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### A Conceptual Study On *Hemanta Ritucharya*

Seema Bhagat<sup>1</sup>, Aku Ramamurthy<sup>2</sup>, Poonam Rathore<sup>3</sup>

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1. MD Scholar, Post graduate department of Dravyaguna Vigyana, National Institute Of Ayurveda, Jaipur.
2. Professor, Post graduate department of Dravyaguna Vigyana, , National Institute Of Ayurveda, Jaipur.
3. MD Scholar, Post graduate department of Dravyaguna Vigyana, National Institute Of Ayurveda, Jaipur

**Corresponding Author :-** Seema Bhagat, MD Scholar, Post graduate department of Dravyaguna Vigyana, National Institute Of Ayurveda, Jaipur. Email, Id- bhagatseema033@gmail.com

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#### ABSTRACT: -

*Purushoayam loksamitam*, an individual is an epitome of the universe as all the material and spiritual phenomena of the universe are present in the individual and all those present in the individual are also contained in the universe<sup>[1]</sup>. It means whenever there is any alteration in surrounding environment it affects humans' body as well. In order to cope with all those changes in the surrounding environment, *Ayurvedic Acharyas* have mentioned *Dincharya* (day time regimen), *Ratricharya* (night regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen). In *Ayurvedic* literature, year is divided into six *Ritus* (seasons) according to the movement of the sun. Three *Ritus Shishira, Vasanta, Grishma* comes under *Uttarayana* or *Aadankala* and the other three *ritus Varsha, Sharada* and *Hemanta* comes under *Dakshinayana* or *Visarga kala*. In *Hemanta Ritu* Moon is more powerful than the Sun which increases human beings *Bala* (strength) and *Agni* (digestive fire) step by step. So, *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Amla* (sour), *Madhura* (sweet) and *Lavana* (salty) dietary substances should be taken in *Hemanta Ritu*. In this study, the characteristics, dietetics, regimen along with the procedures which should be followed in *Hemanta Ritu* are thoroughly reviewed.

**Keywords:** *Ritucharya, Hemanta ritu, Visargakala*



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## INTRODUCTION

In the present era, life style disorders are becoming a serious problem. The main reason behind this is the unawareness of the society about the season and various regimens that we should have to follow in different seasons. Various new diseases are getting originated day by day [2]. For this the concept of *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) is well explained in *Ayurvedic* literature. The word *Ritu* means season and *Charya* means certain guidelines which indicates that *Ritucharya* literally means seasonal guidelines of *Ahara* and *Vihar* that should be followed for healthy life. As per *Ayurveda*, the year is divided into six seasons according to the movement of the Sun. The Northward movement of the sun called *Uttarayana* or *Aadankala* comprises of three *Ritus* (*Shishra*, *Vasanta*, *Grishma*) and the Southward movement of sun called *Dakshinayana* or *Visargkala* comprises of other three *Ritus* (*Varsha*, *Sharad*, *Hemanta*). These *Ayanas* or *kala* shows different effect on the body. In *Uttarayana* or *Aadankala* the Sun and breeze become very hot and dry that affects the gentle qualities of earth and enhances *Tikta* (bitter), *Kashaya* (astringent) and *Katu* (pungent) *Rasa* (taste) respectively. This the reason of considering *Aadana kala* as *Agneya* (fiery) [3]. In *Dakshinayana* or *Visargakala*, the moon dominates over the Sun and the *Soma Guna* of Moon gives soothing effect. The predominant *Rasa* (taste) develops in *Visarga kala* are *Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (salty), *Madhura* (sweet) which increases the strength of the body respectively. *Varsha*, *Sharad*, *Hemanta Ritu* are the part of *Dakshinayana* or *Visarga kala* in which *Bala* (strength) increases step by step i.e *Alpa* (less) in *Varsha Ritu*, *Madhyam* (moderate) in *Sharad Ritu* and *Utam* (best) in *Hemanta Ritu* [4].

## AIM AND OBJECTIVE

To highlight the basic characteristics of *Hemanta Ritu* along with dietary and lifestyle regimen explained in *Brihattaryees*.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study includes the collection of literature regarding *Ritucharya* from *Brihattaryees* (*Charak Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtaang Hridayam & Sanghrah* and the relevant articles related to concept of *Ritucharya*, *Hemanta Ritu*.

## RESULTS

### Characteristics of *Hemanta Ritu*

According to Hindu calendar, *Margashirsha* (*Saha*) and *Pausha* (*Sahasya*) forms *Hemanta ritu*. As per English calendar, *Hemanta Ritu* starts from Nov.15 to Jan 15. The month of November begins with the gradually dropping temperature that makes way for *Hemanta Ritu*, the early winter season. As per *Ayurveda*, *Hemanta Ritu* begins with *Sharad Purnima* and it continues for two months, during which the earth cools down, giving rise to an energy that makes us feel rejuvenated [5]. After the onset of *Hemanta ritu*, the surrounding environment appears smoky with a covering of thick mist and fully surrounded by snow, the Sun is also covered likewise, cold breeze from north creates horripilations, trees like *Lodra*, *Priyangu*, *Punnaga*, *Lavali* become splendid with flowers, animals like elephants, goats, buffaloes, horses, crow and pigs become arrogant, resources of water (natural and artificial) are covered with thick layers of snow and mist with the inert fish and birds, water of wells is warm [6]. The various changes in this *Ritu* is responsible for the development of *Uttam bala* (strength) in our body. Due to more coldness in the environment, the inner heat of the body gets trapped that results in the good strength of the *Jatharagni* (digestive fire)

which is capable of digesting food irrespective of the heaviness of substances (*Guru Dravya*) and more quantity (*Guru Matra*) and this properly digested food is responsible for the nourishment of all seven *Dhatus*. It means when the body does not get *Indhan* (fuel) as *Guru Ahara* (heavy substances) adequately the digestive fire will burn the foremost formed *Rasadhatu* and results in the vitiation of *Vata dosha* [7].

### **Ahara (dietetics) to be followed in Hemanta Ritu** [8]

- *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Madhura* (sweet), *Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (salty) *Rasa* predominant food substances should be consumed.
- Meat of the *Aatimedasvi* (fatty), *Audaka* (aquatic) and *Anoopa* (marshy) animals should be consumed.
- Meat of the burrow-dwelling animals, roasted meat of *Prasaha* (one who eat by snatching) animals like crow should be taken followed by drinking of *Madira* (wine), *Sidhu* (fermented preparation) and *Madhu* (honey).
- Cow's milk products like curd, butter etc and sugarcane products like jaggery, sugar, *Vasa* (fat), new rice should be involved in the diet.
- Drinking of lukewarm water throughout the season.
- Human beings, following the above mentioned recommendations wisely, their life span will never deteriorate.

### **Vihara (regimen) to be followed in Hemanta Ritu** [9]

- *Abhyanga* (oil massage), *Utsadana* (*ubtan*), application of oil on head, *Jentatka sweda* (a type of *sagni sweda* /sudation), *Atatpa-sevana* (sunlight exposure), residing in the warm underground house is recommended.
- All vehicles, beddings and seats should be well covered by wrappers, silken clothes etc.

- It is advised to wear heavy and warm clothes and body is anointed with *Aagru*

### **Apathya (contraindicated) Ahara-Vihara of hemanta ritu** [10]

- Food and drinks which vitiates *Vata dosha*, light to digest.
- Exposure to strong cold waves.
- *Pramita-ahara* (food in less quantity)
- *Udmantha* (*sattu*)

## CONCLUSION

This study summarizes the *Hemanta Ritucharya* explained by the *Ayurvedic Acharyas*. The similarity between the external environment and human body is precisely explained by *Acharya Sushruta* (*Su.Su.21/8*) that the way in which The Moon, The sun and The Wind maintains the integrity of the terrestrial globe in the same way three *Doshas* (*Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*) maintain the integrity of the organism by creating, assimilating and diffusing strength. It means the external environment poses strong impact on the body and it is necessary to change one's diet and lifestyle according to changing seasons. For this, concept of *Ritucharya* is well explained by *Acharyas* with the help of which one can enhance *Bala* (strength) and *Varna* (lusture/complexion).<sup>[11]</sup> *Hemanta ritu* plays an important role in the development and enhancement of *bala* in the body. The *Shrestha Bala* in *Hemanta Ritu*, is due to *Prabala* (strongest) nature of *Jatharagni* (digestive fire), the consumed food is digested properly, the dominance of *Madhura rasa*, overwhelming *Mahabhutas* are *Prithvi* and *Apa* and the *Satmyata* of *Madhura rasa* for the body from birth that provides strength and nourishment to the the *Saptadhatus* accordingly. By following the procedure like *Abhyanga* (oil message) replenish the body with

nutrition, tone the skin, flushes toxins from the body, prevent cellular ageing and adds a youthful lustre to the skin. In the same way *Shiroabhyanga* (application of oil on head/head massage) in *Hemanta Ritu* is advised to avoid dry scalp, dandruff, hair fall. Warm, nutritious and properly cooked meal is ideal for *Hemanta Ritu* to keep body warm and energetic. Intake of dairy products like cow's *Ghee* in the diet helps to balance the *Vata Dosha* and also impart the required nourishment to the body. By adapting the above mentioned regimen of *Hemanta Ritucharya*, one can achieve the foremost goal of *Ayurveda* (*Swasthya Rakshanam*). It also brings the equilibrium in three *Doshas* (*Vata, Pitta* and *kapha*), longevity without disturbing the equilibrium of body and mind.

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