

**RITUCHARYA: ANCIENT REGIME FOR PREVENTION OF DISEASES****\*<sup>1</sup>Dr. Parul Soni, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Sunayana Sharma and <sup>3</sup>Dr. Archana**<sup>1</sup>PG Scholar Dept. of Swasthivritta & Yoga, Sriganganagar Collage of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital Tantia University Rajasthan.<sup>2</sup>Professor & H.O.D in Department of Swasthivritta & Yoga Sriganganagar Collage of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Tantia University Rajasthan.<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor in Department of Swasthivritta & Yoga Sriganganagar Collage of Ayurvedic Science & Hospital, Tantia University Rajasthan.**\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Parul Soni**

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Article Received on 25/02/2023

Article Revised on 12/03/2023

Article Accepted on 05/04/2023

**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda is ancient science of life, it focuses on prevention of diseases instead of treatment of any disease. For prevention perspective it has various rules and regimens regarding *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (regimens), *Achara* (conduct) and *Vichara* (thoughts) which are described in various *samhitas*. "*Ritucharya*", is one among such regimens which plays an important role in acclimatizing the seasonal enforcement easily without altering body homeostasis. *Ritu* (season), has variation classification of *Doshas* in the environment, it has different effects on the body, hence disturb body's equilibrium (*Prakruthi-Purusha Samyata Siddantha*), this disequilibrium occurs due to failure in various appropriate guidelines and leads to imbalance of *Doshas* in the body and they lead to disease manifestation. Hence there arises a need to understand and implement these guidelines in accordance with the changes in *Ritu*.

**KEYWORDS:** Nature, Diseases, Ritucharya.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda system has its basic principle i.e. "*Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam*".<sup>[1]</sup> i.e. Preventive aspect. In this system importance is given to prevention rather than cure. To maintain health and to prevent diseases various rules and regimens have been told.<sup>[2]</sup> One among such regimen is *Ritucharya*. *Ritucharya* is made from two words, word *Ritu* is derived from the Sanskrit root *Ri* which means „to go“, time factor and season.<sup>[3]</sup> *Ritu* means time, season and *Charya* means regimen. Ayurveda divides year into two regimes according to movement of sun. One is *Uttarayana* (northern solstice) and *Dakshinayana* (southern solstice). Each is formed of three *Ritus* (seasons), namely, *Shishira* (winter), *Vasanta* (spring), and *Grishma* (summer) in *Uttarayan*; *Varsha* (monsoon), *Sharad* (autumn) and *Hemanta* (late autumn) in *Dakshinayana*.

With the changing in season, There are very evident changes in the environment we live few of them are such as flowering in spring and leaf-shedding in autumn in the plants, hibernation of many animals with the coming of winter, and so on. Human being is live in the same ecology, so human body is greatly influenced by external environment. Human being has important relation with

environment it's exogenous and endogenous rhythm have specific frequency and has special relationship with each other; they interact and synchronize each other. If human body is unable to adopt itself to the changes in specific according to specific of seasons, it may lead to *Dosha Vaishamya*, which in turn may render the body highly susceptible to one or other kinds of disorders.

Survival of any species depends upon adaptations according to the changes so the knowledge of *Ritucharya* (regimen for various seasons) is thus important. People unknowingly and sometimes being ignorant to the suitable types of food stuffs, dressing, and others regimen to be followed in particular season, this leads to derangement of balance of body and it causes various diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and so on an inappropriate relationship of people with their environment causes Lifestyle diseases. These lifestyle diseases are insidious, delayed development, and very difficult in cure for our country the situation is quite alarming due to rapid changing of disease profile and changing climate. According to World Health Organization India is one of the nations which has most of the lifestyle disorders in the near future and nowadays, lifestyle disorders becoming more common, but they are also affecting highly in number to younger population.

lifestyle disorders Nowadays, not only are becoming more common, but also they are also shifting towards more younger population.

Hence, the population at risk shifts from 40+ to maybe 30+ or even younger. According to a study jointly conducted by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and Max Hospital shows that the in the younger population incidence of hypertension, obesity, and heart disease is increasing at an alarming rate. a sedentary lifestyle combined with an increase in the consumption of fatty food And alcohol is to blame cases of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and so on.

Almost in every *Samhitas* of Ayurveda, Ritucharya is prominently discussed. Prevention from disease to a maintain healthy body is first and foremost aim of the holistic science of Ayurveda. Charaka Samhita In *Tasyashitya* chapter says “*Tasya Shitadiya Ahaarbalam Varnascha Vardhate. Tasyartusatmayam Vaditam Chestaharvyapasrayam,*” it means that „the complexion & strength depends on the suitable diet and regimen for every season and practicing accordingly. Important theme of this chapter is to spread awareness about the methods to live in accordance with the environment. In this article, the *Ritucharyas* mentioned in the *Ayurveda* have been discussed and emphasis has been given on the likely impact of *Ritucharya* on lifestyle disorders.

#### Classification of season

In *Ayurveda* the year is divided into two periods *Ayana* (solstice) it is according to the direction of movement of sun i.e. *Uttarayana* (northern solstice) and *Dakshinayana* (southern solstice).

Each has 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. In a year there are total six seasons these are *Shishira* (winter), *Vasanta* (spring), and *Grishma* (summer) in *Uttarayan* and *Varsha* (monsoon), *Sharata* (autumn), and *Hemanta* (late autumn) in *Dakshinayana*. the above seasonal changes are observed predominantly in Indian subcontinent.

#### Uttarayana and its effect

Uttarayanaya denotes the moment of sun in Northern hemisphere. During this periods sun shines directly over the head and it is dominant and shines stronger. It hamper the strength of people and affects the cooling quality of earth. It affects whole body and causes increase in *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*.

Modern science, says it is same as compared to gradual movement of earth around the sun in which the rays of the sun falls at an angle of 30 degree North Pole on June 21st every year, called as summer solstice. During

the northward journey of the Sun from Tropic of Capricorn to Tropic of Cancer there are some seasonal changes happen in Indian subcontinent from *Shishira* (winter) to *Vasanta* (spring) and to *Grishma* (summer). The period is from mid-January to mid-July, when warmth and dryness in weather increases. It has effects on both human health and environment

#### Dakshinayana and its effect

*Dakshinayana* indicates the movement of sun from Northern hemisphere to southern hemisphere. During this season wind become cool and moon becomes more powerful than sun. It has cooling effects on Indian subcontinent. It increases Unctuousness sets in the atmosphere and *Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (salty), and *Madhura* (sweet) *Rasa* become predominant so the human strength enhances. It is also called *Visarga Kala*.

Modern science, explain this gradual movement of the earth rays of the sun fall over 30 degree meridian of the South Pole on December 21st every year, is called as winter solstice. The southward movement of the Sun occurs from Tropic of Cancer to Tropic of Capricorn. the seasonal changes occur During *Dakshinayana*, 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 generally around 14<sup>th</sup> January where a hindu festival Makar sakranti is celebrated.

#### State of strength

In the beginning of *Visarga Kala* and ending of *Adana kala*, that is, during *Varsha* and *Grishma*, weakness occurs. During *Sharata* and *Vasanta*, strength remains in moderate grade and in the end of *Visarga Kala* and in the beginning of *Adana Kala*, that is, during *Hemanta* and *Shishira*, maximum strength is seen.

#### Regimen of different seasons

##### Shishira (winter)

Mid-January to mid-March (approximately) is considered as *Shishira Ritu* (winter). Environment is cold during this time. The predominant *Rasa* and *Mahabhuta* are *Tikta* (bitter) and *Akasha*, respectively. The strength of the person becomes less, increase is the *Kaptha* occurs and *Agni* (catabolism) remains in a higher state.

##### Diet regimen

Sour fruits as amla and the predominant taste should be 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) are to be avoided. *Laghu* (light) and *Shita* (cold) foods are advised to be prohibited.

##### Lifestyle

Person should avoid Vata expressive lifestyle like Too

much walking, late night sleep or Cold wind exposure, it can harm human health in negative.

Bathing with lukewarm water, body massage, sunlight exposure, wearing warm clothes are few things which one should follow.

### Spring (Vasanta)

This is mid season where flowers start blooming and trees get new and fresh leaves. Weather becomes silent and cold. Predominant Rasa and Mahabhuta during this season are *Kashaya* (astringent), and *Prithvi* and *Vayu*, respectively. Strength of person becomes partial. Kapha dosha increases and Agni becomes medium range.

### Diet

Easily digestible food habits should be adopted. One should include honey in their diet. A non-vegetarian person can eat meat of Shasha i.e. Rabbit, which is easily digestible.

Food which has Sheeta (Cold), Snigdha (Vicious), Amla (Sour), Madhura (Sweet), should not be preferred.

### Lifestyle

People should use warm water for bathing purpose, may do exercise during *Vasant Ritu*.

*Udvartana* (massage) with powder of *Chandana* (*Santalum album*), *Kesara* (*Crocus sativus*), *Agaru*, and others, *Kavala* (gargle), *Dhooma* (smoking), *Anjana* (collyrium), and evacuative measures, such as *Vamana* and *Nasya* are advised.

### Grishma (summer)

Summer is considered from Mid May to July. During this environment is too hot and dry air is prevalent. The predominant Rasa is *Katu* (pungent) and *Mahabhuta* are *Agni* and *Vayu*. Person's strength becomes weak and deposition of *Vata Dosh*a occurs, but the *Kapha Dosh*a is pacified during this season. *Agni* remains in mild state.

### Diet regimen

One should take food which are easier to digest—and also include *Madhura* (sweet), *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Sheeta* (cold), and *Drava* (liquid) *Guna*, such as rice, lentil, etc. Should drink 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 will be a better diet.

*Lavana* and food with *Katu* (pungent) and *Amla* (sour) taste and *Ushna* (warm) foods are to be avoided.

### Lifestyle

One should stay at cold places and apply aromas around his body. Adorning with flowers and sleeping in afternoon is also helpful. Exercise and excessive hardwork should be avoided and too much sexual activities and alcohol are

prohibited.

### Varsha (Monsoon Season)

From Month July to September is considered as *varsha ritu*. The predominant *Rasa* and *Mahabhuta* during this season are *Amla* (sour), and *Prithvi* and *Agni*, respectively. A person's strength becomes weak and vitiation of *Vata Dosh*a and deposition of *Pitta Dosh*a, *Agni* also gets vitiated.

### Diet regimen

Sour fruits like *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.

### Lifestyle

Body massage after bath is advised and medicated *basti* which is enema is advised as an evacuative measure to evacuate doshas.

Rain bath, day sleep, exercise and sexual indulgence should be avoided and prohibited.

### Sharat (autumn)

From month of September to November is considered as *sharat ritu*, during this time sun becomes bright and sky is clear in night. The predominant *Rasa* is *Lavana* (salty) and predominant *Mahabhutas* are *Apa* and *Agni*. The strength remains medium, pacification of vitiated *Vata Dosh*a and vitiation of *Pitta Dosh*a occur, and *Agni* increases.

### Diet regimen

Cold properties Foods like *Madhura* (sweet) and *Tikta* (bitter) taste, and of *Laghu* (light to digest) are advised. *Pitta* vitiated food are advised. Wheat, sugar candy, honey, green gram, flesh of animals of dry land (*Jangala Mamsa*), *Patola* (*Trichosanthes dioica*) to be included in the diet. Few food items as fat, oils, meat of aquatic animals, curds, etc., are also having properties hot, bitter etc. to be not included in the diet during this season.

### Lifestyle

One should eat when he is hungry and do not overeat. It is advised to wear garlands, and to apply *Chandana* (*Santalum album*) paste 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* (purgings), *Rakta-Mokshana* (blood letting), etc. should be done during this season. Day-sleep, excessive eating, excessive exposure to sunlight, etc., are to be avoided.

### Hemanta (late autumn)

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 *Prithvi*

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., \ to be used. Various meats, fats, milk and milk products, sugarcane products, *Shidhu* (fermented preparations), *Tila* (sesame), and so on, 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

For bath one should use warm water, *Atapa-sevana* (sunbath), application of *Agaru* 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.

#### DISCUSSION

These are the ways with help of this the ancient sages set up the regimen for various seasons on analytical reasoning to obtain *Swastha* (health) and prevent the diseases. *Ritucharya* also include The environmental factors, the nature of the land, water, and various atmospheric phenomena which include temperature, humidity, wind, rain, clouds, and atmospheric pressure. All of the environment factors undergo a continuous change with *ritu*, no two moments are exactly alike in a given place. Thus with the temperature of the rising Sun and temperature of sunset might be same but with different effects on body. The maximum and minimum temperature of sun and earth fluctuates on daily basis but it is highest in summer and lowest in winter. Similarly, all these factors show diurnal as well as seasonal variations and these variations for a particular time are known as season. in today's globalized world due to increase in pollution and man made activities the mean temperature of earth is increasing and it is causing global warming and affecting seasons and their timing also. With global warming and variation in the advent of season, it can surely be a query, of the importance of *Ritucharya* in the present scenario. It is to be understood that the background on which *Ritucharya* is based, that is, *Dosha* and *Panchamahabhuta* theory.

Today's *Ritus* do not follow uniformity, the level of *Dosha* and *Panchamahabhuta* can be analyzed accordingly, to decide the regimen, to which this knowledge of *Ayurveda* holds as a pathfinder. These principles surely demand a closer observation for clarity.

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