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AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON VASANTA RITUCHARYA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the science of life is a time tested treasure of knowledge that has been handed down to us from our great ancestors. Ayurveda is evaluated on earth for the maintenance of health and various principles of Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Ahara-Vihara, Dharaniya-Adharaniya Vega, Sadvritta, Achara Rasayana are described for achievement of this goal under the head of Swasthavritta. Since the very birth, the two entities Desh and Kala have been mentioned as influencing the human beings at every step. Kala (Time) as a causative factor has been said to be irresistible, most powerful and uncontrollable. Therefore Kala has been considered in critical manner in every concept of Ayurveda. The annual change of seasons leads to disturbance in equilibrium of

"Tridosha" which comes out as various problems. To balance these *Doshas* a person has to follow *Ritucharya* which is the basic and important concept of *Swasthavritta*. In *Ritucharya* the description of *Ritu*, *Ritusandhi*, *Yamadranshtra etc. are found* as per *Ayurvedic* literature. Natural cycle of *Ritus* affects the physical, chemical and biological nature of the environment, which directly affects the physiology of human. It is not possible to have the knowledge of suitable *Ahara-Vihara* for different *Ritus* without having the knowledge of *Ritus* themselves. The characteristics of *Vasanta Ritu* mentioned in *Ayurvedic* literature are studied and tried to standardize the *Vasanta Ritu* as per modern meteorological factors.

KEYWORDS: Ritu, Ritusandhi, Yamadranshtra etc.

INTRODUCTION

"Loka Purusha Samya" is the basic concept explained in Ayurvedic classics. Obviously changes occurring in the Loka affect the Purush and vice versa. This philosophical theory was transformed into perfect luminaries. Since the very birth, the two entities Desh and Kala

have been mentioned as influencing the human beings at every step. The references of these topics are available here and there in the Ayurvedic literature. Out of these two entities Kala has been given more importance because, an individual can transfer himself from one place to another and as such Desha becomes under the control of mankind. But Kala has been told to be irresistible and uncontrollable. Only temporary control to be achieved, but the major components of Kala could not be mastered. That is why Acharya Charaka, while explaining the causative factors of Janapadodhwansa, has stressed very emphatically that, out of the four reasons, the time factor or the Kala is most powerful and uncontrollable. Kala effects the environment by changing the planetary positions, the rotation and revolution of the earth comes out as different seasons. Natural cycle of Ritus affects the physical, chemical and biological nature of the environment, which directly affects the physiology of human. On the basis of this law, Darwin had framed the concept of "Survival of the fittest" which means that "better adopted for immediate, local environment". As Soma, Surya and Anila support the body of this world by functions like Visarga, Adana and Vikshepa respectively, similarly Kapha, Pitta and Vata Doshas support this human body with their respective functions. Equilibrium of *Tridosha* maintains the health of people. The annual change of seasons leads to disturbance in the equilibrium of "Tridosha". To balance these Doshas one has to follow Ritucharya (seasonal regimen). Ritucharya is the basic and very important concept of Swasthavritta. In Ritucharya the description of Ritu and Ahara-Vihara is explained in all Ayurvedic literature. If these regimens are not followed properly many diseases will be manifested. It may be one of the causative factors for the evolution of life-style (noncommunicable) disorders which are increasing rapidly day by day. The prime principle of Ayurvedic system is preventive aspect. It can be achieved by the change in Ahara-Vihara in response to change in climatic conditions. Life style disorders are very common in present era basically from lack of following seasonal regimens. So, the correct knowledge of Ritucharya is utmost necessity of the people. It is the variation in Ahara and Vihara to balance the rhythmic seasonal variation of Dosha, Bala and Agni. Observance of Ritucharya brings about strength, complexion, happiness and longevity without disturbing the equilibrium of *Dhatu* and *Dosha* of the body and the individual does not suffer from diseases. In this reference Fay Hardy also said that "when a human being was in harmony with the laws of nature no problems of physical body was insoluble, irrespective of how strong and disturbing the so called symptoms".

Changes in environment and morphological description of plants are explained in *Ayurvedic* texts during months of various *Ritus* which should be observed and one should follow *Ritucharya* accordingly. Non-observance of *Ritucarya* leads to disequilibrium of *Doshas*, which comes out as various diseases. Also the lifestyle and behavioral pattern of people are changing day by day and we are ignoring the sound of our inner soul by going away from the nature. With these changes the prevalence of diseases are also showing an upward trend in most countries. To overcome these problems, lifestyle modification in the form of the observance of *Ritucharya* is mandatory. In present scenario, the increased prevalence of disorders also increasing the awareness of individuals towards the health along with the family, community and whole nation and has made people more alert for their life. Hence this is the right time to project the concept of *Ritucharya* in front of the general people of the world.

The chapter on *Ritucharya* has also informed the relation between *Ritus* and diseases. With special reference to *Vasanta Ritu*, where *Agni* is observed *Manda*, which may cause *Kaphaja Roga*. The relation of *Vasantakaleena Roga* with non-observance of *Ritucharya* may be understood. The diseases mainly dominated by *Kapha Dosha* are occurring in *Vasanta Ritu* as a natural phenomenon. All the pathogenesis which occurred by the initiation of aggravated *Kapha Dosha* during *Vasanta Ritu* is taken into consideration.

Kaya and *Agni* have been described as synonyms to each other. On one hand, *Vasantakaleena* disorders caused by *Kapha Dosha* predominantly and sometimes in association with *Vata Dosha* in terms of *Sheeta Guna*, on the other hand, both these types are responsible in causing the production of *Ama* which also has been recognized as a reckoning factor in the causation of maximum disorders.

As the time is changing, environmental conditions and *Ahara-Vihara* pattern of people are also changed a lot, so it is need of time to establish the principles of *Ritucharya*, standardization of *Ritu* and *Ahara-Vihara* in *Vasanta Ritu* as per present time.

Many previous works has been done on related *Ritucharaya* but they are just compilation of *Ayurvedic texts*. Considering the time demand, this work is being proposed to fulfill following new aims and objectives. In view of the above field of knowledge, the present research work entitled "AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON *VASANTA RITUCHARYA*" with following aims and objectives;

- 1) To standardize the *Vasanta Ritu* as per modern meteorological factors.
- 2) To prepare an *Ahara-Vihara* module including contemporary diet pattern.

Concept of Vasanta Ritucharya

One year is divided into six parts known as *Ritus*. Two *Masa* (months) commencing with *Magha* constitutes six *Ritus* (seasons) *Shishira*, *Vasanta*, *Grishma*, *Varsha*, *Sharada*, *and Hemanta* respectively. Three seasons commencing with *Shishira* (*Shishira*, *Vasanta and Grishma*) form *Uttarayana* (northern solstice) also known as *Adana Kala* because the sun takes away the strength of people. In *Uttarayana* (northern solstice) both the sun and air become very strong and dry due to nature of path and take away all the cooling qualities of the earth. *Tikta*, *Kashaya* and *Katu Rasas* are more powerful in *Shishira*, *Vasanta* and *Grishma* respectively. This *Adana Kala* is *Agneya* in nature. Due to its drying effects human beings become weak.

The three seasons commencing with *Varsha* (*Varsha*, *Sharada*, *Hemanta*) form *Dakshinayana* (southern solstice) or *Visarga Kala*, the period in which the moon is more powerful and the sun loses its strength. *Amla, Lavana* and *Madhura Rasas* are powerful (respectively) during this period. As a result, human beings also progressively gain strength.^[1]

When seasons are normal (exhibiting their usual characters) both plants and water will be normal (having their normal qualities) and by using them, life activities, span of life, strength, vigor and vitality of men and animals become augmented. Doshas undergo Prakopa (great increase/aggravation) due to improper manifestation of normal qualities of the seasons either in Ati, Heena and Mithyayoga. The last and first seven days of the preceding and following two seasons together can be called Ritu Sandhi. During this period, regimen of the preceding season should be discontinued gradually and regimen of the succeeding seasons should be adopted gradually. Sudden discontinuity or sudden adoption gives rise to diseases. 4

तस्याशिताद्यादाराद्बलं वर्णश्च वर्धते।

यस्यर्तुसात्म्यं विदितं चेष्टाहार व्यपाश्रयं॥[5]

Thus *Ritus* as a whole affect human beings. It is not possible to have the knowledge of suitable diet and regimen for different seasons without having the knowledge of seasons

themselves. Even though seasons are to be taken as separate entities, but taken together constitute a year and same seasons are repeated every year.

A year is divided in two *Ayanas* or six *Ritus*. *Ritus* and corresponding *Masa* (months) mentioned in classics are mainly for central India where all the *Ritus* are observed corresponding to particular period. But observance of these seasons may vary according to areas (coastal, hilly etc.), zones (tropical, subtropical, torrid, temperate, frigid etc.), *Desha* (*Anupa, Jangala, Sadharana*), equator, southern pole, northern pole etc.

Characteristics of Vasanta Ritucharya

Ritucharya means observance of certain rules and regulations according to a particular Ritu. The guidelines explained in Ayurvedic classics regarding Ritucharya can only be followed when a person knows about the details of prevailing Ritu. The author of Charya Chandrodaya has compiled certain references from various Ayurvedic classics to furnish the characteristics for Vasanta Ritu.

Todrananda has also described the various characteristics of *Vasanta Ritu*. By quoting *Atreya, Todrananda* says that during *Vasanta Ritu* the forest resound with *Koojing* sounds of excited *Kokila* bird and are full of the flowers of *Madana* and *Kinshuka*. The environment is full of fragrance of flowers and the earth is gracefully covered with the colored flowers. The black bees roam around the flowers in search of honey. The atmosphere is surrounded with fragrance of the mango etc. The entire earth appears in a jubilant mood. The forests look beautiful with different trees.^[6]

Compilations of features of Vasanta Ritu are as follows

- 1. *Dakshina Anilshiteshu*: i.e. in *Vasanta Ritu* cold wind blows from south direction. It means that after taking meals in the noon, a person should reside in *Upavana* (parks). (*Hemadri*).
- 2. *Disho Vasante Vimla*: i.e. all directions are observed clean and clear in *Vasanta Ritu*. In *Vasanta Ritu* no fog, dust etc. are observed. (*Dalhana*)
- 3. *Parito Jalvahishu:* i.e. increased water levels in natural flowing water sources/rivers are observed due to melting of snow. After meals in the noon, a person should reside in the area around which water sources are flowing. (*Arundutta/Hemadri*).
- 4. *Kokilalikulalapaki Kollahalakula*: i.e. sounds of excited birds especially *Kokila and* bees are heard in *Vasanta Ritu*.

- 5. *Kvanitamtmdhruvt Lalsam*: i.e. in *Vasanta Ritu* black bees are seen wandering on flowers in search of honey.
- 6. *Navpravaltwakpatrapadpa*: i.e. evolution of new leaves, flowers, bark and even self-plantation are seen naturally in *Vasanta Ritu*.
- 7. *Tamrakirnoo Ravi*: i.e. increased heat along with redness in the sun rays is observed in *Vasanta Ritu*.
- 8. Adrishta Naashtasureshu: i.e. patches of clouds in clear sky are seen in Vasanta Ritu. During Vasanta Ritu the sky is covered with clouds. The sun is either less visible or not visible. A person should reside in Upavana (parks) after their meals in the afternoon. (Arundutta).
- 9. *Manikutimkantishu*: i.e. in *Vasanta Ritu*, earth is gracefully covered with colored flowers and green forests look like gems on the earth. (*Arundutta/Hemadri*).
- 10. *Vichitrapushpa Vriksheshu Kaaneshu Sugandhishu*: i.e. environment is full of fragrance in *Vasanta Ritu*. So a person should reside in forests with fragrance emitted from different flowers and trees. (*Arundutta/Hemadri*).
- 11. *Goshthi Kathabi Chitrabhirmadhyahgamyetsukhi:* i.e. people and children are usually found cheering/enjoying outdoor environment. A person should spend his mid-day (noon) time in enjoying gossips and intellectual talks. (*Arundutta/Hemadri*).

Dincharya during Vasanta Ritu

Following Dincharya should be followed during Vasanta Ritu

- Brahmamuhurta Jagran, Ushapana, Shaucha, Achamana, Dantadhavana, Pratisarana, Jivaha Nirlekhana, Mukh Prakshalana, Anjana, Kavala-Gandusha, Dhumrapana, Tambula Sevan, Nasya-Purvahana, Shiroabhyanga, Abhyanga, Udvartana, Pada Prakshalana, Pada Abyanga, Kshour Karma, Vyayama, Snana, Swachha Vastradharana, Ratna Abhushna Dharana, Lepa-Mukhalepa with Darbhmoola, Chandan, Ushira, Shirisha, Tandula should be done. Paduka Dharana, Chhatra Dharana and Danda Dharana. Drugs used in all the above daily procedures during Vasanta Ritu should be Kapha-Vata Dosha Shamaka in nature.
- *Divaswapna* should be avoided in *Vasanta Ritu*.
- Status of Agni- Manda.
- *Rashi- Kumbha* (Aquarius) and *Meena* (Pisces).
- Sex- A gap of three days should be observed between two sex enjoyments. According to *Acharyas Sushruta and Bhava Mishra* a gap of three days should be maintained between

two sex enjoyments. During the *Vasanta Ritu*, it can be enjoyed either in the day or in the night time. [7],[8]

- Rasa Sevan Tikta-Katu-Kashaya Rasas Bahulya Ahara should be preferred.
- *Rituharitaki- Haritaki* should be consumed with *Madhu* during the period of *Vasanta Ritu*.
- Jala and Dadhi Sewana- Dadhi is avoided in Vasanta Ritu. Because the Dadhi of Vasanta Ritu is Vata and Kapha Prakopaka. As Dadhi contains Madhura, Snigdha and Amla Rasa, therefore it is not considered to be the best in Vasanta Ritu. A person should boil water till 1/2 part left according to Jala Kwatha Niyama. In Vasanta Ritu one should drink lukewarm water. For increasing Kayagni a person should take Snehapana mixed with Saindha Lavana and Pippali Churna and one should not stop his urges.

Diseases occuring in Vasanta Ritu

Masurika and Kaphaj Jwara are the diseases explained by Acharyas having their onset and aggravation during Vasanta Ritu. Whereas symptoms like indigestion causing Udaragaurava (heaviness of abdomen), Shirogauravta (heaviness of head) etc. and Kaphaj diseases like Kasa (cough), Shwasa (dysponea), Praseka (salivation), Chhardi (emesis), Gatrasadana (weakness of body) are also said to occured due to Mandagni prevailing in Vasanta Ritu. Acharya Charaka also described some diseases due to vitiation of Kapha Dosha in Vasant Ritu like Trapti (anorexia nervosa), Tandra (drowsiness), Nidraadhikya (excessive sleep), (heaviness Gurugaatrata Staimitya (timidness), of body), Aalasya (laziness), Mukhamaadhurya (sweet taste in mouth), Shleshmodgirana (mucus expectoration), Malaadhikya (excessive excretion of excreta), Mukhashraava (salivation), Balaasaka (loss of strength), Apakti (indigestion), Hridayopalepa (phlegm adhered in vicinity of heart), Kanthopalepa (phlegm adhered to throat), Dhamanipratichaya (hardening of vessels), Galaganda (goiter), Atisthaulya (obesity), Shitagnitaa (suppression of digestive power), Udarda (urticaria), Shvetaavabhaasata (pallor), Shvetamutranetravarchastva (whiteness of urine, eye, and faces). [9]

Dietetics in Vasanta Ritu

During *Vasanta Ritu* accumulated *Kapha Dosha* is liquefied by heat of the sun and disturbs the power of digestion causing many diseases. The foods should be taken like old barley, old wheat, meat of rabbit, deer and drink should be unpolluted *Sidhu* and *Madhvika* type of wine.

The diets having qualities of *Guru*, *Snigdha*, *Amla* and *Madhura Rasa* and *Divaswapna* should be avoided.^[10]

Regimen of Vasanta Ritu

During Vasanta Ritu the accumulated Kapha Dosha get melted by the heat of the sun, disturbs Agni and thus causes many diseases. Therefore, during spring season, evacuative measures like Vamana (emesis) etc. should be advised. Acharya Vagbhata has explained various types of procedures should be done such as Tikshna Vamana, Tikshna Nasya, Tikshna Dhumpana, Tikshna Gandusha, Vyayama, Ubtana etc.^[11] Dravya to be used are Tikshna, Ruksha in Guna, Katu, Kashaya Rasa and Koshna liquid.

Ahara

Food which is *Laghu*, *Ruksha* should be consumed. [12]

Cereals

Yava (old barley), Godhuma (old wheat), different varieties of millets, different varieties of old rice.^[13]

Pulses

Green gram, soup (pulses), lentil.

Non veg

Roasted meat of *Jangala* (desert like land) animals and birds.^[14] Meat of *Sharabha* (wapiti), *Shash* (rabbit), *Ena* (antelope), *Lava* (common quail) and *Kapinjala* (grey partridge).^[15] *Vishikar, Pratuda, Jangala* group of animal's meat as they are light to digest.^[16]

Vegetables

Brinjal, Parvala, Karela etc.

Drinks

Unspoiled beverages such as *Asava* (fermented infusion), *Arishta* (fermented decoction), *Sidhu* (fermented sugarcane juice), *Mridveeka* (prepare from grape juice), *Madhva* (honey water) or water boiled with *Shringvera* or *Sarambu* (extract of trees such as *Asana* (*Vijyasara*), *Chandana* etc. or water mixed with honey or water boiled with *Jalada* (*Musta*).^[17]

Water boiled with Mustaka, Shunthi, Asana, Chandana, Khadira. [18]

Use of Mridveeka juice to avoid diseases. [19]

Koopa (well) and Prasrana water are used.

Drugs

Haritaki with honey is used during Vasanta Ritu. [20]

Vihara

The excretory orifices should be regularly washed with lukewarm water. A person should besmear his body with *Chandana* (santalum album linn) and *Agaru* (aquilaria agalocha roxb.). A person should also enjoy the blossoming beauty of women and forest. In *Vasanta Ritu*, intercourse should be reduced.^[21]

Avoidable regimen

Ahara

Curd should be avoided. Sleeping during day time and sleeping in dewy environment should be avoided. [22] Guru Aahara, Sheetala Snigdha Dravya, Madhura-Amla Rasa should be avoided. [23] Guru, Sheetala, Snigdha Guna and Amla-Madhura Rasa Pradhana diet should be avoided. [24]

Vihara

An individual should not sleep during day time. [25], [26] At the advent of *Vasanta Ritu* one should habitually resort to *Vyayama*, *Udvartan*, *Dhumpana*, *Kavala-Gandusha* and *Anjana*. [27]

Beneficial and non-beneficial procedures in Vasanta Ritu

In Vasanta Ritu Vaman Kriya, Nasya Kriya, honey mixed with Haritaki, Vyayama, Ubatan, Kavala with Kapha Nashak Dravyas, Jangala Mansarasa, different types of species of rice, Sathi rice mixed with Munga, old Yava should be consumed. Lepa mixed with Chandan, Kesar and Agaru should be applied. Consumption of Ruksha, Katu, Ushna and Laghu Guna Pradhana Dravyas are beneficial.

A person should avoid *Madhura*, *Amla Rasa*, *Dadhi*, *Snigdha Ahara*, day-sleep, items heavy to digest and sitting in dew drops.

DISCUSSION

Any research work after discussion about its nature, utility and importance is said to be complete. *Vitarka* (ability of discussing on the basis of *Shastra*) is one of the six features should be present in a good scholar. Discussion improves the knowledge and it should be on the basis of the *Shastra*. It becomes the root of establishment of the concept.

Vasanta Ritu is the season of Kapha aggravation, the power of Agni is reduced and thus cause of many diseases so Katu, Tikta and Kashay Rasa, Laghu, Ruksha Tikshna and Ushna Guna should be included in diet. Guru, Sheeta, Snigdha, Amla-Madhura Rasa Pradhana diet should be avoided. To fulfill these requirements old grains should be taken. During Vasanta Ritu, evacuative measures like Vamana (emesis) etc. should be done. Acharya Vagbhata has mentioned various types of procedures to be performed such as Tikshna Vamana, Tikshna Nasya, Tikshna Dhumpana, Tikshna Gandusha, Vyayama, Ubtana etc.

Meteorological environment

The criteria for assessment of particular months corresponding to *Vasanta Ritu* during months of February, March, April & May 2014,2015,2016 (*i.e Falgun and Chaitra*) in Jaipur were selected according to *Sushrut Samhita* (*Vasanta Ritu*; corresponding months-*Falgun* and *Chaitra*), from 2nd March 2014 to 29th April 2014, from 19th February 2015 to 18th April 2015 and 9th March 2016 to 6th May 2016. These months were observed.

Maximum and minimum temperature during period of *Vasanta Ritu*. Data is presented as follows:

Month and year	Maximum temperature	Minimum temperature			End of month temperature(0 C)	
	(⁰ C)	(⁰ C)	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.
Falgun-Chaitra (2014)	43	10.3	24	11.6	43	24.5
Falgun-Chaitra (2015)	41.2	5.2	32.7	16.6	41.2	24.1
Falgun-Chaitra (2016)	43.3	15	32	17	34.9	21.5

Temperature recorded: The range for maximum temperature recorded in *Vasanta Ritu* (2014) lies in 24^oC to 43^oC and minimum temperature lies between 10.4^oC to 27.3^oC.

Range for maximum and minimum temperature during period of *Vasanta Ritu2014*, 2015, 2016 is 43-10.3°C, 41.2-5.2°C and 43.3-15°C respectively.

Range for maximum and minimum temperature during early of *Vasanta Ritu2014*, 2015, 2016 is 24-11.6°C, 32.7-16.6°C and 32-17°C respectively.

Range for maximum and minimum temperature during end of *Vasanta Ritu2014*, 2015, 2016 is 43-24.5°C, 41.2-24.1°C and 34.9-21.5°C respectively.

Gradually the temperature rises in *Vasanta Ritu* as days approaches *Grishma Ritu*.

Maximum and minimum relative humidity during period of *Vasanta Ritu*. Data is presented as follows:

	Maximum	Minimum	Early of month	End of month	
Month and year	relative	relative	relative	relative	
	humidity (%)	humidity (%)	humidity (%)	humidity (%)	
Falgun-Chaitra(2014)	96	7	93	27	
Falgun-Chaitra(2015)	100	11	67	35	
Falgun-Chaitra(2016)	72	6	54	52	

Humidity

As shown in table humidity decreases as it approaches *Grishma Ritu*. A wide variation was observed in humidity in *Vasanta Ritu*(*Falgun-Chaitra*). Humidity higher in *Shishir Ritu* than *Vasanta Ritu*.

Wind direction

Wind blows from almost all directions. But in February, March and April months wind of south direction blows more than comparatively other months.

Pressure

There is no significant role of pressure in determination of season. There is more pressure in February month than May month.

Speed

Average speed of wind is slightly more in evening than morning in all March, April and May. Average speed of wind in decreasing order: *Grishma Ritu>Vasanta Ritu>Shishir Ritu*.

Rainfall

There is no significant role of rainfall in *Vasanta Ritu* determination.

CONCLUSION

Ritucharya is important principles of *Swasthavritta* and thus play an important role in health maintenance.

Meteorological factors like-temperature, humidity, pressure, direction of wind, speed of wind and rainfall are taken in standardization of *Vasanta Ritu*. There are no significant role of pressure and rainfall while temperature, humidity, direction of wind, speed of wind is relevant factors in standardization of *Vasanta Ritu*.

An Ahara-Vihara module including contemporary diet pattern has been prepared.

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