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## Research Article

# A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF PANCHMAHABHUT SIDDHANT AND ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION IN VYADHISHAMAN

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### ABSTRACT

The basic goal of Ayurveda is to keep a healthy person well and shield them from illness. The concept of *Panchamahabhuta* (five elements) is one of the basic fundamental principle of ayurveda science. It acknowledges that the universe is composed of five fundamental components, i.e *Aakaash*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Prithvi*, *Jala*<sup>1</sup>. *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* are the primary causative factors responsible for maintaining health and treating diseases, and they too are considered *Panchabhautika*. As far as we are aware, *Panchamahabhutas* are the major components of the *Dravyas* and *Chikitsapurush* employed in treatment. The *Panchmahabhut* revolves around the normal functioning of the body (physiological), occurrence of disease (pathological) and action of drug in various part of the body (pharmacokinetics). Thus, this *Panchabhautic Siddhant* accomplishes the goal of *Ayurveda*. This conceptual study sheds light on the therapeutic application of *Panchamahabhuta* and its significance in Ayurveda, with a particular emphasis on how it interacts with different bodily parts such as *Tridosh*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Triguna*, *Rasa* and so on. A thorough understanding of this *Siddhant* aids in preserving the body's physiological processes, pathological state of the disease and aids in its treatment.

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### INTRODUCTION

Ayurvedic Samhitas provide a detailed explanation of the notion of panchamahabhuta. Each and every material in the world Whether it is non-life or living, the universe has a panchamahabhautic component. According to this theory, everything in the universe, including the human body, is composed of five elements<sup>2</sup>:

**Prithvi (Earth):** Represents solidity, stability, and structure. 2.

**Ap (Water):** Represents fluidity, cohesion, and liquidity.

**Tejas (Fire):** Represents energy, transformation, and metabolism.

**Vayu (Air):** Represents movement, motion, and transportation.

**Akasha (Ether):** Represents space, the substratum that accommodates the other four elements.

In the human body, the balance of these five elements indicates health, while their imbalance indicates sickness. Both the food we eat and the *Dravya* that is used to treat the disease are *Panchabhautic*. When food undergoes digestion with the help of *Jatharagni*, *Parthiv* (*Prithvi Mahabhuta*) properties of food nurses the *Parthiv* part of body. In this manner symmetrical

properties of *Panchmahabhutas* give nutrition to corresponding symmetrical part *Mahabhuta*). The equilibrium of these 5 elements in the human body denotes the health whereas imbalance of these denotes the diseased condition.

### AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To interpret the basic concept of *Panchmahabhuta Siddhanta* to its full perspective.

To understand this concept and utilize it thoroughly in *Vyadhishamana*.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

All Samhitas, Ayurved texts, research papers, online sources are used as material for present conceptual review.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Evolution of *Panchamahabhuta*

The progression of the *Panchamahabhuta*, or the five elements, starts with the formation of *Ahankara*, or ego, from *Mahat*. *Ahankara* embodies three characteristics: *Satwa* (essence), *Raja*

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(energy), and *Tamasa* (mass). *Rajas* drives *Tamasa* in specific proportions, leading to the creation of the *Shabda Tanmatra*. This is followed by the formation of *Sparsh, Rupa, Rasa* and *Gandha Tanmatras*. *Tanmatra* represents a subtle quantum of the *Mahabhuta* category with a distinct *Raja* or *Tama*.<sup>3</sup>

Subsequently, *Bhutantaranupraves* or imitative pervasion, transforms *Tanmatras* into premolecules of *Mahabhutas*, followed by *Panchikaran*, or pentamerization/reciprocal pervasion. In *Panchikaran*, primary existing molecules of *Mahabhutas* combine with gross existents, resulting in conjugate forms of *Tanmatras* known as *Mahabhutas*.

Evolution of Matter *Mahabhuta* is the smallest divisible part of any matter. *Akasha Mahabhuta* is the space without which matter cannot exist. Its main sense attribute is sound (*Shabda*) and Nonresistance (*Apratighatva*) is its main property.

*Vayumahabhuta* evolved from *Aakashamahabhuta*. Touch (*Sparsha*) is its chief sense attribute and as it is evolved from *Aakasha* it also inherits attribute of sound (*Shabda*). *Chalavta* or movability is its chief property. *Agnimahabhuta* evolves next from *Vayumahabhuta*. The main sense attribute of *Agni* is Vision (*Roopa*) and the chief property is *Agni* (*Ushnatva*). It also inherits the sense attributes of sound (*Shabda*) and touch (*Sparsha*) from the *Akasha* and *Vayu Mahabhuta* respectively.

The next *Mahabhuta* to evolve from *Agnimahabhuta* is *Aapamahabhuta* (*Jalmahabhuta*). Taste (*Rasa*) is its main sense attribute and liquidity (*Dravata*) is the chief property, along with that inherited from earlier *Mahabhuta*. The last to evolve is *Prithvimahabhuta*. Roughness (*Kharatva*) is the chief property and Smell (*Gandha*) is the main sense of this *Mahabhuta* besides properties inherited from the earlier once.<sup>4</sup>

The formation of various *Panchabhautika Dravyas* involves specific conjugation processes of *Tanmatras*, guided by *Adrushta* or some unknown power according to *Acharya Chakrapani*. These *Panchamahabhuta* elements play significant roles in both physiological and physical properties.

In the *Charak Samhita*, *Sharirshantan* Charakacharya elaborates on the attributes of the *Panchamahabhuta*.

*Panchamahabhuta* and attributes:<sup>5</sup>

<b>Panchmahabhuta</b>	<b>Tanmatra</b>	<b>Indriya</b>	<b>Gunas</b>
<i>Akaash</i>	<i>Shabda</i>	<i>Karna</i>	<i>Aprtighaat</i>
<i>Vayu</i>	<i>Sparsh</i>	<i>Twak</i>	<i>Chaltva</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Roop</i>	<i>Chakshu</i>	<i>Usantva</i>
<i>Jala</i>	<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Jihwa</i>	<i>Dravtva</i>
<i>Prithvi</i>	<i>Gandh</i>	<i>Nasa</i>	<i>Kharatva</i>

### **Panchamahabhuta and Tridoshas**

'*Prakriti*' a fundamental concept in Ayurveda has three main types *Vata, Pitta, Kapha*. These types are formed on the basis of dominant *Dosha* in an individual. These *Doshas* have specific dominant *Mahabhutas* which make them different than the other. As given below<sup>6</sup>,

<b>Tridosha</b>	<b>Panchamahabhuta</b>
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Vaayu + aakash</i>
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Agni</i>
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Jala + prithvi</i>

Hence, the various structures and functions of the body are regulated by the *Panchamahabhuta*. The health or diseased state of an individual is contingent upon the balanced or imbalanced levels of *Doshas* within the body. These

fluctuations stem from differences in the *Panchamahabhautika* composition of *Doshas*. To address a patient's condition or to maintain an individual's health, substances (*Dravyas*) can be employed, which are also comprised of *Panchamahabhutas*. Consequently, the alleviation or aggravation of *Doshas* relies on *Dravyas*.

<b>Tridosha</b>	<b>Alleviation</b>	<b>Violation</b>
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Prithvi, agni, jala.</i>	<i>Aakash, vayu.</i>
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Prithvi, jala, vayu</i>	<i>Agni</i>
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Aakash, agni, vayu</i>	<i>Prithvi, jala</i>

Therefore, by acquiring precise knowledge of the properties of *Mahabhutas*, one can utilize this knowledge to establish equilibrium among *Doshas*.

### **Panchamahabhuta and Trigunas**

The relationship between *Panchamahabhutas* (the five elements) and *Trigunas* (the three Gunas) is significant, particularly in determining the *Prakriti*, or inherent constitution, especially in terms of the *Manasik* (mental) aspect. *Trigunas* also play a crucial role in *Satwa Parikshana*, which involves assessing mental strength or temperament<sup>7</sup>.

<b>Trigunas</b>	<b>Panchamahabhutas</b>
<i>Satwa</i>	<i>Aakash</i>
<i>Rajas</i>	<i>Vaayu</i>
<i>Tamas</i>	<i>Prithvi</i>
<i>Satwa + rajas</i>	<i>Agni</i>
<i>Satwa + tamas</i>	<i>Jala</i>

After evaluating the mental strength (*Manobala*) of the patient, one can determine the appropriate intervention. By employing suitable *Dravyas* (substances), psychiatric disorders (*Manovikara*) can be effectively treated.

### **Panchamahabhuta and Rasa**

*Rasas* are indeed composed of the *Panchamahabhutas*, but they predominantly exhibit the characteristics of two *Mahabhutas*, which accounts for their variations. This dominance of specific elements contributes to the diverse qualities and properties observed in different rasas.<sup>8</sup>

<b>Rasa (taste)</b>	<b>Mahabhutas</b>
<i>Madhura</i> (sweet)	<i>Prithvi + jala</i>
<i>Amla</i> (sour)	<i>prithvi + teja</i>
<i>Lavana</i> (salty)	<i>Jala + teja</i>
<i>Katu</i> (pungent)	<i>teja + vayu</i>
<i>Tikta</i> (bitter)	<i>Vayu + aakash</i>
<i>Kashaya</i> (astringent)	<i>Prithvi + vayu</i>

*Rasas* play a crucial role in *Doshaprakopa*, which can lead to pathological conditions, diseases, or *Vikaar* (disorders). Therefore, based on the understanding of *Rasas* and their effects on *Doshas*, appropriate dietary and lifestyle recommendations (*Pathya-Apathya*) can be advised to patients. These recommendations aim to maintain balance and harmony in the body, preventing *Dosha* aggravation and promoting health and well-being.

### **Panchamahabhuta and Dhatu**

Seven *Datus* in the body are *Panchabhautika*. whenever there is *Dhatuvruddhi* or *Dhatukshaya*, which leads to the diseased condition. Appropriate *Bheshaj* is used to treat the imbalance.<sup>9</sup>

<b>Dhatu</b>	<b>Mahabhutas</b>
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Jala</i>

Rakt	Agni + Jala
Mamsa	Prithvi
Meda	Jala + Prithvi
Asthi	Prithvi + Vayu
Majja	Jala
Shukra	Jala

**Panchamahabhuta and Chikitsa-Karma**

Treatment actions (*Chikitsa karma*) can be correlated with the *Panchamahabhutas* as follows:<sup>10</sup>

Chikitsa karma	Mahabhuta
Shamana (pacification)	Aakash
Dipana (digestive stimulation)	Agni
Brumhana (nourishing)	Prithvi + jala
Vamana (emesis therapy)	Agni + vayu
Virechana (purgation therapy)	Prithvi + aap

These treatment actions utilize the qualities and effects of specific *Panchamahabhutas* to restore balance and harmony in the body, addressing various health conditions and imbalances. In clinical practice, the *Panchamahabhoota Siddhanta* is applied in various ways:

- **Diagnosis:** Ayurvedic physicians diagnose diseases by understanding the balance or imbalance of these five elements in the body. For instance, an excess of fire element (*Tejas*) may manifest as inflammation or fever, while an imbalance of air element (*Vayu*) may lead to conditions related to movement disorders.
- **Preventive Healthcare:** Ayurveda emphasizes preventive healthcare to maintain the balance of these elements and prevent the onset of diseases. Dietary recommendations, seasonal regimens (*Ritucharya*), and lifestyle practices (*Dinacharya*) are prescribed to harmonize the elements within the body.
- **Herbal Medicine:** Ayurvedic pharmacology categorizes herbs based on their elemental composition and attributes. Herbal formulations are prepared to balance specific elemental imbalances in the body. For example, herbs with earthy qualities may be used to balance excess air element (*Vayu*) in conditions like anxiety or nervousness.
- **Treatment:** Ayurvedic treatments aim to restore the balance of these elements through various therapies, including herbal medicines, diet, lifestyle modifications, and *Panchakarma* (Ayurvedic detoxification procedures). For example, to balance excess fire element (*Tejas*), cooling herbs and therapies such as *Sheetali Pranayama* (cooling breathing exercise) may be prescribed.

**Treatment Based on Practical Applicability of Panchmahabhut Siddhant**

**Management of Urustambha**

*Nidaan of Urustambh*<sup>11</sup>

S. No.	Antarang hetu	Mahabhuta
1.	DOSHA Kapha Pradhan Tridosha	Prithvi + Jala
2.	DUSHYA Meda	Prithvi + Jala
3.	AGNI Manda – (Kapha Pradhan)	Prithvi + Jala
S. No.	BAHIRANG HETUS	MAHABHUTA

1.	Virruddhahara	Prithvi + Jala
2.	Atiamla	Prithvi + Teja
3.	Atisantapa, Mulaka, Tila	Teja
4.	Diwaswapna, Adhyashana	Prithvi + Jala

Here, all the *Hetus* (*Antarang & Bahirang Hetus*) are *Parthiva* and *Jaliya* in *Mahabhautika* dominancy, so there is dominancy of *Sheeta*, *Snigdha*, *Picchila*, *Kathina*, *Sthira* etc. *Gunas* in body. By *Samanya Visheshha Siddhanta*, *Dravyas* having dissimilar properties like *Ruksha*, *Ushna*, *Vishada*, *Tikshna* etc. are used for *Chikitsa* and by seeing the *Mahabhautika* dominancy in *Dravyas*, *Agni & Vayu Mahabhuta* dominant *Dravyas* possess these properties which are opposite to *Prithvi & Jala Mahabhuta*. These *Agni & Vayu Mahabhuta* are also *Sukshma* in nature. So, *Dravyas* having dominancy of these *Mahabhutas* are reaches to minutest channel. *Agni Mahabhuta* dominant *Dravyas* are *Tikshna*, so they causes exculpation in channels and *Vayu Mahabhuta* dominant *Dravyas* are *Khara*, so they causes scraping of *Doshas* from channels. Thus, *Agni & Vayu Mahabhuta* dominant *Dravyas* are helpful in *Urustambha Samprapti Vighatana*.

**Management of Raktpitta**

*Nidaaan of Raktpitta*<sup>6</sup>

S.No.	Nidaan	Mahabhuta	
1.	AHARAJA Rasa	Lavana	Agni + Jala
		Amla	Agni + Prithvi
		Katu	Agni + Vayu
	Guna	Teekshna	Agni
		Ushna	Agni
		Vidahi	Agni
2.	VIHARAJA	Kshar	Agni
		Sunlight	Agni
		High temperature atmosphere	Agni
3.	MANAS	Excessive Physical exertion	Vayu
		Anger	Agni
		Grief	Vayu
		Fight	Vayu

Dosha	Mahabhuta	Dushya	Mahabhuta
Pitta	Agni	Rakta	Agni+ jala

So in *Chikitsa* of *Raktapitta*, *Dravyas* which are having opposite properties/dissimilarities (*Vishesh*) with *Pitta Doshas* are used. So, *Dravyas* which are dissimilar in nature like *Sheeta*, *Manda* etc. in properties, *Madhura*, *Tikta* and *Kashaya* in *Rasa* are used for treatment i.e. *Prithvi Mahabhuta* dominant *Dravyas*. *Dravyas* which are predominant in properties of *Guru*, *Khara*, *Kathina*, *Manda*, *Sthira*, *Vishada* etc. are *Parthiva* (constituted predominantly by *Prithivi Bhuta*), causes functions like *Upchaya*, *Sthairya* etc. and are composed of *Madhura* and *Kashaya Rasa*.

Management of *Amavata*<sup>13</sup>

S. No.	Nidaan	Panchmahabhut
1.	Viruddha ahara	Prithvi+ Jala
2.	Viruddha cheshta , Nishchalata	Vayu+ Akash
3.	Snigdha bhuktavato vyayamam, Mandagni	Prithvi+ Jala

Intake of *Pritvi Pradana* and *Jala Mahabhuta Pradhana Dravya* will increase the same quality in the *Shareera*. As per the *Samanya Vishesh Siddhanta*, *Samanya* is the main cause for the increase and *Vishesh* is the cause for the decrease. So in this condition *Agni*, *Vayu* and *Aakash Mahabhut Pradhana Dravas* are used to treat *Amavata*.

## DISCUSSION

Given the current situation, the Ayurvedic approach to etiopathogenesis holds significant potential. The valuable insights derived from the conceptual review study are outlined below. *Panchmahabhutas*, the fundamental elements of the body, when imbalanced, can manifest various symptoms based on the inherent attributes known as *Gunadwandva*. Both the *Shareera* (body) and the *Loka* (universe) comprise these *Panchmahabhutas*. Consumption of substances dominated by *Prithvi* (earth) and *Jala* (water) will enhance corresponding qualities within the body. According to the *Samanya Vishesh Siddhanta*, an increase in *Samanya* (commonality) is the primary cause, while *Vishesh* (specificity) leads to decrease. Therefore, treatment protocols should align with the dominant *Panchmahabhuta* in the body, indicating the crucial role of *Panchmahabhuta Siddhanta* in therapy.

While all available substances can serve as medicines, their usage demands logical reasoning (*Yukti*) and a deep comprehension of *Panchmahabhutas*, which forms the foundational principle of other *Siddhantas* (principles). The concept of *Panchmahabhuta* principle is unique to Ayurveda, although it shares similarities with philosophical systems like *Vaisheshika* and *Sankhya*. However, Ayurveda's interpretation of *Panchmahabhutas* is tailored to aid diagnosis and treatment, fulfilling its objective of achieving *Dhatu-samyak* (balance of bodily tissues).

Identifying the dominance of *Mahabhutas* in a *Panchabhautic* substance is feasible, yet discerning the configuration, shapes, and sizes of *Mahabhuta* molecules remains beyond human sensory and intellectual limitations. Consequently, this review article paves the way for further exploration in Ayurvedic fundamental research, particularly regarding this *Siddhanta*.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the *Panchmahabhoota Siddhanta* serves as a foundational principle in Ayurveda, guiding diagnosis, treatment, and preventive healthcare practices to maintain holistic well-being by balancing the elemental composition of the body.

## DECLARATION

The author(s) declare that they have no competing interest.

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