



Review Article

NEED OF REDEFINING RASA-DOSHA DYNAMICS - A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

There are standard descriptions on the relationship between *Doshas* and *Rasa* in Ayurveda textbooks. Particular *Rasas* increase/decrease respective *Doshas*, so that *Rasas* become causes of diseases through excess usage. In the other side they classify *Doshas* having opposite characters. Even when the standard *Rasa dosha* relationship prevails, in practice it is often observed that such relations are surmounted. Here is an effort to explore such phenomenon. Methodology: 1. Survey was conducted among practitioners with a structured semi validated questionnaire to collect ideas regarding most repeated *Dosha* in diseases reported at general clinics and to enlist most frequently used *Kashaya yogas* in general practice. 2. Findings were tabulated. 3. Most frequently used *Kashaya yogas* were analysed for *Rasas* of their ingredients and *rasa* profiles of the formulations were prepared. Results: From the survey it was found that most repeated *Doshas* among diseases is *Vata*. Among the most frequently used *Kashayas* majority belong to *Vatahara* group. But from the *Rasa* profiles prepared it was found that most of the ingredients belong to *Tikta-kashaya rasa*. This finding is contradicted with the conventional *Rasa-dosha* relationship. Because *Tikta-kashaya rasas* usually increase *Vata*. Conclusion: Even though *Rasa dosha* relationship is vital in Ayurveda, in practice some of the rules are violated.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda the basic concept of drug action is expounded with the help of principles of *Rasa panchaka* i.e., *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka* and *Prabhava*.^[1] Among them, *Rasa* (taste) is deemed to be first and direct indicator of drug action. So, it has been given importance in Ayurvedic classics. *Rasa* can be defined as the knowledge perceived through *Rasanendriya*. We have the concepts of *Rasa* and *Anurasa*. Among tastes present in a substance, that which is clearly recognized is designated as *Rasa*/primary taste and others which are not clearly manifested or which are understood at the end are *Anurasa*/secondary taste.^[2]

Rasa - dosha relationship is explicitly detailed in Ayurveda text books.

Among *Shad rasas*, *Madhura*, *Amla* and *Lavana rasas* alleviate *Vata dosha*., *Tikta*, *Katu* and *Kashaya rasas* alleviate *Kapha dosha* and *Kashaya*, *Tikta* and *Madhura rasas* alleviate *Pitta dosha*.³

Table 1: *Dosha & Rasas* alleviating *Dosha*

Name of <i>Dosha</i>	<i>Rasas</i> alleviating <i>Dosha</i>
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Madhura</i> , <i>Amla</i> , <i>Lavana</i>
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Kashaya</i> , <i>Tikta</i> , <i>Madhura</i>
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Tikta</i> , <i>Katu</i> , <i>Kashaya</i>


Gurvadi gunas which are considered to be located in *rasa* are actually based in *Dravya*, formed by *Panchamahabhutas* which also form the base of *Rasas*. The *Gunas* are attributed as being located in *Rasas* because of their concomitant coexistence^[4]. *Rasas* are graded to superior (*Uthama*), moderate (*Madhyama*) and inferior (*Avara*) based on the major qualities possessed by them^[5] as shown in table no 2.

Table 2: *Guna & Grades of Rasa*

<i>Guna</i>	<i>Uthama</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>	<i>Avara</i>
<i>Snigdha</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Amla</i>	<i>Lavana</i>
<i>Ruksha</i>	<i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Tikta</i>

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Sita	Kashaya	Madhura	Tikta
Ushna	Lavana	Amla	Katu
Guru	Madhura	Kashaya	Lavana
Laghu	Tikta	Katu	Amla

In Ayurveda, there are ample importance was given to application of particular Rasas abiding the general principle of Rasa – dosha relationship. To show this application, three instances are detailed below:

1. General treatment of Dosha

While describing the general treatment of Doshas, usage of Madhura, Amla, Lavana for the treatment of Vata, Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya for the treatment of Pitta and Katu, Tikta, Kashaya rasas for the treatment of Kapha can be seen.^{6,7,8}

2. Specific treatment of diseases

Rasa has been given importance in specific treatment of diseases also. For example usage of Madhura rasa has been told in Paithika kasa chikitsa^[9] and usage of Katu rasa predominant ghee in Kaphaja gulma.^[10]

3. Description about Prakriti

Prakriti is the personality trait dominated by particular Doshas which determines the primary psycho-physical characteristic of a person. This includes affinity to particular types of food materials. While describing these food materials, importance has been given to particular rasas. Comfort and cravings of Madhura, Amla and Lavana rasa for Vataja prakriti persons, Madhura, Kashaya, Tikta rasa for Pittaja prakriti persons, Tikta, Katu, Kashaya rasa for Kaphaja prakriti persons have been told during Prakriti description.^[11]

Similarly we can see the application of general rule of Rasa and Dosha throughout Ayurveda classical text books. But in general practice, especially in Kerala, mostly preferred formulation is Kashaya. Roughly it is observed that most of the Kashaya yogas contain Kashaya Tikta rasas even in formulations intended to treat Vataja diseases. It seems that there is non-conformity in practice regarding the application of Rasa-dosha dynamics mentioned in Ayurvedic classics. But, this phenomenon is not properly understood or analysed.

Hence, there is a curiosity to know the real scene behind this phenomenon. This enquiry is an attempt to explore the status of applying Rasa-Dosha relationship in general practice.

AIM OF THE STUDY

To review Rasa-Dosha relationship as evidenced from prescription of Kashaya yogas in general practice.

METHODOLOGY

- Survey among Ayurveda practitioners for identifying most commonly used Kashaya yogas.

- Listing out of mostly prescribed Kashaya yogas.
- Preparing rasa profile of yogas identified.
- Exploring the agreement of this Rasa profile with established Rasa - dosha dynamics.

Survey

For the purpose of collecting information regarding most repeated Dosha in diseases reported at general clinics and to enlist most frequently used Kashaya yogas in general practice an online survey using Google form was conducted. The questionnaire comprised of total 10 questions, the first 4 questions were to collect respondent’s personal information and the next 6 questions to gather information regarding mostly prescribed Kashaya yogas in general practice. Sampling procedure was purposive sampling. The questionnaire is attached as appendix-1.

Survey Observations and Results

50 Ayurveda practitioners of average practice of 10 years participated in the survey. For the first question which is regarding the common complaints of patients approaching mostly in OPD, 84% opined as between the age group of 30-60 years. Rheumatic complaints and neurological disorders were the common complaints of patient attending in OPD. For mostly used medicinal form, 80% participants agreed with the option Kashaya and most commonly used Kashaya yogas were Punarnavadi kashayam, Gandharva hasthadi kashayam, Amritotharam kashayam, Rasna saphthakam kashayam, Rasna erandadi kashayam and Maha rasnadi kashayam. 70% respondents opined that Dosha predominance of patient repeated mostly in OPD was of Vata predominance. For the last question, consideration of action of Rasa on Tridosha while prescribing drugs, 43% participants chose the option sometimes, 39% participants chose the option mostly and only 11% participants chose the option always.

Table 3: Kashaya yogas and their frequency

Kashaya	Frequency
Punarnavadi kashaya	66%
Gandharvahasthadi kashaya	60%
Rasnasaphthakam	54%
Amritotharam	54%
Dasamula katutrayam	52%
Rasna erandadi	51%
Maharasnadi	41%

Rasa Profile of Selected Kashaya Yogas

The most repeated seven Kashaya yogas were selected and their Rasa profiles were prepared. For this, the Rasa/s present in each ingredient is noted and tabulated to see the most repeating Rasa in a

formulation. Tables 4 to 10 and graphs 1 to 7 explain the *Rasa* profile of the selected *Yogas*.^[12]

Table 4: Gandharvahasthadi kashaya¹³

Ingredients	Rasa
Gandharvahastha	Madhura, Katu, Kashaya
Chiruvilva	Tikta, Kashaya
Hutasa	Katu
Viswa	Katu
Pathya	Kashaya
Punarnava	Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya
Yavashaka	Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya
Bhumitala	Madhura, Tikta

Table 5: Enumeration of rasa in Gandharvahasthadi kashaya

Rasa	Number
Madhura	4
Amla	0
Lavana	0
Tikta	4
Katu	3
Kashaya	5

Graph -1: Gandharva Hasthadi Kashaya

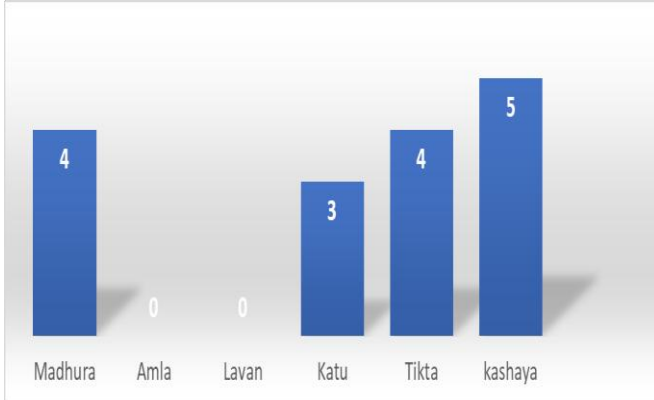


Table 6: Rasna Erandadi Kashaya¹⁴

Ingredients	Rasa
Rasna	Tikta
Eranda	Madhura, Katu, Kashaya
Bala	Madhura
Sahachara	Tikta, Madhura
Satavari	Madhura, Tikta
Dusparsa	Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya
Vasa	Tikta, Kashaya
Amrita	Tikta, Kashaya
Devahva	Tikta, Katu, Kashaya
Ativisha	Tikta, Katu

Ghana	Tikta, Katu, Kashaya
Ikshura	Madhura, Amla, Tikta
Sati	Tikta, Katu, Kashaya
Viswa	Katu

Table 7: Enumeration of rasa in Rasna erandadi kashaya

Rasa	Number
Madhura	6
Amla	1
Lavana	0
Tikta	11
Katu	6
Kashaya	7

Graph 2: Rasna erandadi kashaya

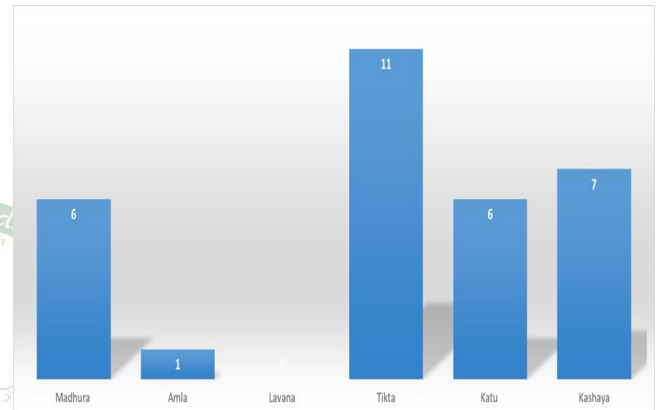


Table 8: Maha rasnadi kashaya¹⁵

Ingredients	Rasa
Rasna	Tikta
Dhanwayasha	Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya
Bala	Madhura
Eranda	Madhura, Katu, Kashaya
Devadaru	Tikta, Katu, Kashaya
Sati	Tikta, Katu, Kashaya
Vacha	Katu, Tikta
Vasa	Tikta, Kashaya
Nagara	Katu
Pathya	Kashaya
Chavya	Katu
Musta	Tikta, Katu, Kashaya
Punarnava	Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya
Guduci	Tikta, Kashaya
Vrdhadaru	Kashaya, Katu, Tikta
Satapushpa	Katu, Tikta
Gokshura	Madhura

Aswagandha	Katu, Tikta, Kashaya
Prativisha	Katu, Tikta
Krtamala	Madhura
Satavari	Madhura, Tikta
Krishna	Katu
Sahachara	Tikta, Madhura
Dhanyaka	Kashaya, Tikta
Brhati	Katu, Tikta

Table 9: Enumeration of Rasa in Maharasnadi kashaya

Rasa	Number
Madhura	8
Amla	0
Lavana	0
Tikta	17
Katu	13
Kashaya	12

Graph 3: Maharasnadi kashaya

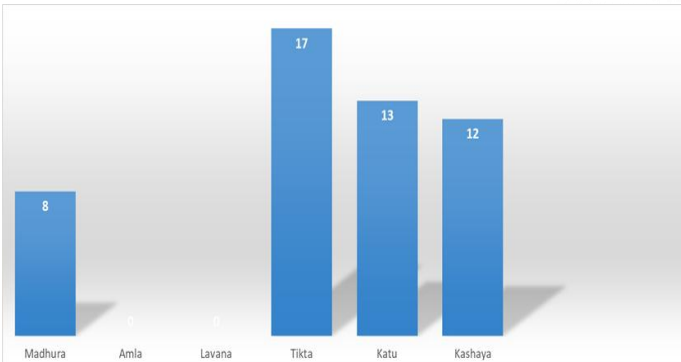


Table 10: Rasna saphthakam kashaya¹⁶

Ingredients	Rasa
Rasna	Tikta
Amrita	Tikta, Kashaya
Aragwada	Madhura
Devadaru	Tikta, Katu, Kashaya
Trikandaka	Madhura
Eranda	Madhura, Katu, Kashaya
Punarnava	Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya

Table 11: Enumeration of Rasa in Rasna saphthakam kashaya

Rasa	Number
Madhura	4
Amla	0
Lavana	0
Tikta	4
Katu	2

Kashaya	4
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Graph 4: Rasna saphthakam kashaya

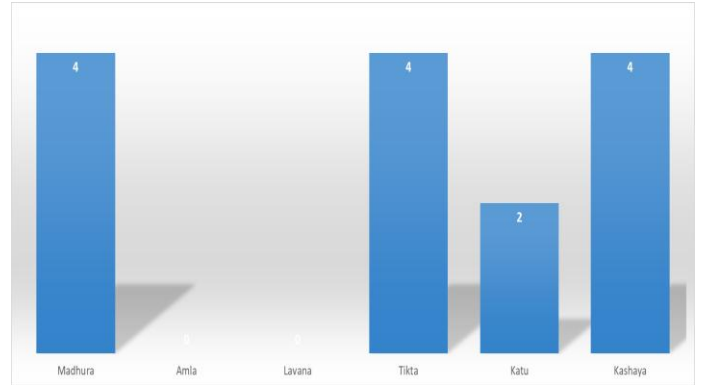


Table 12: Punarnavadi kashaya¹⁷

Ingredients	Rasa
Punarnava	Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya
Nimba	Tikta, Kashaya
Patola	Tikta
Sundi	Katu
Tikta	Tikta
Amrita	Tikta, Kashaya
Darvi	Tikta, Kashaya
Abhaya	Kashaya

Table 13: Enumeration of rasa in Punarnavadi kashaya

Rasa	Number
Madhura	1
Amla	0
Lavana	0
Tikta	6
Katu	1
Kashaya	5

Graph 5: Punarnavadi kashaya

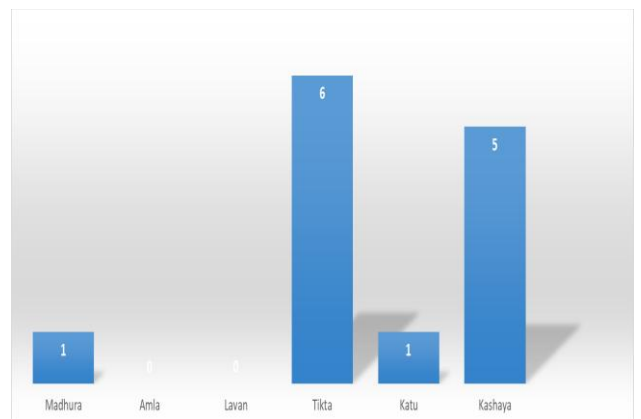


Table 14: Dasamula katutrayam kashaya¹⁸

Ingredients	Rasa
<i>Kasmari</i>	<i>Tikta, Kashaya, Madhura</i>
<i>Vilwa</i>	<i>Kashaya, Tikta</i>
<i>Patala</i>	<i>Tikta, Kashaya</i>
<i>Syonaka</i>	<i>Madhura, Tikta, Kashaya</i>
<i>Agnimantha</i>	<i>Tikta, Katu, Kashaya, Madhura</i>
<i>Salaparni</i>	<i>Madhura, Tikta</i>
<i>Prsniiparni</i>	<i>Madhura, Tikta</i>
<i>Brihati</i>	<i>Katu, Tikta</i>
<i>Kantakari</i>	<i>Katu, Tikta</i>
<i>Gokshura</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
<i>Nagara</i>	<i>Katu</i>
<i>Pippali</i>	<i>Katu</i>
<i>Maricha</i>	<i>Katu</i>
<i>Vrisha</i>	<i>Tikta, Kashaya</i>

Table 15: Enumeration of Rasa in Dasamula katutrayam kashaya

Rasa	Number
<i>Madhura</i>	6
<i>Amla</i>	0
<i>Lavana</i>	0
<i>Tikta</i>	10
<i>Katu</i>	6
<i>Kashaya</i>	6

Graph 6: Dasamulakatutrayam kashaya

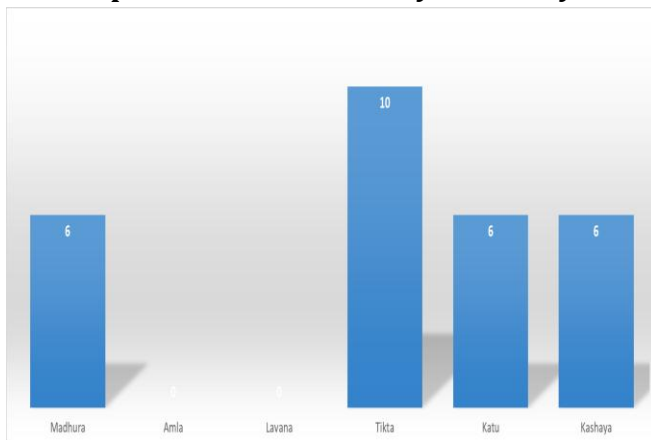


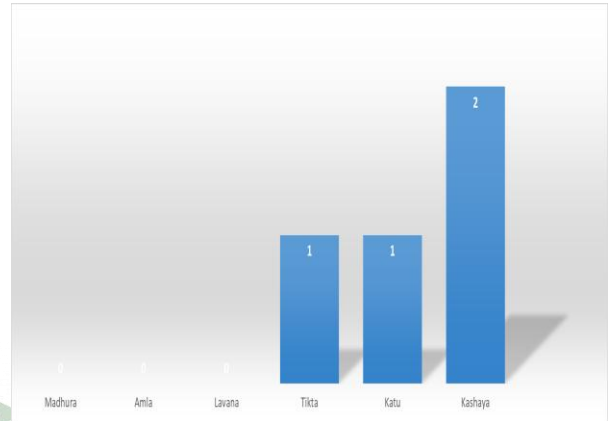
Table 16: Amritotharam kashaya¹⁹

Ingredients	Rasa
<i>Nagara</i>	<i>Katu</i>
<i>Amrita</i>	<i>Tikta, Kashaya</i>
<i>Hareetaki</i>	<i>Kashaya</i>

Table 17: Enumeration of Rasa in Amritotharam kashaya

Rasa	Number
<i>Madhura</i>	0
<i>Amla</i>	0
<i>Lavana</i>	0
<i>Tikta</i>	1
<i>Katu</i>	1
<i>Kashaya</i>	2

Graph 7: Amritotharam kashaya



Rasa Profile Observations

In *Gandharva hasthadi kashaya*, 56% of total Rasa constitutes *Tikta kashaya* rasas. In *Rasnaerandadi kashaya* and *Maharasnadi kashaya* 58% constitutes *Tikta* and *Kashaya* rasas. In *Rasnasapthakam kashaya* and *Dasamula katutrayam kashaya* 57% constitutes *tikta* and *kashaya* rasas. In *Punarnavadi kashaya*, 84% and in *Amritotharam kashaya*, 75% constitutes *Tikta* and *Kashaya* rasa.

Therefore it can conclude that the selected *Kashaya yogas* have *Tikta* and *Kashaya* rasa predominance for more than 50%.

DISCUSSION

When learning theory of Ayurveda, the primary lessons of basic principles of Ayurveda deals with *Rasa-dosha* relationship. That means, it is a primary understanding in Ayurveda and also it is much generalised one. As a primary concept, action (*Karma*) of a *Dravya* is said to be indicated by its *rasa* itself. Even though this indication is a general one, actually *Dravyas* exhibit much diversified activities in body. There are many modifications in *Rasa-Dosha* relationship, when it comes from principles to practice. *Dravya* and *Sarira* are the two domains those having *Panchabhautik* configuration. *Rasa* and *Dosha* are the representatives of *Dravya* and *Sarira* respectively. *Chikitsa* refers to the action of *Dravya* on *Sarira*. When the *rasa* simply located inside the *Dravya*, it cannot function, unlike *Dosha* does inside body. But, the action of *rasa* is revealed when *Dravya* comes in dynamic contact with *Sareera*. So it is said that, specific

manifestations of *Dravya* can be determined by taking into account the specific attributes of the *Rasas*. Even though *Rasa* is attributed with many types of qualities (*Guna*), it is assumed considering the association (*Sahacharya*) of such *Gunas* with respective *Rasas*, not an actual phenomenon. *Dravya* is the one which exhibits *Guna* and *Karma*.

Action attributed to *Rasas* does not hold good in all circumstances, it is not possible to determine the attributes of a *Dravya* having many *Rasas*, simply by taking into account, the attributes of individual *Rasas*.^[20] Hence, how *Dravya* acts on body is more important than its constitution.

Survey observations in the present study points out that, in practice *Vata rogas* are the common complaints and prescription contains *Kashaya* as the main medicinal form used with the predominance of *Kashaya & Tikta rasas*. The discrepancies in the relationship between *Rasa* and *Dosha* are very clear in this survey results and it becomes exceptional to the famous *Rasa- Dosha* relationship. In Ayurveda there are a few instances where exceptions become examples. While enlisting the best material in different *Rasa*-based groups (*Rasaskandha*) it can be seen that all those varieties are exceptional to the general characteristics of the *Rasa* to which it chiefly belongs. Ghee, gooseberry, rock salt, *Patola*, dry ginger, *Hareetaki* are best in the *Rasaskandha* in that order. All these exhibits exceptional properties in the group.^[21] That is the best example for how general principles vary in specific situations. Another example is use of *Tikta rasa* in the management of diseases caused by *Asthi kshaya*.²² Because *Asthi* and *Vayu* are having *Asraya asrayi* relationship²³ and usage of *Tikta rasa* in this situation stands exceptional with regard to *Rasa dosha* relationship. *Samanya visesha sidhantha* are the base for life and treatment, but, these all are exceptions to general rules of *Samanya visesha* theory. Hence, it is natural that there can be exceptions in any generalised principles in Ayurveda, which are becoming pivotal in practical applications. The case of *Rasa-Dosha* relationship also is such a context, as evidenced from this study.

CONCLUSION

Rasa-dosha relationship needs revision in the case of Ayurvedic drug prescription as evidenced from the survey conducted. In this approach, *Dravya* is more important in the initial stages of management than *Rasa*. The *Tikta & Kashaya Rasas* used in the initial stage is meant for *Pachana* and *Deepana*. *Avasthanusara chikitsa* is the unique concept of Ayurveda and *Ama pachana* is getting the prime importance. *Dravya prabhavam* is more important than *Rasa prabhavam*.

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