



Role of Tikta Rasa in the sustained intervention of Lifestyle Disorders - A Review article

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The WHO classifies Lifestyle Disorders as Non-communicable diseases which include Diabetes mellitus, Obesity, Cardiovascular disease, Hypertension, Alzheimer's and Cancer. 74% of fatalities worldwide are attributed to NCDs each year. In Charak Samhita Sutrasthan Chapter 25, described Agrya Dravyas in which the usage of Ek Rasa Ahyasa is deemed Daurbalyakar. This means consumption of one particular taste/food group has been responsible to create laxness in the body. The exponential rise in NCDs might be due to overconsumption of Ek Rasa (eg: Madhur Rasa i.e., Guru Bhojhana), Agni Mandya, Sedentary lifestyle, Smoking, Alcohol consumption. They're called Santarpanjanya disorders in Ayurveda. These disorders have presence of Ama as a contributing factor, which makes the etiology difficult to cure. Tikta Rasa is one such Rasa out of 6 essential Rasas which has the potential to manage lifestyle disorders both on the level of Curative as its a Apatarpanjanya Rasa, by doing Deepana of Agni, Pachana of Ama in the minute Srotases. Preventive by using its beneficial phytonutrients and antioxidant property by including in our Aahar and Dinacharya. This study shows various Tikta Rasa Aahar Varga like Kushmandi, Alabu, Patola, Kunduru, Koshataki, Bimbi, Chichind etc. They're a potent source of phytonutrients like Vit A, Vit C, Vit B complex and phytochemicals like flavonoids, tannins, saponins which prevent right from Diabetes, Dyslipidemias, Metabolic syndromes upto Cancer. A NCD epidemic is approaching and inevitable hence there's a need for a sustained intervention to manage these in the long term. The main objective of this study is to bring awareness and inculcate ways in which we can include this most beneficial nutrition quotient back in our diet and lifestyle.

Keywords: Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), Lifestyle disorders, Santarpanjanya disorders, Agni Mandya, Ama, Tikta Rasa

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Introduction

Lifestyle disorders are the Non communicable disorders due faulty diet and lifestyle. *Ek Rasaabhyasa* is deemed *Daurbalyakar*. For example: Excess *Madhur Rasa Sevana* leads to *Prameha*, similarly excess *Madhur, Amla Sevana* leads to *Kushtha*. Lifestyle disorders vis-a-vis *Santarpanjanya Vyadhis* due to common causative factors, symptoms, condition. *Santarpanjanya* disorders have presence of *Agnimandhya* and thereby formation of *Ama*. They are formed due to inactivity, sedentary lifestyle, over nourishment leading to vitiation of *Kapha Dosha*. *Tikta Rasa* has been neglected in our diet over the years. This might relate with the exponential high numbers of lifestyle disorders as *Tikta Rasa* isn't adequately used to compensate the excess *Madhur* in *Shadras Yukta Aahar*. *Tikta Rasa* can be included in *Aahar Dravyas* as a preventive and curative measure. This paper describes some beneficial *Tikta Aahar Dravyas* that can be consumed to manage Lifestyle disorders.

Aim and Objectives

1. To conceptualise the effectiveness of *Tikta Rasa Aahar Dravyas* in management of Lifestyle disorders.
2. To check the utility of *Tikta Rasa Aahar Dravyas* as preventive., by including in *Aahara Sevana*.
3. To check the utility of *Tikta Rasa Aahar Dravyas* as curative i.e., in *Pathyapathya* and *Chikitsa*.

Materials and Methods

This study is a review article on *Tikta Aahar Dravyas* mentioned in the classics. *Bhavprakash Nighantu (Shaka Varga)*, *Shodal nighantu*, *Shaligram Nighantu* was found to be the suitable reference for this research article. Along with that different Research articles, Modern texts, different Research databases like PubMed, Authorea etc. There are so many known *Tikta Shaka Dravyas* that we know and consume, but here some lesser known *Tikta Shaka* varieties have also been mentioned that should be included in our diet.

Tikta Rasa Aahar Dravyas






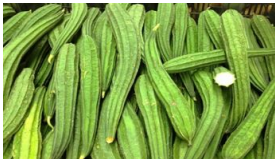
Name	Rasa Panchak	Family	Phytonutrients and Compounds	Pharmacological Actions
1. Kushmandi (Kumhadi/ karkaru) Field Pumpkin 	Tikta , Shita, Guru Kapha Vataghna	Cucurbitaceae, Cucurbita pepo Linn.	Proteins, fats, Iron, VIT C, Carotenoids, tocopherols, alkaloids, glycosides, flavonoids, terpenoids	Anti-inflammatory, Antioxidant, Anti-hypertensive, Anti diabetic [1], Anti-viral
2. Kushmandi Bheda (Lal kumhada) Red gourd/ Squash 	Tikta Krumighna, Mutrala	Cucurbitaceae, C. Maxima Duchesne.	Phenols, flavonoids, alkaloids, tannin, saponin, terpenoids, steroids	Hepatoprotective, Anti diabetic, anti-hypertensive, anti-atherosclerotic [2], anti hypercholesterolemic, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial






Fig. 1.1






Source: Scientific Figure on ResearchGate. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Young-fruits-of-Cucurbita-pepo-one-from-each-edible-fruited-cultivargroup-Left-to_fig7_304456365 [accessed 1 Jun 2025]

Fig. 1.2

Source: <https://www.monaconatureencyclopedia.com/cucurbita-maxima/?lang=en>

Name	Rasa Panchak	Family	Phytonutrients and Compounds	Pharmacological Actions
3. Katu Tumbi Bottle gourd / Calabash  <p>Fig. 1.3 Source: https://www.easyayurveda.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Lagenaria-siceraria1.jpg https://plantwiseplusknowledgebank.org/cms/10.1079/pwkb.species.30556/asset/bede05e8-999a-4ddb-ad0f-d1a2c1030170/assets/graphic/30556_02.jpg</p>	Tikta , Shita, Katu Vipaka, Pittavataghna, Hridya, Vishaghna	Cucurbitaceae, Lagenaria vulgaris Ser.	Saponins, flavonoids, terpenoids, vit b complex, vit c, b-carotene, pyrogallol, avenasterol, palmitic & stearic acids	Antioxidant, immunomodulatory, immunosuppression[3], antidiabetic, anticancer antimicrobial
4. Chichind (Chachenda) Snake gourd  <p>Fig. 1.4 Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/df/Trichosanthes_cucumerina_var_anguina_-_Snake_Gourd_in_a_market_in_North_India.jpg</p>	Guna Like Patola	Cucurbitaceae, Trichosanthes anguina Linn.	Vit C, proteins, vit B1, vit B2, Niacin, flavonoids, carotenoids, phenolic acids, tannins, lycopene, cardiac glycoside	Anti-bacterial, Anti-Fungal, Anti helminthic, Anti diabetic [4], Anti- inflammatory, Anti arthritic, hepatoprotective, cytoprotective
5. Karvellak Bitter gourd  <p>Fig. 1.5 Source: https://fruitboxco.com/cdn/shop/products/BitterGourd.jpg?v=1592407929</p>	Tikta, Shita, Laghu, Pittakaphaghna, Mala Bhedan	Cucurbitaceae, Momordica charantia Linn.	Carotenes, Glycosides, Saponins, momordicine, vit A, C, E, thiamine, riboflavin, folate, niacin, fatty acids	Anti-cancer [5], anti-cholesterol, anti-dementia, antibacterial, anti- inflammatory
6. Raja Koshataki (Koshataki/ dharmagav) Sponge gourd  <p>Fig. 1.6 Source: https://www.nparks.gov.sg//media/ffw/migrated/round2/flora/4988/7f0406ec214a4574a017052dee4056b7.jpg</p>	Tikta, Madhur, Shita, Deepan, Pittaghna	Cucurbitaceae, Luffa acutangula Roxb.	Flavonoids, anthraquinones, saponin, volatile oils	Anti-Ulcer, Anti-hypertensive, Anti- cancer, anti-hyperlipidemic [6], anti-diabetic, analgesic, immunomodulatory

Name	Rasa Panchak	Family	Phytonutrients and Compounds	Pharmacological Actions
7. Patola (Padval) Pointed gourd  <p>Fig. 1.7 Source: https://www.planetayurveda.com/pa-wp-images/pointed-gourd.jpg</p>	Tikta, Ushna, Deepan, Pachan, Kaphaghna, Vrishya	Cucurbitaceae, Trichosanthes dioica Roxb.	Saponins, Vit A, C, tannins, alkaloids, triterpenes	Anti-diabetic [7], Hepatoprotective, cholesterol lowering, antioxidant, anti-hypertensive
8. Bimbi (Kundururu, Bimbi, Kanduri) Ivy gourd  <p>Fig. 1.8 Source: https://5.imimg.com/data5/DL/YC/MY-33719223/coccinia-indica-extract-500x500.jpg</p>	Madhur, Tikta, Shita, Guru, Stambhan, Lekhan, Ruchikar	Cucurbitaceae, Coccinia indica	Saponins, flavonoids, sterols, alkaloids, triterpenoid, carotenes	Hypo lipidemic [8], Anti-mutagenic, anti-glycemic, anti-inflammatory
9. Shigru (Sahijan) Drum stick plant  <p>Fig 1.9 Source: https://plantsguru.com/cdn/shop/files/pg-drumstick-plant.jpg?v=1735618452</p>	Katu, Tikta, Laghu, Ushna, Kapha Vata Shamak	Moringaceae, Moringa oleifera	Alkaloids, flavonoids, anthraquinones, vitamins, glycosides, and terpenes	Anti diabetic [9], hepatoprotective, cardioprotective, and anti-inflammatory
10. Pothki (Bathua) Lambs quarters  <p>Fig. 1.10 Source: https://biokic3.rc.asu.edu/imglib/h_seinet/seinet/Chenopodiaceae/photos/Chenopodium-album-FL-web-.jpg</p>	Madhur, Tikta, Laghu, Deepana, Pachana, Balaprada	Chenopodiaceae, Chenopodium album	Carotene, vit c, flavonoid, isoflavonoid, polyphenol, saponins, amino acids	Anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, gastroprotective, hepatoprotective, anticancer[10]
11. Tanduliya (Chaulai/ Jala Chaulai) Prickly amaranth  <p>Fig 1.11 Source: https://news.s3.amazonaws.com/taxon-images-1000s1000/Amaranthaceae/amaranthus-spinosus-le-kstarr2-a.jpg</p>	Tikta, Shita, Laghu, Vata Shamak	Amaranthaceae, Amaranthus spinosus	Alkaloids, flavonoids, glycosides, phenolic acids, steroids, amino acids, terpenoids, lipids, saponin, b-sitosterol, linoleic acid, rutin and carotenoids.	Antidiabetic [11], antitumor, analgesic, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory

Name	Rasa Panchak	Family	Phytonutrients and Compounds	Pharmacological Actions
12. Pattashak (Nadik)  <p>Fig. 1.12 Source: https://indiabiodiversity.org/files/api/api/get/raw/img//Corchorus%20capsularis/Corchorus_capsularis_1.jpg</p>	Tikta, Madhur, Reduces Krumi, Kushtha, Raktapitta	Tiliaceae, Corchorus capsularis	Protein, lipid, calcium, iron, carotene, vitamins, folic acid	Anti inflammatory, cardioprotective[12]
13. Grunjan (Gajar) Carrot  <p>Fig. 1.13 Source: https://seed2plant.in/cdn/shop/products/carrotseeds.jpg?v=1604032858</p>	Madhur, Tikta, Ushna, Tikshna, Deepana, Laghu, Grahi	Umbelliferae, Daucus carota	Carotenes, vit C, Vit A, Phenols, polyacetylenes	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, plasma lipid modification, and anti-tumour properties[13]
14. Vruntak Phala (Bhanta/baingan) Brinjal  <p>Fig. 1.14 Source: https://organicmandya.com/cdn/shop/files/Brinjal.jpg?v=1721370805&width=1000</p>	Madhur, Tikta,	Solanum melongema, Solanaceae	Flavonoids, alkaloids, glycosides, saponins, tannins, sterols	Anti-inflammatory, anti-diabetic, anti-cancer, anti-rheumatic, anti-cholesterol
15. Varahi Kanda (Genthi)  <p>Fig. 1.15 Source: https://m.media-amazon.com/images/I/61-yZ1Y8YML_AC_UF1000,1000_QL80_.jpg</p>	Katu, Tikta, Rasayan, Balya, Deepana	Dioscoriaceae, Dioscoria bulbifera	catechin, kaempferol, catechuic acid, cortisones, bafoudiosbulbins, diosbulbins, xanthins, dioscin and dioscrine	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antihyperlipidemic, antihelminthic and antileprosy
16. KEMUKA (Kemua, Kebuk)  <p>Fig 1.16 Source: https://toptropicals.com/pics/garden/m2/2020/10/IMG_20201018_124328857_Cheilocostus_speciosus_TA.jpg</p>	Tikta, Katu, Shita, Grahi, Deepana, Pachana, Hridya, Laghu	Zingiberaceae, Costus speciosus	flavones, flavonols, isoflavones, anthocyanins, flavanols, proanthocyanidins and other plant phenolics	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, Anti lipid, and anti-cancer

Phytocompounds found in *Tikta Aahar Dravyas*

- **Tannins:** They accelerate blood clotting, reduce blood pressure, decrease the serum lipid level, and modulate immune responses.
- **Glycosides:** It is known to help reduce inflammation, improve digestion, and boost the immune system. It can also help to reduce cholesterol levels, improve blood sugar levels, and reduce the risk of certain types of cancer.
- **Saponins:** Saponins decrease blood lipids, lower cancer risks, and lower blood glucose response.
- **Flavonoids:** They show anti-cancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-viral properties
- **Terpenoids:** They have anticancer, antioxidant, antiviral, and anti-atherosclerotic activities.
- **Carotenoids:** A very good antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-cancer, provides good vision, strong immunity, mucous membrane
- **Vitamins & Minerals:** Vit B complex, Vit A, Vit C, Fe, Cu, S, K, Ca, Mg, P, Na, Cl & much more.

Bitter taste receptor theory as per Modern texts

Taste perception starts right from the tongue. Tongue has approximately 2000-10,000 taste buds. Among them, Bitter taste receptors, also known as type 2 taste receptors (TAS2Rs or T2Rs), are G protein-coupled receptors (GPCRs) that detect bitter, potentially harmful substances. They are also found in places apart from the tongue. They are also found in several extra-oral systems including the intestine, airways, urinary tract, vascular smooth muscle, nervous system, thyroid gland and airway smooth muscle.[14]

1) Respiratory tract: Bitter compounds increase the cilia beat frequency in airway epithelium which prevents the pathogen colonisation by increasing the mucociliary clearance. It also relaxes the pre-contracted smooth muscle airway.[15]

2) Gastrointestinal tract: Bitter compounds have been known to modulate gastrointestinal motility by delaying gastric emptying and increase satiety.[16]

3) Cardiovascular system: It has been shown to modulate cardiac contractibility and vascular tone. It also shows potential in sensing danger signals.[17]

4) Others: They are also involved in various parts of brain, bladder, reproductive system

Bitter taste in disease prevention

1) Type 2 DM: The aetiopathology of type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) is characterized by insulin resistance and initial hyperinsulinemia, followed by a gradual decline in ability of pancreatic beta cells to produce insulin. In addition, incretin dysregulation, lipolysis, hyperinsulinemia, increased renal glucose reabsorption and central appetite regulation play a central role in pathophysiology of Type 2 DM. Incretin secretion is released after ingestion and regulates glucose homeostasis. Mammalian TAS2R and sensitizing molecules are expressed in intestinal mucosa and mobilize intestinal TAS2R to stimulate secretion of GLP-1 and even gut hormones by intestinal endocrine cells. GLP-1 is an important candidate for development of anti-diabetic drugs that regulate blood glucose levels by various mechanisms, including modulation of insulin production. GLP-1 and its receptor in beta and delta cells of pancreas (GLP-1R) interact to stimulate biosynthesis and release of insulin and somatostatin, respectively, thereby lowering blood glucose levels.[18]

2) Obesity: Obesity, which now affects around 1/3 of the world's population, is gradually being recognised as a global health problem. It is thought to be associated with altered gene expression in the taste buds. TAS2R in gastrointestinal endocrine cells controls appetite secretion and regulates gut hormones that affect hunger and food intake. It has shown to have inhibitory effect on Ghrelin secretion, regulate gastrointestinal motility, induces delayed gastric emptying, inducing satiety. The presence of bitter taste receptors in the gastrointestinal tract may facilitate weight control in obese patients and may serve as novel receptors that alter hunger signaling in humans.

3) Hyperlipidemia: Bitter compounds reduced the proliferation and differentiation of preadipocytes, while both overexpression and knockdown of TAS2R reduced up to accumulation in adipocytes and decreased the expression of adipogenic genes. This shows potential role of bitter compounds in regulating lipid levels.

4) Cancer: Bitter compounds counteracts most typical capabilities of cancerous cells during cancer development and progression.

By regulating growth suppression, deregulating cellular energetics and apoptosis as well as promoting invading and metastatic capabilities.[19]

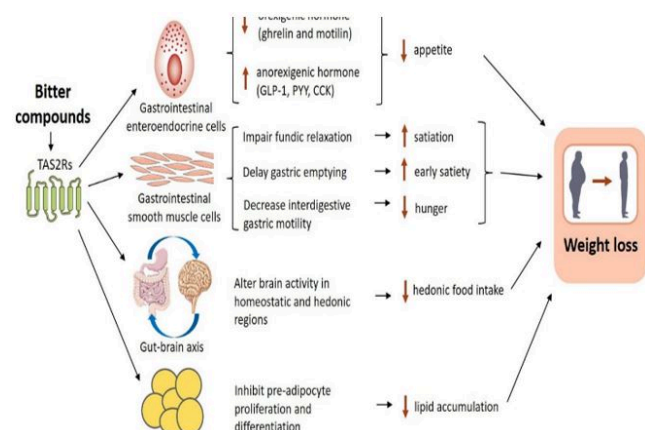


Figure 2: Action of Bitter Compounds



Figure 3: Bitter compounds in Cancer

Discussion

Tikta Aahar Dravyas contain many phytochemicals such as alkaloids, saponins, phenols, glycosides, flavonoids which have been proven to have Anti-diabetic, Anti-cancer, Anti-dyslipidemic, Anti-inflammatory effects. These effects would prove to be beneficial in patients with lifestyle disorders as a curative measure. Proper medications followed with exercise and diet comprising of *Tikta Shaka Varga* vegetables may help in losing weight sustainably, managing sugar, cholesterol levels naturally. *Tikta shaka varga* vegetables must be consumed in adequate quantity and never consumed raw.

They must be cooked and dressed with hingu, saindhav and maricha in order to reap maximum benefits and to pertain to all types of Prakriti patients. *Tikta Aahar Dravyas* also have many essential phytonutrients like Vit B complex, Vit A, Vit C, Fe, Cu, S, K, Ca, Mg, P, Na, Cl etc. They're a rich vegetarian source of all beneficial Vitamins and Minerals. *Tikta Aahar Dravyas* can also be consumed as a prevention, to be disease free in the longer run.

Out of all six *Rasas* *Tikta Rasa* is considered best for *Agni Deepana*. It does *Pachana* of *Ama*. It has the potential to digest metabolic wastes which have been accumulated for years (*Visha Roopa*) by its *Vishaghna* quality. It does *Lekhana*, *Rukshana* and removes excess *Kleda* which is beneficial in *Sthaulya*, *Kaphaj Vyadhis*, *Prameha* etc.

It does *Shodhana* of *Doshas* inside the body. It is *Rasa-Rakta Prasadak*. In *Santarpanjanya Vyadhis*, *Rasavaha* and *Annavaha Srotas* are involved first; *Tikta Rasa* works on both. *Tikta Shaaka Dravyas* holds potential to prevent and cure lifestyle disorders when used properly in our diet.

Diabetes	Kushmandi, Kushmandi Bheda, Katu Tumbi, Chichind, Karvellak, Raja Koshataki, Patola, Bimbi, Shigru, Tanduliya, Vrutnak Phala
Dyslipidemia	Kushmandi Bheda, Karvellak, Raja Koshataki, Patola, Bimbi, Grunjan, Vrutnak Pala, Varahikanda, Kemuka
Cancer	Katu Tumbi, Karvellak, Raja Koshataki, Tanduliya, Grunjan, Vrutnak Phala, Kemuka
Cardiac Disorders	Kushmandi Bheda, Shigru, Pattashak
Hypertension	Kushmandi, Kushmandi Bheda, Patola, Raja Koshataki
Alzheimers/Dementia	Karvellak

Conclusion

Considering various activities of *Tikta Rasa* viz. *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Rukshana*, *Lekhana*, *Vishaghna*, *Krumighna* it is observed that it is highly beneficial as preventive as well as curative in Lifestyle disorders. Evidence based scientific researches have also proven its efficacy and effectiveness in Diabetes, Obesity, Hyper Cholesterolremia, Cardiac diseases, Cancers etc. As *Tikta Rasa Aahar Dravyas* are being neglected in our diet nowadays, if we include it in our daily diet with delicious recipes as described in our classical scriptures, it can successfully be used as a sustained intervention of lifestyle disorders.

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