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# Karkidaka Chikitsa - Rejuvenation through herbs

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## ABSTRACT

'Karkidaka Chikitsa' is a tradition that has been in practice since several centuries in Kerala. Karkidakam is a month as per Malayalam calendar, falling in July - August. "Karkidaka Kanji", the herb mixed rice gruel and "Pathilathoran" are traditionally used as diet, in order to combat ailments of monsoon season; along with other Panchakarma procedures. In Varsha Rithu, there will be decreased Jatharagni and Shareerabala. Majority of the drugs used in these recipes are Agnideepaka and Pachaka in nature and it helps in promoting health by preventing infections, certain allergies, arthritis; and also will boost immunity. This may be the principle behind adopting these herbal recipes by traditional practitioners of Kerala. This is an example of Ritucharya modified according to Desha and Satmya.

**Key words:** Karkidaka Kanji, Pathilathoran, Varsha Rithu, Satmya, Desha.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda stresses the importance of 'Ritucharya' or the diet and lifestyles to be followed in particular seasons, to be free from the harmful effects of climatic changes. Karkidaka Chikitsa is such a tradition that has been in practice since several centuries in Kerala. Karkidakam is a month as per Malayalam calendar, falling in July - August, i.e. Varsha Rithu.

It is in Karkidaka season, that all the Tridoshas aggravate in our body and there will be decrease in Agnibala and Shareerikabala.<sup>[1],[2]</sup> Over 80% of diseases that inflict during this season are waterborne; leading to fever and other infectious

diseases. In addition, humidity in atmosphere often aggravates several conditions including Arthritis, Asthma and other allergies etc.

According to practitioners in Kerala, Karkidaka (July - August, i.e. Varsha Rithu) is the ideal period for rejuvenation treatments and therapies to purify the whole body and mind.

There are various therapies both internal and external which are followed during this period. Karkidaka Kanji and Pathilathoran are some special traditional diet which makes an integral part of rejuvenation therapies. "Karkidaka Kanji" is a unique combination of Shashtikashali, spices, herbs like "Dashapushpam".

"Pathilathoran" is another Karkidakam special side dish prepared out of matured fresh leaves of ten plants which are locally available.

Majority of the drugs used in these recipes are Agnideepaka and Pachaka in nature and it helps in promoting health by preventing infections, certain allergies, arthritis; and also will boost immunity. These recipes are suitable for the people of all age groups and are considered as the simplest way to rejuvenation; to boost immunity and to protect against infections.

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**METHODOLOGY****1. Karkidaka Oushadha Kanji****Ingredients**

SN	Ingredient	Quantity
1.	<i>Shashtika Shali</i>	100gms
2.	<i>Mudga</i>	10gms
3.	<i>Panchakola Churna</i>	5gms
4.	<i>Balamoola Churna</i>	10gms
5.	<i>Chandrashoora</i>	10gms
6.	<i>Jeeraka</i>	10gms
7.	<i>Methika</i>	10gms
8.	<i>Dashapushpa Swarasa</i>	q.s
9.	Coconut milk	q.s
10.	Water	q.s
11.	Jaggery	q.s
12.	<i>Saindhava Lavana</i>	for taste

**Method of preparation**

Boil 1 glass of water with 10gms of *Balamoola Churna*, and then add 100gms of *Shashtikashali* and 10gms of *Mudga* to it. Continue boiling by adding *Jeeraka*, *Methika*, broken wheat, *Chandrashoora* and *Panchakola Churna*. Once the rice gets cooked, add *Dashapushpa Swarasa* along with quantity sufficient coconut milk and jaggery and lastly salt to be added as per the taste.

**2. Pathila Thoran****Ingredients****Fresh tender leaves of;**

1. *Aaluki*
2. *Chakramarda*
3. *Punarnava*
4. *Rajamasha*
5. *Surana*
6. *Kushmanda*
7. *Kushmandi*
8. *Tanduliyaka*
9. *Dusparsha*
10. *Shivalingi*

**For sauting;**

- Mustard seeds
- Coconut oil
- Green chillies
- Grated coconut
- Turmeric powder
- Salt

**Method of preparation**

- Wash and finely chop the tender leaves and drain water from the chopped leaves.
- Grind the grated coconut and chilly and heat oil in a pan and splutter mustard seeds.
- Add chopped leaves, turmeric powder, salt and the grounded mixture.
- Cook in low flame for 2 mins and should stir until the water content gets fully absorbed.



## OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

The most common ingredients of the preparation, "Karkidaka Kanji" along with their properties have

been tabulated as below. It also includes ingredients like jaggery, coconut gratings and salt.

Name	Botanical name	Rasapanchaka	Properties	Proven studies
<i>Shashtika Shaali</i>	<i>Oryza sativa</i>	Rasa - Svadu Guna - Laghu, Snigdha, Veerya - Hima	Tridoshagna, Balada, Pathya, Jwarahara, Ruchya, Deepana	Antioxidant, Antidiabetic <sup>[3]</sup>
Broken wheat	<i>Triticum aestivum</i>	Rasa - Madhura Guna - Guru, Snigdha Vipaka - Madhura Veerya - Sheeta	Vatapittashamaka, Vrushya, Jeevana, Sandhaanakari, Sthairyakrith, Sara.	Anti-cancer, Antiulcer, Antioxidant, Anti-arthritis <sup>[3]</sup>
<i>Mudga</i>	<i>Vigna radiata</i>	Rasa - Svadu Guna - Laghu, Ruksha Vipaka - Katu Veerya - Sheeta	Kaphapittahara Jwaragna, Pushti, Balaprada	Antioxidant, Antimicrobial, Anti-inflammatory, Antidiabetic, Antihypertensive, Antitumor <sup>[3]</sup>
<i>Chandrashoora</i>	<i>Lepidium sativum</i>	Rasa - Katu Guna - Snigdha, Pichila Vipaka - Katu	Balavardhana, Pushtivardhana, Vatakapha Hara	Antioxidant, <sup>[4]</sup> Antimicrobial, Anti-inflammatory
<i>Jeeraka</i>	<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>	Rasa - Katu Guna - Laghu, Rooksha Vipaka - Katu Veerya - Ushna	Kaphavata Hara, Jwaraghna, Pachana, Deepana, Balya, Ruchya	Antimicrobial, Insecticidal, Anti-inflammatory, Analgesic, Antioxidant <sup>[5]</sup>
<i>Methika</i>	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>	Rasa - Katu, Tikta Guna - Laghu, Snigdha Vipaka - Katu Veerya - Ushna	Kaphavatahara, Deepana, Rochana	Antidiabetic, Antinociceptive, Anticarcinogenic, Antioxidant, Anti-inflammatory <sup>[6]</sup>

<i>Panchakola Churna</i>	<i>Pippali - Piper longum</i> <i>Pippalimula -Root of Piper longum</i> <i>Chavya - Piper chaba</i> <i>Chitraka - Plumbago zeylanica</i> <i>Nagara -Zingiber officinale</i>	<i>Rasa - Katu</i> <i>Guna - Teekshna, Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka - Katu</i>	<i>Kaphavatahara, Ruchikrit, Deepana, Pachana</i>	Antioxidant, Anti – inflammatory, Antibacterial <sup>[7]</sup>
<i>Balamoola Churna</i>	<i>Sida cordifolia</i>	<i>Rasa - Madhura</i> <i>Guna - Guru, Snigdha, Pichila</i> <i>Vipaka - Madhura</i> <i>Veerya - Sheeta</i>	<i>Tridoshashamana, Ojovardhaka, Balya, Kshayahara.</i>	Analgesic, Anti-inflammatory, Antioxidant, Anti bacterial <sup>[8]</sup>

Table 2: List of *Dashapushpam* with their properties and pharmacological activity

Sanskrit name	Malayalam name	Botanical name	Properties	Proven studies
<i>Bhadra</i>	Cheroola	<i>Aerva lanata</i> (L.)Juss ex Schult	<i>Kaphavatashamaka, Shoolahara, Pramehahara</i>	Anti microbial, Anti diabetic <sup>[9]</sup>
<i>Viparitalajjala</i>	Mukkutty	<i>Biophytum sensitivum</i> (L)DC	<i>Krimihara, Pittakaphahara</i>	Anti pyretic, Anti oxidant, Antibacterial, Anti inflammatory <sup>[10]</sup>
<i>Indravalli</i>	Valli uzhinja	<i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i> L.	<i>Jwarahara, Vataghni</i>	Antioxidant, Antiarthritic <sup>[3]</sup>
<i>Musali</i>	Nilappana	<i>Curculigo orchioides</i> Gaertn.	<i>Bruhmani, Vrushya, Rasayani</i>	Antioxidant, Hepatoprotective, Anti cancer <sup>[11]</sup>
<i>Durva</i>	Karuka	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> (L.)Pers	<i>Tridoshashamaka, Dahatrushnaprashamana, Raktashodhaka</i>	Anti oxidant, Immunomodulatory, Hepatoprotective <sup>[12]</sup>
<i>Bringharaja</i>	Kayyunnyam	<i>Eclipta alba</i> (L.)Mant	<i>Rasayana, Kaphavatahara, Shophahara, Vishaghna</i>	Anti inflammatory, Anti microbial, Hepatoprotective <sup>[13]</sup>
<i>Akhukarni</i>	Muyalcheviyan	<i>Emilia sonchifolia</i> (L.)DC	<i>Kaphapittahara, Jwarahara, Deepana, Mutrala</i>	Antimicrobial, Analgesic and anti-inflammatory,

				Anti viral, Antioxidant <sup>[14]</sup>
<i>Vishnukrantha</i>	Vishnukranthi	<i>Evolvulus alsinoides</i> (L.)	<i>Rasayana, Medhya, Vishahara</i>	Anti inflammatory, Antioxidant, Anti microbial, Nootropic <sup>[15]</sup>
<i>Lakshmana</i>	Thiruthali	<i>Ipomea sepiaria</i> Koen.ex.Roxb	<i>Tridosahara, Balya, Rasayanakari, Aayuprada</i>	Antifungal, Anticancer, Anti diabetic <sup>[16]</sup>
<i>Sahadevi</i>	Poovamkurunthal	<i>Vernonia cinerea</i> (L.)	<i>Kaphavatashamaka, Jwarahara, Sidhmavinashini</i>	Cytoprotective, Anti oxidant, Neuroprotective <sup>[17]</sup>

Table 3: Properties of ingredients of *Pathila Thoran*

Name	Botanical name	Rasapanchaka	Pharmacological actions	Proven studies
<i>Aaluki</i>	<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	<i>Guna - Guru, Snigdha</i> <i>Veerya - Sheeta</i>	<i>Balakrit, Hrutkaphanashini</i>	Antimicrobial, Antifungal, Anti-metastatic, Anti-inflammatory <sup>[18]</sup>
<i>Chakramarda</i>	<i>Cassia tora</i>	<i>Rasa - Katu</i> <i>Guna - Laghu, Rooksha</i> <i>Veerya - Ushna</i> <i>Vipaka - Katu</i>	<i>Kaphahara, Shwasahara, Kusthahara, Krimihara, Kanthisoukumaryakara, Balya</i>	Anticancerous <sup>[3]</sup>
<i>Punarnava</i>	<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i>	<i>Rasa - Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya</i> <i>Guna - Laghu, Rooksha</i> <i>Vipaka - Katu</i> <i>Veerya - Ushna</i>	<i>Kaphavatahara, Shothahara, Deepana, Ruchya, Artinut.</i>	Antibacterial, Antinociceptive, Hepatoprotective, Anti-inflammatory, Anti-viral <sup>[19]</sup>
<i>Masha</i>	<i>Vigna mungo</i>	<i>Rasa - Madhura</i> <i>Guna - Guru, Snigdha, Sara</i> <i>Veerya - Ushna</i>	<i>Balya, Bruhmana, Tarpana, Shoola Nashana, Ruchya, Hrudya</i>	Anti-oxidant, Anti-inflammatory, Hepatoprotective <sup>[20]</sup>
<i>Sooranakanda</i>	<i>Amorphophallus campanulatus</i>	<i>Rasa - Katu, Kashaya</i> <i>Guna - Laghu, Ruksha, Teekshna</i> <i>Veerya - Ushna</i>	<i>Kaphavatashamaka, Ruchya, Deepana, Arshasu pathya, Shoolahara</i>	Anti bacterial, Antihelminthic, Hepatoprotective, Anti diabetic <sup>[21]</sup>

<i>Kooshmanda</i>	<i>Benincasa hispida</i>	<i>Rasa- Madhura</i> <i>Guna- Laghu,</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Veerya- Sheeta</i> <i>Vipaka- Madhura</i>	<i>Bastishudhikara, Hrudya</i>	Gastroprotective [3]
<i>Kooshmandi</i>	<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	<i>Rasa - Tikta</i> <i>Guna - Laghu</i>	<i>Agnijanani, Graahini,</i> <i>Kaphavatanut</i>	Anti microbial, Anti oxidant, Antitumor <sup>[22]</sup>
<i>Tanduleeya</i>	<i>Amaranthus spinosus</i>	<i>Guna - Laghu,</i> <i>Ruksha</i> <i>Veerya - Sheeta</i>	<i>Srshtamutramalarochana,</i> <i>Deepana, Vishaharaka</i>	Gut modulatory & Bronchodilator, Antidiabetic & Anticholestrolemic <sup>[3]</sup>
<i>Dusparsha</i>	<i>Tragia involucrata</i>	<i>Rasa - Katu, Tikta,</i> <i>Kashaya</i> <i>Guna - Laghu,</i> <i>Snigdha</i> <i>Veerya - Sheeta</i> <i>Vipaka - Katu</i>	<i>Kushtahara, Kaasahara,</i> <i>Dahavinashini,</i> <i>Vishamajwarahara</i>	Anti inflammatory, Analgesic <sup>[23]</sup>
<i>Shivalingi</i>	<i>Bryonia laciniosa</i>	<i>Rasa - Katu, Tikta</i> <i>Guna - Laghu,</i> <i>Ruksha, Teekshna</i> <i>Vipaka - Katu</i>	<i>Kaphahara, Rasayana,</i> <i>Kushtahara</i>	Anti inflammatory, Antimicrobial, Anti asthmatic, Analgesic, Antipyretic <sup>[24]</sup>

The above mentioned dietary recipes;

- Enhance the digestive power
- Provide energy
- Prevent common diseases of rainy season
- Promote health
- Boost immunity

## DISCUSSION

*Kanji (Yavagu)* is the diet which is *Satmya* to the Keralites and is *Deepaka, Pachaka* and *Anulomaka*. Majority of the drugs used in *Karkidaka Oushadha Kanji* are *Balya, Deepaka, Pachaka & Vatahara* and they are indicated in *Kshut, Trushna, Glani, Dourbalya, Kukshiroga* and *Jwara*.

*Pathila Thoran* is a side dish prepared out of locally available tender fresh leaves of 10 herbs. While

analysing the ingredients of leafy vegetable side dish, "*Pathila Thoran*" it was observed that majority of them are *Pittaanihara, Deepaka, Pachaka, Ruchya* and *Balakara*. Leafy vegetables are abundant in antioxidants, mineral salts, vitamins, proteins and fiber, which helps in reviving the immune system and used as food supplement. Both the recipes acts as *Ahara* and *Pathya* and help in digestion, improve immunity and prevent the common ailments of the rainy season. It is the simplest way for seasonal rejuvenation; as all the ingredients used are easily & abundantly available locally.

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