ABSTRACT:

Panchamahabhoota Siddhanta (principle of five elements) is considered to be one of the principles of Indian philosophy, which explains the integrity of all the living and non-living substances in this universe. Panchamahabhootas (principle of five elements) can be seen in two ways in philosophies - as a part of cosmogenesis and a part of Dravya (Matter). The reason to understand the origin of the universe is that, the source of Mahabhautika (gross elements) evolution lies in it and to understand this concept as a whole, one has to understand its base. So it is mandatory for us to know the things which are using in our practice, from where they are originated. The basic principles of Ayurveda though genuine and of much utility, its analysis and implementation need more research.

Key words: Panchabhoota, Ayvka, Mahat, Ahankara, Pancheekarana.

INTRODUCTION: Any individual who is not well versed in basic principles of any science and who doesn’t have practical knowledge of the same will never succeed in his clinical endeavors. Any theory without practical application is considered to be like leading a blind path. Ayurveda, though a science with rich legacy is lacking implementation of its principles in some areas. One of such very less explored theories is that of Panchamahabhoota. According to Darsana (Philosophy) & Ayurveda, the individual is the epitome of the universe. All the material and spiritual phenomena of the universe are present in the individual. Similarly all that present in the individual is also contained in the universe. Visualization of the identity of the individual with the universe paves the way for Salvation. The body is described as the modified form of Panchamahabhuta (principle of five elements). Hence the description of the identity of individual and the Universe relates to mahabhautika (Gross elements) only. Theory of holism, different theories about cosmogenesis, theories about perceptual cognition and other allied principles like tridosha theory (Theory of Three humors), Rasa siddhanta (Theory of six taste) etc, were developed on the basis of this basic theory of five elements. Prithvi (Earth), Ap (Water), Tejas (Fire), Vayu (Air) and Aakasha (Space) are the established elements as Panchamahabhootas, though some contradictions about inclusion of Aakasha (Space) among Bhootas (Elements) existed during some later development.

HISTORICAL ASPECTS: Vedas are considered to be the first recorded sources of knowledge. Indian pre-vedic civilization (Indus valley civilization) has also been well established through series of excavations, in which written are missing. Vedas mainly reflected man’s concern and obligation towards nature and natural forces and were highly ritualistic and practice oriented in many ways. Knowledge in Vedas chiefly aimed to perform some yagnas, tantras or mantras (ritual sacrifice & chanting verses), where the performing man has a tendency to completely surrender before whom he is worshipping. These circumstances might have leaded the vedic civilization into some crisis like:
A) They could not find explanations to many things due to lack of conceptual integrity of the believes and practices

B) Other philosophical systems like Buddhism tried to establish parallel thoughts and life styles through their deeds & practices which became a cause for set back of Hindu practices.

Both the above crisis led to the development in the field of all the knowledges. Vedic and non-Vedic sources of information influenced this and various philosophies and theories developed hereafter. The philosophies tried to draw a cause-effect relation in the evolution of the universe & man and this urge compelled them to formulate different theories about cosmogenesis. The basic assumption they postulated were:

a) There should be a cause –effect relation for everything happening in this universe.

b) As a part of the universe, man is a miniature of all the structural & functional aspects of universe.

These assumptions were the basis of almost all the theories, evolved thereafter. The most accepted theory of cosmogenesis was Parinama siddhanta (Theory of transformation), in which the universe was considered as evolved from a pre-existing chaos. Panchamahabhoota (Theory of five elements) theory was first appeared as an elemental part of the cosmogenesis, were final product of the cosmogenesis Panchamahabhootas, in a later development, especially that related to Ayurveda, considered as a unit of panchamahabhootas combined with Atma(Soul) only became the chief concern in the context of its practical application i.e., Chikitsa (Treatment).

Development of content of Panchamahabhoota siddhanta:

1) In the Vedic period, in some Upanishads the evolution of universe was established as from vayu & jala. Natural forces in the form of Vayu (wind), Jala (rain), Agni (sunlight), Bhoomi (earth) etc. were the subjects for worships in the Vedic period. This consideration can be one reason for the inclusion of these principles under the basic elements of the universe. Absence of all these might have considered as Akasha (Space)

2) Evolution of everything were explained from sookshmavastha (Minute stage) to sthoolavastha (Gross stage).in that sense a sequence from Aakasa to bhoomi has popularized

3) Another possibility of limiting the number into five was that regarding the perceptual cognition. The facilities are five only and thus there cannot be more number of elements than five

4) Panchamahabhootas can be seen in two ways in philosophies

a) As a part of cosmogenesis

b) As a part of matter(dravya)

The first aspect explains the functional significance of bhootas & the second are mainly the structural significance.

Origin of Universe: The reason to understand the origin of the universe is that, the source of mahabhautika evolution lies in it and to understand this concept as a whole, one has to analyze its base. So it is mandatory for us to know the things which are using in our practice, from where they are originated. When describing the evolution of the universe different theories were postulated by the different schools of thought. Sankhya put forth the prakrti purusha siddhanatha (Theory of basic primordial & causative element) as the source of the universe, whereas Vaisesika postulated the paramanuvada (Atomic...
theory) and Ayurveda has merged both. These theories in their own perspective can be compared to the Big bang theory postulated by the scientists of modern metaphysics.

The Prakrti (Nature) as described by the Indian sciences show resemblance to the cosmic egg which is the sole source of the creation of the universe. These theories in their own perspective can be compared to the Big bang theory postulated by the scientists of modern metaphysics.

THE MULA PRAKRITI (Basic primordial element): The Mula prakrti, the root principle of matter, though without a cause for itself is the cause of all inanimate and animate objects, manifested by the three gunas (Qualities) and Ashta prakrti (Eight primordial elements) and is the primordial entity of evolution.

In all Sthavara (Inanimate) and Jangama (Animate) Srishti (evolution), there is a mixture of Satva (enlightening), Rajas (Initiative) and Tamas (Covering). These gunas never stay in isolated form but stay in different proportions in all.

The only difference is that in Avyakta (Unmanifested) these gunas are in Samyavastha (balanced state), whereas in Srishti they are in Visamavastha (imbalanced). Astarupam: (8 fold) Mahat (intellect) Ahankara (ego) and Pancatanmatras (5 objects) are the seven Rupas or manifestation of Prakri. These along with Prakri itself form eightfold manifestation.

Dalhana gives the reason that by Silaputra Nyaya. Avyakta (unmanifested) has both Rupa (form) and Rupitvat (state of having form). But basically Sankhya has described two types of Astavidha Prakri-Mula Prakri and Prakri Vikri (Primordial form and Productive form)

It has been already seen that Prakri and Purusha samyoga (combination) resides in Avyakta. The mula prakrti cannot develop on its own. Matter by itself cannot give rise to minds etc. so the principle of Chaitanya or Consciousness is posited owing to the influence of Chaitanya the root principle evolves into detail forms.

Mahat (Intellect): After the Samyoga (Association), Prakri loses its Triguna samyavastha and also Avyaktvastha. Out of which Mahat tatva is the first one, it also called as Buddhitatva.

To give decisions by looking at the Karya-Karana bhava (Cause and effect form) or to decide acceptance or non-acceptance of a subject is the function of Buddh. This function is also called as Vyvasaya (Discrimination). It is of three types depending upon the dominancy of Trigunas and their functions differ accordingly hence is called as Budhitatwa.

The term mahat signifies all pervasive nature of Buddh.

Even after the Mahat tatva was formed, still its oneness with the Avyakta was undeterred, but Ahankara manifested its Anekavtva (Multiplicty) and Prthikatva (Seperability), because of which we see different plants, animals, stones etc. And it also inculcates the same nature i.e. Abhimaana (ego) in Human beings.

Ahankara (ego) is a product of Mahat hence is manifested after Buddh and is divided into satvikadi (Satva, rajas, tamas) three types.

Ekadaseendrya (Eleven faculties): Though Ahankara is Trigunatmaka, satva guna dominancy is more in manas (Mind) and Buddhendrya (Sensory faculties) compared to Karmendriyas (Motor faculties). Indriyas (Faculties) from Srota (Auditory) to Jihwa (Gustatory). They are termed to be Buddhendryas. They are called so as they are capable of perceiving Artha (objects of sense organs) only when Manas is residing with them.
**Tanmatra** (Five objects of sex organs): These are a subtle basic unit which later on gives rise to Panchamahabhuta and are not perceived by Bahyendriyas (External faculties).

**EVOLUTION OF MAHABHOOTAS:**

**Akasa Mahabhuta:** Nyaya and vaisesika darsanas have told Aakasa to be Vypaka (all pervasive), sabda-gunavisista (having special property of sound) & Nitya (Permenant), but Upanishad has given its origin from Atma.4 (Soul)

Sankhya has told its origin from Sabda-Tanmatra (object of sound) where as vaisesika from Akasa paramanu (Atomic level of space). One which is evolved cannot be Nitya (Permanent) and omnipresent hence a lot of controversies are found regarding Akasa mahabhuta. It can be said that, like paramanurupa prthvi (Atomic levelled earth) and paramanurupa jala (Atomic levelled water) are nitya, in the same way paramanurupa Akasa (Atomic levelled space) is Nitya.5 Akasa is said to be Sarvamurta samayogi dravya i.e samyoga with each paramanu, hence is omnipresent. At the beginning of the Srishti Utpatti (Process of evolution) Akasa paramanu with Iswarecha ( God’s wish) come together in the order of Dvyanuka (diatomic, Tryanuka (Triatomic) etc.. to give rise to Sthula Akasa (Gross space). Therefore in Srishti its Utpatti(From starting) said to be from Atman (Soul). But according to Nyaya darsana though it is said to possess Apratigathatva 6 (Un- obstructiveness). It does have paramanus as it gives rise to murta dravyas (Formed objects) like Jala and Prthvi by the rule of Satkaaryavada (Theory of existence of product in cause).

Susruta says Mahabhootas are nothing but the play of Trigunas. Satva guna is Laghu (Light) and Prakaasha (Which enlightens with the knowledge about Atman.7) Atman is nothing but Satva, hence Akasa Mahabhuta is the first to originate from it.

**Vayu Mahabhuta:** Second mahabhuta to evolve in the order is the Vayu mahabhuta from Sparsa Tantra (object of touch) / Vayu paramanu/Akasa which is again Amurta and has Sparsagunavisesa along with the sabda guna of Akasa due to Gunavidhi (Increase of property).

Vayu mahabhuta is Rajo Guna dominant without which satva and tamas cannot proceed to perform their functions, hence vayu mahabhuta is second to originate.

**Agni Mabhuta:** The third mahabhuta to evolve is the Agni Mahabhuta from Rupa tanmatra (Object of vision) / Agni Paramanus/Vayu having Rupa as visesa guna (Special propery) along with the gunas of previous mahabhutas. Agni mahābhūta is Satva & Rajo guṇa dominant as it derives guṇas from the above two mahabhutas.

**Jalamahabhoota:** The fourth in row is the Jalamahabhoota originated out of Rasa Thanmatra (Object of taste)/Jalaparamanus/Agni Mahabhoota. Its vishesa guna is Rasa along with Sabdhasparsha and Roopa. Karikavali has given the Bhaudhika gunas(Physical properties) of Jala, like color of Jala is Sukla Varna( White colour). Sparsa (Touch) is Seeta (Cold) and Rasa( Taste) is Madhura (sweet). Jalamaahabhoodha is having dominance of Satva and Tamo guṇa.8

**Prthvi Mahabhoota:** This is the last bhoota to get evolve with Gandha(smell) as vishesa guna with all the Gunas of Preceding mahabhootas. Object having mass and shape is having predominance of Prthvi Mahabhoota. Prithi Mahabhoota is Tamo guṇa predominant which provides stability. Among the five mahabhootas the last four Bhootas have an important role in
the creation of Objects whereas Akasha is all pervasive.9

**Dissolution of Mahabhootas:** Dissolution of Mahabhootas takes place in the reverse order of creation.

**Process of Pancheekarana (Pentamarisation):** The word Pancheekarana (Pentamarisation) is not mentioned in the classical text. This word is found in Upanishad and was first conceptualized by Sankaracharya in his book named Pancheekarana.

**DEFINITION:** Pancheekarana is defined as the process by which the Sukshamabhootas combined together according to a set pattern. Ayurveda explains Pancheekarana with the help of another term as Anyonyanupravesa (Intermingling). The difference between the two terms is that the later one explains about the subsequent stage to Anupravesha of Tanmatras wherein the Anupravesitha Tanmatras (Intermingled objects) permutate and combine so that each Bhootha which is formed will causes all the Five Tnamatras.

**Process of Pancheekarana according to Vedantha:** Each molecule of Mahabhoota divides in to two parts and these parts may not be always equal.10 The first part of division again divides into four parts. These four parts also may not be equal proportion. One of these four prats gets exchanged with all four other molecules. Now every molecule will have fractions of each other.

**Tridosha & Panchamahabhootha:** As the tridoshas are the Karyadravyas (Products), they too are Panchahoudhika in nature but predominancy of one or two Mahabhoota influences its nature and functions.

Vata- Vayu + Akasa11

Pitta- Agni
Kapha- Jala + Prithvi

**Dhatus and Mahabhoothas:** According to Chakrapani, Panchamahabhootas are themselves termed as Dhatus. According to Ashangasamgraha12, Predominance of bhoothas is give below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dhatu</th>
<th>Mahabhootha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rasa</td>
<td>Jala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakta</td>
<td>Agni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamsa</td>
<td>Prithvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meda</td>
<td>Jala + Prithvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthi</td>
<td>Vayu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majja</td>
<td>Jala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukra</td>
<td>Jala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Specific Lakshana of Mahabhoothas**13: Charaka and Kasyapa have explained the lakshana of each Mahabhoota as:

- Prithvi- Kharatwa (Solidity)
- Jala- Dravatwa (Liquidity)
- Agni- Usnatwa (Hotness)
- Vayu- Chalatwa (Mobility)
- Akasa- Apratighatatwa (Unobstructiveness)

**DISCUSSION:** The karya dravyas are infinite. Mahabhootas are the karana dravyas. Ayurvedic treatment modalities can be explained on the basis of Panchabhootha theory. Hence Susrutha opines that there is no need to think beyond Panchamahabhoothas. According to Karyakaranasiddhanta (cause and effect theory), we know that every Karya has a cause. Hence the Trigunatmaka prakrti is the cause of the Mahabhoothas. During the evolution of Mahabhoothas, these Trigunas are also carried forward to be manifested in the objects. According to Ayurveda, Dravyas are categorized into five based on the dominancy of each Mahabhootha. Dravyas with Akasa and Vayu bhootha predominance can be utilized in decreased condition of Vata. Similarly in the case of other Doshas also.
According to Susruta the assessment of the changes in the bhautika configuration in the body is done with the help of Sadvidha Pariksha (six methods of examination). e.g.: to understand the changes happening in the Akasa can be analyzed by the examination of Sabdha (Sound). Similarly in the case of other bhoothas by the analysis of their respective Gunas.

For the better application of Panchabhoota theory in clinical practice, physician should be aware of the Gunas of Mahabhoothas. In major Samhithas, Guna (Property) and Karma (action) of Mahabhoothas are well explained. Based on this, increased and decreased level of Mahabhootha in the body should be inferred.

CONCLUSION: The Pancha mahabhoothas are the basic elements of the three among the four components of Ayu i.e. Sarira (Physical body). But unfortunately this theory is not well explored, which has its roots in Vedas. Panchabhoottasidhanda is a Sarvatrantrasindhantha (Universal theory). This Sidhantha (Theory) is very much beneficial in understanding the theories of Ayurveda like Tridosha theory, Rasaveerya (Theory of taste and potency) theory etc.

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