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PATHYA - APATHYA IN RITUCHARYA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FESTIVALS

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is one of the ancient system of medicine, comprising many non-pharmacological methods such as Dinacharya (daily regimen), Ratricharya (night regimen), Ritucharya (seasonal regimen), Sadvritta (code of right conducts), Achara Rasayana (behavioural medicine) and Pathya-Apathya (regimen of dietetics) in order to prevent the diseases and promote the health. Among the above mentioned non-pharmacological methods, Ritucharya is one of the important regimens, it plays a significant role in preventing lifestyle and psychosomatic disorders "Yat Pindae, Tat Bramhandae", as special changes occur in both environment and humans in Ritus (season). Certain Ahara (food) and Vihara (activities) have been specifically given to each Ritu, to maintain health, which is known as Ritucharya. As we know, Indian festivals are celebrated based on the Ritu (season) and specific diets and regimens are followed during the celebration based on environmental and biological changes takes place according to season as to bring back homeostasis in Dosha (body humour), Dhatus (body tissues), etc.. To maintain health, this article gives an insight regarding possible scientific reasons in following diet and other regimens during festivals based on climatic changes in different Ritu.

Keywords: Ahara, Vihara, Pathya-Apathya, Ritu, Ritucharya, Festivals.

INTRODUCTION

Ahara (Food) is one of the *Trayopasthamba* (Three supportive pillars of the body). As it is responsible for both the formation of body and manifestation of the disease. Acharyas have also emphasized the concept of *Pathya-Apathya* (Dietetics), where *Ahara & Vihara* which are beneficial and nutritional to the body and also give the happiness to the mind is known as *Pathya* and opposite to that is known as *Apathya*. Festival: In Latin *Festa* means religious holiday.

It came into English via French, as the adjective "Festival" (relating to the religious feast). A day or period of celebration, typically for religious reasons. [Oxford Dictionary] As we all know, India is the land of festivals & a festival celebration is an inseparable event from the lifestyle of Indians. And, Indian culture has great diversities in traditions and customs, which could be due to geographical distribution. Religious festivals

are commonly celebrated on recurring cycles in a calendar year or lunar calendar. According to the Hindu calendar, the 60-year cycle comes by 5 revolutions of Jupiter and 2 revolutions of Saturn. The relative position of Jupiter and Saturn in one particular year will be repeated after 60 years. The 60-year cycle was essentially conceived for predicting the climate of a particular year, as the relative position of the two major planets, Jupiter and Saturn, is recognized for its impact on climate. [3] In both ancient and English calendar, one year is divided into 12 months. According to *Ayurveda*, *Samvatsara* (one year) is divided into 2 *Ayanas* (*Uttarayana*, *Dakshinayana*) & 6 *Ritus*.

Objectives:

- 1. To review the *Ritucharya* as per classics
- 2. To review the festivals and their relevance according to *Ritu*

Materials and methods: A systematic review of *Ritucharya* has been done from Ayurvedic classics and other religious books along with festival and their significance in celebrating with scientific background have been dealt

Shishira Ritu (Extreme Winter) ^{9, 10, 11}: Characteristics: The environment remains cold, along with the cold wind. *Rasa –Tikta* (bitter); *Bala – Shrestha Bala* (maximum strength); *Dosha- Kapha Caya* (an increase of *Kapha*) and *Agni- Tikshna Agni* (digestive fire will be high).

Ahara (food):

Pathya (Indication): Snigdha (unctuous),

Madhura (sweet), Amla (sour), Lavana (salt), newly harvested rice and other grains. Sugarcane and its products, milk, and milk products, Audaka Mamsa (meat of aquatic animals), Bileshya Mamsa (meat of animals' lives in the burrow), Prasaha Mamsa (meat of animals which eats by tear and eat) are to be included in the diet. Apathya (contraindication): Rasa- Katu (pungent), Tikta (Bitter), Kashaya (astringent); Guna-Laghu (light) and Sheeta (cold).

Vihara (activities):

Pathya (indication): Abhyanga (oil massage), Vimardana (massage), Niyuddha (wrestling), exposure to sunlight, warm clothes.

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

Festivals in Shishira Ritu

Makara Sankranti: It is a Harvest festival, farming community thanks God and Mother Nature for the bountiful harvest. It is celebrated in the month of *Magha* (January). Some states that celebrate are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamilnadu, Punjab, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Bihar, Gujarat, etc.

Table 1: Ahara and Vihara of Makara Sankranti

Ahara (Food)	Vihara (Activities)
Sarkarai Pongal,	Tila Abhyanga (Massage with
Ikshu (sugarcane),	sesame oil) and Ushna Jala
Ellu Bella (sesame	Snana (hot Water bath), outdoor
seeds and jaggery)	Activities (Jallikattu, Kaikuttu
	Sandai, Uriadi)

Maha Shivaratri: It is celebrated with devotion and religious fervour on the 14th night of the new moon in the month of *Phalguna*. Many believe that the *Shivaratri* Festival marks the wedding day of Lord Shiva and Parvati. The auspicious night that Lord Shiva performed the '*Tandava*', the dance of the primal creation, preservation, and destruction.

Rituals: Applying *Bhasma* (medicinal ash), Upavasa (Fasting), Jaagarana (staying awake whole Puja (offering Bilva (Aegle marmelos) leaves). Applying of Bhasma- absorb excess Kledata (moisture) from the body. Observance of Mahashivratri Vrata with discipline helps a devotee to control the two great natural forces that afflict a man, Rajas (passion) and Tamo Gunas (darkness). An entire day in the Feet of Lord and worships with sincerity, emotion is controlled and evils like lust, anger, and jealousy, born of Rajas (passion) are ignored and subdued. Besides, when a devotee observes Jaagrana (staying awake whole night) he manages to conquer the evils of Tamo guna (darkness) too.

Vasanta Ritu (spring) ^{12, 13, 14} Characteristics: Season of flowering and origin of new leaves. Rasa-Kashaya (astringent); Bala-Madhyamabala (moderate

level of strength); *Dosha- Kapha Prakopa* (aggravation of *Kapha*) and *Agni- Madhyama* (moderate digestive fire).

Ahara (food):

Pathya (indication): One should take Ruksha (dry), Katu (pungent), Tikta (Bitter), Kashaya (astringent), Ushna (hot) and Laghu (light) foods. Yava (barley), Godhuma (wheat), Shastika Shali (rice that is grown in 60 days), Mudga (green gram), Madhu (honey) and Shulya Mamsa (fried meat) can be taken. Meats like that of Shasha (rabbit), which are easy to digest can be taken.

Apathya (contraindication):

Sheeta (cold), Snigdha (vis-

cous), *Guru* (heavy), *Amla* (sour), *Madhura* (sweet) are not preferred as they are hard to digest.

Vihara (activities):

Pathya (indication): One should use warm water for bathing purposes. Vyayama (exercise), Dhumapana (medicated smoking), Gandusha (holding the medicated liquid in mouth), Anjana (collyrium), Candana (sandalwood) and Agaru Lepa (paste of Aquilaria malaccensis), Kavala (gargle), Vamana (emesis) and Nasya (intranasal drug administration)

Apathya (contraindication): *Divaswapna* (sleep during daytime).

Festivals in Vasantha Ritu

Ugadi: (Telugu & Kannada New Year): It is celebrated in Shukla Paksha of Chaitra Masa. They are celebrated with different names as follows: Ugadi- Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Yugadi - Karnataka. Maharashtra – Gudi Padwa. One peculiarity of the festival is that people consume Neem leaves and Jaggery. In Andhra Pradesh, people consume Ugadi Pachadhi- neem flowers, un-ripened mango, tamarind, jaggery, salt, chilli powder/ pepper powder. It purifies the blood and increases one's immunity to fight diseases.

Festival dishes: *Pulihora, Obbattu/ Poli,* Sweet Pongal, Dhal, Sambhar, *Rasam, Palya, Moongdhal Payasam*

Tamil Puthandu (**Tamil New Year**): Set with the lunisolar Hindu calendar's solar cycle, it is the first day of the Tamil year. Many communities across India celebrate their traditional new year on the same day. *Vishu*

in Kerala, Bihu in Assam, *Vaishakhi* in Punjab, *Pohela Boishakh* in West Bengal. Tripura, Odisha, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, etc., to commemorate their New Year festivities on the same day.

Festival dish: *Shad Rasa Bhojana*, (full course meals with all 6 taste, which consists of many varieties of side dishes, sweets, rice, dhal, sambar, *rasam*, curd, *Takra* (buttermilk), *Payasam*, etc)

Greeshma Ritu (summer) ^{15, 16, 17}: Characteristics: The environment is prevalent with intense heat. The river-bodies dried and the plants appear lifeless. Rasa-Katu (pungent); Bala- Avarabala (Strength will be less); Dosha- Vata Sanchaya (an increase of Vata Dosha) and Kapha Shamana (Kapha comes back to normalcy); Agni (digestive fire) - Hina (less)

Ahara (food):

Pathya (indication): Madhura (sweet), Laghu (light), Snigdha (unctuous), Sheeta (cold), and Drava (liquid), rice with milk and ghee. Drinking plenty of water and other liquids, such as fruit juices, Rasa (meat soups), mango juice, churned curd with pepper, is to be practiced. Before going to taking buffalo's milk with sugar. Apathya (contraindication): Lavana (salt), Katu (pungent), Amla (sour), Ushna (hot) foods are to be avoided. Vihara (activities):

Pathya (indication): Divaswapna (daytime sleep), staying in cool places, applying sandalwood and other aromatic pastes over the body, adorning with flowers, wearing light dresses (cotton dresses). During night one can enjoy the cooling moon rays with a breeze.

Apathya (contraindication): Excessive exercise or hard work is to be avoided, and alcoholic preparations are to be prohibited. If necessary, may be taken in small quantity or mixing it with plenty of water.

Festivals in Greeshma Ritu

Nirjala Ekadashi: It is celebrated on the 11th day of brighter half of the lunar month of *Jyestha*. It is also called as *Bhimaseni Ekadashi*/ *Pandava Ekadashi*. Fasting is ended with *Tulasi Teerta* (*Tulasi* and camphor flavoured water).

Reason: As we all know on full moon day and new moon day, the effect of the moon on earth is more, hence, to avoid the negative effects of these days on

our *Deha*, the *Ekadashi* concept is followed to cleanse both *Deha* and *Manas*. By completely devoting our self to God.

Dakshinayana 18, 19:

Characteristics: Movement of the sun in the southern direction. The wind is not very dry; the moon is more powerful than the sun. The earth becomes cool due to clouds, rain, and cold winds. *Rasa- Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (salt), and *Madhura* (sweet). The strength of a 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 degrees meridian of the South Pole perpendicularly on December 21st every year, is called as the winter solstice. The southward movement of the Sun occurs from Tropic of Cancer to Tropic of Capricorn. [20]

Varsha Ritu (rainy season) ^{21, 22, 23}: Characteristics: During this season the sky is covered by clouds. The ponds, rivers, etc., are filled with water. *Rasa - Amla* (sour); *Bala- Avarabala* (strength will be less); *Dosha- Vata Prakopa* (aggravation of *Vata Dosha*), *Pitta Caya* (increase of *Pitta Dosha*); *Agni* (digestive fire) - *Hina* (less)

Ahara (food):

Pathya (indication): Madhura (sweet), Amla (sour), Lavana Rasa (salt), Sneha (unctuous) - to counteract the Vata Prakopa (aggravated Vata Dosha). Purana Yava (old barley), Godhuma (wheat), Shali (rice), Yusha (gruel preparation made of pulses like green gram, channa dhal), Arishta with Madhu, medicated water or boiled water.

Apathya (contraindication): Intake of river water, excessive intake of liquid are to be avoided.

Vihara (activities):

Pathya (indication): Use of boiled water for the bath. *Basti* (medicated enema) is prescribed as an evaluative measure to expel vitiated *Doshas*.

Apathya (contraindication): Divaswapna (daytime sleep), Ativyayama (over-excursion), exposures to the wind, getting wet in rain, staying at the riverbank, are to be prohibited.

Festivals in Varsha Ritu

Varalakshmi Vratam: The Varalakshmi Vratam (fasting) is observed on the last Friday during Shravana Shukla Paksha. Varalakshmi Vratam is a popular fasting and Puja day in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra. Performed mostly by married women for the well-being of the husband and the other family members. As per the legend, this is a puja that was pronounced by Lord Parameswara to be performed by his consort Goddess Parvati to seek prosperity and happiness for the family.

Prasada during Varamahalakshmi Vratam: Sarkara Pongal, Atukula Laddu, Pulihora, Lemon Rice, Chakli Krishna Janmashtami: Janmashtami is the birthday of Lord Krishna which is celebrated with great enthusiasm all over the country. The historical background of the birth of Lord Krishna depicts the significance of this Hindu festival. Lord Krishna was born at midnight on the eighth day of Krishna Paksha of Hindu lunar month, Bhadrapada. Dahi handi is celebrated to mimic the stealing of butter by Lord Krishna. An earthen pot containing butter, ghee (milk fat), dry fruits and milk is hung at a height with the help of a rope. Later Dahikala (ingredients in the pot) is distributed among everyone. Dahi handi celebration encourages working in a team, thus signifies the importance of teamwork. As an offering to the Lord, people put together a list of 56 food items, referred to as the 'Chappan Bhog'. The word 'Chappan' translated to 56, and 'Bhog' means food. As legend had it, it consists of Lord Krishna's favourite dishes and usually includes cereal, fruits, dry fruits, sweets, drinks, salty foods and pickles in quantities of seven-under each category. There are variations wherein some people offer 16 kinds of salty foods, 20 kinds of sweets and 20 kinds of dry fruits. Some of the common items found in the Chappan Bhog are Kheer, Rasgulla, Jalebi, Chutney, Murabba, Saag, Dahi, Rice, Dal, Chila, Papad, Moong Dal Halwa, Pakoda, Khichadi, Brinjal Sabji, Poori, Badam Milk, Cashews, Almonds, Pistachios, and Elachi among others.

Gowri Puja: Celebrated predominantly in South India on the day of *Bhadrapada Shukla Tritiya* i.e. on the third day of *Bhadrapada* Month. *Swarna Gowri*

Vrata is observed as Hartalika Teej in Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra. It is believed that Goddess Gowri comes to her parents' house just like any other married daughter would come to her parents' house and the next day, her son Lord Ganesha, comes to take her back to Kailasa. After the puja rituals, women exchange decorated bamboo plates (mora) filled with nine types of grain, along with Jaggery, bangles, turmeric, Kumkum, Betel leaves, fruits and nuts, and Dakshina. Women perform the puja at their maternal homes. Delicious food items such as Chitranna, Payasam, Kayi Holige, Tovae, Rasam, Kayi Kadabu, Palya (Vegetable dish), Kosambari (salad) and bhaji are prepared and relished together. On the next day, Gowri is given a warm send-off by offering Udi (offering the sacred items such as Turmeric, Flowers, Kumkum, Rice, Betel nuts and dry Coconut). The clay idol is immersed in the water.

Ganesh Chaturthi: It is celebrated to commemorate the birth of Lord Ganesha who's considered to be the god of prosperity and wisdom. The association between Lord Ganesha and the Chaturthi is since he was born on the 4th day of the fortnight of the Hindu lunar month of Bhadrapada. Hence, his birth anniversary celebration is known as Ganesh Chaturthi.

Offerings: Modaka (Sweet) Durva (Cynodon dactylon) Kapitta (Elephantum correa) and Jambu Phala (Syzygium samarangense).

Sharad Ritu (autumn): ^{24, 25, 26} Characteristics: During this time the Sun becomes bright, the sky remains clear and sometimes with white clouds, and the earth is covered with wet mud. Rasa - Lavana (salty); Bala-Madhyamabala (moderate level of energy) Dosha- Vata Prasamana (normalcy of Vata Dosha) and Pitta Prakopa (Pitta aggravation) and Agni (digestive fire) - Tikshna (high)

Ahara (food):

Pathya (indication): Madhura (sweet), Tikta (bitter), Laghu (light), Shali (rice), Godhuma (wheat), Mudga (green gram), Madhu (honey), Sarkara (sugar) Foods having the properties to pacify vitiated Pitta are advised.

Apathya (contraindication): · Vasa, Taila (oil), Audaka Mamsa (meat), Dadhi (curd).

Vihara (activities):

Pathya (indication): Hamshodaka (the water that has been exposed to sun, moon, wind and Agasthya Nakshatra in Sharad Ritu); habit of eating food, only when there is a feeling of hunger is recommended. It is advised to wear garlands and to apply the paste of Chandana (sandalwood) on the body. It is said that moon rays in the first 3 hours of the night are conducive for health. Virechana (purgation), Rakta-Mokshana (bloodletting therapy), should be done during this season.

Apathya (contraindication): *Divaswapna* (daytime sleep), *Atibhojana* (excessive intake of food), *Atapa Sevana* are to be avoided.

Festivals in Sharad Ritu

Pitru Paksha: Pitru Paksha (literally "fortnight of the ancestors") is a 16-lunar day period in the Hindu calendar when Hindus pay homage to their ancestor (Pitrs), especially through food offerings. Considered by Hindus to be inauspicious, given the death rite performed during the ceremony, known as Shraddha or Tarpana. It begins on the Pratipada (first day of the fortnight) ending with the no moon day known as Pitru Amavasya, Peddala Amavasya, Mahalaya Amavasya. The person wears a ring of Darbha grass. Then the ancestors are invoked to reside in the ring. The Shraddha is usually performed bare-chested, as the position of the sacred thread worn by him needs to be changed multiple times during the ceremony. The Shraddha involves Pinda-Daan, which is an offering to the ancestors of *Pindas* (cooked rice and barley flour balls mixed with ghee and black sesame seeds), accompanying the release of water from the hand. The food offerings made to the ancestors are usually cooked in silver or copper vessels and typically placed on a banana leaf or cups made of dried leaves. The food must include Payasam (a type of sweet rice and milk), Lapsi (a sweet porridge made of wheat grains), rice, dal (lentils), and the vegetable of cluster (guar), Agasthya leaves and a yellow gourd (pumpkin). Navaratri & Dusshera: The festival is celebrated in the month of Ashviyuja, which typically falls in September and October as per the Gregorian calendar. The festival of Navratri- 9 nights and 10 days. The 10th day

will be celebrated as *Dussehra*. **First 9 days-** Gollu, Bommala Koluvu, Gombe Habba or Gombe Totti **9**th **day-** *Ayudha Puja /Saraswati Puja* **10**th **day-** *Vijayadashami /Dusshera*

Ahara(food): Boiled and seasoned Pulse, Sweet Pongal

Deepawali: Deepawali symbolizes the spiritual "victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance". Light is a metaphor for knowledge and consciousness. On the darkest night of the Hindu month *Kartika*. Diwali was initially celebrated as the festival of harvest. *Tila Taila Abhyanga* and *Ushna Jala Snana*. *Deepawali* Dishes: Teepu gavvalu, Chakli, Ellu Undae (sesame balls)

Hemanta Ritu: (early winter) ^{27, 10, 28}: Characteristics: Blow of cold winds starts, and chillness is felt. Rasa –Madhura (sweet); Bala- Shreestabala (high level of energy); Dosha- Pitta Prasamana (normalcy Pitta Dosha) & Kapha Caya (an increase of Kapha Dosha); Agni (digestive fire) – Tikshna (high). Ahara (food): Pathya (indication): Snigdha (unctuous), Madhura (sweet), Amla (sour) and Lavana (salt). New rice, milk, and milk products, sugarcane products, Tila (sesame).

Apathya (contraindication): Vata Kara Ahara (aggravates Vata Dosha), such as Laghu (Light), Sheeta (cold), and Ruksha (dry).

Vihara (activities):

Pathya (indication): Vyayama (exercise), Abhyanga (oil massage), Atapa-sevana (sunbath), application of Agaru Lepa on body, Guru Pravarana, Bhumigruhavasa.

Apathya (contraindication): Divaswapna (daytime sleep), Atisheeta Vata Sevana (spending more time outside in cold wind), etc.

Festivals in *Hemanta Ritu*

Vaikunta Ekadashi: Ekadashi - 11th day of Shukla Paksha, in the month of Marghasirsha. Vaikuntadwaram (North gate of lord Vishnu temples, which will be closed usually and opened only on the day of Vaikunta Ekadashi). It is believed that one who fasts on Vaikunta Ekadashi will reach Vaikuntha.

Rituals: *Upavasa* (fasting), *Jaagarana* (staying awake at night), *Japa* (chanting), *Dwara Darshana*, end their fasting with *Tulasi Teertha*.

DISCUSSION

The principle reason for so many festivals in India, all connected to the Hindu culture are synchronized with the religious, economic and crop patterns in the agricultural economy. Starting from Sankranti which is a harvest festival it combines the onset of the new economic cycle with the start of the winter solstice, harvesting activity, start of the economic cycle where wealth distribution takes place across the population for all castes. Fairs take place spread over a period of almost 10 days. Accounts get settled, new ledgers open, relationships are reinforced through family ties, gifts, etc. The labour class is not left behind. In short, across the spectrum, there is a celebration along with the propitiation of the gods. Then comes the sowing activity followed by *Ugadi* the New Year coinciding with the sales for the crop and realizing the profits. Ugadi follows when the line of festivals is an excuse for 'good times are here again' mood, which is propitious for marriages, acquisition of houses, land. Religious festivals, Vratas follow. The crops are growing meaning minimal activity in the fields. Then Ashadha Masa follows, which is a period when there is no economic activity like the purchase of fixed assets etc. The 'Paksha' follows, which is a thanksgiving for the dead ancestors who are given their due of Tila and water which is believed as 'their requirement to sustain themselves before taking on another body on earth'. Then comes the Deepawali which is a cause for celebration. Indian festivals are not religious alone; they are intertwined with cultural matrix, the social matrix where every caste has their place of importance and place. All these are not possible if the economic support is not afforded to each community or caste so as to sustain the activity.

Ahara (Food) is Rasa Pradhana and it is superior in sustaining life. If one takes judiciously it serves the purpose otherwise it gives rise to the diseases. To maintain three *Doshas* in normal conditions, the food should contain all six *Rasas* in proportionately and according to the physiological variation of *Doshas* which takes

place in different *Ritus*. As adaptations according to the changes are the key to survival, the knowledge of *Ritucharya* is thus important. People do not know or ignore the suitable types of foodstuff, dressings, etc. And other regimens to be followed in a season, this leads to the derangement of homeostasis. Festivals are the best means to adapt the seasonal regimen which has a scientific background in selecting food articles for offering to the Gods and for consuming it. Throughout the country, people celebrate different kinds of festivals in different ways, but the core content is to follow the regimen according to the seasonal requirement to maintain the homeostasis and to maintain health physically, mentally and spiritually.

CONCLUSION

The person, who follows *Ritucharya* properly, will not become the victims of seasonal diseases²⁹. *Doshas* that gets aggravated seasons, they should be treated with drugs of those related *Rasas*.³⁰

Clear the dust of mythological stories from the eyes and religious beliefs to celebrate festivals and accept the good things which are good for the health.

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