

## A panoramic review of 'Concept of *Prakriti*' in ancient Indian literature

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### Abstract

The word '*Prakriti*' is the amalgamation of two words, '*Pra*' and '*Kriti*'. The letter '*Pra*' as suffix stands for pre or prior or before while the word '*Kriti*' stands for 'to make' that means which is primary which proceeds what is made. '*Prakriti*' is one amongst the major concepts of Ayurveda, which is adopted from Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and Darshanas. The insights of Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, Darshanas and other preliminary literature of ancient India revealed that '*Prakriti*' is *Avyakta Tattva*, an invisible phenomenon, the controller of entire universe, an equipoise of *Trigunas* (*Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*) and all the living beings are originated from it. On the other hand, the concept of *Prakriti* has been delineated in a clinical perspective in Ayurveda, which suggests '*Prakriti*' is *Swabhava* or nature or constitution of an individual, determined at the time of conception and remains unchanged throughout the life, any alterations in *Prakriti* cause imminent death. Every individual is a unique with their *Prakriti*. It distinguishes himself/herself anatomically, physiologically, psychologically and sociologically. The assessment of *Prakriti* is the foremost one in *Dashavidha Parikshas* (Ten-fold examination of a patient), which not only helps in the maintenance of health but also in the management of diseases. Keeping this in view, the present work has been taken to explore the different perspectives of concept of *Prakriti* dealt in Vedas, Upanishads, Darshanas and the treatises of Ayurveda in order to reveal the evolution of the *Prakriti* concept in ancient Indian literature.

**Keywords:** ayurveda, darshana, *Prakriti*, upanishad, veda

### Introduction

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life has its roots in Vedas, Puranas, and Darshanas as the majority of the theories have been adopted from them. The concept of *Prakriti* is one amongst them. Ayurveda possesses a unique identity in defining some distinct principles in which *Prakriti* is one. Assessment of *Prakriti* is the first and foremost factor in *Dashavidha parikshas* (10 important aspects to be examined by a physician), which are very essential to assess the strength of an individual and the contribution of each *Dosha* in the causation of disease <sup>[1]</sup>. It is also essential for every physician for the appropriate selection of the drug or therapeutic procedure, determination of the drug dosage, mode of administration, and in prescribing wholesome, unwholesome diets and lifestyle. It not only helps in the prediction of a disease susceptibility but also in the estimation of disease severity or prognosis in an individual <sup>[2]</sup>. In ancient times, the seers and sages were greatly enthusiastic about the origin of *Srishti* (creation), *Tattwas* (realms) of *Srishti*, death, birth, re-birth, *Moksha*, etc. All the students of ancient times were bound to study all the subjects, viz. *Shabda vidya* (grammar and literature), *Shilpa vidya* (training in arts and crafts including mathematics), *Chikitsa vidya* (science of medicine), *Hetu vidya* (logic and philosophy), *Adhyatma vidya* (spiritual science), which are essential to acquire the complete knowledge. Acharya Sushruta stated that if a person studies a single science, he never gets the complete and real knowledge of medicine. He

must know about the allied sciences and philosophy as possible to complete and determinative knowledge of a topic or subject <sup>[3]</sup>. For in depth understanding of any concept, the study of its origin in history is always essential in the form of historical review. The historical review involves the careful study and analysis of past events. It is a critical investigation of events, their development, and experiences of the past. The purpose of historical review is to gain a clear understanding of the impact of past on the present and future events related to the life process <sup>[4]</sup>. Keeping the above facts in view, the present review work has been taken with the following aims and objectives.

### Aim and Objectives

- To explore the concept of *Prakriti* in ancient Indian literature.
- To analyze the different perspectives of *Prakriti* in various ancient works of Vedic, Pauranika, Darshanika periods and in the available Ayurveda literature.

### Materials and Methodology

To fulfil the aim and objectives of the present review, the available literature of Pre-Vedic period, Vedic period, Pauranika period, Darshanika period, and the available treatises of Ayurveda were thoroughly screened manually, analysed, and presented the archives of *Prakriti* in a systematic manner. The topic related information available on internet were also compiled, analysed and presented.

## Observations

The literature dealt with the various aspects of *Prakriti* has been described accordingly as under:

### Pre-Vedic period

Earlier to the Vedic period (i.e. 500 B.C.), there was not found any evidence, so it is difficult to trace out any facts that could suggest the knowledge of conception of *Prakriti* in Pre-Vedic period.

### Vedic period

Vedic literature is the earliest works in the world, where the word '*Prakriti*' has been used in some instances, in the context of 'Godly power,' an invisible power that is the controller of the universe. There is no explicit reference of *Prakriti* in Rigveda and Yajurveda, but more specified in Atharvaveda, the word '*Viraj*' and '*Virat*' designate *Prakriti* [5]. A lot of description regarding *Prakriti* is seen in Atharvaveda and mentioned that *Prakriti* is force [6]. According to Atharvaveda, *Brahma Prakriti* is of three types [7]. *Panchamahabhutas* and *Mahat-tattva* have formed from this *Prakriti* [8]. *Sthula Prakriti* involves in *Sukshma Prakriti*, and this *Sukshma Prakriti* emerges from *Brahma* [9]. The word '*Prakriti*' rests on the stability of great *Maha Prakriti* [10]. This *Prakriti* is having octal origin and octal forms [11]. In Atharvaveda, it is advocated that to preserve human *Prakriti's* will power, three methods to be followed viz. *Adhidaivika*, *Adhibhautika*, and *Adhyatmika* which can be correlated with the three types of treatments mentioned in Ayurveda viz. *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*, *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa*, and *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* respectively [12].

### Pauranika Period

- In the third chapter of Matsya Purana i.e., *Srishtiprakaran*, it is stated that the equilibrium of *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas Gunas* is called *Prakriti*. The same *Prakriti* is *Pradhana*, *Avyakta* and *Maya*. The disturbance in these three *Gunas* initiates the creation of the entire world [13].
- In Brahmapurana, there is a separate section called '*Prakriti Khanda*,' in which the different explanations traced out about the *Prakriti*. During the creation of the universe, five types of *Prakriti* are mentioned as *Durga*, *Radha*, *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati*, and *Savitri* [14]. It is also quoted that, in the word '*Prakriti*,' '*Pra*' stands for '*Prakrishta*,' '*Kriti*' denotes the universe. Hence, '*Prakriti*' means the best goddess (best creation) of the universe [15]. The same literature also mentioned that the letter '*Pra*' denotes the best, i.e., *Sattva*, '*Kri*' denotes *Raja*, and '*Ti*' denotes the *Tamas* [16].
- The descriptions of '*Prakriti*' in Devibhagavata Purana were similar to the Brahmapurana descriptions.
- '*Pradhana*' and '*Prakriti*' were delineated as the thoughts of *Tattva* in Kurmamaha Purana. They were stated as *Sat* and *Asat*; *Avyakta* and *Nitya*, respectively. The '*Mula Prakriti Swarupa*' is stated as the initial goddess of the universe [17].
- In the third chapter of Brihatnara Purana, *Vidya* indicated as *Brahmi*, *Avidya* indicated as *Matra*, and *Prakriti* as *Para*. The *para*, which is *vyakta* *Avyakta*, cause of the universe. It is also quoted that *Prakriti*,

*Pumana* and *Kala* denote the cause of the universe, *Sthiti*, and *Vinasha*, respectively [18].

- Brief descriptions about *Prakriti* were found in several Puranas like Shivapurana, Bhavishya Purana, Vamana Purana, Vayu Purana etc. [19]
- In Vamana Purana, *Prakriti* is stated as '*Avyakta Tattva*,' which is *sat – asat* and *Nitya* [20].
- In Agni Purana, *Prakriti* is coined as the equipoise state of *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. It is *Pradhana* and related to the soul in the body [21]. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* types of *Deha-Prakriti* along with their characters are described for the first time in the Pauranika period. Besides, three types of *Manasa-Prakriti* viz. *Sattvika*, *Rajasika*, and *Tamasika* and their features are also described in the same chapter in a concise manner [22].

### Upanishad Period

- In Chhandogya Upanishad, Shankaracharya described that there are three types of *Prakriti* viz. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*, which are influenced by *Trigunas* as well as *Sukshmahbhutas* of *Prithvi*, *Ap*, and *Tejas*, which were attributed with three colors. *Lohita varna* is attributed to *Agni*, *Shukla varna* to *Jala*, and *Krishna varna* is attributed to *Anna*.
- The enormous description was traced out in Kathopanishad, in which *Avyakta* is described as '*Mula Prakriti*.' A separate description of *Deha-Prakriti* has been delineated in this work.

### Srimadbhagavadgita

- In the seventh chapter of Bhagavadgita, i.e., *Paramahansa Vignanayoga* (the knowledge of ultimate truth), during the description of eightfold of *Prakriti* (external energy of supreme god), it is stated that *Bhumi* (earth), *Ap* (water), *Anala* (fire), *Vayu* (air), and *Kham* (ether), *Manas* (mind), *Buddhi* (spiritual intelligence), and *Ahankara* (ego) are the eightfold divisions of *Prakriti* (god's external energy) [23]. Further, it is stated that this external energy (*Apara* type) is inferior, but superior to this, every individual should know another one i.e. marginal energy of supreme god (*Para* type) comprising the embodied souls of all living entities by which this material world is utilized. Everybody will be aware that every living thing is manifested by these two energies of god, who is the creator, the sustainer, and the destroyer of all the worlds [24].
- In the third chapter i.e. *Karma Yoga* (a chapter on the eternal duties of a Human being), it is stated that even a knowledgeable person acts according to his own nature, all the living entities are controlled by their own natures [25].

### Darshanikaperiod

In *Shad-Darshanas*, *Prakriti* is delineated in detail, especially in Samkhya Darshana. Which states that *Prakriti* means that which is primary, that which precedes what is made. It comes from '*Pra*' (before) and '*Kri*' (to make). It resembles the vedantika concept of *Maya*. Thus, the sense of unity is seen in the single source of origin of the world or material manifestation. It is called the Root, as *Pradhana*, in which all things are contained. It mentioned that *Prakriti* is the mother of all things. In this order, Maharshi Kapila has described three types of *Manasika Prakriti* lucidly [26].

## Samhita Period

In ayurvedic literature, the concept of *Prakriti* has been portrayed in both the philosophical as well as clinical perspectives.

### Charaka Samhita (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.)

- This treatise is conceived as the best one for general medicine in ayurvedic fraternity. In the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Sutrasthana, i.e., *Navegandharaniya adhyaya*, it is stated that some people may have an equilibrium state of all the three *Doshas* viz. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* since conception. Some may be having the dominancy of *Vata*; certain people may have the dominancy of *Pitta*, and some others have the dominancy of *Kapha*. Those belong to the first category i.e. having equilibrium state of all the three *Doshas* are always healthy, whereas the others are likely to invade diseases. The nomenclature of the body constitution is based on the dominancy of *Dosha* <sup>[27]</sup>.
- In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Sutrasthana, i.e., *Khuddaka Chatushpada adhyaya*, while defining the health and disease conditions, it is stated that the error in the equilibrium state of *Dhatu*s is known as a disease (*Vikara*), and their stable condition is known as health (*Prakriti*). Health is also known as happiness, and the disease is nothing but misery. In this context, '*Prakriti*' is the primary cause for the creation, which is nothing but a state of equilibrium of the three *Gunas*, viz. *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. In the medical system, however, *Vikara* and *Prakriti* are to be considered from a different perspective. Here, *Dhatu*s take the place of *Gunas*. *Dhatu*s comprises of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*; *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Medas*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Shukra* as well as three *Malas*, and *Rajas* & *Tamas*. Any deficiency or excess in the normal quantity of these *Dhatu*s results in *Vikara* or disease. The balanced state of all above mentioned *Dhatu*s is *Prakriti* means *Arogya* i.e., healthy status <sup>[28]</sup>.
- In the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of Sutrasthana i.e., *Mahachatushpada adhyaya*, Acharya Charaka has emphasized the importance of *Prakriti* in the prognosis of disease as stated that if the *Dosha*, *Dushya*, and body constitution are dissimilar, such diseases are easily curable. In contrast, the features of the season, body constitution, and *Dushya* are favorable to the disease; then, it will be difficult to manage <sup>[29]</sup>.
- In the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Sharirasthana i.e., *Katidhaapurushiya adhyaya*, *Prakriti* is stated as the foundation for a philosophical background <sup>[30]</sup>.
- In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Sharirasthana, it is said that *Loka* (philosophical base of *Prakriti*) and *Purusha* (human nature) are similar in many aspects. Further, it is said that the universe is made by *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*, *Panchamahabhutas*, and *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* <sup>[31]</sup>. The individual is an embodiment of the universe. All the material and spiritual phenomena of the universe are present in the individual and vice versa.
- In the same chapter, while describing the gender-specific characters in the fetus, it is stated that the senses and organs of the fetus are simultaneously manifested except the ones which are manifested only after birth such as teeth, secondary sexual characteristics like beard and breasts, signs of puberty like production of semen and ovum and same traits are developed later. This is the normalcy (*Prakriti*) and otherwise abnormal (*Vikriti*) <sup>[32]</sup>.
- Acharya Charaka has not only described the seven types of *Deha-Prakriti* but also described the sixteen types of *Manasa Prakriti* in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Sharirasthana. *Manasa Prakriti* is broadly divided into three types <sup>[33]</sup> (Three types of the psyche):
  - *Sattva* dominant psychic constitution: seven sub-types
  - *Rajas* dominant psychic constitution: six sub-types
  - *Tamas* dominant psychic constitution: three sub-types
- In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Vimanasthana, some scholars have opined that the use of terms like *Vata Prakriti*, *Pitta Prakriti*, and *Kapha Prakriti* is not correct because, in these types of constitutions, there is always a dominance of *doshas* in the individuals. *Prakriti* means a normal or natural state, and there should not be any dominance of *doshas* in such individuals. (No such individuals will present) So such individuals are dominating one or the other *doshas* cannot be described to have the normal state of their body. Thus, it is better to use the terms like *Vatala* (having the dominance of *Vata*), *Pittala* (having the dominance of *Pitta*), and *Shleshmala* (having the dominance of *Kapha*), and these do not indicate the normal state of their body <sup>[34]</sup>.
- In the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Vimanasthana, Acharya Charaka has said that the patient should be examined to determine his strength, lifespan, and morbidity. For which he enlisted *Dashavidha parikshas* (ten-fold examination) consists of *Prakriti* (the constitution), *Vikriti* (morbidity), *Sara* (the constitution of *Dhatu*), *Samhanana* (compactness), *Pramana* (measurement), *Satmya* (suitability), *Sattva* (psyche), *Aharashakti* (power of intake and digestion of food), *Vyayamashakti* (power of exercise) and *Vaya* (age) for the knowledge of the degree of strength <sup>[35]</sup>.
- Further, it is stated that the *Deha-Prakriti* of a fetus will be determined by the constitution of sperm and ovum, the time of conception and condition of the uterus, diet and lifestyle of the mother (during pregnancy) and interaction of *Mahabhutas*. *Dosha*, one or more than one, which predominates in these factors, gets attached to the fetus, which is called the physical or *Doshika* constitution (*Dosha Prakriti*) of human beings, which is emerged from the initial stage of the fetus. So, due to the predominance of a specific *dosha*, some may be *Shleshmala* (having the predominance of *Kapha*), some may be *Pittala* (having the predominance of *Pitta*), some may be *Vatala* (having the predominance of *Vata*), some may have combined *Doshas* and some balanced *dhatu*s. Their respective characteristics are detailed in the further verses of the same chapter <sup>[36]</sup>.
- In the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Indriyasthana, Acharya Charaka has enlisted six factors responsible for the natural constitution. They are *Jati* (origin as per social structure), *Kula* (race), *Desha* (place), *Kala* (time and season), *Vaya* (age), *Pratyatmaniyata* (individual habits and habitat) <sup>[37]</sup>.

### Sushruta Samhita (2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.)

- It is the best treatise for the surgical as well as para-surgical aspects in ayurvedic field. In spite of them, the fundamental principles are also dealt in an elaborated manner, in which the concept of *Prakriti* is dealt in both the philosophical as well as clinical views.



- In the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Sharirasthana, 'Prakriti' is the progenitor of all created things, imaged of eightfold categories viz. *Avyakta*, *Mahat*, *Ahankara*, and *Panchatanmatras*. It is self-begotten and connotes the three fundamental or primary virtues of *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*<sup>[38]</sup>.
- In the same chapter, it is also asserted that *Swabhava*, *Ishwara* (God), *Kala* (time), *Yadriccha* (sudden and unlocked for appearances of the phenomena), *Niyati* (necessity), and *Parinama* (transformation) are the primary causes of all the things<sup>[39]</sup>.
- Acharya Sushruta has clearly stated that the worms whose habitat is a poison do not get affected by it. Similarly, persons whose *Prakriti* is composed of particular *doshas* do not get affected by the *Prakriti* of an individual is 'Swabhava,' it never altered through the entire life. A change, abatement, and deterioration in any condition should be regarded as the harbinger of death<sup>[40]</sup>.
- In this chapter only, seven types of *Doshaja* temperaments<sup>[41]</sup>, five types of constitutions as per the predominance of *Panchamahabhutas*,<sup>[42]</sup> three types of psychic constitutions and their subtypes along with their characteristics<sup>[43]</sup> have been described in a detailed way.

#### Ashtanga Sangraha (6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)<sup>[44]</sup>

- In this treatise, the author has allocated a special chapter in Sharirasthana i.e., 'Prakritibhedhiya' exclusively to describe the different types of constitutions and their features lucidly and also simplified the statements of Acharya Charaka and Sushruta.
- In this chapter, seven types of *Deha-Prakriti* (*Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, *Vata-Pittaja*, *Pitta-Kaphaja*, *Vata-Kaphaja*, *Sama*), seven types of *Manasa Prakriti* (*Sattvika*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*, *Sattva-Rajas*, *Rajas-tamasa*, *Sattva-Tamas*, *Sattva-Rajas-Tamas*), and seven types of *Prakriti* (viz. *Jati*, *Kula*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Vaya*, *Bala*, and *Atma*) were described. Further, it is stated that because of the inter-relationship between *Deha* and *Manas*, they are innumerable due to their permutations and combinations.

#### Ashtanga Hridaya (7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)<sup>[45]</sup>

- In this treatise also, seven types of *Deha-Prakriti*, seven types of *Manasa-Prakriti* were described by considering the textual references of Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Sharirasthana i.e., 'Angavibhagasharira'

#### Kashyapa Samhita (6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

- In this compendium, *Prakriti* has been described in *Lehadhyaya* of Sutrasthana. The development of the human constitution is described through the same methods from the *Garbha*. They are of three types viz. *Vata Sthuna*, *Pitta Sthuna*, and *Shleshma sthuna*.<sup>[46]</sup>
- In the *Shishyopakramaniya adhyaya* (1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Vimanasthana), all the traits or phenotypic characters of different *Deha-Prakritis* were described<sup>[47]</sup>.
- In the 28<sup>th</sup> chapter of Vimanasthana i.e. *Lakshanadhyaya*, three types of *Sattva*, along with their subtypes, their characteristics were discussed in a detailed manner<sup>[48]</sup>.

#### Harita Samhita (6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

- In the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Prathamasthana, i.e., *Doshaprakopana Adhyaya*, four types of *Deha-Prakriti*, and their characteristics have been described comprehensively, and also emphasized the importance of assessment of *Prakriti* in the treatment<sup>[49]</sup>.
- It is also stated that the *Madhyama Prakriti* people will have *Sthula kaya* and *Balishtha*; *Uttama Prakriti* people will be embedded with *Sattvaguna*, and they are *Balavanta* (more than the *Madhyama Prakriti*)<sup>[50]</sup>.

#### Bhela Samhita (7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

- In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Vimanasthana of this literature i.e. 'Rogaprakriti Vinischaya', Acharya Bhela has recruited 'Prakriti' as an examination factor, which is to be assessed in the patient by a physician before prescribing the treatment.
- In the same chapter, the author has illustrated the *Prakriti* in detail, resembles the statements of Charaka Samhita. Constitutions have been distinguished as *Pravara* (excellent) - *Ekadoshaja* (predominance of one *dosha*), *Madhyama* (medium)- *Dwandwaja* (predominance of two *doshas*), and *Avara* (inferior)- a mixed type of all *doshas*.<sup>[51]</sup>

#### Siddhasara Samhita (7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

- In the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of this medieval work, i.e., *Tantra*, the features of seven types of *Deha-Prakriti* were mentioned very briefly<sup>[52]</sup>.

#### Vrindamadhava (9<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

- In the 81<sup>st</sup> chapter of the compendium, i.e., *Swasthadhikara*, the characteristics of seven types of *Deha-Prakriti* were stated in a very short form<sup>[53]</sup>.

#### Vangasena (12<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

- In the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of the treatise, i.e., *Nidanadhikara*, seven types of *Deha-Prakriti* and five types of *Bhautika Prakriti* were described in a concise form. It will depend upon the sperm and ovum of parents, food habits, and regimen followed by the mother and the status of the *Garbhashaya*<sup>[54]</sup>.

#### Sharangadhara Samhita (13<sup>th</sup>- 14<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

- In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Purva Khanda* i.e., *Sharire Aharadigati adhyaya*, seven types of *Deha-Prakriti* have been delineated in a succinct manner.
- The *Vataja Deha-Prakriti* individuals will have *Alpa-kesha* (less hair), *Krishha-Deha* (emaciated body structure), *Ruksha-Twak* (rough or dry skin), *Vachala* (talkative), *Chala-manasa* (fickle minded), and *Akashacharo Swapneshu* (dreams as flying in the space). The *Pittaja Deha-Prakriti* features are *Akala Palita* (premature greying of hair), *Dhiman* (good in nature), *Swedo* (profuse sweaty), *Roshana* (furious), and *Swapneshuu Jyotisham Drashita* (sees stars and other bright objects in the dreams). The *Kaphaja Prakriti* people will have *Gambhira Buddhi* (deep minded), *Sthulanga* (large bodied), *Snigdha-kesha* (smooth haired), *Mahabala* (exceedingly strong), and *Swapneshu Jalashayaloki* (sees water reservoirs in the dreams). These descriptions indicate that the characters

mentioned under each *Doshaja Prakriti* are five or six in number and they are more practical oriented<sup>[55]</sup>.

#### Bhavaprakasha (16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

- In the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of Purva Khanda, i.e., *Bala Prakarana*, seven types of *Deha-Prakriti* (*Ekadoshaja-3*, *Dwidoshaja-3*, *Samatridoshaja-1*) have been described in an elaborative manner.
- It is also stated that the constitutions, though contrary to each other, can not show any visible impact just like a worm that is borne in poisonous substances is not affected by that poison<sup>[56]</sup>.

#### Yogaratanakara (17<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.)

- In the *Purvardha* part, under *Prakriti Prakarana*, seven types of *Deha-Prakriti*, along with their features are stated succinctly<sup>[57]</sup>.

#### Discussion

Before Vedic period, it is not easy to trace any evidence that could suggest the knowledge of the concept of *Deha-Prakriti*. In Vedic literature, the earliest one globally, the word '*Prakriti*' has been used in many contexts. In which '*Prakriti*' stands for Godly power, an invisible power that controls the universe. In a verse of Rigveda, it is stated that *Prakriti* is that inborn or inherent quality, which is influenced by *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamo Gunas*. In Atharva Veda, *Prakriti* is stated as '*Virat*' and '*Viraj*', which means the supreme power. Hence, *Prakriti* has been dealt with only in a philosophical manner until the Samhita period.

In the Pauranicka period, most of the Puranas treated *Prakriti* in the philosophical perspective only. *Prakriti* is mentioned as the supreme God, responsible for the creation of the universe, the *Avyakta-Tattwa*. In Agni-Purana, *Deha-Prakriti*, along with its types, three types of *Manasa-Prakriti* were described in a detailed manner.

In the Upanishad period, Chhandogya Upanishad stated that three types of *Deha-Prakriti* would be influenced by *Trigunas* and minute forms of *Prithvi*, *Ap*, and *Tejas*. Kathopanishad quoted that *Mula-Prakriti* is *Avyakta*. *Prakriti* has been stated as the creator of the universe or the mother of all things in Bhagavadgita, and Samkhya-Darshana. In the ayurvedic literature, *Prakriti* has been depicted in both ways, i.e., philosophical as well as therapeutic perspectives.

The detailed description of *Deha-Prakriti* is seen since the Samhita period, which envelopes its clinical importance, need, practical utility, and applied knowledge in therapeutics. Charaka Samhita, an authentic treatise for ayurvedic clinical practice, emphasized *Deha-Prakriti* in the realm of clinical practice. It is stated that the equilibrium status of three *doshas* is health status, whereas the disturbance is responsible for the manifestation of diseases. *Deha-Prakriti* of an individual is confirmed at the time of fertilization, which is unchangeable throughout life. However, it is influenced by *Jati*, *Kula*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Vaya*, and *Pratyatmaniyata*. Acharya Sushruta has described the characteristic features of *Deha-Prakriti*, based on the behaviour of different types of animals, as the treatise deals with the surgical aspects. *Deha-Prakriti* has a crucial role in the susceptibility and prognosis of the disease. Assessment of *Deha-Prakriti* has been allocated first place among *Dashavidha parikshas* (ten-folds of examination). The characteristics of each *Deha-Prakriti* have been narrated

based on the attributes of each *dosha*<sup>[58]</sup>. Acharya Sushruta has included more *Manasa* factors than Acharya Charaka and also described the different types of sleep patterns in different *Deha-Prakriti* individuals. The change of *Deha-Prakriti* is considered as '*Arishta-Lakshana*' (sign of imminent death). Acharya Sushruta has enlisted various animal behaviours under the characters of each *Doshaja Prakriti*. Acharya Vriddha Vagbhata (author of Ashtanga Samgraha) has incorporated opinions of both the preceding acharyas i.e. Charaka and Sushruta while dealing with the phenotypic characteristics of different types of *Deha-Prakriti* individuals. He also stated that the types of *Deha-Prakriti* are innumerable with their permutations and combinations. Vagbhata, the author of Ashtanga Hridaya, has followed the statements of Charaka and Sushruta.

Acharya Sharangadhara has mentioned the attributes of different physical constitutions of human beings in a concise form and they are helpful to assess even in the Out Patient conditions also. Except for Kashyapa Samhita and Bhavaprakasha, other succeeding authors of ayurvedic literatures such as Ravigupta (author of Siddhasara Samhita), Vrindamadhava, Vangasena, etc., have described the characteristics of different physical constitutions in a short form. Acharya Vriddhajivaka (author of Kashyapa Samhita) and Bhavamishra have dealt with the characteristics of *Deha-Prakriti* in a lucid manner.

#### Conclusion

It can be concluded that *Prakriti* has been dealt in a more clinical perspective in Ayurvedic literatures whereas *Prakriti* is treated in a more philosophical way in other ancient Indian literatures as it is mentioned as *Mula Prakriti* or *Avyakta Tattva*, an invisible phenomenon, responsible for the creation of all the objects in the universe. The present work reveals the evolution of concept of *Prakriti* and its different views in ancient Indian literature. This work will be useful to all the future researchers like a database of historical review on the concept of *Prakriti*. It evidences the definite impact of Vedas, Puranas, and Darshanas on Ayurvedic concepts, in which *Prakriti* is the one.

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