

## Evaluating the role of diet in Khalitya whole-system research to Guru Aahar in the young generation

Kavita Kishor Choutmol<sup>1</sup>, Jai Kiran Kini<sup>1</sup>

Department of Rognidan, Dr GD Pol Foundation YMT Ayurvedic Medical College And Hospital, Navi Mumbai, India



### Corresponding Author

Kavita Kishor Choutmol

Email Id : kavitakishor.kk@gmail.com

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### Abstract :

Ayurveda is the science that prioritizes maintaining health and preventing disease more so than just treating it. One of the most crucial concepts for health maintenance is that the three elements—*Aahara*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya*—are referred to as *Trayaupstambha* for health maintenance. The *Aahara* (food) has a crucial role in the development of our bodies. Since the Vedic Period, food has been considered extremely important. The Upanishad refers to it as *Brahma*. According to Acharya Charaka, eating an inappropriate diet in an unsuitable manner is the primary cause of disease. Of all the other varieties and attributes of *Ahara* that have been discussed, *Guru Ahara* is the one that has been inappropriately utilized and overconsumed in the modern period, particularly by the younger generation and is therefore the primary cause of various ailments at an earlier age. Hair fall is one such minor yet alarming illness. Young People with indiscriminate eating habits and sedentary lifestyles are at a higher risk of developing this illness, which is exacerbated by stress-induced busy schedules and several bodily disturbances that manifest as hair loss. In Ayurveda, hair loss is referred to as *Khalitya Roga* and falls under the category of *Shiroroga* (diseases of the head and scalp) or *Kshudra Roga*. This article aims to evaluate the impact of *Guru Aahara* on *Khalitya* in the younger population.

**Key words:** *Ahara*, *Guru Ahara*, *Khalitya*, Hairfall, young generation

### Introduction:

Ayurveda is the science that places greater emphasis on preventing illness than on treating it. The term "*Trayaupstambha*" refers to the three elements—*Aahara* (Food), *Nidra* (Sleep), and *Brahmacharya* (celibacy)—and is one of the most significant concepts for maintaining health<sup>(1)</sup>. According to the Taittiriya Upanishad, food is the source from which the human body is formed. *Ahara* (Food) supplies energy for a range of metabolic functions, stimulates growth mechanisms, and improves the process of regeneration and repair<sup>(2)</sup>. According to an ancient prophet, what, when, how, and where people consume determines who they are as a person. All the senses are satisfied by caring and nutritious food. In light of this, Ayurveda introduced several dietary rules and regulations. These are referred to as dietic rules, or *Aaharavidhividhana* (Rules for the meal) in Ayurveda, and they cover eight factors: *Prakriti* (nature), *Karana* (processing), *Samyoga* (Mixture), *Rashi* (quantity), etc<sup>(3)</sup>. The quality of the food ingested mostly determines physiological functioning, both normal and disordered. It is believed that biochemical processes related to food digestion and assimilation affect this *Tridoshic* balance through a variety of mechanisms. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* are *Tridosha* and are thought to be responsible for both normal and abnormal physiological functioning of the body<sup>(4)</sup>. A healthy lifestyle can be achieved through eating a balanced diet in the

right way, however, eating unhealthy foods might cause illnesses. The younger generation in particular is becoming more and more driven in today's environment to excel in their careers at the price of maintaining a healthy work-life balance. This is evidenced by their overindulgence in fast food, junk food, and fermented foods, as well as by their disdain for diet recommendations, using smartphones and tablets at mealtimes, and altering their daily schedules<sup>(4)</sup>. In particular, the food consumed contains qualities of *Guru Ahara* (heavy quality food), which are currently the primary cause of numerous ailments at a young age. The third most prevalent, concerning condition among younger individuals is hair loss.

The ectoderm of the skin gives rise to hair, an important part of the body. It is an essential component of the body's protective mechanism and contributes greatly to the external beauty of the body. The structure, color, and amount of a progeny's hair are determined by their paternal side, according to ancient texts, wherein hair is considered one of the *Pitiraja Bhava* (paternal side). Since the *Kesha* (hair) has characteristics like *Khara* (roughness) *Sthira* (steadiness), and *Guru* (heaviness), Acharyas have classified it as *Parthiva Dravya* (earth element)<sup>(5)</sup>. Our food is also made up of *Panchamahabuta*. Each food quality nourishes every part of the body, including *Kesha* (hair). Insufficient dietary activity causes the hair to become undernourished, resulting in hair

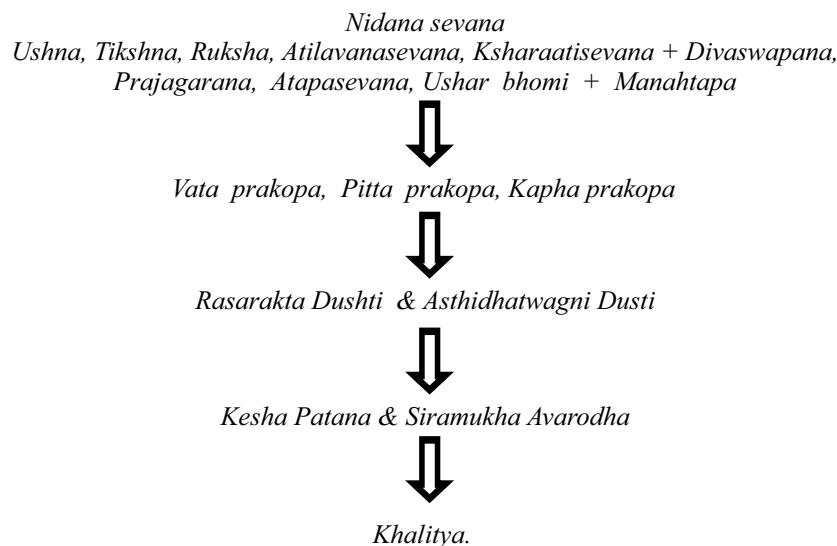
fall. Globally, millions of people suffer from hair loss. A survey in India found that up to 25% of women and 40% of men suffer from hair loss. These days, hair loss is frequently observed among the younger generation as well<sup>(6)</sup>. Hair falls out of the head on a daily basis; in particular, 70–100 hairs per day are commonly lost during washing and brushing<sup>(7)</sup>. A rise in hair loss has been linked to unhealthy eating habits and malnutrition, particularly among the younger population.. According to Ayurveda, this condition is known as *Khalitya* (hairfall) and is primarily brought on by inadequate dietary and lifestyle choices.

**Role of Guru Ahara in Khalitya among the Young generation :**

In Ayurveda, the term *Khalitya* refers to hair loss or fall. Acharya Vagbhatta categorized it under the *Shiroroga*,

whereas Acharya Sushruta placed it under the *Kshudra Roga*. In contemporary medicine, hair fall is also referred to as baldness or alopecia, which denotes partial or total hair loss, particularly from the scalp. The prevalence of "*Khalitya*," or hair fall, is rising daily<sup>(6)</sup>. *Khalitya* is primarily a *Pitta Pradhana Tridoshajanya Vyadhi* i.e. *Vata, Pitta, Kapha* with *Rakta Dosha* and *Swedavaha Sroto Vikara*.

The *Samprapti* (pathogenesis) of this *Vyadhi* (disease) can be understood when vitiated *Pitta* and *Vata* reach *Romakoopa*, it causes hair fall. Further, *Shleshma* and *Shonita* impede *Romakoopa*, cause thickening of the scalp, and blockage of hair follicles preventing hair regeneration. This condition is called *Khalitya*<sup>(8)</sup>. According to Acharya Charaka, the *Tejas* induce hair fall by the *Dahana* of *Romakoopa* (hair follicles) when it combines with *Vatadi Dosha* and reaches the *Shira Kapala*<sup>(9)</sup>. The main cause of the *Samprapthi* of this *Vyadhi* is the *Nidana* (cause) in terms of *Ahara Vihara* i.e:



**Fig. No 1: Samprapti of Khalitya**

The *Samprapti* illuminates the involvement of *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha*. This describes in retrospect the *Guna* (quality) of *Ahara* that is associated with *Nidana Sevana*. In the *Nidana* of *Khalitya*, the *Guru Guna* plays a major role. The definition of the term "*Guru*" is "heaviness." According to the *Nidana* point of view, a *Guru Ahara* is something that is difficult, heavy, or takes a while to digest. *Madhura* (sweet), *Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (astringent) *Rasa* (taste) are included in *Guru Ahara*. When these are consumed in excess, they aggravate the *Kapha Pitta Dosha*, which results in *Vyadhi*. Nowadays, because of industrialization, most food items are available in larger quantities. Examples of these include bakery foods like breads, cakes, pizza, burgers, milkshakes, packaged chips, and drinks that have been sweetened with aeration. The younger generation consumes these in large quantities since they are easily accessible. All of these are

*Guru Ahara*, which is heavy to digest and, when consumed in excess, causes *Khalitya*, or hair loss, in the majority of the younger population.

**Discussion:**

*Khalitya* among younger people is growing quickly. A long-lasting, efficient treatment is of paramount significance in this day and age. *Khalitya* is caused by etiological variables such as *Viruddhahara* (incompatible food), *Atimadhura Sevana* (excess intake of sweet), *Atilavana Sevana* (excess intake of Salt), and *Atikshara Sevana* (excess intake of Alkaline). All these possess the *Guru Guna*. This causes *Agnimandhya*, *Srotorodha*, *Pitta, Vata*, and *Kapha Prakopa* which are the significant elements in the *Samprapti* of *Khalitya*. One of the main signs of *Khalitya* is progressive hair loss<sup>(10)</sup>.

One attribute that adds to the mass and gravitational pull of a substance is *Guru Guna*. A food is said to have a heavy quality if it is difficult to digest or takes a long time to do so. This is a result of the high concentration of *Prithvi* and *Jala Mahabhuta* in these substances. The components of *Kapha Dosha* are *Prithvi* and *Jala Mahabhuta* and that of *Pitta Dosha* is *Agni Mahabhuta* and *Jala Mahabhuta*<sup>(11)</sup>. The *Ruksha* (dry) and *Khara* properties of *Vata*, the *Ushna* (heat) and *Tikshna* (sharp) properties of *Pitta*, and the *Picchila* (unctuous) and *Sneha* (slimy) features of the *Kapha Dosha* cause dryness within the scalp's skin pores, obstructing the growth of new hair and resulting in *Khalitya*. Thus, due to the similarities in *Panchamahabuta*, when *Guru Guna Ahara* is consumed in excess, it increases *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha*, causing *Srotorodha* and leading to *Khalitya*.

On analysis from a contemporary perspective, the *Guru Ahara* is found to contain complex sugars, carbohydrates, and other substances. Excess insulin is produced when sugar intake is high in quantity. Elevated insulin levels have been linked to follicle damage, weakened roots, and breakable hair strands. Moreover, an excessive sugar intake might result in scalp irritation and hair loss. Additionally, the inflammation may cause the blood flow to the hair follicles to be diminished, which would hinder the creation of new hair. Moreover, collagen synthesis, a protein necessary for strong hair development, might be impacted by sugar. Hair that is deficient in collagen may become brittle and thin. Collagen gives hair strength and structure. The protein keratin, which comprises most of our hair, might also be produced less frequently as a result of an excessive sugar diet<sup>(12)</sup>.

Due to easy access and unfavourable lifestyle younger generations are more likely to consume *Guru Ahara*, which causes them to be deficient in vital vitamins and minerals that are necessary for healthy hair growth. Therefore, the cause of hair loss at a younger age is the overindulgence in *Guru Ahara* over time.

#### Conclusion:

A person's hair enhances their personality and sense of beauty. In modern times, everyone is quite wary of first impressions but this modernization has led to faulty dietary practices and lifestyle modifications. Younger generations have been particularly impacted. Food items including breads, cakes, pizza, burgers, milkshakes, packaged chips, and drinks sweetened with syrup, among other items, are consumed in excess by them and are essentially carbohydrates, primarily sugar. They are included in the *Guru Ahara* category. Excessive consumption leads to the aggravation of *Kapha* and *Pitta Dosha*, which in turn induces *Srotorodha* and *Khalitya* at this young age. Hence, *Guru*

*Ahara* is largely responsible for the development of *Khalitya* among the younger generation.

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