



Medicated Porridge (Karkkidaka Kanji) as a Healthy Seasonal Food—A Review[†]

Kalamol M.K. *, Arun Mohanan and Ramesh Narve Venkatesh

Department of Rasashastra and Bhaishajyakalpana (Pharmaceuticals), Amrita School of Ayurveda, Kollam 690525, India

* Correspondence: kalamk30585@gmail.com

† Presented at the 3rd International Electronic Conference on Foods: Food, Microbiome, and Health—A Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of Foods' Impact on Our Wellbeing, 1–15 October 2022; Available online: <https://sciforum.net/event/Foods2022>.

Abstract: Health requires healthy food. Healthy foods are those that provide the nutrients needed to sustain the body's well-being and retain energy. Food is the substances consisting essentially of protein, carbohydrate, and fat used in the body of an organism to sustain growth, repair, and vital processes and to furnish energy. Ayurveda, the science of life, provides a clear context for food in healthy, as well as diseased, persons. Ayurveda explains the influence of food in different stages of a disease, such as in aetiology, manifestation, and treatment, as well as regimens to be followed. There are so many categories of healthy food explained in Ayurveda science. Most of them are of plant origin. Medicated porridge is a medicated rice soup, which is an important dietary regimen discussed in the Ayurvedic medicinal system. A special medicated rice named "Karkkidaka kanji" is usually included in a seasonal food regimen in Kerala, especially in the monsoon or rainy season (June to August). This medicated gruel contains more than 25 herbs, 9 pulses, and cereals that help in boosting one's immunity. It acts as a detoxifying agent, as well as a remedy for rheumatic disorder, and mainly occurs seasonally. The ingredients of "karkkidaka kanji" include shashtika shali (red rice), chandrashoora (garden cress), dasamoola churna (root of 10 medicinal plants), trikatu (3 pungent herbs), dasapushpa (10 herbal flowers), methika (fenugreek), jeera (cumin seed), coconut milk, jaggery, and water. The properties of these herbal medicines make this gruel a delectable, nutritious, and medicated food. The therapeutic effect of these drugs includes the prevention of respiratory ailments; relief from arthritis pain and swelling; enhanced digestion; reduced constipation; and antipyretic, analgesic, and stress relieving effects, etc. Through the literary search related to these ingredients, one can establish the therapeutic effect of the traditional medicated porridge, "The Karkkidaka Kanji".

Keywords: medicated porridge; Karkkidaka kanji; medicated rice gruel; dasamulam; dasapushpam; shashtika sali



Citation: M.K. K.; Mohanan, A.; Venkatesh, R.N. Medicated Porridge (Karkkidaka Kanji) as a Healthy Seasonal Food—A Review. *Biol. Life Sci. Forum* **2022**, *18*, 46. <https://doi.org/10.3390/Foods2022-13020>

Academic Editor: Antonio Cilla

Published: 30 September 2022

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1. Introduction

Ayurveda, the science of life, gives importance to food in different contexts, such as a daily regimen, a seasonal dietary regimen, different stages of disease manifestation, a treatment regimen, etc.

Karkkidaka is the last month in the Malayalam calendar and is considered the worst month concerning health. A special medicinal rice porridge named "Karkkidaka kanji" is usually consumed as part of a seasonal food regimen in Kerala, especially in the monsoon or rainy season (June to August) [1]. In ancient Kerala, agriculture was the main means of livelihood. So, during the rainy season, unemployment was common, and also the body strength and immunity of the people diminished, so they spent this month rejuvenating their bodies.

As per Ayurveda, the seasonal regimen (ritucharya) has a major role in maintaining health, as well as preventing diseases. Karkkidakamasa comes in Varsha ritu, during which the body's strength (Sareera Bala), digestive fire (Agnibala), and immunity (Vyad-hikshamatva) greatly decline [2]. The karkkidaka kanji is practiced by Keralites as a traditional wellness food. It is a combination of many herbs that helps boost immunity and rejuvenation for the monsoon season, as well as the season that follows.

This rice-based porridge comes in different flavors, including "jeera kanji," "Dasapushpa kanji," "Uluvakanji," "Njavara kanji," etc. The shelves of medicinal shops and supermarkets are stuffed with the "Oushadha Kanjikootu" (instant mixture of medicinal porridge) during the Karkkidakamasa (monsoon season), which signifies the health awareness of the people nowadays.

2. Materials and Method

2.1. Sources of Data Collection

Databases, such as Pub Med and Google scholar, were searched for the relevant articles regarding karkkidaka kanji and were reviewed (Table 1).

Table 1. Karkkidaka kanji ingredients.

Sl. No.	Ingredients	Quantity
1.	Shashtika shali	100 g.
2.	Mudga(green gram)	10 g.
3.	Chandrasoora (garden cress)	10 g.
4.	Jeeraka (cumin seed)	10 g.
5.	Medhika (fenugreek seed)	10 g.
6.	Dasamula churna/bala churna	10 g.
7.	Panchakola churna/Trikadu churna	5 g.
8.	Dasapushpa swarasa	Q. S
9.	Coconut milk	Q. S
10.	Water	Q. S
11.	Jaggery	Q. S
12.	Saindhava lavana	For taste

2.2. Method of Preparation

Take adequate quantity of water and boil with 10 g of bala churna/dasamoola churna. Then, add 100 g of shashtikashali and 10 g of mudga (green gram) to it after proper washing. Continue the boiling by adding jeera, medhika, Chandrasoora, and Panchakola Churna. When the rice is cooked well, add the dasapushpa swarasa, coconut milk, and jaggery in sufficient quantity. Lastly, add the saindhava for taste, in accordance with the preparation.

2.3. Time of Administration

This porridge should be consumed fresh and lukewarm on all days of Karkkidaka or for 7, 14, or 21 days continuously, as per one's need. This should be consumed either the morning after an oil bath or in the evening as dinner, or at both times if possible. However, it must be consumed for a minimum of seven days in a row [3].

It is best to avoid tea, coffee, oily foods, and non-vegetarian foods while taking this kanji to avoid deterioration of digestive fire and to reap the most benefits.

3. Result and Discussion

The most commonly used ingredients for the preparation, along with their actions, are tabulated below (Table 2).

Table 2. Ingredients and action [2].

Sl. No.	Ingredients	Botanical Name	Action
1.	Shashtika shali	<i>Oryza sativa</i>	Antioxidant, Antidiabetic
2.	Mudga (green gram)	<i>Vigna radiata</i>	Antioxidant, Antimicrobial, Anti-inflammatory, Anti-diabetic, Anti-hypertensive, anti-tumor
3.	Chandrasoora	<i>Lepidium sativum</i>	Antioxidant, Antimicrobial, Anti-inflammatory
4.	Jeeraka	<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>	Antioxidant, Antimicrobial, Anti-inflammatory, Insecticidal, Analgesic
5.	Medhika	<i>Trigonella foenum graceum</i>	Antioxidant, Anti-inflammatory, Anticarcinogenic, Antinociceptive, Antidiabetic
6.	Panchakola churna	Pippali— <i>Piper longum</i> Pippalimoola— <i>Piper longum</i> root Chavya— <i>Piper chaba</i> Chitraka— <i>Plumbago xylanica</i> Nagara— <i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Antioxidant, Antimicrobial, Anti-inflammatory
7.	Dasamula churna/Balamula churna	Bala— <i>Sida cordifolia</i>	Antioxidant, Antimicrobial, Anti-inflammatory, Analgesic
8.	Dasapushpa	* Sahadevi— <i>Vernonia cinerea</i>	Antioxidant, Cytoprotective, Neuroprotective
		* Akhukarni— <i>Emilia sonchifolia</i>	Antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, Analgesic
		* Vishnukrantha— <i>Evolvulus alsinoides</i>	Antioxidant, Antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, nootropic
		* Bhringaraja— <i>Eclipta alba</i>	Antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, Hepatoprotective
		* Indravalli— <i>Cardiospermum halicacabum</i>	Antioxidant, antiarthritic
		* Lakshmana— <i>Ipomea sepiaria</i>	Antifungal, anticancer, Antidiabetic
		* Musali— <i>Curculigo orchoides</i>	Antioxidant, hepatoprotective, anticancer
		* Viparitalajalu— <i>Biophytum sensitivum</i>	Antioxidant, antipyretic, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory
		* Bhadra— <i>Aerva lanata</i>	Antimicrobial, antidiabetic
		* Durva— <i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Antioxidant, Immuno-modulator, Hepatoprotective

The above-mentioned ingredients are generally used for the preparation of Karkkidaka kanji in Kerala. However, it may vary as per the local availability of the drugs. Nowadays, so many industries are marketing the “karkkidaka kanji koottu”, named medicinal kit, in which the ingredients vary depending on the industry. However, in all types of Karkkidaka kanji, the most common ingredients are rice, pulses, medhika, ajamodha, jeeraka, dasapushpa, and coconut milk.

4. Conclusions

This study provides an insight into the rationale of “karkkidaka kanji.” The analysis of the ingredients and their properties showed that this preparation is an example of ritucharya (seasonal regimen), modified as per desa (place) and satmya (homologation).

The assemblage of herbs and other ingredients in Karkkidaka kanji make it a tasty and healthy meal. This has a special effect in preventing monsoon fevers and is best for

rheumatic disorders, which are on the rise during the monsoon. It is ideal for increasing the strength and immunity of the body, as well as acting as a detoxifying agent.

Author Contributions: K.M. is the main author. A.M. and R.N.V. were supervised and provided suitable suggestions throughout the work. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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