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DISORDER OF THYROID METABOLISM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AGNI

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ABSTRACT:

Thyroid disease is a global health problem that can substantially impact well-being. WHO says that, diseases of the thyroid gland are among the most abundant endocrine disorders worldwide second only to diabetes mellitus. The prevalence in men is about one tenth of that in women. Indian statistics shows that 42 million people suffer from thyroid diseases per year. Hyper- and hypothyroidism may be due to diseases of thyroid gland, secondary to malfunction of the pituitary gland, or, tertiary to malfunction in the hypothalamus. In Ayurveda thyroid disorders can be understood with the concept of Agni Vaishamyata and Galaganda /Gandamala. Various etiological factors highlighted in classical texts like Ati Sevana of Madhura Rasa, Mithyahara Vihar, Vishamasana & pathogenesis like Kaphaja Nanatmaja Vikara, increased Vata and Kapha leads to Medo Dhatu accumulation.

KEYWORDS: Agni, Thyroid Hormones, Agni-Vaishamyata

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INTRODUCTION:

Agni is the unique concept of Ayurveda related to stance or entity that brings about transformations in any form. The thirteen types of Agni bring about all the chemical reactions and conversions in the body. Thyroid gland plays a vital role in the endocrine system. Thyroid disorders are the most common disorders of the endocrine glands and it is estimated that about 42 million people suffer from thyroid disorders in India. Principle function of thyroid gland is to act as a 'Catalyst' for the maintenance of oxidative metabolism. The normal as well as abnormal functions of thyroid gland can be correlated to healthy and altered status of Agni. Agnimandya is one of the commonest disorders of Agni and the root cause for every disease. So this conceptual study helps in evaluation of role of Agni in relation to Thyroid hormone functions and its disorders. Agni helps in maintenance of life, skin complexion, body strength, healthy life. This all functions are carried out by Sama Agni but if there is any deformity in it such as Agni Mandya, Vishamata or causes disease condition¹. Agni is one of entity amongst Dashvidha Parikshna Bhava a root cause of every disease². So when we study any **Anukta Vyadhi** such as Thyroid Function Disorders consideration of status of Agni is

of prime importance. While formulating Chikitsa on vitiated Dosha tain their balance we always have to keep an eye on status of Agni³. Anukta Vyadhi's are those which are not elaborated in the Samhita. Acharya Charaka mentioned that all diseases cannot be labelled with some name so concept of Anukta Vyadhi has been developed⁴. We can understand these disorders through the concept of Trividha Bodhya Sangraha i.e., Vikara Prakruti-Adhithana-Samuthana.

BRIEF ANATOMY OF THYROID GLAND

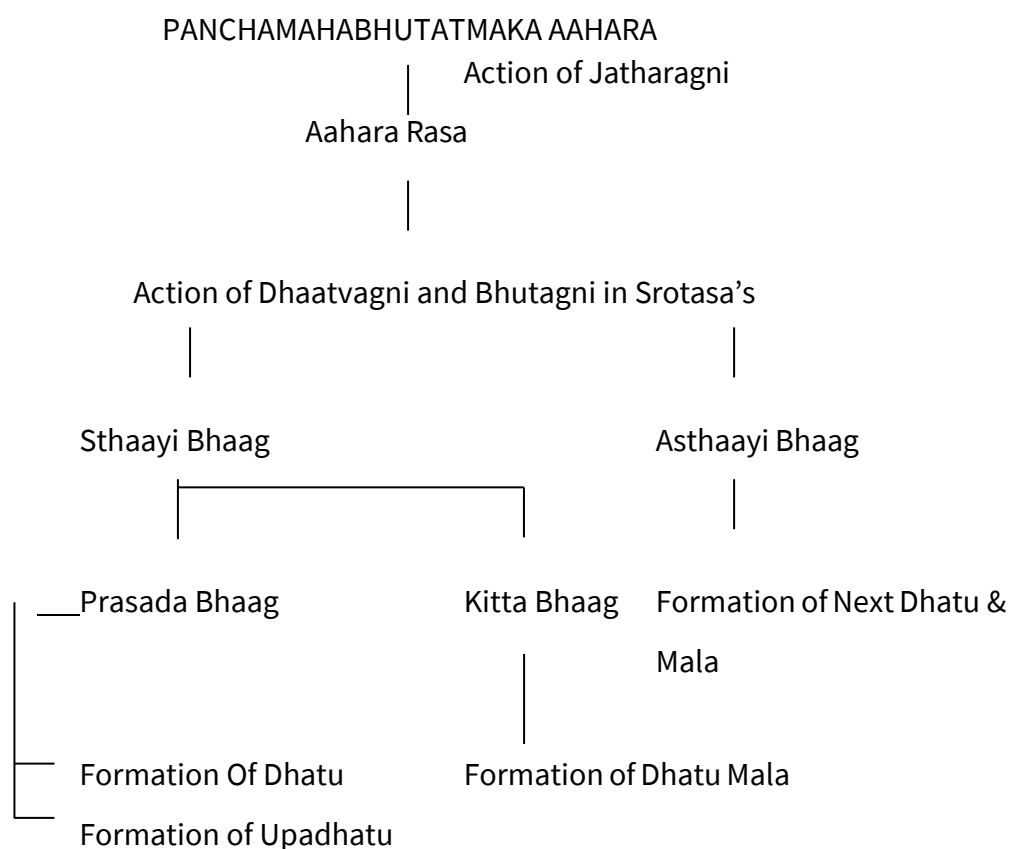
Thyroid gland is one among ductless gland located in front of trachea, below larynx. It has two lobes right and left connected by a central isthmus. Thyrotrophine releasing hormone (TRH) secreted from the hypothalamus stimulates the pituitary gland to secrete thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) and TSH stimulates the thyroid gland to secrete its hormones i.e., T4 (thyroxine) and T3 (triiodothyronine). Thyroxine hormone controls and regulates metabolism, growth, development and activity of nervous system.

ROLE OF AGNI IN AHAAR PACHANA:

Jatharagni helps in digestion of complex food and turns it into simpler products so that they

can be absorbed. This Agni has potency to maintain all other types of Agni present in our body. Bhutagni makes Panchabhautika components of food to release their qualities. Sapta Dhatu's possess their own Agni in them known as Dhatwaagni. After the action of

Jatharaagni, these Agni works on the digested food products forming 'Sara' portion which nourishes the concerned Dhatu and other portion known as 'Kitta' or waste product.



CONCEPT OF AGNI-VAISHAMYA AND THYROID DISORDERS: According to ayurveda, functions of thyroid gland can be correlated with the functions of Agni i.e. digestion & metabolism. This is because the thyroid hormone influences its metabolic effects on almost all the cells of the body and is same in case of Agni. Ayurveda describes Agni as an important aspect of digestion and metabolism in the body i.e. it has a vital role of converting food particles into energy and

body tissues. Pitta is also considered as a form of Agni which is meant for different enzymatic activities in the body⁵.

DISCUSSION:

Agni has a general and specific action in the body and depending on the functions and site of action it is categorized as Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni. The basic function of Jatharagni is macro digestion of ingested food material and separates Ahara Rasa (nutrient material) and Kitta (waste material)

from the food. From this Ahara Rasa (nutrient material), Bhutagni converts heterogeneous material into homogenous material. Further Dhatvagni processes or metabolizes the Ahara Rasa (nutrient material) further into respective Dhatus (body tissues). Ayurveda describes Agni as a sign of life in the body. Acharya Charaka mentions that stoppage of the function of Agni in the body may lead to death of a person. Impairment in the function of Agni disrupts the body metabolism leading to various diseases⁶. Agni Dushti i.e. impaired metabolism is the root cause of all diseases. It alters the normal physiological function of Dosha, Dhatu and Mala and ultimately results into various disorders.

CONCLUSION:

The normal and abnormal functions of Thyroid gland hormones and Agni are similar. Agni is entity that brings about all kind of transformations in the body and Thyroid gland is essential for metabolism in the body. So for correction in thyroid disorders examination and treatment of agni status of the individual plays a vital role.

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Conflict of interest: Nil

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