot. Qualities of dravya also depend on virya. Dravya with cold potency nourishes the body, causes Jivana (activities of life), and production. Most of the advised food comes under cold potency. Except Saîndhav salt (Anushna) and Haritaki hot in potency but it has (vayasthana) rejuvenation quality.[19]

Vipaka, According to Vagbhatacharya, Rasao raso Tulyaphala. It menace Vipaka also works like Rasa.[20]

Foods articles are advised in practice repeatedly are in Madhura rasatmak and above quote vipak is also Madhura and it works like madhura rasa. Madhura vipaka (taste at the end of digestion) nourished dhatus qualitatively as well as quantitatively.

Prabhava is the special quality of dravyas which act according to their special Guna. In shilayet food Yava, Ghee, Moong, Dadim, and Haritaki are the dravyas work according to their special quality (prabhav).[21]

CONCLUSIONS
1. One who consume daily healthy foods, become free from all diseases.[22]
2. Review of shilayet dravya i.e. wholesome diet according to Vagbhatacharya shows that diet should include all six tastes and sweet is prominent.

3. Guna (quality), Virya (potency), Vipaka (taste at the end of digestion), and Prabhava (special effect) all equally support for maintenance of health and prevention of disease to achieve the life’s aim.

4. Shilayet dravya i.e. wholesome diet certainly helps in prevention of lifestyle disorders by maintenance of balance of dosha-dhatu-mala.

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