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A CONCEPTUAL STUDY TO EXPLORE THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF AHAR KALPANA WSR TO KRITANNA VARGA

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, \$\bar{A}h\bar{a}ra\$ (diet) is considered a pillar of health (\$Trayopasthambha\$) and a primary tool for both disease prevention and management. The concept of \$\bar{A}h\bar{a}ra\$ Kalpan\bar{a}\$—methodical preparation and administration of food—is central to Ayurvedic dietetics. Among various food categories, \$Kritanna\$ Varga\$ comprises cooked formulations like \$Manda\$, \$Peya\$, \$Yav\bar{a}gu\$, \$Vilep\bar{i}\$, and \$Yusha\$, which are designed to nourish tissues (\$Dh\bar{a}tu\$), balance \$Do\sigmasa\$, and stimulate \$Agni\$ (digestive fire). This study explores classical references from \$Brhattray\bar{i}\$, \$Laghutray\bar{i}\$, and \$Nighantus\$, highlighting the significance of \$Pathya\$ \$Ah\bar{a}ra\$ in maintaining health and aiding recovery during therapies like \$Pa\bar{n}cakarma\$. Unlike modern nutrition that emphasizes macronutrients, Ayurveda tailors food based on \$Agni\$, \$Prakrti\$, \$Ritu\$, and disease condition, ensuring a more personalized and holistic approach. Classical Ayurvedic preparations are systematically analyzed, including their preparation methods, therapeutic indications, and

physiological effects. The paper emphasizes that food is not merely sustenance but a therapeutic agent—when properly selected, processed (Samskāra), and administered, it can serve as Mahābhaisajya (supreme medicine).

INTRODUCTION

According to the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda, Arogya (health) primarily depends on two key factors— $\bar{A}h\bar{a}ra$ (diet) and $Vih\bar{a}ra$ (lifestyle or physical activity). Health is described not

merely as the absence of disease, but as a state of equilibrium that the physician aims to preserve or restore. Acharya Kāśyapa has referred to Āhāra as Mahābhaisajya^[1] meaning the supreme medicine. It is emphasized that no medicinal therapy can be effective unless the patient adheres to appropriate Pathya (dietary regimen). The role of Āhāra and Pathya in maintaining the balance of Tridoşa and nourishing Saptadhātu is considered vital. Ayurveda asserts that aspects such as complexion, voice, longevity, strength, intelligence, and emotional stability are directly influenced by the quality and type of food consumed. The three foundational components of Ayurveda are Aushadha (medicine), Āhāra (diet), and Vihāra (lifestyle practices). Among these, Āhāra Kalpanā—the methodical preparation and administration of food—holds special importance. Acharyas describe in detail the ingredients, quantities, and methods for preparing various dietary formulations. When food is cooked with precise proportions and methods, it is termed Pathya—that is, wholesome and conducive to health. The primary objective of Āhāra Kalpanā is to highlight the significance of food in preserving health and in the management of disorders related to Dosa, Dhātu, Mala, and Agni. In Ayurvedic physiology, Agni—which includes Jatharāgni (digestive fire) and Dhātvagni (tissue metabolic fire)—is considered the cornerstone of life. Kritanna varga refers to the group of cooked or processed dietary preparations primarily made from dry cereals (shuka dhanya), including peya, mand, yavagu, vilepi, etc. whose preparation methods and properties are systematically described in classical Ayurvedic literature." Thus, the central therapeutic principle in Ayurveda is to restore and maintain Agni. Kritanna varga plays a key role in achieving this by offering dietetic preparations that are easy to digest, nourish body tissues, and support recovery. These formulations are beneficial not only for diseased individuals but also for maintaining the health of the healthy.

Need of Aahara Kalpana (Diet Regime)

Aahara Kalpana is suggested in various places in Ayurveda. It is suggested in the Swasthavrutta (daily life routines to maintain the proper health. Aahara Kalpana must be used in Dinacharya (daily routines), Rutucharya^[2] (seasonal routines). It is very much necessary for the patients to have the food which will keep their Dhatus (body tissue) in a healthy state and will not let them get vitiated more from Doshas (Provoked humours). So the patients must follow the "healthy food consumption" i.e. Pathya Aahara kalpana is also used in Panchakarma as samsarjana krama to boost Jatharagni and the fatigued Annavaha Srotas (Digestive system), Purishavaha Srotas (Excretory system) to regain the healthy stage from weakened one (which happened during the process of purification)^[3] well processed results in Arogya. The processing of food is known as आहारसंस्कार By virtue of the Samskara, the properties of Dravyas alter thereby enhancing its therapeutic value. Food is important part of life but many of those cannot be digested by the human digestive system in raw form. It needs to be converted in such a form that can be used by the human tissues to get sufficient nutrition from it. The Aahara Varga like Shooka Dhanya, Mamsa and Shaaka cannot be used without processing and hence Kalpana is necessary. Acharyas have mentioned Siddhanna, Kritanna Varga to explain the different Kalpana made by Dravyas of other Aahara Vargas.

'Food-design' to all

Both modern science and Ayurveda, emphasis is laid on proper food design for individuals. Ayurveda, rather than merely defining the nature of Aahara (diet), focuses on the indications and contraindications of specific preparations based on the disease condition and their impact on Doshas. In contrast, modern dietetics assesses food by analysing the dominance of its basic nutritional components—namely, carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. These nutrients are used to fulfil a fixed daily caloric requirement, leading to the classification of diets as "protein-rich", "carbohydrate-rich", etc. However, Ayurveda evaluates food not just by its content but also by considering the digestive strength (Agni) of the individual consuming it. The same food may act differently depending on factors like age, region, lifestyle, adaptability, mental status, body constitution, and the dominant Doshas in the person. Thus, an Ayurvedic physician does not prescribe a standard quantity of food for everyone. Instead, they recommend adjusting the amount and type of food according to the individual's appetite and digestive capacity. Furthermore, the inclusion of all six tastes (Shadrasa) in the diet is encouraged to maintain the Panchamahabhuta (five-elemental) balance of the body.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To explore the theoretical foundations of Ahara Kalpana in Ayurvedic literature.
- To identify and document the health benefits associated with specific Pathya Ahara Kalpana mentioned in Ayurvedic classics.

Review of Literature

The core references for this review include classical Ayurvedic texts—namely Brihattrayi and Laghuttrayee—which provide detailed groupings of food substances, particularly in the

Charaka Samhita. To enrich and contextualize the traditional knowledge, additional literature from modern sciences, credible internet sources, and scholarly journals was also examined.

1."संप्रांत शुकधान्यादिवर्गयथासंभव संपादितस्य कृतान्नस्य पेयादेर्गुणान् वक्तुं कृतान्नवर्ग उच्यते। "(Chakrapani. Su 27/256), [4] now the author is describing the characteristics of different types of food preparation like peya etc.

Definition

According to Acharya Charaka, the term **Pathya** is derived from "Patha" which Meanvarious channels in body and "Anapetam"(not harmful) to human body, so any food which is not harmful for body channels and on the contrary which is soothing for body can be called as Pathya.^[5] According to Acharya Gangadhara, Pathya means beneficial for strotas.

Ayurvedic dietetics classifies food preparations into two major groups

- I. Kṛtānna Varga Dietetic preparations designed for healthy individuals to maintain homeostasis.^[6]
- II. Pathya Kalpanā Therapeutic dietary formulations meant for patients during illness.

Both groups include core preparations such as Manda (liquid gruel), Peya (thin gruel), Vilēpī (thick gruel), Yavāgu (semi-solid gruel), and Māmsa Rasa (meat soup). These recipes are designed in ascending order of heaviness and nutritional content, making them easily digestible and therapeutically effective. Notably, in Pathya Kalpanā, the liquid medium often includes herbal decoctions (Kvātha) to further enhance the formulation's medicinal value.

Importance of Aahara(Diet)

Basis of all organisms is Aahara "देहो ह्याहारसम्भवः". [7] Aahara is basis for both sustaining of living systems as well as diseases "आहारसम्भवं वस्तुरोगाश्चाहारसम्भवाः" [8] Hence consumption of right food prepared in a right way/ well processed results in Arogya. Aahara is one of the Trayopasthambha (three pillars of life) and is regarded as the foundation of health and longevity. A diet that includes all six tastes (Shadrasa), taken in proper quantity while considering Agni (digestive strength), Ritu (season), and Prakriti (body constitution), supports not just physical nourishment but also mental and spiritual well-being. Wholesome food ensures: Tushti, Pushti, Bala, Ojas, Tejas, Prabha, and Pratibha. Thus, Ayurvedic dietetics

focus on individualized, seasonal, and functional nutrition that promotes overall health and disease prevention.

DISCUSSION

Concept of Kritanna Varga (Group of Processed Dietary Preparations)

Krutanna Varga is one among the Ahara Vargas that consists of cooked food preparations that are consumed in a daily basis and used as a part of treatment as Samsarjana Krama (Post therapeutic diet). The transformation of raw food substances (Dravyas) into digestible and beneficial forms through specific processing techniques—known as Ahara Kalpana—enhances their suitability for human consumption. Certain food categories such as Shukadhanya (cereal grains), Shamidhanya (legumes), Mamsa (meat), and Shaka (vegetables) require appropriate processing before they can be consumed safely and effectively.

Recognizing this need, all classical Ayurvedic compilers (Acharya Charaka, Sushruta, and Vagbhata) in the samhitas mentioned in table no 1.have elaborated on Kritanna Varga, a category that includes processed or cooked food preparations derived from raw Ahara Vargas (food groups). In essence, Kritanna Varga reflects the practical application of Ahara Kalpana on raw dietary items to enhance their digestibility, palatability, and therapeutic potential.

This group comprises various traditional food formulations such as Manda, Peya, Yavagu, Anna, Vilepi, Yusha, Krishara, and Sattu (roasted and powdered paddy). Each preparation involves distinct methods and holds specific attributes in terms of consistency, therapeutic utility, and Agni-deepana (digestive stimulant) properties.^[18] Many of the preparations mentioned in Krutanna Varga are utilized in the pre-sent era as mentioned in Table 2.

Table no. 1: Comparison of preparations mentioned under Kritanna Varga by various authors.

Name author	Name of verga	Time period	No. of preparation
Charak acharya	Kritann varga	2 nd century	68
Sushrut acharya	Kritann varga	5 th century	43+30
Vagbhatta	Kritann varga	7 th century	32
Madanpala nighantu	Dhanyakrutannadi varge	14th century	83
Kaiyadev nighantu	Kritann varga	15 th Century	122
Bhatpara's	Kritann varga	16 th Century	97

Table no. 2: Preparations commonly practiced in current era.

Name of preparation	Common name
Bhakta/Odana	Boiled rice
Dala	Dul
Krushra	Khichadi
Kshirika	Kheer
Rotika	Roti
Pratpata	Papad
ataka	Vada
Kvathika	Khadi
Modaka	Laddu
Kudalini	Jalebi
Rasala	Shrikhand
Sulyamanse	Kabab
Dharksrodak	Sharbat
Takra	Buttermilk

Formulations and Characteristics of Selected Ahara Kalpanas

The first five commonly referenced preparations—Manda, Peya, Yavagu, Anna, and Vilepi are made using only two primary ingredients: rice (Oryza sativa Linn.) and water. The variation in the proportion of rice to water leads to distinct differences in consistency, texture, and physiological effects. These formulations serve various dietary purposes—ranging from light nourishment in convalescence to energy-providing meals in routine wellness.

Table no 3: Preparatory method of formulations prepared from rice (Oryza sativa linn.)

Name of the formulation	Proportion of rice and water (ratio)	Prepared formulation.	Final constitution of prepared formulation	Guna/ karm	indication
Manda ^[9]	1:14	Till the rice completly cooked	Only supernatant liquid	Laghu, ushna Karma Vatanulomana, pachana, deepana, swedajanana, agnisandhukshaka, strotasmardavkara, hrudya, balya, grahi, and dhatusamyakara.	It is truptikaraka in glani, trushna. Patients who have done their vamana or virechana, manda is given as a shesh dosha pachana and also for sneha pachana who take snehapana every day. indriyas.Bhrama, jwar, trushna, atisar, urusthambha, visarpa, sadyaprasutestri
Peya ^[10]	1:14	Till the rice completly cooked	Solid rice and liquid portion are taken in equal Solid rice and liquid portion are taken in equal proportion	Laghu, ushna Karma Malanulomani, swedajanana, agnijanana, vata and doshanulomani, deepana, bastishodhana, ruchya, agnikruta, grahi, dhatupushtikar.	It alleviates daurbalya due to hunger / kshuda and thirst / trushna. It also removes kukshiroga, jwar, sthambha, klanti, atisar,
Yavagu ^[11]	1:06	Till the rice completly cooked	Only solid rice part is taken	Laghu, ushna Karma Due to it being laghu it doesn't cause daha and ushna guna causes vatanulomana. Grahi, bastishodhana, balya, tarpan, vatanashani.	Dadim rasa- Vatakaphaj vyadhi Sharkara -Pittakaphaj vyadhi Jangal mansa rasa or Gorasa or Dadim rasa- Vataj vyadhi, gulma, pliharog, pinasa, trushna, jwar, etc.

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Anna ^[12]	1:05	Till the rice completly cooked	Only solid rice part is taken	Laghu Karma Agnideepak, pathya, tarpak, rochak	Mandagni Post -samsarjana karma
Vilepi ^[13]	1:04	Till the rice completly cooked	Maximum solid portion with little liquid is taken	Laghu, madhur rasatmaka Karma Grahi, hrudya, deepana, tarpana, vrushya, bruhana, balya, ruchya, pushtikara, pitta nashaka.	Kshudha, trushna, vrana, akshiroga, jwar, amashool, it is given to both durbala and snehapayi patients.
Krisara ^[14]	1:06 (Rice +Mudag:water)	Till the rice and mudga is completly cooked	Only solid rice and Mudag part is taken	Guru Karma Kaphapittakarak, Balya, Anilnashini, Durjara, Shukral.	Vata vyadhi Shukra kshya Krashta
Yusha ^[15]	1:16(Mudag:wa ter)	Till the mudga completly cooked	Maximum liquid portion with little solid is taken	Yusha preparation differs according to doshaghnata. Prepared with Snigdha, ushna dravyas- vata. Snigdha, kashaya dravyas-pitta Atyushna, kaphahar dravyas- kapha Karma Rochana, deepana, vrushya, swarya, varnya, balya, agnikruta, swedajanana, tushti, pushti, sukhakaraka.	After panchakarma Jwar Managing
Mamsrasa ^[16]	1:04(meat and water)	Till the meat completly cooked	Maximum liquid portion with little solid is taken	Guru, ushna, madhur, snigdha Karma Brimhana, vatahar, Balvardhaka, Shukravardhaka Vrishya	Shwas kasa kshayapaha

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1. Manda kalpana

This Kalpana is prepared by using rice and water in 1:14 proportion. The rice is cooked in said proportion of water and then only water content of the prepared formulation is collected as Manda (watery portion of rice gruel).

Types of mand -(Manda, Laja Manda, Vātya Manda)

Not indicated in

Amatisar, kaphaj vyadhi, yonivyapada, pliharoga, pinasa, gulma, hrudroga, halimaka, vatavyadhi, swasa, hikka, akshiroga, shiroroga, chardi, grahabadha, rajyakshma, chinta, unmada, mada, kaphaj prakruti.^[17]

2. Peya kalpana

Peya is a light dietary formulation prepared using rice and water in a 1:14 ratio. The rice is thoroughly cooked in this proportion of water, and the resultant preparation—consisting of the watery portion along with a few soft rice grains—is termed Peya, also known as rice gruel.

Therapeutic Modifications

1. In various clinical contexts, the water component of Peya is substituted with medicated decoctions (Kwatha) tailored to specific diseases. This enhances its therapeutic efficacy while maintaining its light, easily digestible nature.

A detailed account of Peya preparations using different herbal decoctions across disease conditions is presented in.

3. Vilepi Kalpana (Thick Rice Gruel

Vilepi is a thick, semi-solid rice preparation obtained by cooking rice in four times its quantity of water. The resulting gruel exhibits a paste-like consistency and is considered both nourishing and easily digestible.

4. Yavagu Kalpana (Medium Consistency Rice Gruel)

Yavagu is a rice-based gruel prepared by boiling rice with six times its quantity of water, resulting in a semi-solid or flowing consistency, less thick than Vilepi but denser than Peya.

According to classical Ayurvedic texts, Yavagu is categorized into three types based on the medium or form of medicinal substances used in its preparation:

- **Kwatha Siddha Yavagu** Yavagu prepared using herbal decoctions (Kwatha) as the liquid medium.
- Kalka Siddha Yavagu Yavagu prepared by adding herbal pastes (Kalka) directly during cooking.
- Mamsarasa Siddha Yavagu Yavagu prepared by using meat soup (Mamsarasa) as the base liquid, suitable for strength and nourishments.

Acharya Charaka has mentioned 28 types of yavagus for various diseases in sutrasthana. Acharya Kashyup has mentioned 7 doshas or defects of yavagu.

1] ghana 2] Visheerna 3] Sheeta 4] Avakshinatandula 5] Pichila 6] Vishada 7] Ahrudya.

5. Yusha Kalpana (Pulse-Based Herbal Soup)[18,19]

A separate chapter is written on yusha by Kashyup Samhita as 'Yushaneerdeshiya' in khilasthana. Kruttanna kalpanas prepared with yushadi ingredients are pathyakar (good for body) and arogyakara. Yusha converts dhatu to liquid form or drava form causing dravikarana. Boiled yusha converts bhojyapadarthas or ingredients put in the yusha during cooking into liquid form. It is of two types based on rasa as Kashaya-madhur and Kashaya-amla. Its veerya and karmas differ from sheeta, ushna and mishra and pachana, karshana bruhana. Yusha is a dietary formulation prepared by cooking Simbi Dhanya (legumes other than rice) with a suitable liquid medium such as Kwatha (decoction), Swarasa (fresh juice), Hima (cold infusion), Takra (buttermilk), or plain water. The liquid portion obtained after proper cooking and filtration is referred to as Yusha.

For therapeutic Yusha: Mridu Virya Dravyas (mild-potency herbs) are used in 1 Pal (≈48 gm) as Kalka (herbal paste).

Tikshna Virya Dravyas (sharp-potency herbs like Shunthi, Pippali) are used in 1 Karsha (≈12 gm).

These are mixed with 1 Prastha (≈1024 gm) of water and boiled till the quantity reduces to half or as required.

The final liquid is filtered through a cloth to obtain the Yusha.

As per Acharya Sharangdhara, Yusha can also be prepared with 1 part of Dravya and 14 parts of water, like Peya, but with thicker consistency.^[21]

Types of Yusha Based on Sneha (Fat) Addition. [22]

Type Description

- Krita Yusha-Prepared by roasting Katu Dravyas (e.g., Maricha, Pippali) in sufficient Sneha (ghee/oil).
- Akrita Yusha-Prepared without Sneha or Katu Dravyas.

6. Mamsarasa Kalpana (Meat Soup Preparation)^[23]

Mamsarasa is a protein-rich preparation made by boiling meat (Mamsa) with water and medicinal herbs.

Preparation Method

Take meat in twice the amount of the herbal drugs. Use twice the amount of water compared to meat. Boil until one-fourth of the volume remains. Filter the contents to obtain a clear Mamsarasa (meat soup).

Types of Mamsarasa

- Krita Mamsarasa- Prepared with Sneha and roasted Katu Dravyas (Maricha, Pippali, etc.).
- Akrita Mamsarasa Prepared without Sneha and Katu Dravyas.

Table no. 7: Some Food item use in Samtarpana Krama.

S.no	Food item	Preparation From	Properties	
1	Laaja ^[24]	Bhrishtha Tandula (Baked Rice/	Kapha - Pitahara, Grahi,	
1.	1. Laaja	Puff Rice)	Pipasa, Jwarahara	
2.	Saktu ^[25]	Roasted Barley/ Gram flour	Laghu, Santrapana, Balya	
2	Mamsarasa with	1 (Rice):14 (water) Suswinna (Well cooked), Nisruta (Filtered)	Laghu vishad usana	
٥.	Audana ^[26]	Rice.	Lagnu visitau usana	

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda specially expresses the importance of food in maintaining and promoting good health as well as in curing diseases. Modern dieticians have described that carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, vitamins etc are the basic components of food and the balanced diet is said to be composed of all these. The imbalance in the quantity of these constituents leads to loss of immunity and health. But practically we observe many individuals suffering from

deficiency diseases even after, the consumption of the so-called balanced diet. It clearly indicates that an ideal diet means just not only the composition of carbohydrates, proteins, fata etc. The diet should have the qualities like HITAHARA (congenial), SATMYAHARA (compatible), AVIRUDDHAHARA (not causing untoward effects) and SARVARASA SAMANVITAHARA etc.

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