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## ABSTRACT

Ritu means (Season) and Charya means (Guidelines), it is a seasonal guideline for healthy living. The movement of sun is responsible for different types of Ritu (Season), this divides a year into two parts i.e. Uttarayan and Dakshinayan. Both the phases (Ayans) have 6-6 months duration and 3-3 ritus. i.e. Uttarayan has (Shishira, Vasant and Grishma) while Dakshinayan has (Varsha, Sharad and Hemant) ritu. Rituharitaki is the seasonal usage of Haritaki with different Prakshepas (Vehicles) and the action is said to be as Swasthasya Urjaskaram. In each season Haritaki is advised to be taken with a specific Prakshepa which reduces the particular Dosha vitiation in that season.

**KEYWORDS:** Ritu, Charya, Haritaki, Rituharitaki.

## INTRODUCTION

Due to tremendous changes in the mode of living as well as seasonal variations, human beings are prone to various infections and lifestyle ailments. The infectious diseases once thought to be under control, are re-emerging with increased virulence. In Ayurveda, it is mentioned that when seasonal variations occur, the Dosha (Bioelements) get imbalanced in the form of Chaya and Prakopa (Accumulation and aggravation). The health impact caused by seasonal variation includes not only physical problems but also physiological changes.

Various modalities are mentioned to alleviate this Dosha vitiation and to improve the Agni by improving the Vyadhikshamatva (Immunity). One among those is the seasonal usage of Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*), which is mentioned in one of the Laghutrayi-Bhavaprakasha, in the Haritakyaadi Varga as Rasayana (Anti-aging).

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Rituharitaki is the seasonal usage of Haritaki with different Prakshepas (Vehicles) and the action is said to be as Swasthasya Urjaskaram. In each season Haritaki is advised to be taken with a specific Prakshepa which reduces the particular Dosha vitiation in that season. As this is mentioned as Rasayana, this will bring down the vitiation of Dosha and improve the Vyadhikshamatva in that particular season. According to Acharya Sushruta, Rasayana drugs not only arrest the ageing process but also develop resistance against diseases. Acharya Sharangadhara has also claimed the Rasayana to be effective in increasing the immunity. The imbalance of Vata, Pitta and Kapha at cellular level can be the precursor of a disease condition. Rasayana has an important role in maintaining this homeostasis.

In healthy human body, the generation of pro oxidants in the form of ROS (Reactive oxygen species) and RNS (Reactive nitrogen species) are effectively kept in check by the various levels of antioxidant defence. However when seasonal variation occurs or when gets exposed to adverse physiochemical, environmental or pathological agents, this delicately maintained balance is shifted in favour of pro oxides resulting in oxidative stress and this oxidative stress disturbs the normal cell functions. As a part of seasonal variation also, there will be agnimandya resulting in the formation of Ama (Toxic substance/free radicals). This can be correlated with the role of free radicals in diseases manifestation. These free radicals interact with various non-radicals and the cumulative effect of multiple changes by free radicals is the proximate cause of cell death. Membrane lipids are highly susceptible to free radical damage. This chain reaction of lipid per oxidation has deleterious effect on cells. The concept of Rasayana goes well with the concept of anti-oxidants which are substances that neutralize either free radicals or their actions.

**Table 1: Effect of ritu on dosha.**

Dosha	Sanchaya (Accumulation)	Prakopa (Aggravation)	Prashama (Mitigation)
Vata	Grishma	Varsha	Sharada
Pitta	Varsha	Sharada	Hemanta
Kapha	Shishira/ Hemanta	Vasanta	Grishma

**Review of haritaki**

**Morphology:** It is a large perennial tree, which grows up to 30-40 feet height.

**Habitat:** Abundant in Northern India, occurs in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Central and South India.

**Latin name:** Terminalia chebula.

**Family:** Combretaceae.

**Gana:** Prajasthapana, Jwaraghna, Kushtaghna, Kasaghna, Arshoghna (Charaka); Triphala, Amalakyadi, Parushakadi, (Sushruta).

**Table 2: Types of haritaki.**

Types	Uses
Vijaya	Sarvaroga (Cures all diseases)
Rohini	Vrana (Wound healing)
Putana	Pralepa (Used for application)
Amruta	Shodhana (For purification)
Abhaya	Netra roga (Eye diseases)
Jeevanti	Sarvaroga (Cures all diseases)
Chetaki	Rechaka (Purgation)

**Table 3: Rasapanchak of haritaki.**

Rasa (Taste)	Kashaya pradhana Lavana varjita pancha rasa
Guna (Properties)	Laghu, Ruksha
Virya (Potency)	Ushna
Vipaka (Post digestion effect)	Madhura
Prabhav (Benefits)	Tridosahara, patyakara

**Rutu haritaki sevana**

Haritaki provides the rasayana effect i.e. restorative by cleansing the channels of body. But for producing the rasayana effect it needs various supportive dravyas in different ritu such as-

**Table 4: Showing sevana of haritaki in different ritus.**

Ritu	Supportive Dravya
Varsha	Haritaki + Saindhav Lavana
Sharada	Haritaki + Sharkara
Hemanta	Haritaki + Shunti
Shishira	Haritaki + Pippali
Vasanta	Haritaki + Madhu
Grishma	Haritaki + Guda

**Effect of haritaki with guda (Jaggery) in grishma ritu**

Grishma ritu (Summer season) is the last season of Adana kala. During this season dravyas have atiruksha Guna (Excessive dryness) and katu rasa (Pungent taste), which considerably reduce the strength of a person. Accumulation of vata and mitigation of kapha takes place in this season. Guru Snigdha Gunas (Heaviness and Unctuousness) and madhura vipaka of guda (Jaggery) and usna virya, madhura vipaka of Haritaki helps to prevent the vata sanchaya. By this, it checks vata from moving into further kriyakalas (Pathological stages). Ushna virya and laghu, ruksha gunas of Haritaki brings the samana rupi kapha to its equilibrium state.

**Effect of Haritaki with Madhu (Honey) in Vasanta Rutu**

Vasanta rutu (Spring season) is first rutu of visarga kala, comes under sadharana rutu. During this rutu, ahara and oushadha dravyas have madhyama rukshata (Moderately dry) and astringent properties. Hence, strength of person is reduced. The aggravation of kapha takes place in this rutu. To mitigate the aggravated kapha, Haritaki is taken with honey. The laghu, ruksha Guna (Lightness and Dryness) and kashaya rasa (Astringent taste) of Haritaki and madhu help to mitigate kapha, this combination acts as rasayana.

**Effect of haritaki with pippali in shishira ritu**

Shishira ritu (Winter season) is first season of the adana kala (Strengthening season), during this period the intensity of sun rays will gradually increase, along with this ruksha Guna (Dryness) also increases and strength of person gradually decreases due to excess coldness. The accumulation of kapha takes place in this season. To mitigate the accumulated kapha, Haritaki is taken with piper longum, as it is good sleshmahara (Kapha mitigate), due to its katu rasa (Pungent taste), laghu, tikshna Guna (Lightness and penetrating properties) and ushna virya. Apart from this it also brings the shamana rupi pitta to its equilibrium state. By this it maintains the equilibrium status of the dosha leading to agni samyata, dhatu samyata (Equilibrium state of agni and body tissue) and ultimately leads to Rasayana karma.

**Effect of haritaki with shunti in hemanta rutu**

Hemanta rutu (Winter season) is the last season of visarga kala, during which the snigdha Guna and madhura rasa are predominant. In this season the strength of the person is good, the pitta is in mitigating state and kapha in its accumulating stage. It mitigates the kapha in its accumulating stage and prevents aggravation, due to ushna virya (Hot potency), katu, tikta, kashaya rasa (Pungent, bitter, astringent taste), laghu, ruksha Guna (Lightness, dryness) of

Haritaki and shunti (Ginger). Along with this it helps to bring back the pitta to equilibrium state by its madhura vipaka.

#### **Effect of haritaki with sharkara in sharada ritu**

Sharada ritu is madhyama snigdha (Mild unctuousness) and lavana rasa are predominant. Agni (Digestion) becomes teekshna (Increased), Bala (Strength) of the person is madhyam due to predominance of snigdha guna, lavana rasa. Haritaki with sharkara does purifies provoked pitta, due to its snigdha Guna (Unctuousness), madhura rasa (Sweet taste) and vipaka (Post digestion). When the pitta dosha is purified, it restores the strength and digestive capacity of the person. Madhura rasa, madhura vipaka and sheeta virya of sharkara prevent the further vitiation of the pitta.

#### **Effect of haritaki with saindava lavana in varsha ritu**

The lavana rasa is formed in sharada ritu, but its utility is best during varsha ritu to tackle aggravated vata. Haritaki with saindava lavana (Rock salt) brings the sanchita pitta (Accumulated pitta) to equilibrium state due to laghu Guna (Lightness) and madhura vipaka of both Haritaki and saindhava lavana. When the vata and pitta are brought to their equilibrium state, they ultimately enhance the agni (Metabolism), which is impaired due to vata prakopa (Aggravation of vata) and pitta sanchaya (Accumulation of pitta), Haritaki and saindhava acts as appetizer, digestant and restore the strength.

### **CONCLUSION**

In present era it is hard to maintain the healthy life due to faulty diet habits and lifestyle. As everyone wants a healthy life there are many method in Ayurveda to regulates the healthy status of life like Ritu charya (Seasonal regimen), Dinacharya (Daily regimen), Aachar rasayan (to maintain social health), sadvritta (Good habits) etc. Ritu Haritaki is one of them. If it is followed properly, these holistic lifestyle guidelines for diet, exercise and work could prove to be wonderful in maintaining good health and keeping diseases away. The seasonal use of Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*) is the cheapest and effective tools to elevate the health, detoxify the body and keep it free from diseases. Haritaki with its Anupana dravyas in different rutus works as shodhan of doshas, brings the impaired agni to its equilibrium state, and maintains the healthy state of dhatu and mala leading to rasayana (rejuvenator) karma, by detoxifying and balancing the bodily humors throughout the year. Hence Ritu Haritaki acts as a preventive, curative and rejuvenative (rasayana) medicine.

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