

## **KARKIDAKA KANJI – An integral part of Monsoon Regime**

*Karkidakam*, the Malayalam month falls between mid-July and mid-August and coincides with the monsoons in Kerala. Kerala monsoon is famous for its heavy torrential rainfall with thunderstorms and wind. The season makes the earth cool and dry after the scorching summer heat. The *Shareerabala* (general strength of the body) and *Jataragnibala* (capacity of digestion) gets decreased during this season. Owing to this and also due to the increased moisture in the atmosphere, body will be prone to diseases such as fever, cough, cold, etc and water borne diseases will also emerge during this season. Unhealthy food habits and improper activities during this time lead to the imbalance of *Doshas* and thereby making the body susceptible to diseases.

*Karkidaka Kanji* (rice porridge prepared with various medicines) is a recipe that is traditionally used by Keralites during the *Karkidaka* season to maintain the digestive activity and to strengthen the body. *Karkidaka Kanji* or *Marunnu Kanji* is a special porridge medicated with *Vatasamaka* (medicines which alleviate *Vata*) and *Deepaneeya* (medicines which stimulate the digestion) drugs. The *Kanji* is considered the simplest way for a seasonal rejuvenation and aids digestion, improves immunity and prevents the common ailments of the rainy season. This porridge is usually taken continuously throughout the month and people of all age group benefits from this.

As this is a conventional practice, there are no strict guidelines regarding the recipe of *Karkidaka Kanji*. There are local variations across the state. Based on the general health, body constitution, digestive capacity and any disease condition, the ingredients like *Moringa* (*Moringa oleifera* Lam.) leaves, green-gram, *Punarnava* (*Boerhavia diffusa* L.) etc. can be added to the basic recipe given below.

### **Ingredients:**

*Shashtika Shali* (Red rice)-100 gms, *Chandrashoora* (Garden cress)-10 gm, *Dashapushpa Choorna*-10 gm, *Trikatu Choorna*-5 gm, *Dashamoola Choorna*-10 gm, *Dhanyaka* (coriander)-5 gm, *Ajamoda* (*Ajwain*)-5 gm, *Methika* (Fenugreek)-5 gm, *Jeeraka* (Cumin)-5 gm, coconut milk jaggery and water in sufficient quantity may be used.

*Dashamoola* – *Bilwa* (*Aegle marmelos* L.), *Agnimantha* (*Clerodendrum phlomidis* L.f.), *Shyonaka* (*Oroxylum indicum* L.), *Patala* (*Stereospermum saveolens* Roxb.), *Gambhari*

(*Gmelina arborea* Roxb.), *Gokshura* (*Tribulus terrestris* L.), *Brihati* (*Solanum indicum* L.), *Kantakari* (*Solanum surattense* Burm.), *Shaliparni* (*Desmodium gangeticum* L.) and *Prishniparni* (*Uraria picta* Jacq.)

**Dashapushpa** –*Viparitalajjalu* (*Biophytum candolleanum* Wight.), *Bhadra* (*Aerva lanata* L.), *Sakralata* (*Cardiospermum halicacabum* L.), *Lakshmana* (*Ipomea serpiaria* Roxb.), *Sahadevi* (*Vernonia cineria* L.), *Durva* (*Cynodon dactylon* L.), *Musali* (*Curculigo orchioides* Gaertn.), *Vishnukranti* (*Evolvulus alsinoides* L.), *Bhringaraja* (*Eclipta alba* L.) and *Sasasruti* (*Emilia sonchifolia* DC.)

**Method of preparation:**

*Dasamoola Kashaya* is prepared first by boiling 10 gm of powder in 4 glasses of water and reducing it to 1 glass. The *Kashaya* is then filtered well. Add 100 gms of *shashtika* rice (previously soaked for 5 hours) and continue boiling by adding *Jeeraka*, *Trikatu choorna*, *Methika*, *Ajamoda*, *Chandrasoora* and *Dhanyaka*. Once the rice gets cooked, add sufficient quantity of coconut milk and jaggery. Take this porridge at least once daily throughout the month. In conventional practice, this porridge is taken in the early morning after *Abhyanga Snana*. (oil application and hot water bath).

**Dr. Meghna P.P.**

**Email id:** drmeghanapp@gmail.com