ABSTRACT
Takra (Buttermilk) is a dietary product and is being used by Ayurveda from centuries. Takra is a product obtained by curd (fermented product of milk). In Ayurveda the usefulness of Takra is mentioned in many topics like Arsha (Piles), Udara (Asities), Grahanidosha (Swelling) etc. Along with this Ayurveda also mentioned the importance of Takra in disturbed condition of Agni (Digestive Fire). Takra acts as Tridoshashamak by means of its different Gunas (Properties). Takra is a product obtained by curd (fermented product of milk). In Ayurveda the usefulness of Takra is mentioned in many topics like Arsha (Piles), Udara (Asities), Grahanidosha (Swelling) etc. Along with this Ayurveda also mentioned the importance of Takra in disturbed condition of Agni (Digestive Fire). Takra acts as Tridoshashamak by means of its different Gunas (Properties). Takra is light for digestion hence is preferable in patients suffering from the diseases having Mandagni (Low digestive fire). Due to these specialty Takra remains a key component while thinking about the medicine and dietary supplementations for the patients of Agni Vikruti (abnormal conditions of digestive fire).

KEY WORDS: Takra, Buttermilk, Arsha, Udara, Grahanidosha, etc.

INTRODUCTION
Takra (Buttermilk) is a dietary product & is being used by many people around the world by centuries. Many kinds of buttermilk preparation methods are available in the world. In the areas of Indian subcontinent the buttermilk is known as Traditional Buttermilk. In these areas buttermilk is prepared from curd. In Ayurveda Buttermilk is commonly known as Takra. In the compendiums of Ayurveda it is mentioned that Takra is very useful in the digestive problems and the diseases associated with the digestion. In the compendiums like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita & Ashtanga Hridayam (commonly known as Bruhattrayan) the usefulness of Takra is mentioned in the diseases like that of Grahanidosha (Swelling), Udara (Asities), Arsha (Piles) etc.

Ayurveda states importance of Agni (Digestive Fire) through its treatises to keep healthy status of the body in a healthy condition. Agni, if disturbed, can create many kinds of disorders as listed above. It is interesting to see how Takra acts as primary digestive aid in the diseases associated with the Agni. Takra can also be used as a Pathya Ahar (Beneficial diet) to maintain healthy status of the body. In this article the efforts has been taken to rule out the importance of Takra (Buttermilk) from Charak Samhita. Charak Samhita is a very important treatise of Ayurveda which is supposed to be upmost in the branch of medicine. In Charak Samhita Takra is mentioned in Agyrag Dravyas (the most preferable dravya in its group). Takra by means of its different Gunas (properties) acts as Tridoshashamak (it decreases kapha, vata and do not allow pitta to aggravate). Due to this specific property it is very useful in the patients suffering from Agni Vikruti (abnormal conditions of digestive fire) having different kinds of Dasha Dushti (abnormal conditions of Dosa) and having different kinds of Prakuti (Constitution). Hence Takra is an important component in treating the patients suffering from the diseases related with Agni.

Vedic References of Takra
Ayurveda also mentioned the usefulness of Takra (Buttermilk) in its treatises. In Vaidyakya Subhashit Sahityam it is mentioned that God in the Heaven got immortality due to a pious drink (Amrut) & the humans have Takra (Buttermilk) on the Earth to be immortal. It is also mentioned that Takra (Buttermilk) is hard to get for Shakra (The King of God – Indra). Importance of Takra (Buttermilk)
Charaka Samhita mainly underlines the importance of Takra (Buttermilk) by various quotes. Charak mentioned that Takra (Buttermilk) is very useful in following conditions

1. Shotha (Swelling)
2. Grahanidosha (Sprue), Mutragraha (Difficulty in Micturation), Udara (Ascites), Aruchi (Anorexia), Snehvyapad (Complication due to overuse of oily substances), Garavisha (Low Potency Poison)

In Udara (Ascites) Charak mentioned that Takra (Buttermilk) is very useful in following conditions

- Gaurav (Heaviness in the body)
- Arochak (Anorexia)
- Mandagni (Low Digestive Fire)
- Atisaar (Diarrhea)
- Vata-Kapha pradhan vyadhi.

In Arsha (Piles) topic the usefulness of Takra (Buttermilk) is mentioned in Vata – Kaphapradhan (Aggravated conditions of Vata & kapha) Arsha. Further He stated that there is no other medicine on Vata-Kapha pradhan Arsha as that of Takra (Buttermilk). Takra should be used in two forms –

- Sasneha Takra (Buttermilk with cream)
- Ruksha Takra (Buttermilk without cream).

On the basis of the cream content Acharya divided Takra (Buttermilk) in three different categories as

- RukshaTakra (Buttermilk) – Udhrutasneha – Buttermilk without cream.
- Eashatsinghda Takra (Buttermilk) – Ardhodhrutasneha – Takra (Buttermilk) with half removed cream.
- SnigdhaTakra (Buttermilk) – Anudhruta Takra (Buttermilk) with cream.
Charak stated that Takra (Buttermilk) can be used in three different manners on Dosha & Agni conditions.
- Kapha↑, Bala↓, Agni↓ = Ruksha Takra (Buttermilk)
- Pitta↓, Bala↓, Agni↓ = Slightly Snigdha Takra (Buttermilk)
- Vata↑, Bala↑, Agni↓ = Snigdha Takra (Buttermilk)

Usefulness of Takra
The specialty of Takra(Buttermilk) is not limited With Udara (Ascites) & Arsha (Piles), but it has been proved a great importance in Grahani dosha (Sprue) also. Grahani dosha (Sprue) is a condition related with Agni Vikriti. In this condition Takra (Buttermilk) is useful by means of its 1.
- Deepan (stimulates the power of digestion),
- Grahi &
- Laghavatva property (lightness in the body).

Takra (Buttermilk) acts as Tridoshghna by means of its different Guna 2.
- It is useful in Pittodosa by – Madhur (Sweet) Vipaka.
- It is useful in Kapha Dosha by- Kashaya rasa (Astringent Taste), Ushna Virya (Hot Potency), Vikasita (Relives stiffness & causes looseness of joints) & Ruksha Guna (Dry Property).
- It is useful in Vata by – Madhura & Amla Rasa (Sweet & Sour Taste), Snigdha Guna.

Time period of Takra Consumption (Takra sevan Kal)
Acharya Charak also underlines the fact of time period for Takra Sevana 8 (Buttermilk consumption). They mentioned that one should indulge in Takra Sevana (Buttermilk consumption) for 7 days, 10 days, 15 days, & 30 days only. They also warned not to overuse Takra(Buttermilk) after 30 days. In these 30 days Takra (Buttermilk) Sevana Kal, one should carry out the pattern of Takra Sevana (Buttermilk consumption) in increasing & decreasing order (Utkrsha & Apakarsha). The importance of observing the time period of Takra Sevana (Buttermilk consumption) is, it preserves the increased power,
- Strengthens the power of Vata Dosha,
- Maintains Bala (strength) &
- Varna (maintains the color of skin) 9.

Acharya mentioned Takra (Buttermilk) as useful treatment in the patients of Ashtodara. They also mentioned to use Takra (Buttermilk) with various Dravyas in different kinds of Udara as: 10
- Nichayaja Udana – Trikatu + Kshara + Lavana + Takra(Buttermilk).
- Vataja Udana – Pippali + Lavana + Takra(Buttermilk).
- Pittaja Udra- Shankara + Madhuka + Takra(Buttermilk).
- Kaphaja Udra – Yavani + Saishdha + Ajaji + Trikatu + Takra(Buttermilk).
- Pleedhodara – Madhu + Taila + Vacha + Shunthi + Shathava + Kushtha + Saishdha + Takra(Buttermilk).
- Jalodara - Trikatu + Takra(Buttermilk).
- Badhhodara – Hapusha + Yavani + Ajaji + Saishdha + Takra(Buttermilk).
- Chhidrodara – Pippali + Kshaudra + Takra(Buttermilk).

Takarishtam
Kalpa prepared from Takra (Buttermilk) including various other ingredients is known as “Takarishtam”. Takarishtam is discussed in two different topics with different contains-
- Arshaadhisthara (Piles).
- Grahanidishaadhisthara (Sprue).

In Arsha (piles) topic usefulness of Takarishtam is mentioned as 11.
- Deepan (stimulates the power of digestion),
- Rochana (improves taste of mouth),
- Varnya (improves colour of skin),
- Kapha Vatamulomana (allows doshas to act in normal way),
- GudaShothnashak (removes the swelling of anal region),
- GudaKundunashak (removes the itching of anal region),
- AratiNashak (improves mental condition),
- BalaVardhana (increases power) 12.

In Grahanidisha topic importance of Takarishtam is mentioned as 12.
- Deepana (stimulates the power of digestion),
- Shothhara (decreases swelling),
- Gulmahara,
- Arshahara (acts on haemorrhoides),
- Kriminashak (removes worms),
- Mehishak (decreases diebetic condition),
- Udaranashak (acts on ascites).

OTHER IMPORTANCE OF TAKRA (BUTTERMILK)
- Takra (Buttermilk) is also used for Pachana (Digestive) & Grahi (Constitutive) in the form of Peya 13.
- Takra (Buttermilk) is also used in the complications of ghee & oil. 14
- Takra (Buttermilk) is also used in Sthaulya (obesity) Chikitsa in the form of Takarishtam 15.
- Takra (Buttermilk) is used in Pramehachikitsa along with Haritaki churna. 16
- Lastly AcharyaCharaka mentioned the importance of Takra (Buttermilk) in Agryadravyas as-

Regular use of Takra (Buttermilk) is useful in Grahanidisha, Shotha, Arsha & complication of Ghrta (ghee) consumption. 17

Buttermilk
Buttermilk is a liquid obtained by curd. According to the preparation method buttermilk is divided in two types.
- Traditional buttermilk
- Cultured buttermilk

Traditional buttermilk is the liquid which remains after churning the curd. That is the cream is removed from the butter and the end product is called as traditional buttermilk. The cultured buttermilk is a fermented dairy product which can be observed in the warm climate as like the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan etc.). In these areas unrefrigerated fresh milk sours quickly due the warm climate. The sour taste of buttermilk is due to lactic acid bacteria. Streptococcus lactis or Lactobacillus Bulgaricus, one of these two bacteria is responsible to create more tartness. The increased aceticity level of buttermilk is due to lactic acid which is produced by lactic acid bacteria by fermenting lactose (primary sugar of the milk). The pH of milk decreases due to increased aceticity level and casein (primary milk protein) precipitates causing clabbering and curdling of milk.

Nutritional Values of Takra (Buttermilk) 18,19,20
Buttermilk is rich source of Potassium, Calcium, Phosphorus, VitaminB12, & Riboflavin. Buttermilk is a good aid for those suffering from digestive problems.

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One cup of buttermilk contains 2.2 grams of fat & 99 calories, whereas whole milk contains 8.9 grams of fat & 157 calories (some brands may vary regarding the fat contents of buttermilk).

**Importance**

Vitamin B12 helps synthesize fatty & amino acids. It converts glucose of the body into the energy. B12 promotes nerve cell growth and also fights against stress and anemia. Potassium & calcium are supposed beneficial for bone health and nerve cell growth and also fights against stress and anemia. Buttermilk is rich in potassium, vitamin B-12, calcium, phosphorous and probiotics which help strengthen the digestive system and the immunity of the body. Thus buttermilk plays an important role in many conditions of the body.

**CONCLUSION**

Takra (Buttermilk) is very useful in the diseases associated with the AgniVikriti. By means of its Rasa (Taste), Virya (Acting Property), Vipaka (The Taste that emerges after digestion) & Guna (Property) acts as Tridosaghana. It is found very useful in Vata-KaphaPradhan conditions. Besides the usefulness of Takra (Buttermilk) in Granahi (Sprue), Arsha (Piles) & Udara (Asities) it is also useful in Sthaulya (Obesity), Prameha (Diabetes), Shotha (Swelling), complication of Ghrita (Ghee),Tail (Oil) & Garavisha (Low Potency Poison). Takra(Buttermilk) can be used as principal drug like Takrarishtam or along with various Dravyas or as a dietary product in the form of Pathya Ahara (Beneficial Diet). Nutritional Values also suggest that Takra (Buttermilk) also strengthen the immunity and helps to maintain the health by preventing diseases.

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