



International Journal of Indian Medicine

www.ijim.co.in

ISSN: 2582-7634

Volume - 6, Issue - 7



IJIM

INDEXED

July 2025



International Journal of Indian Medicine



International Category Code (ICC): ICC-1702 International Journal Address (IJA): IJA.ZONE/258276217634 eISSN : 2582 - 7634

Evaluating the Correlation between Charakokta Ashta Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana and Modern Nutritional and Health Challenges: A Review

Kubal M.

Assistant Professor, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga,
K. G. Mittal Ayurved College, Charni Road, Mumbai.

Abstract: India is currently facing the "triple burden of malnutrition"-undernutrition, overnutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies-alongside a rise in lifestyle-related, non-communicable diseases. Rapid urbanization and industrialization have led to increasing rates of obesity, hypertension, and diabetes. *Ayurveda* emphasizes the vital role of personalized, seasonal, and mindful nutrition, viewing food as the foremost tool for maintaining health, surpassing even medicine in its impact. **Objective:** To evaluate the significance of *Charakokta Ashta Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana* in addressing contemporary diet-related health issues. **Materials and method:** A conceptual study entails the review and analysis of existing literature focused on a *Ashta Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana* concept. This process involves exploring classical texts, scientific journals, dissertations, and relevant research papers. **Results:** The concept of *Ashta Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana*, a foundational principle in *Ayurvedic* dietetics, presents a systematic approach for the selection of food substances (*Ahara Dravya*) suited to an individual's constitution (*Prakriti*), with due consideration of factors such as age, profession, habitat, and daily routine. It also provides essential guidelines for the appropriate mode of consumption. A discernible association has been observed between the increasing incidences of metabolic and lifestyle disorders and the disregard for this framework, often reflected in improper and unwholesome dietary practices. **Conclusion:** In the modern era, individuals often adopt unhealthy food choices and dietary habits indiscriminately, without recognizing their potential adverse effects on health. This issue can be effectively addressed by applying fundamental principles of *Ahara*, such as *Ashta Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana*, in both the prevention and management of lifestyle disorders, where unhealthy dietary habits act as modifiable risk factors.

Keywords: Ashta aahar vidhi visheshyatana, Ayurveda, Lifestyle Disorders.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Madhuri Prakash Kubal,

Assistant Professor, Swasthavritta and Yoga Department,
K. G. Mittal Ayurved College, Charni Road, Mumbai

Contact No. 8452900646 Email ID- maddykubal22@gmail.com



How to cite this article:

Kubal M. Evaluating the Correlation between Charakokta Ashta Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana and Modern Nutritional and Health Challenges: A Review. Int J Ind Med 2025;6(7):27-33 DOI: <http://doi.org/10.55552/IJIM.2025.6706>

INTRODUCTION:

India faces a wide range of nutrition-related challenges that include undernutrition, overnutrition, and deficiencies in essential micronutrients—together referred to as the "triple burden of malnutrition." India is increasingly facing a surge in lifestyle-related diseases as the national health burden shifts from communicable to non-communicable diseases. As the second most populous developing nation, the impact of industrialization and rapid urbanization has led to a growing prevalence of overweight and obesity, along with rising cases of high blood pressure and elevated blood sugar levels.^[1] Diet is a personal concept that greatly impacts health outcomes, even though it varies widely due to the diversity of cultural groups and populations.

Ayurveda, the ancient science of India, holds a wealth of traditional practices such as *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta*, *Rasayana*, and *Ritushodhan*, all of which support and sustain good health. *Ayurveda* regards food as the most powerful aid for performing daily functions, asserting that no medicine can match the value of proper nutrition.^[2]

Review of literature:

Aahar (food) is recognized as one of the *Trayopastambha*, the three foundational pillars that support the body and maintain health.^[3] The significance of these pillars lies in maintaining balance, as both over and under indulgence can be harmful to life. *Acharya Charaka* introduced the concept of *Ashta Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana*, which refers to eight key factors that influence the wholesome (*Hitakara*) or unwholesome (*Ahitakara*) effects of food, as well as the proper methods of its consumption.^[4]

- **Prakriti** – The inherent nature or original state of the food

- **Karana** – The method or process used in preparing the food
- **Samyoga** – The combination or mixing of different food items
- **Rashi** – The quantity or amount of food consumed
- **Desha** – The geographical origin or habitat of the food
- **Kala** – Time factors, including age, seasons, and regional influences
- **Upyogasamstha** – Guidelines or rules for food consumption
- **Upyokta** – The individual consuming the food, including their habits and behaviour

DISCUSSION:

Classical text and its relevance while considering dietary choices.

1. Prakriti-

The inherent characteristics of food substances (*Ahara Dravya*) are referred to as their *Prakriti*. Attributes such as *Shita* (cold), *Ushna* (hot), *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Ruksha* (dry), etc., known as *Gurvadi Gunas*, play a key role in determining how food interacts with an individual's bodily condition.

Pulses are recognized as an excellent source of protein; however, in individuals with *Agnimandya* (weak digestion) or *Kshina* (debilitated condition), the selection of pulses should be based on the *Prakriti* (nature) of the *Ahara Dravya*. For instance, *Masha* is heavy (*Guru*) by nature, whereas *Mudga* is light (*Laghu*) i.e. easier to digest.^[5] Therefore, *Mudga* is the more suitable choice in such cases.

2. Karana-

Karana refers to the process used to alter the inherent qualities of *aahar dravya*. This transformation involves transferring desirable attributes into the substance. Such changes can occur through various methods, including dilution, heating, purification,

churning, storage, aging, flavour enhancement, infusion, preservation, or even through the type of container used. For instance, curd in its natural form tends to aggravate *shotha* (inflammation or swelling), but when it is churned and transformed into buttermilk, it helps to reduce *shotha*.

Nowadays, we often rely on unhealthy methods of food processing. For example, we use microwaves to cook food, and we repeatedly reheat leftovers. This phenomenon, known as the high-heat food preparation hypothesis, is considered a contributing factor to the elevated risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) observed in South Asians, as compared to populations that predominantly use low-heat cooking methods.^[6] In today's fast-paced society, the convenience of ready-to-eat meals has led to the widespread use of improper food practices—such as excessive preservatives, artificial flavouring agents, overcooked or undercooked dishes, and smoked foods—all of which can be harmful to health. In a cross-sectional study, 44.18% of males and 38% of females were found to be overweight, while 39.71% of the population reported regular consumption of ready-to-eat (RTE) foods. The frequency of intake ranged from one to three times daily. This habitual consumption of ultra-processed and RTE foods, which shows a significant association with elevated BMI and overweight, may contribute to the development of cardiovascular, coronary heart, and cerebrovascular diseases.^[7] Relying on polished rice as a staple food can lead to thiamine deficiency due to nutrient loss during processing.^[8]

3. *Samyoga*-

Samyoga refers to the combination of two or more substances. A beneficial *Samyoga* either enhances the positive qualities of a substance or neutralizes its harmful effects.

The combination of pulses and cereals is considered a superior source of protein, as they complement each other by providing a

complete set of essential amino acids.^[9] The Mid-day Meal Programme also incorporates this idea to combat requirement of protein. Similarly, the traditional practice of eating ghee with *Puranpoli*—a classic Maharashtrian dessert—helps improve the digestion of this rich and heavy dish.^[10]

However, in some cases, combining certain foods can have harmful effects. For instance, ghee and honey are both healthy when consumed individually, but mixing them in equal quantities can be toxic. Likewise, combining foods such as honey, fish, and milk—though safe on their own—may lead to health problems like *Kushta Roga* (skin diseases).^[11] The growing trend of having soft drinks with junk food is linked to numerous health concerns.^[12]

4. *Rashi*-

Rashi refers to the quantity of food to be consumed, which plays a crucial role in determining the effects of both adequate and inadequate intake. *Rashi* is classified into two types: **Sarvagraha** and **Parigraha**. *Sarvagraha* denotes the total quantity of the entire meal, while *Parigraha* refers to the specific quantity of each individual ingredient within the meal. Food should be eaten in accordance with an individual's digestive strength (*Agni*). Ideally, half of the stomach should be filled with solid food, one-quarter with liquids, and the remaining quarter left empty to support the proper movement of *Vata*. Heavy (*Guru*) foods should be consumed in moderation, while light (*Laghu*) foods are easier to digest but still need to be taken in balanced amounts. *Ayurveda* recommends a diet that incorporates all six tastes (*Shadrasa*). However, an excessive intake of any one of these tastes can lead to imbalances and the development of various health disorders.

Overeating during events like parties and functions is a common habit, often done without regard for one's digestive capacity.^[13] On the other hand, many young people eat

too little in an attempt to lose weight and conform to unrealistic body image standards.^[14] Both of these extremes can have harmful effects on overall health. Paying attention to the individual components of food is essential while eating. For instance, overconsumption of salads can interfere with the absorption of essential macro- and micronutrients in the body. Similarly, excessive intake of pickles, papad, and salty foods can lead to imbalances, such as fluctuations in blood pressure.^[15]

5. Desha-

The climate and geography of a region significantly affect the characteristics of the food grown there. For example, foods cultivated in the Himalayan regions tend to be heavy in nature, while those from desert or sandy areas are generally lighter. Therefore, diet (*Ahara*) should be chosen based on both the geographical location (*Bhoomi Desha*) and the individual's body constitution (*Deha Desha*).

Globalization has expanded access to diverse food choices, but this often results in health problems due to the body's inability to adjust to non-native or incompatible diets. Diets that are non-native and rich in processed foods and sugars are associated with increased accumulation of visceral fat. The Indian population, having historically adapted to low-calorie, traditional dietary patterns, often faces metabolic challenges in processing such dietary shifts, thereby increasing the risk of metabolic syndrome.^[16] Migratory populations often face various health issues due to sudden exposure to unfamiliar and non-native dietary habits.

6. Kala-

Kala refers to both the cyclical patterns of day and night as well as the individual's condition, including health status and age. It is categorized into ***Nityaga Kala*** (constant), which pertains to daily rhythms such as the appropriate times for eating, day-night cycles, and seasonal regimens (*Ritucharya*),

and ***Avasthika Kala*** (conditional), which involves adapting one's diet according to specific circumstances such as illness, age, or physical condition to ensure it supports the individual's current state.

Pannha is the unique energy imparting and disease preventing drink used in *Vasant* season. According to Deshpande (2001) mango is laxative, diuretic and antiscorbutic, which tones up the inner muscles.^[10]

Excessive workload and demanding job responsibilities often result in irregular eating patterns, while night shift jobs disrupt the natural timing of food intake, contributing to a range of health problems over time. Late-night eating misaligns the circadian clock, affecting neurotransmitter function, hormonal rhythms, and inflammatory pathways, thereby increasing the risk of mood disorders.^[17] Additionally, advancements in agricultural practices and the global availability of food have led to the year-round consumption of items that were once seasonal, thereby disturbing the natural alignment between diet and seasonal needs.^[18]

6. Upayoga Samstha-

It refers to dietary guidelines in alignment with the individual's digestive health. Eating a meal before the previous one has been fully digested can disrupt the balance of all three *Doshas*, potentially resulting in significant health complications. These guidelines emphasize the consumption of warm and unctuous (*snigdha*) foods in appropriate quantities, ensuring that each meal is eaten only after the previous one has been fully digested. They also recommend avoiding the combination of incompatible foods, eating in a suitable environment with all necessary accompaniments, and practicing mindful eating—without talking or laughing—while maintaining proper self-respect and attentiveness.^[19]

Neglecting or failing to adhere to these critically important dietary guidelines is a key factor contributing to the increasing incidence of diet-related health issues. The frequent consumption of excessively dry, over-fried, and highly processed junk food has become increasingly popular among adolescents, contributing to rising rates of obesity and hormonal imbalances.^[20] Additionally, habitual snacking without regard for genuine hunger cues is widely practiced today. The growing trend of consuming street food, often influenced by food blogs and social media, is gradually affecting health, while the risk of foodborne illnesses remains high due to poor hygiene standards at many such eating establishments.^[21,22] Business meetings over lunch and dinner have become a common practice in corporate settings. Frequent dining out often involves excessive talking and laughing during meals, which can lead to overeating or improper food intake. Additionally, screen usage during meals—prevalent not only among adults but also increasingly among children—has been linked to various digestive issues. In contrast, mindful eating supports the brain-gut connection and promotes healthy digestion.^[23,24]

8. Upayokta-

An individual plays a key role in maintaining their health by regularly consuming foods that are compatible with their constitution, a concept known as *Oka Satmya*. It is important for each person to understand and assess their unique physiological makeup i.e. *Prakriti* and make dietary choices that align with it.

Considering an individual's *Prakriti* (constitutional type) when recommending dietary choices, physical activity, seasonal regimens, *Rasayana* (rejuvenation therapies), and treatment approaches—including both *Shodhana* (purification) and *Shamana* (palliative therapies)—is a unique

and profound aspect of Ayurveda. The concept of *Prakriti* in Ayurveda presents a distinctive framework for comprehending and evaluating an individual's health.^[25] A generalized diet plan cannot be applied to every individual, as factors such as one's *Prakriti* (constitutional type), age, occupation, living environment, daily activities, and specific health concerns must be carefully considered. Tailoring the diet to these individual factors is essential to achieve optimal benefits without disrupting the body's internal balance.

CONCLUSION:

In the modern era, individuals frequently engage in indiscriminate food choices and dietary practices, often driven by convenience, taste preferences, or lifestyle pressures, rather than nutritional value or health considerations. This growing tendency to consume processed, imbalanced, or unsuitable foods—without awareness of their long-term physiological and psychological consequences—has contributed significantly to the rising prevalence of lifestyle-related disorders such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and gastrointestinal ailments. The disconnect from traditional, mindful eating practices and the lack of understanding about the impact of food on overall well-being underscores the urgent need to promote conscious, health-oriented dietary behaviour. This issue can be addressed through the application of fundamental principles of *Aahar*, such as *Ashta Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana*, not only in the curative but also preventive in the management of various lifestyle disorders, wherein unhealthy dietary practices serve as modifiable risk factors. The concept of *Ashta Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatana*, one of the key principles of *Ayurvedic* dietetics, offers a comprehensive framework for the selection of food substances (*Ahara Dravya*) and

prescribes essential guidelines for their proper consumption.

REFERENCES:

- Vennu V, Abdulrahman TA, Bindawas SM. The Prevalence of Overweight, Obesity, Hypertension, and Diabetes in India: Analysis of the 2015-2016 National Family Health Survey. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2019;16(20):3987. Published 2019 Oct 18. Doi:10.3390/ijerph16203987
- Kashyapa, Kashyapa Samhita of VriddhaJivaka. Revised by Sharma H, with Vidyotini Hindi Commentary by Bhisagacharya S. Khila Sthana, Ch. 4, Verse 6. Reprint ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2010.
- Agnivesha, Charak Samhita, 4th Edition, Edited by Vaidya Yadavji Trikamji Aacharya, Varanasi, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Samsthan, 1994, Reprint year: Sutra Sthana 11/35, Chakrapani, 2005.
- Agnivesha, Charak Samhita with Vidyotini hindi Commentary of Pt. Kasinatha Sastri and Dr. Gorakha Natha Chaturvedi Ji, Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, Varanasi. Reprint year: Viman Sthana Chapter 1 Verse 21, 2005.
- Akre MR, Kharat RS. Physicochemical and phyto chemical analysis of masha and mudga wsr to guru and laghu guna.
- Kakde S, Bhopal RS, Bhardwaj S, Misra A. Urbanized South Asians' susceptibility to coronary heart disease: The high-heat food preparation hypothesis. *Nutrition*. 2017 Jan 1; 33:216-24.
- Choudhury SR, Das P, Koner S, Ghosh J, Singh K. Cardiovascular Disease Risks Related to Consumption of Ready-To-Eat Food Products between Young Adults of Kolkata, West Bengal, India. *Journal of Comprehensive Health*. 2024 Mar 8;12(1):60-5.
- Whitfield KC, Bourassa MW, Adamolekun B, Bergeron G, Bettendorff L, Brown KH, Cox L, Fattal-Valevski A, Fischer PR, Frank EL, Hiffler L. Thiamine deficiency disorders: diagnosis, prevalence, and a roadmap for global control programs. 2018 Oct.
- Kumari PV, Sangeetha N. Nutritional significance of cereals and legumes-based food mix-A review. *International Journal of Agricultural and Life Sciences*. 2017;3(1):115-22.
- Kachhot S. Indigenous Traditional Knowledge: Blending Traditional Cuisine and Scientific Knowledge. <https://agritechmagazine.com>. 2024 Jan; 8:81.
- Patil VS, Tripathy S, Sharma A, Pali V. EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN VIRUDDHA AAHAR AND SKIN DISEASES: A LITERATURE REVIEW.
- Gupta B, Rathi B, Rathi RB, Shinde AR. Food Consumption Habits of Students of Ayurveda College with Respect to Incompatible diet and Its Impact on Their Health: A Cross-Sectional Study. *International Journal of Ayurvedic Medicine*. 2022;13(3):673-9.
- Anwar W, Ranjan P, Malhotra A, Madan N, Kumari A, Singh A, Prakash B, Jadon RS, Baitha U, Vikram NK. Understanding obesity among young adults in India: A focus group study. *Diabetes & Metabolic Syndrome: Clinical Research & Reviews*. 2024 Sep 1;18(9):103121.
- Nagar I, Virk R. The struggle between the real and ideal: Impact of acute media exposure on body image of young Indian women. *Sage Open*. 2017 Feb;7(1):2158244017691327.
- Raj V, Sandeep PG, Bhavya SN, Prakash J. Salt consumption behavior among selected subjects and salt content of common processed snack foods. *Indian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics*. 2015 Oct;52(4):442-51.
- Misra, A., & Khurana, L. (2008). Obesity and the metabolic syndrome in developing countries. *The Journal of clinical endocrinology and metabolism*, 93(11 Suppl 1), S9-S30. <https://doi.org/10.1210/jc.2008-1595>

17. Kim YI, Kim E, Lee Y, Park J. Role of late-night eating in circadian disruption and depression: a review of emotional health impacts. *Physical Activity and Nutrition*. 2025 Mar 31;29(1):18.
18. Ma Y, Olendzki BC, Li W, et al. Seasonal variation in food intake, physical activity, and body weight in a predominantly overweight population. *Eur J Clin Nutr*. 2006;60(4):519-528. doi: 10.1038/sj.ejcn.1602346
19. vidhi vidhan
20. Ghosh A, Muley A. Ultra-Processed Food Consumption Among College Students and Their Association with Body Composition, Bowel Movements and Menstrual Cycle. *International Journal of Public Health*. 2025 Apr 8; 70:1607712.
21. Karmarkar A, Paranjape M. The Popularity of Street Food and Role of Social Media in Promoting Street Food, with Reference to Pune City. *Atithya: A Journal of Hospitality*. 2020 Jul 1;6(2):53-60.
22. Rao Vemula S, Naveen Kumar R, Polasa K. Foodborne diseases in India—a review. *British Food Journal*. 2012 May 11;114(5):661-80.
23. Sankar, Raveendran Nair Kumari Lekha Jinu; Harjpal, Lalchand; Chandrakar, Rupendra; Naik, Shrikant. A review article on Ahara Vidhi Vidhana (Rules for consuming food) in consonance with Charaka Samhita. *Journal of Indian System of Medicine* 9(3): p 161-165, Jul-Sep 2021. | DOI: 10.4103/JISM.JISM_31_21
24. Sawai RV, Binorkar S, Suke DU, Karande SP. Ahara vidhi: concepts of food intake in ayurveda with comparison to present era. *International research journal of India*. 2016; 1:1-6.
25. Kararrwal K, Kumar K. Brief knowledge of Prakriti and its importance. *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrated Medical Sciences*. 2024 Feb 24;9(1):201-6.

Authors Contribution: All authors have contributed equally.

Financial Support and Sponsorship: None declared

Conflict of Interest: There are no conflicts of interest.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI Assisted Technologies in the writing process:

The author has not used generative AI/AI assisted technologies in the writing process.

© 2025 IJIM (International Journal of Indian Medicine)

An Official Publication of ARCA- AYURVEDA RESEARCH & CAREER ACADEMY

Website: <https://www.ijim.co.in> Email: ijimjournal1@gmail.com

IIFS Impact Factor: 4.125

Frequency of Publication: Monthly