

Conceptual Study of Utility of Samyog Viruddha Ahara (Combination Incompatibility Food) in Today's Era

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Abstract: *In Ayurvedic classics, Ahara (food) is considered one of the three Upasthambas (sub-pillars) that support the body and maintain health. Ayurveda gives great importance to healthy dietary practices and emphasizes not only what to eat, but also how and in which combinations food should be consumed. Samyog Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food combinations) is a unique concept described in Ayurveda that explains the harmful effects of certain food combinations on the body.*

Aim: To review the concept and present-day relevance of Samyog Viruddha Ahara.

Objective: To study the concept of Samyog Viruddha Ahara mentioned in Ayurveda and understand its utility in the today's era.

Materials and Methods: Literary references were collected from Ayurvedic classical texts and modern medical literature.

Discussion: In today's fast-paced lifestyle, people often consume unhealthy and incompatible food combinations due to lack of awareness about proper dietary habits. Such practices may lead to various disorders and unexplained health issues. Ayurveda advises that before consuming food, one should consider whether the combination is suitable and follows the proper rules of diet intake.

Conclusion: Adopting healthy dietary patterns and avoiding incompatible food combinations described in Ayurvedic classics can help prevent many diseases and promote overall well-being in the present era.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Samyog Viruddha Ahara, incompatible food combinations, healthy diet.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, primarily focuses on maintaining health and promoting a healthy and peaceful lifestyle. The main aim of Ayurveda is not only to prevent and cure diseases from their root cause, but also to preserve the health of a healthy individual throughout life.ⁱ

Ayurveda provides a scientific approach towards Ahara (food) based on an individual's body constitution and digestive capacity. Food plays a vital role in maintaining physical and mental well-being. Ayurvedic classics have clearly explained the importance of wholesome diet and its beneficial effects on health. Ahara is considered the first and most important pillar of life among the Trayopasthambas (three supporting pillars of life).ⁱⁱ

According to Ayurveda, many diseases originate due to improper dietary habits and unhealthy lifestyle practices. When food is consumed in the right quantity, quality, and combination, it helps in maintaining health and preventing diseases. On the other hand, unhealthy dietary patterns may lead to various pathological conditions.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ayurveda describes the concept of Viruddha Ahara, which refers to incompatible food combinations. Such foods disturb the balance of Dosha, Dhatu, and other body elements, thereby initiating disease processes in the body.^{iv}

In today's era, Western food culture and eating habits have greatly influenced Eastern countries. People often consume food at improper times, which is referred to as Kala Viruddha in Ayurveda, and also follow unhealthy food



combinations that can disturb normal metabolism and digestion. Such dietary practices may gradually lead to various health disorders.

Ayurveda explains the importance of proper food combinations, their actions, and interactions in maintaining health. Although diet is widely recognized as an essential factor for a healthy life, there is still limited awareness regarding the concept of Samyog Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food combinations). Understanding and following these Ayurvedic dietary principles can play an important role in disease prevention and promotion of overall well-being.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literary references from ayurvedic classics and modern medical literature along with journals were collected and analytically reviewed to evaluate and enlighten the concept of Samyog Viruddha Ahara and its utility in today's Era by ayurvedic and modern point of view.

Definition of Viruddha Ahara (Incompatible Food)

According to Acharya Charaka, any food or medicine that aggravates the Doshas from their normal state and location in the body, but does not eliminate them properly, is known as Viruddha Ahara or incompatible diet.^[v] Such incompatible foods disturb the normal balance of the body and may gradually lead to the development of various diseases. In simple terms, Viruddha Ahara refers to those food combinations or dietary practices that are harmful to the body and negatively affect health.

According to Acharya Sushruta, Viruddha Ahara refers to those foods and drugs that disturb and displace the Doshas from their natural sites without properly eliminating them from the body. These aggravated Doshas further vitiate the Rasadi Dhatus and interfere with proper nourishment of body tissues. Due to the vitiation of Doshas and Dhatus, several diseases and disorders may develop. Such foods are considered incompatible or Viruddha Ahara.^{vi}

Similarly, Acharya Vagbhata explains that food, drinks, or medicines which aggravate the Doshas and cause Doshoklesha (excitation of Doshas), but fail to expel them from the body, are termed as Viruddha Ahara or incompatible diet.^{vii}

These descriptions indicate that certain food combinations may adversely affect the body in different ways, such as:

- Possessing opposite or contradictory properties
- Producing opposing actions on the Dhatus
- Causing harmful effects when processed in a particular manner
- Becoming incompatible when mixed in specific proportions
- Producing adverse effects when consumed at an inappropriate time
- Acting like slow poisoning or Gara Visha due to improper combinations

Etymology

The Word Samyog is originated from the root Sanyuj or from sam + yoga. Combination; one of the 10 Paradi Gunas. Combination of two or more substances together is Samyog. This kind of process exhibits peculiarities which are not seen in case of individual substances. Such as combination of honey and fish, fish with milk.

The Word Viruddha is originated from the root "Rudhir Avarni" by applying the Prefix "VI". This leads to two factors i.e. on combining two, three things; the stronger shades or overpowers the weaker ingredients. This has been accepted principally in Ayurveda also. It has been stated that in a combination of so many opposite qualities the majority of the power packed qualities overpower the weaker qualities.

Classification of Viruddha Ahara

According to Ayurveda literature, the 18 types are described to be contradictory food.^{viii}



Samyog Viruddha Ahara

संयुक्तो विरुद्ध तदयथा अम्लं पयसा सह | (च.सू. २६/१९)

Consumption of those substances which are against combination or intake of two such substances which on combination have poisonous effect.^{ix}

Studies on the consumption of Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food) have shown that the prevalence of Samyog Viruddha Ahara (combination incompatible food) and Veerya Viruddha Ahara is comparatively higher, accounting for about 81.36%. In the present era, a wide variety of food items and fast-food preparations are easily available in the market. People frequently consume different types of foods from hotels, restaurants, and food outlets without paying attention to their ingredients, preparation methods, or compatibility. As a result, the intake of Samyog Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food combinations) has become increasingly common in today's lifestyle

Diseases Produced by the Intake of Viruddha Ahara

Regular consumption of any type of Viruddha Ahara can lead to the development of several acute as well as chronic disorders. Acharya Charaka has described many diseases that may arise due to the continuous intake of incompatible food combinations. These disorders affect different systems of the body and gradually disturb overall health and well-being. Some of the commonly mentioned diseases are.^x

- Shandhya – Impotency
- Andhya – Blindness
- Visarpa – Erysipelas
- Jalodara – Ascites
- Visphota – Pustular eruptions
- Unmada – Insanity or psychological disorders
- Bhagandara – Fistula in ano
- Murchha – Fainting or loss of consciousness
- Mada – Intoxication or narcosis-like condition
- Aadhmana – Abdominal distension
- Galgraha – Obstruction or discomfort in the throat
- Pandu Roga – Anemia
- Ama – Accumulation of toxic undigested substances in the body
- Kilasa – Leucoderma
- Kushtha – Various skin diseases
- Grahani – Digestive disorders such as sprue syndrome
- Shotha – Swelling or oedema
- Amlapitta – Hyperacidity
- Jwara – Fever
- Pinasa – Allergic rhinitis
- Santana Dosh – Infertility-related disorders
- Mrityu – Severe complications that may even lead to death

Treatment of Diseases Produced by Viruddha Ahara

Acharya Charaka and Acharya Sushruta have described various therapeutic approaches for managing diseases caused by the consumption of Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food).^{[xi][xii]} The treatment mainly focuses on eliminating aggravated Doshas from the body and restoring normal balance.



The following therapies are mentioned in Ayurvedic classics:

- Vamana Karma – Therapeutic emesis used for expelling aggravated Doshas through vomiting
- Virechana Karma – Therapeutic purgation used to eliminate Doshas through the lower pathway
- Administration of substances having opposite qualities – Use of diet and medicines possessing qualities opposite to those causing imbalance
- Adoption of preventive and prophylactic measures – Following proper dietary and lifestyle practices to avoid recurrence of disease

Ayurveda also explains the concept of Oka Satmya, which means gradual adaptation. A person who regularly consumes incompatible food in small quantities over a long period may develop temporary adaptation or tolerance towards it.

Exceptional Conditions for Consuming Viruddha Ahara

Generally, Viruddha Ahara produces harmful effects on the body. However, Ayurveda mentions certain exceptional conditions where its effects may not be prominent.^[xiii] These include:

- Individuals habituated to consuming unwholesome food or substances
- Consumption in very small quantities
- Persons having strong digestive power (good Agni)
- Young and physically strong individuals
- People who regularly perform physical exercise and maintain good stamina

Even though such individuals may tolerate incompatible food temporarily, continuous consumption is still considered harmful in the long term.

Some Examples of Samyog Viruddha Ahara

Ayurveda explains that certain food combinations may disturb digestion, impair metabolism, and produce harmful effects on the body. Some commonly described examples of Samyog Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food combinations) are as follows:

Milk is considered incompatible with meat, fish, sour fruits, banana, and curd. Therefore, combinations such as fruit milkshakes, fruit creams, smoothies, and fruit salads mixed with milk should be avoided.

Consumption of banana with curd, milk, or buttermilk is not recommended. According to Ayurveda, such combinations may weaken digestive fire (Agni), produce toxins (Ama), and may lead to conditions like cold, cough, and allergies.

Starchy foods are considered incompatible with eggs, milk, banana, and dates.

Lemon should not be consumed along with yoghurt, milk, cucumber, or tomatoes.

Yoghurt is incompatible with sour fruits, hot drinks, fish, meat, mangoes, and cheese.

Radish is considered incompatible with fish.

Combination of eggs and milk is regarded as incompatible.

Milk should not be taken along with bread containing yeast.

Tea with milk or milk itself is considered incompatible when consumed with salty food items such as chapati, khakra, or paratha.

Potatoes, tomatoes, and chillies are considered incompatible with yoghurt, milk, melons, and cucumber.

Horse gram along with milk is considered an incompatible food combination.

Consumption of chicken or fish with milk, sesame, or sprouted grains may lead to digestive disturbances.

Honey and ghee in equal quantity are considered incompatible according to Ayurveda

Ayurveda also advises avoiding the intake of raw and cooked food together. Salads may be consumed first, followed by cooked meals after a short interval.

According to Ayurveda, the food that nourishes both the body and mind is considered a balanced diet. Food should always be consumed in proper quantity, which depends upon the strength of one's Jatharagni (digestive fire). Healthy



dietary habits not only help in maintaining overall well-being but also play an important role in the prevention of diseases.^{xiv}

Samyog Viruddha Ahara in Today's Perspective

Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food) can produce harmful effects on the body and may contribute to inflammation at the molecular level. Ayurveda has already described many incompatible food combinations, but in today's changing lifestyle and dietary patterns, it is important to identify newer incompatible combinations commonly consumed in daily life. Such food combinations may adversely affect immunity, metabolism, hormonal balance, and overall health.

Modern food science also supports the idea that certain food combinations may interfere with proper digestion and nutrient absorption. For example, proteins and starches require different digestive environments, and consuming them together may slow down digestion and metabolism.

Concept of Pathogenesis by Viruddha Ahara

According to Ayurveda, repeated or even single consumption of Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food) disturbs the normal functioning of Agni (digestive fire). Due to impaired digestion, food is not properly metabolized and forms immature Ahara Rasa in the Amashaya (stomach). When this improperly digested material remains in the body for a longer duration, it undergoes fermentation and putrefaction, resulting in the formation of Ama (toxic undigested substance).^{xv}

This Ama gets absorbed into the circulation and is carried throughout the body by aggravated Vata Dosha. During circulation, the vitiated Ama combines with the disturbed Vata, Pitta, and Kapha Doshas, leading to further imbalance in the body. This pathological process affects the normal functioning of tissues and channels, ultimately resulting in the manifestation of various diseases.

Thus, Ayurveda considers Viruddha Ahara as an important causative factor in the development of many systemic disorders through the formation of Ama and Dosha vitiation.

II. DISCUSSION

According to Ayurveda, Hetu (causative factor) plays a major role in the initiation and progression of diseases. Viruddha Ahara is considered one of the important etiological factors responsible for Dosha aggravation and disturbance in normal body functions. Therefore, avoiding the causative factors becomes an essential part of disease prevention and treatment.

In the present era, the prevalence of lifestyle disorders such as cardiovascular diseases, obesity, diabetes mellitus, hormonal imbalance, infertility, and even certain cancers is increasing rapidly. Unhealthy dietary habits and frequent consumption of incompatible food combinations may contribute significantly to these disorders. Hence, awareness regarding Viruddha Ahara and healthy eating practices is necessary.

Certain incompatible food combinations may adversely affect digestion, metabolism, and the immune system. For example, combinations like milk with certain fruits or eggs may trigger allergic reactions and respiratory problems in susceptible individuals. Excessive intake of sugar along with saturated fats may also contribute to metabolic and immunological disturbances.

Regular consumption of Viruddha Ahara may produce inflammation at the molecular level, which can further lead to Agnimandya (impaired digestive fire), Ama formation, and various metabolic disorders. Such inflammatory changes may also weaken the body's protective mechanisms and gradually affect immunity.

Studies also suggest that continuous intake of Samyog Viruddha Ahara may contribute to immune senescence and chronic digestive disturbances. Apart from biochemical effects, consuming foods that are not suitable or acceptable to an individual may also lead to improper digestion and long-term health issues.



III. CONCLUSION

Diet plays a major role in maintaining health as well as in curing diseases from their root cause. The present review highlights that Samyog Viruddha Ahara (incompatible food combinations) has become an important concern in today's unhealthy dietary patterns and lifestyle habits. Regular consumption of such incompatible foods may unknowingly lead to various digestive, metabolic, immunological, and systemic disorders.

Ayurveda gives great importance to Ahara (food) in both preventive and curative aspects of health. Therefore, it is essential to identify incompatible food combinations and educate people about their harmful effects. Increasing awareness regarding healthy dietary habits and avoidance of Viruddha Ahara is the need of the present era. Continuous intake of Samyog Viruddha Ahara may act harmful to the body, similar to slow poisoning or artificial toxicity.

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