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A nutritive review on *Shaka Varga* in *Charaka Samhita*

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ABSTRACT

The vegetables are described under *Shaka Varga* in *Ayurvedic* classical books. *Caraka Samhita* is the most important repository of *Ayurveda* classics. In *Caraka Samhita, Shaka Varga* mentioned under the classification of diet (Food). The *Shaka Varga* includes *Patra Shaka* (Green Leafy Vegetables), *Kanda Shaka* (Rhizome Vegetables), *Kaanda Shaka* (Stem Vegetables), *Pushpa Shaka* (Flower Vegetables), *Phala Shaka* (Fruit Vegetables) etc. Vegetables are also supply vitamins and minerals to the diet and are sources of phytochemicals that function as antioxidants, phytoestrogens, and anti-inflammatory agents. The consumption of these vegetables may play a role in preventing human diseases in which free radicals are involved such as cancer, ageing, cardiovascular diseases. In this review, we describe the existing literature available in *Caraka Samhita* on *Shaka Varga* (vegetables). We also review to identify the plants with their botanical identification, properties, therapeutic indications, and chemical constituents. There are some plants in this review study whose botanical identification has not been found.

Key words: *Shaka Varga, Vegetables, Nutrition, Caraka Samhita*

INTRODUCTION

Shaka Varga is the Sanskrit name for a group of medicinal plants classified as pot herbs/ vegetables of which leaves, stems, fruits are used. In the *Caraka Samhita*, *Shaka Varga* is mentioned in *Sutrasthana*, *Annapanavidhi Adhyaya* (27 Chapter).[1] The *Shaka Varga* are the vegetables which are used in our daily diet as *Ahara* (Food). They are used as *Ahara* and as well as *Aushadi* (Medicine). In present times, it is believed that the regular consumption of dietary antioxidants may reduce the risk of several serious diseases.[2] Regular consumption of vegetables has always been associated with health benefits.

Most of the vegetables contain fat in low amount and high calories. Dietary fiber from vegetables, as part of an overall balance diet, helps to reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease. Fibers are important as they promote movement of materials through the digestive system. It helps to reduce constipation and diverticulosis. Fiber-containing foods such as vegetables help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories. Vegetables have historically held a place in dietary guidance because of their concentrations of vitamins (Vitamins A & C), minerals, especially electrolytes and phytochemicals especially antioxidants.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review is done by collection of data from various sources in which *Shaka Varga described, Charak Samhita,* Indian Materia Medica, various published articles and Database. In this review different types of *Shakas* (vegetables) are found in literature, they are arranged systematically in form of table. The subject matter is divided in two form one is general uses of vegetable in health, their properties, actions and

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ISSN: 2456-3110 REVIEW ARTICLE May 2024

chemical constituents of vegetables which are compiled in the table.

Table 1: Showing the list of *Shakas* in *Caraka Samhita* with their properties, therapeutic uses and Chemical constituents

SN	Name of Drug[3]	Botanical Name[4]	Properties & Action[3]	Therapeutic Uses[3]	Chemical Constituent[4]
1.	*Patha*	*Cissampelos pareira* Linn.	*Doshakarma - Tridhoshanasaka*	*Grahi*	Pelosine or Bebeerine
2.	*Shati*	*Hedychium spicatum* Buch-Ham	*Doshakarma - Tridhoshanasaka*	*Grahi*	Aromatic oil, Starch, Glycoside
3.	*Changeri*	*Oxalis corniculata* Linn.	*Doshakarma - Tridhoshanasaka*	*Gharahni, Arsha*	Potasium, Oxalic Acid
4.	*Vastuka*	*Chenopodium album* Linn.	*Doshakarma - Tridhoshanasaka*	*Bhinnavarcha*	
5.	*Rajachhavak*		*Guna - Laghu* *Doshakarma - Tridhoshanasaka*	*Gharahni, Arsha*	
6.	*Kalashaka*	*Corchorus capsularis*	*Rasa - Katu*	*Shotha, Agnidipaka, Garsophjita*	Protein 23% Carbohydrate 54%, Trigonelline
7.	*Kalaya*	*Pisum sativum*	*Guna - Laghu, Rukhsha* *Virya - Ushna* *Doshakarma - Vatavardaka*		
8.	*Upodika*	*Basella alba*	*Rasa - Madhura* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Shelshmavardaka*	*Vrishya,Madoroga*	
9.	*Tandula*	*Amaranthus spinosus*	*Guna - Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*	*Raktapitta, Vishagna*	
10.	*Mandukaparani*	*Centella asiatica* (Linn.) Urban	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*	*Medya*	Hydrocotyline, $C_{22}H_{32}O_8N$, Asiaticoside, Vallerine, Sterol, Tannin, Ascorbic acid
11.	*Vetagra*	*Bambusa arundinacea* Wild	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		

ISSN: 2456-3110 REVIEW ARTICLE May 2024

			Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka		
12.	*Bakuchi*	*Psoralia corylifolia* Linn.	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Psolralen, isopsoralen, isopsoralidin, corylifolin
13.	*Patola*	*Trichosanthes dioica* Roxb.	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Protein, carbohydrate, fat
14.	*Kutaki*	*Picrorhiza kurroa* Royal ex Benth	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Picrorhizin, Kutkin, Kutkiol, Kutki sterol, Venellic acid
15.	*Vrishpusapa* *(Adusa* Flower*)*	*Adhatoda vasica* Nees	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Vasicine, Adhatodic acid
16.	*Shagerstha* *(Kali Makoya)*	*Solanum nigrum* Linn.	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Solamargine, Solasonine, Solanigrine, Vit.C, B-carotine
17.	*Kambuk*	*Costus speciosus* (Koeing) Sm.	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Steroid, Saponin, Starch
18.	*Kathilakam*	*Momordica charantia* Linn.	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Ascorbic acid, Momordicine
19.	*Nadishaka*	*Corchorus olitorius* Linn.	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura*		

ISSN: 2456-3110 REVIEW ARTICLE May 2024

			Virya - Shita *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		
20.	*Gojihiwa*	*Onosma bracteatum Wall.*	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Sodium 9.5%, Potassium 14.25%, Calcium 27%, Iron 1%
21.	*Vartaka*	*Solanum melongena* Linn.	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Aliphatic Ketones, lipids, napthazarins
22.	*Tilparnika*	*Gynandropsis gynandra (*Linn.*)* Briquet	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Cleomine, Viscosin
23.	*Kaulka*		*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		
24.	*Karkas*		*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		
25.	*Nimba*	*Azadirachta indica* A. Juss	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Nimbin, Nimbidin, Nimbinin, Nimbosterol
26.	*Parpataka*	*Fumaria vaillantii* Loisel.	*Rasa - Tikta* *Vipaka - Madhura* *Virya - Shita* *Doshakarma - Kaphapittashamaka*		Pentatriacontane, Tannin, Potassium salt

ISSN: 2456-3110 **REVIEW ARTICLE** May 2024

27.	*Supya Shaka (Moong, Matar, Urad, Arhar)*	*Pulses*	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		Protein, Fiber, Vitamins, Minerals (Iron, Zinc, Folate, Magnesium
28.	*Bharangi*	*Clerodendrum serratum* Linn	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		Phenolic glycoside, Saponin
29.	*Chilli (Vanbathua)*		*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
30.	*Kutumbaka*		*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
31.	*Aluka*	*Dioscorea species*	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
33.	*Shana*	*Crotalaria juncea* Linn.	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*	*Raktapitta*	Fat, Raal
34.	*Shalmalipushpa*	*Salmalia malabaricum* Schott & Endl.	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*	*Raktapitta*	Mochrasa - 8-9% Minreal & Catechol tannin
35.	*Karburdara*	*Bauhinia variegata* Linn.	*Guna - Guru,Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*	*Raktapitta*	Tannin
36.	*Suvarchala*		*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
37.	*Nishapava*	*Dolichos lablab* Linn.	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
38.	*Kovidara*	*Bauhinia purpurea* Linn.	*Guna - Guru,Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*	*Raktapitta*	Tannin
39.	*Patur*	(Chaurai Species)	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura*		

ISSN: 2456-3110 REVIEW ARTICLE May 2024

			Virya - Shita		
40.	*Chunchuparni*		*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
41.	*Kumarjiva (Jeevanti)*	*Leptadenia reticulate* W. & A.	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		Sterol
43.	*Palaka*	*Spinacia oleracea* Linn.	*Guna - Guru,Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		Iodine, Lecithin, Carotin, Oxalic acid
44.	*Marisha*	*Amaranthus blitum* Var	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
45.	*Kalamb (Karemu)*	*Coprosma robusta*	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
47.	*Asuri (Raie)*	*Brassica juncea* Czern & Coss	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
48.	*Kusumb (Barre)*	*Schleichera oleosa* (Lour) oken	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		Macassar oil, Hydrocyanic acid
50.	*Lakshmana*	*Ipomoea sepiaria*	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
51.	*Prapunad (Cakwad)*	*Cassia tora* Linn.	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		Rhein, Aloe-emodin, Chrysophanol
52.	*Nilinika (Kamal)*	*Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn.	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		Nuciferine, Nornuciferine, Nelumbin
53.	*Kutheraka (Vantulsi)*	*Ocimum basilicum* Linn.	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		Basil camphor
54.	*Lonika (Noni)*	*Portulaca quadrifida* Linn.	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha*		

ISSN: 2456-3110 REVIEW ARTICLE May 2024

			Rasa - Madhura *Virya - Shita*		
55.	*Yavashaka (Bathua)*	*Chenopodium album*	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
56.	*Kushmanda*	*Benincasa hispida* Thunb.	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		Cucurbitine
57.	*Yatuka (*White *Sarivan)*	*Desmodium gangeticum* DC.	*Guna - Guru,Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		Raal, Oil
58.	*Shalkalyani (Chaurai* species*)*		*Guna - Guru,Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
59.	*Triparni*		*Guna - Guru,Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
60.	*Peeluparnika*		*Guna - Guru,Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*		
61.	*Udumbara*	*Ficus glomerata* Roxb.	*Rasa - Kashyaya* *Virya - Shita*	*Pittaja Atisara*	Albuminide, Silica, Tannin
62.	*Ashwatha*	*Ficus religiosa* Linn.	*Rasa - Kashyaya* *Virya - Shita*	*Pittaja Atisara*	Tannin
63.	*Nyagrodha*	*Ficus benghalensis* L.	*Rasa - Kashyaya* *Virya - Shita*	*Pittaja Atisara*	Tannin
64.	*Plaksha*	*Ficus lacor* Buch.-Ham	*Rasa -Kashyaya* *Virya - Shita*	*Pittaja Atisara*	
65.	*Gandeer*		*Doshakarma - Kaphashamaka*		
67.	*Chitraka*	*Plumbago zeylanica* Linn.	*Doshakarma - Kaphashamaka*		Plumbagin
68.	*Guduchi*	*Tinospora cordifolia (*Wild*)*	*Doshakarma - Vatanashaka*		Berberine, Giloin
69.	*Shreyshi (Gajpeepal)*	*Piper chaba* Hunter	*Doshakarma - Vatanashaka*		
70.	*Bilvaparni*		*Doshakarma - Vatanashaka*		

ISSN: 2456-3110 REVIEW ARTICLE May 2024

71.	*Bilva*	*Aegle marmelos* corr.	*Doshakarma - Vatanashaka*		Marmelosin, Aegelin, Aegelinin, Marmin, Mucilage, Pectin, Tannnin
72.	*Bhandi (Nishoth)*	*Operculina turpethum* (Linn.)	*Doshakarma - Vatapitashamaka*		Turpethin, Exogonium purga
73.	*Shatavari*	*Asparagus racemosus* Wild.	*Doshakarma - Vatapitashamaka*		Saponin
74.	*Bala*	*Sida cordifolia* Linn.	*Doshakarma - Vatapitashamaka*		Ephedrine
75.	*Jeevanti*	*Leptadenia reticulata* W.& A.	*Doshakarma - Vatapitashamaka*		Sterol
76.	*Parvani*		*Doshakarma - Vatapitashamaka*		
77.	*Parvapushpi*		*Doshakarma - Vatapitashamaka*		
78.	*Langali*	*Gloriosa superb* Linn	*Guna - Laghu* *Rasa - Tikta*	*Malbhedan*	Colchicine, Gloriosine
80.	*Til*	*Sesamum indicum* Linn.	*Rasa - Tikta, Katu, Amla* *Doshakarma -Vatanashaka*		Sesamin, Sesamine
81.	*Vetas*	*Salix caprea* Linn.	*Rasa - Tikta, Katu, Amla* *Doshakarma - Vatanashaka*		Cynidin, Pycin, Delfidinin, Glycoside, Saponin
82.	*Panchagul (Swetaeranda)*	*Ricinus communis* Linn.	*Rasa - Tikta, Katu, Amla* *Doshakarma -Vatanashaka*		Ricin, Ricinine
83.	*Trapusa*	*Cucumis sativus* Linn.	*Guna - Guru, Ruksha* *Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*	*Vistambhi,* *Mutral*	
85.	*Alabu*	*Lagenaria vulgaris* Ser.	*Guna - Shita, Ruksha, Guru*		
86.	*Utapalapatra*	*Nymphaea stellata* Willd	*Rasa - Kashaya*	*Raktapitta*	
87.	*Vidarikanda*	Pueraria tuberosa DC.	*Rasa - Madhura* *Virya - Shita*	*Rasayan*	Carbohydrate -64.60%, Protein - 10.80%
88.	*Sarsapa*	*Brasica campestris*	*Doshakarma - Tridoshakaraka*		

Discussion

Vegetarian diets have been promoted since the 18th century by men and women in search of physical and spiritual health.[5] A wide range of plant food is consumed, including most part of the plant, such as fruits, leaves, roots, and tubers. All the classical texts have given a separate chapter of *Shaka Varga* (Vegetables). In this review article we are trying to explain the properties or vegetables on the basis of *Rasa Panchakas*. Either due to endangered species of several naturally available vegetables, man is unable to find out the exact species of medicinal plant as mentioned in our classical texts. Hence *Shakas Varga*

ISSN: 2456-3110 **REVIEW ARTICLE** May 2024

(vegetables) which mentioned in *Caraka Samhita,* is explained with their properties.

CONCLUSION

From this review study it is concluded that vegetables are an important part of a healthy eating pattern and are excellence sources of many nutrients needed for normal body functions. It is found that nutritional composition in all above mentioned vegetables is different. Some vegetables contained high amount of starch while other vegetables contained high amount of protein. Some vegetables are rich in Vitamins (A, E, & C) and minerals like Na, K, P etc. but their concentration in other vegetables is less or poor. Vegetables are poor sources of fat and calories that is good for peoples suffering from obesity. They are excellent sources of fiber, can reduce the risk of chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, Diabetes type 2 and cancer etc. Fiber is definitely an active component of vegetables and a reason to continue to support their consumption.

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