

REVIEW ARTICLE

Conceptual Analysis of *Vicharchika* W.S.R. to Eczema: An Overview

Narayan Sahu^{1*}, Sarita Mohanta², P. K. Panda³, Utkalini Nayak⁴, Sushmirekha Panda⁵

¹PG Scholar, Department of Rognidan Evum Vikriti Vigyana, Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Balangir, Odisha, India.

²Professor and Head, Department of Rognidan Evum Vikriti Vigyana, Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Balangir, Odisha, India.

³Dean, Department of Rognidan Evum Vikriti Vigyana, SSCAS and RH, Sri Sri University, Cuttack, Odisha, India.

⁴Reader and Head, Department of Rognidan Evum Vikriti Vigyana, Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Balangir, Odisha, India.

⁵PG Scholar, All India Institute of Medical Science, Bibinagar, Hyderabad, Telangana, India

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: In the *Ayurvedic* texts, all the skin disorders are included under the *Kushtaroga*. Which is further classified into two divisions, that is, *Mahakushta* and *Kshudrakushta*, *Vicharchika* is one among them. *Vicharchika* is stated as a *Kshudra-Kushta* and *Sadhya Kushta* by all *acharya*, but *Kushta* is one among *Ashta Mahagada*. Hence, it is difficult to cure. *Vicharchika* can be seen at any age but frequently seen in young age due to exposure to occupational, environmental factors, and mental stress. Junk food, irregular eating, repressing natural desires, using cosmetics and other chemicals, a polluted environment, a demanding existence, and emotional disorders all unquestionably play a significant role in the emergence of *Vicharchika* nowadays.

Materials and Methods: From the *Brihatrayi* and its commentaries, the *Laghatrayi*, and other *Ayurvedic* texts, information regarding the *Vicharchika* (Eczema) was obtained.

Results: According to all *Acharyas*, *kustha* is *tridoshaja* and *Rakta pradoshaja vikara*. In all *kushtaroga*, the vitiation of *Rakta* and *pitta* is mentioned; hence, it is called *Raktapradoshaja vikara*. *Vicharchika* is one of the chronic skin diseases that have been mentioned in all *Ayurvedic* texts under *Kshudra kustha*.

Conclusion: In the contemporary view of *Vicharchika*, it can be included as eczema. Long period of treatment in the form of suppressive and symptomatic (topical and systemic) is necessary in both therapies. In *Ayurved kustha* and *Kshudra Kustha* are broad concepts with pointed principle of management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Skin is the mirror image of body and mind, which is also the largest organ of our body; it reflects physical, mental, and psychological state of an individual. Skin not only covers and protects the body but also performs some functions of excretion and metabolism.^[1] *Ayurveda* has discussed all the skin diseases under the umbrella of *Kushta*, in other word, it can be listed as “*Ayurvedic dermatology*.” *Kushta* is one among *Ashtamahagada* also. It is a type of *kshudra kustha* and *Sadhya Kushta* by all *acharya* and it is characterized by symptoms, namely, *Kandu*, *Srava*, *Pidika*, and *Shyavavarna*, also it is included under *Rakta pradoshaja Vikara* with dominance of *kapha*. Hence, all *Kushta* are having *tridoshaja* origin so, *Vicharchika* can be said in the same way, that is, *Kapha* is responsible for

Kandu, *Pitta* is responsible for *Srava* and *Shyava* that indicate the presence of *Vata*. Despite its *Tridosha* origin, various *Acharyas* mentioned different dominancy in *Vicharchika*, that is, *Kapha*, *Pitta*, and *Vata-pitta Pradhana* which also suggests specific symptom complexes. The clinical presentation of *Vicharchika* is similar to eczema in modern dermatology. Because of a fast-paced lifestyle, industrial and occupational hazards, frequent use of chemical additives, etc., skin conditions like eczema thrive, especially in developing nations. Skin diseases produce a lot more social handicaps since people are afraid to touch them, it is forbidden, and they lose their attractiveness and personalities, which puts them under pressure. Eczema (also called atopic dermatitis) is characterized by dry itchy skin with areas of poorly demarcated erythema and scale. Pruritus, erythema, edema, papules, vesicles, and oozing in the acute phase whereas itching, scaling, dryness, hyperpigmented and lichenified (thickened), and excoriations (scratch marks) are frequently seen in the chronic phase.^[2] Environmental or genetic factors seem to play an important role in the manifestation of *Vicharchika*. By purging vitiated *dosha* and balancing the *Dosha* and

Corresponding Author:

Narayan Sahu,
PG Scholar, Department of Rognidan Evum Vikriti Vigyana,
Government Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Balangir, Odisha, India
Email: narayanbams@gmail.com

Dhatu, Ayurveda provides treatment for the root of *Vicharchika*. *Sodhana, Shamana, and Rasayana* therapy makes up the mainstay of *Ayurveda's* treatment for this illness.

2. ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD *VICHARCHIKA*

The word *Vicharchika* is derived from *sanskrit* origin “*charch adhyane*” using the prefix “*Vee*” to it. The word *adhyane* has two syllables “*Adhi*” which means “above” and “*ayane*” means to spread out.

2.1. Classical Definition of *Vicharchika*

According to *Acharya Charaka*, it is a skin ailment wherein eruptions over the skin appear with dark pigmentation, itching, and with a profuse discharge.^[3] *Maharshi Sushruta* described that *vicharchika* is a condition in which the skin has linear rough lesions with intense itching and pain but when the same itching, burning, and pain are experienced in the feet alone, it is termed as “*vipadika*.” *Acharya Vagbhatta* narrated that the blackish eruptions with intense itching and watery discharge, that is, *Lasikadhya*, are referred to as *vicharchika*.^[4] The *Bhela samhita* has mentioned the exact site of the lesion (*Dhatugatva*), that is, blackish-red deep-rooted lesions, that is, *Mamseropachita* accompanied with oozing is called *vicharchika*. According to *Acharya Kashyapa*, *vicharchika* is blackish-brown pustular eruptions with intense itching and pain having special symptoms such as *Vrana and Paka*. *Acharya Harita* described that multiple pinhead-sized eruptions with ulceration and itching are called *vicharchika*. From the above discussion, it seems that the *charaka* has described a wet type of *vicharchika* while *sushruta* has given the description of a dry type of *Vicharchika*.^[5]

2.2. *Nidana* of *Vicharchika*

The etiological factors of *vicharchika* vary with different authors because the dominant *dosha* according to *Sushruta* is *Pitta*, whereas *Charaka* and *Vagbhatta* accept the dominance of *kapha*. However, according to *Charaka*, the *kushtha* is never caused by any one of the single *doshas*.^[6] Because of *sapta dravyas sangraha* (*vata, pitta, kapha and twak, rakta, mamsa, and ambu*), 18 types of *kushthas* are produced. Hence, the etiological factors of *kushthas* are to be accepted as the etiological factors of *vicharchika*. Hence, the *nidanas* of *vicharchika* may be classified into three groups: (1) *Aharaj*, (2) *Viharaj*, and (3) *Acharaj*.

2.3. *Aaharaj Nidana*

2.3.1. *Mithya ahara*

Intake of *chilchimi* fish with milk, intake of *mulaka* and *lasuna* with *ksheera*, use of *mulaka* with *guda*, excessive use of alcohol with milk, intake of food mostly containing *yavaka, uddalaka* along with *ksheera, dadhi, and takra, kola, kulatha, masha, atasi, kusumbha, and sneha*, continuous intake of *gramya, audaka, and anupa mamsa* with *ksheera*, use of fish, citrus and milk together, excessive use of *navanna, dadhi, matsya, amla, and lavana*, excessive use of *tila, ksheera, and guda*, excessive oleation, continuous and excessive use of *madhu, phanita*, intake of food during indigestion, *asatmya ahara, adhyashana*, and intake of polluted water.

2.4. *Viharaj Nidan*

2.4.1. *Mithya vihara*

To do physical exercise and to take sunbath after heavy meals, to perform sexual intercourse during indigestion, to do exercise or to perform sexual intercourse after *snehapana* and *vamana*, sudden

changes from cold to heat or heat to cold without judiciously following the rules of gradual changes, entering into cold water immediately after one is affected with fear, exhaustion, and sunlight.

2.4.2. *Vega-Vidharana*

Suppression of the urge of emesis, withholding of the natural urges, that is, *Mutra and purisha vega*, etc. are the *viharaja nidana* of *vicharchika*.

2.4.3. *Panchakarm apacharana*

Panchkarmani kriyamani nishida sevanam and improper administration of *snehapana* therapy also create problem.

2.5. *Aacharaj Nidan*

Persons, acts insulting to *bramhanas, guru*, and other respectable indulgence in sinful activities, and use of money or material acquired by unfair means are the causes of *aharaja nidana*.^[5]

2.6. *Purvarupa* of *Vicharchika*

There is no illustration regarding the premonitory sign and symptoms of *vicharchika* in the text, but as it is classified as one of the *kshudra kushtha roga*, so one can take the premonitory syndrome of the *kushtha vyadhi* to that of *vicharchika*. They are *asweda, swedadhikya, atislakshnata, vaivarnyata, toda, suptata, paridaha/Daha, pariharsha, ushmayana, gaurava, shwayathu, and visarpa*na.

2.7. *Rupa* of *Vicharchika*^[4,7-10]

Rupa, that is, signs and symptoms of *Vicharchika*, as stated by different *Acharyas* can be summarized in the following Table 1.

These symptoms are being discussed here in brief:

- *Kandu*: *Kandu* is produced by the vitiated *Kapha dosha*. It is the chief symptom of *Vicharchika* and also can be felt as a *Purvarupa* of *Kushtha*. It is a condition of severe itching and is the most distressful symptom in the patient of *Vicharchika*.
- *Pidika*: “*Peedayati Iti Pidika*,” that is, which creates the *Pida* (Pain). In *Charaka Sutra*, it has been explained that when the vitiated *Pitta* gets accumulated in *Twacha* and *Rakta* creates inflammation and redness then it is known as *Pidika*.
- *BahuSrava*: *Srava* means discharge, flowing, streaming (M. Monier Williams). *Acharya Charaka* has used the adjective “*Bahu*” meaning “profuse discharge.” Regarding the pathology of *Bahusrava* vitiated *Pitta* and *Kapha* is responsible as per *Charaka* while vitiated *Pitta* is responsible as per *Madhukosha*. *Vagbhatta* has used the word *Lasikadhya* and *Indu* in his *Shashilekha* commentary defines it as “*Jalaprayah*” meaning the nature of the discharge resembles to that of water. Contrary to other *Acharyas*, *Sushruta* has mentioned the “*Rukshata*” (dryness) in *Vicharchika*. It seems if the *Vata* is dominant, the lesion will be dry, while in the dominance of *Kapha* or *Pitta*, it will be wet.
- *Shyava*: *Shyava* means dark brown or dark colored. This is the characteristic feature of the lesions of *Vicharchika*, mentioned by all *Acharyas* except *Sushruta*. It is due to vitiated *Vata*.
- *Raji*: It means lining which may develop due to thickening of the lesion, which indicates dry type of *Vicharchika*, *Sushruta* has described this symptom. *Dalhana* explained it as *Rekha*, means linings. Scratching may produce linear markings. *Raji* is caused by vitiated *Vata*.
- *Ruja*: *Vata* is the whole and sole factor responsible for *ruja*. *Sushruta* and *Kashyapa* have mentioned this symptom. *Ruja* means *Vedana*, that is, pain or irritation to the patient due to chronic nature of the disease.

- *Rukshata*: *Rukshata* is the cardinal symptom of *Vata*. It means dryness (not smooth/soft), disagreeable hard, and rough. *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned it. This symptom is due to vitiated *Vata*.
- *Rakta*: *Rakta* means redness in the lesion. It is produced by the vitiated *Pitta*. This symptom has been mentioned in *Bhela Samhita*. In *Kashyapa Samhita*, instead of *Rakta*, the word “*Lohita*” has been used.
- *Praklinna*: *Praklinna* means “with more wetness-more Kleda,” due to continuous discharge the lesion becomes wet. This sign is mentioned only in *Bhela Samhita*, caused by vitiated *Kapha* and *Pitta*.
- *Vrana*: It means a wound, ulcer, and crack. This symptom has been mentioned in *Kashyapa Samhita*. *Vrana* means ulcerated lesion. Because of scratching *Vrana* may be created. This is due to vitiated *Pitta*.
- *Paka*: *Paka avastha* may take place due to infection and purulent discharge. This symptom has been mentioned in *Kashyapa Samhita*. *Paka* is caused by vitiated *Pitta*.

2.8. Samprapti of Vicharchika

In classics, there is no individual description regarding the *samprapti* of *vicharchika*. However, being a variety of *kushtha*, the common *samprapti* of *kushtha* should be considered.^[11] By various causative factors as mentioned in *kushtha nidana*, all the three doshas are simultaneously provoked, the four *dushyas* (*twak*, *mansa*, *rakta*, and *lasika*) thin out or lose their tone. In these deranged *four dushyas*, the provoked *doshas* get located. This causes them to become vitiated and so the *kushtha* or the skin disease is produced. According to *Acharya Charak* and *Vagbhata kapha pradhan*, *tridosha* gets vitiated whereas *Acharya Sushruta pitta pradhan tridosha* vitiated.^[12]

According to *Charaka Samhita* due to various *Nidana Sevana*, *Tridosha* gets vitiated simultaneously and produces *shaitihya* in the *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, and *Ambu*. Then, *Tridosha* gets seated in *Shithila Dhatu* and vitiates them with *Lakshanotpatti* of *Kustha Roga*.^[13]

2.9. Samprapti Ghatka

- *Doshas*: *Tridosha*
- *Dushya*: *Twak*, *Rakta*, *Mansa*, and *Lasika(ambu)*
- *Srotas*: *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *mansa*, and *Udakavaha*
- *Agni*: *Jatharagni* and *Dhatwagnimandya*
- *Srotodusti*: *Sang* and *vimargagamana*
- *Sanchara*: *Tiryaga sira*
- *Adhishтана*: *Twaka*
- *Rogamarga*: *Bahya*
- *Swabhava*: *Chirkari*
- Each of *Samprapti Ghataks* can be described as follows –
- *Dosha*: *Kapha (Ch.) Pitta (Su.) Pradhana*.

Regarding the predominant *dosha*, *Acharyas* hold a different of opinion according to *Acharya Charaka*, *Vagbhata*, *Sharangadhara*, and *Bhavaprakash*, *Vicharchika* is a *Kapha Pradhana Vyadhi* whereas *Sushruta* says as *Pitta Pradhana* and *Madhava* describes as *Vata Pittaja*. Among commentators, *Dalhana* states *Pitta* and *Arunadatta*, *Indu*, and *Shrikanthadutta Kapha* predominance. From the above discussion, it is clear that most of the *Acharyas* have accepted *Vicharchika* to be a *Kapha* dominant disease.^[14]

2.9.1. Dushya

Twak, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, and *Ambu* are four responsible constituents for *Vicharchika*. *Acharya Charaka* in *Nidana Sthana* has postulated that when the four *Dushyas* are vitiated by three provoked *Doshas*.

- *Twak – Twacha* is the *Indriya adhisthana* of *Sparshnendriya* which has *Vata* predominance. Hence, its vitiation causes symptoms such as *Kandu*, *Rukshata*, and *Vedana*.
- *Rakta – Acharya Charaka* shows the vitiation of *Rakta* producing edema, redness, *Shyavata*, that is, *Vaivarnya* and *Kandu* as *Shonitaja Vikara*.
- *Mamsa* – If pathology is not stopped in time, *Dosha* provokes deeper *Dhatu* like *Mamsa dusti*. *Mamsa dusti* produces *Toda*, *Sphota*, *Karkashata*, *Pidika*, etc.
- *Ambu – Acharya Charaka* has mentioned *Vicharchika* as *Bahusravayukta* whereas *Vagbhata* mentioned *Vicharchika* as *Lasikadhya*. *Srava*, *Praklinna*, *Lasikadhya*, etc are the result of *Ambu dusti*.

2.9.2. Srotas and Srotadusti

Srotas are the channels of transportation throughout the body. Here in, *Vicharchika*, *Rasavaha*, *Raktavaha*, *Mansavaha*, and *Udakavaha Srotas* are vitiated. *Lakshanas* of *Bahusrava* and *Raukshyam* are due to *Rasavaha Srotodusti*. *Kandu* and *Sthiratwam* are due to *Mansavaha Srotodusti*. In this disease, two types of *Srotodusti* are observed, that is, “*Sanga*” and “*Vimarga-gamana*” of *Dosha* from *Koshta* to *Shakha*. *Amavisha* accumulates with *Doshas* and *Dhatu* and creates the “*Sanga*” where the *Kha-vaigunya* is present.

2.9.3. Ama and Agni

Mithya ahara, *Ahita ahara*, and *Viruddha ahara* are the main important causative factors of the disease. They cause vitiation of *Jatharagni* results into formation of *Ama* and *Amavisha*. *Jatharagnimandya* and *Dhatvagnimandya* produce *Ama*. *Ama* thus produced along with *pradhana Dosha Dushti* plays a key role in the pathogenesis of *Vicharchika*.

- *Udbhava Sthana* – Initial *Dosha Sanchaya* occurs in *Amashaya*
- *Sanchara* – Provoked *Vata* carries *Prakupita Pitta* and *Kapha* to the *Bahyamarga*.
- *Adhishтана* – *Twak-Shakha* is the *adhishтана* of *Vicharchika*.

2.10. Pathya and Apathya in the Vicharchika

Pathya: The list of “*Pathya*” for *Vicharchika* is given in Table 2 below.

2.11. Apathya

The list of “*Apathya*” for *Vicharchika* is given in Table 3 below.

3. DISCUSSION

In the contemporary view of *Vicharchika*, it can be included as eczema. It is possible to classify it as eczema under the modern interpretation of *Vicharchika*. Eczema, sometimes referred to as atopic dermatitis, is a common chronic skin disorder that, if left untreated, can result in recurring infections and low quality of life. This activity discusses the diagnosis and treatment of eczema and emphasizes the value of interprofessional teams in enhancing patient outcomes. Eczema patients have a malfunctioning barrier that contributes to a number of issues. For healthy skin hydration, the cells that make up our skin are crucial. Dry skin is a common symptom of eczema due to the breakdown of the skin barrier. Dehydrated skin results from the skin’s increased ability to lose water. In addition, those who have eczema are more prone to illness. The malfunction allows harmful chemicals to more easily infiltrate the skin. Atopic dermatitis patients frequently have an abnormally inflammatory immune response and their skin is sensitive to allergens and odors. Atopic dermatitis affects about 2–10% of adults and 15–30% of children during the course of their lifetimes.

About 60% of instances start to manifest within the 1st year of life. In contrast to metropolitan settings, atopic dermatitis is more prevalent in rural ones. Eczema may be influenced by environmental influences as well as hereditary causes. The majority of eczema patients have a chronic, relapsing disease course with sporadic flare-ups and periods of remission. As a result, managing the symptoms of persistent eczema remains difficult. According to all *Acharyas*, *kustha* is *tridoshaja* and *Rakta pradoshaja vikara*. In all *kustharoga*, the vitiation of *Rakta* and *pitta* mentioned; hence, it is called *Raktapradoshaja vikara*. *Vicharchika* is one of the chronic skin diseases that have been mentioned in all *Ayurvedic* texts under *Kshudra kustha*. It has also been considered as *Sadhya Kustha* by *Acharya Kashyapa*. *Acharya Charaka* considered *Vicharchika* as *Kapha* dominant disease because *Kandu*, *Shyava*, *Pidika*, and *Bahusrava* its acute stage whereas *Raji*, *Arti*, and *Saruksha* its chronic or later stage. *Mithya ahara*, *Ahita ahara*, and *Viruddha ahara* are the main important causative factors of the disease. They cause vitiation of *Jatharagni* results into formation of *Ama* and *Amavisha*. Among the disorders affecting the *Rasavaha*, *Raktavaha*, *Mamsavaha*, and *Swedvaha Srotas*, *Vicharchika* is an important disease due to its higher and widespread incidence, chronicity, and progression to grave condition in acute phase. In this disease, two types of *Srotodusti* are observed, that is, “*Sanga*” and “*Vimarga-gamana*” of *Dosha* from *Koshta* to *Shakha*. *Amavisha* accumulates with *Doshas* and *Dhatu*s and creates the “*Sanga*” where the *Kha-vaigunya* is present. *Vicharchika* reaches to be nearest term for Eczema, which is one of the skin disorders described by *Charaka*. These two approaches require for a long period of treatment in the form of suppressive and symptomatic (topical and systemic) medications. The recommended course of treatment for *Vicharchika* also includes *Pathya* and *Apathya* (diet). *Purification (Panchkarma)* is also described in classic text. It implies that Ayurvedic management will be a successful and well-tolerated treatment for skin conditions, including eczema.

4. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the present study, following conclusions can be drawn. (1) *Vicharchika* is stated as a *Kshudra-Kushtha* and *Sadhya Kushtha* by all *acharya*, also *Rakta pradoshaja vikara* being of *three dosha* with dominance of *kapha*. However, *Kushtha* is one among *Ashta Mahagada*. Hence, it is difficult to cure. *Vicharchika* is *Tridoshaja Kapha Pradhana Vyadhi* so humid, cold, and watery contact may aggravate symptoms of *Vicharchika*. (2) *Vicharchika* can be seen at any age but frequently seen in young age due to exposure to occupational, environmental factors, and mental stress. (3) Nowadays, fast food, irregularity in food taking, suppression of natural urges, uses of cosmetics and other chemicals, polluted environment, stressful life, and Emotional disturbances definitely play a major role in progression of *Vicharchika*. (4) *Mithya Ahara-Vihara*, *Ahita ahara vihara* especially *Navanna*, *Viruddhahara*, and *Vegavidharana* are the main causative factors of *agnimandya*. (5) Excessive intakes of *Santarpaka Nidana* cause *Amautpatti* and play an important role in manifestation of *Vicharchika*. The recommended course of treatment for *Vicharchika* also includes *Pathya* and *Apathya* (diet). In a classic literature, purification (*Panchkarma*) is also discussed. It implies that Ayurvedic management will be a successful and well-tolerated treatment for skin conditions, including eczema.

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6. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

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8. ETHICAL APPROVALS

This study does not require institutional ethical clearance number.

9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

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11. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for only for review purposes from principal investigators.

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Samprapti of *Vicharchika*

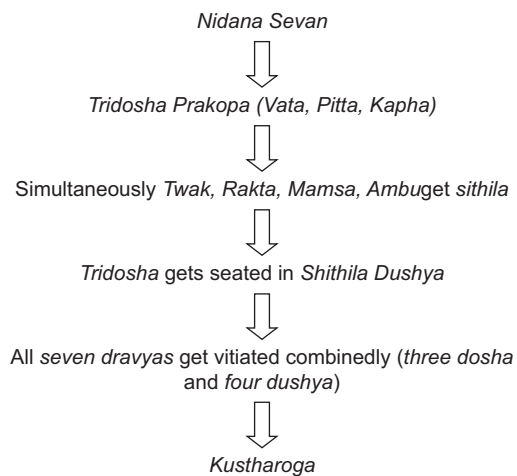


Table 1: *Rupa* of *Vicharchika*

S. No	Rupa	CS	SS	AH	AS	BS	KS	MN	BP
1.	<i>Kandu</i>	+	+	+	+			+	+
2.	<i>Pidika</i>	+		+	+			+	+
3.	<i>Shyava</i>	+		+	+			+	+
4.	<i>Srava</i>	+		+	+	+	+	+	+
5.	<i>Raji</i>		+			+			
6.	<i>Ruja</i>		+				+		
7.	<i>Rukshata</i>		+						
8.	<i>Rakta</i>					+	+		
9.	<i>Praklina</i>					+			
10.	<i>Vrana</i>						+		
11.	<i>Paka</i>						+		

Table 2: *Pathya*: The list of “*Pathya*” for *Vicharchika* (being a variety of *Kushtha*)^[15-18]

S. No.	Pathya	CS	SS	AH	BR
1.	<i>Laghu Anna</i>		+		+
2.	<i>Tikta Shaka</i>		+	+	+
3.	<i>Purana Dhanya</i>		+	+	
4.	<i>Jangala Mansa</i>		+	+	+
5.	<i>Shastic Shali, Yava, Godhuma, Uddalak</i>		+	+	+
6.	<i>Masura</i>			+	+
7.	<i>Ghrita</i>	+			+
8.	<i>Mudaga</i>	+		+	+
9.	<i>Triphala</i>	+	+	+	+
10.	<i>Bhallatak</i>	+	+	+	+
11.	<i>Nimba</i>	+		+	+
12.	<i>Patola</i>	+		+	+
13.	<i>Adhak</i>		+	+	+
14.	<i>Adhak</i>				+
15.	<i>Chitraka</i>	+	+	+	+
16.	<i>Parisheka Avagaha of Khadir</i>				
17.	<i>Brihati Phala</i>				+

Table 3: *Apathya*: The list of “*Apathya*” for *Vicharchika* (being a variety of *Kushtha*)

S. No.	Apathya	CS	SS	AH	BR
1.	<i>Guru Anna</i>	+			+
2.	<i>Dugdha</i>	+	+	+	+
3.	<i>Dadhi</i>	+	+	+	+
4.	<i>Amla Rasa</i>	+	+	+	+
5.	<i>Guda</i>	+	+	+	+
6.	<i>Tila</i>	+		+	+
7.	<i>Anupa Mansa</i>	+		+	+
8.	<i>Matsya</i>				
9.	<i>Mansa and Vasa</i>		+		
10.	<i>Taila</i>		+		
11.	<i>Masha</i>		+	+	+
12.	<i>Kulatha</i>		+		
13.	<i>Ikshu Vikara</i>		+		+
14.	<i>Mulaka</i>				+
15.	<i>Madhya</i>	+			+
16.	<i>Lavana</i>			+	+
17.	<i>Vidahi Anna</i>		+		+
18.	<i>Abhishyandi Anna</i>		+		
19.	<i>Vishtambhi Anna</i>				+
20.	<i>Maithuna</i>		+		+
21.	<i>Navana</i>				+