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## Tridosha in Context of Living Organisms

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### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* is a systematic and exceptional knowledge of life which is based on comprehension of law of nature unveiled by empirical understanding. It preaches about amelioration in every aspect of human life, treatment as well as social wellness too. *Tridosha* theory is the unique fortitude of *Ayurveda*, which refers to three humors i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. These are present in even the subtle particle of universe, in the form of *Panchamahabhuta* (*Prithvi*, *Jala*, *Agni*, *Vayu* and *Akasha*). All physiological and biological functions of human body are regulated by these *Tridosha*. Irrefragable opinion of modern Biologists is that all living organisms exhibit Movement, Respiration, Sensitivity, Growth, Reproduction, Excretion and ability to convert food into energy as essential characteristics. There are roles of *Tridosha* in the manifestation of these characteristic feature. In present article the role of *Tridosha* will be discussed in terms of regulation and expression of these characteristics distinction in living being.

### KEYWORDS

*Vata*, *Pitt*, *Kapha*, *Ayurveda*, *Dosha*, *Tridosha*



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## INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is the science of living organism especially meant for the wellbeing of mankind, still practiced in India since ages. It has aim to provide the *Sukha* in existing life and beyond the life too<sup>1</sup>. So it is obvious that it deals the science related to life and lifespan. It has some conspicuous theories which frame-up the essence of *Ayurveda*, in which *Tridosha* is the pivotal theory. Body is constituted by *Akasha*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Ap* and *Prithvi Mahabhuta* which are known as *Panchamahabhuta*<sup>2</sup>. when these *Panchamahabhuta* comes in contact with *Atma*, and thereafter they are activated to execute their specific functions in three forms which are reckoned as *Tridosha* i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. In fact the three *Bhutas Vayu*, *Agni* and *Jala* become in operative form due to contact of *Chetana* and carry out its functions with association of other *Mahabhutas*. When these *Bhutas* acquired active form associated with other are known as *Dosha* individually and collectively as *Tridosha*. Actually these three are responsible for maintenance of the all biological functions and sustain the body in healthy state in normal physiological circumstances. When there is dissolution in equilibrium condition between *TriDoshas* i.e. in aggravated or diminution state of any

of the *Dosha*, begins to impede the natural execution of the body cell functions.

## MATERIALS & METHODS

Before writing the article relevant literatures have been reviewed and studied meticulously, specially, all the major scriptures of *Āyurveda* like *Bṛihatrayi* (*Caraka Samhita*, *Suśruta Samhita*, *Āstanga Hṛdaya*) and *Laghutrayi* (*Śārangadhara Samhita*, *Bhavaprakāśa*, *Mādhava Nidana*). Other than these scriptures *Vedas*, *Purānas*, *Upaniśadas*, *Sanskṛta* Dictionaries, online Articles also have been looked into for subject related information and explanation. On the basis of all information and collected data subject has been discussed with knowledgeable persons and after discussing systematically it has been concluded in brief. Biological Characters of all living Being and Functions of *Tridosha* can be co-related. Comparing functions of *Tridosha* with Biological characters the role of *Tridosha* in living being could be explained.

## LITERARY REVIEW

These *Tri Doshas* are classified in two groups. First group which present in active form and self activities are manifested as movement of various body part as well as



micro particle at cellular level and may be considered as form of energy. Second one is *Pangu* i.e. lame, this group of *Doshas* are recognized as inactive and supposed to be activated under influence of first group of *Dosha* and may be regarded as form of mass. *Vata* belongs to first group while *Pitta* and *Kapha* are known as *Pangu*. It has been also mentioned that *Vata* regulates, activates of *Pitta* and *Kapha* along with *Dhatu*. (*Pittah Pangu Kaphah Pangu PangavoMalDhatavaah*<sup>3</sup>). Etymologically *Vata* has meaning of motion, movement and initiation of knowledge, *Pitta* is concern with heat generation, while *Kapha* is related with lubrication and instrumentality of adhesion. It has been enumerated the functions of *Pitta* and *Kapha* are as same as *Agni* (Fire) and *Soma* (Water) in universe and execute tantamount functions in the body. This spirit has been described as *Agni Somitvat Jagat* means whole world is made up of *Agni* and *Soma*. *Agni* and *Soma* execute their functions in form of *Pitta* and *Kapha* respectively in living body. *Vata* is manifested as its action which is responsible for the performance of *Agni* to accomplish the function of metamorphosis. Eventually the performance of *Agni* would generate energy required for locomotory function of the body system for instance steam engine. Appropriate contact of air, water and fire

generates power capable train set into motion. The all the principles of *Ayurveda* revolve around this *Tridosha* theory which is related to patho-physiological phenomenon. In physiological (equilibrium) state *Doshas* are liable to sustain and maintain body while in pathological (disequilibrium) condition these are responsible for *Samavayi* (inherent) cause of each and every disease decidedly.

**Theory of Samya (Equilibrium):** - *Acharya Vagbhatta* has been stated that *Doshasamyam Arogyata*<sup>4</sup> and *Acharya Charaka* inscribed “*VikaroDhatu Vaishamya*”<sup>5</sup>, while describing the health and disease. *Samyavastha* is balanced and normal state of *Doshas* leading to health. Amount of *Pitta* and *Kapha* could be assessed since these are present in tangible state in body even at cellular level on the contrary *Vata* is operating latently (*Avyakta*) so it is far-fetched to achieve quantitative assessment. Quantity of *Vata* could only be estimated by observing its function. In reference of different states of *TriDoshas*, *Charaka* has stated *Kshaya*, *Vridhhi* and *Sthana*. Term *Sthana* denotes the balanced state of *Dosha* or *Samyavastha*. Three *Doshas* have opposite properties or antagonistic properties to each other i.e. *Vata* has *Ruksha* (dry), *Laghu* (light), *Chala* (agile), *Sheet* (cold),



*Sukchm*(Subtle)properties whilst *Kapha* possessed with *Snigdha* (oleaginous),*Guru*(heavy),*Sthira*(stable)properties.*Vata* has *Ashu*(expeditious) Guna whereas *kapha* has *Manda*(dull)Guna.*Pitta* charecterized by *Ushna*(warm) *Guna* while *Vata* endowed with *sheeta*(cold)*Guna*.*Pitta* attributed with *Tikshna*(sharpness),*Sara* etc. While disposition of *Kapha* are *Manda*(dull), *Sthira*(stable)etc.<sup>6</sup>Although all the three *Doshas* attributed with opposite characters, nevertheless they comply their normal function separately to control over the various system of body. *Dosha* execute pre-determined action on behalf of their own. If *Doshas* move to other place from their predestined place due to aggravation that will be eventuated into abnormal or pathological state. To understand the functions of *Doshas* straight forwardly, example of Family of Lord *Shiva* could be taken. There are snake adorned as garland of Lord *Shiva*, Peacock is vehicle of *Kartikeyan* and Mouse as vehicle of *Ganesh*a. These animals have opposite ethos to each other. Snake is enemy of Mouse while Peacock is enemy of Snake but snake remains hanging around the neck of *Shiva* and remaining two are dwelling on the ground. So they live together peacefully with their contrary temper. Simulating that *Tridosha* have opposite characters but resides together in

body in their own determined venue. This is the *Samyavastha*(balanced state)of *Doshas* and hold the body. The normal state of all three *Doshas* is essential for *Samyavastha*. Decrement or aggravation of any *Dosha* affects the functioning of other, in this state it is denominated as *Dosha* (contaminant).In fact a balanced state of *Gurvadi Gunas*(physical attributes) of *Doshas*, in general maintained through *Ahara-Vihara* (life style) is the *Samyavastha*.

Biological Characters of living beings and Functions of *Tridosha* could be co-related. Juxtaposing the functions of *Tridosha* with biological characters the role of *Tridosha* in living being could be explained.

#### **Biological characters and *Tridosha* :** -

These three *Doshas* i.e.*Vata*,*Pitta* and *Kapha*, carry out all the normal physiological functions of the body. Any type of movements, locomotor's actions,transportationofsubstances,sense,communication,conductivity,impulsivity,permeability,sensivity,circulation,elimination ,respiration,thoughtare presumed as affairs of *Vata*.*Vata* is essential for cellular division, cellular organisation and formation of tissues apart from these functions, *Vata* plays important role in the formation and determination of shape of the embryo. It also determines the rate of metabolism by controlling over the amount



of action as well as function of *Pitta*. Considering these facts *Vayu* could be regarded as determinant factor responsible for manifestation of biological characteristics in living being. Consciousness is prime feature of all living beings and *Vayu* is capable to do this with the assistance of *Atma*(soul) as a carriage (“*AyushoAnuvritti*”). Ancient *Ayurvedic* treaties mentioned the *Vata* as “*Sarvadhatuvyuhkara*”<sup>7</sup> means *Vata* has specific function of cellular organization which is the prime characteristics of life. Furthermore the “*Vata*” keeps the body constituents *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Dhatu*s etc in their natural form and determined seat. In other words *Vata* is causative factor for growth, development and organization of body. Procreation or breeding is a fundamental process of all living beings, by this biological process new individual organism are produced from their parents. Each individual organism exists as a result of reproduction. Reproduction is performed by *Vata* with the help of *Kapha*, *kapha* is *Shukra* and *Shukra* is placed in *Kapha Varga* in *Harivansha Purana* (*Kaphavarge Tu Bhavet Shukram Pitta Varge Tu Shonitam*<sup>10</sup>). *Rakt*, *Artava* is grouped into *Pitta Varga*. At the time of fertilization *Shukras* have to travel from vagina and *Shonita* from ovary to fallopian tube resulting into union of *Shukra-Shonita*,

eventually there is formation of an embryo. This movement of *Shukra* and *Shodit* occurs due to self-activity of *Vata*. The *Samyoga-Vibhaga* (union and separation) is also performed by “*Vata*”. It has been indicated in *Ayurvedic* texts that; *Tridosha* has great role in reproduction so the reproduction process could be expounded on the basis of *Tridosha*. Metabolism is very important life process, so it has been considered as specific characteristic of life. This process is regarded as *Agni Kriya* in *Ayurveda*. *Kapha* is *Chayatmaka* means its role is anabolic while *Pitta* has role of catabolic functions in body. *Pitta* is very important as far as metabolism is concerned; there is no metabolism without the existence of *Agni*. *Vata* stimulates and initiates the metabolic activity by providing the substantiality to *Agni*. *Vata* has vital role in both process, to perceive and response to the stimuli. There are several references in *Charaka Samhita* mentioning the special functions of *Vata* as *Pravartakashcheshtaanam*, *Sarvendriyanamudyojakah*, *Sarvendriyaanamaabhivodha*<sup>7</sup>, which means *Vata* initiates *Indriyas* along with *Manas* to perceive the stimuli and acquiring the knowledge. Therefore it can be concluded that all the response to stimuli in biological system is the function of *Vata*. Respiration is directly related to *Vata*



*Dosha*. Inspiration and expiration is explicit function of *Vata* as *Prana* and *Apana Vayu*. Growth and development is the function of *Vata Dosha* but there is important role of *Kapha* along with *Pitta* as an essential component. The adaptation function is performed through *Kapha*.

*Ayurveda* has envisaged the characteristics of *Atman* as characteristics of life. *Charaka* has stated that the *Lakshanas* of *Atman* exist in living organism not in non-living<sup>8</sup>, the *Atman Lakshanas*<sup>9</sup> can be equated with the biological characteristics feature for animate which are described as *PranApana* (Respiration), *Nimeshayda* (Involuntary movement of eyelids), *Jivana* (Life), *Manaso Gati* (Activity of *Manas*), *IndiyantaraSanchachariPreranam Dharanam Chayat* (Perceiving and response to the stimuli through senses), *Deshantar Gamana* (travelling in dreams), *Ichchh* (Desire), *Dweshha* (Hate), *Sukha* (Happiness), *Dukha* (Misery), *Prayatna* (Initiation for work), *Chetana* (Consciousness), *Dhriti* (Power of retention of knowledge), *Buddhi* (Intellect), *Smriti* (Memory), *Ahamkara* (Egoism).

The Above mentioned *Lakshanas* (features) are considered as *Lakshanas* or Characteristics of living being. In absence of *Atman* animates will be declared dead. Indisputably, the above *Lakshanas* are regarded as the *Atman Lakshana*

nevertheless these *Lakshanas* are appeared through *Tridosha* in body. Because *Tridosha* exists in living beings devoid of this substance is considered as dead.

*Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha* all have role is these *Lakshanas* but main role is played by *Vata Dosha* since it is accountable for movement and function or action. In reference of function of *Vata* it has been stated that *Vata* is responsible to carry on sustainability and maintenance of the life (*AyushoAnuvrittiPrtyayaBhuto*<sup>7</sup>). A unique *Lakshana* of *Atman* is mentioned as *Jivana* (Life). *Yogendranath Sen* has explained the *Jivana* as “*Jeevana Paden Tat Karya Vriddhi Kshat Bhagna Sanrohanadikam Lakshyate*”<sup>9</sup> (Characteristic of living being is healing action of any type in the body). This dictum candidly throw the light that metabolic process continuously occurs in the living system which is recognised through *Vriddhi* which could be compared with anabolic process, cell proliferation and regeneration, responsible for wound healing in case of fracture etc. All these phenomena are executed through all three *Doshas* i.e. *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*. *Agni* or *Pitta* is responsible for catatabolic process liable for devastation and the pus formation owing to its inherent metamorphic power. Adherence of cells into tissues, tissues into organs, organs into whole body and hypertrophy is the function of *Kapha*.



Formation of complex molecules occurs in the body due to Anabolic capacitance of *Kapha* consequently *KaphaDosha* is acknowledged as *Chayatmaka*<sup>12</sup>.

## DISSCUSSION

*Tridosha* exist in only living body not in dead. After death only *Panchamahabhuta* remains there, whenever the *Chetana Dhatu* conjugated with *Panchamahbhuta* resulted into exhortation of three *Mahabhutas Vayu, Agni* and *Jala* to build and sustain the body. These three *Mahabhutas* are composed of *Panchamahabhuta* due to endowment of other *Mahabhuta* in moderation. These three *Vayu, Agni* and *Jala* transformed into *Tridosha*; activates *Vayu Mahabhuta* with the help of other *Mahabhutas* and becomes as *Vata Dosha*. *Agni Mahabhuta* with help of other *Mahabhutas* change into *Pitta Dosha*. *Jalamahabhuta* with the help of other *Mahabhuta* takes the form of *Kapha Dosha*. Conclusively it may be mentioned that *Chetana Dhatu, Panchamahabhuta* converted into *Tridosha* from functional point of view. *Panchamahabhuta* are structural constituent of body while its active form known as *Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*. Undoubtedly these *Tridosha* exist only in living organism. All biological characters of living being appear due to

activity of *Tridosha*. It manifests characteristics of life through *Indriyas*. *Indriyas* are instrumental to exhibit the characteristics of life. Maximum characteristics are displayed by *Vata Dosha* chiefly because of its dynamic property, so it has synonym of *Kriya*, *Gati* or movement. Internal process of *Agnikarma* (digestion and generation of energy) is accomplished by *Pitta* and *Kapha* with help of *Vata*. This *Agnikarma* results in anabolic and catabolic activity of living organism. *Jivana* is considered as characteristics of living organism which has been denoted as *Vridhhi*. Although this term covers the all living organism along with some non livings. But in reference of human being and other living organism term *Vridhhi* has clearly been mentioned in context with metabolic process as instance (Dwibedy, Dwibedy, & Goswami) in healing of wound etc. where cells regenerates. Therefore in the reference of living organism *Jivana* can be expounded as growth and development. This biological process is performed by *Kapha* and *Pitta* along with *VataDosha*.

## CONCLUSION

*Tridosha* exist only in living body. In non-living *Tridosha* doesn't exist. All characteristics of living organism are reflection of function of *Tridosha* along



with *Chetan Dhatu* in which *Vata Dosha* play pivotal role.



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