



Pathya-Apathya in Atisara: A Literary Review with Special Reference to Yogaratnakara

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: *Atisara*, often correlated with diarrhoea in contemporary medicine, is a common gastrointestinal disorder characterized by frequent passage of watery stools due to vitiation of doshas and digestive impairment. In Ayurveda, *Atisara* is classified under the *Ashtamahagada* and arises primarily from *Agnimandya* and *Amadosha* triggered by improper *Ahara* and *Vihara*. Hence, regulation of diet and lifestyle through *Pathya Apathya* forms a fundamental component of its management.

Methods: The present study is based on a literary review of *Yogaratnakara*, *Purvardha- Atisara Nidana Adhyaya*, from which relevant references and data were systematically collected and analysed.

Result: The review revealed that *Atisara* primarily develops due to *Agnimandya* and *Ama* formation resulting from *Apathya Ahara* and *Vihara*. *Pathya Ahara* such as *Laghu*, *Grahi*, and *Deepana* food substances aid in restoring digestive fire, reducing stool frequency, and improving intestinal absorption. Conversely, *Guru*, *Snigdha*, *Sheeta*, *Abhishyandi*, and *Viruddha Ahara* were identified as *Apathya*, aggravating *Doshas* and worsening the disease condition. Appropriate *Vihara* practices were found to support recovery by preventing further *Dosha* vitiation.

Discussion: *Pathya Apathya* acts not only as a supportive measure but also as a primary therapeutic modality in *Atisara*. By correcting the underlying digestive dysfunction, dietary regulation helps break the disease pathogenesis and reduces dependency on pharmacological interventions. The Ayurvedic dietary approach shows conceptual similarity to modern dietary management of diarrhoea, emphasizing easily digestible and gut-protective foods.

Conclusion: *Pathya Apathya* constitutes a vital and effective Ayurvedic approach in the management of *Atisara*. Its judicious application helps restore *Agni*, normalize bowel function, and prevent recurrence.

KEYWORDS: *Pathya*, *Apathya*, *Atisara*, Diarrhoea, *Agnimandya*

INTRODUCTION

Vaidya Lakshmipati Shastri authored *Yogaratnakara*, a 17th-century Ayurvedic text that is especially useful for practicing physicians. The work focuses on practical treatment methods, giving clear guidance on

medicines along with diet and lifestyle advice, and explains disease management through well-defined *Pathya-Apathya* principles and logical formulations.

In Ayurveda, diarrhoea can be associated with *Atisara*. *Ati* and *Saranam* together form the term *Atisara*. *Ati* denotes excess, whereas *Saranam* denotes flow. As a result, *Atisara* is characterised by the frequent, excessive passing of watery stools via the guda.¹

Agnimandya is the most crucial factor in the pathogenesis of *Atisara*, as it serves as the primary cause of *Amadosha* and is commonly involved in the manifestation of most diseases, including *Atisara*.² *Amadosha* arises due to *Agnidushti* caused by *Mithya Ahara* and *Vihara* (improper dietary and lifestyle practices), which ultimately manifests as *Atisara*.

Poor dietary habits significantly contribute to the onset of *Atisara*. Hence, adherence to *Pathya Ahara* and the principles of *Ahara-Vidhi-Vidhana* is recommended for the effective correction of *Atisara*. The human digestive system is highly sensitive and responds appropriately to internal physiological disturbances as well as emotional and psychological factors.³

Pathya Apathya:

Pathya helps preserve health in a healthy individual and supports recovery in a diseased person.

पथ्यं पथोऽनपेतं यद्यच्चोक्तं मनसः प्रियम्।

यच्चाप्रियमपथ्यं च नियतं तन्न लक्षयेत् ॥ (च. सू. २५/४५)

Substances that are beneficial to the body and its channels, and those that are agreeable and bring pleasure to the mind, are termed *Pathya*. In contrast, *Apathya* refers to substances that are unwholesome, harmful to the body, and unpleasant to the mind. Essentially, the concept of *Pathya Apathya* corresponds to *Upashaya Anupashaya* and encompasses the entire range of favourable and unfavourable factors related to both *Ahara* and *Vihara*.⁴

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Yogaratanakara is a 17th-century Ayurvedic treatise. Information was collected from the *Purvardha*, *Atisara Nidana Adhyaya* of *Yogaratanakara* and from various related articles. The collected data were organized systematically in tabular form, along with appropriate references and pharmacological properties.

Nidana of Atisara:

According to Ayurvedic texts, the *Nidana* of *Atisara* are broadly classified into four main categories:

- *Aharaja* (dietary causes),
- *Viharaja* (lifestyle-related causes),
- *Manasika* (psychological or emotional factors), and
- *Agantuja* (external factors such as bacterial and viral infections).

Types:

The *Brihatrayees* of Ayurvedic literature authored by Acharya Charaka, Acharya Sushruta, and Acharya Vagbhata classify *Atisara* into six distinct types.

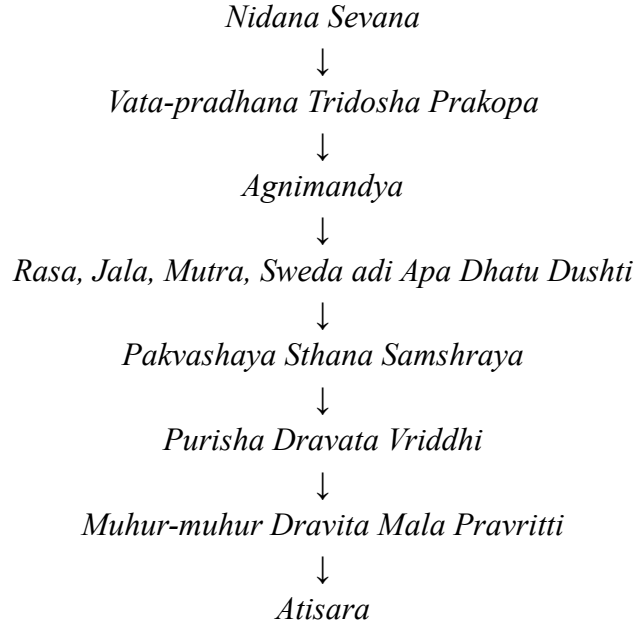
Table no. 01- Types of Atisara

Charak Samhita⁵	Sushruta Samhita⁶	Ashtanga Hridaya⁷
<i>Vataja</i>	<i>Vataja</i>	<i>Vataja</i>
<i>Pittaja</i>	<i>Pittaja</i>	<i>Pittaja</i>
<i>Kaphaja</i>	<i>Kaphaja</i>	<i>Kaphaja</i>

<i>Sannipataja</i>	<i>Sannipataja</i>	<i>Sannipataja</i>
<i>Bhayaja</i>	<i>Shokaja</i>	<i>Bhayaja</i>
<i>Shokaja</i>	<i>Aamaja</i>	<i>Shokaja</i>

In his *Siddhisthana*, Acharya Charaka listed 36 different forms of *Atisara*.⁸

Samprapti of *Atisara*⁹:



Samprapti Ghataka

Table no.02- *Samprapti Ghataka*

<i>Samprapti Ghataka</i>	Description
<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Vata-pradhana Tridoshaja</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	<i>Udaka, Purisha</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Jatharagni Mandya</i>
<i>Srotas</i>	<i>Purishavaha, Udakavaha, Annavaha Srotas</i>
<i>Srotodushti</i>	<i>Ati-pravritti</i>
<i>Udbhava Sthana</i>	<i>Pakwashaya</i>
<i>Adhisthana</i>	<i>Pakwashaya / Guda</i>
<i>Svabhava</i>	<i>Ashukari</i>
<i>Sadhyasadhyata</i>	<i>Sadhya / Kruchrasadhya</i>

Pathyapathya Mentioned in Yogaratnakar:

Table no.3- Pathyapathya mentioned in Yogaratnakar

<i>Pathya Ahara/Vihara</i> ¹⁰	<i>Apathya Ahara /Vihara</i> ¹¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Langhan</i> ▪ <i>Vaman</i> ▪ <i>Nidra</i> ▪ <i>Purana Shali</i> ▪ <i>Shashtik</i> ▪ <i>Vilepi</i> ▪ <i>Lajamanda</i> ▪ <i>Masoora</i> ▪ <i>Arhara</i> ▪ <i>Mamsa rasa- Lava, Harina, Kapinjal</i> ▪ <i>Ghrita, Navaneet, Takra, Dadhi</i> ▪ <i>Naveen Kadali Phala (unripen)</i> ▪ <i>Madhu,</i> ▪ <i>Jambu-phala,</i> ▪ <i>Bhavya,</i> ▪ <i>Aadrak,</i> ▪ <i>Shunthi,</i> ▪ <i>Vikankat,</i> ▪ <i>Kapittha,</i> ▪ <i>Bakula,</i> ▪ <i>Bilva,</i> ▪ <i>Tinduka,</i> ▪ <i>Dadima,</i> ▪ <i>Shaluka,</i> ▪ <i>Changeri,</i> ▪ <i>Bhanga,</i> ▪ <i>Aruna (Manjistha),</i> ▪ <i>Ahiphena,</i> ▪ <i>Jeeraka,</i> ▪ <i>Girimallika (Kutaja),</i> ▪ <i>Kustumbaru,</i> ▪ <i>Mahanimba</i> ▪ <i>Kashaya rasa dravya</i> ▪ <i>Deepana, Laghu anna</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Swedana</i> ▪ <i>Anjana</i> ▪ <i>Raktamokshana</i> ▪ <i>Ambupan</i> ▪ <i>Snan</i> ▪ <i>Vyavaya</i> ▪ <i>Jagaran</i> ▪ <i>Dhumrapan</i> ▪ <i>Nasya</i> ▪ <i>Abhyanga</i> ▪ <i>Vega Dharana</i> ▪ <i>Ruksha Bhojan Sevan</i> ▪ <i>Godhuma,</i> ▪ <i>Masha,</i> ▪ <i>Yava,</i> ▪ <i>Vastuka,</i> ▪ <i>Kakamachi,</i> ▪ <i>Nishpavaka,</i> ▪ <i>Madhu</i> ▪ <i>Shigru,</i> ▪ <i>Kushmand</i> ▪ <i>Tumbi</i> ▪ <i>Badar</i> ▪ <i>Tambula</i> ▪ <i>Ikshu</i> ▪ <i>Guda</i> ▪ <i>Madya</i> ▪ <i>Upodika</i> ▪ <i>Draksha</i> ▪ <i>Amlavetas</i> ▪ <i>Lashuna</i> ▪ <i>Amalaki</i> ▪ <i>Dushtambu,</i> ▪ <i>Narikela</i> ▪ <i>Dugdha</i> ▪ <i>Punarnava</i> ▪ <i>Urvaruka</i> ▪ <i>Amla, Lavana rasa</i>

➤ **Rasapanchaka of drug^{12 13 14}:**

<i>Dravya</i>	<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Guna</i>	<i>Virya</i>	<i>Vipaka</i>	<i>Doshaghnata</i>
<i>Puran Shali</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Shighrapaki, Pitta Shamaka</i>
<i>Masoor</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Shita</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vatakar, Kaphapitta Shamak</i>
<i>Arahara</i>	<i>Kashay, Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Shita</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vatakar, Kaphapitta Shamak</i>
<i>Kadaliphala</i>	<i>Madhura, Kashaya</i>	<i>Shita, Guru, Snigdha</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Pitta Rakta Shamak Kaphakarak</i>
<i>Jambu</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Vatajanak, Kaphapittashamak</i>
<i>Bhavya</i>	<i>Madhura, Amla, Kashaya</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Pittakapha Vardhak</i>
<i>Ardra</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Kapha pachna</i>
<i>Shunthi</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Snigdha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Kapha Vatashamak</i>
<i>Shaluka</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Shita, Guru, Ruksha</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Pittashamak, Vatavardhak</i>
<i>Vikankat</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridoshahara, Deepan, Pachan</i>
<i>Kapittha</i>	<i>Aam: Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Sangrahi</i>
	<i>Pakva: Amla, Kashaya</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridhoshahara, Grahi</i>
<i>Bakula</i>	<i>Kashay</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>KaphaPitta nashak</i>
<i>Bilva (Apakva)</i>	<i>Katu, Tikta, Kashay</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kaphavatashamak, Grahi, Agnidipak,</i>
<i>Dadima</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Laghu, Snigdha</i>	<i>Anushna</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Pittajanak, Vatakapashamak, Amanashak</i>
<i>Swadu Dadima</i>	<i>Madhura, Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu, Grahi, Snigdha</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Santarpankara</i>
<i>Changeri</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Ruksha, Ushna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Pittakarak, Agni Dipak, Ruchikar</i>
<i>Bhringaraja</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Tiksha, Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kaphavata shamak, Kriminashak, Amanashak</i>
<i>Manjishtha</i>	<i>Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Vishanashak, Kaphashamak</i>
<i>Ahiphena</i>	<i>Tikta, Kashya</i>	<i>Sukshma, Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kaphanashak, Vatapittakarak, Grahi</i>

<i>Bhanga</i>	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Laghu, Tikshna</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Pittakarak, Kaphashamak, Dipan, Panchak, Grahi</i>
<i>Girimallika (Kutaja)</i>	<i>Katu, Kashaya</i>	<i>Ruksha</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kaphapitta shamak, Amanashak</i>
<i>Kustumbaru</i>	<i>Katu, Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Snigdha, Laghu</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Tridoshashamak, Agni dipan, pachan, Rochak, Grahi</i>
<i>Tinduk (Apakva)</i>	<i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Shita</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kaphapitta shamak, Vatajanak, Grahi</i>
<i>Jirak</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Agnidipaka, Sangrahi, Pittakarak, Kaphanashak</i>
<i>Mahanimba</i>	<i>Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Ruksha</i>	<i>Anushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Grahi, Kaphapitta shamak,</i>

DISCUSSION

पथ्ये सति गदात्तस्य किमौषधिनिषेवणो ।

पथ्येऽसति गदात्तस्य किमौषधिनिषेवणो ॥ (Vaidya Jivan 1/10)

Pathya itself functions as *Chikitsa* without the need for medicines; however, in the absence of *Pathya*, the administration of medicines is considered ineffective.¹⁵

Atisara is primarily a disorder of *Agnimandya* leading to *Ama* formation and derangement of *Purishavaha* and *Udakavaha Srotas*. The present review highlights that *Apathya Ahara* and *Vihara* plays a decisive role in the initiation and progression of the disease. Excessive intake of *Guru*, *Snigdha*, *Abhishyandi*, *Sheeta*, and *Viruddha Ahara* weakens *Jatharagni*, promotes *Ama* formation, and results in increased *Dravata* of *Purisha*, manifesting as frequent loose stools.

The concept of *Pathya Apathya*, as described in *Yogaratanakara*, directly targets the basic *Samprapti* of *Atisara*. *Pathya Ahara* such as *Purana Shali*, *Shashtika Shali*, *Vilepi*, *Lajamanda*, *Masoora*, *Arahar*, and *Kashaya Rasa Dravyas* possess *Laghu*, *Grahi*, and *Deepana* properties, which helps in *Agnideepana*, *Ama Pachana*, and *Sangrahana* of stools. Drugs like *Bilva*, *Kutaja*, *Dadima*, *Jeeraka*, and *Kapittha* are well known for their *Grahi* and *Pachana* actions, thereby reducing stool frequency and improving intestinal absorption.

The *Rasapanchaka* analysis of these *Dravyas* shows predominance of *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Kashaya*, and *Ushna* qualities, which are antagonistic to *Kapha* and *Ama* and supportive in *Vata Pradhana Tridoshaja Atisara*. Appropriate *Vihara*, along with dietary regulation, further prevents *Dosha* aggravation and supports recovery. Thus, *Pathya* acts not merely as an adjunct but as a form of *Chikitsa* itself, often reducing the need for extensive pharmacological intervention.

Vata Doshahara Dravyas generally possess *Madhura*, *Amla*, or *Lavana Rasa*; *Snigdha* and *Guru Guna*¹⁶; *Ushna Virya*; and *Madhura Vipaka*, and these combined properties help in *Srotasa Vishodhana*, improves digestion, correct *Agnimandya*, and thereby helps in the management of *Atisara*.

The specificity of *Pathya Ahara* according to the type of *Atisara* further emphasizes the individualized approach of Ayurveda. In *Vataja Atisara*, *Pathya Dravyas* such as *Purana Shali*, *Ardraka*, *Shunthi*, *Bilva*, *Dadima*, *Changeri*, *Bhringaraja*, *Pakva Kapittha*, and *Kustumbaru* help counter *Vata* predominance through their *Deepana*, *Pachana*, and *Grahi* actions, thereby reducing excessive bowel movements and correcting *Agnimandya*.

In *Pittaja Atisara*, the recommended *Pathya* items including *Purana Shali*, *Masoora*, *Arahar*, *Kadali Phala*, *Jambu*, *Shaluka*, *Kapittha*, *Bakula*, *Madhura Dadima*, *Kutaja*, *Kustumbaru*, and *Mahanimba*

predominantly possess *Shita*, *Kashaya*, and *Grahi* properties. These qualities pacify aggravated *Pitta*, reduce intestinal inflammation, and aid in stabilizing bowel function.

For *Kaphaja Atisara*, *Pathya* substances such as *Mahanimba*, *Jiraka*, *Tinduka*, *Kutaja*, *Bhanga*, *Purana Shali*, *Masoor*, *Arahara*, *Ardraka*, *Shunthi*, *Bilva*, *Dadima*, *Changeri*, *Bhringaraja*, *Manjishta*, and *Ahiphena* exhibit *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Ushna*, and *Deepana* properties. These attributes help in *Kapha Shamana*, *Ama Pachana*, and restoration of *Agni*.

In *Amatisara*, *Pathya Ahara* like *Purana Shali*, *Jambu*, *Ardraka*, *Shunthi*, *Vikankata*, *Dadima*, *Changeri*, *Bhringaraja*, *Bhanga*, *Kutaja*, *Kustumbaru*, *Jiraka*, and *Maha Nimba* primarily act on *Ama* digestion and *Agni* stimulation, thereby preventing further progression of the disease.

During *Pakvatisara*, when *Ama* is absent and *Doshas* are relatively stabilized, *Pathya Dravyas* such as *Kustumbaru*, *Purana Shali*, *Kadali Phala*, *Jambu*, *Bhavya*, *Vikankata*, and *Pakva Kapittha* support *Grahana* of stools and strengthen digestive function.

In *Sannipataja Atisara*, where all three *Doshas* are involved, *Pathya Ahara* including *Purana Shali*, *Vikankata*, *Madhura Dadima*, and *Kustumbaru* provide a balanced *Tridosha-shamaka* effect and aid in restoring intestinal harmony.

CONCLUSION

Pathya Apathya constitutes the fundamental basis of Ayurvedic management in *Atisara*. Proper selection of *Pathya Ahara* and *Vihara* helps in restoring *Agni*, digesting *Ama*, normalizing bowel movements, and preventing recurrence of the disease. The review establishes that adherence to *Pathya* alone can act as an effective therapeutic measure, whereas neglect of *Pathya* renders medicinal treatment less effective. Hence, rational application of *Pathya Apathya*, as described in *Yogaratanakara*, is essential for comprehensive and sustainable management of *Atisara*.

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