

Review Concept on Ritu Charya w.s.r. Lifestyle Disorders w.r.t. Ayurvedic Literature

Dr. Smithendu RS¹, Dr. Lakshmi Devi Chauhan², Dr. Ved Parkash³, Dr. Payal Sharma⁴

¹Assistant professor, Dept. of Swasthavritta and yoga, Kalawati Ayurvedic Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, Gorha, Kasganj, U.P.

²Assistant Professor, Dept. of Balrog, Kalawati Ayurvedic Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, Gorha, Kasganj, U.P.

³Assistant professor, Dept. of Dravya guna, Mangalayatan Ayurvedic Medical College & Research Centre, Beswan, Aligarh, U.P.

⁴Assistant professor, Dept. of Prasuti tantra evum stri roga, Mangalayatan Ayurvedic Medical College & Research Centre, Beswan, Aligarh, U.P.

Abstract—Ayurveda is an ancient science which focus more on preventing lifestyle diseases rather than just treating them. “*Swasthasya swathya rakshanam aturasya vikar prashamanam ch*”.⁽¹⁾ For prevention of disease, it offers various niyam/rules related to Ahara (diet), Vihara (daily habits), Achara (conduct), and Vichara (thoughts), as described in different classical Samhitas. As per such comes “Ritu charya”, which literally means acharan to be followed according ritu/season. It helps the body to adapt according seasonal changes. Each Ritu/season causes changes in the levels of Doshas in the body. These seasonal changes deliberately affect the body and disturb its natural equilibrium, as explained in the concept of Prakruti-Purusha Samyata Siddhanta. If a person fails to follow the seasonal guidelines properly, it can lead to Dosha imbalance in the body, which may result in lifestyle diseases. Therefore, it is important to understand and follow Ritucharya according to the changes in each season. The different food and lifestyle regimens stated in the classics of Ayurveda and their significance on lifestyle problems have been explored in this review article.

Index Terms—Ritu, Ritucharya, lifestyle disorders, seasonal regimens, seasonal variations.

I. INTRODUCTION

As mentioned above, ayurveda is for all – “*Swasthasya swathya rakshanam*- maintain the health of a healthy individual, *aturasya vikar prashamanam ch*”- defines cure the disease of the diseased. To fulfil this purpose, Dinacharya (daily regimen) and Ritucharya (seasonal regimen) is

mentioned & explained well in the classics of Ayurveda.⁽²⁾

Many exogenous and endogenous rhythms have specific phase relationships with one another, implying that they interact and synchronies with one another. If the body is unable to adapt to stressors due to changes in specific seasonal traits, it may result in Dosha-dhatu Vaishamya, which may lead to disease.⁽³⁾ Because adaptation is the law for survival. Adapt to changing season is equally important without getting sick/diseased. Hence, knowledge of Ritucharya is essential. Individual who are not aware or ignore the appropriate regimen to be followed in a specific season leads to homeostasis derangement and causes various diseases such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and so on. Individual’s inappropriate relationship with their environment causes lifestyle diseases. These lifestyle diseases manifest insidiously, develop slowly, and are much difficult to treat.⁽⁴⁾

The World Health Organization has claimed India as one of the countries with majority of lifestyle diseases in upcoming future. Lifestyle disorders are also affecting the younger generation. As a result, the population at risk shifts from 40+ to possibly 30+ or even younger. Already known as the diabetes capital of the world, India may grab the title of various lifestyle disease capital due to faulty lifestyle. Ritucharya is well explained in Ayurvedic Samhitas vastly. The holistic science of Ayurveda first and foremost goal is disease prevention and health maintenance. “Tasya Shitadiya Ahaar balam Varnascha Vardhate,” it is written in the Tasyashitya

adhaya of the Charaka Samhita. Tasyartusatmayam Vaditam Chesta harvyapasrayam," which means 'the strength and complexion of the person knowing the suitable diet and regimen for every season and practicing accordingly are enhanced.'⁽⁵⁾

Classification of season According to Ayurveda,

A year is divided into two ayaan depending on the direction of the sun's movement-

1. Uttar ayana (the northern solstice)
2. Dakshin ayana (the southern solstice)

Each Ayana has three ritu/season. The word Ritu means —to go or —to move. In one year, there are six seasons-

- Uttar ayana (northern solstice)-
 1. *Shishira (winter)*
 2. *Vasanta (spring)*
 3. *Grishma(summer)*
- Dakshin ayana (southern solstice)
 4. *Varsha (monsoon)*
 5. *Sharad (autumn)*
 6. *Hemanta (late autumn).*

These seasonal changes are mainly observed in the Indian subcontinent.

Uttar ayana/ adaan kaal

It is also known as Adana Kala. The sun and wind are particularly strong during this period. The sun dwells up individual's strength and depletes the earth's cooling capacity. It increases the Tikta (bitter), Kashaya (astringent), and Katu (pungent) Rasa (taste), causing dryness in the body and decreasing the Bala (strength). This can be compared to the gradual movement of the earth around the sun to the position where the sun's rays fall perpendicularly on the North Pole on June 21st every year, known as the summer solstice. The Sun moves northward from the Tropic of Capricorn to the Tropic of Cancer. During Uttar ayana,

the seasons in the Indian subcontinent change from Shishira (winter) to Vasanta (spring) and finally to Grishma (summer). The time period can be compared to mid-January to mid-July, when the weather becomes warmer and drier. It has a debilitating effect on the environment which makes suffers everyone.

Dakshin ayana

It is also known as visarg kaal. It denotes the sun's descent or movement in a southern direction. The wind is not very dry during this time, and the moon is more powerful than the sun. Clouds, rain, and cold winds cause the earth to cool. Unctuousness pervades the atmosphere, and Amla (sour), Lavana (salty), and Madhura (sweet) Rasa predominates, so a person's strength is increased during this period. This can be compared to the earth's gradual movement around the sun to the position where the sun's rays fall over the 30-degree meridian. The winter solstice occurs every year on December 21st, when the South Pole is perpendicular to the equator. The sun moves southward from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn. During Dakshin ayana, the Indian subcontinent experiences seasonal changes from Varsha (monsoon) to Sharad (autumn) and Hemanta (winter) (late autumn). This period is comparable to mid-July to mid-January, when cool sets in and anabolic activity outnumbers catabolic activity in the environment.

State of strength

Weakness occurs at the beginning of Visarga Kala and the end of Adana Kala, that is, during Varsha and Grishma. Strength remains moderate in the middle of the solstices, that is, during Sharad and Vasanta; maximum strength is seen at the end of Visarga Kala and the beginning of Adana Kala, that is, during Hemanta and Shishira.⁽⁶⁾

RITU KAAL	PATHYA/ INDICATED	APATHYA/ CONTRAINDICATED
Hemant	Milk products and their preparations, cane juice products and them preparations, grains like black lentils, marshy animal meat, sweet, sour, salty foods, lipids, butter, and lukewarm drinking water. Vihar holds - Aguru lepa (Aquilaria agallocha), abhayanga (oil	Avoid laghu (light) and ruksha (dry) meals and drinks, as well as strong breezes, since they vitiate vata.

	massage), and jentaka sweda (hot sweating).	
Shishir	Same as in Hemant ritu.	Pungent, bitter and vata provoking food and drinks.
Vasant	Yava is a simple-to-digest food (Hordeum vulgare). Godhuma, a recent addition to the diet (Tritium vulgare). The Body of Shashaka (the rabbit). It is suggested to consume water that has been boiled with mustak, vijayasara, or shunthi (Zingiber officinale) (Cyperus rotundus). Aside from dhoompana (smoking with medicinal cigarettes), udvartana (massage) with Chandana (Santalum album), kesara (Crocus sativus), kavala (gargle), anjana (collyrium), and vamaana andnasya are also Advised.	It is important to refrain from sleeping All day and from eating the typical madhura rasa.
Grishma	It is advised to eat and drink things that are madhura (sweet), sheeta (cold), and snigdha (unctuous), as well as leaf mantha and jaggery, as well as ghee and milk with Shali rice. It is advised that you remain in serene areas, use sandalwood polish, adorn with flowers, and dress comfortably.	Avoid alcohol and the sour foods amla, katu, and ushana from your diet (warm). Overindulging in sexual activities and excessive exercise would be forbidden.
Varsha	They eat salt rice, old yava (Hordeum vulgare), godhuma (Triticum aestivum), and meat from desert animals in addition to vegetables (Oryza sativa). It is recommended to consume dietary components like amla, lavana, and snigdha. Use honey while preparing meals, it is advised.	Mantha and sources of open water Overexertion and river bathing are to be avoided.
Sharad	It is advised to include sweet, sour, spicy, salty, and bitter foods and	Curd and meat of marsh and marine animals should be

	drinks in your diet. Godhuma is a wise pick for you, Yava. Virechana (purgation) and Rakta mokshana are recommended as treatments.	avoided. In the afternoon, refrain from bothering animals that are sleeping and stop working in the sun.
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II. DISCUSSION

The characteristics of the land, the water, and different atmospheric phenomena, such as temperature, humidity, wind, rain, clouds, and air pressure, are considered environmental elements. No two moments are precisely comparable in a given location since all these environmental elements are always changing. As a result, as the Sun rises, the temperature continues to rise and eventually declines at night. Although the maximum and minimum temperatures vary every day, summer and winter are the warmest and lowest times respectively. Similar to how all these components exhibit both diurnal and seasonal fluctuations, season refers to these variations during a certain period of time.⁽⁷⁾

According to a study, the concept of Ritu and their impact on Bala, Hemanta Ritu had the greatest overall impact on the Bala of healthy individuals, Vasanta Ritu had a moderate impact, and Varsha Ritu had the least significant impact. The study came to the conclusion that Hemanta is the Ritu of Pravara Bala, Vasanta is the Ritu of Madhyama Bala, and Varsha is the Ritu the study's findings provide credibility to Ayurvedic concepts.⁽⁸⁾ Ignorance to follow Ritucharya leads to several diseases which may lead to lifestyle capital. The importance of Ritu charya in the present scenario may undoubtedly be questioned given climate change and seasonal variations. It is important to compile the theoretical knowledge of Ritucharya. The amount of Dosha and Pancha maha bhuta can be assessed properly to determine the regimen, to which this knowledge of Ayurveda holds as a pathfinder, even though Ritu nowadays are not well followed.

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