



KARKITAKAM – THE MONTH OF REJUVINATION

Arya R V¹, Nimisha Sudhakaran²

¹BAMS MD Panchakarma, Assistant Professor, Dept of Panchakarma, Mai Bhago Ayurvedic Medical College Sri Muktsar Sahib, Punjab, India

²BAMS MD Panchakarma

Corresponding Author: draryapalazhi@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is said to be the Science of Life. The basic principle of Ayurveda is not only for reducing diseases but also to maintain health. For this, both the mental and physical aspects of a person should be considered. For maintaining proper health and for preventing diseases we need to consider different aspects of Ayurveda such as Dinacharya, Ritucharya, etc. By adopting proper changes in lifestyle, we can maintain health, and thereby we can achieve longevity. Due to the changes in the season and other environmental factors, there will be frequent changes in body factors also. So, adopting proper measures during this time will help to maintain the Doshic balance in the body. Here in this article, an attempt is done to show the importance of 'Karkitaka' month in maintaining health.

Keywords: Dinacharya, Ritucharya, Karkitaka.

INTRODUCTION

As per the Malayalam calendar Karkitaka masa (the month of Karkitakam) is considered the ideal time for doing Ayurvedic treatments in Kerala. This is the period of the Monsoon season which starts from mid

– july to mid- august and witnesses heavy rains. Traditionally, this month is considered the most ideal period for undergoing Ayurvedic treatments. In Ayurveda, this period can be compared to Varsha

Ritu. The basic principle followed in the Ayurvedic system of medicine is Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshana means to maintain the health of the healthy and Aturasya vikara prashamana means to cure the disease¹. For this purpose, Dinacharya and Ritu-charya have been mentioned. According to Acharya Vagbhata in Ashtanga Hridaya's third chapter he mentioned Shat Ritus and their Acharyas. Here it is mentioned that Sishira, Vasanta, and Grishma ritus are included under Uttarayana, which is also known as Aadanakala where the strength of the person will be reduced day by day². The Varsha, Sarat, and Hemanta ritus comprise Dakshinayana also known as Visargakala where the body gains strength during this period³. According to Charaka Samhita, all three Doshas are vitiated in Varsha ritu⁴. Because of the effect of a cloudy environment, the Kapha dosha will be vitiated, and Bhubashpa which turns into Amlavipaka vitiates the Pitta Dosha. Pitta will be in the Sanchaya stage Vata will be in the Prakopa stage due to the cold breeze Vata gets vitiated, due to ground water Pitta gets vitiated and due to low digestive power, Kapha gets vitiated. All these conditions will lead to vitiation of all three Doshas which inturn effects the Agni and Bala of a person. So, following special diets and adopting unique lifestyles are important during this period. This annual rejuvenation during the monsoon plays a vital role in refreshing the body and mind.

Specialties of Karkitaka Chikitsa:

With the help of a specific diet, Panchakarma procedures, and lifestyle changes one person can attain good health. Which includes.

1. Roga chikitsa
2. Aushadha prayoga
3. Following Varsha ritu charya

In detail

1. Roga Chikitsa:-

During this Karkitaka masa, there is more chance of getting waterborne diseases because of continuous raining. So proper care should be taken for preventing these diseases. Panchkarma procedures can be done during this time for obtaining good health and prevent further diseases. Different Pan-

chakarma treatments are recommended during this Ritu for cleansing the body system. Which includes:

1. Abhyanga- it is said to be part of Dinacharya⁵. With the help of suitable Tailas Abhyanga can be done and this plays an important role in this season. It helps to rejuvenate the skin, removes toxins from the skin, and repairs the skin damage caused in the summer season because of excessive sweating and heat exposure. Pizhichil can also be done during this season which helps the person to attain good strength. Murchita tila taila, Dhanvantaram taila, Mahanarayana taila, Sahacharadi taila, and Kottam chukkadi taila are the different taila used for Abhyanga. According to Dosha avasta, we can change these taila's also.
2. Swedana⁶- Different Swedana procedures can be adopted based on the health status of a person. Sarvanga Sweda, Nadi Sweda, Patrapinda Sweda, Shashtika shali pinda Sweda, Jambeera pinda Sweda are some of them. With the help of Snehana and Swedana procedures, we can move the doshas which are vitiated during this time from the Shakhas to the Koshta.
3. Vamana, Virechana, and Basti- At the starting of the Varsha ritu Sodhana should be done. After cleaning the body Asthapana basti should be done. By doing this we can prevent diseases and also promote the health of the person. On Yoga Basti, Karma Basti and Kala Basti schedules Basti can be administered⁷.

2. Aushadha Chikitsa:-

Aushadha Chikitsa includes the administration of special diet intakes which includes different Karkidaka kanji preparations. Karkidaka Kanji (Medicated Gruel)- Karkitaka Chikitsa is incomplete with Karkitaka kanji. Medicated Gruel is prepared with the help of different medicinal herbs, therapeutic ingredients, etc. Different types of Karkitaka Kanji can be used depending on the health conditions. It includes Navara Kanji, Jeeraka Kanji, Dashapushpa Kanji, Wheat Kanji etc. Now a days different flavors of Kanjis are available in the market which are in ready-

to-cook form. This should be taken for a period of 7 days, 14 days, 21 days, or the whole month. Karkitaka

Kanji Preparation:

Ingredients	Quantity
Shashtika shali	100gm
Medika	25 gm
Shunthi	5gm
Maricha	5gm
Jeeraka	5gm
Haridra	5gm
Ajamoda	5gm
Garlic	5gm
Coconut milk	Sufficient quantity

Preparation: Wash the rice and boil it in 1litre water. Add Medika seeds and continue boiling. Once it is boiled pour coconut milk, wait till it starts to boil again, and immediately take it from the flame. Then add the rest of the spices mix well and keep covered for a while and later it can be served. We can also add Trikatu Churna and Dashapushpa Churnas in this preparation. Intake of these Kanji will help in improving immunity during this period.

3. Varsha Ritucharya:-

Acharya Vagbhata has detailed mentioned Varsha Ritucharya in Ashtanga Hridaya Sutra Sthana⁸. Here he has explained that after proper Shodhana Chikitsa one should undergo Niruha Basti. He has also recommended different Ahara and Viharas during this period of time.

Ahara:- This includes Yudha, Madhu, Arishta, and Mastu mixed with Sauvarchala, Panchakola Churnas, and boiled water are recommended for use in this season⁹.

Viharas:- Apaadachari means walking without wearing footwear is contraindicated in this season. Dhupita Vastras should be used and also body should be scented with perfumes. Stay should be on the upper floors which should be free from moisture, cold, and mist. People should avoid using Nadi Jala, Mantha preparations, Divaswapna, Aayasa, and Aatapa seva¹⁰.

DISCUSSION

Varsha, Sharat, and Hemanta Ritus come under Dakshinayana. This period is also called Visarga Kala because during this period body gains more strength. Also, there will be maximum strength during the Hemanta Ritu and later on, it will be moderate during Vasanta Ritu and it will be Minimal during Varsha Ritu. So, care should be taken in this period to maintain health and avoid diseases. Because of the Dosha imbalance during this season, even the Agni of the person will also be in Mandavsatha hence care should be taken for the proper maintenance of body and mind. For this, we need to administer some specific treatments and even Ahara Viharas and Ritu Charya are to be followed. Different Panchakarma procedures along with Medicated Gruel i.e., Karkitaka Kanji preparations will help the person to attain good health and to prevent all the diseases during this particular season. Karkitaka Kanji preparations and their intake also help to increase the immunity of a person because of the action of different ingredients used in these preparations. Even in different disease conditions, we can administer specific Dravyas especially indicated for that particular disease can be used. Also, Shodhana Chikitsa also plays an important role in Karkitaka Masa. With the help of Snehana Swedanadi procedures and also other Shodhana procedures we can maintain the health of a person. Basti Chikitsa also plays an important role in this Ritu. Thus, with the help of all these procedures and preparations, we can easily maintain the health of a person in Karkitaka Masa. Hence, we can conclude

that these all techniques not only help in Dosha pacification but also helps in removing all the metabolic wastes from the body, and thus body itself gets Rejuvenated and regenerated.

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