**Varsharitucharya-An Ayurvedic Concept of Healthy Lifestyle in Monsoon**

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**Abstract**

Ayurveda is a science of life. Ayurveda states that Arogya (good health) stands at the root for attainment of Dharma (virtuous acts), Artha (wealth), Kama (gratification of desire) and Moksha (salvation). In varsha ritu (monsoon), the people are susceptible to diseases owning to their decrease immunity, dehabala (body strength) and agnibalal (digestion strength). With an aim to keep people healthy in this season, Ayurveda has mentioned the concept of varsharitucharya.

**Keywords**

Varsharitu, dehabala, agnibala, varsharitucharya
INTRODUCTION

Ritucharya generally means as “mode of living in different seasons”. An year is divided into six seasons namely sisira (late winter), vasanta (spring), grisma (summer), varsha (monsoon/rainy season), sarad (autumn) and hemanta (early winter). Out of them magha and phalguna makes sisira, caitra and vaisakha makes vasanta, jyestha and asadha makes grisma, sravana and bhadrapada makes varsa, asvina and kartika makes sarad and margasirsa and pausa makes hemanta. The three commencing with sisira (sisira,vasanta and grisma) together pertain to northern solstice (uttarayana) also known as adana kala. The southern solstice (Daksinayana) relates to the three ritus the varsa, sarata and hemanta. It is referred as the visarga kala.

The sun, the moon and the wind being governed by the time, nature and path they follow, constitute the causes of time, season, taste (in drugs and diets), (vitiation of) dosas and bodily strength.

In the beginning of visarga kala (varsa) and end of adana kala (grisma) weakness prevails in human beings. In the middle of both i.e (vasanta and sarad) strength becomes moderate. At the end of visarga kala (hemanta ritu) and beginning of adana kala (sisira ritu) human beings get considerable amount of strength.

It is considered that, generally people are susceptible to weakness during adana kala, while they gain strength during visarga kala. But this is a general statement which cannot be taken too seriously. In fact, the rate of weakness or strength is to be determined according to the seasons rather than the period as a whole. Thus, even though the sisira season happens to come in the period of adana kala people gain strength during this season. Similarly, though the rainy season is one the season of visarga kala, people are susceptible to weakness during this season. The susceptibility to weakness is in fact to be determined according to the following principles.

As regards in adana kala, the first season, sisira is conducive to strength and good health, the second season spring gives rise to moderate strength and the third season the summer causes weakness. The process is reversed during visarga kala. Its first season, rainy season causes susceptibility to weakness, the second season autumn gives moderate strength, while the last season winter is conducive to strength and good health.
The principle mentioned above is quite simple. One who has gained enough strength during the last season of visarga kala will not altogether lose it during the first season of adana kala even though the weakening process has already started⁷.

As it is shown above, varsha ritu causes susceptibility to weakness. So in order to remain healthy one should follow diet and regime namely varsharitucharya as mentioned by our Acharyas.

**VarshaRitu**

The digestive activity (agni) remains weak in individuals during the rainy season as they are debilitated by the summer (adanakala). The agni undergo further decrease and get vitiated by dosas in the rainy season. The dosas in turn get provoked by

- The effect of hanging, thick clouds full of water.
- Cold wind having snow and blowing suddenly.
- Water getting dirty because of rain⁸.

The vata dosa especially get provoked (prakopa) due to consumption of tissue elements caused due by inadequate production of the nutrient material responsible for the nourishment of tissue elements⁹. According to Acharya Susruta the herbs and water during summer become devoid of sara (sapless), roughened, devoid of unctuousness. This herb due to roughness and lightness causes accumulation of vata dosa in person dried by the intense sun. That accumulated vayu excited by cold winds and rain produces prakopa (discord) of vata in rainy season¹⁰. In case of pitta dosa rainfall after adana kala on hot earth are responsible for increase of acidity in water, which causes hyperacidity during digestion and causes sanchaya (accumulation) of pitta.

**Varsharitucharya**

Ahara (diet)

- Old barley, wheat, Sali rice (Oryza sativum Linn.).
- Meat of arid animals.
- Soup of pulses.
- Wine prepared from grapes and fermented decoction (madhvika or arista).
- Intake of whey (mastu) processed with suvarcala and powder of pancakola.
- Rainwater or water from deep wells, well boiled should be used for drinking.
- One should generally use honey in preparing diets and drinks.
- If the days are cooler due to heavy rains accompanied by the storms, one should take such diets as are conspicuously sour, salty, and unctuous; this serves as an
effective antidote to the vitiation of vata during rainy season.

- Eatables should predominantly include the sour, salty and dry items and honey that is easy to digest\textsuperscript{11, 12}.

\textit{Vihar (Lifestyle)}

- Abstain from day sleep and intake of \textit{mantha} (groat) diluted in excess.
- Avoid exercise, avoid indulgence in sexual intercourse.
- One should wear light and clean apparel.
- One should use perfume, should expose his cloth to fragrant fumes.
- One should reside in places that are devoid of heat, cold and snow.

- The individual should have application of \textit{Asthapanvasti} (decoction enema therapy) after undergoing purificatory therapies like \textit{vaman} (emesis therapy, \textit{virecan} (purgation therapy))\textsuperscript{11, 12}.

Even though by nature, honey is responsible for the vitiation of \textit{vata}, its intake in small quantity is prescribed in order to overcome dampness (\textit{kleda}) of the rainy season\textsuperscript{13}. When it is too cold due to heavy rains accompanied with storms, the sour and salty diets are required to be taken. Even though such diets vitiate \textit{pitta}, they are exceedingly useful in overcoming the vitiation of \textit{vata}, which is the most harmful of all\textsuperscript{14}.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To enlighten the basic concept of \textit{Varsharitucharya} to its full perspective.

**MATERIALS**

This article is based on a review of Ayurvedic texts. Reference were taken from \textit{Charaksamhita}, \textit{Susrutasamhita}, \textit{Astangahridaya} along with commentaries.

**CONCLUSION**

\textit{Varsharitu} (monsoon) is the first \textit{ritu} of \textit{visarga kala} during which the strength and power of individuals are diminished due to effect of \textit{adana kala}. The appetite and power of digestion during this season is also very poor. The immunity also tends to be at its lowest in this season. Due to \textit{vata dosa} vitiation in this season all painful conditions like rheumatism tends to aggravate and \textit{pitta dosa} aggravation in turn causes problems like acidity, digestive problems, allergies and skin problems.

\textit{Ayurveda}, the age old science of life, has always emphasized to maintain the health and prevent the diseases by following proper
diet and lifestyle regime rather than treatment and cure of diseases. With a view to keep people healthy and prevent from diseases in rainy season, our ancient Acharya has mentioned the concept of Varsharitucharya.

Table 1 Classification of kala based on Ayana, Ritu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ayana</th>
<th>Seasons</th>
<th>Months acc. to Hindu calendar</th>
<th>Months acc. to English calendar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uttarayana (the period of dehydration/adanakala)</td>
<td>Sisira (late winter)</td>
<td>1. Magh</td>
<td>January - February</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Phalguna</td>
<td>February-March</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vasanta (spring)</td>
<td>1. Caitra</td>
<td>March-April,</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Vaisakha</td>
<td>April-May</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grisma (summer)</td>
<td>1. Jyaistha</td>
<td>May-June,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Asadha</td>
<td>June-July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daksinayana (the period of hydration/visargakala)</td>
<td>Varsha (Rainy Season)</td>
<td>1. Sravana</td>
<td>July-August,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Bhadrava</td>
<td>August-September</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarad (Autumn)</td>
<td>1. Asvina,</td>
<td>September-October</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Karttika</td>
<td>October-November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hemanta (Early Winter)</td>
<td>1. Margasirsra</td>
<td>November-December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Pausa</td>
<td>December-January</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The following table furnishes a comparative view of the seasonal classification.*
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