



Review Article

KUKKUTA (CHICKEN) IN AYURVEDA LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda *Samithas* directly or indirectly touch upon each dimension of human life. The leads of every science connected to health can be traced in Ayurveda. *Ahara Dravyas* explained by *Acharays* plays an important role in prevention and curation of diseases. Meat of various animals and birds are mentioned with their nutritive and therapeutic values under the sub class of *Mamsa varga*. *Kukkuta* is one such bird belonging under *Vikshira varga*. Among many birds, the instances of *Kukkuta* (Chicken) outplay the importance of others birds. Chickens are the important source of meat and egg which greatly benefits human population with its high nutritive profile. *Kukkuta* and its eggs are not only used for its food values but also recommended for therapeutic values in various diseases, formulations and in as *Pathya-apathya* in Ayurveda. As the information on *Kukkuta* is scattered, the present article compiles, analyses and discuss the utility of *Kukkuta* in detail.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a holistic science having principle of *Swastasya Swastya Rakshanam* and *Aturasya vikara prashamana*. To maintain *Swastya* (health) and to combat disease, *Dravya* plays a pivotal role. A classification and explanation of *Dravya* is mentioned broadly under two categories as *Dravadravya Varga* and *Anna dravya varga* under which several food articles are explained. Meat of animals and birds are mentioned with their nutritive and therapeutic values under the sub class of *Mamsa varga* (Sub class of meat). Birds serve as source of food in the form of meat and egg, it is easy to digest when compared to meat of other animals. Various bird's meat with their nutritive attributes have been explained in the classics. *Kukkuta* is one such bird having high therapeutic profile with a greater number of references in the classics and it belongs to the sub class *Vikshira*.

Chicken is one of the most commonly widespread domestic animals which often scratch at soil to search for seed, insects etc.

Vikshira are a group of birds which are named so based on their method of collection of food. Many references pertaining to chicken are found in the classics, folklore, Ayurveda and Vedas. The information on *Kukkuta* and its usages are scattered in the Ayurveda, as the bird serves as a source of food as well as medicine, a need arises to explore ancient usage of such birds. Thus, an effort is made to collect the information on *Kukkuta* systematically, analyze and present it.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Literary review of classical texts namely *Charaka Samitha*, *Sushruta Samitha* and various *Nigantus* and research updates, books and articles published related to nutrition, meat, chicken etc.

Kukkuta

Synonyms of the Bird *Kukkuta*

Kukavaaku, Tamrachuda, Charnaayudha, Kaalajhna, Niyodha, Vishkira, Nakaraayudha, Tamrashikhi, Daksha, Yamanaadi, Shikhandika, Jatadhara, Raatriveda, Ushakara etc are various synonyms mentioned to the word *Kukkuta* in *Amarakosha*.

Classification

Ayurveda *Samithas* have placed *Kukkuta* under *Vikshira varga*. The birds which disperse food before taking are known as *Vikshira* (gallinaceous).

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Types of Kukkuta

Two types of *Kukkuta* are explained in classics are *Gramya* (domesticated) And *Vanya* (wild variety).

Properties of Kukkuta Mamsa [1]

Meat of *Vanya Kukkuta* attributes such as *Snigda* (unctuous), *Ushna veerya* (hot in potency), mitigates *Vata dosha*, *Vrushya* (aphrodisiac), induces

sweating, strengthens the voice and does *Brimhana* (stoutness the body).

Gramya Kukkuta is Guru (heavy for digestion) in nature, cures diseases of *Vata dosha*, *Kshaya* (consumption), *Vami* (vomiting) and *Vishama jwara* (intermittent fever).

Table 1: Guna karmas of Kukkuta Mamsa acc to various Niganthus[2-5]

<i>Nigantu</i>	<i>Brimhana</i>	<i>Balya</i>	<i>Chaksusya</i>	<i>Shukrkrut/ Vrushya</i>	<i>Swedana</i>	<i>Swara Indriya Dardyakrut</i>
<i>Kaiyyadeva Nigantu</i>	+	+	+	+	+	-
<i>Madanaphaala Nigantu</i>	+	-	+	+	-	-
<i>Dhanvantharu Nigantu</i>	+	+	-	+	-	+
<i>Bhavaprakasha Nigantu</i>	+	+	+	+	-	-

+Mean present, -Mean absent

Chicken

Chicken is one of the most common and widespread domestic animals which is a subspecies of red junglefowl. There is more chicken in the world than any other bird. There are numerous references to Chicken in folklore, Ayurveda and Indian culture. Chicken are omnivores in the wild, they often scratch at soil and search for seeds, insects and small animals. Chicken is the most common type of poultry in the world owing to its relative ease and low cost of raising in comparison to others. Chicken is reared as a source of meat and eggs.

Meat of Chicken

Chicken are the important source of meat and eggs. The human population benefits greatly from poultry meat and eggs, which provide relevant quantities of essential nutrients at higher concentrations like high-quality protein, and a low level of fat with a desirable fatty acid profile when compared with other foods. Despite the fact that current particular farming techniques, have been found to alter some compositional elements of meat, such as the quality of meat and nutrients level depend on the diet of animal or genetic pattern.[6] The level of minerals, in particular iron, in poultry meat makes them suitable for even the most advanced stages of growth, such as adolescence.[7] The low quantity of collagen in poultry meat is a positive feature as it reduces the digestibility of meat. Large quantities of collagen protein in muscle meat are linked to a lower percentage of digested product per unit of time. Meat contributes to fats, especially saturated ones. Fat offers 'essential fatty acids' such as linoleic and alpha-linolenic acids and lipophilic vitamins like A, D, E, and

K when taken in sufficient amounts. It also serves as a primary source of energy. Glycogen is a carbohydrate found naturally in meat muscle. Meat is an excellent source of the majority of nutrients like the high contents of hydrophilic vitamins, mineral content combined with a low-fat content composed of unsaturated fatty acids and being best source of dietary vitamin B12, meats can be optimally incorporated into the diet at all ages.[8]

Kukkuta in Ayurveda

The bird Chicken is *Kukkuta*. In Ayurveda the bird *Kukkuta* is extensively used for its food values as well as therapeutic values. *Vasa* (muscle fat) of *Kukkuta* is said to be superior among muscle fats of *Vikshira* birds.[9] Meat of *Kukkuta* is best *Balya dravya* (strengthening).[10] The concept of *Viruddha ahara* (incompatible food articles) and its ill effects are dealt detailed in *Susrutha Samitha*, which are to be avoided to maintain health. While explaining *Samyoga virudha*; the article which should not be combined together and taken- intake of *Kukkuta Mamsa* along with vegetables of *Nadibhanga* leaves and curd is prohibited.[11] Meat soup of *Kukkuta* cures the diseases of seminal passage.[12] *Kukkuta* meat is extensively used as one of the ingredients in profuse *Vrishya yogas* like *Vrishya rasa yoga*, *Vrishya pupalikadi yoga*.^[13] *Kukkuta Mamsa* boiled with *Nygroda Kashaya* is used in *Vatholbana Raktapitta* associated with *Vibanda*.^[14] *Kukkuta Mamsa* is indicated in treatment of *Vataja Gulma*.^[15] *Kukkuta Chataka* (sap of the eggs) is one of the ingredients in *Satavaryadi Sneha Basti* which is an excellent *Rasayana*.^[16]

Apart from *Kukkuta Mamsa* (meat of Chicken) *Kukkutanda twak* (shell of egg) are used in several therapeutic formulations indicated for different actions like *Avasadana* (removal of extra growth of muscle on wound),^[17] *Pratisarana/Savranakarana*; procedure to restore the normal colour of the skin of wound. For *Savranakarana* procedure-Equal quantity of *Kukkutanda kapala* (shell of egg), along with other drugs are powdered and macerated in cows urine, and the paste is applied and massaged gently.^[18] *Kukkutanda twak* is used as one of the ingredients in various formulations of collyrium like *Lekhyanjana*, *Bhadrodaya Anjana*, *Anjana in Vataja timira*, *Shukavati varti*, *Dristiprada varti* which are used for treating several eye disorders.^[19-21] *Tamrachuda rasa*: Chicken fat and oil are useful for *Uttara Basti* (urethral douche) in *Mutraghata*.^[22] *Kukkuta Mamsa* is used as the *Sweda janana dravya*, drugs which induces sweating.^[23] *Kukkuta vasa* (fat of chicken meat) is used for *Karna purana*^[24] and *Kukkuta Mamsa pinda sweda* is indicated for treating *Karna shola* (otalgia).^[25]

Some miscellaneous uses of various parts of *Kukkuta* is also documented in classics like in the condition of *Arshas*, *Kukkuta shakrud* (faecal matter) along with *Pippali*, *Citraka*, *Syamaka*, *Kinva*, *Madana Tandula*, *Haridra* made into paste and applied externally as *Pralepa*.^[26] Fumigation of feathers of *Kukkuta* is given to the area of insect bites, destroys the poison of scorpion.^[27] Seeds of *Prapunnaada*, *Kustha* and *Yastimadhu* together are macerated with ghee and this paste should be given as food to a white coloured domestic cock which has been purposely starved for a day and half and is very hungry. The excreta of said, then be collected, made into paste and applied on the affected patches of *Switra* (leucoderma). This cures *Switra* within a month.^[28]

Chicken egg

Egg is an encapsulated source of macro and micronutrients that meet all requirements to support embryonic development until hatching. Egg is one of source of food and the most commonly consumed eggs are chicken eggs. Chicken's eggs are of interest from a view of nutritional point, as source of essential lipids, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and trace elements. It represents the lowest-cost animal source for proteins, vitamin A, iron, vitamin B12, riboflavin, choline and the second lowest-cost source for zinc and calcium.^[29] In addition to providing well-balanced nutrients for infants and adults, egg contains a myriad of biologically active components.^[30-32]

Properties of *Kukkutanda* (Chicken egg)^[33]

Properties of Chicken egg are well explained in Ayurveda classics. It is *Agnikrut* (ignites digestive fire), *Brimhana* (nourishing), *Balavardana* (increases strength), *Ruchya* (increases taste perceptions), *Kanti*

kara (increases complexion), *Vrushya* (aphrodisiac), *Stoulyakrut* helps to gain weight.

CONCLUSION

There is a thin line that separates food from medicine. According to Acharya Charaka, *Ahara* is *Rasa pradhana* whereas *Aushadha* is *Veerya pradhana*. Therefore, many food substances have medicinal values too. *Kukkuta* and its egg which is widely used as food, no doubt has nutritive values and Acharyas have recommended it in various disease conditions like *Raktapitta*, *Vataja gulma*, *Akshi vikaras* (eye disorders) and *Karna rogas* (ear disorders). *Kukkuta Mamsa* and *Kukkuta anda* and its *Kapala* (egg and its shell) are used in formulations of profuse *Vrushya yogas*, *Rasayana Basti* like *Shataveeryadi basti* and collyriums. Based on *Guna-karma* of *Kukkuta Mamsa* it is also indicated as *Pathya-Apathya* in many disorders. *Kukkuta* with its high nutritive values profile along with therapeutic attributes makes its usage ideal for preventive as well as curative purposes in several health conditions.

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