

Shadrasas (Six Types of Tastes) According To Different Ayurvedic Texts - A Literary Survey

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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 main taste. Whereas that which is perceived after a small period of time called *Anu-Rasa*. The *Anu-Rasa* also called as *Uparasa* or secondary taste. The taste of the wet drug is always considered as *Anu-Rasa* whereas the taste of dry drug is *Pradhana Rasa*. The *Rasa* and *Anu-Rasa* concept is based on the Taste threshold. The intensity and its determination is entirely depends upon the ecological condition. The soil, temperature, rain fall, sun light etc factors are mainly take part in the growth and development of the plant. The soil nutrients like potassium, phosphorous, sulphur, calcium, magnesium etc salts affects the taste of the drug. The present study reveals that the six types of tastes, determination, *Guna*, *Karma*, *Ati sevanajanya vikarasa*, *Rasa-Dosha* relation, and some modern aspects. The further scope of the study is to evaluate the controversial aspects of tastes of the drug which are enumerated in classics along with comparative study with the modern science.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Shad Rasa, Atisevanajanya Vikara, Anu-Rasa, Taste threshold etc

INTRODUCTION

The word *Rasa* can be attributed in different contexts. Viz;

1. *Rasa*^[1] means the *Rasa Dhatu* which circulate all over the body.
2. *Rasa*^[2] is *Parad* (Mercury) as per Indian Alchemy.

3. *Rasa*^[3] as one of the pharmaceutical preparation i.e. the juice which is expressed through the machine.

4. *Rasa*^[4] as *Mansa Rasa*

5. *Rasa*^[5] as Taste perception

6. *Rasa* as Interest or *Abhiruchi*.^[6]

Here in this context the word *Rasa* is taste perception. And it is felt by an individual through the *Rasanendriya* ie tongue. As per *Ayurveda* there are six types^[7] of *Rasa*. Viz; *Madhura*- Sweet, *Amla*- Sour, *Lavana*- Salty, *Katu*- Pungent, *Tikta*- Bitter, *Kashya*- Astringent. *Acharya Sushruta* clarifies that different combination of *Mahabhuta*^[8] leads to the formation of six *Rasas*. All the six *Rasa* have *Mahabhuta* but the predominant *Mahabhuta* determines the *Pradhana Rasa*. The *Anu-Rasa* is the secondary taste perception which is perceived after primary taste. The *Rasa* is Stable in dry state. Whereas *Anu Rasa* is unstable. As per modern science taste organ is nothing but the Taste buds. Each taste bud is made up of 100-150 receptors. The life of each receptor is one to two weeks, after these receptors are replaced by the other receptors.

DISCUSSION

All the *Dravyas* are said to be made up of *Panchamahabuta*, the *Panchamahabhuta* which are non-living entities combine by permutation and combination by certain chemical reactions give rise to *Tridoshas*. These *Tridoshas* have some basic chemical structures which further give rise to the dominant *Rasa*. Therefore the *Doshas* can only be understood through *Rasa*. Eg. The combination of *Panchamahabhuta* took

place in order of evolution, ie, *Akasha Mahabhuta* is combined with *Vayu Mahabhuta* produces *Tikta rasa*, which further give rise to *Vata Dosha*. Then *Vayu Mahabhuta* combined with *Agni Mahabhuta* produces *Katu Rasa*, which in turn produces *Pitta dosha*. Then the *Agni Mahabhuta* combined with *Apa* produces *Lavana Rasa* which in turn produces *Kapha Dosha*. Thus all the three *Doshas* are produced.

There are some controversial views related to *Rasa* according to different *Ayurvedic Acharyas*. To rule out the controversy *Maharshi Atreya* called a symposium which was held about three thousand years ago. The *Rishis*^[9] and scholars came to attend the seminar from all around the world to put their views on the *Rasa*. Viz;

1. *Maharshi Bhadrakapya* viewed that number of *Rasa* is only One, because the *Apa Mahabhuta* only nature and responsible for to taste perception.
2. *Maharshi Shakunteya Bramhana*- He told that the *Rasa* are two in number; *Chedaniya* and *Upashamaniya*. The earlier one does *Apatarpana* because *Lavana, Amla,* and *Katu Rasa* are responsible for this particular *Karma*, and the later one is *Santarpana* because *Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya* are responsible for this particular *Karma*.
3. *Maharshi Purnaksha Maudgalya*- He enumerated the *Rasas* are three in number viz; *Chedaniya, Upashamaniya,* and *Sadharana*.
4. *Maharshi Hiranyaksha Kaushika*- As per his view the *Rasas* are four viz; *Swadu Hita, Swadu Ahita, Aswadu Hita, Aswadu Ahita*.
5. *Maharshi Kumarashira Bharadwaj*- He enumerated *Rasas* as per *Mahabhuta*, viz; *Parthiva, Apya, Agneya, Vyavaya, Antarisha/Akasha*.
6. *Rajarshi Varyovida*- He listed the *Rasa* are six viz; *Guru, Laghu, Sheeta, Ushna, Snigdha, Ruksha*. He divided *Rasa* interms of *Gunas*.
7. *Maharshi Vaideha Nimi*- He explained *Rasa* are seven viz; *Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya* and

Kshara. He mentioned *kshara* because it the *kshara* gives particular type of sensation on the tongue.

8. *Maharshi Badisha Dhamargava* who enumerated that *Rasas* are eight in number, viz; *Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya, Kshara,* and *Avyakta*. *Avyakta* he specified because some tastes cannot be perceived through the organ tongue.
9. *Maharshi Kanakayana Balhika Bhishak*- He told *Rasa* are innumerable because the degrees and intensities of each *Rasa* constantly changing. So the *Rasas* are innumerable.
10. *Maharshi Punarvasu Atreya*- He Heard all the scholars opinion and came into conclusion that *Rasa* are only six in number, viz; *Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya*. Rest all the are the actions of these *Rasas* only.

According to *Acharya Sushruta*^[10] *Jala Mahabhuta* when combines with different *Mahabhuta* produces six *Rasa*, ie *Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya*. *Acharya Vagbhata*^[11] has the same opinion that *Rasa* are six in number; *Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya*.

The inter-ralation between *Rasa* and *Mahabhata*- (Manifestation of *Rasas*)^[12]

Madhura- *Jala + Prithvi*

Amla- *Prithvi + Agni* according to *Acharya Charaka, Vriddhavagbhata,* and *Vagbhata*

Jala + Agni according to *Acharya Sushruta*

Lavana - *Jala + Agni* according to *Acharya Charaka* and *Vagbhata*

Prithvi + Agni according to *Acharya Sushruta*

Agni + Jala according to *Maharshi Nagarjun*

Katu - *Vayu + Agni*

Tikta - *Vayu + Akasha*

Kashaya - *Vayu + Prithvi*

Difference between *Rasa* and *Anu-Rasa*- *Rasa* is primary taste, perceived immediately, distinctly, and completely, and

remains stable in dry state also, whereas the *Aun-Rasa* is secondary taste, perceived after some time, and not distinctly perceived, but perceived partly but not stable in dry state.

Relation between *Rutu*, *Mahabhuta* and *Rasas* formation-^[13]

1. **Shishira Rutu**- *Vayu + Akasha forms Tikta Rasa*
2. **Vasanta Rutu** - *Vayu + Prithvi forms Kashaya Rasa*
3. **Grishma Rutu** - *Agni + Vayu forms Katu Rasa*
4. **Varsha Rutu** - *Agni + Prithvi forms Amla Rasa*
5. **Sharat Rutu** - *Agni + Jala forms Lavana Rasa*
6. **Hemnatha Rutu** - *Prithvi + Jala forms Madhura Rasa.*

The disturbance in the seasons may affects the *Mahabhuta* also, which may further affects the permutation and combination of the *Mahabhutas*, and there is variation in the *Rasa* perception.

Rasa Upalabधि- (Perception of Taste)-

According to *Badhnta Nagarjun* the taste can be perceived through three *Pramanas* viz; **Pratyaksha** - By direct perception from sense organ. Eg: *Tikta Rasa* of *Kirata Tikta*, *Vasa*, *Guduchi* etc

Anumana- Through inference. Eg: All types of poisonous drugs cannot be perceived directly.

Aptopadesha- Through ancient literature. Eg: The *Rasa* of Gold, *Mala*, *Mutra*, their action cannot be perceived through the *Pratyaksha* and *Anumana*. It can only be reviewed through the classical literature.

Rasa Rupantarana- (Transformation of Rasa) -

According to *Badhant Nagarjun*, *Rasa* can be changed under the influence of *Sthana*, *Patra*, *Samyoga*, *Paaka*, *Atapa*, *Bhavana*, *Desha*, *Kaala*, *Parinama*, *Upasarga*, *Vikriya*.

1. **Sthana**- *Dravyas* kept unaltered for longer duration the taste will change. Eg: *Madhura Rasa* of cooked rice

changes into sour taste when kept for longer duration.

2. **Patra**- *Dravyas* kept in certain metallic utensils changes its taste. Eg: Curd kept in bronze utensil turns pungent taste.
3. **Samyoga**- When the drugs are combined it changes its taste. Eg: Tamarind is combined with Lime turns into sweet taste.
4. **Paaka**- A drug which is exposed to heat changes its taste. Eg: Tamarind when heated changes into sweet taste.
5. **Atapa**- Certain drugs when exposed to sun leads to change in taste. Eg: *Tumburu Phala* is exposed to sun light its *Kashaya Rasa* changes into sweet taste.
6. **Bhavana**- A drugs when triturated with certain drugs or single gives rise to different colour. Eg: *Tila* when it triturated with *Yasthimadhu* gives rise to sweet taste.
7. **Desha**- Taste of the drugs may differ according to *Desha* (Region), Eg: *Tulasi* grown in hot climatic conditions are some different taste which is grown in cold climatic condition.
8. **Kaala**- After some time the taste of the drug may vary. Eg: The unripe banana is astringent, after some time it changes into sweet taste.
9. **Parinaama**- Transformation of the drug from one form into another form can be seen change in the taste. Eg: Curdling of sweet milk becomes sour.
10. **Upasarga**- Worm infestation may leads change in the colour. Eg: Infested sugarcane turns in to sour.
11. **Vikriya**- Drugs subjecting into specific methods leads to change in taste. Eg: *Talaphala* when rubbed turns bitter, *Panasa* squeezed in hands becomes *Amla*.

Rasa Prayoga-

The usage of the *Rasa* in food consumption are;

Pratahama- *Madhura Rasa Dravyas*,
Madhyama- *Amla* and *Lavana Rasa Dravyas*,

Antima- Katu, Tikta and Kashaya Rasa Dravyas. [14]

Bhavamishra [15] has different opinion that one has to consume *Madhura Rasa* first which can overcome *Vidaha* caused by *Ushna Guna Yukta Rasas* like *Lavana, Amla* and *Katu*.

Qualities of Rasas-

1. *Madhura Rasa* - Snigdha, Sheeta, Guru
2. *Amla Rasa* - Snigdha, Ushna, Laghu
3. *Lavana Rasa* - Snigdha, Ushna, Guru
4. *Katu Rasa* - Ruksha, Ushna, Laghu
5. *Tikta Rasa* - Ruksha, Sheeta, Laghu
6. *Kashaya Rasa* - Ruksha, Sheeta, Guru.

Actions of Rasas -

Madhura Rasa Karma- [16]

1. *Nadi Samsthana*- Alhadakara, Shad Indriya Prasadakara, Medhya, Tarpana
2. *Pacahana Samsthana*- Anulomana, Trishna Nigrahana
3. *Raktavaha Samsthana*- Sandhaniya, Hridya
4. *Shwasana Samsthana*- Kanthya
5. *Mutravaha Samsthana*- Mutrala.
6. *Prajanana Samsthana*- Vrushya, Garbhasthapana, Stanyajanana
7. *Twacha*- Dahashamana, Twachya, Keshya, Varnya.

Amla Rasa Karma- [17]

1. *Nadi Samsthana*- Manaprasadana, Indriya Sthairyakara
2. *Pachana Samsthana*- Lalasravakara, Rochana, Deepana, Pachana, Anulomana.
3. *Raktavaha Samsthana*- Hridya, Raktapittakara
4. *Mutravaha Samsthana*- Mutrala.
5. *Prajanana Samsthana*- Shukrgna

Lavana Rasa Karma- [18]

1. *Pacahana Samsthana*- Kledana, Deepana, Pachana, Rochana, Lalasravajanaka
2. *Raktavaha Sansthana*- Rakta Kopaka
3. *Shwasana Samsthana*- Chedana, Kapha Nissaraka.
4. *Mutravaha Samsthana*- Shikraghna

Katu Rasa Karma- [19]

1. *Nadi Samsthana*- Indriyottejaka, Sajnasthapana
2. *Pachana Samsthana*- Mukha Shodhaka, Deepana, Pacahana, Krimighna, Rochana, Grahi
3. *Raktavaha Samsthana*- Hridayottejaka, Raktasravakara
4. *Shwasana Samsthana*- Kaphagna
5. *Mutravaha Samsthana*- Mutra Sangrhaniya
6. *Prajanana Samsthana*- Avrushya
7. *Twacha*- Kusthagna, Kandugna

Tikta Rasa Karma- [20]

1. *Pacahana Samsthana*- Rochana, Krimighna, Trishna Nigrahana, Deepana, Pachana, Purisha Shoshana
2. *Raktavaha Samsthana*- Rakta Prasadana, Ahridya
3. *Shwasana Samsthana*- Kaphagna
4. *Mutravaha Samsthana*- Mutra Sangrahaniya
5. *Prajanana Samsthana*- Avrushya, Stanyashodhana
6. *Twacha*- Swedana, Kandugna, Kusthagna, Dahashamana, Sthirakarana
7. *Tapakrama*- Jwaragna

Kashaya Rasa Karma- [21]

1. *Pachana Samsthana*- Sthambhana
2. *Raktavaha Samsthana*- Sandhaniya, Ahrudya
3. *Shwasana Samsthana*- Kaphagna
4. *Mutravaha Sansthana*- Mutra Sangrahaniya
5. *Prajanana Samsthana*- Avrushya
6. *Twacha*- Peedana, Ropana, Scarnikarana

Actions of Rasas on Dhatus-

1. *Madhura* - Sarva Dhaturvardhana, Balya, Jivana, Ayushya, Stanyavardhana
2. *Amla Rasa* - Brimhana, Balya, Shukraha
3. *Lavana Rasa* - Dhatunashana, Daurbalyakara, Avrushya, Shaithilyakara

4. **Katu Rasa** - Dhatunashana, Lekhana, Avrushya
5. **Tikta Rasa** - Dhatunashana, Avrushya, Meda, Vasa, Majja, Lasika, Shoshana
6. **Kashaya Rasa** - Sarva Dhatu Shoshana, Lekhana.

Actions of Rasas on Mala-

1. **Madhura, Amla, Lavana** - Srishta Vin Mutra Maruta
2. **Katu, Tikta, Kashaya-** Baddha Vin Mutra Maruta

Actions of Rasa on Doshas-

1. **Madhura Rasa-** Vata, Pitta Shamaka, Kapha Vardhaka
2. **Amla Rasa-** Vata Shamaka, Kapha-Pitta Prakopaka
3. **Lavana Rasa-** Vata Shamaka, Kapha-Pitta Prakopaka
4. **Katu Rasa-**Kapha Shamaka, Vata-Pitta Prakopaka
5. **Tikta Rasa-** Kapha-Pitta Shamaka, Vata Prakopaka
6. **Kashaya Rasa-** Kapha-Pitta Shamaka, Vata Prakopaka

Atisevana Janya Vikarasa of Rasas- [22]

Madhura Rasa Atisevana Janya Vikara- Sthaulya, Mardava, Alasya, Atiswapna, Gaurava, Aruchi, Agnimandya, Mukha-Kanthagata Mansa Vriddhi, Shwasa, Kasa, Pratishyaya, Alasaka, Sheeta Jwara, Anaha, Mukhamadhurya, Vamana, Sajnanasha, Swarabhanga, Netra Rogas, Galaganda, Gandamala, Shleepada, Prameha, Krimi etc Kaphaja Rogas, .

Amla Rasa Atisevana Janya Vikaras- Danta Harsha, Trushna, Akshinimilana, Romanchakara, Liquifies Kapha, Pitta Vriddhi, Raktadosha, Mamsa Vidaha, Sharira Shaithilyakara, Shotha, Kshata, Kantha, Vaksha, Hrudaya Dahakara, Raktavikarakara, Shothakara, Paaka, Daaha, Kandu, Paandu, Drishtimandya, Raktapittakara, Bhrama etc

Lavana Rasa Atisevana Janya Vikara-

Avrushyakara, Trishna, Murcha, Santapa, Vidara, Mamsakotha, Kustha, Visha, Shopha, Dantachuti, Napumsakata, Indiyanaasha, Indralupta, Palita, Khalitya, Raktapitta, Amlapitta, Visarpa, Vatarakta, Vicharchika etc.

Katu Rasa Atisevana Janya Viakara- Glani, Krashata, Kampa, Angashula, Avrushyakara, Murcha, Bhrama, Daha, Daurbalya, Trushna, etc.

Tikta Rasa Atisevana Janya Vikaras- Kharatwa, Glani, Murcha, Dhatu shoshana, Daurbalya, Bhrama, Mukhashosha, Vatavyadhi

Kashaya Rasa Atisevana Janya Vikaras- Mukhashosha, Hrudayashula, Adhmana, Swarabheda, Shyavatwa, Napumsakata, Visthabhi, Karshya, Glani, Sthambha, Pakshaghata, Apatanaka, Ardita, Strotorodha, Avrushyakara, Vatavyadhi etc.

CONCLUSION

Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya are the Shadrasas. The present study revealed that the six types of tastes, determination, Guna, Karma, Atisevanajanya vikarasa, Rasa-Dosha relation, and some modern aspects. The further scope of the study is to evaluate the controversial aspects of tastes of the drug which are enumerated in classics along with comparative study with the modern science.

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