

Concept of Virrudha Ahara - An Ancient Overview

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ABSTRACT

The practice of Aharavidhi (dietetics) is an ancient, empirical and elegant art and it is only in the early years of the last century that nutrition and dietetics have come to acquire the status of distinct discipline.² Virruddha' means incompatible, opposite or unwholesome or which is harmful for the body or dhatu (body-tissue). It possesses opposite qualities compared to dhatu and vitiates them, leading to various diseases or complications. The concept of virruddha is broadly explained in ayurveda. Virruddha ashana (intake of unwholesome food or diet) is mentioned as a causative factor for various diseases, especially skin diseases (kushtha), erysipelas (visarpa), psychiatric diseases like insanity (unmada) etc. In the context of agrya samgraha (collection of definitive and first choice of medication or treatment), in Charak Samhita, intake of virruddha ahara is the foremost causative factor for nindita vyadhi (wretched diseases like kushtha). [Cha. Sa. Sutra Sthana 25/40] Virrudha anna or incompatible diet is very important issue discussed by ayurveda Samhita, Charak, Sushruta, Vaghhat, Madhavanidan, Yogratnakar, Bhavprakash, Vangsen. The diet which disturbs the balance among the body elements is called Viruddha Ahara (Incompatible diet). Consuming two food items together or a particular type of diet may tend to toxicity; it is termed as incompatible diet. Viruddha (Incompatible diet) means substances which when consumed cause for aggravations of Doshas but do not expel them out of the body and bring about abnormalities in Dhatus and produces Vyadhi.

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KEYWORDS:

Ayurveda,
Upstambha, Viruddhahara,
Incompatible Diet.

INTRODUCTION

Food plays a decisive role in development, sustenance, reproduction and termination of life. Through centuries, Food has been recognized as an important factor for human beings, in health and diseased state. Man has always been interested in food and the history of man to a large extent has been a struggle to obtain food. Food (Ahara) supplies bio-energy to body. This bio-energy is supplied by proper and adequate nutrition in the form of its essential constituents viz. proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, vitamins and water.¹ In Ayurveda Acharya described Trividha upastambha Ahara, Nidra and Bramhacharya are three parts of sharira in which ahara is the prime need without Ahara life would not continue very long.¹ The Ahara is again differentiating into two types Hita and Ahita Ahara. In present era, due to less time and excessive work load people moving towards fast life style and consuming Viruddhahara, which lead to

manifestation of various diseases. According to Charak Acharya, Viruddhahara is described as foods (incompatible diet) and remedies (medicines) that disrupt the doshas from its regular seat but do not evict it from the body²

Viruddhahara may result from consuming the improper combination of foods that have undergone that have undergone the wrong processing, are being ingested in the wrong dose, at the wrong time of day, or during the wrong season³. Viruddhahara (incompatible diet) classification according to the Ayurvedic literature, the following 18 categories of foods are considered contradictory⁴

In modern time, knowingly or unknowingly unwholesome combinations of food, faulty diet/junk foods, or processed/packed food are consumed. This produces ill effects on the body, such as allergies, food toxicities, etc. The cases of food incompatibility

and food-food interactions, food-drug interactions are increasing. Therefore, a need to understand the concept of viruddha has risen to know measures for preserving health. The dietary guidelines about what to eat and what is to be avoided; what type of food can be combined or taken together and what not; are important to prevent diseases too. Faulty dietary habits can be corrected and incompatibility with ill effects can be prevented by knowing concept of viruddha. This chapter describes concept of viruddha, its practices and its effects on health.

Charaka Caturanana” Cakrapani explained here that, the food articles by which the dosas are going to be provoked and spread or diffused from their place but these dosas are not eliminated from the body. So these food articles become unwholesome.

Susruta has also quoted in Su. Su. 20/20 and Dalhana has pointed out that the food articles (Viruddhahara) not only provoke the dosas (humors) but they also aggravate the body elements (Dhatus). Indu, commentator of A.S. has mentioned here that these type of dravyas (Viruddhahara) are localized in dhatus in spite of its antagonist nature to dhatus.

It is very important to correlate the mechanism as to know how viruddh Ahara as a combination interacts with each other and creates a disease, combinations which interrupt the metabolism tissue which inhibits the process of the formation of tissue is called as 'viruddha anna'. The food which is wrong in combination has undergone wrong processing consumed in incorrect dose or consumed in incorrect time of the day and in wrong season can be termed viruddha Ahara. With the help of modern technology and biochemistry aspects it becomes easy to elaborate the effect of viruddha Ahara food-food interactions are harmless but is always better to know about some of them opposite properties, opposite activities on the tissue may extent undesirable effect when combined in certain proportion.

त्रय उपस्तम्भा इति- आहारः स्वप्नो ब्रह्मचर्यमिति, (cha su 1/35)

Ayurveda is essentially the science of life. It embraces in itself perfect principles for leading a healthy life. Ayurveda envisages complete regimen for both healthy and diseased one, guarding health at all ages. Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya are three sub pillars, which support the body itself Here Ahara has been enumerated first, which shows its importance.³

Nutrition may be defined as the science of food and its relationship to health. It is concerned primarily with the part played by nutrients in body growth, development and maintenance.

यत् किञ्चिदोषमास्त्राव्य न निर्हरति कयतः ।

अहारजातं तत् सर्वमहितायोपपद्यते ॥ (च सु २६/८५)

In Ayurveda a Novel concept of Viruddhahara has been condensed. Since the effect of this Viruddha Ahara is indifferent from the Ahita Ahara, this Viruddha Ahara may be included under the Ahita Ahara group. Caraka has mentioned “whatever articles of food, which having dislodged the morbid humors do not eliminate them from the body, are to be regarded as unwholesome”.⁴ Further he has said “Articles of diet that are inimical to the body-elements tend to disagree with the system (body).”⁵

Viruddhahara is one potent causative factor for several diseases. Consumption of Viruddhahara gives rise to various disturbances of mild to violent nature and disease of acute to chronic nature including the eight Maharogas, genetic disturbances and even sometimes causes death of the person. This point towards the potency and lethal effect of Viruddha Ahara.⁶ This fact clearly indicates how far-reaching effects can be produced by Viruddha Ahara. Yet, no sufficient work has been done regarding causativeness of Viruddhahara and its treatment in the field of Ayurveda or modern science. This has turned out to be a burning problem for Ayurveda and modern science as well as for individual who consume Viruddhahara frequently. Viruddhahara is very vast and complicated subject, which needs biochemical, pharmacological examinations, survey study, clinical study, as well as modern scientific interpretation. Keeping the concept of Viruddhahara in mind, the present review study has been planned.

VIRUDDHAHARA

Caraka has stated the short definition of Viruddhahara that is.

देहधातुप्रत्यनीक भूतानि द्रव्याणि देहधातुभिः विरोधमापद्यन्ते । - च.सू. २६

Articles of diet that are inimical to the body-elements tend to disagree with the system (Body).

Characteristic Features:⁷

It is not possible to give all examples and types of Viruddhahara.

So in nutshell, Caraka and other Acaryas have stated the

Cardinal symptom of Viruddha.

यत् किञ्चिदोषमास्त्राव्य न निर्हरति कयतः ।

अहारजातं तत् सर्वमहितायोपपद्यते ॥ (च सु २६/८५)

Those articles of food, which dislodge the morbid humors(Dosas), but do not eliminate them from the body are to be regarded as unwholesome (food articles).

"Caraka Caturanana" Cakrapani explained here that, दोषमास्त्राव्येति दोषानुत्किलष्टरूपान् जनयित्वा न निर्हरतीति । अनेन वमनविरेचनद्रव्याणि निराकरोति, तानि हि दोषानास्त्राव्य निर्हरन्ति ।

Means by these food articles, the dosas are going to be provoked and spread or diffused from their place but these dosas are not eliminated from the body. So these food articles become unwholesome. ⁸

According charaka Viruddhahara as follows:

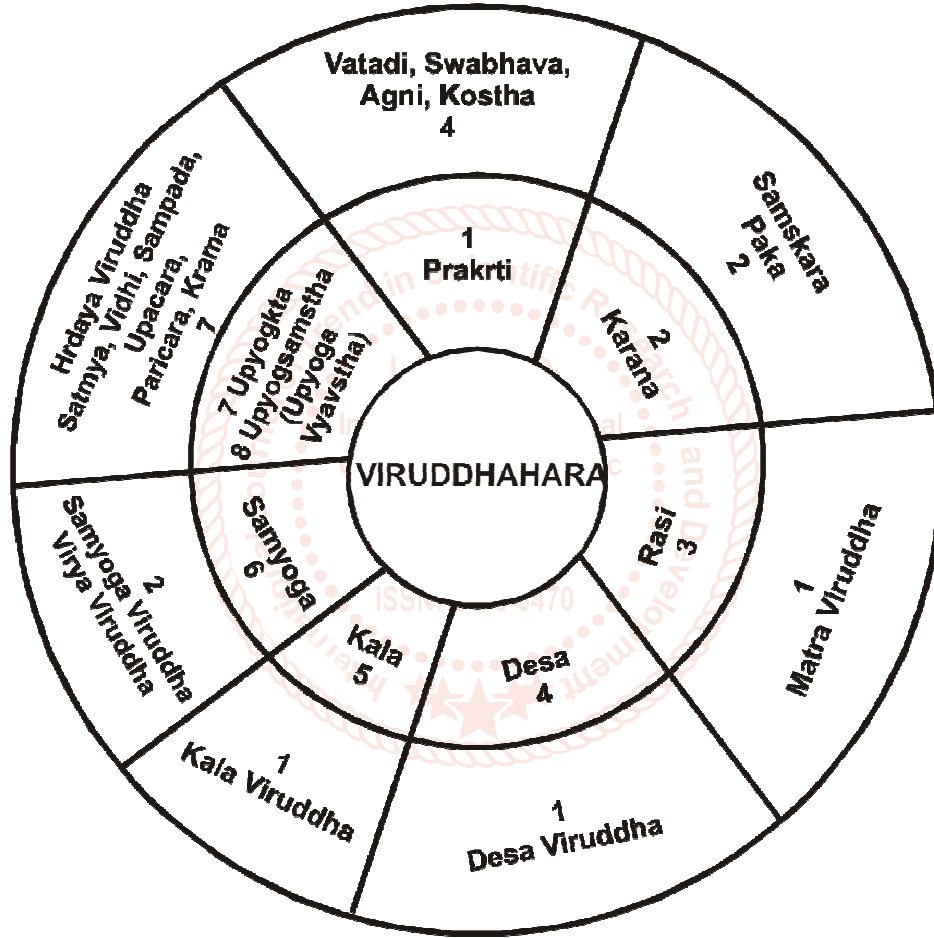
यच्चापि देशकालाग्निमात्रासाम्यानिलादिभिः।

संस्कारतो वीर्यतश्च कोष्ठावस्थाक्रमैरपि ॥

परिहारोपचाराभ्यां पाकात् संयोगतोऽपि च ।

विरुद्धं तच्च न हितं हृत्संपद्विधिभिश्च यत् ॥ c.su.26/88

- 1) Desh virrudha 2) Kala virrudha 3) Agni virrudha 4) Matra virrudha 5) Satmya virrudha 6) Dosha virrudha 7) Sanskar Virrudha 8) Veerya virrudha 9) Koshta virrudha 10) Avastha virrudha 11) Krama Virrudha 12) Parihar virrudha 13) Upachar virrudha 14) Paka virrudha 15) Sayong virrudha 16) Hridhay virrudha 17) Sanpad virrudha 18) Vidhi virrudha



Disease caused by Viruddhahara: -^{9,10}

षाण्ड्यान्ध्यविसर्पकोदराणां विस्फोटकोन्मादभगन्दराणाम् ।

मुच्छर्यामदाध्मानगलग्रहाणां पाण्ड्वामयस्यामविषस्य चैव।।

किलसकुष्ठग्रहणीगदानां शोथोम्लपित्तज्वरपीनसानाम् ।

संतानदोषस्य तथैव मृत्योर्विषधमन्नं प्रवदन्ति हेतुम् ॥ (ch.su.26/102,103)

The disease produced due to Viruddhahara are as follows Infertility, blindness, visarp, jalodar, visphot, bhagandhar, mental disorder, murchya, Adhman, Galgraha, Pandu, Aam visha, Kilas, Kustharoga, Grahani, Shotha, Amlapitta, Jwara, Peenas, Disorders in next progeny.

**Concept of samyoga viruddha (combination)**

- Samyoga (combination of two or more substances) viruddha means some drugs or food items will act as unwholesome when taken together or mixed. [Cha. Sa. Sutra Sthana 26/82-83] [Su. Sa. Sutra Sthana 20/13]

Table no. 1: Examples of Samyoga Viruddha and the logical reasons behind their incompatibility:

Sr. no.	Examples of samyoga viruddha	Logical reasons of incompatibility
1	Ripe fruit of nikucha (<i>Artocarpus lakoocha</i> Roxb.) with soup of masha (<i>Vigna mungo</i> L.), sugar and ghee	Mutually contradictory
2	Amla Rasa food items such as amra (<i>Mangifera indica</i>), amrataka (<i>Spondias pinnata</i>), matulunga (<i>Citrus decumana</i>), nikucha (<i>Artocarpus lakoocha</i> Roxb.), karamarda (<i>Carissa carandas</i>), mocha/shalmali (<i>Salmalia malabarica</i>), dantasatha (<i>Citrus medica</i>), badara (<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i>), koshamra (<i>Schleichera oleosa</i>), bhavya (<i>Dillenia indica</i>), jambu (<i>Syzygium cumini</i>), kapittha (<i>Limonia acidissima</i>), tintidi (<i>Ras parviflora</i>) with milk	Mutually contradictory
3	Aksoda (<i>Juglans regia</i> Linn.), panasa (<i>Artocarpus heterophyllus</i>), narikela (<i>Cocos nucifera</i>), dadima (<i>Punica granatum</i>), kulathi (<i>Macrotyloma uniflorum</i>), and amalaki (<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>) or meat of paravata (pigeon) with milk	Mutually contradictory
4	Kangu/Kangini dhanya (<i>Setaria italica</i> Beruv.), vanaka (vana kodo), makustha (<i>Phaseolus aconitifolius</i>), kulattha (<i>Dolichos biflorus</i>), masha (<i>Phaseolus radiatus</i>), nishpava (cowpeas) with milk	Mutually contradictory
5	Honey and ghee or honey and rain water in equal quantity, honey with seeds of pushkara (<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> / blue lotus), intake of hot water after taking honey, Moolaka (radish) with honey	All are unwholesome
6	Bhallataka (<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i>) with hot water	All are unwholesome
7	Kampillaka (<i>Mallotus philippensis</i>) boiled with butter milk	All are unwholesome
8	Meat of Bhasa (bearded vulture) roasted with the spit or fire	All are unwholesome
9	Stale Kakmachi (<i>Solanum nigrum</i>), Kakmachi with jaggery, Kakmachi with Pippali (<i>Piper longum</i>) or Maricha (<i>Piper nigrum</i>).	All are unwholesome
10	Fish with jaggery	All are unwholesome
11	Varaha mamsa (pork meat) with milk or jaggery	All are unwholesome
12	Kadaliphala (<i>Musa paradisiaca</i> Linn.) i.e., banana with milk, curd or buttermilk or lakuch (<i>Artocarpus lakoocha</i> Roxb.) with milk or curd	All are unwholesome
13	Sura (beer), krishra (mess), and payasa (milk pudding) not to be consumed together	All are unwholesome

CONCEPT OF RASA, VEERYA, VIPAKA VIRUDDHA-

Unique concept of viruddha combinations based on rasa (taste), virya (potency), vipaka (post digestion effect) explained in Sushruta Samhita which are as follows: [Su. Sa. Sutra Sthana 20/16]

Table no. 2: Examples of viruddha combinations based on rasa, virya and vipaka:

Sr. no.	Examples of viruddha combinations based on rasa, virya and vipaka	Combinations of rasa
1	Rasa viruddha	Madhura (sweet) and lavana (salty), amla (sour) and lavana, katu (pungent) and tikta (bitter), katu and kashaya (astringent), tikta and kashaya.
2	Rasa and veerya viruddha	Madhura and amla.
3	Rasa and vipaka viruddha	Madhura and tikta, madhura and kashaya, amla and katu, lavana and katu.
4	Sarvata viruddha	Madhura and katu, amla and tikta, amla and kashaya, lavana and tikta, lavana and kashaya.

Diseases due to Viruddha Ahara according to Acharya Charaka:-

Viruddha Ahara is responsible for the causation of many diseases. According to Acharya Charaka a whole number of disease occurs as a result of Viruddha Ahara and they are infertility, Bhagandara (fistula), Moorcha (fainting), Pandu (anaemia), Amavisha (acid eructation), Grahani Roga (malabsorption syndrome), Jvara (fever), Santana Dosha (genetic disturbances) Visarpa (erysipelas), blindness, ascites, bullous, insanity, intoxication, abdominal distention, stiffness in neck, indigestions, various skin diseases, swelling, gastritis, rhinitis. If the above list of diseases is classified as per the body system, it can be said that, immune system, endocrine system, digestive system, nervous system, and circulatory systems are affected by continuous consumption of Viruddha Ahara.

Treatment:-

Nidana Parivarjya (prophylactic measures) is the main line of treatment. Diseases caused by Viruddha Ahara (incompatible diet) can be treated by Vamana (Emesis), Virechana (purgation) and Shamana Chikitsa (palliative therapy) and by the prior use of beneficial substances.

PATHOGENESIS DEPENDS ON TYPE AND DURATION OF VIRUDDHAHARA: ^{11,12}

As mentioned earlier, there are eight or eighteen types of Viruddhahara. Diseases of different systems depend on the type of Viruddhahara and duration of intake of Viruddhahara e.g. if person take Samskara Viruddha or Swabhava Viruddha (i.e. poison) then he suddenly get some diseases like, diarrhoea, vomiting, constipation etc. and some time these diseases may also lead to death.

On the other hand, all type of Viruddhahara is not capable of inducing diseases suddenly and they may produce after long time of intake of Viruddhahara, e.g. Kalaviruddha, Desaviruddha, Vidhiviruddha cannot produce diseases immediately.

Considering this type of pathogenesis of Viruddhahara, one question may arise here that how pathogenesis is induced by viruddhahara.

There are three systems where disease occurs.¹³ They are -

1. **Sakha** - **The peripheral system**
2. **Marma asthi sandhi** - **The vital parts and bone and joints**
3. **Kostha** - **The alimentary tract**

Among these, the peripheral system consists of such body elements as the blood and other dhatus as well as the skin. This is the external system for the occurrence of diseases. The diseases occurring in this system are as under (Ca. Su. 11/49).

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Ganda | 2. Pidaka | 3. Alaji |
| 4. Apaci | 5. Carmakila | 6. Adhimansa |
| 7. Masaka | 8. Kustha | 9. Bahya Visarp |
| 10. Bahya Gulma | 11. Bahya Sotha | 12. Bahya Arsa |
| 13. Bahya Vidradhi | | |

some Srotasas are more prone to Viruddhahara because Viruddhahara is a vitiating factor for such srotas. Such srotas, which are vitiated by Viruddhahara are as under¹⁴ (Ca. Vi. 5).

No.	Srotasa	Vitiative Viruddhahara	Total No. of vitiating factors of that Srotas
1	Udakavahi	1. Eating of very dry food substance - Vidhi viruddha	6
2	Annavahi	1. Over - eating - Matra viruddha 2. Untimely eating - Kala viruddha 3. Unwholesome diet - Viruddhahara	4
3	Rasavahi	1. Over - eating - Matra viruddha	2
4	Raktavahi	1. Over - irritant food - Matra viruddha	2
5	Mamsavahi	1. Abhisyandi Food - Vidhi viruddha 2. Guru Bhojana - Vidhi viruddha 3. Sthula Bhojana - Vidhi viruddha	4
6	Medovaha	1. Excessive consumption of fats - Matra viruddha 2. Over - indulgence of Varuni wine - Matraviruddha	4
7	Asthivaha	1. Vata promoting food - Vidhi viruddha	4
8	Majjavaha	1. Extreme Abhisyandi - Vidhi viruddha 2. Incompatible diet	5
9	Mutravaha	1. Eating under the urge to urinate - Kramaviruddha	3
10	Purisavaha	1. Excessive eating - Matra viruddha 2. Eating in indigestion - Vidhi viruddha	5
11	Swedavaha	1. Indiscriminate indulgence in cold and heat - Kramaviruddha	4

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR DISEASE :¹⁵

To understand the process of disease formation a principle involving three factors is laid down by Caraka as under.

1. Nidana - causative agents
2. Dosa
3. Dusya - The body elements

By the effect of causative factors Dosa should first get provoked or vitiated. Dosas when thus provoked and vitiated, vitiate the tissue of the body, which are referred in Ayurveda as Dusya.

Another principle is that of Samanya and Visesa that is, increase is caused by agents or causative factors similar to Dosas and Dusyas and decrease being caused by dissimilar ones is formulated.

However, if the property of the Dosas is opposite to those of the causative factor's agreement for co-operation in production of the disease is not possible. On the contrary these opposite properties counter the factor and the inroads of the disease are checked. In this way provoked Dosa does not find favorable response in the tissue, it finds hard to vitiate and the further process is checked or is delayed. Thus above three specific factors, which determine the ability or otherwise of the body to resist all types of disease is described (Ca. Ni. 4/4). Critical exposition by Cakrapani on above statement describes that the specific feature of etiological factors etc., which determine the ability to resist the disease is as under. (Ca. Ni. 4/4)

1. When the etiological factors (here Viruddhahara) have properties homologous with Doshas and or Dhatus or when Dosas have properties homologous with Dhatus this leads up to the manifestation or aggravation of the disease.
2. If it is in a lesser degree and the combination is further subdued due to passage of time or due to repeated combination in still smaller degree, then it may lose strength and may result in the non-manifestation of the disease.
3. If at all a disease is so manifested then it will develop slowly or in a subdued form or all its symptoms may not be so manifested, as they should.
4. When the etiological factors Dosas and Dhatus are favourable moderately or strongly with each other then the result may be opposite. i.e. the disease may be slowly manifested, immediately manifested or all the symptoms may be well manifested. The suppression or the incidence of the diseases can be tabulated as under (According to Caraka Samhita).

Etiological factors + Morbid humans + Body elements	No association	No disease
Etiological factors + Morbid humans + Body elements	Late association	Prolong course or delay in manifestation (chronic disease)
Etiological factors + Morbid humans + Body elements	Weak or insufficient association	Mild disease or incomplete disease or irregular symptoms
Etiological factors + Morbid humans + Body elements	Sudden association	Acute disease
Etiological factors + Morbid humans + body elements	Powerful association	Fatal (or) threatening disease

Thus disease Pathogenesis depend upon association of causative factors, humours as well as elements of body.

Discussion –

Frequent intake of incompatible food act as poison which leads to aggravation of all Doshas. The recommended therapy for diseases caused by incompatible food is Shodhana Chikitsa (Eliminative therapy), Shamana Chikitsa (Palliative therapy) and avoidance of incompatible of incompatible food. Charaka, who mentioned that incompatible diet, is one of the causes for spreading the morbid humours from the alimentary tract to the peripheral systems and causes diseases. Avoidance of intake of incompatible diet plays key role in the prevention of disease.

Factors deciding effect of viruddha ahara

If a person is habituated to the intake of such unwholesome food combinations or if taken in very little quantity, then there will be no or less adverse effect of viruddha ahara. Deeptagni (good digestive power), taruna avastha (young age), undergone oleation therapy, having strong physique due to exercise are protective factors against viruddha ahara. In presence of these factors, adverse effect of such unwholesome food combinations is not observed. [Cha.Sa. Sutra Sthana 26/104] So, these practices can be promoted to prevent adverse effects of viruddha ahara.

- Among all types of Viruddha which are mentioned by several Acaryas, Samyoga or Viryaviruddha is the most important or more dangerous than others. It has been seen practically that when a person consumes food substance or diet, which is virya viruddha or samyoga viruddha, then it provokes the dosas after a very short time period. On the other hand, other types of Viruddha requires long period of Viruddha sevana to aggravate the dosas.
- Incompatibility with reference to the state of the person is known as Avastha viruddha, e.g. when a Vata, provoking meal is given to one who is exhausted on account of Fatigue, sexual act or physical strain then it turns out to be Avastha

viruddha. Similarly, if a Kapha provoking meal is given to one subject to who is lethargic or sleepy or indolence, then it becomes Avastha viruddha.

- When one person takes food substances similar to his own prakrti dominant dosa, then it is called. Avastha viruddha. Viz. in childhood, intake of Kaphavardhaka Ahara. Similarly, if one person who is suffering from provoked dosas and he takes food substances having similar quality to provoked dosa, it is also called Avasthviruddha.
- Krama is related with general rules and regulations of eating. One should take his food as per the rules and regulations of eating, if one cannot obey these rules, his diet may become Krama viruddha.
- Ahara plays an important role in healthy, diseased and convalescent states. It is more important than the medicine itself. The body can be nourished and maintained in good health, by adopting suitable diet and full benefits of life can be reaped by adherence to proper mental hygiene.

Conclusion-

Wholesome diet is prime cause for the growth and development of the body, on the contrary, unwholesome diet causes several diseases. Caraka emphasizes that the ideal diet is that, which rebuilds the worn-out systems and nourishes the Dhatus and maintains the equilibrium of the body constituents. Irrational diet acts otherwise, producing diseases. (Ca. Su. 25/32).

According to this concept, Pancabhautika Sarira requires Sadarasa and Vinsati Gunayukta Aharadravyas for its growth, development and welfare.

Caraka while describing Trayopastambhas i.e. Ahara (food), Nidra (sleep) and Brahmacarya (celibacy), states that these three factors are the supporters of life(Ca.Su.11/35).

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