

## THE CONCEPT OF RASAPANCHAKA – 5 QUALITIES OF DRAVYA

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, a science of well-being with its unique approaches of social and spiritual life is in practice since centuries in the Indian sub-continent. Approximately, five decades have been passed when it is getting global attention for health benefits of community with its basic principles of healing. New terminologies and different advanced preparations have evolved at the level of pharmaceuticals but the therapeutic effects of the Ayurveda are the same. As per Ayurveda these natural drugs consist of their own actions by the virtue of *Rasapanchaka* which are *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Veerya*, *Vipaka*, *Prabhava*. Here we have tried to explain the theme of the title.

**KEYWORDS:** *Dravya*, *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, *Prabhava*, *Rasapanchaka*.

## INTRODUCTION

The therapeutic approaches of Ayurveda science not only comprises scientific and practice based theories for healthy living but it also encompasses holistic ways of healthy regimen. Ayurveda described concepts of *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Veerya*, *Vipaka* and *Prabhava* through which pharmacokinetic, pharmacodynamic and toxicological effects of drug molecule could be understood. The word *Rasapanchaka* includes the five factors of *Dravya* (substance) that are:

*Rasa* – taste of the drug*Guna* – qualities or basic nature of the drug

Potency of the drug

*Vipaka*- taste conversion after digestion or bio-transformation of the drug*Prabhava* - special effect of the herb. Example: Brahmi is Medhya - brain tonic.Classification of *Rasapanchaka* and their action

- *Rasa*: “*Rasya ye aswadhyate rasanayaha rasendriyena eti Rasa*”<sup>[1]</sup> which means the particular sense or quality, which is perceived by the *Rasanendriya* / tongue, is called *Rasa*. *Rasa* are basically divided into six types based on its perception that is:
- *Madhura Rasa* (sweet taste) is *Snigdha* (oily/unctuous), *Sheeta* (cold), *Guru* (heavy) in nature.
- *Amla Rasa* (sour taste) is *Snigdha*, *Ushna* (hot) and *Guru* in nature.
- *Lavana Rasa* (salty taste) is *Snigdha*, *Ushna* and *Guru* in nature.
- *Katu Rasa* (pungent taste) is *Ruksha* (dry), *Ushna*,

*Laghu* (light) in nature.

- *Tikta Rasa* (bitter taste) is *Ruksha*, *Sheeta* and *Laghu* in nature.
- *Kashaya Rasa* (astringent taste) is *Ruksha*, *Sheeta*, *Laghu* in nature

**Action of *Rasa*:** The action of tastes is brought in accordance with *samanya vishesha siddhantha*. Similar *dravya* (substance)-*guna* (qualities)-*karma* increase similar *dravya* (substance)-*guna* (qualities)-*karma* and *dosha-dhathu-mala*. Whereas opposite *dravya* (substance), *guna* (qualities), *karma* bring about decrease. The mechanism belongs to the *dravya* (substance) having the particular *Rasa*. According to Indian *Darshana shashtra* knowledge *Rasa* can be acquired through three *Pramanas* i. e., *Pratyaksha*, *Anumana*, *Aptopadesha*. In general *Pratyaksha Pramana* provides general knowledge of taste, *Anumana Pramana* provides specific and hidden knowledge of taste and *Aptopadesha Pramana* provides experimental knowledge of taste.

Tastes can be known through all these three modes of knowledge. Yet, *Pratyaksha Pramana* is more widely used, if the *Dravya* (substance) comes in contact with the tongue then only the direct perception of *Rasa* is possible, this is *Rasana Pratyaksha*. Some *Rasas* can only be perceived by *Anumana Pramana* like, sweetness of gold, bitter taste of iron etc have all been ascertained through inference after carefully observing the effects of these *Dravyas* on the body. Similarly the knowledge of *Guna* (quality or property) is defined as that which is inherently existent in substance and is non-inherent cause

(of its effect).

## 2. Guna: "Samavayee ty nischesta karanam gunam".<sup>[2]</sup>

Guna is defined as the property which is inherently existent in substance and is non-inherent cause (of its effect). *Gunas* act as a medium for understanding the peculiarities of *Dravya*, it is an acceptable principle that every *Guna* has a definite action a single *Dravya* may have many *Gunas* and single specific *Guna* may be present in many *Dravyas*. *Gunas* are fourty one in number as described below:

- **Vaisheshika Guna:** these are 5 in numbers and are –
- Shabda - sound
- Sparsha - touch
- Roopa - shape
- Rasa - taste
- Gandha-smell

- **Gurvadi Guna:** these are 20 in numbers and are – Gurumanda himasnidha ślakṣṇasāndra mṛdusthirāfi | Guṇāfi sasūksmaviśadā viṃśatifi saviparyayāfi A.H.Sutrasthana 1/18.<sup>[3]</sup>

- *Guru Guna* – heaviness quality
- *Laghu Guna* – lightness quality
- *Sheeta Guna* – cold quality
- *Ushna Guna* – hot quality
- *Snigdha Guna* – unctuousness quality
- *Ruksha Guna* – non-unctuousness quality
- *Manda Guna* – dullness quality
- *Teekshna Guna* – sharpness quality
- *Sthira Guna* – immobility quality
- *Sara Guna* – mobility quality
- *Mrudu Guna* – softness quality
- *Kathina Guna* – hardness quality
- *Vishada Guna* – clearness quality
- *Pichchila Guna* – sliminess / stickiness quality
- *Shlakshna Guna* – smoothness quality
- *Khara Guna* – roughness quality
- *Sukshma Guna* – fineness quality
- *Sthula Guna* – bulkiness quality
- *Sandra Guna* – solidity quality
- *Drava Guna* – liquidity quality

- **Paradi Guna:** these are 10 in numbers and are –
- *Para*
- *Apara*
- *Yukti*
- *Samyoga*
- *Vibhaga*
- *Pruthaktwa*
- *Abhyasa*
- *Sanskara*
- *Parimana*
- *Samkhya*

- **Atma Guna:** these are 6 in numbers and are –
- *Ichha*
- *Dweshā*
- *Sukha*
- *Dukha*
- *Prayatna*
- *Budhi*

**Action of Guna:** Action of the *Rasa* and *Dravyas* are based on *Guna*. In *Chikitsa* aspect *Samanya Guna Sidhanta* will increase the dhatus and *Viprita Guna Abhyasa* can help in decrement of disease symptoms.

**3. Veerya:** This is described as the potency of the *Dravya*. Some *Acharyaa* described *Veerya* as substances, some as *guna* (qualities) and *karma*, some as a dynamic potency and therefore consider it as a part of *guna* (qualities). Modern scholars consider *Veerya* (potency) as 'active principle' and hence a part of special substance.

*Veeryas* are mainly divided into two types based on *Charaka Samhitha* and *Vagbhata Samhitha*. That are.

<b>Astavidha Veerya:</b>		<b>guru heaviness</b>
<i>laghu</i>	–	lightness
<i>sheeta</i>	–	coldness
<i>ushna</i>	–	hotness
<i>snigdha</i>	–	unctuousness
<i>ruksha</i>	–	dryness
<i>mrudu</i>	–	softness
<i>teekshna</i>	–	strong, piercing

### Dvividha

-*Sheeta*

-*Ushna*

**Action of Veerya:** Drug contains different entities like, *Rasa*, *Veerya*, *Vipaka* etc. among all these *Veerya* is predominant because it brings out action of *Dravya*. Only *Dravyas* which are predominant in specific *Veerya* are used in *Chikitsa*, and it specifies the action of the *Dravya*. *Veerya* supersedes *Rasa*, *Vipaka*, and *Guna*, therefore even when tastes, *Vipaka* and *Guna* of a *Dravya* act in accordance with each other, *Veerya* may bring out a different action.

**4. Vipaka:** This is described as the bio-transformation of the *Dravya* or food or drug, after this the *Ahar Rasa* divides into *Saara* and *Kitta bhaga*.

*Vipaka*- is classified into two types:<sup>[4]</sup>

- **Prapaka:** It is the first stage of digestion here the food undergoes *Paka* in *Koshthalevel*, and nourishes the *tridoshas* respectively. It is also called *Avasthapaka*. It is of three types:
- **Madhuravasthapaka:** which will take place from mouth to *amashaya* and nourishes *Kapha dosha*.
- **Amlavasthapaka:** which will take place at *ama pakwashaya madhya* (between stomach and large

intestines) and nourishes *Pitta dosha*. *Katuavasthapaka*: it takes place at *pakwashya* and nourishes *Vata dosha*.

- *Vipaka*: is done by *bhoothagni* and *dhathvagni*, it is the final stage of *Ahar Rasa*
- which nourishes the respective *Dosha, Dhatus* and *Mala*.

**Action of *Vipaka*:** In *Vipaka* the food or the medicinal drugs attain the homologous stage and nourishes the definite *dosha, dhatus, malas* etc respectively. Even though it is of different *rasa, guna* (qualities) etc due to the *vipaka* it undergoes to nourish *tridoshas* specifically by its action, it is a micro digestion particle or bio-transformation of food and medicine.

*Vipaka* is important among all other qualities like *Rasa* within *dravya*, because *guna* or *dosha* of *dravya* depend on proper and improper digestion. *Gunas* are evolved due to proper digestion of *dravya* by balanced digestive fire and *doshas* due to incorrect digestion.

*Vipaka* is more important because both aggravation and alleviation of *Doshas* is due to *Vipaka*.

**5. *Prabhava*:** This is the specific action of a drug, *Prabhava* is that action of the substance which cannot be explained by means of taste, qualities, after digestion taste transformation and potency, hence, it is called *Achintya* – unimaginable.

**Action of *Prabhava*:** Two plants may have similar qualities, taste etc but their actions and benefits could be different, It is due to *Prabhava* – special effect of the plants. For example *Milk* and *Ghee* both are *Madhura* and *Sheeta* in nature but *Ghee* is *Agni deepana* but milk is not. This is due to *Prabhava*. Even having same qualities, taste or action the drug can show a different effect due to *Prabhava*. It is an unique property of the *Dravyas*. By ancient scriptures *Prabhava* is considered as superior one.<sup>[5]</sup>

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

*Rasa panchaka* is a term which includes five factors of a *Dravya* which are *Rasa, Guna, Veerya, Vipaka* and *Prabhava*. The *Rasapanchaka* define the specific properties and actions of the *Dravya*. Among these, *Charaka* mentioned *Vipaka* as the first because of its wide spread action over the body but the recent authors mention *Rasapanchaka* in the order of *Rasa, Guna, Veerya, Vipaka*, and *Prabhava*. For the fulfilment of treatment in *Ayurvedic* science, the knowledge of *Dravya* along with the knowledge of *Rasapanchaka* is a must. There may be different opinions regarding dominance of *Rasapanchaka* in a *Dravya* but each of them is equally important.

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