

Scientific Approach to Celebrate Festivals in Maharashtra in India - A Conceptual Study

Review article

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Abstract

Festival celebration is an inseparable event from the lifestyle of Indians. This study is proposed to explain the scientific approach towards the Indian festivals to promote good health and to overcome the wrong beliefs of mythological stories to particular festivals.

Indian culture is having great diversities in traditions and customs. It could be due to geographical distribution. Maharashtra also follows its own customs & traditions and celebrates festivals for the acceptance of these environmental changes to maintain sound health rather than follow rituals and beliefs on mythological stories.

So, while celebrating festivals one should follow the regimen of *ritu sandhi* according to *desha* (land).

Key Words: Festivals, *Ayurveda* seasonal regimen and festivals, *Ayurveda* and festivals, definite relation between festivals and principles of *Ayurveda* of seasonal regimen.

Introduction:

India is known as the land of festivals which are no more confined to the boundaries of our nation but also being celebrated by the different communities around the world. So celebration of festival is the indivisible part of Indian people's life. Festival is the joint which brings together with loving bond. It is observed that sometimes some mythological stories and sometimes some atmospheric reasons are behind the celebration of festivals.

This study explains the relation between festivals and principal of *Ayurveda* of seasonal regimen.

Aims and objectives:

- To study the scientific approach of various festivals celebrated in *Maharashtra*.
- To explain the relation between festivals and seasonal regimen according to *Ayurveda*.

Materials & methods:

Ayurveda texts like *Brihatrayee*, *Laghatrayee* were used which are related to seasonal regimen.

Various texts on festivals were used which was available.

Conceptual study:

According to *Hindu* and English calendar one year is divided into 12 months. According to *Ayurveda* one year

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is divided into six seasons. One season comprises of two months and also whole year is divided into two *Ayana* i.e. *Uttarayana* (the period when sun is seen traversing to the north of equator) and *Dakshinayana* (the period when the sun is seen traversing to the south of the equator). (1).

Uttarayana is also called as *Adanakala* (period of extraction). *Adanakala* takes away human strength day by day. Three consecutive seasons *Shishira* (Extreme winter), *Vasanta* (spring) and *Grishma* (summer) comprise *Uttarayana*. *Dakshinayana* is also called as *Visargakala*. (Period of discharge) .*Visargakala* gives back vitality and strength or body gains strength during this period. The seasons of *Varsha* (Rainy),

Sharada (Autumn) and *Hemanta* (Early winter) comprise *Dakshinayana*.

ADANAKALA: During this period, the sun is above the north of equator, the earth has decreased moisture content, and the air becomes dry. The atmosphere changes, affect human body causing a gradual decrease in vitality and strength. Since it takes away strength, the period is known as *Adanakala* (2).

VISARGAKALA: During this period sun is seen moving in southern direction from east to west and hence called *Dakshinayana*.

During this period, Sun is above the south of the equator. The earth is blessed with increase in the moisture content, the body will be supple and strong. Thus it is held that this period is *Visarga Kala*, as the sun “lets out” strength to the organism. (3)

Table No.1 Showing Seasons, Hindu Months, English Months, Festivals and Diet According To Seasons

SEASONS	HINDU MONTHS	ENGLISH MONTHS	FESTIVALS	TASTE OF DIET ACCORDING TO SEASONS
Shishira (Extreme winter)	<i>Magha</i>	Mid January- Mid February	<i>Mahashivaratri</i> <i>Holi</i> <i>Rangapanchami</i>	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet) <i>Amla</i> (Sour) <i>Lavana</i> (Salt)
	<i>Phalgun</i>	Mid February- Mid March		
Vasanta (Spring)	<i>Chaitra</i>	Mid March- Mid April	<i>Gudi Padwa,</i> <i>Akshaya Tritiya</i>	<i>Katu</i> (Pungent) <i>Tikta</i> (Bitter) <i>Kashaya</i> (Astringent)
	<i>Vaishakha</i>	Mid April- Mid May		
Grishma (Summer)	<i>Jyeshtha</i>	Mid May- Mid June	<i>Vata Pournima</i>	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet)
	<i>Ashadha</i>	Mid June- Mid July		
Varsha (Rain)	<i>Shravana</i>	Mid July- Mid August	<i>Naga Panchami</i> <i>Gokulashtami</i> <i>ShravanaPournima</i> <i>(Rakhi/Narali Pournima)</i> <i>Bail Pola</i> <i>Ganesha Chaturthi</i>	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet) <i>Amla</i> (Sour) <i>Lavana</i> (Salt)
	<i>Bhadrapada</i>	Mid August- Mid September		

Sharada (Autumn)	<i>Ashvina</i>	Mid September-Mid October	<i>Pitra Paksha</i> <i>Navaratri</i> <i>Dassera</i>	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet) <i>Tikta</i> (Bitter) <i>Kashaya</i> (Astringent)
	<i>Kartika</i>	Mid October-Mid November	<i>Diwali</i> <i>Kojagiri Pournima</i>	
Hemanta (Early winter)	<i>Margashirsha</i>	Mid November-Mid December	<i>Geeta Jayanti</i> <i>Makara Sankranti</i>	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet) <i>Amla</i> (Sour) <i>Lavana</i> (Salt)
	<i>Pausha</i>	Mid December-Mid January		

Shishira ritu means extreme winter season and comes in *Magha* and *Phalguna* months of *Hindu* calendar. *Magha* is between Mid January to Mid February and *Phalguna* is from Mid February to Mid March. *Mahashivaratri*, *Holi* and *Ranga Panchami* are the festivals which come in this *Shishira Ritu*. *Madhura* (sweet), *Amla* (sour) and *Lavana* (salt) are the tastes prevalent in *Shishira Ritu*.

Vasanta Ritu means spring season and consists of two months *Chaitra* and *Vaishakha*. *Chaitra* is from Mid March to Mid April. *Vaishakha* is from Mid April to Mid May. *Gudi Padwa* is the festival which comes in *Vasanta Ritu*. *Katu*, *Tikta* and *Kashaya rasas* are prevalent in *Vasanta Ritu*.

Grishma Ritu means summer season and has two months *Jyestha* and *Ashadha*. *Jyestha* is from Mid May to Mid June. *Ashadha* is from Mid June to Mid July. *Madhura rasa* is prevalent in *Grishma Ritu*.

Varsha Ritu means rainy season. It consists of two months *Shravana* and *Bhadrapada*. *Shravana* is from Mid July to

Mid August and *Bhadrapada* is from Mid August to Mid September. *Nagapanchami*, *Narali Pournima*, *Gopalakala*, *Pola* and *Ganesha Chaturthi* are the festivals which come in *Varsha Ritu*. *Madhura*, *Amla* and *Lavana rasas* are prevalent in *Varsha Ritu*.

Sharada Ritu means autumn season. *Ashwina* and *Kartika* are the two months which come in *Sharada Ritu*. *Ashwina* is from Mid September to Mid October and *Kartika* is from Mid October to Mid November. *Navaratri*, *Dasshera*, *Kojagiri Pournima* and *Diwali* are the festivals which come in *Sharada Ritu*. *Madhura*, *Tikta* and *Kashaya rasas* are prevalent in *Sharada ritu*.

Hemanta Ritu means early winter season. It consists of two months *Margashirsha* and *Pausha*. *Margashirsha* is from Mid November to Mid December and *Pausha* is from Mid December to Mid January. *Gita Jayanti* is the festival which comes in *Hemanta Ritu*. *Madhura*, *Amla* and *Lavana Rasa* are prevalent in *Hemanta Ritu*.

TABLE NO.2: SHOWING RELATION BETWEEN RITU AND DOSHA

Dosha	Sanchaya (accumulation)	Prakopa (aggravation)	Prashamana (mitigation to normalcy)
Vata	Grishma	Varsha	Sharada
Pitta	Varsha	Sharada	Hemanta
Kapha	Shishira	Vasanta	Grishma

According to Hindu calendar first month of New Year is *Chaitra*. One cycle of season is completed in this month. New Year will be supposed to good atmosphere, status of body strength, status of Doshas in the body and festivals.

VASANTA RITU (SPRING SEASON)

HINDU MONTHS: *Chaitra, Vaishakha.*

ENGLISH MONTHS: Mid March- Mid April, Mid April-Mid May.

STATUS OF ATMOSPHERE: *Ruksha* (Dryness) .

STATUS OF DOSHAS: Aggravation of *Kapha Dosha*, Alleviation of *Vata Dosha*.

STRENGTH OF PERSON: Medium.

SHAMAN KARMA (PALLIATIVE THERAPY): *Deepana* (Carminative), *Pachana* (Digestive) .

SHODHANA KARMA (ELIMINATION THERAPY) : *Vamana* (Emesis) .

Accumulated *Kapha* in *Hemant Ritu* gets liquified because of hot Sunrays from *Vasanta Ritu* which leads loss of fire and so *Kaphaja* diseases can occur in this season.

DO'S:

DIET- Barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L), Wheat (*Triticum spp.*), *Madhu* (Honey) and meat of *Jangala* (dry, arid land) animals and birds should be partaken. Grains like *Jawara* (*Sorghum Bicolor*), *Bajra* (*Pennisetum glaucum* Corn), Pulses like Green gram (*Phaseolus aureus*), Brown skinned lentil (*Lens Culinaris*), Pigeon pea (*Pisum Sativum*), Chick pea (*Cicer Arietinum*), Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Snake Gourd (*Trichosanthes cucumerina*), Mustard (*Brassica juncea*), Fenugreek leaf (*Trigonella fornum-graecum*), Spinach (*Spinacia oleracea*), Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) and Ginger (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe) should be partaken.

MEDICINE-*Rasayana* (rejuvenative) drugs and *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*) powder with Honey. Exercise, Medicated powder massage over the body, Medicated smoke inhalation, Gargling,

Application of concentrated Collyrium, Concentrated *Nasya* (nasal administration of medicine) and Application of paste of Sandal (*Santalum album*) and *Agaru* (*Aquilaria agallocha* Roxb.) powder should be done.

LIFESTYLE-One should move along river side to get cold, fragrant breeze of air. One should get up early in the morning before sunrise and do Yoga after elimination of Urine and Stool.

DON'TS:

DIET-New grains, cold, unctuous, sour and salty food, curd, Black gram (*Vigna Mungo*), Potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.), Onion (*Allium cepa* L.), Sugarcane (*Saccharum officinarum*), new Jaggery, Buffalo milk and water chest nut (*Trapa natans* L.) .

LIFESTYLE-Sleeping in day time, and consuming sweet, oily and heavy to digest food.

FESTIVALS OF VASANTA RUTU:

In the month of *Chaitra* "*Gudhipaadwaa*" is celebrated as the first day of *Hindu* New Year. On this day a pole named *Gudhi* is erected in front of the house. A new cloth is tied on the *Gudhi*; a metal vessel is put on to it. Mixture of *Neem* (*Azadirachta Indica*) leaves, *Guda* (Jaggery) and Cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*) can be used to eat on this special day. (4)

In *Ayurveda*, properties of *Neem* leaves and Jaggery have been very well explained. The leaves, flowers, stem of *Neem* tree are useful as medicine. Cumin is carminative, digestive and useful in Urinary disorders. (5)

In the spring season increased heat of the body subside by bathing with water with *Neem* leaves to prevent skin diseases like eczema which is custom. (6)

'*Akshaya Trutiya*' is the second festival celebrated in this season in the month of *Vaishakha*. The word "*Akshaya*" means *the never diminishing* in *Sanskrit* and the day is believed to bring good luck and success. It is believed that if you do charity on this

day you will be blessed. It is observed that on *Akshay Tertiya*, worship of Mrutika (soil/earth) was custom. (7) So on this day earthen pots are offered to the needy as charity. (8)

According to *Ayurveda*, during these days atmosphere becomes hot. So one gets frequently thirsty. That is why everyone is needed to drink cold water so the idea of earthen pot charity was implemented. But in ancient time earthen pots were used to keep water cool.

GRISHMA RUTU (SUMMER SEASON).

HINDU MONTHS: *Jyestha- Ashadha.*

ENGLISH MONTHS: Mid May- Mid June, Mid June- Mid July. **STATUS OF ATMOSPHERE:** Very Dry.

STATUS OF DOSHAS: Accumulation of *Vata* and alleviation of *Kapha*

STRENGTH OF PERSON: Less strength.

SHAMANA KARMA (PALLIATIVE THERAPY) : *Vataghna* medicine.

SHODHANA KARMA (ELIMINATION THERAPY) :

In this season sun takes away moisture from the atmosphere and air becomes very dry. During this season; trees, animals and birds get affected with severe heat. Water from the river gets absorbed. Everywhere dryness can be seen.

DO'S:

DIET-Sweet, oily and cold food. Drink liquids like milk, Lassi and Buttermilk. Drink fruit juices like Pomegranate, Lemon, Sugarcane, Watermelon, Muskmelons, Coconut water and Cumin. Drink water in *Brahma Muhurta* (early in the morning i.e. before sunrise).

MEDICINE-Sweet and cold *mantha* (cold infusion), meat soup of *Jangala* (dry, arid) animal & birds, ghee, milk, rice should be partaken and increase the strength of a person. Intake of *Madya*

(alcohol) with mixed water according to constitution and strength of the body.

LIFESTYLE-Move in gardens, Bathing twice in a day.

DON'TS:

DIET-Hot, spicy, dry, salty food, meat and fried items. Food items prepared from *Maida* (flour of *Listea glutinosa*) or *Besan* (flour of *Cicer Arietinum*), Intake of wine and pungent, sour and salty taste.

LIFESTYLE-Sunrays, exercise and exhaustion should be avoided. Wearing synthetic clothes and visiting contaminated water and place like fair should be avoided. Sexual intercourse should be avoided.

FESTIVALS OF GRISHMA RITU.

On the full moon day of the month of *Jyestha*, *Vata Pournima* is celebrated in this season. On this day women worship *Vata* (Banyan) tree and seek blessings for their husbands for long and healthy life. (9)

Vata (Banyan- *Ficus Bengalensis*) is considered as a holy tree. It is a huge tree with strong roots and long life. *Vata Pournima* is celebrated according to *Hindu* mythology. On this day Savitri was successful in bringing her husband Satyawaana from the web of death under this tree. So from this day, *Vata Pournima* is celebrated by women for their husband's longevity.

According to *Ayurveda*, *Panchaanga* (five parts) of this tree is used as medicine. 11% tannin is seen in its *twaka* (skin/outer surface). It is cold in potency acts as *Graahi* (constipative), *Mutrasangrahaniya* (urine retention) and *Vrana ropaniya* (heals the wound). Because of its cold potency people used to come under this tree to take rest. Its taste is astringent so it acts as *Raktastambhak* (Haemostatic). Sticky substance of leaves is used in the symptoms of Scorpio poison. Hot paste of its leaves can be applied on Arthritis. (10)

VARSHA RUTU- RAINY SEASON.

HINDU MONTHS- *Shravana, Bhadrapada*

ENGLISH MONTHS- Mid July to Mid August and Mid August to Mid September

STATUS OF DOSHAS IN THE BODY- Accumulation of *pitta* and Alleviation of *vata*.

PROPERTIES OF ATMOSPHERE- *Snigdha* (Unctuous)

STRENGTH OF PERSON- Less strength

SHODHAN KARMA (ELIMINATION THERAPY) - Emesis, Purgation, Medicated Enema

During period of *Adankala* strength and *Agni* (digestive fire) becomes weak. In *Varsha Rutu*, weak digestive power is further deteriorated as dark clouds gorged with water blanket the horizon, the wind blows with water droplets causing the vapours rising from the earth generate *amlavipaka*. Thus the turbid water even the weak digestive fires are all responsible for vitiating *doshas*.

Thus, in this season when the *doshas* vitiate reciprocally, it is advisable to adopt regimen that does not vitiate *doshas* and those that increase digestion.

DO'S:

DIET-Old cereals, seasoned meat soup and meat of *Jangala* (dry, arid land) animals, soup of Green grams (*Phaseolus aureus*), old wine, sour, salty and oily food, old rice and Barley should be consumed. Ghee and Milk during meal should be taken. *Bajra* (*Pennisetum glaucum*) or corn (*Zea mays var. everta.*) with buttermilk should be consumed. Vegetables liked pumpkin (*Cucurbita maxima*), Brinjal (*Solanum melongena*), Snake gourd (*Trichosanthes cucumerina*), Bitter gourd (*Momordica charantia*) and Bottle gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*) should be consumed. Ginger (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe), Fenugreek leaf (*Trigonella fornum-graecum*), Garlic (*Allium sativum*) and clean water to drink

should be used. Boiled water is best. Water from well, pond and river can be used for drinking after mixing Alum. After getting wet in rain bath with clean water is necessary.

MEDICINE-*Arishtas* (alcoholic bevarages) should be used as medicine. *Mastu* (Whey) mixed with *Souvarchala* (*Sochal salt-unaqua sodium chloride*) or *Panchakola* powder which contains five ingredients- *Pippali* (Piper longum), *Pippalimula* (root of Piper longum), *Chavya* (piper brachystachyum), *Chitraka* (*Plumbago zylanica*), *Nagara* (*Zingiber officinale*) should be used as medicine.

DON'TS:

DIET-Rice (*Oryza sativa L.*), Potato (*Solanum tuberosum L.*), ladies finger (*Abelmoschus esculentus*), heavy food and steal food should be avoided. Well, pond and river water should be avoided. Curd, fish, meat, liquid food and wine should be avoided.

LIFESTYLE-Walking without footwear should be avoided. Body should be scented with perfumes. Clothes should be scented with fumigated drugs. Preferably stay in upper floor of a building free from moisture, cold and mist. Avoid river water. Sleeping during day time and sleeping in open space should be avoided. Exertion, exercise and sun bath should be avoided.

FESTIVALS OF VARSHA RITU

“Naga Panchami” is the first festival of this season. On this day, farmers and women or people worship snake by offering milk to them. Snake is considered as farmer's friend. Snake prevents destruction of crops from the rats by killing them. To preserve the greenery and to show the gratitude to them people worship snake with wholeheartedly on this day.

According to *Ayurveda*, skin of snake is used for *dhupana chikitsa* (fumigation by medicinal plant) in piles and difficulty in delivering baby in women. In ascites, bite of snake opens the

blockages of channels so that distention of abdomen can be subsided.

Second festival of this season is “*Gokulashtami*” or “*Gopalakala*”. This day is considered as a birthday of *Lord Krishna*. People eat curd specially on this day because of belief that *Lord Krishna* in his childhood used to play with his friends and after playing they used to eat curd and butter always.

According to *Ayurveda*, sour and sweet taste is advisable for decreasing *vata* because taste of curd is sour and *vipaka* of curd is also sour.

Third festival of this season is “*Shravana Pournima*”. *Shravana Pournima* is also known as “*Rakhi Pournima*” or “*Narali Pournima*”. This festival is celebrated in this month on the day of full moon. On this day sisters tie *Rakhi* made of threads on the wrists of their brothers for their long and happy life and their brothers vow to take care and protect their sisters. This is the festival of celebrating the bond of love between a brother and sister. On this day special *Narali bhat* (coconut rice) is prepared in every house.

During the rainy season, the sea is ferociously restless so, the fishermen celebrate *Narali Pournima* to calm the sea by offering the auspicious coconut fruit.

According to *Ayurveda*, Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) is called as *Mahavruksha* or *Kalpavruksha* because it has multiple uses in kitchen and medicine also. Coconut oil is used in cooking and medicine. Coconut is having sweet taste, aphrodisiac, gives strength, makes stout and cleans the urinary bladder. Coconut water is cold in potency, relieves thirst and increases urine and decreases fever. Oil of it is used as tonic for hair and act as good wound healer. Wine prepared from it is used to subside burning sensation, gives strength and cleanses bladder. Root of it is astringent in taste, used in urinary calculus, diabetes and menorrhagia. By burning hard cover of it, we get oil which

is good to cure skin diseases. Milk of coconut acts as tonic to weak person and after the surgery. (11) To show gratitude to it, coconut is worshipped by people on this day.

In the month of *Bhadrapada* on the *Amavasya* (darkest moonless night) after the rainy season “*Bail Pola*” is celebrated. This is another festival of farmer. In the life of farmer *Bail* (Ox) is has most important place. After the agricultural work done by ox during rainy season farmer shows gratitude towards ox on this day and so farmers worship ox on this day.

“*Ganesh Chaturthi*” is celebrated on fourth day of *Shukla paksha* in the month of *Bhadrapada*, during rainy season. This day is considered as birthday of *Lord Ganesha*. And on *Ananta Chaturdashi* (eleventh day after *Ganesh Chaturthi*) the idol of *Ganesha* is drowned in to the pond (*visarjana*) . *Ganesha* word is derived from two words; one is *Gana* which means group and second is *Isha* which means leader. So, *Ganesha* is supposed to be leader of one group.

According to *Ayurveda* or in *Sanskrit* grammer root word of *Gana* is derived from *guna*. *Guna* means qualities which are *Satva*, *Raja* and *Tama*. *Ganesha* means the controller of the three qualities. So, *Ganesha* is considered as God of intelligence and quality. To worship lord *Ganesha* people offer twenty one *durva* (*Cynodon dactylon*) to him.

During the month of *Bhadrapada*, *durva* grows rapidly and it absorbs heat of the body. In this particular month or season, *pitta* gets accumulated in the body and so *Durva* makes its strength low. (12)

In *Ayurveda*, *Durva* is described as medicine. *Durva* is said to have many medicinal properties and health benefits including antimicrobial and antiviral properties. Recent research at university of Allahabad in India has shown the glycemic potential of *cynodon dactylon* extract has significant hypoglycaemic as well as antidiabetic effects. (13)

SHARADA RUTU (AUTUMN SEASON)

HINDU MONTHS- *Ashwina, Kartika*

ENGLISH MONTHS- Mid September- Mid October, Mid October- Mid November

STATUS OF DOSHAS IN THE BODY- Accumulation of *pitta*

PROPERTIES OF ATMOSPHERE- Unctuous.

STRENGTH OF PERSON: Medium Strength.

SHODHANA KARMA (ELIMINATION THERAPY) - Virechana (Purgation) .

In *Varsha Ritu*, the body is accustomed to the cold atmosphere and hence *pitta* is accumulated but fails to aggravate *Kapha* due to frigid atmosphere when the sunrays become hot in the ensuring *Sharada ritu*, the body becomes suddenly hot and by this, the accumulated *pitta* aggravates.

In this season digestive fire increases. Water heated by besieged rays of sun during day time and cooled by moon rays at night detoxified by the star *Agastya* (the star *anapus*) rising in this season and is pure and clear, capable of pacifying *tridoshas* which is neither *abhishyandi* (secretory) nor *ruksha* (causing dehydration) . It is as good as divine elixir and known as *Hamsodaka* . (*Hamsodaka* word derived from two words: *Hamsa*: Swan, *Udaka*: Water. Sun and Moon are considered as *Hamsa* (Swan) .) Purified water by the rays of sun and moon or the water which can be capable to drink by swan is *Hamsodaka*. Swan always drinks clean water. Water which can be drink which is purified by rays of sun and moon. (14)

DO'S:

DIET- Sweet, light, cold and pungent taste diet, rice (*Oryza sativa L.*), barley (*Hordeum vulgare L.*) .

Drink clean water or alum mixed with water. Vegetables like Bitter gourd (*Momordica charantia*), snake gourd (*Trichosanthes cucumerina*), Fenugeek leaf (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*), bottle gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*), spinach (*Spinacia oleracea*), Radish (*Raphanus sativus*), Water chestnut (*Trapa natans L.*), Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Cabbage (*Brassica oleracea or variants*) and grapes (*Vitis vinifera*), tomato (*Solanum lycopersicum*), drink fruit juices like lemon (*Citrus × limon*) juice and eat dry fruits especially dried grapes and coconut. Eat vegetables without spices. Drink water before sunrise.

MEDICINE-

Chyavanaprasha, *Amalaki Rasayana*, *Brahma rasayana* etc. can be consumed after the consultation of Doctor. Administration of *Tikta Ghrutpana* (Bitter Ghee) is good in this season. Eat *Triphala churna*, *Nishottha Churna* and *Amaltas*. Eat green gram and black gram pulses.

LIFESTYLE-

Perform regular oil massage, regular exercise. Those who are unable to do exercise, they can do morning walk. Do take sleep in room. Wear clean and light clothes. Bath in swimming pool and pond.

DON'TS:

DIET-

Food prepared with maida (flour of *Listea glotinoso*) should not be consumed. Hot, pungent, spicy and oily food, Fatty and salty and sour diet should be avoided. Fish should be avoided. Guava (*Psidium guajava*) in excess and stem vegetables should be avoided.

Vanaspati Ghee and unripe Cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*) should be avoided.

LIFESTYLE-

Sleeping in day time should be avoided. Do not cover mouth while sleeping and not to sleep under sky in open space.

FESTIVALS OF SHARADA RITU:

“Pitra paksha” (Cermony of fifteen days to remind the departed ancestors of family) is specially observed by hindu people in the month of *Ashvina*. The period of the festival extends over the dark fortnight of the month. People celebrate the festival with religious fever. It is celebrated to pacify the souls of deceased ancestors. On each day of the festival, the eldest son of a family performs certain ceremonies. He offers oblations Pinda (rice balls etc.) and water for the departed souls. (15)

In *Ayurveda* three basic desires are mentioned by the name *Pranaeshana*, *Dhanaeshana* and *Paralokeishana*. *Praanaeshana* means desire to live long, *Dhanaeshana* means desire to earn money and *Paralokaeshana* means desire to get happy life after death. These three desires belong only to such persons as are after enjoyment of happiness in this world and the world beyond. Desire to perform virtuous acts is related to the desire to attain happiness in life after death. While discussing this issue, topic of rebirth is explained. And to get salvation, *Pitra paksha* is observed.

‘Navratri’ is celebrated after performing religious act like *Pitra Paksha* as second festival of this season. Nine holy days in the month of *Ashvina* are celebrated as *Navaratri*. This festival is dedicated for goddess which is symbol of women empowerment. To salute women empowerment this festival is celebrated all over India with full of enjoyment. (16) Either on the eighth or ninth day, The ladies of house prepare delicious food offering as *Prasada*. For nine consecutive days the ladies keep fast. On the festival day they give food to nine girls. It is symbolic act of worshipping the goddess in the virgin form. This is abserved generally in Northern India. (17)

According to *Ayurveda*, *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are the root cause of evolution of universe. Every particle of the universe is

made up of *triguna* (*Satva*, *Raja* and *Tama*) which is originated from *Prakriti*. In *Navaratri* power of nine goddesses are worshipped. Among these some are of mild quality which denotes *Satva* quality and some are of aggressive quality which denotes *Raja* quality. And we can consider this festival is a symbol of worship of the qualities of *triguna*.

“Dassehera” is a festival which celebrates the victory of good over evil. It has mythological aspect. It falls on the tenth day in the month of *Ashvina*. Its other name is **“Vijaya Dashmi”**. The battle between Goddess *Durga* (Good) and *Mahishasura* (Evil) were fought for nine days. On the tenth day *Durga* killed *Mahishasura* and that is why this tenth day is celebrated as *Vijaya Dashmi*. This day is also celebrated as the victory of Lord *Rama* who killed and defeated the powerful ruler of *Lanka*, the ten headed *Ravana* during period of *Ramayana*.

Another mythological story is also behind the celebration of *Dassehera* during period of *Mahabharata*. On this day *Arjuna* had relieved the cows of king *Virata* from the *Shami* (*Prosopis cineraria*) tree where the weapons of battle were kept or hidden.

Above stories had happened in different periods but on the same day of *Vijaya Dashmi*. So this day is celebrated as the symbol of victory. And people worship Goddess *Durga* by offering leaves of *Shami-Apta* (*Prodopis spicigera*) and instruments also.

According to *Ayurveda* *Shami-Apta* (*Prodopis Spicigera*) is a holy tree. It alleviates *Raktapitta* (bleeding disorders). Ash of skin of this tree is rubbed over particular area to get rid of excess hair, It is *Garbhasthaapaka* (to establish and maintenance of pregnancy). (18)

“Deepawali/Diwali” falls on the darkest moonless night of *Amavasya*, the fifteenth day of *Krishna paksha* in the month of *Kartika* after *Vijayadashmi*, This festival is celebrated for five days.

Deepawali or popularly known as *Diwali* has got great mythological, religious and cultural importance. *Dipa* in *Hindi* or *Diwaa* in *Marathi* means *lamp*. *Deepawali* is the festival of lights. We forget our sorrows and a bit in the light. Light is the symbol of act of fulfillment and mysteries. During this period we get the yields from the farms. Rains are over and atmosphere becomes pleasantly cool. For the farmer crops is their wealth so they get reason to celebrate their happiness in the form of festivals like *Diwali*, *Vasubarasa*, *Dhanatrayodashi*, *Naraka Chaturdashi*, *Bali Pratipada* and *Bhaubeej* and these are six events which are celebrated during *Diwali*. During these six events people wake up early in the morning and bath with oil massage and application of scented powder all over the body.

In *Ayurveda* benefit of bath, oil massage is very well explained. But especially people perform this act during this season or festival because of coldness or winter season. Due to coldness, *vata* aggravation can be subsided by oil massaging and luke warm water. Scented powder is the combination of different medicinal drugs which are helpful to destroy bad odour of sweat and it also improves the skin complexion.

“Vasubaaras” is the first day of *Diwaali*. *Vasu Baras* or *Bagh Baras* (*Vagh Baras*) or *Govatsa Dwadashi* is the twelfth the light of day of the *Krishna Paksha* of *Ashwina* calendar month which is dedicated to the cow and calves. In *hindi* language *Govatsa* derived from two words *Go* and *vatsa* where as *Go* or *Vasu* means ‘cow’ and ‘*vatsa*’ means calf.

Indian people exceptionally inside rural areas symbolically think that the cow represents motherhood. In urban India cow is the individual economic source of thousands of families. Hence married women worship them. Images of cow and calf are decorated with turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) and kumkum (*Crocus sativus*)

On this day people worship cow which is definitely an auspicious thing which gives milk and is the symbol of wealth.

Ayurveda has described qualities of milk and specially cow’s milk and so people show the gratitude to cow and calf by worshipping them.

“Dhanatrayodashi” is the second day of *Diwali*. It is also known as *Dhana Terasa*. *Dhana* means “wealth” and *Trayodashi* means “13th day” It is also celebrated as birthday of Lord *Dhanvantari* who propagated the science of *Ayurveda*. **Dhanvantari** is an *Avatar* (incarnation) of lord *Vishnu* from the *hindu* tradition. He appears in the *Vedas* and *Puranas* as the physician of the *god* and the God of *Ayurvedic* medicine. It is common practice in hinduism for worshipers to pray to *Dhanvantari* seeking his blessings for sound health for themselves and/or others especially on *Dhanterasa*. Due to this science life of human being becomes healthier in the country by worshipping Lord *Dhanvantari*. So his birthday is celebrated by the practitioners of *Ayurveda* every year on *Dhanterasa*. There are many legends revealing different stories about this day. One legend says when gods and demons churned the ocean to get nectar, *Dhanvantari* emerged carrying a jar of the elixir from it. (19)

On this day Coriander seeds are worshipped by people. During this season coriander grows more. And to prevent the aggravation of *Pitta* people drink water of Coriander with *Khadi sakhara* (sugar cubes) which mitigate *Pitta*.

Ashwina Krishna Chaturdashi means **“Naraka Chaturdashi”**. This day is fourteenth day of the month of *Ashwina* considered as the victory on demon *Naraka sura* who was killed by Lord *Krishna*. Broadly this signifies the victory of good over evil. On this day people take bath before sunrise and cleans houses, lights lamps then they crushed the bitter

fruit called *Karita* (*cucumis melo var agrestis*) by first toe of right leg which represents the head of demon king *Narakasura*. (20) and then the entire family sits down for a joint breakfast of savouries called *Farala* (sweet preparations).

Fifteenth day in the month of *Ashwina* is no moon day and so it is darkest and celebrated as "**Laxmi Pujana**" after *Naraka Chaturdashi*. This ritual is made on the dark day because after every black night bright light will destroy the darkness. So after the darkest moon night, Goddess *Laxmi* who is the symbol of cleanliness, beauty, light and wealth is worshipped. This is considered as an auspicious day for women. *Lakshmi Puja* or the worship of the goddess of wealth is the main event on *Diwali* in North and West India. It is popularly believed that *Lakshmi* likes cleanliness and will visit the cleanest house first. Hence broom is worshiped with offerings of turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) and kumkum (*Crocus sativus*) on this day. Lamps are lit in the evening to welcome the goddess as they are believed to light up her path. On this day, a supported light of knowledge is said to dawn upon humanity. This self-enlightenment is expressed through the twinkling lamps that illuminate the abode of the worshippers. It is believed that on this day, the goddess walks through the green fields and loiters through the by-lanes and showers her blessings on mankind for glory and prosperity. (21)

Marigold (*Calendula officinalis*) (22) flowers are offered to Goddess *Laxmi*. Marigold is grown mainly in March and April and is known to grow rapidly. They are known to be a rich source of flavonoids and vitamin C. They have no fat content and therefore aid weight loss. It is used in the treatment of minor burns when used in the form of ointments or a tincture. Marigold has anti-inflammatory properties. In the treatment of allergic reactions, eczema and bruising it is being

used. In the treatment for plantar lesions that tend to occur on the feet marigold is useful. Health benefits and therapeutic uses of marigold flowers as well as the leaves of the marigold is very well explained. It is beneficial in minimizing the number of tumors in the case of breast cancer as well as in the prevention of the development of new cancer cells. Besides breast cancer, Marigolds are also known to be effective against colon, leukemia and melanoma cancer cells, effective against painful mouth and stomach ulcers as well as colitis. The petals of the marigold flowers are also used in sitz baths as they are effective in healing vaginal infections, bladder infections, healing of stitches post child birth as well as haemorrhoids. To prepare a sitz bath the petals of the marigold flowers should be boiled for some time and then added to the warm bath water. (23)

"**Bali Pratipadā**" is the fifth day of *Deepavali* (*Diwali*), the *Hindu* festival of lights. It is celebrated in honour of the notional return of the *Daitya* (demon) - king *Bali* to earth. *Bali Pratipadai* falls in the Gregorian calendar months October–November. It is the first day of the *Hindu* month *Kartika* and is the first day of the bright lunar fortnight (day after new moon day) in the month. It is also called the *Akashadipa* (lights of the sky). It is celebrated as the first day of the *Vikram Samvat* calendar in Western India.

According to *Hindu* mythology, *Bali Pratipada* commemorates the victory of god *Vishnu* in his dwarf incarnation i.e. *Vamana*, the fifth incarnation of the *Dashavatara* (ten major incarnations of *Vishnu*) defeating *Bali* and pushing him to the nether world. But *Bali* was bestowed a boon by *Vishnu* that on this day he (*Bali*) be honoured and people celebrate his devotion and noble deeds to his people. (24)

This is first day of the month of *Kartika* which is symbol of love and affection. In *Maharashtra* it is celebrated

as *Padva* or *Bali Pratipada*. The day is linked to worship of king *Bali*. On this day wife prays for long and healthy life for her husband . To enhance the bond of love between the married couples they exchange gifts .

Sixth day of *Diwali* is “*Bhaubeeja*”. The celebrations of this day are similar to the festival of *Raksha Bandhana*. On this day sisters pray for a long and happy life for their brothers by performing the *Aukshana (Tika)* ceremony. On this day in contrast to *Raksha Bandhana* sisters present gifts to their brothers. According to a popular legend in *Hindu* mythology after slaying the evil demon *Narkasura*, Lord *Krishna* visited his sister *Subhadra* who gave him a warm welcome with sweets and flowers. She also affectionately applied *tilak* on *Krishna's* forehead. Some believe this to be the origin of the festival. This day is celebrated by brothers and sisters. By wearing clean and new clothes with ornaments sister does *Aukshana* (*Aukshana* means the ceremony in which wet *kumkum* is applied on forehead of brother in vertical line and the plate with small lamp and sweets is rotated from left to right by sister for five times. The lamp is the symbol of light which destroys the darkness) to her beloved brother and this is done to protect the brother from the darkness which is the symbol of bad things and to increase the longevity and healthy life. To add charm to the occasion, of *Bhau beej*a gifts are exchanged between brothers and sisters as a token of love and appreciation.

So in short, *Diwali* is the festival of love, affection and lights .It enhances the relationship between the family members and the community as whole.

The full moon day of *Ashwina* is called the “*Kojagari Pournima*”. The *Sharada Purnima* or *Kojagari Purnima* or *Kumar Purnima* is a harvest festival celebrated on the full moon day of the *Hindu* lunar month of

Ashvina (September–October) . It marks the end of monsoon. There is a traditional celebration of the moon and is also called the '*Kaumudi* celebration', *Kaumudi* means moonlight.

This event is celebrated by observing sacred *Kojagiri Pournima vrata* for Goddess *Laxmi* and Lord *Indra*. To welcome her houses, temples and streets etc. are illuminated. A light is lit outside one's house to let Goddess *Laxmi*, the Harbinger of wealth and prosperity while going on her rounds to overlook and pause to boost her blessings. Some people believed that on this night Goddess *Laxmi* visits every house asking, “*Ko Jaagarati?*” means “Who is awake?” and shows her pleasure on those she finds awake. Hence the night is spent in festivity and various games of amusement in honour of the goddess. So people sit in the moonlight singing songs or keep themselves entertained in some other way. They observed fast and take only fluids like coconut water or milk. Milk is boiled till it thickens and a mixture of dry fruits is added to it and offered as delicacy. There is also a tradition to have milk with rice flakes on this night. It is a harvest festival and is celebrated throughout the country, particularly by *Maharashtrians*. (25)

In *Ayurveda*, in this season moonlight is enjoyed atop terrace of white mensions and moonlight gives maximum strength and cooling effect to the body, Moonlight detoxified by the star *Agastya* (the star canopus) rising in this season and is pure and clean. So milk drink at this moonlight gives maximum strength. Milk is included in *Kshira varga* which is sweet in taste, purgative and mitigates *Pitta*. Boiled milk is to be made cold in the presence of moonlight. This milk is good for drinking. Almond, Cashew nuts are added to this drink which makes it tasty as well as nutritious which is the need of this season. (26) So people gather on this night and drink milk with almond and cashew nuts.

HEMANTA RITU (EARLY WINTER)

ENGLISH MONTHS-*Margasheersha, Pausha*

ENGLISH MONTHS- Mid November- Mid December

Mid December- Mid January

STATUS OF DOSHAS IN THE BODY-

Aggravation of *pitta* and alleviation of *vata*

PROPERTIES OF ATMOSPHERES-

Cold

STRENGTH OF PERSON- Highest strength

SHODHANA THERAPY (ELIMINATION THERAPY) - Basti (Medicated Enema)

In *Hemanta Ritu* due to the cold breeze the body temperature is obstructed and enters deep into the body and increases digestive fire in the strong persons and is able to digest hard food substance also. (27)

DO'S:

DIET-Unctuous, sweet, heavy meals should be consumed. Oil, ghee and hot meal should be consumed. Nutritious *Laddoo* (ball-shaped sweets) and *modaka* (sweet rice dumpling) should be consumed. .New *Shali* should be consumed. Dry fruits should be consumed.

LIFESTYLE-Bath with oil massage should be done. Application of dry powder all over the body should be done. Woolen and dark colored clothes are to be worn. One should wear socks and shoes. One should use lukewarm water to wash hands and legs.

MEDICINE-*Ashwagandha Paka, Methi Ladoo, Chyavanprasha* and *Brahma Rasayana* should be consumed.

DON'TS:

DIET-Cold drinks should be avoided. One should consumed less food and watery food.

LIFESTYLE-Sleep in day time should be avoided. One should not stay in the place where wind blows. One should wear cotton and light clothes.

FESTIVALS OF HEMANTA RITU :

The "*Gita Jayanti*" or the day when *Gita* (A sacred book on ethics) was revealed to the world is celebrated traditionally on the eleventh day of the *Shukla Paksha* (bright half) in the month of *Margasheersha*. The pious *Gita* is a composition of the thoughts exchanged between *Krishna* and *Arjuna*, just before the *Mahabharata* war. Later it was integrated in *Mahabharata* by *Veda Vyasa*. It is composed of more than one hundred thousand *shlokas*.

On *Gita jayanti* special *Puja* (*rituals*) and rendition of the *Bhagvad Gita* is performed. People prey to Lord Krishna to shower his grace on all his devotees. (28)

In Ayurveda, causes of all diseases are very well explained. *Bhagvad Gita* is a holy book which gives the wise words to live strong and peaceful life. *Ayurveda* also described 10 sins which should not be committed by the body, the gab or the mind.

- (1) *Himsa* (violence),
- (2) *Steya* (theft),
- (3) *Anyatha Kama* (infidelity),
- (4) *Paishunya* (tale bearing),
- (5) *Parusha* (abuse/being rude),
- (6) *Anrut* (speaking untruth/lying),
- (7) *Sasmbhinalpa* (uttering rubbish),
- (8) *Vyapada* (tendency to harm),
- (9) *Abhidya* (longing for other's belongings) and
- (10) *Drgviparyaya* (atheism) . (29)

The only festival which falls on the same day every year is "*Makara Sankranti*". It is celebrated on January 15, *Shukla Paksha* in the month of *Pausha*. *Makara* literally means "Capricorn" and "*Sankranti*" is the day when the sun passes from one sign of the zodiac to the next.

Although geographically on this day sun passes from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn. That is the sun enters the constellation of *Makara* (Crocodile) and begins to move towards

the north. This day has a very special significance because the day and the night of *Makar Sankranti* are of equal hours.

The people of India celebrate the day by eating “*Khichadi*” prepared by mixing rice and *Dal*. On the feast of *Makar Sankranti Tila* (*Sesamum orientale* Linn.) eating is considered as auspicious. The *Tila laddoo* is prepared which has nutritive and medicinal properties. Women celebrate this day by applying *Haldi* (*turmeric*) - *Kumkum* on each other’s forehead. Children make this day even more colorful by flying kites. During this season *Bajra* (*Pennisetum glaucum*) grows more which is hot in potency. During this season *Brinjal* (*Solanum melongena*) also grows more so in vegetable markets these can be easily available. On this day special meal is prepared i.e. *Bajra roti* with *Tila* along with *brinjal* vegetable.

During this season people offer *Tilagula* i.e. *Tila* (*sesame*) and *Jaggery* to each other. *Tila* is hot in potency. *Makar Sankranti* is a festival in which people forget disputes to celebrate festival by offering sweets.

SHISHIRA RITU (EXTREME WINTER)

HINDU MONTHS- *Magha, Phalguna*

ENGLISH MONTHS- Mid January- Mid February

Mid February- Mid March

STATUS OF DOSHAS IN THE BODY-

Accumulation of *kapha*,

Mitigation of *vata*.

PROPERTIES OF ATMOSPHERES-

Dry

STRENGTH OF PERSON- Highest Strength

SHAMANA KARMA (PALLIATIVE THERAPY) - *Deepana* (Carminative), *Pachana* (Digestive)

The intensity of cold increases during this season. Moreover, *Roukshya* property (dryness), so characteristic of *Adanakala* is also present in this season.

DO’S:

DIET-Heavy food, milk should be consumed.

LIFESTYLE-Oil massage should be performed. *Atapsevan a* (exposure to sunlight) should be done. One should preferably bath with warm water. One should wear warm and dark colored clothes, socks and shoes. One should stay in places where heater can be used.

MEDICINE-*Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*) and *Pippali* (*Piper longum*) should be consumed. *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Musali* (*Chlorophytum borivilianum*), *Badama* (*Prunus dulcis*) and Black gram (*Vigna mungo*) should be consumed. *Methi Laddoo* (sweet balls prepared with *Trigonella fornum-gracum*) should be consumed. *Lohasava*, *Ashwagandhaarishta* and *Drakshasava* should be consumed.

DON’TS:

DIET-One should avoid cold drinks and cold food.

One should not keep feet open. One should not wear light and white clothes. One should eat less food.

LIFESTYLE-One should avoid cold breeze.

FESTIVALS OF SHISHIRA RUTU:

Maha Shivaratri, Holi and Ranga Panchami are the three festivals celebrated during this season. “*Maha Shivaratri*” is celebrated during the month of *Phalguna*. The festival is principally celebrated by offerings of *Bela* or *Bilva* (*Aegel marmelos*) leaves to *Shiva*, keeping all-day fasting and *jagarana* (all-night-vigil) . All through the day devotees chant “*Om Namah Shivaya*”, the sacred *mantra* of Lord *Shiva*. Penances are performed in order to gain boons in the practice of *Yoga* and meditation in order to reach life’s highest good steadily and swiftly. On this day the planetary positions in the Northern hemisphere act as potent catalysts to help a person raise his or her

spiritual energy more easily. The benefits of powerful ancient *Sanskrit mantras* such as *Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra* increase greatly on this night.

On this day Lord *Shiva* and his wife *Parvati* are worshipped by young girls and even men, in the hope of getting a perfect mate for themselves. They offer Lotus flowers and *Bilva* (*Aegel marmelos*) leaves. (30)

According to *Ayurveda*, till this day the coldness in the atmosphere becomes less and people start feeling the increasing heat in the atmosphere. Worms and flatus decrease by the use of *Bilva* leaves. Soaking *Bilva* leaves in water overnight and then using it internally will subside the diseases of abdomen. *Kapittha* (*Limonia acidissima*) is also easily available during this period. *Kapittha* alleviates *Pitta*. So people should eat *chutney* (paste) of *Kapittha* with Jaggery. (31)

“Holi and Ranga Panchami” are the second festival of this season. This festival is celebrated from *Pournima* (Full Moon Day) to fifth day of *Phalguna* month. **Holi** is a spring festival also known as the festival of colours or the festival of love *Holi* celebrations start with a *Holika* bonfire on the night before *Holi* where people gather, sing and dance. The next morning is a free-for-all carnival of colours where participants play, chase and colour each other with dry powder and coloured water with some carrying water guns and coloured water-filled balloons for their water fight. Traditionally washable natural plant-derived colours such as turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), neem (*Azadirachta indica*), kumkum (*Crocus sativus*) were used; but water-based commercial pigments are increasingly used. The festival signifies the victory of good over evil, the arrival of spring and end of winter. This is a festive day to meet everyone, play and laugh together, forget and forgive and repair ruptured relationships. So, *Ranga*

Panchami is celebrated by applying different colors to each other. (32)

According to *Ayurveda*, leaves fall off, arrival of new leaves can be seen. Every human being can adopt this change. This is the example or a learning lesson to people that forget all sorrows, clashes and live life happily. This festival is the symbol of happy life is ahead in coming year, be ready for enjoying it.

Observations:

The New Year is celebrated by erecting a pole by the name *Gudhi* in front of the house. Just like the end of the year is celebrated by *Rangapanchami*.

After minute observations, all these festivals stand around either on the full moon day or dark moonless night. It means that festivals are depend on changes in atmospheres and the status of *doshas* in the body.

Every festival is celebrated by availability of leaves, flowers and vegetables in surrounding area. So that it is very important to follow the rules of *Rutu Sandhi* according to *Ayurveda*. The last seven days of a season are included in *Rutu Sandhi*. In this period, one should taper the regimens of the previous season and practice those of the next season in a gradually phased manner. Immediate abandoning and adoption of regimens will cause various diseases due to improper adaptation. (33)

While celebrating any festival people should consider the atmosphere of that particular area or country and adopt diet and seasonal regimen accordingly. Not to follow the diet and seasonal regimen only on the basis of month and religion. It can be harmful to the health of the person. For example *Diwali* is celebrated in *Sharada ritu* (Autumn season) in India where digestive fire is good but in Australia during this period sunrays are more hot so tremendous summer can be seen and also digestive fire will decrease. If person celebrated *Diwali* festival in Australia by

eating oily food which can not be digested properly and can lead various diseases. Same period in India *Diwali* celebration gives happiness and same period in Ausralia *Diwali* celebration can lead diseases.

Conclusion:

While celebrating festivals, every person should follow the regimen of Rutu Sandhi according to *desh* (land) .

Festivals are depends on changes in atmospheres and the status of *doshas* in the body. Clear the dust of mythological stories from the eyes and religious beliefs to celebrate the festivals and accept the good things which are good for the health.

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