



## Review Article

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### A REVIEW ON SEASONS AND SEASONAL REGIMENS: NEED OF REDEFINING KERALA MODEL: FROM PRACTICE TO PRINCIPLE

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#### ABSTRACT

Ritu, the season, is classified according to different features that affect our bodies and the environment. The basic principle followed in Ayurveda is Swastahsya swasthyarakshana & Athurasya vikaraprasamana, which means Ayurveda emphasises maintaining health and preventing diseases by following proper dietetics and lifestyle regimen rather than just treatment and cure of the diseases. This can be achieved by changing diet and practices in response to changes in climatic conditions. For this purpose, Dinacharya and Ritucharya have been mentioned in the classics. Ayurveda gives equal importance to both prevention and cure of disease. Generally, India has six major types of seasons. But the climate of India comprises a wide range of variations due to geographical diversity. The role of Pitta in seasonal patterns seems to be different in Kerala compared to a pan Indian pattern. Relationship of pitta in greeshma and varsha ritu needs revision. Kerala's traditional pattern of Ritucharya seems to endorse the role of pitta to a more considerable extent. The enquiry should direct from practice to principle, instead of a usual dynamic from Principles to Practice, because tradition focus on technique rather than principle. This paper highlights the need to revise seasonal regimens suitable in a regional context based on panchavayava vakya.

**Keywords:** Ritu, Ritucharya, pitta, Kerala pattern of Ritucharya

#### INTRODUCTION

Seasons are classified according to different features like changes in weather, ecology, number of hours of day and night etc. They express other effects on our bodies as well as the environment. The main aim of Ayurveda is to maintain healthy's health and cure the disease of the diseased<sup>1</sup>. This can be achieved by proper dietetics and lifestyle modification in response to changes in climatic conditions. For this purpose, Dinacharya and Ritucharya have been mentioned in the classics. Ayurveda has described various diet regimens to easily accustom seasonal variations without altering body homeostasis. One who follows Dinacharya, Ritucharya, and Ratri charya, as mentioned, should be healthy always<sup>2</sup>. It is an essential aspect of preventive medicine mentioned in Ayurvedic texts.

Generally, India has six major types of seasons. According to Charaka<sup>3</sup> and Vagbhata<sup>4</sup>, they are sisira, vasantha, greeshma, varsha, sarath and hemantha. But According to Susruta<sup>5</sup>, there is a slight difference, varsha, sarath, hemantha, vasantha, greeshma and pravrit. Seasons are differentiated according to month, rasi and characteristics<sup>6</sup> features of that specific season. More importance has been given to the appearance of characteristics<sup>7</sup>. (Table 1)

But the climate of India comprises a wide range of variations due to geographical diversity like the presence of mountains, coastal areas, deserts etc. The southern part of India experiences a different seasonal pattern compared to the northern region, especially Kerala.

The role of pitta in a seasonal pattern is also different for Kerala. Explicit knowledge about the difference in ritu based on region is vital to follow a healthy lifestyle. This paper will discuss the necessity of probable revisions in seasonal regimens suitable in a regional context based on Panchavayava vakya.

**Table 1: Characteristic features of each Ritu**

Ritu	Features
Sisira	Feeling extreme cold day and night
Vasantha	Feeling hot at day and cold at night
Greeshma	Feeling hot day and night
Varsha	Raining heavy
Sarath	Raining frequently and associated with hotness
Hemantha	Feeling cold day and night

#### Pratijna

In this article, establish 2 points,

1. Ritu and ritucharya patterns are different for Kerala
2. The significance of pitta in greeshma and varsha ritu are different for Kerala compared to classical textbooks.

In Kerala, all shatritus are not well restricted (Table 2). Only Greeshma and Varsha ritu are well defined. Here Varsha can be seen in 2 stages, Southwest monsoon and Northeast monsoon. This concept relates more to varsha ritu explained by Sushruta, i.e. pravrit and varsha. The influence of Hemantha ritu can also see up to an extent. Sisira, Vasantha, Sarath ritus are not much evident in Kerala. In Kerala, seasons having reduced bala are more dominant throughout the year, leading to increased climatic diseases.

**Table 2: Ritus in Kerala**

Greeshma	March, April, May
Pravrit	June, July
Varsha	August, September, October, November
Hemantha	December, January, February

The role of Pitta in seasonal patterns seems to be different in Kerala compared to a pan Indian pattern. As per the textual references, pitta undergoes Chaya during varsha ritu and get kopavastha during sarath ritu<sup>8</sup>. But in Kerala, pitta undergoes Chaya during greeshma ritu and get kopa during varsha ritu. Kerala's traditional pattern of Rituchaya seems to endorse the role of pitta to a more considerable extent. The relationship of pitta in greeshma and varsha ritu needs revision to better observance of ritucharya.

#### Hetu

Kerala is situated near the equator and temperate region, so we feel ushna, especially in summer. Kerala has the Highest humidity compared to other states of India because The Arabian Sea flanks Kerala on the west and western ghats running along its length on the other side of Kerala. The coastal and hilly areas (western ghats) are seen without much difference in the gap. Its location gives its unique climate and geographical features. When the water evaporates, it increases the humidity, but it doesn't go out because of western ghats as a barrier on another side of Kerala. The summer season is more humid than other seasons due to the high temperature and evaporation rate. So, the summer season has snigdha guna along with ushna guna. Due to the presence of ushna and snigdha guna, there is the involvement of pitta in greeshma, i.e., chaya of pitta. Pitta, which is in the chaya stage in greeshma ritu, get kopa in Varsha ritu due to amlapaka in Varsha.

#### Udaharana

It is evident that, in Kerala, during the summer season, there is increased hotness and increased humidity in the environment. So, there is increased sweating, and the chance for sunburn is less. But in the northern part of India, they feel dryness rather than sweating during the summer season due to reduced humidity. Clinically, it is evident that diseases like miliaria rubra, conjunctivitis, and chickenpox are common in summer in Kerala. They are pitta vata pradhana diseases. But in the northern part, sunburn is seen instead of these pitta vata pradhana conditions because of the dryness and hotness of summer. While considering the treatment aspect, vata pitta samana chikitsas are adopted in summer for the diseases like Miliaria rubra, conjunctivitis, and Chickenpox.

There is a traditional practice in Kerala, that is, at the beginning of Varsha, Keralites do virechana instead of classically mentioned vasthi by considering pitta dosha.

#### Upanaya

During greeshma ritu, there is vata Chaya. Due to the environment's snigdha and ushna guna, kleda forms in the body, which leads to pitta vardhana. Consequently, there is vata pita chaya in greeshma.

In the chaya stage in greeshma, Pitta gets kopavastha in varsha ritu due to amlapaka in Varsha. Subsequently, there is pitta and vata prakopa in Varsha. So, at the beginning of Varsha, it is better

to do virechana instead of vasthi, which is mentioned classically by considering the kopa of vata dosha. This procedure can control climatic diseases in varsha ritu to an extent.

#### Nigamana

In the case of Kerala, it is challenging to follow the concept of shat-ritus mentioned in brihatrayi. We can see mainly four seasons in Kerala and no extreme climate. The role of Pitta in seasonal patterns seems to be different in Kerala compared to a pan Indian pattern. And Kerala's traditional pattern of Rituchaya seems to ratify the role of pitta to a greater extent.

#### CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has always stressed maintaining health and preventing diseases by following proper diet and lifestyle regimens rather than treating and curing the diseases. Seasonal changes are very evident in the environment we live in. Being a part of the same ecology, human beings are greatly influenced by the changing climate. With the change in ritu, there is disharmony in tridoshas, which results in different diseases. First, we should understand the ritus and predominant doshas based on the region before adopting ritucharya. Accordingly, there is a need to revise seasonal regimens suitable in a regional context before implementing ritucharya totally to promote a healthy lifestyle.

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