

## ROLE OF PANCHAMAHABHUTA IN THE FORMATION OF GARBHA

Meghana Navada<sup>1</sup>, Mamata Murthy M.D (Ayu)<sup>2</sup>, Shruti Hegde M.D (Ayu)<sup>3</sup>

1. Postgraduate scholar, Department of Rachana Shareera, 2. Professor and HOD, Department of Rachana Shareera, 3. Assistant Professor, Department of Rachana Shareera Government Ayurveda Medical College, Dhanwantari Road, Bengaluru, 560009, Karnataka

Corresponding Author: [meghamn98@gmail.com](mailto:meghamn98@gmail.com)<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj1612122024>

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## ABSTRACT

'*Sarvam Dravyam panchabhoutikam*', this statement emphasises the role of Mahabhoota (*Tanmatra*) during *Srushti utpatti* and through the concept of *anyonya-anupravesha* the attributes of the preceding Mahabhoota gets inherited by the succeeding one getting expressed in the *dravyas*. One such product of these *mahabhutas* is the *Garbha*, wherein *shukra*, *shonita*, *atma*, *prakruthi* and *vikaras* combine in the *garbhashaya*. With a *Soumya shukra* (*jala mahabhuta* predominant) and *agneya arthava* (*agni mahabhuta* predominant), and other *mahabhutas* in *anu swaroop*, owing to *paraspara anugraha* and *paraspara anupravesha avastha* they form the substratum for the *Panchabhautikatva* of *garbha*. This article attempts to understand the role of *Pancha Mahabhoota* in the formation of *garbha* and its relevance in comprehending the basic principles of Rachana Shareera.

**Keywords:** *Shukra, Shonita, Anyonya anupravesha, Panchabhoutika, Garbha*

## INTRODUCTION

*Akasha, vayu, agni, ap, and pruthvi* are the *panchamahabhutas*, the fundamental elements responsible for forming all the *dravyas* in the universe. *Garbha* is also an ensemble of *Panchamahabhutas*,

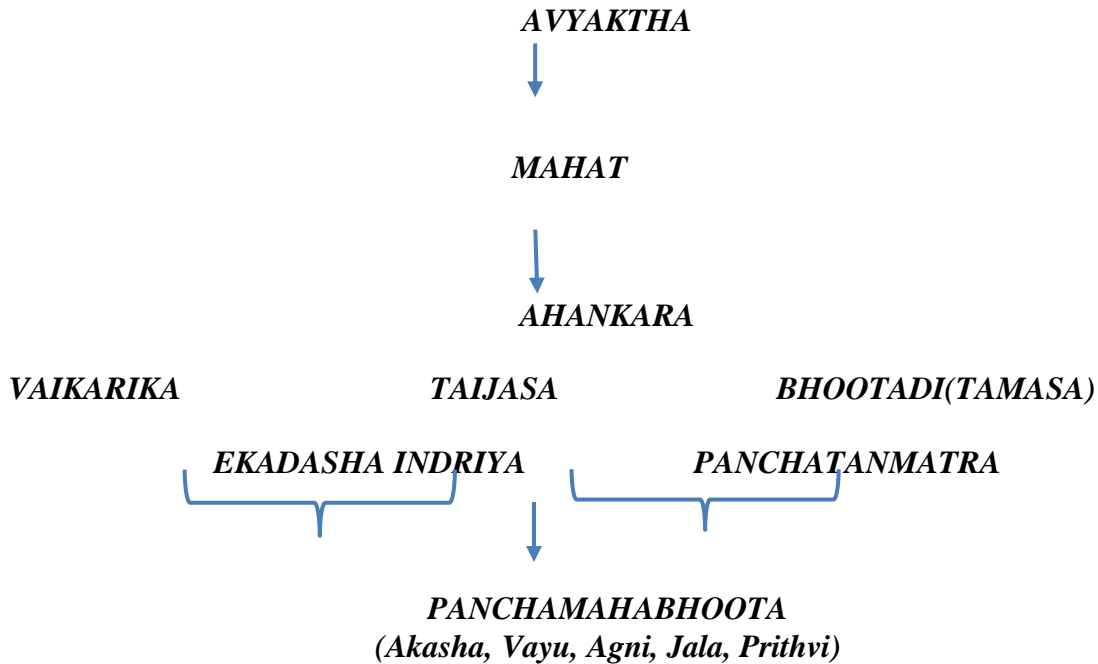
receiving Bhoutika attributes through various factors. These *Mahabhootas* play a crucial role in their formation and development.

Word *pancha Mahabhoota* is made up of,

- According to *Shabdha Kalpa Druma*,<sup>1</sup> **Pancha** - *Sankhya vishesha* (represents number) = five  
**bhoota** - *bhu + kta - Yuktam – Skmaadi bhu – sattayaam* (one which exists)  
**Mahabhuta** – ‘*mahat bhootam*’ *Panchatanmatrebhyah sthaulyaadasya tathatvam* (first *sthoola* component of *shruti utpathi*)
- According to *Mukthavali*<sup>2</sup>  
*Bahirindriya grahya vishesha gunavatvam bhootathvam* (one which can be perceived through external sense organs)  
E.g: *Chaksurindriya – rupa (bhootatwa of agni Mahabhoota)*

### **Formation of Pancha Mahabhoota:**

*Pancha Mahabhootas* is formed during the process of *Shristi utpathi*.<sup>3</sup>



### **Formation of each Mahabhoota:**

Formation of each *Mahabhoota* is explained through various theories by different authors. Among them *Anyonyanupravesha*, *Bhootanupravesha*, *Panchikarana siddhanta* are some.

#### **1. Anyonyanu Pravesha of Mahabhoota:<sup>4</sup>**

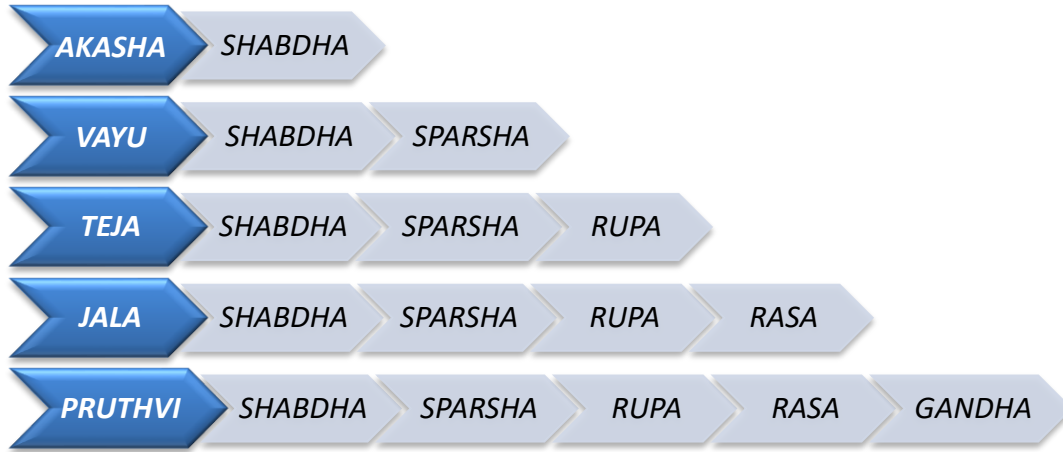
*Anyonyanupravishitani sarvanyetani nirdhisheth / Swe swe dravye tu sarvesham vyaktam lakshanamishyate //*

In the evolution process of *Mahabhoota* the succeeding *bhoota* is produced from the preceding one. Hence the attributes of the former are transmitted into

the latter. Hence *Dravya* is a collective product of all the 5 *Mahabhootas*.

#### **2. Bhootanupravesha / guna vrudhi:<sup>5</sup>** *Teṣhamekaguṇaḥ purvo guṇavruddhiḥ pare pare | Poorvaḥ poorvaguṇshcaiva kramasho guṇiṣu smrutaḥ //*

The order of *Mahabhootas* i.e., *Akasha, Vayu, Agni, Ap, Pruthvi* is important because, starting with *akasha*, the number of attributes per *Mahabhoota* increases in the above order. This increase in a number of attributes is cumulative, i.e., the attribute of the preceding *Mahabhootas* is added to the succeeding one.



3. **Panchikara Siddhanta of Vedanta darshana:**<sup>6</sup> According to this theory all the *Bhoota* intermingle with each other.

	Akasha	Vayu	Agni	Jala	Pruthvi
Akasha	1/2	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8
Vayu	1/8	1/2	1/8	1/8	1/8
Agni	1/8	1/8	1/2	1/8	1/8
Jala	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/2	1/8
Pruthvi	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/2

Even though the *bhootas* are intermingled with each other, the distinct attributes are expressed in the *dravyas*.

**Qualities and functions of Mahabhootas:**  
*Shabdah sparshashca roopam ca raso gandhashca tadgunah*<sup>7</sup>

- Each *Mahabhoota* has its own specific *gunas* like *shabdha, sparsha, rupa, rasa, gandha*.

**Kharadravacaloshnatvam bhoojalaanil-atejasam/ Akashasyapratighato drshtam lingam yathakramam**<sup>8</sup>

- *Prithvi, jala, agni/tejas, vayu* and *akasha* are characterized by *kharatva* (roughness), *dravatva* (liquidity), *ushnatva* (heat), *chalatva* (mobility) and *aprateghatatva* (unobstructibility) respectively.

Mahabhoota	Qualities <sup>9,10</sup>
Akasha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for <i>shabdhendriya, sarva chidra samuha, viviktata</i></li> <li>• <i>Shlakshana</i></li> <li>• <i>Sukshma</i></li> <li>• <i>Mrudu</i></li> <li>• <i>Vyavayi</i></li> <li>• <i>Vishada</i></li> <li>• <i>Avyakta rasa</i></li> </ul>
Vayu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for <i>sparshanendriya, sarva-chesta samuha, sarva shareera spandana and laghuta</i></li> <li>• <i>Sukshma</i></li> <li>• <i>Ruksha</i></li> <li>• <i>Khara</i></li> <li>• <i>Shishira</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Laghu</i></li> <li>• <i>Vishada</i></li> <li>• <i>Ishat tikta</i></li> <li>• <i>Kashaya</i></li> </ul>
<i>Teja</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for <i>rupendriya, varna, bhrajishnuta, pakti, amarsha, teekshnata, shaurya</i></li> <li>• <i>Ushna</i></li> <li>• <i>Sukshma</i></li> <li>• <i>Ruksha</i></li> <li>• <i>Khara</i></li> <li>• <i>Laghu</i></li> <li>• <i>Vishada</i></li> <li>• <i>Ishat amla, lavana, katu rasa praya</i></li> </ul>
<i>Ap</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for <i>rasanendriya, sarvadrava samuha, guruta, shaithya, sneha, retas</i></li> <li>• <i>Sthimita</i></li> <li>• <i>Manda</i></li> <li>• <i>Sara</i></li> <li>• <i>Sandra</i></li> <li>• <i>Mrudu</i></li> <li>• <i>Pichhila</i></li> <li>• <i>Ishat Kashaya, amla, lavana, madhura rasa praya</i></li> </ul>
<i>Pruthvi</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for <i>gandhendriya, sarva moortha samuha, gurutha.</i></li> <li>• <i>Sthula</i></li> <li>• <i>Sandra</i></li> <li>• <i>Manda</i></li> <li>• <i>Sthira</i></li> <li>• <i>Katina</i></li> <li>• <i>Ishat Kashaya</i></li> <li>• <i>Madhura</i></li> </ul>

**Satwadi trigunatmakatwa:<sup>11</sup>**

*Tatra satwabahulam akasham, rajobahulo vayuh, satwarajobahulo agnih, satwatamobahula apah, tamobahula pruthiviti //*

<i>MAHABHOOTA</i>	<i>TRIGUNA</i> (predominant)
<i>Akasha</i>	<i>Satwa</i>
<i>Vayu</i>	<i>Raja</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Satwa + Raja</i>
<i>Ap</i>	<i>Satwa + Tama</i>
<i>Pruthvi</i>	<i>Tama</i>

**Garbha:**

Combination of *shukra, shonita, asta prakruthi* (*avyakta, mahan, ahankara, pancha tanmatras*) and *shodasha vikara* (*pancha-gyanendriya, pancha-karmendriya, manas, pancha-Mahabhoota*) lead to the formation of *garbha* in the *garbhashaya*.<sup>12</sup>

**Sources of Mahabhoota in Garbha:**

*Bhutaishcaturbhih sahitaḥ susukshmairmanojavo dehamupaiti dehat/ Karmatmakatvanna tu tasya drshyam divyam vina darshanamasti rupam*<sup>13</sup> Being guided by the past life actions, *atma* along with *mana* and the four *Mahabhootas* transmigrates from one body to another.

*Garbhasya catvari caturvidhani bhootani maa-tapitrasambhavani/ Aharajanyaatmakrutani caiva*

sarvasya sarvani bhavanti dehe<sup>14</sup> Garbha is made up of four set of *Mahabhootas* (except *akasha*) one set each from the mother, the father, from the nutrition provided by the mother (*ahara rasa*) which is in turn responsible for the formation of *uttarottara dhatu* and from *aatma*.

***Bhootani maatapitrusambhavani rajashca shukram ca vadanti garbhe| Apyayate shukramasruk ca bhootairyaistani bhootani rasodbhavani***<sup>15</sup>

*Bhotas* are responsible for the formation of *shukra* and *arthava* which are in turn outcome of *ahara-rasa*. ***Rasatmamaatapitrusambhavani bhootani vidyaddasha shaṭ ca dehe***<sup>16</sup> We therefore are a total aggregate of the sixteen *bhoota-sanghatana* from the four basic sources (*maata, pitaa, rasa, aatma*).

**Panchabhuthikata of shukra and shonita:**

***Soumyam shukram artavam agneyamitareshama-pyatra bhootanam sanidhyamasyaguna visheshena, praspaparopakarath(parasparanugrahat) prasaparanupraveshaca*** <sup>17</sup>

*Shukra* is *soumaya* i.e *Soumya guna* (*jala Mahabhoota*) predominant and *shonita* is *Agneya* i.e *Agni Mahabhoota* predominant. But all other 4 *Mahabhootas* are also present in *paraspara anughraha/upakara* (serving each other) and *paraspara anupravishya* state. Thus *shukra* & *shonita* are *panchabhuthika*.

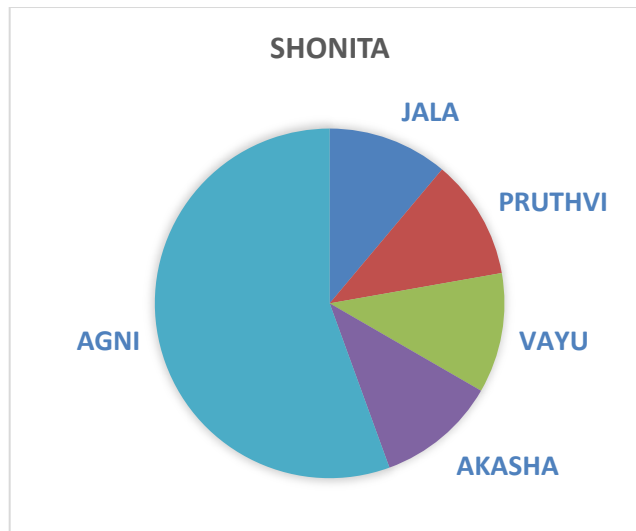
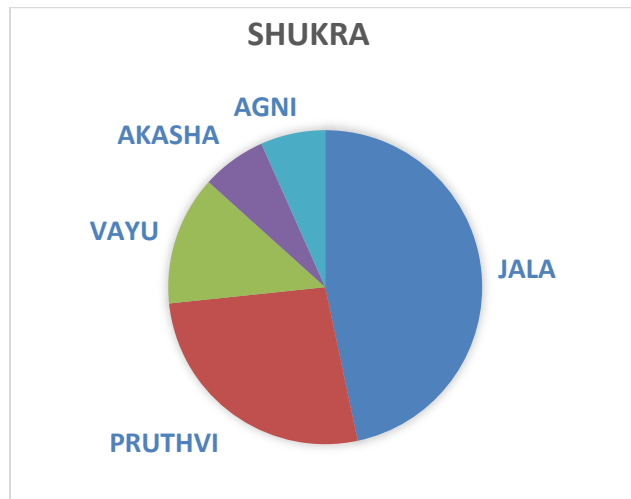
**Analysis of Mahabhoota predominance in Shukra and Shonita:**

Though we know both *shukra* and *shonita* are *panchabhautika*, using the various *gunas* mentioned about *shudha shukra* and *shudha shonita*, following inference about its predominant *Mahabhootas* can be made.

<b><i>Shukra guna</i></b> <sup>18,19,20</sup>	<b><i>Gurvadi guna</i></b>	<b><i>Mahabhuta</i></b>
<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru, sheeta, snigdha, picchila</i>	<i>Jala+Pruthvi</i>
<i>Drava</i>	<i>Drava</i>	<i>Jala</i>
<i>Snigdha</i>	<i>Snigdha</i>	<i>Jala</i>
<i>Picchila</i>	<i>Picchila</i>	<i>Jala</i>
<i>Bahala</i>	<i>Manda</i>	<i>Jala+Pruthvi</i>
<i>Avisra</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Pruthvi</i>
<i>Guru</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Pruthvi+jala</i>
<i>Bahu</i>	<i>Sandra</i>	<i>Jala+Pruthvi</i>
<i>Sphatikabha</i>	<i>Vishada</i>	<i>Akasha+Pruthvi+Agni+Vayu</i>
<i>Shukla</i>	<i>Vishada</i>	<i>Akasha+Pruthvi+Agni+Vayu</i>
<i>Madhugandhi</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Pruthvi</i>
<i>Tailanibha</i>	<i>Guru+snigdha</i>	<i>Pruthvi+jala</i>
<i>Kshudranibha</i>	<i>Picchila</i>	<i>Jala</i>
<i>Cala</i>	<i>Sara</i>	<i>Vayu</i>
<i>Avidahi</i>	<i>Manda</i>	<i>Akasha+jala</i>
<i>Ghana</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Pruthvi</i>
<i>Sukshma (beejarupa)</i>	<i>Sukshma</i>	<i>Akasha</i>

<b><i>Shudha artava</i></b> <sup>21,22,23</sup>	<b><i>Guna</i></b>	<b><i>Mahabhuta</i></b>
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<i>Shashasruk Prathima, Laaksha-rasopama, Gunjaphala savarna, Padma, aalaktaka sannibha, Indragopasankasha Ishat krishna, vivarna</i>	<i>Ushna Teekshna Sukshma Ruksha Varna</i>	<i>Agni</i>
<i>Drava</i>	<i>Drava</i>	<i>Jala</i>
<i>Nishpicha</i>	<i>Vishada</i>	<i>Akasha+Pruthvi+Agni+Vayu</i>
<i>Na daha, na arthi</i>	<i>Manda</i>	<i>Akasha+jala</i>
<i>Na ati bahu, na ati alpa</i>	-	<i>Jala+ Pruthvi</i>
<i>Yadvaso na viranjayeth, Doutham ca viranjayamana</i>	<i>Vishada</i>	<i>Akasha+Pruthvi+Agni+Vayu</i>
<i>Sukshma (beejarupa)</i>	<i>Sukshma</i>	<i>Akasha</i>



- Analysis of *shukra shonita guna* indicates, the variable proportion of all 5 *mahabootas*. *Shukra* having predominance of *jala* and *pruthvi Mahabhootas* followed by *vayu, agni, akasha Mahabhootas* whereas *shonita* has predominance of *agni Mahabhoota* followed by *jala, akasha, pruthvi, vayu Mahabhootas*.
- This analysis helps us to understand the *Panchabhautikatva* of *Garbha*.

## DISCUSSION

‘*Sarvam Dravyam panchabhoutikam*’<sup>24</sup> Everything in the universe is made of 5 fundamental elements like

Sources	Pradhana bhoota	Gouna bhoota
Maata	Agni	Pruthvi, Jala, Vayu
Pitaa	Jala	Pruthvi, Teja, Vayu,
Ahara-rasa	Pruthvi, Jala, Teja, Vayu	-
Aatma	Pruthvi, Jala, Teja, Vayu	-

*Garbha* receives its four *Mahabhootas* from *maata, pitaa, ahara-rasa* and *aatma*, with *akasha* being *sarvavyapaka* and *akriya*<sup>25</sup>. To elaborate,

The varying combination of these *Mahabhootas* under the four major categories is reflected in the *Garbha*. Among these *bhoutika* ratios, that which has a dominant influence will become the most recognizable factor in *Garbha*. For example, dominance of *prithvi Mahabhoota* can be seen in *Asthi, Danta, Kेशha* etc., dominance of *jala* in *rasa, rakta, mutra* etc., dominance of *teja* in *varna, pachana shakti, drithi* etc. and dominance of *vayu* in all sorts of internal and external body movements (peristalsis, movement of limbs).

Thus, *saadrishata* of *Garbha* with *maata, pitaa* or both is determined by the dominance of *bhoutika sanghatana* of the respective *maata* or *pitaa*. When the child does not resemble either mother or father, its features and mannerisms could be due to the *bhoutika* influence from *ahara* or *aatma*. The psychological/intellectual attributes of a child are also determined by *purva-janmakrutha shubha and ashubha karma* carried by *aatma*.

*akasha, vayu, agni, jala* and *pruthvi* (in *paraspara anupravishya avastha*). By doing their respective *karmas* like *dharana, samhanana, parinama, vyuhana, avakasha* they do *paraspara upakara* and also are in *paraspara anughraha avastha* i.e., *dravya* with one *Mahabhoota* predominance, gives *aashraya-dana* to other four *gouna Mahabhootas*. Understanding the formation, qualities, and function of these *Mahabhootas* is very essential since all other bodily components are the products of permutation and combination of these *Mahabhootas*. This understanding begins with the formation of *Garbha*.

The role of *Mahabhootas* in the development of *Garbha*, i.e., *vayu* does *vibhajana, teja* does *pachana, jala* does *kledana, prithvi* doing *samhanana, akasha* doing *vivardhana, varna utpathi* etc are explained but how the *Garbha* became *Panchabhautika* is ambiguous. Through the analysis of *Panchabhautikatva* in *sukra* and *shonita*, we can clearly understand *Garbha's Panchabhautikatva*. This also assists in the field of teaching various *Rachana shareera* basic concepts like the importance of *pancha Mahabhootas* not just as a basic element, but as the base for various other body components like *dosha, dhatu, mala, anga-pratyanga* and so on. No treatment is possible devoid of *PanchaMahabhoota*.<sup>26</sup>

*Paramanu* is considered to be the smallest part which cannot be further divided. According to *vaisheshika darshana*, the whole world and all the *kaarya dravyas* are formed by the 3 types of *paramanu samyoga* i.e., *paramanu, dwayanuka (indriya aprathyaksha), triyanuka (indriya prathyaksha)*. This *paramanu bheda* is also based on the *Mahabhootas* itself.<sup>27</sup>

There are two ways of understanding the concept of *Pancha Mahabhoota* through the lens of



contemporary sciences i.e., an atom & a cell (protoplasm). These are the structural and functional units of any element in the universe, including the living. An atom is made up of protons, neutrons, electrons,

orbit, force of attraction and energy. A cell also has its various components like cytoplasm, nucleus, mitochondria & energy, and motion.

Few examples for understanding *panchaMahabhoota* from the concept of an atom,

<b>Atom</b>	<b>Panchamahaboota</b>
Electron, proton, neutron Atomic weight,	<i>Pruthvi</i>
Binding force between protons and neutron in nucleus (cohesion) Electromagnetic force, Nuclear force	<i>Jala</i>
Energy between the components, Nuclear reaction, Radioactive decay	<i>Teja</i>
Movement of electron in the orbit, Atomic motion	<i>Vayu</i>
Space where the atom is present, Space between the 3 elements	<i>Akasha</i>

A few examples for understanding *pancha Mahabhoota* from the concept of a cell protoplasm,

<b>CELL PROTOPLASM</b>	<b>PANCHAMAHABOOTA</b>
Structure of cells and their components (cell membrane, nuclear membrane, membranes of Golgi, EPR, mitochondria, lysosome etc.)	<i>Pruthvi</i>
Cytoplasm, nucleoplasm	<i>Jala</i>
Production of energy by mitochondria (release of ATPs) enzymes secreted by EPR	<i>Teja</i>
Movement of various components within the cell and also in and out the cell	<i>Vayu</i>
Space within EPR, golgi, mitochondria, vacuole	<i>Akasha</i>

## CONCLUSION

*PanchaMahabhoota* are the principle five elements responsible for the creation of all animate and inanimate objects in this universe with cells and atoms being the precursors. Be it *ahara* or *aushadha* everything is *panchabhoothika*. Understanding about the role of *Mahabhoota* begins with understanding *Garbha* in other words how a *Garbha* attains *panchabhootikata*. *Garbha* acquires its *Mahabhootas* mainly by four sources i.e., from mother(*shonita*), father(*shukra*), *ahara-rasa* (nutrition from maternal diet) and *aatma*. Among these *shukra* and *shonita* serve as prime substratum. Analysis of *shudha shukra*

and *shudha shonita gunas* shows – *shukra* has all *Mahabhoota* with a predominance of *jala*, *pruthvi* and *vayu Mahabhootas* whereas *shonita* having mainly *agni Mahabhoota* predominance. Thus, combining *shukra*, *shonita*, and *aatma* having different ratios of each *Mahabhoota* results in *panchabhutika Garbha*. This can also serve as one of the bases for *Ayurveda* genetics. If these *Mahabhoota* are not properly combined, it can lead to structural & functional changes in the *Garbha*. For example, *vikruta Mahabhoota* can result in *vikrutha dosha, dhatu, mala*. If *tejo Mahabhoota* is not combined rightly or there is *vikruta tejo Mahabhoota* from any source, it can lead to improper formation of *Chakshurindriya, vaikrutha var-*



nothpatti, etc. Similarly, as these are responsible for *beeja*, *beejabhaga*, and *beejabhaga avayava*, which are in turn form different *anga-prathyangas* in *Garbha*, any imbalance in *Mahabhoota* will lead to *Garbha vikruti*. Hence, *panchamahaboota* has an extensive role in the formation, development and maintenance of *Garbha*.

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