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Shad Rasa and their effect on the body

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ABSTRACT

The word *Rasa* means taste, but it also has other meanings like *Rasa Dhatu*, *Parada*, etc. Among them, the one which is perceived through the tongue is known as *Rasa*, which is *Pradhana Rasa* i.e., primary taste or main taste. *Rasa* action occurs immediately after exposure to *Rasanendriya* (tongue). In Ayurveda, the benefits of any food and drink have been determined on the basis of these *Rasas*. The things in which the intensity of the *Rasas* is very high are used as medicine. The taste of food items is also decided on the basis of these *Rasas*. For example, things with *Madhura Rasa* are considered cold and those with *Amla* or *Lavana Rasas* are considered hot. The present study reveals that the six types of *Rasas*, determination, associated *Guna*, *Virya*, properties, benefits, disadvantages of excessive consumption, *Rasa-Mahabhuta* relation and *Rutu*, *Mahabhuta* and *Rasas* formation relation, *Rasa-Dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala* relation and some modern aspects. The further scope of study is to elaborate about consumption *Shad Rasas* and their effect on body.

Key words: Ayurveda, Shad Rasa, Mahabhuta, Virya, Dosha, Dhatu, Mala

INTRODUCTION

Rasa

When anything comes in contact with the tongue, the experience we experience from it is called *Rasa* in Ayurveda. If we understand this in common language, then after eating anything, we feel the taste that is the *Rasa*.

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

1. *Rasa* means the *Rasa Dhatu* which circulate all over the body.
2. *Rasa* is *Parada* (Mercury) as per Indian Alchemy.
3. *Rasa* as one of the pharmaceutical preparations i.e., the juice which is expressed through the machine.
4. *Rasa* as *Mansa Rasa*.
5. *Rasa* as Taste perception.
6. *Rasa* as Interest or *Abhiruchi*.

Here in this context the word *Rasa* is taste perception. And it is felt by an individual through the *Rasanendriya* i.e., tongue.

Types of Rasas

There are 6 types of *Rasas* mentioned in Ayurveda. These types of *Rasas* are basically determined on the basis of taste. The following 6 *Rasas* are mentioned in Ayurveda. *Madhura* (sweet), *Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (salty), *Katu* (pungent), *Tikta* (bitter), *Kashaya* (astringent) of these, the first *Rasa* (melodious) is giving the most force and the next *Rasa* is relatively less

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forceful. From this sequence, *Kashaya Rasa* is the least powerful. *Acharya Sushruta* clarifies that different combination of *Mahabhuta* leads to the formation of six *Rasas*. All the six *Rasa* have *Mahabhuta* but the predominant *Mahabhuta* determines the *Pradhana Rasa*. As per modern science, taste organ is nothing but the Taste buds.

DISCUSSION

Rasa is *Apya* (born from water element) and is not manifested in the beginning. Though *Rasa* is a natural quality of water, but *Rasa* is produced (expression) in water only when it comes in contact with the atoms of *Mahabhutas*. Therefore, the predominance of different *Mahabhutas* is found in each *Rasa*. According to the main elements found in each *Rasa*, that substance has an effect on the *Doshas*, metals etc. present in the person's body.

Relation between *Rutu*, *Mahabhuta* and *Rasas* formation

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. *Sharada Rutu - Agni + Jala* forms *Lavana Rasa*
6. *Hemnatha Rutu - Prithvi + Jala* forms *Madhura Rasa*.

Guna 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*.

Effect of tastes on *Tridosha*

Madhura, Amla and *Lavana Rasas* increase *Kapha Dosh* and decrease *Vata Dosh*. *Katu, Tikta* and *Kashaya Rasas* increase *Vata Dosh* and pacify *Kapha*

Dosha. *Amla, Lavana* and *Katu Rasas* increase *Pitta Dosh*. *Madhura, Tikta* and *Kashaya rasas* decrease *Pitta Dosh*.

Actions of *Rasas* on *Dhatu*s

1. *Madhura - Sarva Dhatu*vardhana, *Balya, Jivana, Ayushya, Stanyavardhana*
2. *Amla Rasa - Brimhana, Balya, Shukraha*
3. *Lavana Rasa - Dhatunashana, Daurbalyakara, Avrushya, Shaithilyakar*
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 - Srishtavinmutramaruta*
2. *Katu, Tikta, Kashaya - Baddhavinmutramaruta*

Rasa and its *Virya* (temperature)

Sheet Virya - *Madhura, Tikta* and *Kashaya Rasas*, these three are coolant in nature and coolant effect over the body. (There are some exceptions)

Ushna Virya - *Katu, Amla* and *Lavana Rasas*, these three are hot in nature and hot effect over the body. (There are some exceptions)

Modern View

Taste or gustatory function is closely interlinked with smell according to physiology. The common chemical sensibility is observed between smell and taste, in nose and mouth respectively. The common chemical stimulus is carried by trigeminal nerve endings. In absence of olfaction taste sensation will be altered. (E.g., during rhinitis) tongue is mainly concerned with taste. They bear taste buds. Taste receptors are considered as chemo receptors that respond to substance dissolved in oral fluids bathing them. Modern science accepts only four tastes are Sweet, Salt, Sour and Bitter.

1. Sweetness - Tip of tongue
2. Salt - On dorsum anteriorly

3. Sourness - At sides of tongue
4. Bitterness - At the back of the tongue

(Mid – dorsum has no taste sensation.)

Madhura Rasa (Sweet)

The juice which is consumed by satisfaction, happiness and stickiness in the mouth is felt. Along with this, the juice which provides nutrition and increases Kapha is called sweet or *Madhura Rasa*.

Qualities

Madhura Rasa is congenial to the body, improves body fluid, blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow, Ojas, and nourishes male and female reproductive systems. It improves life expectancy, soothes all the sense organs and mind, improves strength.

Properties

Substances (medicines and food substances) containing *Madhura Rasa* are favorable from birth. Therefore, by increasing all the metals from Rasa to Venus, they make a person strong and increase life. Its consumption improves the complexion of the skin and pacifies *Pitta* and *Vata Doshas*. The nose, throat, mouth, tongue and lips become smooth and soft by eating sweet- tasting things. They provide stability, flexibility, strength and vitality to the body. They are good for hair, senses and oozes. Slim, weak people or people suffering from any disease etc. are especially advised to eat *Madhura Rasa* (Sweet) diet.

Disadvantages of excessive consumption of Madhura Rasa

In spite of having many qualities, the consumption of *Madhura Rasas* increases the *Kapha Dosha* in the body. Due to increased *Kapha*, the chances of following diseases increase:

Obesity, lethargy, excessive sleepiness, heaviness in the body, loss of appetite, lack of digestive power, diarrhea (urinary diseases, diabetes, etc.) increased flesh in the mouth and neck. Sweet taste of mouth Lack of sensation, Weakness in voice, Throat Inflammation and stickiness in conjunctivitis. Therefore, a person suffering from obesity, excess fat, diabetes should

consume *madhura rasa* at least and should avoid it even if there are worms in the stomach.

Madhura Rasa foods

Ghee, Gold, Jaggery, Walnut, Banana, Coconut, Phalsa, Shatavari, Kakoli, Jackfruit, Bala, Atibala, Nagbala, Maida, Mahameda, Salaparni, Prisnaparni, Mudgaparni, Mashaparni, Jeevanti, Jivaka, Mahua, Liquorice, Vidari, Vanshlochan, Doodh, Gambhari, Reed, Buckwheat, Madhu and Draksha, all these are the main among *Madhura Rasa* substances.

Exception

Old rice, old barley, moong, wheat, honey do not increase kapha even if they have sweet juice. Therefore, in Ayurveda, there is a law to eat food old and ghee new.

Amla Rasa (Sour)

Consuming the juice causes discharge from the mouth. On eating which the eyes and eyebrows shrink and sourness is felt in the teeth, it is acid juice or *Amla Rasa*.

Qualities

Sour improves taste of food, digestion strength, nourishes the body, improves enthusiasm, pleases mind, and strengthens sense organs.

Properties

Amla Rasa makes the substances tasty and increases appetite. It feels cold to touch. Its consumption increases the strength of the body. The brain becomes more active by the consumption of things containing *Amla Rasa*. It strengthens the senses and gives energy to the body. *Amla Rasa* helps in swallowing and moistening the food and also increases the digestion process by increasing the speed and moving the food downwards. *Amla Rasa* is found in most unripe fruits.

Disadvantages of excessive consumption of Amla Rasa

Excess intake of *Amla Rasa* leads to an increase in *Pitta Dosha*. As a result, the chances of having the following problems increase.

Excess thirst, Sour teeth, melting phlegm, Muscle breakdown, swelling in weak body, Weakness in the

body, Darkness in front of the eyes, Frustration, Itching, flaking and pus in the wounds caused by cuts or cuts, etc.

Amla Rasa foods

Amla, tamarind, lemon, pomegranate, silver, buttermilk, curd, mango, *Kamarkha*, *Kath* and gooseberry etc. have amla rasa in high quantity.

Exception

Pomegranate or *Anardana* and *Amla*, although they are acidic, they do not cause any kind of harm due to *Amla Rasa*.

Lavana Rasa (Salt)

The juice which, when consumed, causes saliva to drip from the mouth and causes burning sensation in the throat and cheeks, that is called Salt juice or *Lavana Rasa*.

Qualities

Salt aids in digestion, causes moistening effect, scraping effect, excision effect, breaks down, piercing, sharp etc.

Properties

Substances containing *Lavana Rasa* reduce the movement of *Vata*, cause stickiness and are sharp digestive. These remove stiffness of the limbs, blockage of body channels, accumulated fat and excess accumulation of faecal matter. Substances containing *Lavana Rasa* are neither too smooth, nor too hot, nor too heavy. *Lavan Rasa* reduces the effect of other *Rasas*.

Disadvantages of excessive consumption of Lavana Rasa

Consumption of foods rich in *Lavana Rasa* leads to imbalance of blood with *Pitta Dosha*. This increases the chances of the following problems occurring:

Excessive Thirst and Heat Burning, Deterioration of the skin in the area suffering from leprosy or other skin disease, rotting of the mouth, eye puffiness, swelling of the skin, discoloration of the skin, bleeding from the body parts, movement of teeth, toxic symptoms, loss

of virility, baldness, whitening of hair, gout, Acidity (hyperacidity) Wound enlargement and loss of energy.

Lavana Rasa foods

Rock salt, *Sauravchal* salt, Krishna, Bid, *Samudra* and *Audbhid* salt, *Romak*, *Pansuj*, lead and alkali, these salts are the main substances containing *Lavana Rasa*.

Katu Rasa (Pungent)

On consuming this *Rasa*, a needle-like pain is felt in the mouth and stimulates the front part of the tongue. Apart from this, it secretes from the eyes, nose and mouth and burns the scalp.

Qualities

Katu rasa cleanses mouth, improves digestion strength, dries up food, causes watering of nose, causes lacrimation, and sharpens sense organs cure diseases like *Alasaka* (intestinal toper), inflammation, obesity, urticaria, chronic conjunctivitis.

Properties

The substances containing *Katu Rasa* keep the mouth clean and help in the absorption of food in the body. Their consumption increases appetite and digestion power. They enable the sense organs like eyes, ears, etc. to function properly. With regular consumption of bitter juice things, the secretion of faeces from the nose and eyes and the removal of sticky stools from the sources (body channels) is properly done. Consumption of bitter juice is beneficial in these diseases:

Obesity, Cold, Bile Intestinal Dysfunction, Conjunctivitis, Itching, Stomach Worms, Joint Stiffness, Throat Diseases, Leprosy, Ucositis. The substance containing bitter juice pacifies the phlegm and circulates the frozen blood.

Disadvantages of excessive consumption of Katu Rasa

In the diets containing *Katu Rasa*, there is an excess of *Vata* and *Agni Mahabhuta*. Consuming too much of these substances can lead to the following problems:

Fainting, palpitations and dryness of lips, tingling, weakness, dizziness, virility, loss of strength and semen, burning and pain in the hands, feet and back.

Katu Rasa foods

Asafoetida, Maricha, Panchkol (Pippali, Pippalimool, Chavya, Chitrak and Shunthi) and all types of Pitta, Urine and Bhilava etc. are foods with *Katu Rasa*.

Exception

Dry ginger, pippali and garlic are not as harmful as other substances of bitter juice.

Tikta Rasa (Bitter)

This juice removes the licorice from the mouth and makes the tongue root.

Qualities

Though not so good to taste, when taken, it improves taste in the person, detoxifies, kills germs and worms, relieves unconsciousness, burning sensation, itching and skin disorders, relieves thirst, strengthens and stabilizes body, useful in fever, digestive and carminative, cleanses and detoxifies breast milk.

Properties

Tikta juice may have a bad taste but it makes other substances tasty and delicious. This increases interest in food. The substances containing *Tikta Rasa* remove toxic effects, stomach worms, leprosy, itching, fainting, burning, thirst, skin diseases, obesity and diabetes etc. They anulomana (downward movement) of *Vata*, bring dryness in the body. Therefore, the body's moisture, fat, obesity, marrow, sweat, urine and urine dry up. Apart from this, it purifies the throat and liver and enables it to function.

Disadvantages of excessive consumption of Tikta Rasa

If consumed in excess quantity, the substances containing *Tikta Rasa* reduce the amount of *Rasa* (plasma), blood, fat, marrow and Venus in the body. They cause roughness in the sources and dryness in the mouth, loss of strength, weakness, exhaustion, dizziness, fainting, and rheumatism.

Tikta Rasa foods

Patol, Jayanti, Sugandhabala, khus, sandalwood, absinthe, neem, bitter gourd, Giloy, Dhamaasa, Mahapanchamool, small and big Kateri, Idrayana, atis

and Vacha all these are substances containing *Tikta Rasa*.

Exception

Giloy and Patol are not harmful even if they are rich in *Tikta Rasa*.

Kashaya Rasa (Astringent juice)

This juice makes the tongue root (numbing) and blocks the throat and the sources.

Qualities

Calming, healing, absorbing, constipative, wound healing, bone healing, causes pressure on body parts, dries up moisture, blocking, useful in bleeding disorders.

Properties

This *Rasa* reduces *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha*. Apart from this, it reduces secretion from organs, heals wounds faster and helps in keeping bones together. It also has drying properties of metals and urine etc. This is the reason why the consumption of substances containing *Kashaya Rasa* leads to the problem of constipation. The *Kashaya* substances make the skin clean. They absorb moisture from the body.

Disadvantages of excessive consumption of Kashaya Rasa

Kashaya Rasa aggravates *Vata*. If you consume a lot of things containing *Kashaya Rasa*, then you are more likely to have the following problems:

Dryness in the mouth Heartache, Flatulence, Interruption in speaking, Darkening of complexion, Destruction of man, Excessive thirst, Weakness in the body, Fatigue, Paralysis.

Kashaya Rasa Foods

Harad, Bahera, Shirish, Khair, Honey, Kadamba, Gular, Kachikhand, Lotus, cucumber, Padma, Mukta (pearl), Praval, Anjan and Ocher etc. are foods containing *kashaya rasa*.

Exception

In spite of having *Kashaya Rasa*, myrobalan is not as cold and columnar (preventing stool etc.) like other *Kashaya Rasa* substances.

CONCLUSION

Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya are the *Shadrasas*. The present study revealed that the six types of *Rasas*, determination, *Guna* (qualities), Karma (action), properties, Disadvantages of excessive consumption, *Rasa-Dosha* relation and some modern aspects. The further scope of the study is to elaborate about consumption of *Shad Rasas* and their effect on body.

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