ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 12| Issue: 3| March2026|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2026: 8.753 || ISI Value: 1.188

NUTRITIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC DIMENSIONS OF *PAYASA* IN *AYURVEDA*: A REVIEW ON CLASSICAL *KRITANNA KALPANA*

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ABSTRACT

***Background**: Payasa (also referred to as Paramanna or Kshaireyi) is a premier milk-based preparation within Kritanna Kalpana (Ayurvedic dietetics). While commonly perceived as a traditional sweet, classical texts describe it as a potent therapeutic vehicle with diverse clinical applications ranging from nutritional support to the management of neurological and psychiatric disorders.*

***Objective**: This study aims to systematically review and document the various preparation methods, pharmacological properties, therapeutic indications, and dietary guidelines of Payasa as described in the Brihatrayi, Laghutrayi, and various Nighantus.*

***Methods**: A comprehensive literary search was conducted across classical Ayurvedic scriptures, including Sushruta Samhita, Bhavaprakasha, Kshema Kutuhala, Yogaratnakara, and Nighantus such as Kaiyadeva, Shodala, and Madanapala. Data regarding ingredients, processing techniques (Samskara), and clinical indications were extracted and categorized.*

***Results**: The review identified that while the base of Payasa is inherently Guru (heavy) and Brimhana (nourishing), its properties are significantly altered by specific ingredients. Notable variations include Eranda Phala Payasa for Gridhrasi (sciatica), Shatavari Payasa for ocular health (Timira), and Swethonmatta Payasa for Unmada (insanity). The study also highlights critical safety protocols, including the mandatory use of Sheeta Udaka (cold water) as Anupana to prevent Vidaha (burning sensation) and the contraindication of Payasa in Prameha (diabetes) and Vrana (wounds).*

***Conclusion**: Payasa represents a sophisticated integration of nutrition and therapeutics in Ayurveda. Understanding its specific formulations and contraindications is essential for Swasthavritta practitioners to utilize it effectively in lifestyle management and disease prevention. Further clinical research is warranted to validate the efficacy of specialized therapeutic Payasa preparations in contemporary medical practice.*

KEY WORDS: *Payasa, Paramanna, Kshaireyi, Kritanna Kalpana, Brimhana, Ahara, Swasthavritta*

INTRODUCTION

In the fundamental framework of *Ayurveda*, *Ahara* (diet) is recognized as the foremost pillar of *Trayopastambha* (the three supporting pillars of life), essential for the maintenance of *Dhatu Samya* (homeostasis). Within the specialized branch of *Swasthavritta*, the emphasis lies not only on the raw ingredients consumed but also on the methods of their processing, categorized under *Kritanna Kalpana* (study of prepared foods).

Payasa (also termed *Paramanna* or *Kshaireyi*) represents one of the most significant formulations in classical *Ayurvedic* dietetics. Traditionally defined as a milk-based cereal preparation, it is extensively described across the *Brihatrayi* and *Laghutrayi* for its profound *Brimhana* (nourishing) and *Balya* (strength-promoting) properties. While modern culinary perspectives often relegate *Payasa* to the status of a dessert, classical literature identifies it as a sophisticated therapeutic vehicle capable of addressing specific pathological states when processed with medicinal herbs (*Samskara*).

Despite its widespread traditional use, there is a lack of consolidated literary evidence regarding the diverse varieties and specific clinical indications of *Payasa* preparations. This article aims to systematically review the classical references of *Payasa*, exploring its preparation methodologies, pharmacological attributes, and its dual role as both a daily nutritional supplement and a targeted therapeutic intervention.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A literary search was conducted across classical texts, including *Sushruta Samhita, Bhavaprakasha, Kshema Kutuhala, Yogaratnakara,* and various *Nighantus* such as *Kaiyadeva, Shodala*, and *Madanapala Nighantu*.

Observations

1. General Method of Preparation of *Payasa*

The standard preparation involves cooking rice with milk. *Bhavaprakasha* suggests adding rice fried in ghee to half-boiled milk (*ardhapakva kshira*), followed by the addition of sugar and more ghee, heating until the rice is thoroughly cooked.[1] *Yogaratnakara* specifies using 1/8th part of rice to milk reduced to half through boiling (*ardhavshishta dugdha*), cooking it to a semi-solid consistency.[2]

2. General Properties and Indications

According to various *Acharyas, Payasa* generally possesses the following attributes:

- ✓ *Guna* (Qualities): *Guru* (heavy to digest) and *Snigdha* (unctuous).

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- ✓ *Karma* (Actions): *Brimhana* (nourishing), *Balya* (strength-promoting), *Vrishya* (aphrodisiac), and *Dhatupushtida* (strengthens tissues).
- ✓ *Dosha Karma* (Effect on Doshas): Generally alleviates *Vata* and *Pitta* but increases *Kapha*.
- ✓ Specific Indication: Frequently indicated for *Raktapitta* (bleeding disorders).

	***KN*[3]**	***BP*[1]**	***HS*[4]**	***Su*[5]**	***Sho. nig*[6]**	***Bho.Ku*[7]**	***Ksh.ku*[8]**	***Y.R*[2]**	***D.S*[9]**	***MN*[10]**
Syn	*Payasa, paramanna, Kshaireyi*	*Payasm, Paramannam*						*Payasa Paramannam*		*Paramannam Kshireyi*
Guna	*Guru*		*Guru*	*Guru*	*Guru*	*Guru*		*Guru*	*Guru*	*Guru*
Karma	*Rasayana Vishtambhi Ruchikarakam medovardhanam Sukrajanakam Balakarakam*	*Durjara brmhani balavardhini vishhtambhi Reduces agni*	*vishtambhi balya Vrshya Sreshta rasayanam*	*Vishtambhi Balya Medokara*	*Vishtambhi Medovardhanam Balakarakam*	*Durjara Balya Dhatupushtiprada Vishtambhi Reduces agni*	*Vishtambhi Balya Dhatupushtiprada*	*Durjara Balya Dhatupushtida Brimhanam Saram sukralam*	*Balya Medura*	*Durjara Balya Dhatupushtiprada Vishtambhi Trishnahara Reduces agni*
Doshakarma	*V hara K karam*	*PV hara*	*KV kara P hara*	*K kara*	*K kara*	*PV hara*		*P hara (madhura vipaka)*	*K kara*	*V hara*
Indications	*Raktapitta*	*Raktapitta*				*Raktapitta*	*Raktapitta*			*Raktapitta*

3. Specialized Classical *Payasa* Preparations

	Key ingredients	**Properties**	**Indications**
***Nalikera kshirika*[11]** *BP.-poorvakhanda-misraprakarana 12(kritanna varga)/15-16*	1.Grated kernal of coconut 2. *Kshira* 3. *Sarkara*(sugar) 4. *Ghrita*	*Rasa – madhura Guna - snigdha, sita, guru, Karma - ati pushtida, vrshya Doshakarma - anilapaha*	*Raktapitta*
***Sevika Payasa*[12]** *BP.-poorvakhanda-misraprakarana.12(kritanna varga)/17-19*[1]	Ingredients 1. *Sevika* 2. *Kshira* 3. *Ghrita* 4. *Sita*(sugar)	*Guna – Guru Karma - Tarpani , Balya, Grahi, Sandhikrt, Ruchya Doshakarma – PV hara*	
***Manaka payasam*[13]** *Chakradutta37(udara adhikaram)/57-58*	Ingredients 1. *Manakanda*(mature root)-1P 2. *Tandula*- 2P 3. *Kshira* 4. *Jala*		*Vatodara Grahani Pandu Shotha*
***Masha Payasam*[14]** *Cha.Da.67(vajikarana adhikara)/10*	1. *Masha*(black gram) 2. *Kshira* 3. *Ghrita*		*Vrshya(Uttamam)*
***Godhuma payasa*[15]** *YR.siddhannadipakaguna kadhanam*		*Guna- Guru, Sitalam Karma- Balyam Medakaram Sukravardhanam Doshakarma- P hara KV kara*	
***Sasirekha*[16]** *Ksh. Ku., 12 th utsava, shloka 39*	1. *Bhakta*(rice) 2. *Dugdha*(milk) 3. *Sarkara*(sugar)	*Guna- sitala, laghu Virya- sita Karma-balya pushtiprada,*	*Mahadaha*

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		ruchya *Doshakarma- VP hara*	
Rajapayasam[17] *Ksh.ku., 12 th utsava, shloka 3.*	1. *Tandula* 2.*Shyamaka*(barnyard millet) 3. *dugdha* 4. *ghrita* 5. *sarkara*		
Naranga kshirini[18] *Ksh.ku.12 th utsava, shloka 5-6*	1. *Naranga* 2. *Dugdha* 3. *Khanda* 4. *Ghrita* 5. *Ela*	*Guna- guru* *Karma- vishtambhi pachaka* *Doshakarma- VP hara*	
Eranda phala payasa[19] *Cha.Da. 22/ 49*	1. *Eranda bija* 2. *Sunthi* 3. *Kshira*		1. *Gridhrasi* 2. *Katishoola*
Swethonmatta payasa[20] *(SY.5kshirapakayoga prakaranam)*	1. *Sveta dattura mula* 2. *Kshira* 3. *Guda* 4. *Ghrita*		All *Doshaja Unmada*

The classics describe unique variations using different primary ingredients:

- ***Nalikera* (Coconut) *Payasa*:** Grated coconut boiled with milk, sugar, and ghee. It is highly nourishing and indicated for *Raktapitta*.
- ***Sevika* (Vermicelli) *Payasa*:** Prepared with wheat vermicelli, it acts as *Tarpani* (satiating) and *Grahi* (absorbent).
- ***Manaka Payasa*:** Mature roots of *Manakanda* are pounded, mixed with rice, and cooked with milk and water. It is used in managing *Vatodara, Grahani,* and *Pandu.*
- ***Eranda Phala Payasa*:** Prepared with castor seeds and Sunthi (dry ginger), this is a therapeutic preparation for *Gridhrasi* (sciatica) and *Katishoola* (lower back pain).
- ***Swethonmatta Payasa*:** Processed with *Sveta Dattura* root, indicated for all types of *Unmada* (insanity).

4. Clinical Context and Therapeutic Utility of *Payasa* in *Ayurveda*

- ✓ ***Vatavyadhi* (Neurological Disorders):** For patients with *Gridhrasi* (sciatica) and *Katishoola* (lower back pain), specialized *Payasa* prepared with *Eranda bija* (castor seeds) and *Sunthi* (dry ginger) is highly effective .[19,21]
- ✓ ***Atyagni* (Hyper-metabolism):** In conditions of excessive hunger or *Atyagni*, *Payasa* is indicated to be eaten repeatedly (*Asakrt*) to mitigate *Pitta* due to its heavy and cooling nature.[22,23]
- ✓ ***Vajikarana* (Aphrodisiac Therapy):** A potent *Vrshya* preparation involves cooking *Masha* (black gram) and *Shashtika* rice in the juice of *Shvadamstra* and *Vidari* with milk.[24]
- ✓ ***Netra Roga* (Ophthalmology):** For *Timira* (vision loss), specific diets include *Shatavari Payasa* or *Amalaki Payasa* taken cold with honey and sugar in the morning.[25]
- ✓ **Psychological Health:** *Swethonmatta Payasa*, processed with the root of *Sveta Dattura*, is traditionally used in the management of various types of *Unmada* (insanity).
- ✓ **External Therapy:** It is not only internal; *Payasa* processed with *Vatahara* drugs can be used as a *Snigdha Upanaha* (warm poultice) for pain relief in *Vatarakta.*[26]

5. Dietary Considerations and Contraindications

➢ ***Payasa* as *Apathya* (Contraindications)**

- *Prameha* (Diabetes): *Payasa* is listed as a primary *Nidana* (causative factor) for *Prameha* and should be strictly avoided.[27]
- *Vrana* (Wounds): It is considered *Apathya* in wound management as it causes *Dosha-sanjananam* (aggravation of *Doshas*) and *Puya-vardhanam* (increased pus formation).[28]
- *Pradara*: It is also listed as a causative factor in *Yonivyapat* conditions like *Pradara*.[29]

➢ ***Payasa* In the context of *Viruddhahara* (Incompatible Combinations)**

Combining *Payasa* with certain substances can lead to toxicity or skin diseases:

- It should never be consumed simultaneously with *Sura* (alcohol) or *Krishara* (rice and lentil mix). According to *Bhavaprakasha* and *Bhojana Kutuhalam*, the mixture of *Payasa* and *Krishara* is specifically mentioned as *Samyoga Viruddha*.[30]

➢ ***Anupana* (Post-Meal Adjuvant)**

Because *Payasa* is considered *Guru* (heavy to digest), it can lead to *Vidaha* (burning indigestion or acid reflux) if not managed correctly. To counter these specific properties, the classical texts prescribe a mandatory *Anupana*.

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- ***Sheeta Udaka* (Cold Water):** This is the specified *Anupana* specifically after consuming milk-based preparations like *Payasa*. *Acharya Dalhana*, in his commentary on the *Sushruta Samhita*, clarifies that *Sheeta Udaka* helps to mitigate the *Vidaha* caused by the heavy nature of the dish.[31] According to *Dravyaguna Sangraha*, the cold potency (*Sheeta Virya*) of the water balances the potential for heat and acidity (*Vidaha*) that arises during the digestion of concentrated milk and sugar, ensuring a smooth transformation of the food *(Aahara Parinama).*[32]

DISCUSSION

The systematic review of classical *Ayurvedic* literature reveals that *Payasa* (also referred to as *Paramanna* or *Kshaireyi*) is far more than a conventional sweet dish; it is a sophisticated therapeutic vehicle within *Kritaanna Kalpana*. The diversity in preparation methods—ranging from the simple milk-rice combination to complex medicated formulations—underscores the *Ayurvedic* principle of *Sanskaro hi gunantaradhanam* (processing alters the inherent properties of substances).

A key finding of this review is the functional versatility of *Payasa*. While its primary nature is *Guru* (heavy), *Snigdha* (unctuous), and *Brimhana* (nourishing), the addition of specific ingredients pivots its clinical utility. For instance, the use of *Eranda Phala* transforms it into a treatment for *Vatavyadhi* (neurological pains), while *Manaka* root allows it to be used in metabolic conditions like *Udara* and *Pandu*. This demonstrates a targeted approach to dietetics where the base medium (milk and cereal) provides the necessary nutrition (*Balya*), while the active medicaments address the underlying pathology.

From a *Swasthavritta* perspective, the strict guidelines regarding *Anupana* and *Viruddhara* are crucial. In the context of *Payasa*, the mandatory prescription of *Sheeta Udaka* (cold water) serves as a functional measure to counteract the *Vidahi* (causing burning/acidity) and *Guru* (heavy) nature of dense milk solids and sugars. By adhering to the *Dalhana* commentary, we see that the adjuvant is not just a beverage but a therapeutic intervention designed to ensure that a highly nutritious (but heavy) food like *Payasa* is fully assimilated without causing internal distress.

Furthermore, the contraindication of *Payasa* in *Prameha* (Diabetes) and *Vrana* (Wounds) serves as a preventive strategy to avoid *Kleda* (moisture/sludge) accumulation in the body, which can exacerbate these conditions.

Modern nutritional science is beginning to validate these traditional insights. Recent research, such as the formulation of *Payasa* with germinated buckwheat milk, shows that traditional recipes can be successfully adapted to enhance antioxidant activity and sensory acceptability.[33] Such innovations bridge the gap between ancient wisdom and contemporary nutritional requirements, offering nutrient-dense options for managing malnutrition and age-related debility.

CONCLUSION

This review highlights the profound importance of *Payasa* in both preventive and curative *Ayurveda*. It is established as a premier *Brimhana* (nutritive) preparation that, when used with proper *Anupana* and in the absence of *Viruddha* (incompatibility), serves as an excellent source of strength and vitality.

The clinical significance of specialized varieties like *Shatavari Payasa* for ocular health and *Swethonmatta Payasa* for psychiatric conditions warrants further exploration through clinical trials. It is evident that reviving these classical preparations can provide a natural, food-based approach to health promotion. Incorporating these traditional culinary pharmacology concepts into modern dietetics can lead to a more holistic management of lifestyle disorders and nutritional deficiencies.

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