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# Critical Analysis of *Gurvadi Guna According to Hemadri- A Review Article*.

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# **ABSTRACT:**

**Introduction**-The ancient philosophy of well-being and healing called *Ayurveda* is the 'Science of Life', which has its roots back to the civilizations. The *gurvadi guna* help us to put words to what we sense and feel. They are 10 pairs of opposite *gunas*. For example- heavy-light (*guru-laghu*), cold-hot (*shita-ushna*), unctous-dry (*snigdha-ruksha*), etc. Some of them make perfect sense in modern medicine too, as hot for fever or cracking skin would be dry etc. The same concept can be used to find any balance in life.

**Materials and Methods**- Among all the *samhitas* of *Ayurveda*, the Acarya Hemadri in his commentary, *Ayurveda rasayana* on Ashtang Hridaya; have done the detailed analysis about *gurvadi guna*, which no one else has done. These attributes can be seen as energies or forces in our environment and within us.

**Results**- The exact estimation of predominance of *guna* leading to vitiation of *doshas* helps us to understand the pathogenesis and treatment can be planned with the help of opposite *guna*. The detailed discussion about each and every *guna* helps to develop a better understanding and clarification of the concept. **Conclusion-** It is important to estimate the *hetus* of every individual and estimate the *guna* predominance out of it which leads to vitiation of *doshas* and generation of disease for proper diagnosis and effective treatment. Appropriate knowledge of *guna* may help the practitioner to understand the disease along with that the drugs used for the treatment would be well understood at every minute level and prescribed.

Keywords: Gurvadi guna, guru-laghu, shita-ushna, snigdha-ruksha.

#### INTRODUCTION

Ashtanga Hridaya being the junior most text of *Brihattrayi*is regarded as most authentic and acceptable handbook of *kayacikitsa*. Among the commentators of Ashtang Hridaya, Hemadri's *Ayurveda Rasayana* is considered to

be the most authentic and versatile commentary having in depth knowledge of text. During the selective principles for offering orthodox ayurvedic treatment considerations on gurvadi gunas are very important whether the concept of



gurvadi gunas are applicable to the diet(ahara) and drugs(aushadha). Gurvadi gunas are most important as far its composition is based on panchamahabutas and their application through samanya and vishesh. In present scenario the gurvadi gunas may be discussed with pharmacological exploration with certain paramaters which may be discussed with the help of various biophysical and biochemical activities. Here, we are going to scan the available literature on Ashtang Hridaya with Hemadri's Ayurveda Rasayana commentary have got certain information regarding interpretation as well as scope for clinical application. This paper will try to throw some light on the line of ayurvedic principles to explore these gurvadi guna with their respective pharmacological activities in relation to clinical applications.

According to *Ayurveda*, *guna* are broadly classified into two types. They are –

- Adhibhoutika guna
- Adhyatmika guna

Ayurveda has the methodology of naming the group of anything with the first term / substance etc mentioned in the list.

Term gurvadi guna comprises of 2 words i.e., guru means heaviness and adi means first. So, Gurvadi guna are set of 20 qualities, the first among which is guru guna. Since the list of qualities begins with guru quality, the entire group of qualities is called gurvadi guna i.e., 'the group of qualities begins with guru quality'. Since these qualities are related to the tissues and substances of the body, they are also called as sharirika gunas. Sharirika means 'pertaining to the body'. These qualities are also found in all substances made up of five elements of nature, including the medicines and food we consume. They are general qualities present in the elements of creation and the substances made up of them. Therefore, they are called samanya guna i.e., general qualities. Samanya guna, including its sub-classification of qualities i.e. gurvadi and paradI guna are classified under adhibhautika guna i.e., qualities pertaining to living beings. Therefore, the gurvadi guna are also the qualities pertaining to living beings.

# MATERIAL AND METHODS

Going through verse by verse, references of related matter have been explored using classical *Ashtang Hridaya* and its commentary *Ayurveda Rasayana* and then the matter has been properly discussed to interpret it with the help of different classical concept based on different classical literature.

The twenty types of *guna* (qualities) according to all the *Acaryas* including *Acarya Vagabhat* are-

Guru (heavy) -laghu (light), Manda (slow)-Tiksna (quick,fast), Hima (cold) -Ushna (hot), Snigdha (unctuous) -Ruksa (dry), Slaksna (smooth) -Khara (rough), Sandra (solid) -Drava (liquid), Mrdu (soft) -Kathina (hard), Sthira (stable) -Cala (moving, unstable), Suksma (stable, small)-Sthula (big, gross), Vishada (non-slimy) -Picchila (slimy) When we see these qualities, they are actually 10 qualities + 10 opposite qualities of those 10 qualities. Totally they are 20 in number.

# Panchabhautka samgathana and properties of Gurvadi Gunas-

# 1. *Guru guna* – heaviness

This quality contributes to the weight and gravity of substance. If a food is said to possess heavy quality, it means that it is hard to digest or takes a longer time to get digested. This is because of the abundance of *prithvi* and *jala mahabhuta* contained in these substances. *Kapha Dosha* is made up of *prithvi* and *jala mahabhuta*. So, the person of *kapha* constitution is slow and steady in his actions and thoughts. This is because of the heaviness quality in them due to *prithvi* and *jala mahabhuta*.

# 2. Laghu Guna - Lightness

This quality is opposite to *guru guna* (heaviness). It contributes to lightness in weight of a substance. In terms of food, it can be explained as foods that are easy to digest or that which undergo quick digestion. Lightness is due to abundance of *vayu* and *akasha mahabhuta*. *Vata Dosha* is made up of *vayu* and *akasha mahabhuta*. A person of *vata* constitution is very quick and unstable in his actions and thoughts. This is because of lightness quality in his body due to *vayu* and *akashamahabhuta*.

# 3. Shita Guna - Coldness

This quality contributes to the cold nature of substances. Coldness is related to *jala* and *vyau mahabhuta*. Water is the basis of coldness quality. In its normal temperature, water is cold to touch. We feel cold when exposed to cold breeze. This is because of *shita guna* of *jala* and *vayu mahabhuta*. A person of *vata* body constitution cannot tolerate cold climates because there is already an excess of cold quality in him due to *vata dosha*. A person of *pittaja* constitution will feel comfortable in low temperatures as his body has excess of hotness (*ushna guna*) due to *pitta mahabhuta*.

# 4. Ushna Guna – Hotness

When this quality is present in a substance, it is said to be hot in nature. It is opposite to *shita guna*. Hotness is a

quality which can be felt by touch. We would experience heat when we touch hot water. When hotness as a quality is present in food substances, it means that the food is hot in potency, burning and corrosive in nature. *Ushna guna* is related to *agni mahabhuta*. *Agni* is the basis of hot quality. It has heat in it and *agni* is hot on touch. A person of *pitta* constitution develops symptoms like redness in the eyes, excessive sweating and burning sensation of the skin when exposed to sunlight. This is because heat is naturally more in *pitta* constitution persons (due to *pitta* which has fire element) and a slight exposure to sunlight which is also hot in nature aggravates hotness in them.

# 5. Singdha Guna – Unctuousness

This quality contributes to oily or unctuous nature of a substance. It is opposite to dry quality. Foods and medicines of unctuous quality are administered to counteract the effect of excessive dryness in the body. Unctuousness is a special quality of jala mahabhuta. Therefore, snigdha quality is defined in terms of its capacity to induce unctuousness in the body. The property of water to produce wetness is also present in the unctuous quality. Just as water acts as binding substance between two materials and makes the dry things wet, unctuous quality too binds the cells and tissues and removes dryness prevailing in them. The skin of a kapha constitution person is soft and supple and not dry. This is due to predominance of kapha dosha which is made up of jala mahabhuta. The same water element in snigdha guna renders unctuous nature to substances.

#### 6. Ruksha Guna - Dryness

This quality contributes to dryness or non-unctuousness of substances. It is opposite to unctuous quality. Foods and medicines of dry quality are administered to counteract the excessive unctuousness in the body. Dryness is a special quality of *vayu mahabhuta*. Therefore, *ruksha guna* is defined in terms of its capacity to bring about dryness in the tissues and body. The property of *vayu* to produce dryness is present in *ruksha guna*. For example, the skin of a *vata* constitution person will be dry. This is due to predominance of *vata dosha* which means increased *vayu mahabhuta* in the body.

# 7. Manda Guna – Dullness

Slow acting or dullness is explained as *manda* in ayurveda. The substance in which it is present is said to be dull in nature. Dullness is defined on the basis of slowness. Foods and medicines which work slowly and pacify the *doshas* over a period of time are called *manda*. Dullness is made up of *prithvi* and *jala mahabhuta*. We can see that *prithvi* and *jala* are basically heavy in nature. Due to this

heaviness, they are also dull and slow acting. Medicines and foods rich in these elements will naturally tend to act slowly in the body and induce dullness. For example, in a person of *kapha* constitution, the activities are slow and dull. This is due to predominance of *kapha dosha* which means a predominance of *prithvi* and *jala mahabhuta*.

### 8. Tikshna Guna – Sharpness

Tikshna Guna means 'sharpness'. Substance which has this quality are said to be sharp in action. It is opposite to dullness quality i.e., manda guna. Sharpness is defined on the basis of quickness and intensiveness with which things work and on the ability of things to cause cleansing and expulsion of materials in the body. Sharpness is a natural quality present in agni mahabhuta. Likewise, sharpness is predominantly made up of agni mahabhuta. We can see that it is basically sharp, intense and deep penetrating in nature. Due to this sharpness, materials having this quality are fast acting and make quick impact. Medicines and foods rich in fire element will naturally tend to act quickly in the body and induce sharpness. Example – spices.

# 9. Sthira Guna – Stability

Sthira Guna means 'immobility or stable' quality. It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be stable in nature. That which has the capacity and strength to hold things back, i.e., capacity to retain things is called *sthira guna* i.e., stability or immobility quality. Stability is the quality of *prithvi mahabhuta*. All things which are solid are made up predominantly of *prithvi mahabhuta*. We see that solid materials are in a state of rest, immobile and stable unless mobilised by outward pressure or force greater than their weight or displaces them from their static position. Medicines and foods rich in *prithvi mahabhuta* will naturally tend to bring about immobility to greater extent.

# 10. Sara Guna – Mobility

Sara Guna means 'mobility' quality. It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be unstable in nature. It is opposite to *sthira guna* i.e., immobility quality. That which has a capacity and strength to put things in motion, to mobilize and expel things is called *sara guna*. That, on entering the body mobilizes and expels flatus and waste products out of the body, mainly the faeces, is called *sara guna*. Mobility or instability quality is related to *jala* and *vayu mahabhuta*.

#### 11. Mrudu Guna – Softness

Mrudu Guna means 'softness' quality. Substance which has this quality is said to be soft in nature. Softness (mrudu) is defined on the basis of capability of foods, medicines and activities to induce softness and laxity in body parts.

Therefore, foods and medicines which cause softness and laxity in body parts are considered as having softness quality. Softness quality is related to *jala* and *akasha mahabhuta*. Therefore, softness quality is formed by the combination of *jala* and *akasha mahabhuta*.

# 12. Kathina Guna – Hardness

Kathina Guna means 'hardness' quality. A substance which has this quality is said to be hard in nature. It is opposite to mrudu guna i.e., softness quality. They also balance each other. Hardness is related to prithvi mahabhuta. Therefore, hardness quality is formed by presence and predominance of earth element in any substance. Medicines and foods rich in prithvi mahabhuta will naturally induce hardness in body parts.

# 13. Vishada Guna – Clearness

Vishada Guna means 'clearness' quality. Substances which have this quality are said to be clear in nature. Clearness quality would remove excessive sliminess, thereby removing blocks and treat conditions caused by increased sliminess. This quality also causes separation and differentiation of different body parts and thus becomes responsible for loss of adhesiveness between structures and loss of integrity in body. Clearness quality is related to four elements i.e., akasha, vayu, agni and prithvi mahabhuta. Therefore, clearness quality is formed by the presence and predominance of the above mentioned four elements in any substance. Medicines and foods rich in earth and other elements mentioned above will naturally induce clearness in body parts.

# 14. *Picchila Guna* – Sliminess

Picchila Guna means 'sliminess' quality. It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be slimy and sticky in nature. It is opposite to vishada guna i.e. clearness quality. Sliminess and clearness are opposite qualities. They also balance each other. Those which on entering the body causes adherence of structures with each other (lepana) are called picchila guna. This quality has the property of unifying and integrating things. It also destroys clearness quality and causes heaviness in the body. Sliminess quality is related to jala mahabhuta. Therefore, sliminess quality is formed by predominance of jala mahabhuta in any substance.

# 15. Shlakshna Guna – Smoothness

Shlakshna Guna means 'smoothness' quality. It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be smooth in nature. Smoothness is defined on basis of capability of foods, medicines and activities to produce healing effect in the body. Therefore, foods and medicines which heal damaged tissues, wounds and ulcers and induce

smoothness in body parts are considered to have *shlakshna guna* i.e., smoothness quality. There are different opinions regarding elemental relationship of smoothness quality.

# 16. Khara Guna – Roughness

Khara Guna means 'roughness' quality. Substances having this quality are said to be rough in nature. It is opposite to shlakshna guna i.e., smoothness quality. Roughness and smoothness are opposite qualities and are also mutually balancing. Roughness is a quality which can be perceived by touch. It is a feel when you touch the dry bark of a tree or a sand-paper. Inside the body, roughness can be known through its action, i.e., its ability to cause roughness, scrape and deplete tissues, increase vata and vata symptoms including dryness, roughness of the body parts and degeneration. There are different opinions regarding the elemental relationship of roughness quality.

#### 17. Sukshma Guna – Minuteness

Sukshma Guna means 'fineness' quality. Substance with this quality is said to be very fine in nature. It is opposite to sthula guna i.e., bulkiness quality. Fineness and bulkiness are opposite qualities and are also mutually balancing. Fineness quality is mainly related to three elements i.e., agni, vayu and akasha mahabhuta. Combination of vayu and akasha mahabhuta makes up vata dosha. Therefore, fineness which is formed by and dependent on these elements also increase vata in body. Combination of these three elements in balanced proportions is very intense and quick acting. They enable easy dissolution and penetration into minute channels of the body, into each cell and small channels of body and hence spread in the body.

# 18. Sthula Guna – Bulkiness

Sthula Guna means 'bulkiness / stoutness' quality. Substance in which it is present is said to be bulky in nature. It is opposite to *sukshma guna* i.e., minuteness quality. Bulkiness and fineness are opposite qualities and are also mutually balancing. Sthula is defined on the basis of capability of foods, medicines and activities to cause obstruction in channels and tissues owing to its heavy and large size and its inability to move easily in the body. Bulkiness quality is mainly related to *prithvi mahabhuta*.

# 19. Sandra Guna – Solidity

Sandra Guna means solidity or density quality. It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be solid in nature. Solidity is defined on the basis of the capability of foods, medicines and activities to nourish the organs and tissues in the body. It also increases thickness and density of tissues in a healthy way contributing to stability of the body and maintenance of health. Solidity is predominantly formed from *prithvi mahabhuta*.

# 20. Drava Guna - Liquidity

It is present in some substances and those substances are said to be liquid in nature. Liquidity is defined on the basis of the capability of foods, medicines and activities which being subtle and fine in nature, to flow freely and move in all parts of the body in an uninterrupted way. This quality has the capacity to drip through, dissolve, liquefy, moisten things, circulate, ooze and flow in the body. That which is subtle and perforate everywhere and in everything is called drava guna i.e., liquidity quality. That which is responsible for flow of things is called liquidity or is said to possess liquidity quality. Liquidity is predominantly formed from water element. Jala mahabhuta too has liquidity quality in it.

# 1. Predominance of *Prithvi mahabhuta* is found in these *gunas*:

Guru, snigdha, kathina, khara, manda, sthira, vishada, sandra, sthula.

- 2. Predominance of *Jala mahabhuta* is found in these gunas: Guru, drava, snigdha, sheeta, mridu, manda, picchila.
- 3. Predominance of Agni mahabhutais found in the following gunas: Ushna, teekshna, sukshma, laghu, ruksha, vishada.
- **4. Predominance of Vayu mahabhuta is found in the gunas:** Laghu, sheeta, ruksha, teekshna, khara, vishada, sukshma.
- 5. Predominance of Akasha mahabhuta is found in these gunas: Mridu, vishada, sukshma, shlakshna.

The appearance, feature, shape, texture and the state in which any matter exists is because of predominance of any one element. For example, hardness in any substance is attributed to predominance of *prithvi mahabhuta* It means that the hard substance is made up of a combination of other *mahabhutas* also but *prithvi mahabhuta* is the predominant one. Similarly, any substance in liquid or fluid state has a predominance of *jala mahabhuta* in it.

# **RESULTS**

Table 1- Detailed tabular representation of the *Gurvadi Guna* according to Acarya Hemadri

# DISCUSSION

The exact estimation of predominance of *guna* leading to vitiation of *doshas* helps us to understand the pathogenesis and treatment can be planned with the help of opposite *guna*. The detailed discussion about each and every *guna* 

helps to develop a better understanding and clarification of the concept. Among various purposes of incorporating the concept of *Gurvadi guna* is to let the patient be comfortable in conveying their problems in words that offers them a language to communicate to the practitioner and the practitioners about how they feel in order to find remedies. Along with that, the drugs and various formulations prescribed by the doctors has various features which varies accordingly. So, by understanding the prakriti, predominant dosha, condition of *agni*, *koshta and strotas*, along with the *gunas* present in the various drugs and formulations, it is very convenient of a practitioner to prescribe medicines and treat the patient.

# **CONCLUSION**

It is hence justified that the Hemadri has considered, the Guna to have the potency to perform various pharmacological actions of dravya. The exact estimation of predominance of gunas leading to vitiation of doshas helps us to understand the pathogenesis and treatment can be planned with the help of opposite gunas. Nidana parivarjana can also be advised accordingly and pathya apathya can be suggested considering the guna predominance. Rukshaguna predominance is primarily observed in patients now a days due to wrong food habits like dieting for weight loss, eating sprouts recurrently, veg nigraha due to wrapped up lifestyle, deprived sleep at night, fast food like wafers, chips, biscuits which might be accompanied by other gunas leads to vitiation of vata. So, it is important to estimate the *hetus* of every individual and estimate the guna predominance out of it which leads to vitiation of doshas and generation of disease for proper diagnosis and effective treatment.

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Table 1-Detailed tabular representation of the Gurvadi Guna according to Acharya Hemadri

GUNA	GUNA ACCORDING TO HEMADRI	PANCHABHAUTIKA SANGATHANA	EFFECT OF DOSHA	KARMA
karmani shakti sa guruh		Vatahara		
Laghu	Lamghanelaghuh	Vayu+ Akash	Vatakara	Langhan
			Kaphaghana	
Shita	Sthambhanehimah	Jala+Vayu	Vatshleshmakara	Satmbhana
			Pittaghna	
			Vatasleshmahara	
			Pittakara	
Ushana	Swedneushnah	Agni	Vatasleshmahara	Swedana
			Pittakara	
Snigdha	Yasyakledane shakti sa snigdha	Jala	Vatahara	Snehana
			Kaphakara	
Ruksha	Yasyashoshane shakti sa ruksha	Vayu	Vatakara	Rukshana
			Kaphahara	
Manda	Yasyashamane shakti sa manda	Akash+ Jala	Kaphakara	Shamana
			Pittahara	
Tikshana	Yasyashodhane shakti sa tikshana	Agni	Kaphahara	Shodhana
			Pittakara	
Sthira	Yasyadhaarane shakti sasthira	Prithavi	Kaphakara	Dharana
Sara	Preranechala	Jala+ Vayu	Vatakara	Prerana
Mridu	Yasyashlathane shakti samridu	Vayu+ Akash	Kaphakara	Shlathana
Kathina	Yasya dridhane shakti sa kathina	Prithavi	Vatakara	Dridhakara
Vishada	Yasyakshaalane shakti sa	Prithavi+Vayu+Agni+	Vatakara	Kshalana
	vishada.	Akash		
Picchila	Yasyalepaneshakti sa picchila	Jala	Kaphakara	Lepana
Shlakshna	Yasyaropane shakti sa slakshana	Sushruta-Jala	Kaphakara	Ropana
		Caraka-Akash		
		Nagarjuna-Agni		
Khara	Yasyalekhaneshakti sa khara	Sushruta-Agni+Vayu	Vatakara	Lekhana
		Charak-Prithavi+Vayu		
Sukshma	Yasyavivarane shakti sa	Agni+Vayu+Akash	Vatakara	Vivarana
Sthula	sukshama Yasyasamvarane shakti sa sthula	Prithavi	Kaphakara	Samvarana
	*			
Sandra	Yasyaprasaadane shakti sa saandra	Prithavi	Kaphakara	Prasadana
Drava	Yasyavilodane shakti sa drava	Jala	Kaphakara	Vilodane