

## A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW ON BHAKSHYA (EATABLES)

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda - ancient science of India glorifies concept of Aahara in all aspects. As per Acharyas- Aahara itself is health and is considered as the best medicine. Aahara is classified into different categories for easy understanding and proper utilization. Among these based on mode of intake, acharyas classified Aahara as Pana, Lehya, Bhakshya etc. In this Bhakshya is considered here for comprehensive review as this includes healthy eatables i.e., snacks which can be advisable for healthier life. As new lifestyle demands snacks this becomes important to have a complete nutritive eatable to nullify negative part of fast-food snacks. Ayurveda enlightens this core area through the concept of Bhakshya.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, Aahara, Bhakshya, healthier snacks

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda- “Science of life”, which is well blended with life style and food habits, explains “Swastha” (Health) as harmonious situation of Doshas, Dhatus, Malas, Agni and eternal happiness of Indriyas (senses), mind and Aatma (soul). According to Ayurveda, an inevitable factor so called Aahara which is considered as one of the Trayopasthambha balances shareera in healthier status.<sup>1</sup> Aahara is the cause of strength, colour and viability of all living beings. Aahara is the cause for maintenance, creation and destruction of universe. Only Aahara can assure growth, strength and health. A physician one should have knowledge of Aahara in the aspects of - articles of food, taste, properties and action of each when food is prepared in different forms of eatables (Bhakshya), drinkables (Peya), lickables (Lehya) and chewable

(Chushya). Understanding Aahara in different forms of intake is very important because without this knowledge physician will not be able to advise Aahara for maintenance of health and prevention of diseases.<sup>2</sup> In this new life style -fast-food snacks are causing unhealthy issues and life style disorders. Bhakshya is to be considered as eatable solid snacks as per Ayurvedic perspective. So, understanding Bhakshya (eatables / snacks) which is to be healthy is one of the most demandable topics to be discussed.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

-To compile healthy eatables / snacks told in Bhrihatrayee under the concept of Bhakshya.

-To compile properties, action and even therapeutic value of Bhakshya told in Bhrihatrayee.

For easy understanding acharyas classified Ahara in different context in different headings.

**Classification of Aahara in Bhrihatrayee:**  
3,4,5

Table No: 1, Aharavargas in Bhrihatrayees.

Sl.No	Bhrihatrayees	No of vargas	Name of vargas
1	Charaka Samhitha	12	Shuka Dhanya, ShamiDhanya, Mansa, Shaka, Phala, Harita, Madya,Ambu, Gorasa, Ikshu, Krutanna and Aaharayogivargas.
2	Sushruta Samhitha	21	<b>Dravadravyavidhiadhyaya:</b> Jala,Ksheera,Dadhi,Takra,Ghruta,Taila,Madhu,Ikshu, Madya&MutraVargas. <b>Annapanavidhiadhyaya:</b> Shali, Kridhanya, Mamsa, Phala,Shaka, Pushpa, Kanda, Lavana, Krutanna, Bhakshya and Anupanavargas.
3	Ashtanga Hridaya	10	Jala, ksheera, Ikshu, taila,madya, shukadhanya, shimbidhanya, shakavarga, phala&oushadhavargas

Table No: 2, Aahara: According to nature of intake:

Sl No.	Acharyas	Aahara based on nature of intake
1	Charaka	Pana, asana, bhakshya and lehya
2.	Sushruta,Bhavamishra, Yogratakara,Kashyapa, Sharangadhara	Chusya, Peya, Lehya, Bhojya, Bhaksya&Carvy.

Chusya: Suckable food like sugarcane, pomegranate

Peya/ pana: Drinkables like juices, panaka

Lehya : Lickables like Rasala

Bhojya: Eatable Liquid foods like Bhakta, supa

Bhaksya: Snacks / eating by chewing like modaka

Asana: Eating by biting (Charaka).

Even though these all are division of Aahara. Here going to discuss Bhakshya i.e., eatables in detail.

**Bhakshya in Bhrihatrayee:**

“Bhakshya” is one of the types of Aahara classification based on mode of intake of

food. This includes group of food articles which are eating by chewing. As per some thoughts it is to be considered as solid eatables which can be taken as snacks.

Acharya Sushruta explained Bhakshya under Aaharavarga told in Annapaana vidhi adhyaya, Charaka explained this under special category based on mode of intake and sometimes use the name as ashitham for Bhakshya in some contexts. Charaka also told some Bhakshya yogas in Vajeekarana adhyaya. In Ashtangahridaya, this was not explained in direct heading whereas explained in the concluding parts of krutanna varga.

**Bhakshya in detail:**

In Ayurveda classics, it is very interesting to find some Bhakshya combinations which are explained with mode of preparations, therapeutic uses and its properties in detail. Eventhough many classics have explained many Bhakshya combinations; Bhrihatrayees forms the ground backbone for these.

**Sushruta Samhita:<sup>8</sup>**

In Susrutha Samhita, Sutrasthana, Annapanavidhiadhyaya- Acharya Susrutha  
**Table No.3.** Bhakshya in Susrutha Samhita

explains Aaharavarga based on the food articles for maintaining health and preventing diseases. Among Aaharavarga “Bhakshya varga” is explained after krutanna varga. Bhakshyavarga is a group of eatable food articles which can be used as snacks. These are explained based on their taste, potency and taste even after digestion. This is very unique as only acharya Susrutha explained Bhakshya title under Aahara varga in special entity.

Sl.No:	Bhakshya	Preparation/definition	Action on Dosha	Properties & action
1	Ksheerakritha bhakshya	Snacks prepared from milk	Mitigates Pita	Vrishya (Aphrodisiac), Hridya (good for heart), have pleasant smell, not cause heart burn; nourishing and kindles digestion.
2	Gaudika bhakshya	Eatables prepared with guda	Increase kapha&mitigate Vata and pita	Stoutening, hard for digestion, do not cause heart burn, aphrodisiac
3	Vaatapithaghna bhakshya	Eatables prepared from dough of wheat flour	Mitigate Vata and pitta	Stoutening, bestow strength, good for the heart *Phenaka – easily digestable
4	Paishtika bhakshya	Eatables prepared from pista (paste of corn flour)	Aggravate kapha and pitta	Hot in potency, cause heart burn, do not bestow strength greatly and are hard for digestion
5	Laghavo bhakshya	Eatables prepared from pulses (paste of pulses)	do not interfere with pitta, mitigates kapha	Easy for digestion, astringent in taste, create more of flatus, stay long in the stomach without digestion, cause purgation *But using masha: strengthening, aphrodisiac & hard for digestion
6	Koorchikavikrut ha bhakshya	Eatables made from cheese	Do not aggravate pitta, aggravate kapha	Hard for digestion

7	Virudakakritha bhakshya	Eatables prepared from sprouted grains (pulses)	Increase vita and pitta	Hard for digestion, increase vita and pitta, create burning sensation and nausea
8	Susnighdho bhakshya	Eatables cooked in ghee	Mitigate Vata and pitta	Good for the heart, have pleasant odour and easily digestible
		Eatables cooked in oil	Mitigate Vata & increase Pitta	Cause heart-burn, hard for digestion, pungent after digestion, hot in potency, diminish vision, vitiate the skin
9	Phala, mamsa, ikshuvikrithi, tila, maasha samskritha Bhakshya	Eatables prepared from fruits, meat, products of sugar cane, tila and misa		strengthening; hard for digestion, stoutening and pleasing to the heart/mind.

All the above explained are direct Bhakshya title given by acharya while explaining these combinations but there are some other combinations also included in this chapter which are solid eatables and can be used as Bhakshya. They are:

**a) Mudghadivesavaram:**<sup>9</sup> Discs of wheat dough filled with paste of mudga etc. and cooked, these when consumed, stay in the stomach for long time without digestion. Discs filled with meat, cooked well and consumed are hard for digestion and stoutening the body.

**b) Palala:**<sup>10</sup> Oil cake (removed of oil) or paste of tila (sesame) is known as palala, eatables prepared for this are palala, produce more of kapha and pitta

**c) Saskuli:**<sup>11</sup> made from flour of rice made as dough, then pressed through a small hole to come out like thread-like and arranged in circular discs. These are deep fried in oil and consumed. Saskuli cause increase of kapha and Pitta

**d) Ghrithapura:**<sup>12</sup> sustains life (by bestowing strength), is good for the heart

(mind) increases kapha, mitigates vita and pitta, is aphrodisiac, hard for digestion, and helps growth of blood and muscles.

**e) Kulmasa:**<sup>13</sup> flour of yava (barley) soaked in hot water, increases vata, cause dryness inside, hard for digestion and produce purgations.

**f) Madhusirsaka, samyeva, pupa and modaka:**<sup>14</sup> madhusirsaka is dough made into thin discs, lump of sugar, ghee etc. are kept inside, enveloped all around and cooked (in steam). Samyeva is dough added with milk, sugar etc. kneaded well made into thin discs, cooked (deepfried) in ghee, then powder of sugar candy, ela, maricha and ardraka are sprinkled over it. Pupa is sweet pan cake. Modaka is laddu ball of sweets. modaka is very hard for digestion – all these are hard for digestion and stoutening.

**g) Sattaka:**<sup>15</sup> powder lavangha, vyosa (trikatu), khanda (sugarcandy) are added to curds, churned well and filtered, to this liquid, seeds of dadima and powder of karpura are sprinkled over and consumed-tasty, kindles digestion, good for voice,

mitigates pitta and vita, hard for digestion very sweet and sustains life by bestowing strength.

**h)Visyandha:**<sup>16</sup>raw flour of wheat added with ghee, milk and jaggery all stirred well to form a liquid - good for the heart, has pleasant odour, sweet in taste, is unctuous, increases kapha, hard for digestion, mitigates vata, bestows contentment and strength.

**i)Vatya:**<sup>17</sup> cake made from flour of barley or wheat and fried in oil --cure reverse peristalsis, cough, rhinitis and diabetes.

**j)Dhana and Ulumba:**<sup>18</sup>Dhana -Puffed corn (popcorn) and ulumba is unripe corn roasted over burning coal are easily digestible and cause diminution of kapha and medas (fat).

**k) Saktu:**<sup>19</sup> flour of cereals like barley, wheat, rice etc. cooked in water- is stoutening, aphrodisiac. Cures thirst and mitigate pitta and kapha. Consumed in liquid form it bestows strength immediately;

**Table No: 4.** Bhakshya in Charaka samhitha

consumed in the form of hard balls, it is hard for digestion whereas it is easily digestible otherwise (balls being soft),

**l)Avalehika:**<sup>20</sup>form of food added with sugar, ghee. Salt etc.Gets digested quickly because of its softness.

**m)Laja:**<sup>21</sup>friedpaddy cures vomiting, diarrhea, kindles digestion. mitigates kapha, bestows strength, astringent sweet in taste, easily digestible and relieves thirst.

**n)Prthuka:**<sup>22</sup> paddy parboiled and flattened- is hard for digestion, unctuous stoutening, increases kapha, strengthening; when combined with milk it mitigatesvata and produces purgation.

**Charaka samhitha:**<sup>23</sup>

Acharya charaka explained Bhakshya along with krutannavarga, he added opinion such as the physician should decide their influence on doshas, properties and actions based on the source substances used for preparation.

Sl.No	Bhakshya	Properties & Action
1	Svinnabhaksya - preparing soup of pulses, wheat and yava or snacks prepared in steam	No specific properties told. Have to assess based on substances used for preparation.
2	Bhaksya- Eatables prepared from fruits, meat, fat, vegetables etc.	When added with honey are aphrodisiac, strengthening not easily digestible and are stoutening
3	Bhaksya containing jaggery, tila, milk, honey and Sugar	Aphrodisiac, strengthening and very hard for digestion
4	Bhakshya prepared from fats	Hard for digestion, nourishing. Aphrodisiac. Good for heart
5	Bhakshya prepared from godhuma(Wheat)	Hard for digestion, nourishing. Aphrodisiac. Good for heart
6	Bhakshya prepared from pulses, boiled rice etc.	Increase of vata and dryness; are cold in potency; these should be consumed in small quantity when added with pungent, fats and salt.

Some of the combinations that can be used as Bhakshya other than in direct Bhakshya title enlisted in Charaka samhitha.

**a)Kulmasa:** Flour of yava added with hot water, cooked slightly and cook as pupa (poori) is called kulmasa. Kulmasa (poori) is difficult for digestion, dry (causes dryness) aggravates vata and produces loose motion.

**b)Yava pupa and yavakavatya:**Yava pupa: poori prepared from yava. yavakavatya: cake prepared from yavaka. These cure diseases such as udavarta (upward movement), common cold, cough, diabetes and pain of the throat.

**c)Vartika:** Eatables prepared in the form of varti (suppository) is vartika.<sup>24</sup>

**d)Dhana:** Eatables from Virudhadhanya: germinated grains- cause lekhana(scarification) being dry, these do not feel satisfaction and are not easily digestible since they stay long inside and cause constipation.

**e)Sashkuli:** is paste of rice flour cooked (deep fried) in oil,

**f)Vesavara:**meat brothis hard for digestion, unctuous, enhances strength and physique.

**g)Pulpaka:** prepared from using milk and sugarcane juice -hard for digestion, nutritious and aphrodisiac.

**h)Pruthuka (cipita):** paddy fried and flattened is hard for digestion and so should be eaten in less quantity. Pruthuka prepared from yava- undergoes digestion after staying long inside and causing constipation; consumed together with meat soup it produces purgation.

**Bhaksyayogas in Charaka chikitsa Sthana – Vajeekarnaadhyaya:**

More to this Charaka in chikitsasthana – 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter- Vajeekarnaadhyaya – explained some bhakshyayogas specially meant for vajeekarana. These are some

recopies which helps in promote semen as well as ojas of the body ie, aphrodisiac.

**1. Vrisyapupalikadi Yoga:**<sup>25,26,27,28</sup>

a) Egg of cataka, hamsa, sikhi and nakra .addede with cows ghee, varala vasa, powder of sashtika as well as Ghoduma . out of this pupalika, saskuli, vartika, pupa, dhana are prepared.

b) Egg of tamrachuda, fried in ghee, added with sastika, and whole is boiled in ghee. Pupalikas are made from this. After eating this varunimanda is advised.

c) Powder of fruits which are jivaniya, snighda, rucikara are taken in one kudava. Add one kudava powder of fruit of svayamgupta, and masha, two kudava of mudgha and tila,onekudava each of SHali and godhuma, one kodava of ghee. All these are kneaded with milk.

d) Fish and meat made paste by crushing. To this hingu, saindhava, dhanyaka should be added. Mixed with ghoduma and boiled in ghee

e) Fish added with spices are bolied in the soup of meat of buffalo. When liquid portion is evaporated. Fish meat is made paste added with hingu, jiraka,dhanya, mashapowder and ghee

f) Masha, Atmagupta, godhuma, Sali, sashtika, sarkara, vidari, kokilaksha – made into powder and to this milk is added and made into dough. Boiled in ghee.

**2. Vrishya Mahisha Rasa:**<sup>29</sup>

Grains of Masha should be cleaned and made to germinate. Husk removed, fruits of suka, simbi added. Soup of meat of buffalo, mixed with curd, juice of dadima, and ghee also added. Further added with dhanyajiraka and nagara. Solid portion is to be used as eatable.

**Ashtangha hridhaya:**<sup>30</sup>

In Ashtangahridaya, while explaining kritanavarga acharya explained about Bhakshya (snacks/ eatables). There we can find detailing about laghutva – guruthva of

these bhaksya. There is a comparative assessment of preparation, properties, benefits etc. of these food articles are also seen in this classic. There is no specific yogas told in Ashtangahridaya. Acharya concise the idea of bhakshya by saying its different mode of preparation. They are: Different mode of preparation & its properties:

1. Kalulapaachitham- steam boiled
2. Karpparapaachitham – frying in hot pan
3. Bhrashtapaachitham- halwa like preparation in pan
4. Kandhupaachitham – roti like gas fire preparation

5. Angharapaachitham- live coal preparation

Acharya added that any food articles either rice or wheat, most light for digestion is Anghara and most guru is Kalula, rest of all increases its laghutva in preceding order from kalual to anghara.

**Review of Bhakshya combinations based on modern nutrition:**

In modern dietetics, food is categorized as energy rich food, body building food and protective food. This all together form a rich food combination. From the above enlisted food combinations, we can assess in most of them includes:

**Table No: 5.** Modern nutrition in ingredients of Bhakshya

<b>Milk products</b>	<b>Milk, Ghee, Cheeses.</b>	<b>Rich source of proteins, fats, vitamins etc.- energy rich food</b>
<b>Sugar products</b>	Sugarcane, Jaggaery	Energy rich foods
<b>Cereals &amp; grains</b>	Wheat, Rice, Brown Rice (ShashtikaShaali), Green Gram, Black Gram, Barley, Corn, Sesame, Sprouted Grains	Body building & energy rich foods
<b>Oil</b>	Tilataila	Have essential fatty acid, fat soluble vitamins – energy rich food
<b>Spices</b>	Ardraka, Jiraka, Pippali, Ela, Maricha	Good source of copper, potassium, calcium, manganese, iron, zinc, and magnesium. Acts as appetizer, digestant etc.
<b>Others</b>	Fruits, Vegetables, Meat, Egg, Fish	Rich source of proteins, fat, vitamins, calcium etc.- body building food

**DISCUSSION**

Acharyas says that- Aahara is said to be basis of life, strength, complexion, Ojas, growth and development, functioning of Indriyas, happiness, clarity of voice, luster, pleasure, increase of Dhatus, intellect, health etc. So here in this studywhen collectively assess the components in each Bhakshyawe can see that in most of the yogas there suggested food articles which are told in pathya Aahara (Wholesome diet) like Shaali, Ghoduma. Ksheera,

Gritha etc which shows a pathway for what really a healthy Aahara should be. When compared to modern dietetics most of the Bhakshya told in classics are rich sources of protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, macro & micronutrients etc. which forms a balanced healthy eatable. As most of the Bhakshya have spices added will increase taste, acts as appetizer, digestant by balancing digestive fire. Bhakshya mentioned almost are nourishing dhatus, even by balancing

doshas. Detailed explanation about properties of each Bhakshya gives idea about its effect in health and also ill health. In Sushruta Samhita we can see a wide range of Bhakshya which included all preventive and therapeutic aspects. Different choices of preparations as needed according to our taste, body constitution, digestive capacity etc. are told in detail in Sushrutokta Bhakshya vargas. As susruthokta Bhakshya varga covers most of the combinations that includes a mind ful healthier snack for vegetarians and non-vegetarians. In Charaka samhitha most of the preparations are similar to Sushruta but some like vartika, pruthuka, dhana etc. are found very unique to this classic. The very specialty of Charaka is enlightening ideas on Vajeekarana Bhakshya yogas. These Yogas told in Charaka samhitha are aphrodisiac, rejuvenating and some are showing preventive aspects also. Eventhough different title is not given for Bhakshya, Charaka explains these yogas after krutannavarga, this infers the idea that the wise person should eat eatable after having peyadi even Acharya Sushruta supports this while explaining guruthva – laghuthva of Peya and Bhakshya. In Ashtanga Hridaya, no detail description about Bhakshya are found but acharya listed out the missing angle of both Charaka and Sushruta in Bhakshya yoga i.e., mode of preparation and its effect on each preparation. Specialty is that Acharya explains clear cut idea about how to cook and how it influences digestive fire if any Bhakshya are prepared accordingly.

### CONCLUSION

This comprehensive article is clearing the idea that even ancient knowledge in Ayurveda suggests healthier eatables in different combination. By inferring the combinations in classics, we can say that

these are not in main course of food type whereas can be taken as snacks. This article also suggests that a nutritive value of these combinations is high and it is highly recommendable for those who are in quest of having eatables in a healthier way. A broad compilation on different Bhakshya combination in Bhrihatrayee ensures wide range of healthier choices according to our taste, need, body constitution etc. So, for healthy wellbeing and prevention of diseases - food to be special, specially processed, good for health, endowed with taste, pleasing to mind and freshly prepared.

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