



## Ritu Haritakee – A Rejuvenator

### Review article

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#### Abstract

Mankind has been more concerned about their health, protection from evils of diseases and suffering since the dawn of civilization. Since then he believed that, nature alone could help in conquering these afflictions and he sought remedies in nature i.e., in Plants, Minerals and Animals. *Haritakee (Terminalia chebula. retz)* is one of commonest and easily available medicine, which is generally used in various forms along with other two *dravyas* like *Amalaki* and *Vibhitaki* by the folklore. Among the earlier references, *Panini* described it for the management of dysurea, anurea, constipation (*mootra purisha nirodha*) and *Rasayana karma* (rejuvenative effect). Here an attempt has been made to collect the available literary data related to *Haritakee* with respect to its *rasayana* (rejuvenative property) effect.

**Key Words:** *Haritakee, Terminalia chebula Retz, Ritu, Rasayana, Anupana, Rejuvenator.*

#### Introduction:

Human passion on herbal medicine dated back to time immemorial. As we are aware, the very survival of animal kingdom is dependent of plant kingdom. Plants play major role in the pharmacotherapy in day to day life. *Vedic* literature indicates mainly about the utility of single herbs in the management of different ailments [1].

*Haritakee (Terminalia chebula retz)* is one of the important as well as commonest herbs used by folk, household and traditional medicine. Its fruit rind is used in medicine; it is one of the ingredients of *triphala* i.e, *Haritakee, Vibhitaki* and *Amalaki* [2]. *Haritakee* with different *Anupana* (vehicle) yields rejuvenative effect

in different *ritu* (seasons) [3]. *Acharya Charaka* highlighted its *rejunative* properties in *chikitsasthana*. He specifically stated that *Haritakee* is best among the herbs to be used regularly. i.e. “**Haritakee pathyanam**”.I [4].

#### (I) Review on ritu:

##### Definition:

Which is in a tendency to move continuously in a cyclic manner is called as *ritu* (seasons). The period of one year is divided into six *ritus*- *Shishira* (winter season), *Vasanta* (spring season), *Grishma* (summer season), *Varsha* (rainy season), *Sharada* (autumn season), and *Hemanta* (winter season). *Tikta* (bitter), *Kashaya* (astringent), *Katu* (pungent), *Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (salt), *Madhura* (sweet) tastes are predominated in food and medicines in respective seasons[5].

According to the intensity of sun rays, these six seasons are divided into two groups such as;

1. *Adaana kaala* (debilitating period)
2. *Visarga kaala* (strengthening period).

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According to purificatory therapy, these are grouped in two groups as follows;

1. *Sadharan ritu* (General seasons) - *Pravrita, Sharada, Vasanta ritu.*
2. *Vishistha ritu* (specific seasons) - *Hemanta, Grishma, Varsha ritu.*

**Predominance of Guna, Rasa, and Bala in Adana kala is given in following table [6]:**

Ritu of Adana kala	Guna (properties)	Rasa (taste)	Bala (strength)
<i>Shishira ritu</i> (winter season)	<i>Alpa Rukshata</i> (Mild dryness)	<i>Tikta</i> (Bitter)	<i>Uttama bala</i> (Superior strength)
<i>Vasanta ritu</i> (spring season)	<i>Madhyama Rukshata</i> (Moderate dryness)	<i>Kashaya</i> (Astringent)	<i>Madhyama bala</i> (medium strength)
<i>Grishma ritu</i> (summer season)	<i>Atirukshata</i> (Excess dryness)	<i>Katu</i> (pungent)	<i>Durbala</i> (inferior strength)

**Predominance of Guna, Rasa, and Bala in visarga kala is given in following table [7]:**

Ritu of visarga kala	Guna	Rasa	Bala
<i>Varsha ritu</i> (rainy season)	<i>Alpa snigdhatata</i> (Mild unctuousness)	<i>Amla</i> (Sour)	<i>Durbala</i> (Inferior strength)
<i>Sharada ritu</i> (autumn season)	<i>Madhyama snigdhatata</i> (Moderate unctuousness)	<i>Lavana</i> (salt)	<i>Madhyama bala</i> (Medium strength)
<i>Hemanta ritu</i> (winter season)	<i>Snigdhatata</i> (Excess unctuousness)	<i>Madhura</i> (sweet)	<i>Uttama bala</i> (Superior strength)

### Effect of Ritu on dosha:

According to the *sanchaya* (accumulation), *prakopa* (aggravation) and *prashamana* (mitigation) of the *dosha*, the *Shishira* and *Hemanta ritus* seems to be similar. Hence these two *ritus* are explained in single *ritu* i.e. *Hemanta ritu* [8].

Dosha	Sanchaya	Prakopa	Prashamana
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Grishma</i>	<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Sharada</i>
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Sharada</i>	<i>Hemanta</i>
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Shishira / Hemanta</i>	<i>Vasanta</i>	<i>Grishma</i>

### 1) Review on Haritakee:

**Gana:** *Prajasthapana, Jwaraghna, Kushtaghna, Kasaghna, Arshoghna.* (Charaka) ; *Triphala, Amalakyadi, Parushakadi, (Sushruta.)*

**Latin name:** *Terminalia chebula retz.*

**Family:** Combretaceae.

**Kula:** *Haritakee kula.*

**Synonyms:** *Haimavati, Shiva, Pathya, Abhaya, Kayastha, Shreyasi, Chetaki, Amrita, Vijaya etc.*

### Vernacular names:

**Hindi:** Harad,

**Marathi:** Hirada,

**Tamil:** Kadukkai,

**Telugu:** Karakkai,

**Kannada:** Alalekayi,

**English name:** *Myrobalans, Chebulic myrobalan.*



**Morphology:**

It is a large perennial tree, which grows up to 30-40 feet height. Phyllotaxy: Alternate. Leaf: simple, petiolated, aggregated at the tip of the branches, leathery, obovate/ oblong -ovate, acute, wavy margins, having a glandular structure at base of leaf. Inflorescences: Axillary and terminal spike. Flower: Complete, regular, bisexual. Fruit: Obovoid or ellipsoidal more or less five ribbed when dry.

**Habitat:** Abundant in Northern India, also occurs in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Central and South India.

**Chemical constituents:** Anthraquinone Glycoside, Chebulinic acid, Tannic acid, Terchebin, Vit C, Arachidic, Behenic, Lindic, Oleic, Palmatic, Stearic acids[9].

**Types of Haritakee:**

Acharya Bhavaprakasha mentioned 7 types of Haritakee, such as [10]

Types	Swaroo pa of fruits	Habitat	Uses
<i>Vijaya</i>	Oval in shape	Vindhya	<i>Sarvaroga</i> (Cures all diseases)
<i>Rohini</i>	Round in shape	Every where	<i>Vrana</i> (Wound healing)
<i>Putana</i>	Small and less bulky	Sindha	<i>Pralepa</i> (used for application)
<i>Amruta</i>	Bulky	Champa desha	<i>Shodhana</i> (for purification)
<i>Abhaya</i>	Fruit has five lines on it.	Champa desha	<i>Netra roga</i> (eye diseases)
<i>Jeevanti</i>	Yellow in colour	Saurashtra	<i>Sarvaroga</i> (Cures all diseases)

<b>Chetaki</b>	Having three lines	Himachal	<i>Rechaka</i> (purgative)
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However in practice three variety of Haritakee are found [11].

- (1) *Bala Haritakee*
- (2) *Chambhari- Rangari Haritakee*
- (3) *Survani Haritakee*

**Grahya laxanas of Haritakee:**

A fruit of Haritakee which sinks in water, which is fresh, smooth, bulky, round in shape and weighs at least 26 grams is considered ideal for medicinal use [12].

**Rasa panchaka of Haritakee:**

*Guna:* - *Laghu, Ruksha*  
*Rasa :* - *Kashaya pradhana Lavana varjita pancha rasa .*  
*Virya:- Ushna*  
*Vipaka:- Madhura*  
*Prabhava:- Tridosahara, patyakara.*

**Rasa predominance in different parts of Haritakee:**

*Phalamajja:- madhura , Fibers- amla, Vrunta – tikta , Twacha- katu, Asthi- kashaya.*

**Karma: -**

It acts as *tridosha shamaka* (mitigates *vata, pitta, kapha*). *Shothahara* (anti- inflammatory), *chakshushya* (beneficial for eyes), *mukharogahara* (cures oral diseases), *balya* (strengthening), *deepana* (appetizer), *paachana* (digestant), *vatanulomana* (carminative), *vrana ropana* (wound healing), *yakrita pleeha uttejaka* (hepatoprotective), *kasa swasahara* (cures cough & breathlessness), *hikka* (cures hiccough), *mootrala* (act as diuretic), *rasayana* (rejuvenator), *vajikara* (aphrodisiac).

**Vishistha yoga:**

*Abhaya aristha, Pathyadi kwatha, triphala churna, T. ghrita, chitraka Haritakee* [13].

**Restorative effect: -**

*Haritakee* acts as a rejuvenator (by cleaning various malas). But for producing its *rasayana* effect, it needs various supportive *dravyas* in different seasons in the form of *anupana* (vehicle).

*Varsha:* - *saindhava* (rock salt-Sodium chloride)

*Sharada:* - *sharkara* (sugar candy)

*Hemanta:-* *shunthi* (dry ginger)

*Shishira:-* *pippali* (piper longum)

*Vasanta:* - *madhu* (honey)

*Grishma:* - *guda* (jaggery) [14].

**Rasa , Guna, virya, Vipaka and karmas of Haritakee Anupanas [21]**

<b>Dru gs</b>	<b>Ras a</b>	<b>Guna</b>	<b>Vi ry a</b>	<b>Vip aka</b>	<b>Karma</b>
<i>Sain dhav a lava na</i>	<i>Lav ana</i>	<i>Laghu, tikshna, snigdha</i>	<i>Sh eet a</i>	<i>Mad hur a</i>	<i>Tridosha hara, Rochaka , Deepana</i>
<i>Shar kara</i>	<i>Mad hur a</i>	<i>Guru, Snigdha</i>	<i>Sh eet a</i>	<i>Mad hur a</i>	<i>VataPitt ashamak a brumhan a,</i>
<i>Shun thi</i>	<i>Kat u</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha</i>	<i>Us hna</i>	<i>Mad hur a</i>	<i>Vata Kapha shamaka Deepana , Vrushya.</i>
<i>Pipp ali</i>	<i>Kat u</i>	<i>Laghu, snigdha, Teeksh na</i>	<i>Us hna</i>	<i>Mad hur a</i>	<i>Kapha pitta shamaka Deepana , Vrushya.</i>
<i>Mad hu</i>	<i>Mad hur a Kas hay a</i>	<i>Laghu, ruksha</i>	<i>Sh eet a</i>	<i>Mad hur a</i>	<i>Tridosha shamaka Deepana , Balya.</i>
<i>Gud a</i>	<i>Mad hur a</i>	<i>Guru, snigdha</i>	<i>Sh eet a</i>	<i>Mad hur a</i>	<i>Tridosha shamaka , balya</i>

**Useful part: - Phala (fruit).**

**Matra:** -3-10gms of *Haritakee choorna* (powder), empty stomach in the morning with *anupana*.

**II) Rasayana:**

*Rasayana* is defined as a therapy which ameliorates *jaraa* (senility), and *vyaadhi* (disease) [15].

*Acharya Charaka* explicitly stated that *Rasayana* imparts *dirghayu* (long life), *smriti* (memory), *medha* (intellectual power), *arogya* (healthy state of body & mind), *taruna* (youth), *prabha* (complexion), *varna* (colour), *swarya* (good for voice), *dehabala* (body strength), *indriya bala* (strength to sensory organs), *vaksiddi*, etc [16].

There are three types of *Rasayana* in practice such as

a) *Medhya Rasayana* – *Sankhapushpi, Mandukaparni, Guduchi etc.*

b) *Doshaghna Rasayana* – *Bhallataka, Hareetaki etc.*

c) *Dhatu Rasayana* - *Ashwagandha, Amalaki etc* [17].

**iii) Anupana(vehicle) :****Paribhasha:**

*Anupana (vehicle)* is defined as the *pana* (drink) which is taken immediately after *ahara* (food), *oushadha anga* and *oushadha yoga (medicines)* [18].

**Anupana karmukata:**

As the oil added to water spreads quickly on the surface of water, so the *oushadha* (medicine) along with the *Anupana* spreads in the body and produces its effect when administered with appropriate *Anupana* [19].

**Benefits and Importance of Anupana:**

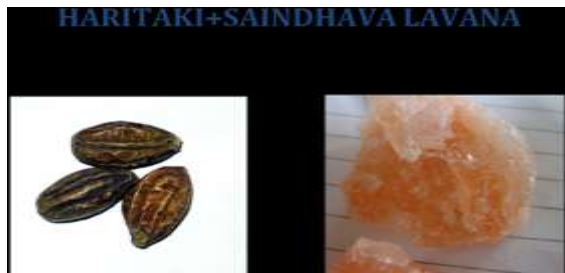
*Anupana* invigorates, gives contentment, helps in proper movement of food inside, stability of body, softens the consumed food, increases the *kledata (moisture)* and helps in proper digestion of the food [20].

**Discussion on Ritu Haritakee sevana:**

Haritakee provides the restorative effect i.e *rasayana* by cleansing the channels of body. But for producing the *rasayana* effect it needs various supportive *dravyas* in different *ritu* such as;



In *Varsha ritu* → *Haritakee* + *saindava lavana*,  
 In *Sharada ritu* → *Haritakee* + *sharkara*  
 In *Hemanta ritu* → *Haritakee* + *shunti*,  
 In *Shishira ritu* → *Haritakee* + *pippali*  
 In *Vasanta ritu* → *Haritakee* + *madhu*,  
 In *Grishma ritu* → *Haritakee* + *guda*.

**Effect of Haritakee with Saindava lavana on dosha, agni, bala in varsha ritu.**

*Varsha ritu* (rainy season); is first season of *visarga kala* (debilitating), during which *alpa rukshata* (mild roughness), *amla rasa* (sour taste) are predominant. *Agni* (digestive power) becomes irregular. *Bala* (strength) of the person is less. Due to *mandagni* (decreased digestive energy) and excess cold, *sanchaya* (accumulation) of *pitta dosha* and *prakopa* (aggravation) of *vata* takes place.

The *lavana rasa* (salt taste) is formed in *sharada ritu* (autumn season), but its utility is best during *varsha ritu* (rainy season) to tackle aggravated *vata*. *Haritakee* with *saindava lavana* (rock salt) brings the *sanchita pitta* (accumulated *pitta*) to equilibrium state due to *laghu Guna* (lightness) and *madhura vipaka* of both *Haritakee* and *saindhava lavana*. *Saindhava lavana* acts as *vata shamaka* due to its *lavana rasa*, *snigdha guna* (unctuousness), and *madhura vipaka* (post digestion). *Haritakee* acts as *vata shamaka* due to the *madhura*, *amla rasa*, *ushna virya* and *madhura vipaka*. When the *vata* and *pitta* are brought to their equilibrium state, they ultimately enhance the *agni* (metabolism), which is impaired due to *vata prakopa* (aggravation of *vata*) and *pitta sanchaya* (accumulation of *pitta*), *Haritakee* and *saindhava* act as appetizer, digestant, and restore the strength of the person by its *madhura vipaka*.

**Effect of Haritakee with sharkara on dosha, agni, bala in Sharada ritu.**

*Sharada ritu* (autumn season) is second *ritu* (season) of *visarga kala*, comes under the *sadharana ritu*. During which *madhyama snigdha* (mild unctuousness) and *lavana rasa* (salt taste) are predominant. *Agni* (digestion) becomes *teeekshna* (increased), *Bala* (strength) of the person is *madhyam* (moderate), due to predominance of *snigdha guna*, *lavana rasa*.

*Haritakee* with *sharkara* (sugar candy) does purification of provoked *pitta*, due to its *snigdha Guna* (unctuousness), *madhura rasa* (sweet taste) and *vipaka* (post digestion). By this the *pitta* gets purified.



When the *pitta dosha* is purified, it restores the strength and digestive capacity of the person. *Madhura rasa, madhura vipaka and sheeta virya* of *sharkara* prevent the further vitiation of the *pitta*. Along with this they help in mitigating *shamana rupi vata* (which are under mitigating stage), due to their *snigdha Guna, madhura rasa* and *vipaka*. The *ushna virya* of *Haritakee* mitigate the *vata*.

#### Effect of *Haritakee* with *Shunti* (*Ginger officinale*) on *dosha, agni, bala* in *Hemanta ritu*.



*Hemanta ritu* (winter season) is the last season of *visarga kala*, during which the *snigdha Guna* and *madhura rasa* are predominant. In this season the strength of the person is good, the *pitta* is in mitigating state and *kapha* at its accumulating stage. It mitigates the *kapha* at its accumulating stage and prevents aggravation, due to *ushna virya* (hot potency), *katu, tikta, kashaya rasa* (pungent, bitter, astringent taste), *laghu, ruksha Guna* (lightness, dryness) of *Haritakee* and *shunti* (ginger). Along with this it helps to bring back the *pitta* to equilibrium state by its *madhura vipaka*. Due to its *ushna virya* it stimulate the *agni* which get impaired during vitiation of *pitta*.

#### Effect of *Haritakee* with *Pippali* (*Piper longum*) on *dosha, agni, and bala* in *Shishira ritu*.



*Shishira ritu* (winter season) is first season of the *adana kala* (strengthening season), during this period the intensity of sun rays will gradually increase, along with this *ruksha Guna* (dryness) also increases and strength of person gradually decreases due to excess coldness. The accumulation of *kapha* takes place in this season. To mitigate the accumulated *kapha*, *Haritakee* should be taken with *piper longum* fruit, as it is good *sleshmahara* (*kapha* mitigate), due to its *katu rasa* (pungent taste), *laghu, tikshna Guna* (lightness and penetrating properties) and *ushna virya*. Apart from this it also brings the *shamana rupi pitta* to its equilibrium state. By this it maintains the equilibrium status of the *dosha* leading to *agni samyata, dhatu samyata* (equilibrium state of *agni* and body tissue) and ultimately leads to *Rasayana karma*.

#### Effect of *Haritakee* with *Madhu* (Honey) on *dosha, agni and bala* in *Vasanta ritu*.



*Vasanta ritu* (spring season) is first *ritu* of *visarga kala*, comes under



*sadharana ritu*. During this *ritu*, *ahara* and *oushadha dravyas* (food and medicines) are *madhyama rukshata* (moderately dry) and *astringent*. Hence, strength of person is reduced. The aggravation of *kapha* takes place in this *ritu*. To mitigate the aggravated *kapha*, *Haritakee* should be taken with honey. The *laghu*, *ruksha Guna* (lightness and dryness) and *kashaya rasa* (astringent taste) of *Haritakee* and *madhu* help to mitigate *kapha*. *Ushna virya* of *Haritakee* also acts as *kaphahara*. Because of its *madhura vipaka*, this combination also acts as *rasayana*.

### Effect of *Haritakee* with Guda (Jaggery) on *dosha*, *agni*, and *bala* in *Grishma ritu*.



*Grishma ritu* (summer season) is the last season of *Adana kala* and comes under *visishta ritu*. During this *season* *dravyas* have *atirukshata Guna* (excessive dryness) and *katu rasa* (pungent taste), which considerably reduce the strength of a person. *Accumulation of vata* and *mitigation of kapha* will take place in this season. *Guru Snigdha Gunas* (heaviness and unctuousness) and *madhura vipaka* of jaggery and *usna virya*, *madhura vipaka* of *Haritakee* helps to prevent the *vata sanchaya*. By this, it checks *vata* from moving into further *kriyakalas* (*pathological stages*). *Ushna virya* and *laghu*, *ruksha gunas* of *Haritakee* brings the *samana rupi kapha* to its equilibrium state.

Ayurveda describes six different seasons in the year. In each one of them the climatic conditions and weather is of particular nature. These are - *Shishira* (Late Winter), *Vasanta* (Spring),

*Grishama* (Summer), *Varsha* (Rainy), *Sharada* (Autumn), *Hemanta* (Early winter). This Ayurvedic herb is extolled for its effect as a *Rasayana* therapy. The seasonal use of *Terminalia chebula* can be one of the cheapest and effective tools to elevate the health, detoxification of the body and keep you free from diseases.

*Ayurveda* clearly advises the daily regime and the seasonal regime. If followed properly, these holistic lifestyle guidelines for diet, exercise, work etc could prove to be wonderful in maintaining good health and keeping the diseases away. This would be some sidetracking from the topic but it might deserve your attention later. In Ayurvedic Social and Preventive Medicine, the use of whole body tonic, specific organ or organ system energizers and adaptogenic herbs is praised for becoming healthier. In this regard *Ritu Haritakee* is a wonderful herb as it offers several benefits as - Being cheap and easily available when stored properly. Good for persons suffering from overweight, diabetes, hypertension, increased lipids and cholesterol in blood and other degenerative disorders as a result of improper nutrition characterized by overeating, eating a lot of oily and fried food, not doing exercises, taking junk foods etc.

It can be taken throughout the year with specific substances in different seasons. It would help in this way not only to maintain health, but to avoid the seasonal disturbances in bodily humors and other common seasonal diseases like diarrhea, cold, cough, flu etc. Besides the adaptogenic effects, it would detoxify the body round the year. As most of the adaptogenic herbs promote only the vital energy, immunity and general health. Hence *Haritakee* with its *Anupana dravyas* in different *ritus* does the *shodhan* of *doshas*, brings the impaired *agni* to its equilibrium state, and maintains the healthy state of *dhatu* and *mala* and leads to *rasayana* (*rejuvenator*) karma, by



detoxifying and balancing the bodily humors throughout the year.

**Conclusion:**

*Ritu Haritakee* acts as preventive, curative, and rejuvenative (*rasayana*) medicine.

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