



ISSN 2456-3110

Vol 6 · Issue 4

July-Aug 2021

Journal of  
**Ayurveda and Integrated  
Medical Sciences**

*www.jaims.in*

JAIMS

An International Journal for Researches in Ayurveda and Allied Sciences



**Maharshi Charaka**  
Ayurveda

Indexed

# A survey report on status of *Bala* (Physical strength) and *Agni* (Digestive Strength) during *Greeshma Ritu* (summer season)

Sushma Kumari

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Swasthviritta, Shiva Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital, Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh, India.

## ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* advocates the maintenance of health by using regimen like *Dincharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Sadvritta* (social code of conduct), *Aachara Rasayana* (personal code of conduct), *Vega Vidharna* (not to hold natural urges) etc. *Ritucharya* means 'the *Aahara* (diet) and *Vihara* (life style) and other behavioural activities according to specific *Ritu* (season), in accordance with *Shastra* (scriptures). A lot of physiological variations occur in the body during *Greeshma Ritu* (summer season) like exhaustion, general weakness, drowsiness, increased thirst, reduced appetite etc. *Charaka Samhita* has also described that the status of *Bala* (physical strength) and *Agni* (digestive strength) is very weak in *Greeshma Ritu* (summer season). To observe the status of *Bala* (physical strength) and *Agni* (digestive strength) during *Greeshma Ritu* (Summer season) i.e., during April to June 2018, a survey was conducted on 500 apparently healthy volunteers in Paprola and surrounding areas. Paprola is a small town of Himachal Pradesh, situated in foot hills of Dhauladhar Ranges of Himalaya. Data was collected by a questionnaire framed on the basis of *Ayurvedic* texts. Many volunteers showed reduced *Bala* (physical strength) but their *Agni* (digestive strength) status was good.

**Key words:** *Greeshma Ritu*, Summer season, Survey, *Bala*, *Agni*

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is not just a system of medicine for treating diseases but also a science that emphasizes on prevention and health promotion through proper diet and lifestyle. By following specific *Aahara-Vihara* (diet & life style) in response to change in climatic conditions, one can prevent many disorders & live a

healthy and disease-free life. According to *Yogaratanakara*, *Dosha* of *Ritu* (season) does not proceed towards untimely aggravation, if individual follows *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen).<sup>[1]</sup> All *Acharya* have mentioned a firm scientific analysis about *Ritu* (season) and *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) which is true even today. One year has been divided into six *Ritu* (seasons) viz. *Shishira*, *Vasanta*, *Greeshma*, *Varsha*, *Sharada* and *Hemanta Ritu*. With the changes in the *Ritu* (seasons), environment also changes. These changes can be observed in our surrounding. e.g., dry vegetation during *Greeshma Ritu* (Summer season), flowering during *Vasanta Ritu* (spring season), growth of new vegetation during *Varsha Ritu* (rainy season) and so on. As human is also a part of this ecosystem, body is greatly influenced by changes in external environment. If body is unable to adapt itself to stressors due to changes in specific characteristics of *Ritu* (season), it may lead to *Dosha Vaishmya* (vitiation of *Dosha*), which in turn may lead

### Address for correspondence:

Dr. Sushma Kumari

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Swasthviritta, Shiva Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital, Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh, India.  
E-mail: sushma0767@gmail.com

Submission Date: 21/07/2021 Accepted Date: 18/08/2021

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Quick Response Code



Website: [www.jaims.in](http://www.jaims.in)

DOI: 10.21760/jaims.6.4.13

to development of diseases. According to *Ayurveda*, *Greeshma Ritu* (summer season) comes under *Aadana Kaala* in the months of *Shuchi-Shukra* i.e., *Jyeshtha & Aashadha* (mid-May to mid-July).<sup>[2]</sup> It is the hottest of all *Ritu* (seasons) and status of *Bala* (physical strength) & *Agni* (digestive strength) is weakest.<sup>[3]</sup> To maintain optimum *Bala* (physical strength) and *Agni* (digestive strength), *Aahara & Vihara* (diet & life style) is described accordingly. In this regard, a survey was conducted to observe the status of *Bala* (physical strength) & *Agni* (digestive strength) in the Paprola and surrounding areas during 2018.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aim and objective is to estimate the status of *Bala* (physical strength) and *Agni* (digestive strength) in 500 apparently healthy volunteers during the months of *Greeshma Ritu* (summer season) in Paprola and surrounding areas.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey was conducted on 500 apparently healthy individuals of Paprola and surrounding areas of approximately 2 km in diameter during 2018. Age group 20 - 60 years irrespective of sex, race, religion and socio-economic status was selected. Excluded individuals were; Volunteers not willing for the trial, Volunteers below 20 years and above 60 years, Volunteers having any associated chronic ailments like Diabetes Mellitus, Cardiac disorder, Renal disorder, Alcoholic liver disease and chronic haemolytic anaemia, Pregnant and lactating mothers. The subjects were screened for common diseases to which they were prone during this season. A questionnaire was prepared based of *Ayurvedic* texts.

### OBSERVATIONS AND RESULTS

#### 1. Status of Bala

**Table 1: Status of Bala of 500 apparently healthy volunteers during Greeshma Ritu.**

SN	Bala	No. of volunteers	Percentage
1.	Full energy with normal daily routine work ( <i>Samanya Bala</i> )	147	29.4%

2.	Occasional feeling of general weakness but can do work	240	48%
3.	Continuous feeling of general weakness but can do work	88	17.6%
4.	Continuous feeling of general weakness which hampers routine work ( <i>Daurbalya</i> )	25	5%

Present survey revealed that, 70.6% volunteers had feeling of general weakness during *Greeshma Ritu* (summer season). Out of them 48% volunteers were occasionally feeling general weakness but there was no hindrance in performing routine work followed by 17.6% with continuous feeling of general weakness but they were doing routine work. Only 29.4% volunteers had *Samanya Bala* (physical strength) i.e., they were performing normal routine work with full energy daily.

#### 2. Status of Agni (digestive strength)

##### a) *Abhyavaharana Shakti* (Food intake capacity)

**Table 2: *Abhyavaharana Shakti* of 500 apparently healthy volunteers during Greeshma Ritu.**

SN	<i>Abhyavaharana Shakti</i>	No. of volunteers	Percentage
1.	Normal intake of food	244	48.8%
2.	Sometimes normal, sometimes decreased intake of food	177	35.4%
3.	Decreased intake of food	79	15.8%

During this survey it was revealed that 48.8% (244) volunteers had normal intake of food where as 35.4% (177) sometimes normal, sometimes decreased and 15.8% (79) had decreased intake of food.

##### b) *Jarana Shakti* (Digestion)

**Table 3: *Jarana Shakti* of 500 apparently healthy volunteers**

SN	<i>Jarana Shakti</i> (digestion)	No. of volunteers	Percentage
1.	Able to digest adequate quantity of meals	417	83.4%

2.	Unable to digest adequate quantity of meals but can digest small quantity of meals	50	10%
3.	Occasionally unable to digest small quantity of meals	27	5.4%
4.	Unable to digest even small quantity of meals	6	1.2%

This survey revealed that maximum volunteers i.e. 83.4% (417) were able to digest adequate quantity of meals where as 10% (50) volunteers were unable to digest adequate quantity of meal but able to digest small quantity of meals. 5.4% (27) volunteers were not able to digest small quantity of meals occasionally where as 1.2% (6) volunteers were not able to digest even small quantity of meals.

## DISCUSSION

### 1) Status of Bala

Feeling of general weakness doesn't always mean a diseased condition. It is physiological phenomenon which is occurring naturally during *Greeshma Ritu* (summer season) as mentioned in *Ayurvedic* texts. The Sun, wind and moon are considered as causative factors of manifestation of seasons, body strength etc. During *Greeshma Ritu* (summer season) hot sun rays absorbs moisture, drinks unctuous element; piercing dry winds further dehydrate it and thus causing gradual waning of strength of mankind.<sup>[4]</sup> Survey report revealed that 70.6% volunteers had feeling of general weakness. This can be attributed to hot climate in the region of Paprola. Another reason can be the life style of population as majority of people work in fields and fodder the cattle due to which day sleep is usually forbidden. Water and liquid diet intake is less among people of this area.

### 2) Status of Agni during Greeshma Ritu

It was observed that in 84.2% volunteers (48.8% volunteers had normal intake of food whereas sometimes normal, sometimes decreased in 35.4%) *Abhyavaharana Shakti* (food intake capacity) was almost normal and 83.4% volunteers had *Saamana*

*Jarana Shakti* i.e., they were able to digest adequate quantity of meals.

Good status of *Agni* (digestive strength) may be due to the fact that, Paprola and surrounding area is a hilly area in Dhauladhar ranges of Himachal Pradesh. Majority of population here is rural and people work in fields and fodder their cattle. They remain physically active all the day. Good status of *Agni* (digestive strength) might be attributed to their active lifestyle. Those, who had weak *Agni* (digestive strength), may be due to their faulty dietary habit and faulty life style or it can also be due to effect of *Greeshma Ritu* (summer season).

Therefore, observance of rules of *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), is one of the factors for maintaining healthy state. One should consume *Anna-Paana* (foods & drinks) predominant in *Madhura* (sweet), *Sheeta* (cool), *Drava* (liquid), *Snigdha* (unctuous) and *Laghu* (light to digest) properties.<sup>[5]</sup> e.g. *Shali Dhanya* (rice) and/or *Shali Dhanya* (rice) mixed with *Sharkara* (sugar),<sup>[6]</sup> *Saktu* (roasted powder of cereals or Bengal gram) mixed with *Sharkara* (sugar) & cold water,<sup>[7]</sup> *Sheeta Mantha* mixed with *Ghritta* (*Mantha* is *Saktu* soaked in cold water) and other food items like *Ikshu Rasa* (sugar cane juice) or *Draksha* (raisins) or *Amla* (Indian gooseberry), meat of *Jaangla* animals and birds like poultry meat, mutton, beef meat, milk, *Ghritta* (clarified butter),<sup>[8]</sup> *Maansa Rasa* (meat soup) not too thick in consistency,<sup>[9]</sup> *Paanaka* (drink prepared by mashing fruits in plenty of water) mixed with fragrant *Sharkara* (sugar) kept in mud pot along with *Hima* (ice),<sup>[10]</sup> *Shrita Sheet Peya* (water which is boiled and then cooled) etc.

## CONCLUSION

Therefore, it is concluded that during *Greeshma Ritu* (summer season), status of *Bala* (physical strength) is weak and *Agni* (digestive strength) status is good among the population of Paprola and surrounding areas. To improve *Bala* (physical strength), people should change their dietary habits as they should include more liquid dietary preparations like milk, *Paanaka* (drink prepared by mashing fruits in plenty of water), *Sharbata* (fruits plus sugar) rice water, meat

soup etc. during this season. Water intake should be increased. People should do rest in cool place, especially, day sleep is highly recommended. *Agni* (digestive strength) is although good but balanced diet and *Laghu* (easy to digest) food items should be consumed.

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**How to cite this article:** Sushma Kumari. A survey report on status of Bala (Physical strength) and Agni (Digestive Strength) during Greeshma Ritu (summer season). J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2021;4:85-88. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21760/jaims.6.4.13>

**Source of Support:** Nil, **Conflict of Interest:** None declared.

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