



## *World Journal of Pharmaceutical Science & Technology*

Journal homepage: [www.wjpst.com](http://www.wjpst.com)

### Review Article

## **RITUCHARYA (AYURVEDIC SEASONAL REGIMEN) AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE DISEASE PREVENTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Dr Naveenta Devi<sup>1</sup>**

**1. M.D.(Ayu), Assistant Professor, Dept. Of Samhita & Siddhant, M.L.R. Ayurvedic college, Charkhi dadri, Haryana**

#### Address for correspondence:

**Dr Naveenta Devi**, Assistant Professor, Dept. Of Samhita & Siddhant, M.L.R. Ayurvedic college, Charkhi dadri, Haryana.

Email Id- [pahelnaveenta@gmail.com](mailto:pahelnaveenta@gmail.com)

Received: 15-05-2023, Revised: 01-06-2023, Accepted: 15-7-2023

### **ABSTRACT**

Ritu means the season, classified by diverse characteristics convey altered effects on the body as well as the environment. Ayurveda has depicted various rules and regimens (*Charya*), regarding diet and behaviour to acclimatize seasonal enforcement easily without altering body homeostasis. The prime principle of Ayurvedic system of medicine is preventive aspect, can be achieved by the change in diet and practices in response to change in climatic condition. Acharya's have mentioned relation of season and disease and different types of formulations are also advised according to season. Season is divided into six parts and each part consists of two months. Seasons also classified to eliminate the morbidity of Dosha in the respective seasons. Strength of the person is highest in Visarga kala in comparison to Adana kala. Different life style and dietetic regimen advised for each season. Time of seven days at the commencement of the season is known as *Ritusandhi*. It is critical period in which previous regimen should be discontinued gradually and that of subsequent season should be adopted gradually. Seasons influences on body humours resulting into aggravation, accumulation and pacification. Hence one should prescribe appropriate bio purificatory procedures, collect drugs etc. to lead a healthy life. In this review article, various regimens in diet and lifestyle as mentioned in the classics of Ayurveda and their importance on lifestyle disorder has been discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** *Life style, Disease, Adan kala, Visarga kala*

## INTRODUCTION

The season (*Ritu*) classified by different features expresses different effects on the body as well as the environment. *Ayurveda* has depicted various rules and regimens (*Charya*), regarding diet and behavior to acclimatize seasonal enforcement easily without altering body homeostasis. The basic theory followed in the Ayurvedic system of medicine is *Swasthyashya Swasthya Rakshanam*, which means to maintain the health of the healthy, rather than *Aturashya Vikara Prashamanancha*, means to cure the diseases of the diseased person<sup>i</sup>. The prime principle of *Ayurvedic* system of medicine is preventive aspect, can be achieved by the change in diet and practices in response to change in climatic condition. This is a very important aspect of preventive medicine as mentioned in Ayurvedic texts.

Given that the term *Prakriti* denotes both body constitution and nature, it is only expected that with the changing seasons of nature there will be corresponding effects on the *Bhutas* and thereby the *Doshas* of the constitution. Cold, dry weather for instance enhances *Vata*, hot humid climate increases *Pitta*, while cold, wet weather aggravates *Kapha*. To avoid such continued aggravation leading to imbalance of the *Doshas*, *Ayurveda* prescribes a seasonal routine to preserve the *Doshic* balance as the seasons change. For each season therefore, there is a unique diet (*Ahar*), a distinct mode of living (*Vihara*) and routine living (*Karya*). These keep your *Doshas* in a state of equilibrium and help you cope with the stresses and strains of changing seasons. As human being is also part of the same ecology, the body is greatly influenced by external environment. Many of the exogenous and endogenous rhythm have specific phase relationship with each other; which means that they interact and synchronize each other. If body is unable to adopt itself to stressors due to changes in specific traits of seasons, it may lead to *Dosha Vaishamya*, which in turn may render the body highly susceptible to one or other kinds of disorders<sup>ii</sup>.

As adaptations according to the changes, is the key for survival, the knowledge of *Ritucharya* (regimen for various seasons) is thus important. People do not know or ignore the suitable types of food stuffs, dressing, and others regimen to be followed in particular season, this leads to derangement of homeostasis and causes various diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and so on. Lifestyle diseases are a result of an inappropriate relationship of people with their environment. Onset of these lifestyle diseases is insidious, delayed development, and difficult to cure.

## CLASSIFICATION OF SEASON

The year according to *Ayurveda* is divided into two periods *Ayana* depending on the direction of movement of sun that is *Uttarayana* (northern solstice) and *Dakshinayana* (southern solstice). Each is formed of three *Ritus* (seasons). The word *Ritu* means “to go.” It is the form in which the nature expresses itself in a sequence in particular and specific in present forms in short, the seasons<sup>iii</sup>.

A year consists of six seasons, namely, *Shishira* (winter), *Vasanta* (spring), and *Grishma* (summer) in *Uttarayan* and *Varsha* (monsoon), *Sharata* (autumn), and *Hemanta* (late autumn) in *Dakshinayana*.

As *Ayurveda* has its origin in India, the above seasonal changes are observed predominantly in Indian subcontinent.

<b>Kaala (Semester)</b>	<b>Ritu (Season)</b>	<b>Maasa (Month)</b>	<b>Characteristics of the Season</b>
Aadaana (Uttaraayana) (Northern Solastice)	Sisira	Magha and Phalguna (mid January to mid march)	Cold and dewy
	Vasanta	Chaitra and Vaisakha (mid March to mid May)	Spring
	Greeshma	Jyeshthaa and Aashaadha (mid May to mid July)	Summer
Visarga (Dakshinaayana) (Southern Solastice)	Varsha	Shravana and Bhadrapada (mid July to mid September)	Rainy
	Sharat	Aashvina and Kartika (mid Sept. to mid November)	Autumn
	Hemanta	Margshirsha and Pausha (mid Nov. to mid January)	Winter

### **Uttarayana and its effect**

*Uttarayana* indicates the ascent of the sun or northward movement of the sun. In this period the sun and the wind are powerful. The sun takes away the strength of the people and the cooling quality of the earth. It brings increase in the *Tikta* (bitter), *Kashaya* (astringent), and *Katu* (pungent) *Rasa* (taste), respectively, which brings about dryness in the body and reduces the *Bala* (strength). It is also called *Adana Kala*.

According to modern science, this can be compared with the gradual movement of earth around the sun to the position, in which the rays of the sun fall perpendicularly at 30-degree meridian of the North Pole on June 21<sup>st</sup> every year, called as summer solstice. The northward journey of the Sun from Tropic of Capricorn to Tropic of Cancer happens.

During *Uttarayana* the seasonal changes in Indian subcontinent is from *Shishira* (winter) to *Vasanta* (spring) and to *Grishma* (summer). The period can be compared to mid-January to mid-July, when warmness and dryness in weather increases. It has an overall debilitating effect on environment, to which human being is also a part.

### **Dakshinayana and its effect**

*Dakshinayana* indicates the descent of the sun or movement of the sun in southern direction. In this period, the wind is not very dry; the moon is more powerful than sun. The earth becomes cool due to the clouds, rain, and cold winds. Unctuousness sets in the atmosphere and *Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (salty),

and *Madhura* (sweet) *Rasa* are predominant, so the strength of person enhances during this period. It is also called *Visarga Kala*.

According to modern science, this can be compared with the gradual movement of the earth around the sun to the position, in which the rays of the sun fall over 30 degree meridian of the South Pole perpendicularly on December 21<sup>st</sup> every year, is called as winter solstice. The southward movement of the Sun occurs from Tropic of Cancer to Tropic of Capricorn.

During *Dakshinayana*, the seasonal changes occur in the Indian subcontinent from *Varsha* (monsoon) to *Sarata* (autumn) and to *Hemanta* (late autumn). This period can be compared to mid-July to mid-January, when cool sets, and due to which anabolic activity dominates over the catabolic activity in the environment.

### **STATE OF STRENGTH**

- In the beginning of *Visarga Kala* and ending of *Adana kala*, that is, during *Varsha* and *Grishma*, weakness occurs.
- In the middle of the solstices, that is, during *Sharata* and *Vasanta*, strength remains in moderate grade.
- In the end of *Visarga Kala* and in the beginning of *Adana Kala*, that is, during *Hemanta* and *Shishira*, maximum strength is seen<sup>iv</sup>.

### **REGIMEN OF DIFFERENT SEASONS**

#### **1. Shishira (winter)**

##### **➤ General condition**

Mid-January to mid-March (Approx.) is considered as *Shishira Ritu (winter)*. During this season, the environment remains cold, along with cold wind. The predominant *Rasa* and *Mahabhuta* during this season are *Tikta* (bitter) and *Akasha*, respectively. The strength of the person becomes less, deposition of the *Kapha* *Dosha* occurs and *Agni* (catabolism) remains in a higher state.

##### **➤ Diet regimen**

Foods having *Amla* (sour) as the predominant taste are preferred. Cereals and pulses, wheat/gram flour products, new rice, corn, and others, are advised. Ginger, garlic, *Haritaki* (fruits of *Terminalia chebula*), *Pippali* (fruits of *Piper longum*), sugarcane products, and milk and milk products are to be included in the diet.

Foods having *Katu* (pungent), *Tikta* (bitter), *Kashaya* (astringent) predominant *Rasa* are to be avoided. *Laghu* (light) and *Shita* (cold) foods are advised to be prohibited.

##### **➤ Lifestyle**

Massage with oil/powder/paste, bathing with lukewarm water, exposure to sunlight, wearing warm clothes are mentioned to follow.

*Vata* aggravating lifestyle like exposure to cold wind, excessive walking, sleep at late night, are to be avoided.

## 2. Vasanta (spring)

### ➤ **General condition**

The approximate time is from mid-March to mid-May. This season is considered as season of flowering and origin of new leaves. Predominant Rasa and Mahabhuta during this season are Kashaya (astringent), and Prithvi and Vayu, respectively. Strength of the person remains in medium degree, vitiation of Kapha Dosha occurs and Agni remains in Manda state.

### ➤ **Diet regimen**

One should take easily digestible foods. Among cereals, old barley, wheat, rice, and others are preferred. Among pulses, lentil, Mugda, and others, can be taken. Food items tasting Tikta (bitter), Katu (pungent), and Kashaya (astringent) are to be taken. Besides those, honey is to be included in the diet. Meats like that of Shahsa (rabbit), which are easy to digest can be taken. Foods which are hard to digest are to be avoided. Those which are Sheeta (cold), Snigdha (viscous), Guru (heavy), Amla (sour), Madhura (sweet) are not preferred. New grains, curd, cold drinks, and so on, are also to be prohibited.

### ➤ **Lifestyle**

One should use warm water for bathing purpose, may do exercise during Vasant Ritu. Udvartana (massage) with powder of Chandana (*Santalum album*), Kesara (*Crocus sativus*), Agar, and others, Kavala (gargle), Dhooma (smoking), Anjana (collyrium), and evacuative measures, such as Vamana and Nasya are advised.

Day-sleep is strictly contraindicated during this season.

## 3. Grishma (summer)

### ➤ **General condition**

Mid-May to mid-July (approximately) is considered as Grishma (summer) season. Environment is prevalent with intense heat and unhealthy wind. The river-bodies dried and the plants appear lifeless. The predominant Rasa is Katu (pungent) and Mahabhuta are Agni and Vayu. The strength of the person become less, deposition of Vata Dosha occurs, but the vitiated Kapha Dosha is pacified during this season. Agni of the person will remain in mild state.

### ➤ **Diet regimen**

Foods which are light to digest—those having Madhura (sweet), Snigdha (unctuous), Sheeta (cold), and Drava (liquid) Guna, such as rice, lentil, etc, are to be taken. Drinking plenty of water and other liquids, such as cold water, buttermilk, fruit juices, meat soups, mango juice, churned curd with pepper, is to be practiced. At bedtime milk with sugar candy is to be taken and food *with Katu (pungent) and Amla (sour) taste and Ushna (warm) foods* are to be avoided.

### ➤ **Lifestyle**

Staying in cool places, applying sandal wood and other aromatic pastes over the body, adorning with flowers, wearing light dresses and sleeping at day time are helpful. During night one can enjoy the cooled moon rays with breeze. Excessive exercise or hard work is to be avoided; too much sexual indulgence and alcoholic preparations are prohibited.

#### 4. **Varsha (monsoon)**

##### ➤ **General condition**

Mid-July to mid-September (approximately) is considered as Varsha Ritu. During this season the sky is covered by clouds and rains occur without thunderstorm. The ponds, rivers, etc., are filled with water. The predominant Rasa and Mahabhuta during this season are Amla (sour), and Prithvi and Agni, respectively. The strength of the person again becomes less, vitiation of Vata Dosha and deposition of Pitta Dosha, Agni also gets vitiated.

##### ➤ **Diet regimen**

Foods having Amla (sour) and Lavana (salty) taste and of Sneha (unctuous) qualities are to be taken. Among cereals, old barley, rice, wheat, etc., are advised. Besides meat soup, Yusha (soup), etc. are to be included in the diet. It is mentioned that one should take medicated water or boiled water.

Intake of river water, churned preparations having more water, excessive liquid and wine are to be avoided. The foods, which are heavy and hard to digest, like meat, etc., are prohibited.

##### ➤ **Lifestyle**

Use of boiled water for bath and rubbing the body with oil properly after bath is advised. Medicated Basti (enema) is prescribed as an evacuative measure to expel vitiated Doshas.

Getting wet in rain, day-sleep, exercise, hard work, sexual indulgence, wind, staying at river-bank, etc., are to be prohibited.

#### 5. **Sharat (Autumn)**

##### ➤ **General condition**

The period between mid-September to mid-November is Sharat Ritu (autumn). During this time the Sun becomes bright, the sky remains clear and sometimes with white cloud, and the earth is covered with wet mud. The predominant Rasa is Lavana (salty) and predominant Mahabhutas are Apa and Agni. The strength of the person remains medium, pacification of vitiated Vata Dosha and vitiation of Pitta Dosha occur, and activity of Agni increases during this season.

##### ➤ **Diet regimen**

Foods are having Madhura (sweet) and Tikta (bitter) taste, and of Laghu (light to digest) and cold properties are advised. Foods having the properties to pacify vitiated Pitta are advised. Wheat, green gram, sugar candy, honey, Patola (*Trichosanthes dioica*), flesh of animals of dry land (*Jangala Mamsa*) are to be included in the diet.

Hot, bitter, sweet, and astringent foods are to be avoided. The food items, such as fat, oils, meat of aquatic animals, curds, etc., are also to be not included in the diet during this season.

➤ **Lifestyle**

Habit of eating food, only when there is a feeling of hunger is recommended. One should take water purified by the rays of sun in day time and rays of moon at night time for drinking, bathing, etc. It is advised to wear flower garlands, and to apply paste of Chandana (*Santalum album*) on the body. It is said that moon rays in the first 3 h of night is conducive for health. Medical procedures, such as Virechana (purging), Rakta-Mokshana (blood letting), etc, should be done during this season. Day-sleep, excessive eating, excessive exposure to sunlight, etc., are to be avoided.

6. **Hemanta (late autumn)**

➤ **General condition**

Mid-November to mid-January is considered as Hemanta (late autumn) Ritu. Blow of cold winds starts and chillness is felt. Predominant Rasa during this season is Madhura and the predominant Mahabhutas are Prithivi and Apa. The strength of a person remains on highest grade and vitiated Pitta Dosha gets pacified. Activity of Agni is increased.

➤ **Diet regimen**

One should use unctuous, sweet, sour, and salty foods. Among cereals and pulses, new rice, flour preparations, green gram, Masha, etc., are mentioned to be used. Various meats, fats, milk and milk products, sugarcane products, Shidhu (fermented preparations), Tila (sesame), and so on, are also to be included in the diet. Vata aggravating foods, such as Laghu (light), cold, and dry foods are to be avoided. Intake of cold drinks is also contraindicated.

➤ **Lifestyle**

Exercise, body and head massage, use of warm water, Atapa-sevana (sunbath), application of Agarū on body, heavy clothing, sexual indulgence with one partner, residing in warm places is recommended. Exposure to strong and cold wind, habit of day sleep, etc., are mentioned to be avoided<sup>v</sup>.

**Ritusandhi:** Time of seven days at the end and commencement season is known as *ritusandhi*. During this period regimen of previous season should be discontinued gradually and that of subsequent season should be adopted gradually<sup>vi</sup>.

**Yamdanstra:** *Sharangadhara* has mentioned that movement of sun from one stellar constellation to other makes for the six seasons during which *Tridosha* undergo accumulation, aggravation and pacification. The last eight days of *Kartika* and the first eight days of *Agahana* is described as *Yamdanstra*.

## CONCLUSION

This review examines the relevance of *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) based on the current evidence on the interdependency of gut microbial ecology with changing seasons and consequent health effects. The lifestyle and dietary factors can profoundly alter the commensal microbial communities, the dysbiosis of which can

augment pathogen susceptibility, inflammatory diseases and the current epidemic of metabolic health problems like non-communicable diseases. Adopting *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) could provide sample opportunity to attune the dynamics of human gut flora and rescue the host from the pathological manifestations of seasonal variations and other varied causes.

If body is incapable to adopt itself to stressors due to alteration in specific character of seasons, it may lead to *Dosha Vaishamya*, which in turn may render the body highly susceptible to one or other kinds of disorders. As adaptations according to the changes, is the key for survival, the knowledge of *Ritucharya* (regimen for various seasons) is thus important. With global warming and divergence in the arrival of season, it is necessary to acquire knowledge about *Ritucharya* in the present scenario. Strict dietary regimens and regular exercise can go a long way in prevention the Non communicable diseases. The knowledge of *Ritucharya* and its strict compliance in accordance with the *Ritu* helps to maintain the harmony of the *Tridosha*, *agni*, *dhatuand srotas* and to lead disease free life.

kala, during this period it is advised to strictly follow seasonal regimen and should take small quantities of food<sup>vii</sup>.

## REFERENCES:-

- 
- <sup>i</sup> Kushwaha HC, editor. Pratham Bhag. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Orientalia; 2009. Acharya Charaks' Charak Samhita. [Google Scholar]
- <sup>ii</sup> Rao Mangalagowri V, editor. Text Book of Svasthavritta. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2007. [Google Schol]
- <sup>iii</sup> Monier-Williams M. A dictionary English and Sanskrit. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited; 1999.
- <sup>iv</sup> Rao Mangalagowri V. Text Book of Svasthavritta. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2007.
- <sup>v</sup> Srikanthamurthy KR, editor. Acharya Vagbhatas' Ashtanga Samgraha. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2005.
- <sup>vi</sup> Murthy, K.R. Shrikantha. (2000). *Vagbhata, Ritucharya Adhyaya*. Ashtanga Sangraha of Vagabhata, Vol I, third edition, Varanasi, Chaukhambha Orientalia, 59-69
- <sup>vii</sup> Murthy, K.R. Shrikantha. (2006). *Shargadhara, Bhaishajya vyakhyana Adhyaya*, Sharngadhara Samhita (English translation), sixth edition, Varanasi. Chaukhambha Orientalia, 12-13