



RELEVANCE OF RUTU SHODHANA IN EVOLVING ERA

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ABSTRACT

In today's era of rapid environmental changes, evolving lifestyles, and increasing health challenges, the ancient *Ayurvedic* concept of *Rutu Shodhana* (seasonal purification) holds significant relevance. Seasonal variations impact the balance of *doshas* in the body, influencing health and disease progression. *Rutu Shodhana*, based on the principles of *Panchamahabhuta*, *Dosha Prakopa*, *Agni* and *Bala*, aims to eliminate vitiated *doshas* at appropriate times, thereby preventing seasonal ailments. The article explores key aspects such as *Aadana* and *Visarga Kala*, *Shadrutu*, *Shodhana Mahatva*, and *Rutu Kriyakala*, highlighting their importance in maintaining overall well-being. The systematic application of *Panchakarma* therapies, including *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, *Nasya*, and *Raktamokshana*, is discussed concerning seasonal transitions to enhance host defense mechanism, immunity, facilitate detoxification, and prevent diseases. This article emphasizes the necessity of integrating seasonal purification practices into modern healthcare to achieve *dhatu Samyata* (tissue homeostasis) and sustain long-term health.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Rutu Shodhana*, *Rutukala*, *Panchakarma*.

INTRODUCTION

In the current era, we are experiencing significant climatic changes, coupled with a shift towards sedentary lifestyles, decreased physical activity and substantial changes in the diet since the latter half of the 20th century. Disrupted sleep pattern can disrupt the body's natural circadian rhythm, leading to various imbalances in homeostasis and potentially causing multiple lifestyle related disorders (*Santarapanantha vyadhis*). *Ayurveda*, the ancient science of life, emphasizes preventive, promotive and curative healthcare to maintain flourishing state of one's health.^[1] One of the most considerable principles in *Ayurveda* is the *Shodhana Chikitsa* (Purification Therapy), which plays a crucial role in eliminating accumulated *doshas* and restoring the body's natural equilibrium. Among these purification therapies, *Rutushodhana* holds a significant place, as it is seasonally delivered to cleanse the body in accordance to the natural cycles of *dosha* accumulation (*Chaya*) and aggravation (*Prakopa*). To counteract these seasonal *doshic* imbalances, one has to undergo specific *Shodhana* procedures like *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, *Raktamokshana*, and *Nasya*. Thus it provides a time-tested, natural, and holistic approach to detoxification and disease prevention.

ESSENTIALITY OF SHODHANA IN TODAY'S ERA

- **Aahara** – In today's urbanized period, as people tend to consume more junk foods, deep fried foods, packed foods, fermented foods, instant food products with preservatives and adulterated foods. All these kinds of diet have bad impact on health and leads to *Viruddha ahara janitha vyadhis*.^[2]

- **Vihara** – As cities get more urbanized the wide spread reliance on modes of transportation, such as cars, metros and automated transit systems has drastically reduced physical activity. Thus contributing to a decline in daily movements, disruption in natural circadian rhythm due to fragmented sleep leading to imbalance in cortisol, stress hormone, this imbalance is associated with issues like Diabetes, Hypertension etc.

- **Desha** – *Desha* is of two types i.e. *Bhumi Desha* and *Atura Desha*.^[3]

- ❖ The primary objective of *Bhumi Desha* is to assess *Atura Parijnana Hetu* (the patient's condition) and *Aushadha Parijnana Hetu* (the properties of medicinal

substances) by considering three crucial factors: *Jaata* (the land of birth), *Samvriddha* (the environment where one has nurtured) and *Vyadhita* (afflicted with disease).^[4]

❖ *Atura Desha* is to assess *Bala pramana jnana hetu* (*Prakruthi, Sara, Samhanana, Pramana, Satmya, Satva, Ahara Shakti, Vyayama Shakti, Vaya*) and *Dosha bala pramana jnana hetu* (*Vikruti*). According to *Brihatrayees*, *Desha* can be *Jangala* (Dry land), *Sadharana* (Normal land), *Anupa Desha* (Marshy land).^[5]

Excessive consumption of *Kshara* by people in the eastern regions and China has detrimental effects on the *Kesha, Akshi, Hrudaya* and *Pumsatva*. In villages, towns, cities, and countries where its use is prevalent, individuals commonly suffer from *Aandhya* (blindness), *Shandhya* (impotence), *Khalitya* (baldness), *Palitya* (premature graying of hair) and *Hrudaya parikartana vedana* (Tearing type of pain in heart).^[6]

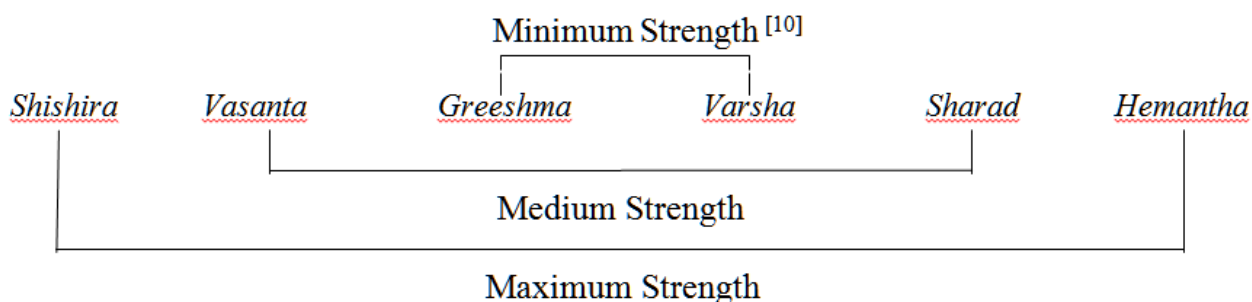
Table No. 1: Dietary Habits And Disease Occurrence By Region.^[7]

Sl.no.	Regions	Ahara	Vyadhi
01	<i>Prachya</i> (Eastern region)	Intake of <i>Matsya</i> (fish) and <i>Anna</i> (rice)	<i>Shleepada Galaganda</i>
02.	<i>Dakshina</i> (Southern region)	Fish from rivers and the <i>samudhra</i>	<i>Kushtha</i>
03.	<i>Kambhoja</i>	<i>Masura</i> (lentils), <i>Yava</i> (barley), <i>Godhuma</i> (wheat), <i>Tila</i> (sesame) and <i>Koddala</i> (grains).	<i>Arshas</i>
04.	<i>Pratichya</i> (Western regions)	<i>Mamsa</i> (meat), <i>Sura</i> (alcohol) and <i>Strikaama</i> (fascination with women)	<i>Rajayakshma</i>
05.	<i>Vahlika</i> (Northwestern region)	<i>Tikshna, Ushna, Mamsa</i> and <i>Pana</i> (fermented drinks)	<i>Santarpana vyadhis</i>
06.	<i>Pārvatopatya</i> (hilly and mountainous regions)		<i>Balaasaka</i>

- **Kala** – Many individuals reside in areas affected by pollution and unpredictable weather conditions, *Kala* profoundly impacts health, as the unique qualities of air, sunlight, and moonlight vary between *Dakshinayana* and *Uttarayana*, influencing the body's balance and well-being. *Acharyas* has explained *Kala* is of two types' i.e *Nityaga kala* and *Avasthika kala*. *Nityaga kala* is *Dainandina* (seasonal) and *Artava* (diurnal) whereas *Avasthika kala* is *vyadhi Avastha*.^[8]

- **Agni** – Impaired *Agni* is the root cause for manifestation of all the diseases.^[9] So optimum functioning of *agni* is to be maintained. Every individual has unique *prakruthi, dosha, agni and koshta*. So before administering any *Panchakarma* procedure it is must to assess the *agni* and *koshta* of the person.

- **Bala**



RUTUSHODHANA

Rutu Shodhana is derived from *Rutu* (season) and *Shodhana* (purification), signifying a seasonal detoxification process that eliminates accumulated *doshas* in harmony with seasonal changes to maintain health and prevent diseases (*vyadhis*). The year is divided into two phases: *Uttarayana* (Summer Solstice)

and *Dakshinayana* (Winter Solstice), with each season (*Rutu*) spanning two months.

Though the classification of *Rutu* for *Swasta Rutu* includes *Shishira, Vasanta, Greeshma, Varsha, Sharad,* and *Hemantha*, *Acharyas* emphasizes the categorization of *Rutus* primarily concerning *Samshodhana* i.e. *Samshodhanam Adhikrutya Shat Vibhajayante Rutavaha*.

He divides them into six, deliberately excluding *Shishira Rutu*, and instead considers *Pravrut Rutu*. Therefore, for *Samshodhana*, the relevant *Rutus* are *Pravrut*, *Varsha*, *Sharad*, *Hemantha*, *Vasanta*, and *Greeshma*. These *Rutus* are further classified based on their predominant qualities: *Pravrut* and *Varsha* fall under *Varsha Rutu*, *Sharad* and *Hemantha* under *Sheeta Rutu*, and *Vasanta* and *Greeshma* under *Ushna Rutu*. They are further ramified into *Sadharana Rutu* and *Asadharana Rutu*.

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, the representation of seasons within a day is as follows: *Vasanta* (*Poorvaane* - Forenoon), *Greeshma* (*Madhyane* - Mid-day), *Pravrut* (*Aparhaane* - Afternoon), *Varsha* (*Pradosha* - Evening), *Sharad* (*Ardharatre* - Midnight), *Hemantha* (*Pratyush* - Morning).^[11] Along with *Ahara* and *Vihara*, factors such as *Desha* and *Kala* also play a crucial role in maintaining the equilibrium of *doshas* in the body.^[12] The unique qualities of each season cause *doshas* to undergo three phases: *Sanchaya* (Accumulation), *Prakopa* (Aggravation) and *Prashama* (Pacification).

Table No. 2: *Rutukala*.^[13]

	ADAANA KALA	VISARGA KALA
<i>Aayana</i>	<i>Uttarayana</i>	<i>Dakshinayana</i>
<i>Rutu</i>	<i>Shishira – Vasanta - Greeshma</i>	<i>Varsha – Sharad – Hemantha</i>
<i>Agni</i>	Decreased	Increased
<i>Kala</i>	<i>Agni Pradhanya Kala</i>	<i>Soumya Kala</i>
<i>Bala</i>	Debilitating Period	Strengthening Period
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Tikta – Kashaya – Katu</i>	<i>Amla – Madhura – Lavana</i>
<i>Guna</i>	<i>Ruksha</i>	<i>Snigdha</i>

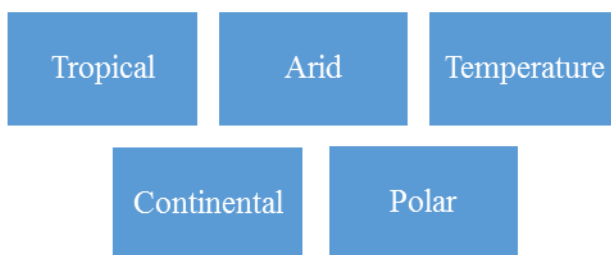
Table No. 3: *Maasa According To Different Acharyas*.

	<i>Charaka & Vagbhata</i> ^[14]	<i>Sushruta</i> ^[15]	Time Period
<i>Shishira</i>	<i>Magha - Phalguna</i>	<i>Tapa - Tapasya</i>	Mid-January – Mid- March
<i>Vasanta</i>	<i>Chaitra - Vaishaka</i>	<i>Madhu - Madhava</i>	Mid-March – Mid-May
<i>Greeshma</i>	<i>Jyeshtha - Aashada</i>	<i>Shuchi - Shukra</i>	Mid-May – Mid-July
<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Shravana - Bhadrapada</i>	<i>Nabha - Nabhasya</i>	Mid-July – Mid-September
<i>Sharad</i>	<i>Ashvija - Karthika</i>	<i>Isha - Urja</i>	Mid-September – Mid-November
<i>Hemantha</i>	<i>Margashirsha - Pushya</i>	<i>Saha - Sahasya</i>	Mid-November – Mid-January

MODERN VIEW – KOPPEN CLIMATE CLASSIFICATION

Koppen Climate Classification was first published by German-Russian climatologist Wladimir Koppen (1846-

1940) in 1884 and mostly used climate classification scheme. It divides Earth climates into five main climate groups, with each group being divided based on patterns of seasonal precipitation and temperature.^[16]



The concept of *Gangaya Dakshine Kule* and *Uttara kule* goes hand in hand with Koppen Climate Classification. Due to high rainfall in *Gangaya dakshine kule*, the *Shodhana* procedure ideally commences from *Pravrutadi Rutu*, likewise *Gangaya Uttara Kule* is dominated with winter and hence *Shodhana* to be performed in *Shishiradi krama*.^[17]

IMPORTANCE OF SHODHANA

Shodhana is a therapeutic procedure aimed at eliminating vitiated *doshas* from the body, thereby alleviating disease. It is also referred to as *Apanurbhava Chikitsa*. The five primary *Shodhana Karmas* - *Niruha*, *Vamana*,

Virechana (*Kayarekha*), *Nasya* (*Shirorekha*), and *Raktamokshana* (*Asravisruti*) effectively expel *doshas* in *bahu matra*. While *doshas* subdued through *Langhana* and *Pachana* may resurface, those eliminated through *Shodhana Karma* do not reoccur. The effects of these therapies can be understood through natural metaphors: *Vamana Karma* is like breaking an obstructive ridge in a field, preventing water stagnation and allowing crops to thrive—just as it clears vitiated *kapha* from the *amashaya*.^[18] *Virechana Karma* resembles cooling a fire chamber by removing the fire source, leading to the subsidence of heat and pacifying *pitta* disorders throughout the body.^[19] *Basti Karma* can be compared to

uprooting a tree, which causes its trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits to wither—similarly, it helps alleviate

vata disorders across various body systems.^[20]

SHODHANA KALA

Table No. 4: Unique Preventive Measures According To *Doshas*.

<i>RUTU</i>	<i>MASA</i>	<i>DOSHA</i>	<i>KARMA</i>
<i>Sharad</i>	<i>Urja – Saha</i>	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Virechana</i>
<i>Vasanta</i>	<i>Tapasya – Madhu</i>	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Vamana</i>
<i>Pravrit</i>	<i>Shuchi – Nabha</i>	<i>Vata</i>	<i>Basti</i>

❖ *Shodhana* procedures like *Vamanadi Karmas* should be performed only during *Sadharana Rutus*, which include properties such as *Manda Sheeta*, *Manda Ushna*, and *Manda Varsha*. These seasons are considered *Sukhatama*, as they do not negatively impact the body or the effectiveness of medicines. In contrast, during *Asadharana Rutus* characterized *Atisheeta*, *Atiushna*, and *Ativarsha*, *Vamanadi Karmas* should be avoided, as they are *Dukhatma* and may have adverse effects.^[21]

❖ *Chakrapani* in commentary illustrates the concept of *Krutrimagunopadhana*,^[22] which refers to creating an

artificial environment to counteract seasonal influences. For example, during *Sheeta Kala* (cold season), *Ushna Karmas* (warming therapies) should be adopted to balance and mitigate the effects of excessive cold.

RUTU KRIYAKALA

The equilibrium of *doshas* undergoes constant fluctuations throughout the day, transitioning through three phases: *Chaya* (accumulation), *Prakopa* (aggravation), and *Prashama* (pacification). These rhythmic variations are inherently linked to the seasonal influences and their distinct characteristics.

Table No. 5: *Avastha* of *Dosha* According To *Rutus*.

<i>Doshas</i>	<i>Sanchaya</i>	<i>Prakopa</i>	<i>Prashama</i>
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Greeshma</i>	<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Sharad</i>
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Sharad</i>	<i>Hemantha</i>
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Shishira</i>	<i>Vasanta</i>	<i>Greeshma</i>

PANCHAKARMA CHIKITSA

❖ *MASAANUSARA PANCHAKARMA*

Pravrut, *Sharad*, and *Vasanta* are considered as *Sadharana Rutus*, during which *Basti*, *Virechana*, and *Vamana* should be performed, respectively. *Shodhana* is recommended in the second month of each season rather than the first month, as *doshas* are not severely aggravated in the initial month, which may result in incomplete elimination.^[23]

Classics clearly explain that during the months which are just prior to *Madhava*, *Nabhasya* and *Sahasya* i.e during

Madhu, *Nabha* and *Saha* months, one should perform elimination of accumulated *doshas*.^[24]

After *Snehana* and *Swedana*, *Vamana* and *Virechana* should be administered, followed by *Basti* and *Nasya* in the appropriate sequence as per individual needs. Finally, *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana* therapies should be undertaken. This systematic approach ensures the *dhatu samyata*, promoting homeostasis and preventing *Vyadhis* (diseases).

❖ *RUTUANUSARA UPAKARMAS*

Table No. 6: *Rutuanusara Upakarmas*.

<i>Rutu</i>	<i>Panchakarma and Upakarmas</i>
<i>Hemantha</i>	<i>Abhyanga</i> , <i>Utsadana</i> , <i>Murdhini taila</i> , <i>Jentaka Swedana</i> , <i>Vimardana</i> and <i>Padaghata</i>
<i>Vasanta</i>	<i>Basti</i> , <i>Navana Nasya</i> , <i>Vyayama</i> , <i>Lepa</i> , <i>Udwartana</i> , <i>Dhoomapana</i> , <i>Gandusha</i> , <i>Kavalagraha</i> , <i>Vamana</i> is considered to be the best.
<i>Greeshma</i>	<i>Chandana Lepa</i>
<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Anjana</i> , <i>Vyayama</i> , <i>Udwartana</i> , <i>Abhyanga</i> , <i>Dhooma</i> and <i>Asthapana</i> . <i>Basti</i> is considered to be the best.
<i>Sharad</i>	<i>Snehapana</i> with <i>Tiktaka gritha</i> , <i>Lepana</i> and <i>Raktamokshana</i> . <i>Virechana</i> is considered to be the best.
<i>Shishira</i>	<i>Abhyanga</i>

DISCUSSION

In today's fast-paced world, marked by high stress, sedentary lifestyles, and sleep deprivation, *Rutu Shodhana* has become more essential than ever. This

seasonal purification process systematically eliminates accumulated *doshas*, restoring balance and preventing diseases. Neglecting *Rutu Shodhana* allows *doshas* to accumulate gradually, leading to *vyadhis* such as

Atisthoulya (obesity), *Agnisadana* (digestive impairment), *Meha* (metabolic disorders), *Kushta* (skin diseases), *Srotorodha* (blockage of bodily channels), *Akshavibramsha* (ocular disorders), *Swasa* (respiratory issues), *Shvayathu* (edema), and *Panduta* (anemia) etc.^[25]

Despite consuming nourishing foods, these conditions arise because excess *doshas* coat the channels of *Rasadhatu*, impairing their function. Therefore, seasonal detoxification is essential to promote overall health and well-being. Environmental factors such as land, water, temperature, humidity, wind, rainfall, and cloud patterns constantly change, with no two moments being exactly alike in a given place.

Additionally, modern lifestyles expose individuals to numerous toxins, compromising the immune system and also it is essential to identify vulnerable populations who had similar tendency of developing the diseases due to genetic, familial, or occupational factors. To counteract all this, immunomodulation through *Rutu Shodhana* is essential. Along with *Ahara* and *Vihara*, factors like optimization of *Agni*, *Desha* and *Kala* play a crucial role in regulating *doshas*, *Dosha dushya samruchana* is considered to be the main cause for manifestation of the disease. Just as dirt inevitably accumulates on a gem even when it is in clear water, similarly, impurities naturally build up in the body over time. Therefore, it is necessary to undergo *Shodhana*.^[26] By prioritizing *Rutu Shodhana*, we not only maintain *Swastha* (well-being) but also prevent *Srotas Kha Vaigunya* (susceptibility to disease), thereby halting disease progression before it takes root.

Although *Rutu* is understood in relation to *Maasa*, the decision to undertake a specific *Shodhana* should be based on the actual climatic conditions of the *Rutu* rather than rigidly adhering to *Maasa*. While the classification of *Rutu* is based on geographical area predominating with rainfall and winter but the classics are concluded that, it is to be considered based on application of *Samshodhana* in respective *Rutus*.

Sushruta Acharya explains that in *Kshina Avastha*, *Bruhmana* therapy should be administered to nourish and strengthen the body. In *Kupita Avastha*, *Prashamana* therapy is required to pacify aggravated *doshas*. In *Vridhhi Avastha*, *Nirharana* therapy is essential for the elimination of excessively increased *doshas*. To maintain *Swasthya* (health), the balance of *doshas* (*Sama Dosha*) should be preserved.^[27]

The *Kapha dosha*, which accumulates during *Shishira Rutu* due to its *Sheeta* and *Snigdha guna*, begins to liquefy in *Vasanta Rutu* due to the *Ushna guna* of *Surya* (the sun's harsh rays). This process can weaken *agni* and, if left unaddressed, may lead to various *vyadhis*. To prevent such imbalances, *Vamana* is recommended during *Chaitra Masa* of *Vasanta Rutu*.

In *Greeshma Rutu*, *Atiushna* leads to the *Chaya* (accumulation) of *Vata dosha* but does not cause *Prakopa* (aggravation), despite the predominance of *Ruksha guna*. However, with the onset of *Varsha Rutu*, the *Sheeta guna* triggers *Vata Prakopa*, potentially causing imbalances. To counteract this, *Basti* is recommended during *Shravana Masa* of *Pravrut Rutu*.

During *Varsha Rutu*, factors such as *mandagni*, *amlapaka*, *malina jala* and *sheeta guna* of *Varsha rutu* there will be *Chaya avastha* of *Pitta*, which undergo *prakopa* in *Sharad rutu*, because of *ushna guna*. To counteract this, therapies like *Tiktha sarpipana*, *Virechana* and *Rakthamokshana* are recommended during *Margashirsha Masa* of *Sharad Rutu*.

If *dosha prakopa* occurs despite following the illustrated *Ahara* and *Vihara* for a particular season, it is termed *Pathyaja Prakopa* or *Achayapoorvaka Prakopa*, where *Shamana* therapy is advised. However, when *dosha prakopa* results from neglecting the recommended seasonal regimen, it is known as *Apathyaja Prakopa* or *Chayapoorvaka Prakopa*, necessitating *Shodhana* as the preferred treatment.

Shodhana is believed to aid in the removal of metabolic waste and free radicals, thereby laying the foundation for overall bodily rejuvenation. Just as a dirty cloth cannot shine, *Rasayana Vidhi* will not be effective for individuals who have not undergone *Shodhana Karma*.

Though different challenges are being faced in evolving era in terms of dietary modifications, shifts in eating patterns, lifestyle changes, alterations in disease morphology, the emergence of new diseases, increased pesticide use, food adulteration, and excessive medication use for minor ailments are being encountered. To combat these issues, *Samshodhana* plays a pivotal role and is regarded as a hallmark remedy.

CONCLUSION

Seasonal variations influence changes in flora, leading to alterations in *rasa*, which in turn impact the body in terms of *dosha*, *agni*, and *bala*. *Rutushodhana* aids in eliminating aggravated *doshas*, thereby does *srotoshodhana*, thereby does *poshana* of *rasa dhatu* and *uttarottara dhatu*. The primary goal of a *Vaidya* is to establish *dhatu samyata*, which can be achieved through timely *Rutushodhana*. Regular practice of *Dinacharya* and *Rutucharya* provides both preventive and promotive benefits of *Panchakarma* in a *Swastha Purusha*. *Shodhana* main aim is to attain *Malapaha* (eliminate the *malas*), *Rogahara* (eradicates disease), *Bala Varna Prasadana* (restores strength and complexion) and it ensures *Ayu* (longevity).

To conclude, the effectiveness of treatment relies on the *Matra* and *Kala* of the *Aushada*. True success can only

be achieved when a physician applies these principles with his own *Yukthi*.

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