



Review Article

A NOVEL APPROACH OF AYURVEDA TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS AND HEALTH BENEFITS OF VARIOUS TYPES OF TAKRAS (BUTTERMILK)

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ABSTRACT

Takra (buttermilk) is included under the *Pathya kalpana* (dietetic preparations) because of its use as both medicine and a dietary regime. *Takra* is called as *Amruta* for the patients suffering from the diseases caused by *Mandagni* (low digestive power). Detail description about *Takra* is mentioned in all classical texts of Ayurveda. It plays important role in diseases namely *Arsha* (hemorrhoids), *Grahani* (irritable bowel syndrome), *Udara* (ascities) and *Agni vikruti*.

The properties of *Takra* (buttermilk) according to Ayurveda are mentioned as *Laghu* (light), *Anushna* (not hot in potency), *Grahi* (absorbant), *Dipana* (appetizing), *Madhur vipak* (sweet taste after digestion) and *Tridhoshaghna*. Because of this unique combination *Takra* can be included in daily diet for all type of *Prakruti* (constitution of person). In this study *Takra* along with its various types, their properties, and methods of preparation and health benefits has been studied critically on the basis of principles and practices of Ayurveda. This study will bring about novel understanding of nutritional and therapeutic uses and newer preparations of buttermilk.

INTRODUCTION

Takra is a product derived from the curd is known as *Takra* (buttermilk), which is widely used by almost everyone today. In Ayurveda, food is considered as powerful medicine and *Takra* is one of this. In Ayurveda, the main root cause of every disease is considered as *Agnimandya* (low digestive power). *Takra* is *Agni deepak* in *Guna* i.e., it improves hunger and hence it is used in digestive problems. So, regular intake of *Takra* has been advised in classical text. *Takra* has been also included under the *Pathya ahar* and called as Nectar on earth in Bhavprakash samhita. *Takrapan* and its effect on health have been mentioned in Charak Samhita under the reference of *arsha* disease. *Takra* is advised to take in winter season in Ayurvedic scriptures.

But commonly it is found that it is taken during summer season. So, proper knowledge of different properties of *Takra* is also necessary. It is usually said that diseases once cured by *Takrapan* will never happen again and the person will never get ill. To involve the *Takra* in regular diet, it is important to know how it is prepared and what benefits it will have in our body. Thus, according to Ayurveda, a wholesome diet with proper metabolism and digestion helps to achieve good health. In Charak Samhita and Bhavpraksha, different methods of *Takra* preparation with their properties have been elaborated. In today's era, because of changed lifestyle, people are facing so many health problems specially related to digestive system. So, it is important to understand the proper method of *Takra* preparation and its action on digestive system. Various combinations of *Takra* with other drugs are used in different *Doshaprakopa*. Such as Acharya Charaka has suggested to use *Ruksha Takra* in patient having *Adham bala* (least body strength) and *Anudhrut Takra* in patient having *Uttam bala* (good body strength). If patient takes *Anudhrut Takra* who is having *Adham bala* then it will not be useful and

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sometimes unwanted effects can be seen. As it is used in many diseases not only as medicine but also as *Ahar* (food), attempt has been made to elaborate its holistic approach in Ayurveda in the context of characteristics and health benefits of various types of *Takra* (Buttermilk) in health and diseases. In *Vaidyakiya Shubhashit Sahityam*, it is described as God in the Heaven got immortality due to *Amruta* (pious drink) and humans have *Takra* (buttermilk) on earth to be immortal. It is also mentioned that *Takra* is hard to get for *Shakra* (King of God – Indra).

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

Data was collected from various Ayurvedic scriptures, such as *Samhitas* and *Nighantu* along with reputed Journals and World Wide Web references.

Need For Study

A critical study is needed for in depth, understanding of the basic differences amongst the characteristics and uses of different types of *Takra* (buttermilk). There is a scope of further research and development on various types of Buttermilk based on their Ayurvedic classification.

On the basis of classification of *Takras* given by Bhavaprakash, it is very difficult to assign the role of amount of water, butter and the process of churning to the difference in properties functions and clinical utility of *Takra*.

A critical analysis to understand the fundamental differences amongst the characteristics and uses of different types of *Takra* could explore novel nutritional and therapeutic uses and newer preparations of buttermilk.

Eight Important Characteristics of *Takra* as Per Ayurveda^[1]

1. *Kshut Vardhana*- Improves appetite
2. *Netra Rujapaha*- Relieves eye disorder
3. *Prana Pada*- It is *Pranadayaka*
4. *Shonita Mamsada*- *Rakta Mamsa Kara*
5. *Amahara*- Relieves *Ama*
6. *Abhighatahara*- Causes relief in trauma
7. *Kapha Hara*- Pacify *Kapha dosha*
8. *Vata Hara*- Pacify *Vata dosha*

Table 1: Classification of *Takra* (Buttermilk) according to Different Ayurvedic Classical Texts ^[2,3,4,5]

S.No	Classification of <i>Takra</i> (Buttermilk) according to different Ayurvedic Classical Texts			
	Charak Samhita (3)	Bhavprakash Nighantu (5)	Kaiyadev Nighantu (10)	Dhanvantari Nighantu (8)
1	<i>Ruksha</i>	<i>Ghola</i>	<i>Karmathit</i>	<i>Sasaar</i>
2	<i>Ardhasneha yukta</i>	<i>Mathit</i>	<i>Galit</i>	<i>Nirjal</i>
3	<i>Purn sneha yukta</i>	<i>Takra</i>	<i>Shwetmatha</i>	<i>Ghola</i>
4	-	<i>Udashwit</i>	<i>Ghola</i>	<i>Mathit</i>
5	-	<i>Chacchika</i>	<i>Mathit</i>	<i>Nisaar</i>
6	-	-	<i>Takra</i>	<i>Ardhoudak</i>
7	-	-	<i>Udashwit</i>	<i>Udashwit</i>
8	-	-	<i>Dandahat</i>	<i>Paadjalanvit</i>
9	-	-	<i>Kalsheya</i>	-
10	-	-	<i>Shadhav</i>	-

Table 2: Ayurvedic Pharmacology of *Takra* (Buttermilk) ^[6,7,8,9,10]

S. No.	Charak Samhita	Sushrut Samhita	Ashtang sangrah	Ashtang hriday	Bhav prakash
<i>Rasa</i> (Taste)	<i>Kashay Amla</i>	<i>Madhur Amla</i>	<i>Kashay Amla</i>	<i>Amla Kashay</i>	<i>Kashay Madhur</i>
<i>Anurasa</i> (The after taste)	-	<i>Kashay</i>	-	-	-
<i>Guna</i> (Qualities)	<i>Deepan, Grahi, Laghu</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Agnidipak</i>	√	√	-
<i>Virya</i> (Potency)	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	√	√	<i>Ushna</i>
<i>Vipak</i> (Conversion of taste before and after Digestion)	<i>Madhur</i>	<i>Madhur</i>	√	√	<i>Madhur</i>

Table 3: Therapeutic Preparations of *Takra* according to Doshas & Diseases in Ayurveda [11]

S No.	Disease	<i>Takra</i> preparation
1	<i>Vata Prakop</i> (Vitiated <i>Vata Dosha</i>)	<i>Amla Takra + Sunthi/Saindhav</i>
2	<i>Pitta Prakop</i> (Vitiated <i>Pitta Dosha</i>)	<i>Madhur Takra + Sita</i>
3	<i>Kapha Prakop</i> (Vitiated <i>Kapha Dosha</i>)	<i>Madhur Takra + Trikatu</i>
4	<i>Arsha</i> (haemorrhoids) and <i>Atisar</i> (dysentery)	<i>Takra + Hing + Jeerak + Saindhav</i>
5	<i>Mutrakruccha</i> (Difficulty in micturition /burning micturition)	<i>Takra + Guda</i>
6	<i>Pandu</i> (anaemia)	<i>Takra + Chitrak</i>

Table 4: Classification of *Takra* (Buttermilk) based on the *Sneha* (fat) Quantity in *Takra* according to Acharya Charaka. [12]

S. No.	Type of <i>Takra</i> (Buttermilk)	<i>Sneha</i> (Fat) Quantity in <i>Takra</i> (buttermilk)
1	<i>Ruksha Takra</i>	<i>Takra</i> devoid of <i>Sneha/Navneet</i> (butter)
2	<i>Ardha Sneha yukta Takra</i>	<i>Takra</i> with half the quantity of <i>Sneha/Navneet</i> (butter)
3	<i>Purna Sneha yukta Takra</i>	<i>Takra</i> with total quantity of <i>Sneha/Navneet</i> (butter)

Characteristics and Health Benefits of *Takra* (Buttermilk) according to Acharya Sushruta [13]

Acharya Sushruta has not mentioned the types of *Takra* but had described procedure to make *Takra* along with its *Guna*. Accordingly half part of water is taken with one part of freshly prepared *Dadhi* - curd. Then this mixture is churned with proper churner and then it is ready to consume. Thus formed *Takra* is not too thick in consistency not too thin, is of *Madhur, Amala, Kashaya Rasa*.

***Guna* of *Takra* as Described by Acharya Shushrut are as Follows**

***Rasa* (Taste)**- *Madhur* (sweet), *Amla* (sour)

***Anurasa* (The after taste)**- *Kashaya* (astringent)

***Virya* (Potency)**- *Ushna* (hot)

***Vipaka* (Conversion of Taste Before and After Digestion)**- *Madhur* (sweet)

***Guna* (Qualities)**- *Laghu* (light), *Ruksha* (dry), *Avrishya*.

Indications of *Takra* in various Diseases as per Ayurveda- *Gara Visha* (stiffness), *Shopha* (edema), *Atisara* (diarrhea), *Grahani* (IBD/IBS), *Pandu* (anemia), *Arsha* (hemorrhoids), *Arochaka* (anorexia), *Visham Jwar* (fever), *Trushna* (thirst), *Chardi* (emesis), *Prasek* (excess salivation), *Shool* (pain), *Mutrakricha* (difficulty In micturition), *Snehavyapad* (disorder related to oleation therapy).

Dosha – *Shleshma* - *Anilahara* (*Kapha* and *Vata* pacifier)

Sushruta Samhita has mentioned contraindications for administration of *Takra* as follows [14]

Takra (buttermilk) is not advised in, *Urakshat*, *Ushna kala* (summer season), *Durbal* (lean), *Murcha* (syncope), *Bhram* (giddiness), *Daha* (thirst) and *Raktapitta*.

Table 5: For different *Dosha* Vitiations, Acharya Sushruta had mention use of *Takra* along with specific *Prakshepa dravyas* for respective *Doshas*

Sr. No	<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Takra</i> with <i>Prakshepa dravyas</i>
1.	<i>Vaat</i>	<i>Takra</i> along with <i>Saindhava</i>
2.	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Takra</i> along with <i>Sharkara</i>
3.	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Takra</i> along with <i>Trikatu Churna</i> and <i>Yava Kshara</i>

Classification of *Takra* (Buttermilk) according to Acharya Bhavamishra

Acharya Bhavamishra had mentioned 5 types of *Takra* according to method of preparations. [15]

Ghola

Dadhi (curd) when churned without adding any water in it is called *Ghola*. When taken along with *Sharkara* is *Rasalavat*, *Vaat - Pitta Nashak*, *Shukral*, *Balya*, *Ruchikar*, *Bruhan*, *Snigdha* and *Dipak*.

It is useful in *Raktapitta*, *Trushna*, *Daha* and *Pratishaya*.

Mathit

Dadhi devoid of *Sneha* part and such *Dadhi* is churned to make *Mathit*. This is mentioned to be *Kapha - Pitta Nashak*.

Takra

Dadhi along with one fourth part of water is churned to make *Takra*. In this procedure the *Sneha* part is removed. It is useful in *Gara, Grahani, Shopha* and *Arsha*.

Udashwit

Dadhi added with half part of water is churned to make *Udashwit*. In this *Sneha* part is not removed. It is said to be *Kapha prakopak, Balya* and *Aam dosha nashak*.

Chacchika

Dadhi along with more than one part of water is churned to make *Chacchik* from this *Sneha* part is removed totally. It is *Deepan, Laghu, Sheetal* and useful in *Shram, Trushna, Vaat - Pitta vikar* but is *Kapha karak*.

Table 6: Classification of types of *Takra* (Buttermilk) based on their contents and method of preparation.

S. No.	Types	Shloka	Preparation method	Dosha Karma	Indications
1.	<i>Ghola</i>	ससरं निर्जलं घोलं	1part Curd+ no water – churning – homogeneous mixture	<i>Vatapitta hara</i>	<i>Raktapitta, Trishna, Daha, Pratishtyaya</i>
2.	<i>Mathitha</i>	मथितं त्वसरोदकम्	1part Curd + no water – churning – till butter formed – remove butter	<i>Kaphapittahara</i>	
3.	<i>Takra</i>	तक्रं पादजलं प्रोक्त	1part Curd + ¼ part water – churning – till butter formed – remove butter	<i>Kaphavatahara</i>	<i>Agnidipan, Hridya, Avrishya, Kaphavatahara</i>
4.	<i>Udashvita</i>	मुदश्चित्त्वर्धवारिकम्	1part Curd + ½ part water – churning - homogeneous mixture	<i>Kaphaprakopaka</i>	<i>Balya, Amadoshanasha</i>
5.	<i>Chacchika</i>	छच्छिका सारहीना	1part Curd + >1part water – churning – homogeneous mixture	<i>PittaVatahara</i>	<i>Shrama, Trishna, Pittavikara, Vatavikara</i>

Table 7: Classification of *Takra* (Buttermilk) based on Stages of its Digestion: *Aam Takra* and *Pakwa Takra*^[16]

1.	<i>Aam Takra</i>	Mainly nullify the <i>Kapha</i> present in abdomen and has <i>Prabhav</i> on <i>Kapha</i> present in throat
2.	<i>Pakwa Takra</i>	Used in <i>Kasa, Shwas</i> and other diseases.

Ayurvedic Guidelines of *Takra* (Buttermilk) Administration^[17]

Ayurveda has stated *Takra Sevan Kala* (time period and method of *Takra* consumption) and *Krama* (sequence). According to *Shodhala Nighantu*, depending on the strength of individual and strength of diseases, consumption of *Takra* should be done for minimum 7 days to up to 1 month.

For better effect, it should be taken in increasing order and as maximum dose reached then decrease the dose in the same way. This will help to increase and maintain the strength of body. There will be improvement in digestive power. But one should not stop consumption of *Takra* suddenly.

Properties of *Takra* (Buttermilk) According to Sources of Milk^[18]

Takra prepared with different types of milk such as cow's milk, buffalo's milk and goat milk has different *Dosha karma* properties.

Table 8: Classification of *Takra* (Buttermilk) based on sources of Milk and its Indications.

S.No.	<i>Takra</i>	<i>Rasa/Guna/Virya</i>	<i>Dosha and Karma</i>
1.	Prepared with cow's milk	<i>Madhura</i> (sweet), <i>Kashaya</i> (astringent)	<i>Vata Shamaka</i> (pacifies <i>Vata</i>), <i>Agnideepak</i> (enhances digestion), <i>Hrudya, Balya</i> (strengthening)
2.	Prepared with buffalo's milk	<i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous),	<i>Vatapitta Shamak</i> (pacifies <i>Vata pitta</i>),

		<i>Guru</i> (heavy)	<i>Kaphakara</i> (alleviates <i>Kapha</i>), <i>Abhishyandi</i> , <i>Arsha</i> (haemorrhoid), <i>Gulma</i> (tumors), <i>Atisar</i> (diarrhoea)
3.	Prepared with goat's milk	<i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous), <i>Laghu</i> (light)	<i>Shota</i> (oedema), <i>Pandu</i> (anaemia), <i>Grahani</i> (IBD/IBS)

Indications of *Takra* As Per Dhanvantari Nighantu^[19]

Takra has been ideally indicated in winter season and *kapha vataj prakruti* (constitution) individuals.

It should be consumed in condition like *Mandagni* (low digestive power), *Strotorodha* (blockage of circulatory channel) and *Vata dosha* diseases.

Takrapan act as nectar in diseases such as *Arsha* (haemorrhoid), *Pandu* (anaemia), *Atisar* (dysentery), *Grahani* (irritable bowel syndrome).

Contraindication of *Takra* as per *Shodhal Nighantu* [20]

Takra should not be taken in summer season. It is also contraindicated in condition of *Adham bala* and *Pitta Prakop* such as giddiness, fainting, burning sensation because of its *Ushna virya*.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda asserts the use of *Takra* in diet not only as medicine but also as *Anupan* (vehicle/diet adjuvant). *Takra* has *Madhur* (sweet) *Vipak* (conversion of taste before and after digestion) and it doesn't cause *Pitta prakopa* (vitiation) and shows *Vata kapha shamak* (pacifies) property.

Takra (buttermilk) is also advised in disorders of gastrointestinal tract as it has *Deepan* (appetizer), *Pachana* (digestion), *Sangrahi* (with holds) and *Tridoshahara* (pacifies *Tridoshas*) properties.

Takra has been advised in winter season and that also for *kapha vataj prakruti* (constitution) individuals.

According to *Shodhal Nighantu*, *Takra* should be consumed from minimum 7 days to maximum 1 month consecutively. This denotes both positive and negative effects *Takra* on our metabolism.

Similarly, it may be wisely used and other lifestyle disorders like in diabetes, dyslipidaemia, obesity.

So, the *Takra* used as per the Ayurvedic principles will definitely act as nectar for health as stated in Indian.

CONCLUSION

Takra has been recommended in Ayurveda for its unique role on digestive metabolism. On modern grounds also it has been proven that, it contains lactobacillus and acts as a natural probiotic which helps in proper digestion and absorption.

It also maintains normal metabolism and aids in disease prevention, cure and health promotion.

The *Ghol*, *Mathitha*, *Takra*, *Udashwita*, *Chacchika* and other types of *Takra* have different physicochemical characteristics, nutritional values and therapeutic uses.

Additionally, according to Ayurveda, Healthy Individuals should consume *Takra* on the basis of their personalized state of *Dosha Avastha*, *Agnibala* and *Sharir Bala*.

The customization of the use of *Takra* on the basis of individual constitution and other Ayurvedic parameters in healthy individuals will explore a new area of research in medical field.

Similarly, the customization of the use of *Takra* on the basis of diseases in various patients will also explore a new area of research in medical field.

Thus, this critical study has explored a novel understanding of physicochemical characteristics, nutritional values and therapeutic uses.

The newer preparations of buttermilk in the Ayurvedic perspective will explore new dimension of researches on *Takra* (buttermilk).

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