

Review article**Concise concept of vāta doṣa with special reference to its Guṇa, Sthāna, Karma**

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ABSTRACT:

Every science is based on its own fundamental pillars called as Basic Principles of that science. The pioneer science of health, Āyurveda also has its own fundamental principles on which all the epitome of health and treatment of diseases is standing. According to Āyurveda, doṣa, dhātu & mala are the bioproducts of pāñcamahābhūta which play important role in all physiological activities of living beings. Among these three bhāvas, doṣa and again among the doṣas, vāta doṣa have prime importance. Hence the concept of vāta doṣa with special reference to its Guṇa, Sthāna, Karma is studied concisely in this research work. The study concluded that vāta doṣa has pivotal role in all the physiological actions performed by the living being. This study is certainly beneficial to each Āyurveda physician for Naidānika (Diagnostic) and Cikitsiya (Therapeutic) viewpoint.

KEY WORDS: Āyurveda, doṣa, dhātu, pāñcamahābhūta, vāta**INTRODUCTION:****Concise review of Vāta Doṣa :****A] Vyutpatti :**वात = √ वा + क्त..... वाचस्पत्यम् |¹

The word 'vāta' is of male gender and originated from root verb 'va (वा)' with suffix 'kta (क्त)'.

B] Nirukti :तत्र 'वा' गतिगन्धनयोः | सु.सू. 21/5²

Gati : jñāna or gamana or prāpti

Gandhana : sūcanā or Information or medium for flowing of smell.

(vā gati gandhanayoḥ) Dhātu pāṭha pāṇini adādigāṇa 43

The term gati is used in the sense of jñāna (knowledge), gamana (movement) and prāpti (obtaining or achievement) while gandhana denotes sūcanā or information. The term sūcanā also denotes the act of piercing (toda), which is one of the important signs of vāta vikāra and the factor responsible for all these things is called vāta doṣa.

C] Pāñcabhautika constitution:वाय्वाकाशधातुभ्यां वायुः| अ. सं. सू. 20/2³

Vāta doṣa is pāñcabhautika with predominance of vāyu and ākāśa mahābhūta as mentioned by Ācārya Vāgbhāta.

D] Guṇa (Properties) of Vāta Doṣa:

The dravya (doṣas too, as they are dravya) are recognized by the qualities which they possesses. The qualities of doṣa have been selected from the dvandva guṇas (hot-cold etc). For example vāta doṣa possesses rukṣa guṇa (roughness). It means that all the things which have roughness will increase and aggravate vāta doṣa and whenever vāta doṣa is increased in the body, the attribute of roughness will be prominently present there. So is also with the other properties of vāta doṣa.

Sāmānya guṇas (common properties) of vāta doṣa according to various Āyurvedic classics are enlisted as below, initially guṇas (properties) among the gurvādi guṇas are enlisted in [Table No. 1].

Concept of योगवाह (yogavāha)

A drug or a drug vehicle which has special affinity to carry and potentiate the actions of the main drug with which it has been mixed is known as yogavāhi drug. These vehicular agents carry a few special qualities viz. sara, vikāśi, vyavāyi, cala and sukṣma etc.

योगवाहः परं वायुः संयोगादुभयार्थकृत् |

दाहकृतेजसा युक्तः, शीतकृत् सोमसंश्रयात् || च. चि.3/38¹³

(योगाद्योगिनो गुणं वहतीति योगवाहः| चक्रपाणि)

Table No. 1: Guṇa (properties) among the gurvādi guṇa ^{4 5 6 7}

Sr. No.	गुण	चरकसंहिता	सुश्रुतसंहिता	अष्टांगसंग्रह	अष्टांगहृदय
1	रुक्ष	+	+	+	+
2	लघु	+	+	+	+
3	शीत	+	+	+	+
4	खर	+	+	+	+
5	सूक्ष्म	+		+	+
6	चल	+		+	+
7	विशद	+			
8	दारुण	+			
9	परुष	+			

Rest of guṇas (i.e. other than gurvādi guṇas) according to various Āyurvedic classics are enlisted in table no. 2.

Table No. 2: Guṇa other than gurvādi guṇas

Name of Āyurvedic classic	Guṇa other than gurvādi guṇas
चरकसंहिता ^{8 9 10 11}	असङ्घातवन्त, अनवस्थित, अनासाद्य, शुषिरकर, गति, अतिबल, अतिशीघ्र, आत्ययिक, अमूर्त, बहु, योगवाह
सुश्रुतसंहिता ¹²	अव्यक्तो व्यक्तकर्मा च, सर्वगत, अचिन्त्यवीर्यो, दोषाणां नेता, रोगसमूह्राट्, आशुकारी, मुहुश्चारी, स्वयम्भू, तिर्यग्, द्विगुण, रजोबहुल, स्वतंत्र, नित्यभाव

Table No. 3: Interpretation of all the Guṇas of Vāta Doṣa

Sr. No.	Name of guṇa (Property)	Interpretation
1	रुक्ष (rukṣa)	Dry
2	शीत (śīta)	Cool
3	लघु (laghu)	Light
4	सूक्ष्म (sūkṣma)	Subtle / Minute
5	चल (cala)	Mobile
6	विशद (viśada)	Non-slimy / Clean
7	खर (khara)	Coarse / Rough
8	अमूर्तत्व (amūrtatva)	No Shape
9	अनवस्थितत्व (anavasthitatva)	Unstable
10	परुष (paruṣa)	Hard
11	शुषिरकर (suṣirakara)	Responsible for Porous
12	दारुण (dāruṇa)	Severe / Hard
13	आशुकारी (āśukārī)	Quick movement
14	मुहुश्चारी (muhuścārī)	Frequent movement
15	योगवाह (yogavāh)	Accelerator of the properties and actions of other doṣas
16	रजोबहुल (rajobahula)	Rajo guṇa dominant
17	अव्यक्त व्यक्तकर्मा च (avyakta vyaktakarmā ca)	Unmanifested but recognized by its actions.
18	अचिन्त्यवीर्य (acintyavīrya)	Unpredictable power
19	दोषाणां नेता (doṣāṇām netā)	Leader of all doṣās
20	तिर्यग् (tiryaḡga)	Moves in an oblique direction
21	द्विगुण (dviguṇa)	Possesses two special qualities as shabda and sparsha.
22	स्वयम्भू (svayambhū)	Self-begotten
23	स्वतंत्र (svātāmtra)	Independent
24	सर्वगत (sarvagatva)	All pervasiveness
25	अतिबल (atibala)	Strongest among the doṣas
26	अनासाद्य (anāsādyā)	Inaccessible
27	असङ्घातवन्त (asaṅghātavanta)	Incorporeal
28	बहु (bahu)	Abundant in quantity
29	आत्ययिक (ātyayika)	Destructive power
30	नित्यभाव (nityabhāva)	Eternality

E] Sāmānya Sthānas / Common Sites of Vāta Doṣa in the body:

पक्वाशयकटीसक्थिश्रोत्रास्थिस्पर्शनिन्द्रियम्।

स्थानं वातस्य, तत्रापि पक्वाधानं विशेषतः।।अ. ह. सू. 12/1¹⁴

Vāta doṣa even being present in the whole body but mainly its seats are pakvāśaya (large intestine – lower abdomen), kaṭi (waist), sakthi (thigh), śrotra (ear), asthi (bone), sparśanendriya (the organ of touch). Among all these the large intestine (pakvāśaya) is the most important and main site of vāta doṣa.

Ācārya Caraka includes urinary bladder (basti), rectum (purīṣādhānam) and legs (pāda) to the above list. (Ca. Sū. 20/8)

Ācārya Suśruta adds the regions of the pelvis (śroṇi) and the rectum (guda) while Ācārya kaśyapa also adds bone marrow (majjā) to this list,

तत्र समासेन वातः श्रोणिगुदसंश्रयः। सु. सू. 21/7

अधोनाभ्यस्थि मज्जानौ वातस्थानं प्रचक्षते। कश्यप संहिता

F] Karmas of Vāta Doṣa:

The principal function of vāta doṣa is to sustain the body. According to Caraka, the general functions of vāta doṣa which flows within the body are,¹⁵

वायुस्तन्त्रयन्त्रधरः, प्राणोदानसमानव्यानापानात्मा,
प्रवर्तकश्चेष्टानामुच्चावचानां, नियन्ता प्रणेता च मनसः,
सर्वेन्द्रियाणामुद्योजकः, सर्वेन्द्रियार्थानामभिवोढा,
सर्वशरीरधातुव्यूहकरः, सन्धानकरः शरीरस्य, प्रवर्तको वाचः,
प्रकृतिः स्पर्शशब्दयोः, श्रोत्रस्पर्शनयोर्मूलं, हर्षोत्साहयोर्योनिः,
समीरणोऽग्नेः, दोषसंशोषणः, क्षेप्ता बहिर्मलानां, स्थूलाणुस्रोतसां
भेत्ता, कर्तागर्भाकृतीनाम्, आयुषोऽनुवृत्तिप्रत्ययभूतो
भवत्यकुपितः।च.सू. 12/8

तन्त्रयन्त्रधरः (tantrayantradhara) :

Here word tantra means śarīra & yantra means śarīra avayava (body parts, senses and mind), dhara means to keep control in normal state. i.e to maintain all physical, physiological & psycho-sensorial activities of body in normal state.

प्रवर्तकश्चेष्टानामुच्चावचानां

(pravartakaścheṣṭānāmuccāvachānām) :

It is the originator of every kind of action of the body, senses & mind

नियन्ता प्रणेता च मनसः (niyantā praṇetā ca manasa) :

It regulates and guides mind, i.e it restrains the mind from indulging in undesirable objects and guides it to desirable objects.

सर्वेन्द्रियाणामुद्योजकः (sarvendriyāṇāmudyojaka) :

It coordinates all the sense faculties with their objects.

सर्वेन्द्रियार्थानामभिवोढा (sarvendriyārthānāmbhivoḍhā):

It carries out perceptions of all the senses from their respective objects towards the mind.

सर्वशरीरधातुव्यूहकरः (sarvaśarīradhātuvyūhakarā) :

It means vāta doṣa is arranging & placing the body constituents at their proper place during gestation & onwards.

सन्धानकरः शरीरस्य (sandhānakarā śarīrasya) :

It connectng & adjoining all the body constituents in proper way & manner

प्रवर्तको वाचः (pravartako vāca) :

It is initiator & generator of speech.

प्रकृतिः स्पर्शशब्दयोः (prakṛtiḥ sparśaśabdayo) :

It is the prime causative factor for perception of touch & sound. Gaṅgādhara explains that the cause of sound and touch within the body is vāta doṣa and not ākāśa. Although the root cause of the sound is ākāśa, the full manifestation of sound is not, however, due to it. It is the vāta doṣa, intimately associated with ākāśa that produces the manifested sound which we can hear.

श्रोत्रस्पर्शनयोर्मूलं (śrotrasparśanayormūlaṁ) :

It is the root cause of the auditory and tactile sense faculties

हर्षोत्साहयोर्योनि (harṣotsāhayoryoni) :

It is the prime cause for the manifestations of pleasure & enthusiasm.

समीरणो अग्नेः (samīraṇo agne) :

It ignites the body-fire (digestive & metabolic unit).

दोषसंशोषणः (doṣasamśoṣaṇa) :

It dries up any excess of moisture accumulated in the body & subside the provoked doṣās.

क्षेप्ता बहिर्मलानां (kṣeptā bahirmalānām) :

It expels out all the waste products from body like urine, feces etc.

स्थूलाणुस्रोतसां भेत्ता (sthūlaṇusrotasāṁ bhettā) :

It is due to vāta doṣa that every kind of channels (macroscopic & microscopic) are formed within the body. (Mitosis & Meiosis)

कर्तागर्भाकृतीनाम् (kartā garbhākṛtīnām) :

It is the prime cause which is responsible for the formation of the different structures of the fetal body (Embryonic development). śāraṅgadhara also says that it is the vāta doṣa, which is the cause of segmentation of the body.

Ācārya Caraka has also described the special functions of vāta doṣa as quoted below,

उत्साहोच्छ्वासनिःश्वासचेष्टा धातुगतिः समा ।

समो मोक्षो गतिमतां वायोः कर्माविकारजम् ॥ च. सू. 18/49¹⁶

1] उत्साह (utsāha; Enthusiasm) :

When the physical and mental equilibrium of the body is maintained, a person shows his enthusiasm in fulfilling the desires. It is a mental entity, which is the result of positive health. By this factor a person achieves perfection as well as satisfaction in action and life. It is the example of yogavāhi property of vāta doṣa. On practical level; which accentuates the sattva and rajoguṇa (the mental factors) with vāta doṣa. The feeling of health is experienced at the level of brain and mind, and both governed mainly by prana vāta. On physical level acceleration or hurry to perform an action can be known as stimulus. Energy and quickness at mental level and the combination of both of the qualities are found in utsāha. That's why Caraka defines vāta as niyantā prañetā ca manasa, sarvendriyāṇāmudyojaka, harṣotsāhayoryoni (Ca. Sū.12/8).

2] उच्छ्वास निःश्वास (ucchvāsa niḥśvāsa; Respiration) :

This action of vāta is performed with the help of prāṇavaha srotasa (Respiratory system). It is an important activity which denotes life in living beings and is indicative of the continuity of the span of life (āyusa anuvṛtti pratyayabhuto bhavatyakupitaḥ). ucchvāsa and niḥśvāsa have been described as prāṇa and apāna in various references as below,

प्राणापानौ निमेषाद्या जीवनं मनसो गतिः ।

..... लिङ्गानि परमात्मनः ॥ च.शा.1/70-72

(प्राणापानौ उच्छ्वासनिःश्वासौ चक्रपाणि)

3] चेष्टा (ceṣṭā; Proper actions of speech, mind and body): The various external, internal, physical or chemical actions are the symbols of life. Action consists in motion (Ca. Sū. 1/52). Caraka describes karma (action) as vocal, mental and physical actions.

कर्म वाङ्मनःशरीरप्रवृत्तिः । च. सू. 11/39

The vāta doṣa is responsible for all types of activities in living being. Physical activities like utkṣepaṇa (casting upward), apakṣepaṇa (casting downward), ākuncana (contraction), prasāraṇa (dilation) and gamana (all the remaining activities), all the reflexes, impulses and natural urges are controlled by the vāta doṣa as quoted by Ācārya Caraka,

सर्वा हि चेष्टा वातेन स प्राणः प्राणिनां स्मृतः । च. सू. 17/118

vāta doṣa has been also described as 'it prompts all

types of actions and speech.

प्रवर्तकश्चेष्टानामुच्चावचानां । प्रवर्तको वाचः । च. सू. 12/8

4] सम्यग्गत्या च धातूनां (samyaggyā ca dhātūnām; Proper direction or flow of one dhātu to the next nourishing dhātu):

Equilibrium or balance is the main theme and the very bedrock of health (samadoṣa samāgni.....Su.Sū.15/41). Proper digestion, assimilation, distribution of nutrients up to each cell etc. are required for positive health and vāta doṣa is responsible for the co-ordination of all these activities in the body (Ca.Ci.15/36).

5] समो मोक्षो गतिमतां (samo mokṣo gatimatām; Proper excretion of the waste products):

Malas are produced in the body by the different organs and tissues. Their proper excretion is essential; vāta doṣa bears the responsibility to keep them mobile and to excrete them properly. The different gross and subtle channels are created by vāta doṣa. Vāta doṣa throws out the excreta from the body.(Ca. Sū.12/8).

Expiration throws out carbon dioxide from the body. By sneezing and spitting the obstructive material is excreted or removed. The urine, feces, sweat and other products are excreted by different action of vāta doṣa. Different urges in the body are controlled by reflexes. Suppression of these urges leads to various diseases. Caraka advises not to suppress the natural urges relating to urine, feces, semen, flatus, vomiting, sneezing, eructation, yawning, hunger, thirst, tears, sleep and breathing caused by over exertion (Ca. Sū. 7/3-4). Most of the urges in this list, excluding only a few, are used to excrete the waste material from the body and have been described as samo mokṣo gatimatām.

Ācārya Suśruta says that vāta sustains the body by performing the following five-fold functions,

तत्र प्रस्पन्दनोद्धहनपूरणविवेकधारणलक्षणो वायुः पञ्चधा प्रविभक्तः शरीरं धारयति। सु. सू.15/4(1)¹⁷

- प्रस्पन्दन (praspanḍana) : Breathing and other rhythmic movements of the body.
- उद्धहन (udvahana) : Carrying of the sensations of the respective sense organs.
- पूरण (pūraṇa) : The passing down of food to its proper receptacles.
- विवेक (viveka) : The separation of excretions from the assimilated food matter.
- धारण (dhāraṇa) : The retention and evacuation of urine, semen etc.

Aṣṭāṅga hr̥daya adds one more function i.e. akṣāṇām pāṭavena (proper functioning of the sense organs. (A.H.Sū.11/1-2).

DISCUSSION:

Among bṛhadrayī, only Caraka saṁhitā and Suśruta saṁhitā mentioned the guṇa other than gurvādi guṇa for vāta doṣa. In Āyurvedic classics, vāta doṣa is also mentioned as yogavāhi in nature. In combination with pitta and kapha doṣa, vāta doṣa produces both (the hot and cold) types of effects. For example: when patient suffering from jvara (pyrexia) caused by vāta and pitta doṣa, the symptoms like burning sensation are generated and when combined with soma (kapha) the cooling effects are produced.

Common Sites of Vāta Doṣa are mentioned by Caraka saṁhitā, Suśruta saṁhitā and Aṣṭāṅga hṛdaya i.e bṛhadrayī.

Functions of Vāta Doṣa are described in detail by all the important Āyurvedic classics i.e bṛhadrayī. Though vāta, pitta and kapha doṣas have independent actions of their own. So when one says that pitta and kapha are inactive, it does not mean that they are impotent or inactive. Pitta and kapha have their own particular seats within the body. Remaining in these places, they can act, they can vitiate the dhātus, but they have not the power of independently moving from one place to another. It is the vāta doṣa which has the power of imparting motion to other body entities. It is due to the action of vāta doṣa that the normal pitta and kapha circulate throughout the body along with the vāta doṣa.

CONCLUSION:

Āyurveda Saṁhitā (Bṛhatrayī with their respective commentaries) and modern Science has been studied critically to understand the concise concept of vāta doṣa with special reference to its Guṇa, Sthāna, Karma. This study is certainly beneficial to each Āyurveda clinician for Naidānika (Diagnostic) and Cikitsiya (Therapeutic) perspective.

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