



CRITICAL STUDY OF CHARKOKTA AHARA VARGAS

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ABSTRACT

Life is a divine gift, and a disease-free sound health is a great blessing. *Ahara* plays an important part in maintenance of health.. *Ahara* that we eat ,not only effects our body and efficiency of mind but directly effects our nature and habits. Improper intake of *Ahara* can affects our nutrient intake also. It is also the cause of stress, tiredness and many other diseases. No medicine can perform well unless it is accompanied with proper food. *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brhamcharya* are described as *Trayoupstambh* in *Ayurveda*. *Ahara* stands for balanced diet and is the first and foremost pillar off *Ayurveda*. *Acharya Charak* has divided *Ahara* in twelve *Vargas*. The component in theses *Vargas* can be used for both purpose i.e maintenance of health and eradication of disease. *Acharya Susruta* has divided the *Vargas* on physical properties and same pattern has been followed the basis of *Astanga Samgraha* and *Astanga Hridya*.

Keywords: Ayurveda. *Ahara*, *Vargas*,*Trayoupstambh*,*Nidra*,*Brhamcharya*

INTRODUCTION: Ayurveda is said to be primitive science which focuses basically in maintaining healthy status of healthy and eradication of disease¹. While emphasizing on the first aim Samhitas have mentioned various concepts like *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Vegvidharana*,*Aahara vidhi vidhana* etc . *Ahara* plays an important role in maintaining health .The food taken in appropriate quantity, helps individual in bringing out strength, complexion, happiness and longevity without disturbing the equilibrium of *Dhatus* and *Dosas* of the body². The wellness of human beings are fundamentally sustained on three major factors these are *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brhamcharya*. These three together are called *Tryopstambha* or three pillars of life³.

Ahara maintains the equilibrium of *Dhatus*, promote health and prevents body from various diseases. Aacharya Charak has mentioned twelve *Ahara vargas* ⁴ . The *Ahara vargas* includes all the components of balanced diet.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES:

- To study the *Ahara varga* according to Charak Samhita.
- To study the classification of *Ahara varga* mentioned in Brihatrayee.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Collection, compilation, rearrangement, analysis of data from various Ayurveda literatures.

CONCEPTUAL STUDY: *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brhamcharya* are recognized as the three *Upastambhas*⁵ which are essential for the smooth running of life . Among the

three *Upasthambhas*, *Ahara* is considered

as the best sustainer of life .

Table No.1- Ahara Vargas in described in Brihatrayee-

S.NO	CHARAK SAMHITA ⁶	SUSHRUTA SAMHITA		ASTANGA HRIDAYA	
		<i>DRAVA VARGA</i> ⁷	<i>ANNAPANA VARGA</i> ⁸	<i>DRAVAM</i> ⁹	<i>ADRAVAM</i> ¹⁰
1.	<i>Shook Dhanya Varga</i>	<i>Jala Varga</i>	<i>Shali Varga</i>	<i>Toya Varga</i>	<i>Shook Dhanya</i>
2.	<i>Shami Dhanya Varga</i>	<i>Kshira Varga</i>	<i>Kudhanya Varga</i>	<i>Kshira Varga</i>	<i>Shimbi Dhanya</i>
3.	<i>Mamsa Varga</i>	<i>Dadhi Varga</i>	<i>Vaidala Varga</i>	<i>Ikshu Varga</i>	<i>Pakvanna Varga</i>
4.	<i>Shaaka Varga</i>	<i>Takra Varga</i>	<i>Mamsa Varga</i>	<i>Taila Varga</i>	<i>Mamsa Varga</i>
5.	<i>Phala Varga</i>	<i>Ghrita Varga</i>	<i>Phala Varga</i>	<i>Madya Varga</i>	<i>Shaaka Varga</i>
6.	<i>Harita Varga</i>	<i>Taila Varaga</i>	<i>Shaaka Varga</i>	<i>Mutra Varga</i>	<i>Phala Varga</i>
7.	<i>Madya Varga</i>	<i>Madhu Varga</i>	<i>Pusph Varga</i>		<i>Aushadhabhavarga</i>
8.	<i>Ambu Varga</i>	<i>Ikshu Varga</i>	<i>Kanda Varga</i>		
9.	<i>Gorasa Varga</i>	<i>Madya Varga</i>	<i>Lavana Varga</i>		
10.	<i>Ikshu Vikara Varga</i>	<i>Mutra Varga</i>	<i>Kshar Varga</i>		
11.	<i>Kritanna Varga</i>		<i>Dhaatu Varga</i>		
12.	<i>Ahara Upayogi Varga</i>		<i>Ratna Varga</i>		
			<i>Kritanna Varga</i>		

SHOOK DHANYA VARGA:Out of twelve *Vargas* the two *Vargas* *Shook Dhanya* and *Shimbi Dhanya* comes under category of *Dhanya Varga*. This could be differentiated the cereals which are monocotyledon are brought under *Shook Dhanya*. While those dicotyledon is in *Shimbi Dhanya Varga*. *Shook Dhanya* includes different varieties of rice, usually they are *Madhura* in *Rasa*¹¹. So they can be related to source of carbohydrate. The lowest unit of carbohydrate is glucose and

so is *Madhura Rasa*. They are the basic component of *Kritanna Varga*. Being *Madhura Rasa*, they are useful in *Vataja* and *Pittaj* disease. Corns and Bristle are divided in 6 categories. These are *Shali* rice, *Shastika* rice, *Vreehi* rice, *Shyamaka* rice, *Yava* and *Godhuma*. *Shali* rice further divided in 15 varieties¹². This class contains mainly cereals including different varieties of rice. Red variety is best among the rice varieties. It pacifies thirst and *Tridoshas*. The food item of this *Varga* are

Sheeta in *Virya* *Madhura* in *Vipaka* and vitiate *Vata Dosha*. These *Shali* types of corns are *Madhura* in *Rasa*(Sweet in Taste) and wholesome for body as they add to growth of *Rasa* (Body Fluid),blood, muscle Fat, bone Marrow, *Ojas*, semen and longevity¹³

Examples- *Shyamaka* rice, *Gavedhuka* rice, *Neevar* rice, *Godhuma* etc

SHIMBI DHANYA VARGA: *Shimbi Dhanya* includes classes of pulses. Usually the ingredients present in this group are having *Madhura* and *Kashaya Rasa*¹⁴, and they are good source of carbohydrates and protein in body. The medicated use of *Shimbi Dhanya Varga* as *Yusha*. It is also have useful ingredients on *Kritanna Varga*. The term Pulses as used by the United Nations food and agricultural organization (FAO), is reserved for crops harvested solely for the dry seeds.

- In *Sushruta Samhita*, the category of pulses is known as *Mudgadi Varga*, *Vaidala* or *Shimbi Dhanya*.
- It contains different types legumes and pulses like *Mudga*, *Kulaatha*, *Tila* etc. The category of pulses is main source of protein for vegetarian.

MAMSA VARGA: *Mamsa* *Varga* elaborately explained in *Charaka* according to their habitat and eating habits. Some of the *Mamsa Varga* having *Madhura* and *Kashaya Rasa* and *Laghu Guna*. It is usually taken in the form of *Rasa* as medicinal purpose. Meat is a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals in diet. A balanced diet can include protein from meat, as well as from non-animal sources such as beans and pulses. According to *Acharya Charaka* The group of animals whose meat is commonly used as food are enumerated are following categories¹⁵

Table No 2.- Group of animals acc. to Acharya Charaka-

Prasha	Animals and Birds who take their food by snatching are known as <i>Prasaha</i> . Eg. <i>Cow</i> , <i>Ashavatara</i> , <i>Khara</i> , <i>Ushtra</i> , <i>Asva</i> , <i>Dweepi</i> , <i>Simha</i> , <i>Vanara</i> etc.
Bhumisya	Those residing in burrows known as <i>Bhumisya</i> . Eg. <i>Shwetkakuli Mrig</i> , <i>Shyamkakuli Mrig</i> , <i>Kurchika</i> , <i>Chillata</i> , <i>Bheka</i> etc.
Anupa	Those animals residing in marshy are known as <i>Anupa</i> . Eg. <i>Sharumar</i> , <i>Khadya</i> , <i>Mahisha</i> , <i>Gavaya</i> , <i>Gaja</i> etc.
Vaarishaya	Aquatic Animals. Eg. <i>Koorma</i> , <i>Karkatak</i> , <i>Matsya</i> , <i>Timingal</i> , <i>Shukti</i> , <i>Sankh</i> etc.
Vaarichara	Birds Moving in water Eg. <i>Hansa</i> , <i>Kraureha</i> , <i>Balaalka</i> , <i>Baka</i> , <i>Plava</i> etc.
Jangala	Animal Living Dry Land Forest. Eg. <i>Prushata</i> , <i>Sarabha</i> , <i>Rama</i> , <i>Shasha</i> , <i>Urana</i> , <i>Gokarna</i> etc.
Vishkira	Those which disperse food before taking are known as <i>Vishkira</i> . Eg. Group 1- <i>Lava</i> , <i>Varteeraka</i> , <i>Kapinjala</i> , <i>Upacakra</i> etc. Group 2- <i>Vartaka</i> , <i>Vartika</i> , <i>Tittiri</i> etc.
Pratuda	Those which strike the food articles before taking known as <i>Pratuda</i> . Eg. <i>Shatapatra</i> , <i>Koyasti</i> , <i>Kokila</i> , <i>Atyusha</i> etc.

SHAAKA VARGA: It includes all kind of vegetables. These are modified stems, roots, leaves. *Acharya Charak* includes all the part of plant in category. They are rich source of Vitamins and Minerals. *Shaaka Varga* contains mainly vegetables like *Vastuka, Makoi, Poi, Upodika* etc. All the *Shaaka* are- *Vistabhi, Guru, Ruksha* and Purgative in properties¹⁶. *Aacharya Charak* Classified *Shaka Vargas* According to *Rasa* and *Doshaprabhav*.

PHALA VARGA: *Phala(Fruits)* are rich source of vitamins and minerals. *Phala* is used in form of *Swarasa, Bhavna Dravya*. *Phala* has been recognized as a good source vitamins and minerals, and for their role in preventing vitamin C and vitamin A deficiencies, the nutrients in *Phala*(fruit) are vital for health and maintenance of our body. The fruits have important place in *Ahara*. It is full of Vitamins and Minerals and easily available so it has important place in *Ahara Vargas*.

- In *Charak Samhita Phala Vargas* Starts with 'Draksha' .It is also known as *Phalotama*¹⁷

- *Sushruta* first described *Dadima* in *Phala Vargas*¹⁸.
- In *Bhavprakash Nighantu, Dhanvantri Nighantu Phala Vargas* is known as *Amradi Vargas*¹⁹
- The fruit divided in *Phala vargas* is classified according to *Rasa*.

HARITA VARGA: *Harita Varga* contains different green leafy vegetables and tubers. Dried fruits which is described in these *Varga* used as *Salads*. this category included *Dravyas* which could be take without cooking. Ingredients of this *Vargas* the alleviator of *Vata* and *Kapha*²⁰. *Dravyas* which is use in moist form included in this group. For example green *Adraka* included in *Harita Varga* while in dried form it is used in *Ahara Upayogi Varga*.

Examples- *Adaraka, Jamiri nimbu, Sursa(Tulsi), Gandir etc.*

MADYA VARGA: This class contains different varieties of special wines which has used regularly with diet and therapeutically in different disorders. *Madya* are generally Sour in taste ,*Ushana* in *Virya* and *Amla* in *Vipaka*²¹.

Table No. 3- Madya according to Aacharya Charak²² -

1. Sura	Beer
2. Madira	<i>The upper portion of Madya.</i>
3. Jagala	<i>The lower portion of Madya.</i>
4. Aristha	<i>Fermented Decoction</i>
5. Sharkara	<i>Wine prepared by using Sugar</i>
6. Sidhu	<i>Prepared by Sugarcane juice</i>
7. Gauda	<i>Prepared by using treacle</i>
8. Madhuasava	<i>Wine prepared by Honey</i>
9. Sauviarka	<i>Prepared by fermenting wheat</i>
10. Tushodaka	<i>Prepared by coarse powder of yava along with its husks</i>
11. Madhulika	<i>Prepared by Wheat</i>
12. Dhanyamla	<i>Prepared by Rice and other Grains</i>

JALA VARGA: Human body consisting 75 percent of it and with two thirds of earth

surface covered by water, it is evidently clear that water is one of the prime

elements responsible for life on earth. The entire water is ultimately of one type viz the one which fall from sky as directed by

lord *Indra*. After the fallen down on earth properties are determined by the place where it falls.

Table No .4 -Classification of water according to Aacharya Charak²³

Types	Properties
Aindrya	The one which fall from the Sky directed by Lord <i>Indra</i> .
Kaar	The water which falls directly in the form of ice stone during rain.
Heem	The water which is collected in the form of ice.

GO RASA VARGA: It contains different types of Milk and milk products like Butter, Butter-Milk, *Ghrita* etc. Generally all the milk is *Snighdha* in *Guna*, *Madhura* in *Rasa* and *Sitat* in *Virya*²⁴. Cow's Milk is best wholesome in this group. The properties of cow milk are similar to preparation of *Oja*. Milk is one of the best source of calcium. Milk is filled with vitamin D that helps the body absorb calcium. *Acharya Charak* described following category of milk in *Gorasa Varga*²⁵- *Go Kshira, Mahisa Kshira, Aja Kshira, Ustra Kshira, Hasti Kshira, Aswa Kshira*(Animal with single nail in foot), *Milk of sheep & Nari Kshira*.

IKSHU VARGA: This group contains sugarcane and its various products like *Guda, honey, sugar*. All the product obtains from *Ikshu* is *Madhura* in *Rasa* and *Vipaka* and *Sheetha* in *Virya*²⁶ The *Paundraka* variety of sugar cane is best wholesome in this group. According to *Acharya Charaka* following varieties of *Ikshu* described in *Ahara Varga-Kandekshu, Ikshuvalika, Poundraka & Ikshu*²⁷.

KRITANNA VARGA: *Kritanna varga* have list and properties of different *Kalpanas* made from different *Ahara Varga*, usually included *Shook dhanya, Shimbidhanya and Mamsa rasa*. Food is important part of life but many of those cannot be digested by the human digestive system in raw form, It needs to be

converted in such a form that can be used by the human tissues to get sufficient nutrition from it. The *Ahara Varga* like *Shook Dhanya, Mamsa* and *Shaaka* cannot be used without applying *Kalpana*. *Aacharya* have mentioned *Kritanna Varga* to explain the different *Kalpana* made by *Dravyas* of other *Ahara Vargas*.

AHARA UPAYOGI VARGA: This *Varga* contains different type of oils, condiments, spices and different types of salts. *Tila oil* is best in among oils , *Tila oil* is *Madhura* and *Kashaya* in *Rasa*. *Ushana* in *Virya*. This is the best for *Balya* and *Snehana*. *Saindhav Lavana* is best among in salts. It is *Tridosha Shamak*, aphrodisiac and improves *Agni*.

DISCUSSION: The concept of *Ahara* is being dealt with in all the *Samhitas* but in brief basically three *Samhitas* are considered here. Historically speaking *Sushruta Samhita* is most ancient *Samhita* in respect to *Charaka Samhita* followed by *Astanga Hridaya*.*Acharya Sushruta* being the most primitive has divided the *Vargas* on physical properties that is *Drava* (Liquid) and *Annapana*(Solid).Same pattern has been followed the basis of *Astanga Samgraha* and *Astanga Hridaya*, only the terminology has been changed instead of *Dravyam, Panam* word is been used. *Astanga Hridaya* has added *Aushadha Varga*. This particular *Varga* is indicative of using *Ahara* in the form of medicine.

This simply indicates the medicinal properties of the *Ahara Varga*. It depends upon the uses of things , *Ahara* can be used for nourishment or treatment.

After the analyzing the *Vargas* of *Charaka Samhita* the basis of classification seems

to be nearer to balanced diet. Balanced diet also includes the articles of all flavors same as *Carakokta Ahara Varga*. He quoted “*Sarva rasa abhyaso balkarana*²⁸.” The intake of all six *Rasa* provide strength to body.

Table No.5-Charakokta Ahara Varga in accordance to balanced diet-

AHARA VARGAS	MAIN NUTRIENTS
<i>Shook Dhanya Varga</i>	Carbohydrate
<i>Shami Dhanya Varga</i>	Protein
<i>Mansa Varga</i>	Protein
<i>Shaaka Varga</i>	Carbohydrate and Fiber
<i>Phala Varga</i>	Vitamins and Minerals
<i>Harita Varga</i>	Vitamins and Minerals
<i>Madya Varga</i>	Depend upon which <i>Madya</i> prepared
<i>Ambu Varga</i>	Water
<i>Go Rasa Varga</i>	Protein and Fat
<i>Ikshu Varga</i>	Vitamins and Minerals
<i>Kritanna Varga</i>	Depend upon different drugs
<i>Ahara Upayogi Varga</i>	Salt (Mainly sodium & chloride)

The classification includes food as a raw material, both of animal and plant origin and the byproduct prepared food and accessory item also.

Table No.6- Classification of raw and prepared food from Ahara Vargas

<i>Raw food</i>	Plant Origin	<i>Shook Dhanya Varga, Shimbi Dhanya varga ,Phala varga,harita varga, Shaka Varga</i>
	Animal origin	<i>Mamsa vargas,Gorasa varga</i>
<i>Prepared</i>		<i>Madya Varga</i> <i>Ikshu Varga</i> <i>Kritanna Varga</i>
<i>Adjuvant of food</i>		<i>Ahara Upayogi Vargas</i>

Different *Acharya*'s have accepted different criteria for the classification of *Ahara Dravyas*. The difference between their basis of *Ahara* classification could be their evolution in their time period. According to usage *Ahara* is divided into four types *Pana*(Drinks),*Ashana*(Eatables), *Bhakshya*(Chewables) and *Leha*(Lickables). Word *Annapana* is famous for *Ahara*. Under *Anna* three categories can be brought and under *Pana* one category can be brought.

Comprasion Of Charak And Sushruta Varga

The basis of classification by *Acharya Sushruta* is physical properties i.e solid[*Annapana*] and liquid[*Drava*]. analyzing, its seen that some of the articles placed in *Drava* *vargas* has solid articles as a bi-product, while some placed in *Annapana varga* has liquid articles as a

bi-product. For eg- *Dugdha Varga* is placed in *Drava varga* and its products like curd, butter are solid in nature.

The classification of *Charak* seems to be more clear and precise as the above confusion does not arise.

Acharya Charaka has kept *Taila*(Oils) under *Ahara Upayogi Vargas*. Where as *Acharya Sushruta* has kept *Taila Varga* separately. Explanation of Species and oils under *Ahara Upayogi Vargas* indicates that along with Species, Oils are also used in food formulation . *Acharaya Sushruta* has included products of *Gorasa* as different *Varga* i.e *Kshira, Takra, Ghrita*. But *Acharya Charak* has explained these three under *Gorasa Vargas* which is more authentic.

Sequence of Ahara Varga: *Acharya Chakrapani* quoted “*Ahara is Rasapradhana* while *Aushadha is Viryapradhan*.” *Ahara Dravyas* bring the change in the body by nourishing the tissue. They also cause increase or decrease of *Doshas* but not to such an extent an *Aushadha Dravya*. *Aushadha Dravya* bring in the changes in the body in the form of either increase or decrease in *Guna* or *Doshas*, but they don’t nourish the body tissues like *Ahara Dravyas*. While commenting on *Ahara Vargas* *Acharya Chakrapani* only mentioned that being prime amount of all *varga* , *Shook Dhanya* is being placed in first position.

Table No.7- Ahara Vargas sequence according to Rasa

AHARA VARGAS	RASA
<i>Shook Dhanya Varga</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
<i>Shami Dhaya Varga</i>	<i>Madhura and Kashaya</i>
<i>Mamsa Varga</i>	<i>Madhura and Kashaya</i>
<i>Shaaka Varga</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
<i>Phala Varga</i>	<i>Madhura, Amla</i>
<i>Harita Varga</i>	Depends on different drugs
<i>Madya Varga</i>	<i>Amla</i>
<i>Jala Varga</i>	<i>Avyakta</i>
<i>Go Rasa Varga</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
<i>Ikshu Varga</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
<i>Kritanna Varga</i>	Depends on different drugs
<i>Ahara Upayogi Varga</i>	Depends on different drugs

The basis of sequence of *Vargas* is not mentioned in classics. It may be the dominancy in the quantity of food. Like the cereals and pulses form the major ingredient of one diet, followed by vegetables, salads and water. *Phala* and products of *Gorasa Varga* are accessory food items. *Madya varga* maybe added in the *Varga* to facilitate the digestion.

The second basis could be first the naturally available food is placed followed by prepared food or the solid food are

mentioned first and liquid later. Class of adjuvant foods could be a collection of *Ahara* which could not be placed in any *Varga*.

An observation of the classification of *Ahara* into the twelve *Vargas* reveals that it is beneficial for a diseased person and its ingredients is also a complete diet for a healthy person.

CONCLUSION:

- The basis of classification is different in all classics. *Sushruta samhita*

,Astang Samgrah and Astang Hridya classifies the *Ahara Varga* on the basis of physical properties.

- The classification of *Ahara Varga* in Charak Samhita is near to balanced diet.
- The classification of Charak includes raw source, prepared food and adjuvant.
- The sequence of *Dravyas* is due to dominancy in quantity of food.
- Shook *Dhanya Varga* ingredients are important source of carbohydrate in body,these are taken after cooking.
- *Shimbi Dhanya Varga* ingredients are class of pulses and rich source of protein in body.
- *Mamsa Varga* elaborately described in Charaka. These are good source of protein and fat in body.
- *Shaaka Varga* includes all types of vegetables, ingredients of these *Varga* is rich source of vitamins and minerals.
- *Phala Varga* ingredients are rich source of vitamins and minerals.
- *Harita Varga* contains different types of leafy vegetables and tubers which could be taken without cooking.
- *Madya Varga* contains different varieties of special wines which has used regularly with diet and therapeutically in different disorders.
- *Jala Varga* contains different qualities of water.
- *Gorasa Varga* contains different types of milk and milk products. It is the best source of calcium.
- *Ikshu Varga* contains sugarcane and its various products like *Guda*, honey, sugar etc.
- *Kritaana Varga* have listed and properties of different *Kalpanas* made

from different *Ahara Vargas*, usually included *Shimbi Dhanya* and *Mamsa Rasa*.

- *Ahara Upayogi Vargas* contains different types of oils, condiments, spices and different types of salts.

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