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Review Article

CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF RITU-HARITAKI – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda's core principle is to maintain the health of healthy individuals and treat those who are ill. "Ritu" means season, and "Charya" means guidelines, together forming a seasonal guide for healthy living. The year is divided into two phases (*Ayan*) of six months each, with three seasons (*Ritus*) in each phase. *Uttarayan* includes *Shishir*, *Vasant*, and *Grishm*, while *Dakshinayan* consists of *Varsha*, *Sharad*, and *Hemant*. *Ritu-Haritaki* is part of *Ritu-charya*, where *Haritaki* powder is taken with different adjuvants according to the season, known as *Ritu Haritaki*. Acharya Charak emphasized its rejuvenative properties in the *Chikitsasthan* section of the *Charak Samhita*. According to this text, *Ritu Haritaki* is a *Rasayan* (rejuvenator) suitable for use in every season, though the accompanying substance (*Anupana dravya*) should vary. *Haritaki* possesses all tastes (*rasas*) except salty (*Lavan Ras*). When used with different *Anupana dravyas* in various seasons, it balances the doshas, restores impaired digestion (*agni*) to its proper state, and maintains the health of bodily tissues (*dhatu*) and waste products (*mala*), leading to rejuvenation (*rasayana*). For example: In the Rainy season (*Varsha Ritu*), *Haritaki* is taken with rock salt (*Saindhava Lavana*). In Autumn (*Sharad Ritu*), it is taken with sugar (*Sharkara*). In Early winter (*Hemanta Ritu*), it is taken with dry ginger (*Shunthi*). In Winter (*Shishira Ritu*), it is taken with long pepper (*Pippali*). In Spring (*Vasanta Ritu*), it is taken with honey (*Madhu*). In Summer (*Grishma Ritu*), it is taken with jaggery. This practice naturally

detoxifies the body. Given the current need to enhance immunity, it is crucial to be aware of and follow the *Ritu Haritaki* method as described in the *Samhita Granths*.

KEYWORDS

Ayurveda, Ritucharya, Ritu Haritaki.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda aims to maintain health in the healthy and treat illness in the sick by adhering to daily regimens. However, even with strict adherence, diseases can still occur due to climatic changes. "*Ritu*" means season, and "*Charya*" means guidelines, collectively referring to seasonal guidelines for healthy living. The movement of the sun creates different seasons, dividing the year into *Uttarayan* and *Dakshinayan*, each lasting six months and encompassing three seasons: *Shishir*, *Vasant*, and *Grishm* in *Uttarayan*, and *Varsha*, *Sharad*, and *Hemant* in *Dakshinayan*.

Ritu-Haritaki involves the seasonal use of *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*) with various adjuvants, acting as an immunity booster. *Ayurveda* states that seasonal variations can imbalance the *Doshas* (bio-energies), leading to physical and physiological changes. To manage these fluctuations in *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*, it is essential to follow *Ritu-Charya*. *Ritu-Haritaki*, a part of *Ritu-Charya*, involves taking *Haritaki* powder with different adjuvants according to the season.

Haritaki is a crucial herb in traditional medicine, known for its rejuvenative properties, as highlighted by *Aacharya Charak* in the *Charak Samhita*. He praised *Haritaki* as the best herb for regular use. *Haritaki's* benefits vary seasonally when combined with different adjuvants, enhancing its rejuvenative effects. This article explores *Haritaki's* benefits according to the seasonal regimen and its role in balancing *Doshas* and boosting immunity, as mentioned in *Laghutrayi-Bhavaprakash*.

Haritaki belongs to the *Combretaceae* family and is widely used in *Ayurveda*, *Unani*, and *Siddha* medicine systems. It possesses a broad spectrum of pharmacological activities due to its biologically active compounds. According to *Charak Samhita*, *Ritu-Haritaki* is a *Rasayana* (anti-aging remedy) suitable for every season, with the adjuvants varying according to the season. *Haritaki* contains all tastes except salty. In *Charak Samhita Chikitsa Sthan Adhyay 01, Abhayaamalaki Rasayan Paad, Aacharya Charak* elaborates on *Haritaki's* properties and its various formulations:

“हरीतकीं पञ्चरसामुष्णामलवणां शवाम्। दोषानुलोमनीं लघ्वीं वद्याद्दीपनपाचनीम्॥

आयुष्यां पौष्टिकीं धन्यां वयसः स्थापनीं पराम्। सर्वरोगप्रशमनीं बुद्धीन्द्रियबलंप्रदाम्” ॥ (*Ch.Chi.1/29,30*)

“*Haritaki*, having five tastes except salty, is auspicious, balancing the *Doshas*, light, and a digestive aid. It promotes longevity, nourishment, wealth, youthfulness, and cures all diseases, enhancing mental and sensory faculties.” (*Ch.Chi.1/29,30*).

Qualities (Gunas) of *Haritaki* is mentioned by *Aacharay charak* in *Chikitsa Sthan* like *Shiva* means good for general health, eliminates *doshas* from body, stimulate the power of Digestion (*Dipan*), Carminative

(*Pachan*). It nourishes the body and increase life expectancy. It eradicated all diseases and promotes intellect as well as enhances memory.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

MATERIAL:

- *Ayurved Brihatrayi*, *Charak Samhita*, *Sushrut Samhita*, *Ashtang Hridaya*.
- *Ayurved Laghutrayi*, *Madhav Nidan*, *Bhav Prakash*, *Sharangdhar Samhita*.
- All other *Ayurvedic Samhita Granths* and available concerned subjective books, internet, Journals, e.t.c.

METHODS:

Conceptual and Literay Study about *Ritu Haritaki* from all available *Ayurvedic* Literature.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of Haritaki

- 1) **Gana-** Jwaraghna, Praja-sthapana, Kushthaghna, Kasaghna, Arshoghna (*Charak*), *Triphala*, *Amalakyadi*, *Parushkadi* (*Sushruta*)
- 2) **Latin Name-** Terminalia chebula
- 3) **Family**–Combrataceae
- 4) **Kula**–*Haritaki kula*
- 5) **Synonyms-** *Abhaya*, *Pathya*, *Shiva*, *Amrita*, *Pranada*, *Medhya Pachani*
- 6) **Ras**– *Panch ras* (except *Lavan*)
- 7) **Virya** – *Ushna*
- 8) **Vipak** – *Madhur*.
- 9) **Prabhav** – *Tridoshhar*
- 10) **Guna**–*Ruksha* and *Laghu*.
- 11) **Vernacular names:- Hindi**–*Harad* **Marathi** – *Hirada* **Tamil** – *Kudukkai* **English** –*Chebolic myrobalan*.

Review of Ritu -

Ritu means Season which is continuously move in cyclic manner. According to *Ayurveda* there are 6 seasons and 2 kaal. Each season last for two months.

- 1) *Aadan kaal / Uttarayan* (15 January to 14 July) *Shishir ritu*- January to Mid March *Vasant ritu* – (Mid March to Mid May) *Grishma ritu* – (Mid May to Mid July)
- 2) *Visarga Kaal / Dakshinayan* (15 July to 14 January) *Varsha ritu* – (Mid July to Mid September) *Sharad ritu* – (Mid September to Mid November) *Hemant ritu* – (Mid November to Mid January). *Ritu Haritaki* :- To attain the *Rasayana Karma* (vitalizing action, Rejuvenation, anti-ageing effect), *Haritaki* is taken along with different adjuvants in a different season with a dose of 2-4 gm powder. ***Ritu Haritaki*** :- These are like the Rainy season (*Varsha Ritu*) - It is administered with *Saindhava Lavana* (rock salt) In Autumn (*Sharad Ritu*) – with *Sharkara* (Sugar) Early winter (*Hemant Ritu*) *Shunthi* (Dry ginger) Winter

(*Shishira Ritu*) – *Pippali* (long pepper) Spring (*Vasanta Ritu*) – *Madhu* (Honey) Summer (*Grishma Ritu*) – Jaggery It causes the natural detoxification of bodily toxic materials.

Rasapanchak of *Haritaki*

1	Rasa (Taste)	<i>Lavan Rahit</i> (Except saline all tastes are present).
2	Guna (Properties)	<i>Laghu</i> (Light), <i>Ruksha</i> (Dry)
3	Virya (Potency)	<i>Ushana</i> (Hot)
4	Vipaka (Post digestion effect)	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet)
5	Prabhav (Benefits)	Cures <i>Gulma</i> , <i>Kushtha</i> (Skin Disease), <i>Pandu</i> (Anaemia), <i>Udavarta</i> , <i>Prameha</i> (Diabetes Mellitus), <i>Arsha</i> (Piles), <i>Anaha</i> ,

Ritu *Haritaki*:-

Aacharya Bhavmishra explains that if a person wants to attain all the attributes of *Rasayan*, consumed with different *Anupanas* in different *Ritus*-

1. *Grishm ritu* :- *Grishm ritu* (Summer season) is the last season of *Aadanakal*. During this season *dravyas* have *atiruksha Guna* (Excessive dryness) and *katu rasa* (Pungent taste), which considerably reduce the strength of a person. Accumulation of *Vata* and mitigation of *Kapha* takes place in this season. *Guru Snigdha Gunas* (Heaviness and soothingness) and *Madhura vipaka* of *guda* (Jaggery) and *usna virya*, *madhura vipaka* of *Haritaki* helps to prevent the *vata sanchay*. By this, it checks *vata* from moving into further *kriyakalas* (Pathological stages). *Ushna virya* and *laghu, ruksha gunas* of *Haritaki* brings the shaman *rupi kapha* to its equilibrium state.

2. *Vasant Ritu* :- *Vasant ritu* (Spring season) is first *ritu* of *visarga kala*, comes under *sadharan ritu*. During this *ritu*, *ahara* and *aushadha dravyas* have *madhyam rukshata* (Moderately dry) and astringent properties. Hence, strength of person is reduced. The aggravation of *kapha* takes place in this *ritu*. To mitigate the aggravated *kapha*, *Haritaki* is taken with honey. The *laghu, ruksha Guna* (Lightness and Dryness) and *kashaya rasa* (Astringent taste) of *Haritaki* and *madhu* help to mitigate (less) *kapha*, this combination acts as *rasayan*.

3. *Shishir ritu* :- *Shishira ritu* (Winter season) is first season of the *aadana kala* (Strengthening season), during this period the intensity of sun rays will gradually increase, along with this *ruksha Guna* (Dryness) also increases and strength of person gradually decreases due to excess coldness. The accumulation of *kapha* takes place in this season. To mitigate the accumulated *kapha*, *Haritaki* is taken with piper longum, as it is good *shleshmhar* (*Kapha* mitigate), due to its *katu rasa* (Pungent taste), *laghu, tikshna Guna* (Lightness and penetrating properties) and *ushna virya*. Apart from this it also brings the shaman *rupi pitta* to its equilibrium state. By this it maintains the equilibrium status of the *dosha* leading to *agni samyata*, *dhatu samyata* (Equilibrium state of *agni* and body tissue) and ultimately leads to *Rasayana karma*.

4. Hemant ritu :-Hemant ritu (Winter season) is the last season of *visarga kala*, during which the *snigdha Guna* and *madhur rasa* are predominant. In this season the strength of the person is good, the *pita* is in mitigating state and *kapha* in its accumulating stage. It mitigates the *kapha* in its accumulating stage and prevents aggravation, due to *ushna virya* (Hot potency), *katu, tikta, kashaya rasa* (Pungent, bitter, astringent taste), *laghu, ruksha Guna* (Lightness, dryness) of *Haritaki* and *shunti* (Ginger). Along with this it helps to bring back the *pitta* to equilibrium state by its *madhura vipaka*.

5. Sharad ritu :-Sharad ritu is *madhyama snigdha* (Mild soothingness) and *lavana rasa* are predominant. *Agni* (Digestion) becomes *tikshna* (Increased), *Bala* (Strength) of the person is *madhyam* due to predominance of *snigdha guna* (soothingness), *lavana rasa*. *Haritaki* with *sharkara* does purifies provoked *pitta*, due to its *snigdha Guna* (soothingness), *madhura rasa* (Sweet taste) and *vipaka* (Post digestion). When the *pitta dosha* is purified, it restores the strength and digestive capacity of the person. *Madhura rasa, madhura vipaka* and *sheeta virya* of *sharkara* prevent the further vitiation of the *pitta*.

6. Varsha ritu :-The *lavana rasa* is formed in *sharada ritu*, but its utility is best during *varsha ritu* to tackle aggravated *vata*. *Haritaki* with *saindhava lavana* (Rock salt) brings the *sanchita pitta* (Accumulated *pitta*) to equilibrium state due to *laghu Guna* (Lightness) and *madhura vipaka* of both *Haritaki* and *saindhava lavana*. When the *vata* and *pitta* are brought to their equilibrium state, they ultimately enhance the *agni* (Metabolism), which is impaired due to *vata prakopa* (Aggravation of *vata*) and *pitta sanchaya* (Accumulation of *pitta*), *Haritaki* and *saindhava* acts as appetizer, digestant and restore the strength.

Rasapanchaka of Haritaki Anupan

Anupan	Ras	Gun	Virya	Vipak	Karma
<i>Saindhava lavana</i> (Rock Salt)	<i>Lavana</i> (Salty)	<i>Laghu</i> (Lightness) <i>Tikshna</i> (Sharpness) <i>Snigdha</i> (Soothingness)	<i>Sheeta</i> (Cold)	<i>Madhur</i> (Sweet)	<i>Tridosahara,</i> <i>Rochaka, Deepana</i>
<i>Sharkara</i> (Sugar)	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet)	<i>Guru</i> (Heavyness) <i>Snigdha</i> (Soothingness)	<i>Sheeta</i> (Cold)	<i>Madhur</i> (Sweet)	<i>Vatapittashamaka,</i> <i>brumhana</i>
<i>Shunthi</i> (Ginger).	<i>Katu</i> (Pungent)	<i>Laghu</i> (Lightness) <i>Snigdha</i> (Soothingness)	<i>Ushna</i> (Hot)	<i>Madhur</i> (Sweet)	<i>Vata kapha</i> <i>shamaka,</i> <i>Deepana,</i> <i>Vryushya</i>
<i>Pippali</i> (Piper Longum)	<i>Katu</i> (Pungent)	<i>Laghu,Snigdha</i> (Soothingness) <i>Tikshna</i> ,(Sharpness)	<i>Ushna</i> (Hot)	<i>Madhur</i> (Sweet)	<i>Kaphapittashamak</i> <i>a, Deepana,</i> <i>Vryushya</i>

<i>Madhu</i> (Honey)	<i>Madhura,</i> (Sweet) <i>Kashyaya</i> (Astringent)	<i>Laghu</i> (Lightness) <i>Ruksha</i> (Dryness)	<i>Sheeta</i> (Cold)	<i>Madhur</i> (Sweet)	<i>Tridoshashamaka,</i> <i>Deepanna, Balya</i>
<i>Guda</i> (Jaggery)	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet)	<i>Guru</i> (Heavyness), <i>Snigdha</i> (Soothingness)	<i>Sheeta</i> (Cold)	<i>Madhur</i> (Sweet)	<i>Tridoshashamaka,</i> <i>Balya</i>

Importance of Haritaki in modern practice:-

Haritaki, also known as Terminalia chebula, offers a wide range of medicinal benefits:

1. **Antibacterial Action:** Haritaki extracts exhibit antibacterial properties effective against multiple bacterial strains, making it a useful natural antibiotic for various diseases.
2. **Antifungal Action:** Haritaki extracts inhibit the growth of fungi, helping to clean the urinary tract and reduce the risk of infections.
3. **Antiviral Action:** Extracts from Haritaki may offer protection against influenza-related damage and inhibit the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
4. **Gastrointestinal Benefits:** Haritaki significantly benefits the gastrointestinal tract by purifying the digestive system, aiding in the relief of constipation, and supporting detoxification due to its tannin content.
5. **Cardiovascular Benefits:** Haritaki helps purify the blood, strengthens heart muscles, and prevents fat buildup in the arteries, promoting cardiovascular health.
6. **Liver Protection:** Haritaki extract helps prevent hepatotoxicity and protects the liver from damage.
7. **Metabolism Booster:** By cleansing the intestinal tract and enhancing mineral absorption, Haritaki speeds up metabolism and helps reduce body fat.

These diverse health benefits underscore the importance of Haritaki and its utility throughout all seasons.

CONCLUSION

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle in the modern era is challenging due to poor dietary habits and lifestyle choices. *Ayurveda* offers several methods to promote health, including *Ritu Charya* (seasonal regimen), *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Aachar Rasayana* (social health maintenance), and *Sadvritta* (good habits). Among these, *Ritu Haritaki*, the seasonal use of *Haritaki* (Terminalia chebula), is an affordable and effective way to boost health, detoxify the body, and prevent diseases.

Ritu Haritaki serves as a preventive, curative, and rejuvenative (*Rasayana*) medicine. To achieve its vitalizing, rejuvenating, and anti-aging effects, *Haritaki* is taken with different adjuvants in each season, in a dose of 2-4 grams of powder. The seasonal combinations are:

- Rainy season (*Varsha Ritu*): *Haritaki* with *Saindhava Lavana* (rock salt)
- Autumn (*Sharad Ritu*): *Haritaki* with *Sharkara* (sugar)
- Early winter (*Hemanta Ritu*): *Haritaki* with *Shunthi* (dry ginger)

- Winter (*Shishira Ritu*): *Haritaki* with *Pippali* (long pepper)
- Spring (*Vasanta Ritu*): *Haritaki* with *Madhu* (honey)
- Summer (*Grishma Ritu*): *Haritaki* with *jaggery*

This seasonal regimen helps naturally detoxify the body, promoting overall health and well-being.

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