

REVIEW ARTICLE: CONCEPT OF SHAD RASA ACCORDING TOVARIOUS  
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## ABSTRACT

The word *Rasa* comprises different meanings as per classics. Among them, the one which is perceived through the tongue is known as *Rasa*, which is *Pradhana Rasa* ie primary taste or maintaste. Whereas that which is perceived after a small period of time called *Anu-Rasa*. The *Anu-Rasa* also called as *Uparasa* or secondary taste. *Ayurvedic* Interpretation of *Shad Rasa* (Six Tastes) is one among the consummate theories of this sage old wisdom. It has a comprehensive stretch and applicability in almost all dimensions of the science. This understanding regarding appreciation of each taste, their qualities, potentials and attributes remain unparalleled even when equated with the advanced and contemporary researches. Each among the *Shad Rasa* is explained in the classics with a set of *guna*, (attributes) and *Karma* (actions), origins, action of *rasa* on *tridosha*.

KEYWORDS – *Shad rasa, Uprasa, Anurasa, Guna, karma, rasanendriya, seasons.*

## INTRODUCTION

**Rasa Nirukti**

The word *rasa* means taste, but it also have other meanings like *rasadhatu, paradha* etc.

**"Rasyate aswadhyate rasanayaha rasanendriyena eti Rasa"**<sup>[1]</sup>

That means the particular sense object, which is perceived by the tongue, is called *rasa* or *guna*, which can be perceived by the *rasanendriya*, is called *rasa*.

**Nirukthi**

*Rasa* action occurs immediately after exposure to *Rasanendriya* (tongue). So, the first impression formed over the tongue by the substance, is the taste of the substance.

**Definition of Rasa**

*Rasa* is the special sense known through the *Rasna* or *Rasanendriya* (tongue or taste buds). Taste is the direct action of a drug on the nerve endings in the mucous membrane of the mouth.

**Shad Rasa Six Tastes**<sup>[2]</sup>

As per *Ashtanga Hridayam Sutrasthana* 1st chapter, *rasah svadvamlalavana tiktoṣaṇakaṣāyākāḥ |ṣad dravyāmāsrīaste ca yathapurvam balavahah* ||14

There are 6 types of tastes (*Rasa*) mentioned  
*Svadu / Madhura* – sweet  
*Amla* – Sour *Lavana* – Salt *Tikta* – Bitter  
*Ushna / Katu* – Pungent  
*Kashaya* - Astringent.

They are successively lower in energy. It means, Sweet taste imparts maximum energy to body and astringent, the least.

**Classification of Rasa**<sup>[3]</sup>

Depending upon the general behavior of *Ushna* (hot) and *sheeta* (cold) characters or depending upon their effect on *dosha's* or depending upon their effect on digestive process the *rasas* are mainly classified into 3 categories.

- 1) *Soumya* and *Agneya Rasas*
- 2) *Dosha prakopaka* and *Dosha Samakarasa's*
- 3) *Vidhani* and *Aridahi Rasas*

**➤ Soumya & Agneya Rasas**

(*Soumya*) - coolant - Sweet, bitter and astringent.  
(*Agneya*)- hot-pungent, sour and salt.

**➤ Dosha Prakopaka & Samaka Rasa**

(*Prakopaka*) - *Vata* – *katu, tikta, kasaya*.  
*Pitta* - *Katu, Amla, Lavana*.

*Kapha* - *Madhura, Amla Lavana*.

(*Shamak*) - *vata* - *Madhura*, *Amla Lavana* *Pitta* – *madhur, tikta, kasaya* *Kapha* - *katu, tikta, kasaya*.

### Characteristics of Rasa

Rasa	Mouth and tongue	Senses	Body	Chest and throat
Madhura	It smears	Pleases the senses	Pleases the body	—
AMLA	Stimulates and increases salivation	Causes contraction of eyes and eyebrows	Produces thrill even looking by it	Produces burning sensation
Lavana	Causes overflow	Produces appetite	—	Produces burning sensation
Katu	Produces irritation and burning sensation on mouth & tongue	Induces secretion from eyes and nose	Produces burning sensation	—
Tikta	Clears the mouth and tongue	Produces numbness in tongue	—	Cleanses throat
Kasaya	Produces numbness, heaviness of the tongue	—	—	Pain in chest region & choking sensation

### Pancha mahabhoota of Rasa<sup>[4]</sup>

Rasa	Relation with Pancha Mahabhootas
Madhura	Prithvi + jala
Amla	Prithvi + tejas
Lavana	Jala + tejas
Katu	Vayu + tejas
Tikta	Vayu + akash
kasaya	Vayu + prithvi

Regarding composition of *amla* and *lavana* rasas there is difference of opinion between *Charaka* and *Surshruta*, the composition given in above table proposed by *Charaka*. According to *Sushruta* *amla* is composed of *jala* and *tejas* and *lavana* is of *prithvi* and *tejas*.

### Rasa and its gunas (Ayurvedic properties)

Rasa	Guna (properties)
Madhura	Snigdha, sheeta, guru
Amla	Snigdha, usna, guru
Lavana	Snigdha, usna, guru
Katu	Ruksha, usna, guru
Tikta	Ruksha, sheeta, laghu
Kasaya	Ruksha, sheeta, laghu

### Action of Rasas on Doshas (Ayurvedic humors/energy)

The action of *rasas* on *doshas* is essential because *rasa* is one which has *gunas* (Ayurvedic properties) in it and which are favorable or unfavorable for the *dosha* and it will be mainly applicable in the treatment aspect because in *Ayurveda* we are treating only on basis of *doshas* by using different recipes. In this order rasas are used in treatment.

Dosha	Used in sequence		
	i.	ii.	iii.
Vata	Lavan	Amla	Madhura
Pitta	Tikta	Madhura	Kasaya
Kapha	Katu	Tikta	Kasaya

### The Perception of Rasas

According to Indian *Darshana shashtra* knowledge *rasa* can be acquired through three *Pramanasi*.e., *Pratyaksha*, *Anumana* and *Aptopadesha*. *Rasas* can be known through all these three modes of knowledge yet, direct demonstrable knowledge is more widely used. If the *dravya* comes in contact with the tongue then only the direct perception of *rasa* is possible. This is *rasana pratyaksha*. Some *rasa* can be perceivable by *Anumana* only like, *madhura rasa* of *Swarna*, *Rajata* and *Naga* (sweetness of gold, silver and lead), & *tikta rasa* of *Lauha* (bitter taste of iron) have all been ascertained through inference after carefully observing the effects of these *dravyas* on the *body*. Similarly *avyakta rasa* or *anurasa* has to be specially understood through *Aptopadesha*. And this knowledge is endorsed through *anumana pramana*. According to some, a general knowledge of *rasa* is obtained through *Pratyaksha*, *Anumana* provides specific knowledge, where *Aptopadesha* provides experimental knowledge.

### Anurasa

**Anurasa** - Sub taste.

The one which is directly perceived is called *rasa*, whereas some *rasas* which are not perceptible at first but it will found at the last, are called as *anurasa*.

### Characteristics of anurasa

- *Anurasa* is either unmanifested or is manifested in small proportion.
- *Anurasa* doesn't remain in *dravya* in its dry state. For eg. The sweet *anurasa* of *Pdry pippali* will not persist.

**Rasa and Anurasa difference**

<b>Rasa</b>	<b>Anurasa</b>
Is manifested	Either is non manifested or is manifested.
Remains intact even after dravya is dried	Doesn't remain intact after drying
Manifested at first	Manifested later or in end

**TASTE AND THEIR ORIGIN**

<b>Taste</b>	<b>Season of origion</b>
Sweet( <i>Madhura</i> )	<i>Hemanta</i> (early winter)
Salt( <i>Amla</i> )	<i>Varsha</i> (Rainy seasion)
Sour( <i>Lavana</i> )	<i>Sharath</i> (Autumn)
Pungent( <i>Katu</i> )	<i>Greeshma</i> (summer)
Bittar( <i>Tikta</i> )	<i>Shishra</i> (winter)
Astringent( <i>Kashaya</i> )	<i>Vasanta</i> (Spring)

**DISCUSSION**

All of the *Dravyas* are claimed to be made up of *Panchamahabhuta*, which are non-living entitiesthat join through permutation and combination through chemical reactions to form *Tridoshas*. These *Tridoshas* feature some fundamental chemical structures that lead to the dominating *Rasa*. As a result, the *Doshas* can only be comprehended through *Rasa*. For eg. when *Akasha Mhabhuta*is coupled with *Vayu Mahabhuta*, *Tikta* rasa is produced, which leads to *Vata Dosha*. The combination of *Vayu Mahabhuta* and *Agni Mahabhuta* generates *Katu Rasa*, which causes *Pitta dosha*. The *Agni Mahabhuta*, when joined with *Apa*, creates *Lavana Rasa*, which leads to *Kapha Dosha*. As a result, all three *Doshas* are created.

All of the preceding descriptions of employing *rasa* as medication and food are based on the *Ayurvedic* idea of *samanyvishesh sidhant*, which states that comparable and opposing qualities of drug or food material are used to keep the qualities present in the bodily elements (*Dosha* and *Dhatu*) at a normal level. This philosophy allows us to keep our bodies and minds in good health while also efficiently curing ailments.

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