

## REVISITING AYURVEDIC DIET IN THE ERA OF NUTRITION TRANSITION: A HOLISTIC PREVENTIVE STRATEGY AGAINST NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

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### ABSTRACT

The shift from traditional diets to contemporary, highly processed food systems is directly associated with an increase in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) worldwide. This article reviews the Ayurvedic dietary principles found in the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and their applicability to modern nutrition. Cereals, legumes, fruits, vegetables, prepared foods, and dietary adjuvants are among the traditional Ayurvedic classifications of *Ahara Varga* that emphasize metabolic equilibrium, digestive energy (*Agni*), and balanced nutrition. On the other hand, modern diets high in highly processed foods are linked to lifestyle diseases and metabolic disorders. Ayurvedic dietary principles, combined with contemporary nutrition research, may offer a long-term preventive approach to reduce the risk of NCDs and improve overall health.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, *Ahara Varga*, Nutrition Transition, Non-Communicable Diseases, Traditional Diet, Preventive Healthcare.

## INTRODUCTION

Global health trends have changed dramatically as a result of the quick shift from traditional to modern, industrialized lifestyles. The prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like obesity, metabolic syndromes, diabetes mellitus, and cardiovascular disorders has increased concurrently with economic growth, urbanization, and technological advancements that have increased life expectancy and decreased the burden of infectious diseases. These illnesses are currently a serious public health issue, especially in developing nations going through fast cultural and socioeconomic change.<sup>[1]</sup> Diet and lifestyle are important contributing factors to the increasing prevalence of these disorders. One of the main causes of this epidemiological shift is thought to be dietary modifications. Reduced dietary diversity, high consumption of processed carbs and harmful fats, and irregular eating patterns have disrupted metabolic homeostasis, hastening the development of NCDs.<sup>[2]</sup> Energy-dense, nutrient-poor, highly processed foods are gradually replacing traditional diets that relied on seasonal, locally accessible, and minimally processed foods.<sup>[3]</sup> The natural connection between food, digestion, and general health is weakened by modern dietary habits, which are frequently driven more by commercial availability and convenience than by nutritional sufficiency. In this regard, the traditional medical system of Ayurveda provides a thorough and preventive view of health and illness. The *Brihatrayi*, specifically *Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, go into great detail about the significance of *Ahara* (diet). Among these ancient writings, *Charak Samhita* places a high value on *Ahara*, characterizing it as one of the three vital pillars of existence (*Trayopastambha*) that are necessary for sustaining the body and preserving health.<sup>[4]</sup> Ayurveda places emphasis not only on the amount of food consumed but also on its quality, time, compatibility, preparation techniques, and the individual's digestive capacity (*Agni*), poor eating habits, also known as *Mithya Ahara*, are primary sources of sickness and closely resemble contemporary lifestyle disorders and NCDs.<sup>[5]</sup> In the same manner, *Sushruta Samhita* emphasizes the curative and preventive value of nutrition in preserving health. It explains how *Ahara* sustains physiological balance, nourishes bodily tissues (*Dhatu Poshana*), and promotes digestive fire (*Agni*). Additionally, the article highlights how improper and incompatible eating habits can disrupt metabolism and lead to the emergence of systemic diseases.<sup>[6]</sup> Additionally, *Ashtanga Hridaya* offers a thorough discussion of nutritional guidelines. It claims that while inappropriate eating habits, such as consuming incompatible foods (*Viruddha Ahara*), can result in illness, a balanced diet consumed in accordance with a person's digestive ability promotes equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Agni*.<sup>[7]</sup> In order to address the rising prevalence

of non-communicable diseases, a review of Ayurvedic dietary principles in the contemporary era may offer insightful information for lifestyle change and preventative treatment.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

A thorough analysis that includes classical works, along with modern literature, Ayurvedic works like *Charaka Samhita*, *Susruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, which are essential to understanding *Ahara* (diet) and its significance in health and disease, was studied. For pertinent information, official government websites and online databases like PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar were also consulted. After examining several published data, those pertaining to the study's goal and publication title were chosen.

### Ahara varga classification in *brihatrayee*

*Ahara Varga* is carefully categorized with both preventive and therapeutic intent in the *Brihatrayee*. Food is systematically categorized in *Charaka Samhita* into groups including *Shukadhanya*, *Samidhanya*, *Mamsa*, *Saka*, *Phala*, *Ikshu*, *Krtanna*, and *Aharayogi*, with a focus on *rasa*, *guna*, *virya*, and their effects on *dosha* and *agni*.<sup>[8]</sup> *Acharya Sushruta* and *Vagbhatta* mentioned *Aharavarga* in two main categories. *Acharya Sushruta* mentioned *dravavarga*, i.e., category of liquids, and *Annavarga* i.e., category of foods, and *Acharya Vagbhatta* mentioned *dravam*(liquids) and *adravam* (foods). *Sushruta* emphasizes healthy and appropriate diets in connection with strength and tissue nourishment by mentioning *shalivarga*, *kudhanyavarga*, *vaidalavarga*, *pushpavarga*, *kandavarga*, *dadhivarga*, *takravarga*.<sup>[9]</sup> *Vagbhatta* simply incorporates both these ideas, highlighting digestive capacity, seasonal adaptation, and moderation, and put it in his own way in *shukadhanyavarga*, *shimbidhanyavarga*, *phalavarga*, *ikshuvarga*, *tailavarga*.<sup>[10]</sup> In general, *Ahara Varga* supports *dhatu poshana*, vitality, and long-term health through balanced, nourishing, immunity-boosting, and strength-giving foods.

**Table 1: The classification of food substances mentioned in *Brihatrayee*.**

S. No	Charaka Samhita -Ahara varga <sup>[8]</sup>	Susruta Samhita – Anna Varga <sup>[9]</sup>	Susruta Samhita – Drava Varga <sup>[9]</sup>	Ashtanga Hridaya – Adravam <sup>[10]</sup>	Ashtanga Hridaya – Dravam <sup>[10]</sup>
1	Śūkadhānya Varga (Cereals)	Śāli Varga	Jala Varga	Śūkadhānya	Toya Varga
2	Śāmidhānya / Śimbi Varga (Pulses)	Kudānya Varga	Kṣīra Varga	Śimbi Dhānya	Kṣīra Varga
3	Māṃsa Varga	Vaidala Varga	Dadhi Varga	Pakvāna Varga	Iksu Varga

	(Meats)				
4	Śāka Varga (Vegetables)	Māṃsa Varga	Takra Varga	Māṃsa Varga	Taila Varga
5	Phala Varga (Fruits)	Phala Varga	Ghṛta Varga	Śāka Varga	Madya Varga
6	Harita Varga (Greens)	Śāka Varga	Taila Varga	Phala Varga	Mūtra Varga
7	Madya Varga (Alcoholic drinks)	Puṣpa Varga	Madhu Varga	Auśadha Varga	—
8	Ambu Varga (Water)	Kaṇḍa Varga	Ikṣu Varga	—	—
9	Gorasa Varga (Milk products)	Lavaṇa Varga	Madya Varga	—	—
10	Ikṣu Vikāra Varga (Sugarcane derivatives)	Kṣāra Varga	Mūtra Varga	—	—
11	Kṛtāna Varga (Prepared foods)	Dhātu Varga	—	—	—
12	Āhāra Upayogi Varga (Useful foods)	Ratna Varga	—	Kṛtāna Varga	—

### Dietary classification in *Charak Samhita*

Groups of food substances -

1. *Sukadhanya* (awned cereals)
2. *Samidhanya* (legumes)
3. *Saka varga* (vegetables)
4. *Phala varga* (fruits)
5. *Harita varga* (salads)
6. *Ikshu* (sugarcane and its products)
7. *Krtanna varga* (dietary preparations)
8. *Aharayogi* (food adjuvants)

#### 1. *Sukadhanya Varga*

*Suka Dhanya* is the first of the twelve varieties of *Ahara* that *Acharya Caraka* described in *Annapana Vidhi Adhyaya*. *Suka dhanya* are awned cereals. Due to the presence of bristles or awns, these are called awned cereals. Although *Suka Dhanya Varga* has not been specifically stated by *Acharya Sushruta*, the *dravyas* of *Suka Dhanya Varga* are discussed in *Mudgadi*, *Shali*, and *Kudhanya Varga*. *Suka Dhanya* has been compared to monocotyledons and foods that provide energy in contemporary literature. Wheat, rice, maize, oats, jowar, ragi, and bajra

are the principal foods that provide energy. Some *Suka Dhanya Dravyas*, such as *Shasthika*, *Vrihi* (type of rice), *Yava*, and *Wheat*, have been stated by ancient *Acharyas* with their *Gunas* (qualities) that are crucial for illness prevention.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Nutritional composition

Table No. 2.

Grain (Sanskrit / Botanical Name)	Carbohydrates [12]	Protein	Fat	Vitamins	Minerals	Dosha Effect <sup>[13]</sup>	Ayurvedic Benefits
<b>Shāli (Rice / Oryza sativa)</b>	~80 g	~7 g	~0.6g	B-complex (B1, B3, B6), small Vit E	Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus	Pacifies <b>Pitta</b> , increases <b>Kapha</b>	Light, cooling, easy to digest, good in fevers
<b>Godhuma (Wheat / Triticum aestivum)</b>	~71 g	~12 g	~1.5g	B- complex, Vit E	Iron, Zinc, Magnesium, Selenium	Balances <b>Vata</b> , increases <b>Kapha</b>	Strength- giving, promotes muscle bulk
<b>Yava (Barley / Hordeum vulgare)</b>	~73 g	~12 g	~2.3g	B- complex, Vit E	Selenium, Magnesium, Phosphorus	Pacifies <b>Kapha</b> & <b>Pitta</b>	Good for weight loss, diabetes, urinary disorders
<b>Kodrava (Kodo millet / Paspalum scrobiculatum)</b>	~66 g	~8 g	~1.3g	B-complex	Iron, Calcium, Zinc	Pacifies <b>Kapha</b> , increases <b>Vata</b>	Improves digestion, useful in obesity

### 2. Samidhanya Varga

*Sami* refers to the pod of a leguminous plant, and the grain is inside the pod, this group is a group of legumes. Pod-covered grains are referred to as *shimbidhanya* (legumes). The synonyms for *Shimbidhanya* are *Samija*, *Simbija*, *Simbibhava*, *Supya*, and *Vaidala*. *Shimbidhanya* typically has an astringent (*Kashya*) and sweet (*Madhura*) taste. It possesses the qualities of *Sita* (cold) and *Ruksha guna*. It has *Katuvipaka*, which will calm *Pitta* and *Kapha* while slightly raising *Vata*, and acts as *Mutrala* (diuretic). The protein content of pulses is twice that of grains, which is why they have become the most affordable source of protein.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Nutritional composition

Table No. 3.

Sanskrit Name	Botanical Name	Carbohydrates (per 100 g) <sup>[15]</sup>	Protein	Fat	Vitamins	Minerals	Dosha Effect <sup>[13]</sup>	Ayurvedic Benefits
<b>Mudga (Green gram)</b>	<i>Vigna radiata</i>	~62 g	~24 g	~1.2g	B-complex, Vit C	Iron, Magnesium, Potassium	Pacifies <b>Pitta</b> , balances <b>Kapha</b>	Light, easy to digest, good for fevers and digestion
<b>Māsha (Black gram)</b>	<i>Vigna mungo</i>	~60 g	~25 g	~1.6g	B-complex	Iron, Calcium, Phosphorus	Increases <b>Kapha</b> & <b>Pitta</b>	Heavy, strength-giving, aphrodisiac
<b>Rāja Māsha (Cowpea)</b>	<i>Vigna unguiculata</i>	~63 g	~24 g	~1.5g	B-complex	Iron, Zinc, Magnesium	Slightly increases <b>Vata</b>	Nourishing, useful in weakness
<b>Kulattha (Horse gram)</b>	<i>Macrotyloma uniflorum</i>	~60 g	~22 g	~0.5g	B-complex	Iron, Calcium	Pacifies <b>Kapha</b> , increases <b>Vata</b>	Good for obesity, kidney stones, respiratory issues
<b>Chanaka (Chickpea)</b>	<i>Cicer arietinum</i>	~61 g	~19 g	~6g	B-complex, Vit E	Iron, Zinc, Magnesium	Pacifies <b>Kapha</b> , increases <b>Vata</b>	Strength-giving, improves digestion

## 3. Saka Varga

This is the fourth group consisting of vegetables mainly based on leaves, fruits and tubers. Fresh vegetables are essential components of a nutritious diet. Utilizing many vegetable varieties gives us the vitamins, minerals, and other vital nutrients we need to maintain our health.

## Nutritional composition

Table No. 4.

Sanskrit Name	Botanical Name	Carbohydrates (per 100 g) <sup>[15]</sup>	Protein	Fat	Vitamins	Minerals	Dosha Effect <sup>[13]</sup>	Ayurvedic Benefits
<b>Patola (Pointed gourd)</b>	<i>Trichosanthes dioica</i>	~4 g	~2 g	~0.3g	Vit A, Vit C	Iron, Calcium	Pacifies <b>Pitta</b> , balances <b>Kapha</b>	Light, cooling, good for fevers
<b>Kushmanda (Ash gourd / Winter melon)</b>	<i>Benincasa hispida</i>	~3 g	~0.4 g	~0.2g	Vit C	Calcium, Iron	Pacifies <b>Pitta</b> , mild on <b>Kapha</b>	Cooling, diuretic, good for acidity
<b>Ervaruka</b>	<i>Cucumis</i>	~3.6 g	~0.7 g	~0.1g	Vit K,	Potassium,	Pacifies <b>Pitta</b> ,	Hydrating,

(Cucumber)	<i>sativus</i>				Vit C	Magnesium	increases <b>Kapha</b>	cooling, good for digestion
<b>Karkotaka (Bitter gourd)</b>	<i>Momordica charantia</i>	~4 g	~2 g	~0.2g	Vit C, Folate	Iron, Potassium	Pacifies <b>Kapha</b> , increases <b>Vata</b>	Anti-diabetic, improves metabolism

#### 4. Phala Varga

Commonly consumed fruits with dosha-specific effects, light (*laghu*) and cooling (*sheeta*) properties, and mostly *madhura* and *amla rasa* make up *Phala Varga*. They help immunity, digestion, and metabolic balance since they are a good source of natural carbohydrates, vitamin C, vitamin A, folate, potassium, iron, antioxidants, and dietary fiber.

#### Nutritional composition

Table No. 5.

Sanskrit Name	Botanical Name	Carbohydrates (per 100 g) <sup>[15]</sup>	Protein	Fat	Vitamins	Minerals	Dosha Effect <sup>[13]</sup>	Ayurvedic Benefits
<b>Amalaki (Indian gooseberry)</b>	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>	~15 g	~1 g	~0.6g	Very high Vit C	Calcium, Iron	Pacifies <b>Pitta</b> , balances <b>Kapha</b>	Rasayana boosts immunity
<b>Draksha (Grapes)</b>	<i>Vitis vinifera</i>	~17 g	~0.6 g	~0.4g	Vit C, Vit K	Potassium, Copper	Pacifies <b>Vata &amp; Pitta</b>	Cooling, laxative, good for thirst
<b>Jambu (Jamun / Black plum)</b>	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	~15 g	~0.6 g	~0.2g	Vit C	Iron, Calcium	Pacifies <b>Kapha</b> , balances <b>Pitta</b>	Anti-diabetic, improves digestion
<b>Badara (Indian jujube / Ber)</b>	<i>Ziziphus jujube</i>	~20 g	~0.8 g	~0.4g	Vit C	Calcium, Iron	Pacifies <b>Vata</b> , balances <b>Kapha</b>	Nutritive, cooling, improves appetite

#### 5. Harita Varga

This is the group of vegetables that are used uncooked or in salads, just like fruits, but fruits are satiating, and these are not satiating but relishing, hence are described after fruits. Mostly *laghu*, *tikshna*, and digestion-stimulating, they are high in iron, calcium, vitamin C, B-complex vitamins, selenium, and essential oils. They have anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and antioxidant qualities that are good for metabolic health, and they improve digestion, immunity, and circulation.

## Nutritional composition

Table No. 6.

Sanskrit Name	Botanical Name	Carbohydrates (per 100 g) <sup>[15]</sup>	Protein	Fat	Vitamins	Minerals	Dosha Effect <sup>[13]</sup>	Ayurvedic Benefits
Jambira (Lemon)	<i>Citrus limon</i>	~9g	1g	0.3g	Vit C, B-complex	Potassium, Calcium	Pacifies Kapha, increases Vata	Improves digestion, detoxifies, enhances immunity
Surasa (Holy Basil)	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>	~5g	3g	0.6g	Vit A, C, K	Iron, Calcium	Balances Kapha & Vata	Anti-inflammatory, respiratory support, stress relief
Yawani (Ajwain)	<i>Trachyspermum ammi</i>	~25g	15g	21g	Vit B-complex	Calcium, Iron	Reduces Kapha, stimulates Pitta	Carminative, relieves indigestion, antimicrobial
Sigru (Drumstick/Moringa)	<i>Moringa oleifera</i>	~9g	2.5g	0.2g	Vit A, C	Calcium, Magnesium	Pacifies Kapha & Vata	Anti-inflammatory, nutrient-rich, boosts immunity

## 6. Ikshu Varga

This is the group of sugarcane juice and its products. While *Ikshu Kaanda* is referenced in *Shukra Shodhana Varga*, Acharya Charaka has identified *Ikshu* as *Agrya* for *Mutrajananaam*. It is naturally *Brihamana* and *Vrushya* when chewed.<sup>[16]</sup> It is *Madhura*, *Balya*, *Vrushya*, *Mutrala*, and *Raktapitta Prasamana* in nature, according to Acharya Sushruta.<sup>[17]</sup> The same attributes are also described in *Astanga Hridayam*. It is referred to as *Hridhya*, *Raktpittaghna*, *Balya*, and *mutrala* by *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Nutritional composition

Table No. 7.

Sanskrit Name	Botanical / Source	Carbohydrates (per 100 g) <sup>[15]</sup>	Protein	Fat	Vitamins	Minerals	Dosha Effect <sup>[13]</sup>	Ayurvedic Benefits
Ikshu (Sugarcane)	<i>Saccharum officinarum</i>	~73 g	~0.2 g	~0.4 g	Small Vit B-complex	Calcium, Iron, Potassium	Pacifies Vata & Pitta, increases Kapha	Cooling, energizing, diuretic, improves strength
Ikshu Rasa (Sugarcane juice)	Fresh juice of sugarcane	~13 g	~0.2 g	~0.1 g	Vit C (trace), B-complex	Potassium, Calcium	Pacifies Pitta, increases Kapha	Hydrating, cooling, useful in jaundice
Guḍa (Jaggery)	Unrefined sugarcane product	~97 g	~0.4 g	~0.1 g	Small Vit B-complex	Iron, Calcium, Magnesium	Pacifies Vata, increases Kapha	Nutritive, improves digestion, blood

								purifier
<b>Khanda (Raw sugar / sugar lumps)</b>	Crystallized cane sugar	~99 g	~0 g	~0 g	–	Trace minerals	Increases <b>Kapha</b>	Quick energy, heavy, sweet

### 7. *Krtanna varga*

According to the *Brhatrayee*, *Krtanna Varga* comprises prepared and processed foods such as *peya*, *vilepi*, *manda*, and *yusa*, which are suited to the individual's digestive capacity. Depending on their level of preparation, their *guna* ranges from *laghu* (light) to *guru* (heavy). In terms of nutrition, they assist in recovery and restoration of *agni* by offering readily digestible carbs, moderate protein, tiny amounts of fat, B-complex vitamins, and vital minerals.

### Nutritional composition

Table No. 8.

Sanskrit Name	Preparation / Source	Carbohydrates (per 100 g) <sup>[15]</sup>	Protein	Fat	Vitamins	Minerals	Dosha Effect <sup>[13]</sup>	Ayurvedic Benefits
<b>Peya</b>	Thin rice/barley gruel	~15 g	~2 g	~0.5g	B-complex	Iron, Magnesium	Pacifies <b>Pitta</b> , balances <b>Kapha</b>	Light, easy to digest, good in fevers
<b>Vilepi</b>	Thick rice/barley gruel	~25 g	~3 g	~1g	B-complex	Iron, Calcium	Pacifies <b>Vata</b> , increases <b>Kapha</b>	Nutritive, grounding, suitable for weakness
<b>Manda</b>	Supernatant liquid of rice gruel	~5 g	~1 g	~0.1g	B-complex	Trace minerals	Pacifies <b>Pitta</b> , balances <b>Kapha</b>	Very light, suitable for convalescence
<b>Odana</b>	Cooked rice	~28 g	~2.7 g	~0.3g	B-complex	Iron, Magnesium	Pacifies <b>Pitta</b> , increases <b>Kapha</b>	Staple food, nourishing, cooling
<b>Yūṣa</b>	Soup made from pulses	~15 g	~6 g	~1g	Vit C, B-complex	Iron, Zinc	Pacifies <b>Kapha</b> , balances <b>Pitta</b>	Light, digestive, improves appetite
<b>Saktu</b>	Roasted flour (barley)	~60 g	~12 g	~2g	B-complex	Iron, Magnesium	Pacifies <b>Kapha</b> ,	Nutritive, light, quick energy
<b>Vesavāra</b>	Rich meat/vegetable curry	~10–20 g	~8–15 g	~10–15g	Vit B12, Vit A	Iron, Zinc	Increases <b>Kapha</b> , balances <b>Vata</b>	Heavy, strength-giving, nourishing

### 8. *Aharaupyogi Varga*

This is the group of food adjuvants. In order to improve the quality and digestion of food, *Aharaupyogi Varga* includes dietary adjuvants, including rock salt, pepper, cumin, ginger, garlic, and medicinal oils. Rich in antioxidants, magnesium, zinc, iron, calcium, selenium, essential oils, and good fats, they are primarily *tikshna*, *ushna*, and digestive-stimulating in *guna*. They enhance circulation, metabolic regulation, *agni*, and nutrient absorption.

## Nutritional composition

Table No. 9.

Sanskrit Name	Botanical / Source	Carbohydrates (per 100 g) <sup>[15]</sup>	Protein	Fat	Vitamins	Minerals	Dosha Effect <sup>[13]</sup>	Ayurvedic Benefits
<b>Saindhava Lavana (Rock salt)</b>	Mineral salt	0g	0g	0g	–	Sodium, Potassium, Magnesium	Pacifies <b>Vata</b> , balances <b>Pitta</b> , increases <b>Kapha</b>	Improves taste, aids digestion, balances electrolytes
<b>Maricha (Black pepper)</b>	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	~64g	~10g	~3g	Vit K, Vit C	Iron, Manganese	Pacifies <b>Kapha</b> , increases <b>Pitta</b>	Carminative, stimulates appetite, clears channels
<b>Hingu (Asafoetida)</b>	<i>Ferula asafoetida</i>	~67g	~4g	~0.6g	Trace Vit B	Calcium, Iron	Pacifies <b>Vata &amp; Kapha</b>	Strong digestive stimulant, relieves gas
<b>Tila Taila (Sesame oil)</b>	<i>Sesamum indicum</i>	0g	0g	~100g	Vit E	Calcium, Zinc	Pacifies <b>Vata</b>	Nourishing, strength providing

## Foods of today: Changing Dietary Patterns in the Modern Era

Structural changes in traditional food systems which were brought on by urbanization, industrialization, globalization and technological advancement, have reshaped the contemporary food environment. Current dietary patterns are characterized by an excess of convenient, energy-dense and commercially processed products,<sup>[19]</sup> in contrast to traditional diets that emphasized seasonal, locally produced, and minimally processed foods. Ultra-processed foods, like packaged snacks, instant noodles, processed meats, sugary drinks and ready-to-eat meals, are some of the most widely consumed types of foods and usually have high levels of sodium, trans fats, added sugars refined carbohydrates and additives that can contribute to obesity, metabolic syndrome, insulin resistance, and cardiovascular disease.<sup>[20]</sup> The risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease is further increased by refined grains and sugar-sweetened beverages.<sup>[21]</sup> Increased fast-food consumption increases intake of saturated fats and sodium.<sup>[22]</sup> Together with sedentary behaviours and decreased dietary diversity these trends contribute to the global burden of non-communicable diseases.<sup>[23]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

The current study highlighted both compositional characteristics and health concerns by comparing traditional Ayurvedic dietary classifications with modern nutritional patterns. The

*Charaka Samhita's* list of food groups - *Sukadhanya*, *Samidhanya*, *Saka*, *Phala*, *Harita*, *Ikshu*, *Kṛtanna*, and *Aharaupyogi Varga* - showcases a dietary approach that is both metabolically orientated and nutritionally diversified. Rice, wheat, barley, millets, and wild rice are examples of *Sukadhanya Varga* (awned cereals) that are primarily high in complex carbs (66–80 g/100 g), moderate protein (7–12 g), low fat, and B-complex vitamins, as well as minerals like iron, magnesium, phosphorus, and selenium. These macronutrient compositions promote metabolic stability and long-term energy release. The *Kapha*-pacifying qualities of barley and millets align with current research that supports the use of low-glycemic, high-fiber cereals to prevent diabetes and obesity.<sup>[24]</sup> High-quality plant protein (19–25 g/100 g), complex carbs (60 g), little fat (except from sesame), and minerals like iron, zinc, calcium, and magnesium are all found in *Samidhanya Varga* (legumes), which include green gram, black gram, chickpea, lentil, and horse gram. They support glycemic management, cardiometabolic health, and satiety due to their high protein density and fiber content.<sup>[25]</sup> The contrast made by Ayurveda between light (*mudga*) and heavy (*masha*) legumes reflects variations in digestibility, which are today explained by antinutritional components and fiber type. *Saka* and *Phala Vargas* provide low-calorie, high-micronutrient fruits and vegetables that are high in antioxidants, potassium, calcium, folate, vitamins A, C, and K. Leafy greens, *amalaki*, *jamun*, and bitter gourd all have hypoglycemic and antioxidant qualities. Diets high in fruits and vegetables lower cardiovascular risk, inflammation, and oxidative stress, according to recent studies.<sup>[26]</sup> Garlic, ginger, cumin, black pepper, and rock salt are among the spices and adjuvants that *Harita* and *Aharaupyogi Vargas* highlight. They contain iron, selenium, vitamin C, vitamin E, essential oils, and bioactive substances that improve digestion, bioavailability, and metabolic efficiency, even though they are only ingested in modest amounts. Their cardioprotective and anti-inflammatory properties are supported by recent studies. Therefore, macronutrient balance and micronutrient sufficiency have changed as a result of the shift from traditional Ayurvedic dietary principles, seasonal, minimally processed, and constitution-specific, to contemporary industrialized food systems. Evidence-based nutrition, combined with traditional dietary knowledge, may offer long-term strategies for preventing NCDs and regaining metabolic health. Mental health disorders are also significantly influenced by nutritional deficiencies. Deficits in vital micronutrients, including iron, zinc, magnesium, omega-3 fatty acids, and B-complex vitamins, which are critical for brain function and neurotransmitter production, can result from diets heavy in ultra-processed foods and low in nutrient-dense foods. These impairments are linked to a higher risk of stress, anxiety, depression, and cognitive decline.

## CONCLUSION

The preventive and customized framework provided by traditional Ayurvedic food principles is still very applicable in addressing the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases. Ayurveda promotes balanced, minimally processed, and nutrient-dense eating patterns that support metabolic harmony and long-term well-being by highlighting constitution-specific planning, seasonal adaptation, digestive power (agni), and the qualitative qualities of food like rasa and guna. This traditional system emphasizes holistic sustenance above simple calorie computation, in contrast to modern diets that are dominated by ultra-processed, calorie-dense, and nutrient-poor foods. Preventive healthcare techniques can be strengthened by combining Ayurvedic dietary wisdom with modern nutrition research and new personalized medicine approaches. By bridging the gap between conventional wisdom and contemporary research, this combined model provides workable and sustainable ways to lower the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, anxiety depression and other mental health lifestyle-related conditions.

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