

Review



Thiruvizha Chardi: A traditional emetic practice in the management of Gara Visha (Cumulative Toxicity)

[¹Krishna Priya G, ²Vijay Bhaskar. S](#)

ABSTRACT:

The world recognizes the potential of the Traditional system of medicine when the conventional system of medicine alone cannot meet the needs of society and the trend is moving forward to a holistic approach to health care. Traditional systems of medicine have solutions for various problems existing in the current scenario. Bio-purification is a unique treatment modality that Ayurveda put forward under the term *Panchakarma*. In ancient times, the *Gara Visha* (cumulative toxicity) was used as a unique technique to endanger the lives of eminent persons by their enemies. In the current scenario, human beings are subjected to cumulative poisoning through the accumulation of certain heavy metals and chemical molecules, which are entering the human system through cosmetics, polluted air, contaminated food, water, etc. The inability of such chemicals to pass through the normal excretory pathway leads to the accumulation of toxins. The presence of such toxic substances in the human system is proved to be the causative factor for many disease manifestations encountered by the human species. This review article aims to highlight the relevance of the traditional emetic called *Thiruvizha Chardi* which has been performed in a temple in Kerala for many years in the management of *Garavisha*.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Traditional medicine, Cumulative toxicity, Detoxification, *Garavisha*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional medicine (TM) is one of the oldest medical systems utilized for the prevention and treatment of both physical and mental disorders. Traditional medicine is described as the collection of numerous therapeutic approaches used to address a wide range of health and life-threatening ailments. It is based on the knowledge, skills, and practices based on the theories, beliefs, and experiences indigenous to different cultures. [1]

TM, also known as complementary or ethnic medicine, plays a major role in providing basic healthcare support to societies in many Asian countries like Korea, China, Japan, and India. [2]

Gara Visha (cumulative toxicity) explained in Ayurveda is a type of *Samyogaja Visha* (artificial toxin prepared by a combination of various toxic and non-toxic substances) which negatively affect the body by vitiating *Doshas*, *Dhatus* (tissues), and *Srotas* (channels). [3] People who are habituated to adulterated food (food added with preservatives artificial colouring, and taste enhancers), incompatible food, fruits, and vegetables treated with pesticides will share the similar clinical features as that of *Gara Visha* (cumulative toxicity).

Thiruvizha Chardi is an age-old traditional emetic practice in the Thiruvizha Mahadeva temple (Near Alleppey, Kerala, India). This is closely linked with the '*Sadyovamana*', one of the *panchakarma* procedures explained for the elimination of *Gara Visha* (cumulative toxicity). This traditional practice clearly explains the role of *Sadyovamana* and *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* in the management of *Garavisha* (cumulative toxicity). The importance and relevance of *Thiruvizha Chardi* in *Gara*

Visha (Cumulative toxicity) have been evaluated, elaborated on, and discussed in this fundamental research article.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aims :

To critically analyze, document, and explore the ethnomedical practice *Thiruvizha Chardi* and its rationality in the management of *Gara visha* (Cumulative toxicity).

Objectives :

To understand the background of *Thiruvizha Chardi* and to explore the methodology adopted in the conduct of the procedure.

To explain the utility of *Thiruvizha Chardi* in the management of *Garavisha* using the principles of *Sadyovamana*.

3. METHODOLOGY

Materials referred for collecting the details about the procedure are documentary film [4], ancient Malayalam literature works like *Aithihyamala* (written in 1909) [5], and *Mahakshetrangalude Mumbil* [6] were reviewed. Reference for the drug used for the *Thiruvizha chardi* was taken from the proceedings of the 4th International Congress of Ethnobiology held at Lucknow, India.

Review of literature

Gara Visha and cumulative toxicity

With the worldwide dissemination of radioactive elements, pesticides, industrial chemicals, and heavy metals [7] the surroundings have become increasingly toxic. Bioaccumulation of these toxins through the food chain causes harmful effects on human health [8], including cancer, infertility, congenital anomalies,

metabolic syndrome, and diseases affecting the central nervous system. Combinations of toxins produce synergistic effects [9] that can be more potent than those of individual toxins.

Charaka Samhita mentions *Gara Visha* (cumulative toxicity) as *Kalantaravipaki*, i.e., the mild potent nature of *Gara Visha* (cumulative toxicity) is incapable of producing any immediate signs and symptoms; however, in the long run, it will accumulate in the body, leading to the manifestation of *Visha Lakshana*. [10] *Gara Visha* (cumulative toxicity) will present differently in different individuals as *Pandu* (pallor skin), *Karshya* (emaciation), Poor digestion, *Udara roga* (diseases of the abdomen), Oedema on hands and feet, fever, *Grahani Roga* (GI disorders), and psychological disturbances in the form of abnormal dreams. [11]

Practice of *Thiruvizha Chardi*

Thiruvizha Mahadeva temple is situated in the Alleppey district of Kerala and is said to build in the 14th century. The temple belongs to Thalakkat Family and they started the practice of *Thiruvizha chardi*. *Kalakandha*, the incarnation of Lord Shiva who drank *Hala Hala Visha* to protect the whole world is the deity of worship in this temple. The subject who wishes to undergo the procedure is made to stay in the temple to attend the previous day's rituals and served with food, which is given as offerings to the deity. On the day of the procedure, the subject is instructed to wake up early in the morning and take a bath. After that, the subject will attend a special ritual called *Pantheeradi Pooja* (the ritual conducted when the sun produces a shadow length of up to 12 steps). The subject is served with

juice of *Lindernia crustacea* (Scrophulariaceae) [12], which is pounded and mixed with milk in a copper cup. After the intake of medicine, the person is advised to drink tepid water and do *pradakshina* (walking around the premises of the temple). While doing this, the person will start to vomit, and in between the subject is advised to drink tepid water and the process of vomiting will continue till the subject feels lightness of body. Once the *Vegas* (episodes of vomiting) stops, porridge made of milk and rice is given when the subject gets appetite. This will help the patient to overcome the tiredness caused by the procedure.

Relevance of *Sadyovamana* in *Gara Visha* The primary management of Diseases caused by *Gara Visha* (cumulative toxicity) is *Shodhana Chikitsa* (Elimination therapy) by inducing *Vamana karma* (emesis). [13] *Sadyovamana* helps in the immediate elimination of vitiated contents through the oral route. It is the instant therapeutic emesis conducted without any prior *poorva karma* (preparation therapy) since the *Doshas* are in the *Utklishta Avastha* (aggravated stage) in *Amashaya* (upper part of the GI Tract). [14] Also *acharya Charaka* has mentioned *Vamana* in the *Sthavara Visha Chikitsa*. [15] Since *Snehana* (internal oleation) is contraindicated in *Gara Visha* and in a state of *Uchrita kapha* (accumulated *Kapha dosha*) *Sadyovamana* is the only treatment option.

Role of *daivavyapashraya chikitsa* in *gara visha*

The origin of folk traditional medicine in the land of Kerala is believed to have a history of 3000 years. In those periods, the practice of medicine is integrated with spirituality and *Poojadi karma* (offerings to the

deity). Diseases such as *kushta* (skin diseases), *unmada*, *madatyaya*, etc. which are not getting cured with medicines have considered *Gara visha* (cumulative toxicity) as the causative factor. Performing the *sodhana* (bio-purificatory) procedures in religious places, integrating *daivavyapashraya* will be more effective. The procedures under *daivavyapashraya chikitsa* act by its *prabhava* (enigmatic action) [16] and have *adrushta Phala*, i.e., their effects cannot be explained based on *Karya Karana Siddhanta* (cause and effect theory). The mode of action of *daivavyapashraya chikitsa* is beyond the purview of reasoning.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Thiruvizha chardi focuses on managing a wide spectrum of diseases caused by *gara visha*. *Garavisha* entering the human body causes the vitiation of *doshas*, which further alters the normal function of *agni* to form *Ama dosha*. *Ama dosha* formed inside the body clogs microcirculation and acts as inflammatory cytokines. [17] Adulterated foods, and various forms of *viruddha ahara* (incompatible food) can influence the composition and activity of the gut microbiome, which in turn interacts with the immune system, potentially leading to inflammatory conditions.] Gut microbes in a state of dysbiosis can activate immune cells in the gut wall, which causes the release of proinflammatory cytokines. [18] *Lindernia crustacea* used for *Thiruvizha chardi* has significant antipyretic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and analgesic activity. [19] *Sadyovamana* with *Lindernia crustacea* expels the systemic toxins also limits the inflammatory process, which may be the reason for the action of *Thiruvizha chardi* in *Gara visha*.

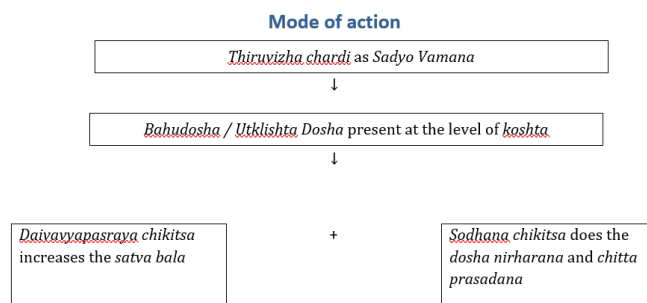


Figure 1: Mode of Action of *Thiruvizha chardi*

5. CONCLUSION

Ethnomedical practices like *Thiruvizha chardi* represent the richness and uniqueness of the traditional system of medicine. Such practice should be preserved and validated in terms of scientific standards that will give a new perspective on the management of non-communicable diseases. The limitation of this review article is the lack of supportive evidence, including the data of patients who had undergone the procedure with their chief complaints and the outcome of the procedure; therefore, the safety and effectiveness of the *Thiruvizha Chardi* cannot be established. Traditional practices like *Thiruvizha chardi* needs to be scientifically validated for their potential in the management of *Gara visha*, and the same knowledge needs to be preserved, which will be the lead for further research studies.

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