



## A LITERARY REVIEW ON AHAR-KALPANAS IN NIGHANTARATNAKAR

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**ABSTRACT**

Ahar is one of the important factors of life. Ahar is more than just sustenance-it is the cornerstone of health, culture and healing. In ayurveda, this wisdom is mentioned in texts where food is not only seen as nourishment but also as a medicine. Food is used as a preventive as well as corrective medicine for the treatment of a disease. Diet acts as a whole medicine to the body. Different acharyas explain different types of ahar concepts differently. In nighantaratnakar, acharya has explained a variety of drugs, its formulations and its uses in various diseases. Acharya has also explained different types of ahar kalpanas (food formulations) in vivid ways with differences in its cooking styles and types. In this text acharya has explained a wide range of food formulations which are easily digestible foods like manda, peya, vilepa (soups) to day-to day cooking recipes like rice recipes, sweet recipes etc. This article describes detailed aspects of food formulations and its types mentioned in this text by the acharya.

**KEYWORDS :** Ahar, lifestyle, ahar kalpana, recipes**INTRODUCTION**

The three main pillars of life include ahar, nidra and brahmacharya. Food is considered as the main pillar of life. Ahar is the one of the main factors for the continuation of life.

Acharya charaka believes food as a medicine in itself, emphasizing on dietetics, prevention and digestion. While acharya sushruta has explained food as a source of strength, nourishment and healing factor. Acharya Kashyapa believes ahara is itself the greatest medicine.

Nighantratnakar is edited by Bhashagvarya Krushnashastra Navare collated with spacious notes by Vasudev Laxman Shastra Pansikar and Krishnaji Vitthal Soman. This text describes drugs, food formulations, ahar vargas, shodhan vidhis, ratnachikitsa etc.

Part I of this text includes bhojan and its formulations i.e. ahara kalpanas. This text has included various types of recipes of rice, rotis, sweets, soups etc.

**Literature Review:-**

In this text, acharya has explained about rice, its recipe with detailed quantity of ingredients and its benefits. He has explained about various types of rice like brinjal rice, moong rice, mudgayusha rice, puffed grains (lahya) rice, barley rice, khichadi rice, Bengal gram rice. He has also explained fish and rice formulation.

Acharya has explained about different types of food and its properties. Acharya has now explained yavagu, peya, vilepi and manda recipes with the quantity of water and its method of cooking. Different types of recipes of manda like barley, wheat, pulses are explained in a detailed manner. Yushas made from moonga (mudgayusha), other pulses, kulitha (horse gram), barley, pomegranate, yoghurt etc have been mentioned. The writer has explained its formulations, quantity of water, its method of cooking and also the benefits of the formulations in a very subtle and compact way.

The author discusses various soups, including unique ones like Kanchan soup, roasted pulse soup, and legume soups such as pea and lima bean, along with their preparation methods and health benefits.

The text explains Kulamasha and Kathika (kadhi) preparations. Kathika is made from buttermilk, gram flour, pepper, salt, and ghee. It is light, tasty, increases pitta, and helps relieve constipation, promoting digestive health.

The writer has now further highlighted about muramba- sweet pickle. He has mentioned the way of preserving it, the ingredients and different types of this dish. Benefits of this dish has also been stated.

The writer has mentioned another dish called as majjashikhri which is made from yoghurt, honey, sugar, ghee, other condiments like black

pepper, bay leaf, cinnamon, etc.

The text details various preparations of Payas (pudding) described by the author, including milk, rice, and coconut pudding. The author provides comprehensive instructions for preparing these dishes, along with their therapeutic benefits.

The author has then described the formulations of panak- cold infusion. Panchasarapanak described by the author is a type of cold infusion made from 5 different types of fruits and then infused with spices like black pepper, cinnamon, bay leaf, cardamom etc.

The author describes a unique recipe termed Pramodākhyasātak. Parallel preparations such as Vardhamānasātak and Somasātak are also mentioned. The formulation is considered heavy to digest, yet strengthening and satisfying.

The Acharya details the ingredients and cooking methodology, highlighting both its culinary and therapeutic values.

Small dumplings are described, prepared from dough made of pulse flours, black pepper, coriander seeds, and other condiments. The dough is shaped into small tablets and sun-dried, to be fried before consumption.

The author also describes various forms of Papad (thin, crispy flatbreads), prepared from different pulses. In general, papads stimulate digestive fire, improve appetite, but are heavy to digest.

The author has then described different types of vade-fritters. These fritters are made up of various types of pulses. Another type of fritter-kanjikvatak and takravatakis mentioned.

Acharya has described a leaf delicacy called paatvadya with the main ingredient as gram flour.

The acharya has explained bhaji-fried fritters. Acharya has mentioned its detailed method of cooking with details of quantity of ingredients.

Another unique recipe described by the author is kadboli-crispy lentil snack. The main ingredient used in this preparation is black gram flour added with other condiments. The dough is then converted into small circular rings. Another recipe like undrya similar to the above mentioned delicacy is also explained by the author.

The author now explains some fried preparations made from colocasia leaves and other condiments.

The author has described a sweet preparation made from semolina with milk and ghee named as mohanbhog.

The dish is made of liquid semolina dough and is fried in ghee. This type of dish is also made from rice flour, coconut, milk fudge (khava), and mango.

Another distinctive preparation such as sweet pancakes— Apup/ Gharge—has been described by the author, prepared from semolina or rice. Sweet preparation like bread made from jaggery is stated here called gudori/gulpoli.

Another sweet preparation similar to pancakes made from rice flour and yoghurt fried in ghee is stated here.

A sweet delicacy made from semolina having a semicircular shape fried in ghee with filling of coconut and dry fruits called as saiyav/karanji is mentioned by the author. A sweet dish made from fermented wheat semolina and shaped into intricate loops, fried in ghee and then dipped into sugar syrup called jilebi. It is described to have the same properties like other sweets mentioned above.

A unique dish named indursa has been explained.

Sweet savories like bundi laddoo are described. Another type of laddoo made from wheat flour called choorma is also explained.

A very unique dish made from fish called fish laddoos is explained by the author. It is made from flesh of the fish and buttermilk fried in ghee and dipped in sugar syrup. Other laddoos made from yoghurt, seeds laddo, lotus stem laddoo have been mentioned.

Different recipes of chapati, sweet chapati-puranpoli, semolina chapati have been mentioned.

Different types of rotis like wheat flour, black gram flour have been described.

The author has explained properties of each type of roti according to its ingredients.

Different preparations of semolina, rice flour which is made on leaf and steamed is mentioned here called fenika. Flat bread of rice flour called ghavan is also mentioned.

Sweet recipes like modak made of rice flour, filling of coconut and steam is described by the author.

Flat semolina noodles dried in sunlight and then eaten with milk and sugar is mentioned in the text.

Another sweet savory which is made from semolina, made into small finger like cakes and then fried is mentioned as chirote. Khaja is a similar dish mentioned. Flat thin bread made from wheat flour is also mentioned as mande.

A sweet preparation of rice is explained here with ghee and sugar.

Later the author has explained benefits of different general preparations like food items made from rice flour, wheat flour, jaggery, items fried in oil and ghee, sprouts, etc.

The author now describes preparations like pohe, hola, ombya, lahya etc. These preparations are made from freshly cut grains or half grown grains. The author has also described benefits of different types of flour like saktu, roasted grains flour, rice flour etc.

The author has described milk made products and its benefits.

The author has described a detailed recipe of mantha with its properties. Another unique dish made from milk and yoghurt called nishpad is mentioned. Similar dish called dugdhalupika and ksheershaka is also mentioned.

The writer now mentions a preparation made from all condiments which can be incorporated in any dish and is named as vesvar. Different types of lentil soups have been described by the author. He has also mentioned a unique seasoning mixture of a blend of spices called sourabh masala which is to be used in any spicy preparation.

The author has also mentioned about a spicy chutney-like preparation called panchamrut.

Different types of pickles and their properties are also explained by the author in this text.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Nighantu Ratnakar offers an extensive compilation of Ayurvedic culinary wisdom, highlighting the therapeutic significance of food (Ahara) in maintaining health and treating diseases. Various Ahara Kalpanas such as yavagu, peya, vilepi, yusha, and numerous sweet and savory preparations are described with precise formulations, ingredients, and health benefits. The text emphasises on properties of the food preparations like guru, ruksha, snigdha etc. The diversity of recipes—from rice and soups to sweets and pickles—illustrates a balanced approach to nutrition, digestion, and prevention. The detailed documentation in Nighantu Ratnakar shows Ayurveda's foundational principle that food itself is medicine, thereby bridging culinary art with therapeutic science and emphasizing diet as the cornerstone of health and longevity.

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