

A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF YAVAGU KALPANA AS AHARA AND AUSHADHA FROM CHARAKA SAMHITA

¹*Dr. Rahul Hanumantrao Kale, ²Dr. Sambhaji Shivaji Gosavi, ³Dr. Shital Hanmanlu
Thakrod

¹Asst. Professor, Dept. of Samhita, Mahesh Ayurved College, Asthi, Maharashtra.

²Asst. Professor, Dept. of Swasthavritta Evam Yoga, Mahesh Ayurved College, Asthi,
Maharashtra.

³Asst. Professor, Dept. of Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, Mahesh Ayurved College,
Asthi, Maharashtra.

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*Corresponding Author

Dr. Rahul Hanumantrao Kale

Asst. Professor Dept. of Samhita,
Mahesh Ayurved College, Asthi,
Maharashtra.



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ABSTRACT

Yavagu Kalpana has been described in Charaka Samhita as a significant food that can be prescribed either as a routine Ahara or under conditions such as poor digestion, fever, or following therapy to regain strength. Being a unique blend of Ahara & Aushadha, Yavagu Kalpana plays a vital role in the field of Ayurvedic Pathya Kalpana. Classical texts describe Yavagu Kalpana as a laghu, sadrava, easy to digest preparation made using mainly rice and water/medicated preparations, which have found their application in Samsarjana Krama, Jwara, and Agnimandya. This article presents a critical review of Yavagu Kalpana in light of classical literature, with special reference to commentary of Chakrapani. One of the unique concepts introduced by Chakrapani is that of viewing Peya & Vilepi as variations of Yavagu on account of fluidity. Such a concept introduces a novel idea of graded food progression, called as

Ahara Krama, to aid in sequential restoration of digestive fire. Review on use of Yavagu as a therapeutic medium has revealed its unique feature of incorporating medicinal substances to treat diseases according to their requirement. Dosage considerations according to virya of medicinal substances also contribute to individualization of the concept, making it similar to contemporary ideas of functional foods and nutraceuticals. Thus, Yavagu Kalpana remains to

be a highly useful tool, combining nutrition and pharmacological aspects, of ancient times as well as modern age.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Charaka Samhita, Yavagu, Ahara, Nutraceuticals.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the ancient science of medicine where besides its emphasis on prevention of diseases (Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam) it also places equal importance on curing the diseases (Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam).^[1] These two aspects can be accomplished by using proper measures for Ahara (diet), Vihara (lifestyle), and Aushadha (medicines). Among these three factors, Ahara and Aushadha become crucial elements in achieving physiological balance as well as in correcting the pathological disorders. The science of Ayurveda believes that healthy individuals must maintain an optimal diet that could help them in sustaining good health, while improper diet becomes one of the prime causes of diseases. Therefore, both diet and medicines become essential components in the clinical management of patients.

Pathya Apathya Concept

Pathya Apathya concept forms the key treatment modality in Ayurveda. In other words, Pathya refers to a diet and regimen, which promote health and recovery, while Apathya denotes foods and regimens that have the potential to aggravate diseases. According to classical texts, the efficacy of any medicine will become futile without proper Pathya regimen, whereas an appropriate diet alone will cure certain diseases. Although there exists a difference between Ahara and Aushadhi, in terms of nutrition versus potent medicines, there is no precise distinction between them. Ahara Kalpana, when devised in accordance with the disease condition, digestive capacity, and Dosha imbalance, not only serves the purpose of nourishment but also acts as therapeutic agents.

Yavagu Kalpana

Ahara acting as Aushadha gets illustrated by Yavagu Kalpana. It finds a mention in many classical texts like Charaka Samhita. Yavagu represents a dietary preparation, which when made with medicines acts as a potent remedy against various diseased conditions.^[3]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To critically study Yavagu Kalpana in Charaka Samhita with special emphasis on Chakrapani's interpretation of Peya and Vilepi as gradational forms of Yavagu.

Review of Literature

1. Yavagu as Ahara Kalpana^[4,5,6]

Yavagu is mentioned under Kritanna Kalpana in Charaka Samhita. It includes detailed description regarding the method of preparation of numerous preparations of rice diet. Such preparations play an important role in Ayurvedic dietology and used for treatment of diseases as well as in healthy state.

The basis of preparation of Yavagu consists of rice (Tandula) and water or decoction. In accordance with traditional instructions, one part of rice was mixed with six parts of water and cooked till the attainment of liquid-consistency. This proportion allows maintaining Laghu nature of the preparation.

Preparation of Yavagu is not confined to rice and water alone. In accordance with the need, it can be prepared from

Kwatha (medicated decoction)

Kalka (paste of drugs)

Mamsa Rasa (beef broth)

Hence Yavagu appears as a versatile formulation, which can be adjusted according to clinical indications. Usage of medicinal substances renders it with added therapeutic properties.

The physiological significance of boiling rice lies in the conversion of starch into simpler forms. Thus, boiling of rice helps in increasing its digestibility.

2. Yavagu as Pathya Kalpana

a. In Samsarjana Krama^[7]

Yavagu plays a crucial role in Samsarjana Krama, the post-therapeutic dietary regimen described in Charaka Samhita. After procedures like Vamana and other Shodhana therapies, digestive fire becomes weakened. To restore Agni gradually, a sequential dietary protocol is followed.

This progression ensures that digestion is not overloaded and that metabolic capacity is gradually restored. Yavagu acts as an intermediate stage, providing both nourishment and stimulation of digestive fire.

b. In Jwara, Raktapitta Etc (Fever)^[8]

Yavagu is mentioned as a pathya in various disorders. Charaka specifically prescribes Yavagu in the management of Jwara. After Langhana (lightening therapy) or Vamana, Yavagu is administered

- At appropriate time of feeding
- Starting with Manda and progressing to Peya/Yavagu
- Continued until fever becomes mild or for a duration of up to six days

Yavagu is considered Jwara Satmya, meaning it is compatible with the pathological state of fever. It helps in

- Kindling Agni
- Relieving thirst
- Inducing mild sweating
- Providing light nourishment

c. In Agnimandya^[9]

Yavagu is widely indicated in conditions of Agnimandya, where digestive capacity is reduced. Due to its Laghu and fluid nature, it facilitates digestion without exerting stress on the gastrointestinal system.

Especially in the Agnimandya due to fasting, Yavagu along with Ghruta is indicated to slowly lighten up the Agni and provide nutrition to the body.

Medicated Yavagu prepared with drugs such as Pippali, Shunthi, and Chitraka is specifically indicated to

- Stimulate digestive fire (Agnidīpana)
- Improve metabolism (Pachana)
- Reduce symptoms like abdominal pain and heaviness

Thus, Yavagu serves as an ideal dietary intervention in digestive disorders.

3. Yavagu as a Therapeutic Medicine^[3]

Yavagu in Charaka Samhita is not limited to dietary use but is also described as a therapeutic formulation. Its medicinal value is derived from the incorporation of specific drugs tailored to disease conditions. Where Aushadhi becomes impossible to use due to its high potency, which can damage the Dhatu and Oja, Ahara Kalpana only becomes feasible, which not only

protects Oja and Bala of Dhatu but also moderates disease due to medicinal properties of Aushadhi used during preparation.

Various formulations of Yavagu are described for different diseases, demonstrating its versatility as a therapeutic medium. These include

- Pachana Yavagu – prepared with digestive herbs for Agnimandya
- Grahi Yavagu – useful in diarrhea
- Mutrakṛcchrahar Yavagu – used in urinary disorders
- Krimighna Yavagu – indicated in worm infestations
- Pipasahara Yavagu – relieves excessive thirst

These formulations highlight that Yavagu acts as a vehicle for drug delivery, enhancing both palatability and bioavailability of medicinal substances.

Pharmacologically, Yavagu exhibits

- Agnidīpana (digestive stimulation)
- Anulomana (regulation of physiological movement)
- Swedana (induction of mild sweating)
- Trishna Nigrahana (relief of thirst)
- Balya and Tarpana (nourishment and strength)

Its liquid and warm nature further supports physiological processes and aids in recovery.

DISCUSSION

The concept of Yavagu Kalpana according to Charaka Samhita is an interesting amalgamation of Ahara (diet) and Aushadha (medication). Yavagu plays a very important role in disease management in addition to its nutritional role. According to Ayurveda, the correct choice of diet has been equated to medication, especially when dealing with impaired digestion and metabolism.

Importance of Yavagu as Pathya Yavagu can be considered an ideal pathya owing to its Laghu (light), Bahudrava (liquid) property and easy digestibility. In cases like Jwara or after Shodhana therapy, where digestive power (Agni) is impaired, consumption of difficult to digest food would have an adverse effect on health. Yavagu, as a light meal, provides nutrition with least digestive burden.

In Samsarjana Krama, consumption of food becomes necessary after the treatment procedure such as Vamana, when digestive power is weak. Yavagu helps in this regard by serving as a transitional diet. It gradually restores Agni and prevents complication due to digestion and recurrence of illness.

Another important aspect of Yavagu includes its use in pathological states. It is known as Jwara Satmya, since in fever conditions, appetite is suppressed along with reduced digestion capacity. Yavagu in this case supplies body energy and fluid. In addition to this, it helps to stimulate physiological processes like sweat formation, removal of thirst and maintenance of hydration.

Yavagu as Aushadha (Therapeutic Vehicle)

Yavagu has also been used as a medium for administering drug. When some medicinal agents are included in the preparation of Yavagu, it gets converted into a therapeutically useful form of treatment. Yavagu serves as a suitable medium for delivering medicinal properties.

It has been described in classical texts that Yavagu can be prepared from:
Kalka (paste of drugs)

Kwatha (decoction)

Mamsa Rasa (meat decoction)

It has different applications in different pathological conditions. Some examples include: Deepana Pachana (digestive drugs) for digestive disorders Grahi (stomachic drugs) for diarrhea Brimhana (nutritive drugs) for malnutrition Clinical Utility and Dose According to Virya^[3] Unique about Yavagu is its individualized dosing according to Virya of medicinal agents.

It is mentioned in the commentary on Yavagu as Virya Tikshna Drugs (example – Sunthi, Pippali) – Karsha (~12 gms) Virya Madhyama Drugs (example – Bilva, Agnimantha) – Half Pala (~24 gms) Virya Mrdu Drugs (example – Amalaki) – One Pala (~48 gms) This classification helps in providing optimum dosage. In the case of Yavagu preparation, there is no standard dosage, as in other preparations, according to Agni, Bala and condition of disease.

Role of Chakrapani's Interpretation in Clinical Utility^[10] Chakrapani's interpretation of Yavagu is very interesting, as he describes two modifications of Yavagu as follows:

Peya = Bahudrava Yavagu Vilepi = Viraladrava Yavagu Herein lies the importance of his understanding as Yavagu is not separate but only a different consistency form. This opens a new horizon for us with great clinical application in mind.

It gives us a graded approach in diet, which could be modified according to the patient's digestion ability. Peya – for maximum impaired digestion Yavagu – for Agni restoration Vilepi – for near-normal Agni Thus, on one hand we can give maximum relief and on the other hand we could give a customized treatment according to the needs of the patient. This kind of interpretation makes the treatment easier for the patient.

CONCLUSION

Yavagu Kalpana from Charaka Samhita is a fine example of a well-thought-out therapeutic dietary combination, successfully linking the concepts of Ahara and Aushadha. According to Ayurvedic principles, a properly planned and implemented diet can serve as one of the main approaches to treating certain diseases, specifically those associated with disorders in the Agni and metabolism.

According to classic descriptions, Yavagu should be a Laghu, Bahudrava, and easily digestible combination of medicinal components which would be suitable to treat such pathologies as Jwara and Agnimandya. Yavagu has found its use in the process of Samsarjana Krama for the gradual restoration of Agni, allowing patients to gradually return to normal food consumption after Shodhana. Finally, due to inclusion of medicinal agents, Yavagu becomes a medium that can deliver various health benefits to patients. A new perspective on the concept of Yavagu Kalpana has been offered by Chakrapani who described Peya and Vilepi as gradational forms of Yavagu. The idea of the gradation of food according to the degree of digestibility allows applying this approach in clinical practice and increasing the efficacy and safety of the therapy.

Therefore, the concept of Yavagu has become more than just dietary therapy as it offers an approach combining nutrition, drug therapy, and digestive therapy in one. As we look to the future, standardizing these preparations and validating them through clinical trials could bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern nutritional science, offering a gentle yet powerful path to recovery for patients everywhere.

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