



Concept of *Dravyaguna* and Contribution towards Drug Action: an Ayurveda View

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ABSTRACT: The ancient Ayurveda philosopher described the concept of *Dravyaguna* which deals with the properties of drugs and also establishes correlation between Ayurveda properties of *Dravya* and their biological action. The concept of *Dravyaguna* related with the nature, nomenclature, actions and properties, etc. of *Dravyas*. The *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, *Prabhava* and *Karma* of *Dravya* play major role towards their biological action. The Ayurveda *Samhitas* put great emphasis on the concept of *Dravyaguna*. The *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka* and *Prabhava* affects *Doshas* and *Dhatus* thus exhibited pharmacological actions. These attributes of Ayurveda drugs also alter *Agni* and *Strotas*, thus affects physiological functioning significantly. The properties of drugs considered responsible for specific therapeutic responses including pacification of *Dosha*, potentiating *Dhatus*, curing vitiation of *Agni* and relieving obstruction of *Strotas*, etc. These all therapeutic properties of *Dravya* can be attributed to their *Guna*, *Virya*, *Rasa* and *Vipaka*. The knowledge of *Dravyaguna Vigyan* is very essential not only for therapeutic utilization of drugs but also for suggesting appropriate *Ahara* for diseased person since particular qualities of *Ahara* imparts specific responses which can either cause or treat diseases.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Dravya, Dravyaguna, Ahara, Properties

INTRODUCTION

Dravyaguna is science described by Ayurveda philosopher with respect to the properties of substances especially *Aushadhi* (drug substances) and *Ahara* (dietary substances). The properties of substances play role towards their biological action. Similarly substances like *Visha* exhibited fatal action by virtue of their properties that can be explained by the concept of *Dravyaguna* [1-4].

The properties of *Dravyas* (drugs) are responsible for therapeutic action but also responsible for harmful effects if consumed inappropriately. The adverse effects of drug overdosing can be attributed to their *Dravyaguna*. Similarly the harmful effect of *Virudha Ahara* is due to their inherent properties [3-5].

- ❖ The *Dravyaguna* contributed towards *Panchabhutas* (*Akasha*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Jala* and *Prithivi*).
- ❖ Inherent properties of drug substances alter states of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* thus helps to synchronize their balances in pathological conditions.
- ❖ *Dravyaguna* of *Aushadhi* and *Ahara* affects *Dhatus*, *Agni* and *Srotas* thus imparts some biological actions.

- ❖ The pharmacokinetic of *Aushadhi* inside the body merely depends upon their properties.
- ❖ Similarly adsorption, assimilation and elimination of *Ahara* depend upon their *Guna*, *Rasa* and *Vipaka*, etc.

The qualities of *Dravyas* (substances; drug & food, etc.) that can affect their action on the biological system are depicted in **Figure 1**.

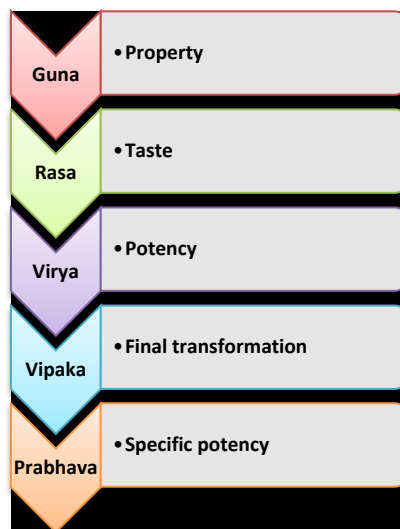


Figure 1: Qualities of *Dravyas* (drugs and foods, etc.) responsible for their biological action

As mentioned in Figure 1, these qualities of substances contributed towards their biological action (*Karma*).

GUNAS

Guna can be explained as inherent property of substances which imparts some particular actions on biological system, thus before selecting *Ahara* and *Aushadhi* the consideration of their *Guna* is very important [4-6].

The somatic *Guna* of substances are as follows:

- ✓ *Guru*: Heavy
- ✓ *Laghu*: Light
- ✓ *Shita*: Cold
- ✓ *Ushna*: Hot
- ✓ *Snigdha*: Unctuous
- ✓ *Ruksha*: Rough
- ✓ *Manda*: Dull
- ✓ *Tikshna*: Sharp
- ✓ *Shlakshna*: Smooth
- ✓ *Khara*: Course
- ✓ *Sandra*: Solid
- ✓ *Drava*: Liquid
- ✓ *Mridu*: Soft
- ✓ *Kathina*: Hard
- ✓ *Sthira*: Stable
- ✓ *Sara*: Unstable
- ✓ *Sukshma*: Minute

- ✓ *Sthula*: Gross
- ✓ *Vishada*: Non slimy
- ✓ *Pichhila*: Slimy

The Psychic qualities (*Guna*) of *Dravyas*:

<i>Ichcha</i>	Desire
<i>Dvesha</i>	Aversion
<i>Sukha</i>	Pleasure
<i>Duhkha</i>	Pain
<i>Prayatna</i>	Will
<i>Buddhi</i>	Determinative Intellect

RASA

Rasa is the object of sense organ responsible for particular type of taste. *Rasa* is combination of *Bhutas* in *Dravya*.

Rasas of *Dravyas*:

<i>Madhura</i>	Sweet
<i>Amla</i>	Sour
<i>Lavana</i>	Salty
<i>Katu</i>	Pungent
<i>Tikta</i>	Bitter
<i>Kashay</i>	Astringent

- ✚ *Madhura Rasa* pacifies *Pitta* and promotes strength
- ✚ *Amla Rasa* pacifies *Vata* and offers *Dipana-pachana* effects.
- ✚ *Lavana Rasa* pacifies *Vata*, it imparts carminative, digestive and appetizer properties, etc.
- ✚ *Katu Rasa* pacifies *Kapha* aggravation, stimulates digestive fire and cure constipation.
- ✚ *Tikta Rasa* pacifies *Kapha* and facilitates process of detoxification.
- ✚ *Kashaya* pacifies *Pitta*, cure diarrhoea and stop discharge.

Vipaka

Vipaka represents final transformed state of drugs after complete digestion. *Vipaka* determines future course of drug action after biotransformation.

***Vipaka* can be categorizes as follows:**

According to taste and effect on <i>Doshas</i>	According to properties
<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru</i>
<i>Amla</i>	<i>Laghu</i>
<i>Katu</i>	-

- ❖ *Madhura vipaka* helps in excretions and pacifies *Pitta*.
- ❖ *Amla vipaka* offers carminative effect and improves digestion.
- ❖ *Katu vipaka* helps to cure anorexia and relieves nausea/vomiting.

Virya

Virya is *Shakti* that can be described as potency of substance. Drug acts as instrument by virtue of its *Virya*. It is believed that *Virya* decides onset and intensity of action of *Dravyas*.

- *Shita Virya* produces contentment and gives soothing effect.
- *Ushna Virya* offers digestive and purgative properties.
- *Snigdha Virya* gives pleasantness and *Vaajikaran* effect
- *Ruksha Virya* is good for *Sangrahana*
- *Guru Virya* fills cavities and gives *Sanshleshana* action
- *Laghu Virya* offers *Kledaachushana* and *Lekhana* effects

Prabhava (Specific Power)

Prabhava can be described as specific property of substances or something being different from common qualities. This specific power of *Dravyas* depends upon their *Bhautika* composition. The specific power known as *Prabhava*, substances may exert following specific actions by virtue of their *Prabhava*:

Drugs	Prabhava Action
<i>Shirisha</i>	<i>Vishaghna</i>
<i>Danti</i>	<i>Virechna karma</i>
<i>Guggulu</i>	<i>Mansa karma</i>

Ergot is analgesic drug but by virtue of *Prabhava* action it helps in pain and migraine. Similarly Colchicine is useful for pain in case of gout but it is ineffective in other conditions of pain like; osteoarthritis. Its analgesic action in gout only can be attributed to its *Prabhava* [7-9].

KARMA (Action)

Karma (action) of substances is defined as the cause of conjunction and disjunction that results movement and some activities. As like *Guna* the *Karma* is also located in *Dravya*, *Karma* does not require any other factors for creating the effects. *Karma* also not requires any other *Karma* for its operation since it is considered as *Vaisheshikasutra* means *Karma* does not caused any another *Karma*.

Dravyaguna and mode of drug action:

The drug action is related with following basic fundamentals:

- Concept of *Loka-purusha-samya*
- Similar/dissimilar properties increases or decreases effects of substances inside the body
- The internal *Prana* of combined with the qualities of external *Prana* of five *Bhutas* to exert some biological action.
- When *Rasa* are of in equal strength, then *Rasa* is subdued by *Vipaka* and *Virya*.
- When *Rasa* are in unequal strength the potent one overcomes the weaker one
- When there is inequality of strength of *Rasa* then their own action arises due to their inherent property [9-11].

CONCLUSION

The Ayurveda concept of *Dravyaguna* deals with properties of drugs and food stuffs, etc. This branch dedicated to the identification, nomenclature and descriptions of *Dravya*. The biological action of *Dravya* attributed to their properties including; *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka* and *Prabhava*. As per Ayurveda the *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka* and *Prabhava* of *Dravya* affect *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, *Agni*, *Srotas* and *Mala*, etc. thus exhibited biological actions inside the human body when these *Dravya* consumed as *Aushadhi* (drug substances) and *Ahara* (dietary substances). The properties of drugs are considered responsible for their specific therapeutic responses. Similarly health benefits of *Ahara* can be attributed to their properties. *Dravyaguna* contributed towards *Panchabhutas* constitution (*Akasha*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Jala* and *Prithivi*) and

inherent properties of drug substances alter states of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* thus helps to synchronize their balances in pathological conditions. The pharmacokinetic of *Aushadhi* inside the body merely depends upon their properties. Similarly absorption, assimilation and elimination of *Ahara* depend upon their *Guna*, *Rasa* and *Vipaka*, etc. The *Dravyaguna* not only provides health benefits but also causes harmful effects if *Dravya* (*Aushadhi* and *Ahara*) consumed inappropriately. The knowledge of *Dravyaguna Vigyan* is very important not only for therapeutic utilization of drugs but also for suggesting *Pathya Ahara* for diseased person.

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