

# Ayurveda Perspectives on *Visha & Upavisha Dravyas* as *Rasaushadhi*:

## A Review

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### REVIEW ARTICLE

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#### ABSTRACT

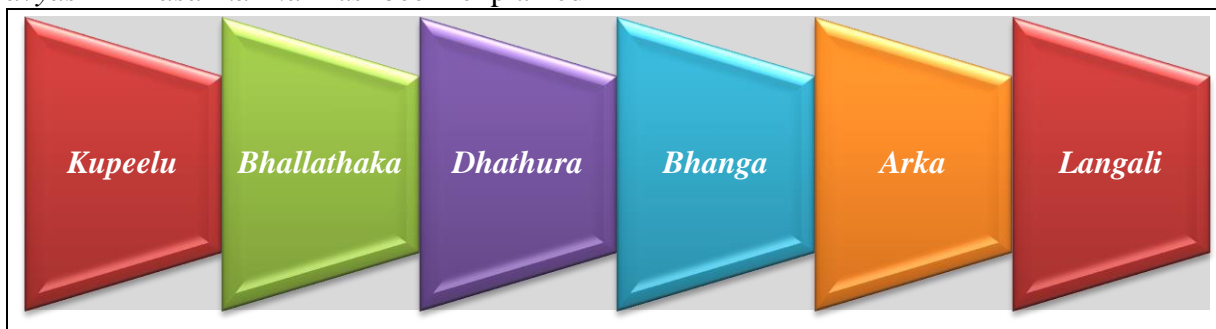
Ayurveda is science of long and healthy live which focuses on treatment of diseases. Ayurveda works around management of physical and mental health using various medicines involving herbs, metals and minerals. Ayurveda encompasses different stream including *Rasashastra* which utilizes *Rasa* drugs for therapeutic purposes. Many mineral, metal and plant based compounds involved in the preparation of formulations belong from *Rasa* category. These compounds may possess some toxic effects and utilizes only after proper purification process. Therefore it can be stated that *Upavisha Dravyas* can be used for health benefits after purification measure. *Rasa-shastra* involves utilization of many poisonous herbs, metals and minerals. Considering the therapeutic significance of such compounds this article exploring critical aspects of *Upavisha Dravyas* in *Rasa-shastra*.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Visha-Upavisha, Rasa-shastra, Agad Tantra

#### 1. Introduction

*Upavisha varga* are considered beneficial for since these compounds offers excellent properties like; good absorption, high efficacy in low dosing, minimal adverse effect and high potency, etc. Ayurveda suggested that manufacturing processes, standardization of quality and dosing of these drugs need to be taken in great care for avoiding any health consequences. Many ancients' literatures explained therapeutic perspective of *Upavisha Dravyas*. In this regards uses of *Upavisha dravyas* in *Rasa karma* has been explained

under the theoretical principle of *Rasashastra*. *Upavisha dravyas* not only possess advantage of quick effectiveness even in small dose but also provides therapeutic benefits in many chronic health ailments. However these drugs can imparts fatal and harmful effects inside the body if not prepared and used in proper manner. Similarly consideration of dosing of such drugs is very important aspect since at higher dose these drugs can leads toxic effects. The poisonous used as drugs in Ayurveda depicted in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** Common example of *Upavisha* used in Ayurveda

#### Descriptions of *Upavisha Varga* as per Classical Literatures:

Many poisonous drugs have been studied during 3000 BC even the Indian mythology also mentioned concept of *Visha* and *Amruta*.

Concept of *Vishachikitsa* is mentioned in *Brahmavaivarta puran* while *Sthavara* and *Jangama* poisons were described in *Atharvaveda*. Classification of poison also described in *Kalpa Sthan* of *Sushruta*. *Vagbhata* described *Visha* as; *Sthavara*, *Jangama* and *Garvisha*. As per *Rasatarangini* on the basis of origin *Visha Dravya* are two types i.e. plant and mineral origin (*Sthavara*) and *Jangama* (Animal origin). *Rasashastra* literatures described *Vihsa* and *Upavisha* as category of poisonous substances. *Mula*, *Phala*, *Twak*, *Niryas*, *Kanda* and *Puspha*, etc. are considered as *Sthavar Visha* while *Shwasa*, *Nahka*, *Drusti*, *Purisha* and *Mutra* are considered as *Jangama Visha*.

### Visha Guna

- ✓ *Ruksh Guna* responsible for *Vaat Prakopa*
- ✓ *Tikshna Guna* responsible for *Sarva Dosha Prakop*
- ✓ *Sukshma Guna* responsible for *Sharer Avayay Pravesh*
- ✓ *Ushna Guna* responsible for *Pitta Prakopa*
- ✓ *Laghu Guna* responsible for *Dushchikitsya*
- ✓ *Anirdeshya Rasa Guna* responsible for *Kapha Prakopa*

### Utilization of *Upavisha* in *Rasa-shastra*:

*Upavisha dravyas* employed in *Rasashastra* due to their specific qualities like *Rasa*

**Table 1: Specific Role of *Visha Dravya* in various Health Problems:**

S. No.	Therapeutic Purpose	Recommended <i>Visha Dravya</i>
1	To relives <i>Kaphaj</i> ailments	<i>Danti</i>
2	To prolonging labour	<i>Langli</i>
3	To pacify <i>Kapha</i>	<i>Snuhi</i>
4	For <i>Dhoopan</i> purpose	<i>Bhallatak</i>

The ingredients of poisonous plants are considered equally competent to react with *Rasa Dravya*. These drugs exert effects within short time periods due to their competent qualities; impart prolonged therapeutic effect and offers benefits of long shelf life. The *Visha* & *Upavishas* as *Rasaushadhi* helps to promote health, boost immunity, resist symptoms of

*Dravyas*. The *Shodhana* procedure utilized in *Rasashastra* not only reduces toxicity but also improve qualities of *Upavisha dravyas* by reducing their size. *Upavisha* being utilized in *Rasa-shastra* after *Shodhana* procedures; the measures of purification utilized in *Rasa-shastra* for toxic materials are as follows:

#### ✚ *Swedana & Gomutra Nimajjana*:

Boiling of toxic substances with different liquids like; cow milk, cow urine & vegetable extracts.

#### ✚ *Bharjana*:

Frying of toxic substances with or without *Ghee*.

#### ✚ *Kshalana*:

Washing of toxic materials with hot water.

#### ✚ *Nistvachikarana*:

Removal of harmful covering by the process of decortications.

#### ✚ *Bhavana*:

Triturating of substances to be purified with vegetable juices.

*Upavisha Dravya* used in *Rasa-shastra* for specific purposes like; *Raskarma* & *Rasbandhan*. These *Dravyas* used for particular health benefits as mentioned in **Table 1**.

early aging, acts as rejuvenators and improves physical as well as mental strength.

The principle of treatment through *Visha Dravyas* works around concept of “*Samanya-Vishesha Siddhanta*” which resembles therapeutic significance of opposite properties. It is also advocated that such types of *Rasaushadhis* should not be used continuously means interval or gap need to be maintained

during therapy to neutralizes effect of accumulated *Visha Dravyas*.

### Therapeutic Role of *Visha & Upavishas* as *Rasaushadhi*:

- ✓ *Kushta* can be treated when *Kakodumbara mula kwatha* used with *Visha*
- ✓ *Visha* in *Aindra rasayana* offers health benefits
- ✓ *Sannipatodara* can be managed using *Sarpa Visha*
- ✓ *Sthavara Vishas* also used in *Sannipatodara*

### Mode of action of common *Visha & Upavishas* Formulations

The tonic & stimulant effects of some *Dravyas*, *Tribhvanakirti Rasa* offers *Amavatahara* effect since it affects circulation helps to eliminate accumulated *Ama*. This formulation relive pain by suppressing activities of sensory nerve terminal thus reduces sensation of pain and inflammation. *Shwasakuthar Rasa* helps in *Kasa & Shwasa*, the hot potency of ingredients stimulate appetite, clears respiratory passages and acts as expectorant thus provides relief in respiratory problems. Similarly other *Upavishas Dravyas* used in asthma acts by removing spasm in bronchial smooth muscles.

### Advantages of *Upvisa dravya* as *Rasaushadhi*:

1. *Upvisa dravya* circulated throughout body immediately after administration.
2. Palatability and formulation compatibility.
3. Low dosing frequency.
4. Effective against many chronic diseases.
5. Some poisonous drugs can be used as antidote against other poison after purification.
6. Good absorption, quick response and wide range of spectrum.

### Conclusion

The ancient texts of Ayurveda suggested clinical applications of *Vishas* and *Upavishas* in *Rasa Dravyas* thus these toxic substances

can be used as *Rasaushadhi* after purification process. It is believed that *Sukshma, Laghu* and *Vishada Guna* of these drugs offers quick response, reaches through minute channels, absorbed easily and exerts therapeutic response even in minimal dose.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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