

## THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL OF VIPAK AND VIRYA: A AYURVEDIC APPROACH

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda works for the maintenance of harmony of life and achievement of good health status. Ayurveda offers extensive theories for the healthy well being in all aspects. The concept of *Dravyaguna* is one such approach of Ayurveda science which refers to the properties of substances. These properties of substances are responsible for biological effects and when comes to drug then these inherent properties (*Dravyaguna*) contributed for the therapeutic responses. The therapeutic efficacy of remedies merely depends upon their inherent properties such as; *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya* and *Vipaka*. *Rasa* describes taste of drug, *Guna* attributes to the quality, *Virya* resembles potency and *Vipaka* represents post-digestive effect. These properties guide the specific biological responses and therapeutic outcomes in treating various conditions. *Virya* and *Vipaka* play major role in the biological action of drugs as well as *Ahara*, many substances exerts effects by virtue of their potency (*Virya*) and active metabolite (*Vipaka*). This article explores the biological significance of *Virya* and *Vipaka*.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda, Dravyaguna, Virya, Vipaka, Property.*

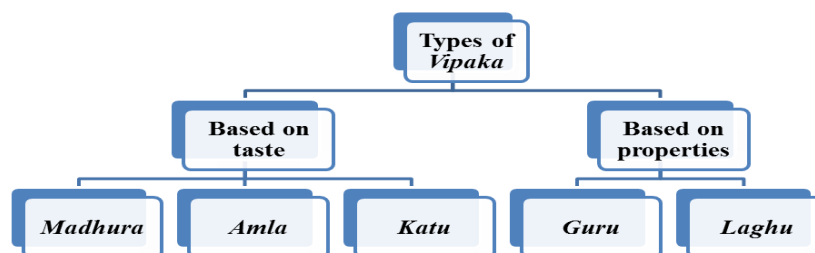
### INTRODUCTION

The various branches of Ayurveda enriched with the comprehensive knowledge about the diseases and their treatment. The various processes of body physiological as well as pathological mainly governed by the *Tridosha*, *Dhatu*, *Agni* and *Mala/Ama*, etc. Balanced state of these entities is considered essential for normal health. Any imbalance leads to pathological symptoms as a resultant of disturbed physiology. *Dravyas* such as *Ahara* and drugs plays crucial role in maintaining this balance and eradicating any effects of misbalanced harmony.<sup>[1-3]</sup> The properties of these *Dravyas* (*Ahara* and Drugs) help to maintain biological balances and keep normal health status. Taste, inherent quality, potency and post-digestive

effect are major attributes of *Dravyas* which significantly influence and support biological equilibrium. Ayurveda drugs possess some characteristic properties which can pacify the imbalances of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Mala*, etc. The therapeutic efficacy of drugs determined by their inherent properties, *Virya* and *Vipaka* contributed greatly for achieving this goal.<sup>[4-6]</sup>

#### *Vipaka*

*Vipaka* refers to the metabolite of digestive resultant of a substance, which can alter biological action of drug molecule. *Vipaka* classified into two different ways as depicted in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1: Various types of vipaka.**

As depicted in Figure 1, *Vipaka* are mainly three types: *Madhura Vipaka* has sweet taste, *Katu Vipaka* offers pungent taste and *Amla Vipaka* possess sour taste. *Vipaka* associated with *Virya* since *Madhura* and *Katu Vipaka* are associated with *Shita* and *Ushna Virya* respectively.

*Vipaka* influences *Doshas* in specific ways; *Madhura Vipaka* pacifies *Vata Dosha*, *Katu Vipaka* elevates *Pitta Doshas* and *Amla Vipaka* increases *Pitta Dosha*.

**Biological significance of vipaka**

- ✚ **Amla vipaka:** Enhances digestion, supports metabolic processes and helps in excretion of urine.
- ✚ **Katu vipaka:** Relieves constipation, improves circulation and imparts stimulating effect.
- ✚ **Madhura vipaka:** Promotes excretion, helps in gaining weight and nourishes body.

*Vipaka* reflects the change in taste after the digestion, involves in biotransformation of *Dravya* altering the inherent properties of the substance. *Madhura Vipaka* has *Snigdha* and *Ruksha* qualities thus increase *Kapha Dosha*, while *Katu Vipaka* increases *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha*. The specific *Vipaka* of a substance significantly influences its therapeutic actions. Substances with a sweet and salty taste produce *Madhura Vipaka*. Substances with a sour taste result in a *Amla Vipaka*. Substances with pungent, bitter and astringent tastes produce *Katu Vipaka*.<sup>[5-7]</sup>

Typically, the original *Rasa* of a substance remains unchanged through digestion, thus substance possess *Vipaka* as it present in original state, but in certain cases, a definite change occurs, resulting in a different *Vipaka*. This change plays a role in determining the substance's subsequent effects on the body after the metabolic transformation. *Sushruta* suggests correlation of *Vipaka* with *Bhutas*, according to him, when *Prithivi* and *Jala* are predominate, the *Vipaka* is *Guru*, while when the other three elements dominate, *Vipaka* is *Laghu*. In this context, *Guru* is associated with *Madhura Vipaka*, and *Laghu* corresponds to *Katu* and *Amla Vipaka*.

*Charaka's* classification emphasizes taste and its effects on the *Doshas*, while *Sushruta* focuses on the elemental properties that influence *Vipaka*. Together, these perspectives provide a more comprehensive understanding of how *Vipaka* determines the therapeutic action of substances after digestion. Different *Vipaka* acts differently on same biological system, for example *Madhura Vipaka* enhances semen production, *Amla Vipaka* and *Katu Vipaka* decreases semen contrary to *Madhura Vipaka*. Each *Vipaka* has distinct influences on the *Doshas*, *Dhatus* and *Malas*.<sup>[3-5]</sup>

*Vipaka* is crucial in determining the ultimate effects of ingested substances, as their wholesome or unwholesome impact on the body is realized only after their final transformation. The effects of a substance depend on its *Vipaka*, which dictates whether the substance will produce beneficial or harmful outcomes. The overall effect of different types of *Vipaka* is detailed in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Biological and Therapeutic role of different types of vipaka.**

<i>Vipaka</i>	Primary Taste	<i>Dosha</i> Effects	Impact on Digestion	Disease Management
<i>Madhura</i>	Sweet	Pacifies <i>Vata</i> and <i>Pitta</i>	Promotes nourishment and tissue growth	Helps in managing <i>Vata</i> and <i>Pitta</i> disorders. Effective in conditions of debility, anemia, and emaciation.
<i>Amla</i>	Sour	Pacifies <i>Vata</i> , Increases <i>Pitta</i> and <i>Kapha</i>	Stimulates appetite and digestion	Useful in digestive disorders like loss of appetite, indigestion, and malabsorption.
<i>Katu</i>	Pungent	Pacifies <i>Kapha</i> , Increases <i>Vata</i> and <i>Pitta</i>	Improves metabolism and reduces fat	Effective in managing <i>Kapha</i> disorders, obesity, and respiratory conditions like asthma.

**Virya**

*Virya* refers to the potency which influences onset of action as well as duration of action of drugs or substances. *Virya* can be classified into various types including *Shita Virya*, *Ushna Virya*, *Ruksha Virya*, *Guru Virya*, *Laghu Virya* and *Mridu Virya*. These different categories of *Virya* influences *Dosha* differently as follows:

- *Shita Virya* pacifies *Pitta Dosha*

- *Ushna Virya* pacifies *Kapha Dosha*
- *Ruksha Virya* pacifies *Kapha Dosha*
- *Guru Virya* pacifies *Vata Dosha*
- *Laghu Virya* pacifies *Kapha Dosha*
- *Mridu Virya* pacifies *Pitta Dosha*

Another classification broadly elaborated *Virya* as *Dwividha Virya* and *Asthavidha Virya*, their further sub classification is depicted in **Figure 2**.

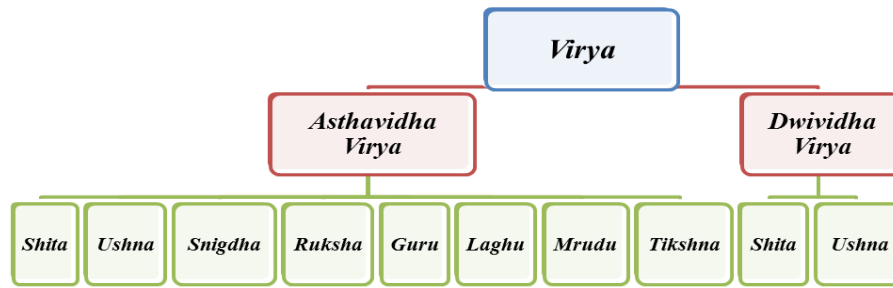


Figure 2: Various subcategories of *dwividha Virya* and *Asthavidha virya*.

Other classification suggests different categories of *Virya* based on their intensity of action as *Teekshna Virya*, *Madhyama Virya* and *Mridu Virya*.<sup>[6-8]</sup> Here are some examples of drugs belong from this specific classification:

1. *Shunthi* possess *Teekshna Veerya*
2. *Bilva* offers *Madhyama Veerya*
3. *Amalakadi* has *Mridu Veerya*

### Biological and Therapeutic significance of *virya*

*Snigdha Virya* enhances aphrodisiac effects and offers a *Vaajikaran* impact, *Snigdha Virya* also promotes strength, imparts oleation and cure early aging. *Shita Virya* relieves burning sensations, give soothing effect and controls fever, etc. *Ushna Virya* supports metabolic functions and boosts digestion. *Ushna Virya* also offers purgative property. *Guru Virya* helps in filling of body cavities and provides stability and rigidity. Drugs having *Ruksha Virya* used in dysentery heals wounds and offers *Virukshan* property. *Laghu Virya* possesses *Kledaachushana* property, has *Lekhana* effects thus heals wounds and offers *Uparopan* action. *Mrudu Virya* promotes health of blood and muscle imparts *Rakta-Mansa Prasadana* property. *Tikshna Virya* dries moisture, and has *Avadaran* and *Stravan* effects. *Virya* associated with the *Gunas* and complements the *Rasas* of substances. Hot potency offers sour, salty and pungent tastes while cold potency offers astringent, sweet and bitter tastes.<sup>[7-9]</sup>

*Virya* is very crucial for drug action if it has to act by its potency. The intensity of drug action merely depends upon *Virya*. *Virya* is not an inherent quality but it helps in the interaction of substance with the body's systems. *Virya* can be viewed as the concentrated essence of the *Bhutas* of drug. It is often represented by the active fraction of the substance, which contains this essence. The onset and duration of action of drug mainly depends upon their *Virya*. Thus selection of drug for acute and chronic conditions can be done by deciding their *Virya*.<sup>[8-10]</sup>

### CONCLUSION

*Dravyaguna* refers to the properties of *Dravya* responsible for their therapeutic actions. These properties include taste, qualities, potency, post-digestive effect and specific effects, etc. potency described as *Virya* while post-digestive effect described as *Vipaka*, these two hold great importance towards the contribution of drug action.

*Virya* as potency or strength of substance decide onset and duration of action. *Vipaka* as final metabolite influences the long-term effects of the drug on the body's system. These principles support pharmacological significance of substances and contribute towards the therapeutic efficacy drug. *Madhura Vipaka* pacifies *Vata Dosh*, *Katu Vipaka* elevates *Pitta Dosh* and *Amla Vipaka* increases *Pitta Dosh*. Similarly *Virya* impacts action of *Dosha*; *Shita Virya* pacifies *Pitta Dosh*, *Ushna Virya* pacifies *Kapha Dosh*, *Ruksha Virya* pacifies *Kapha Dosh*, *Guru Virya* pacifies *Vata Dosh*, *Laghu Virya* pacifies *Kapha Dosh* and *Mridu Virya* pacifies *Pitta Dosh*. These effects of *Virya* and *Vipaka* on *Dosha* attribute for the therapeutic properties of drugs acts by their *Virya* and *Vipaka*.

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