Journal of Dravyaguna and Bhaishaiya Vigyan 2025; 2(1): 01-04

P-ISSN: 3078-7769
E-ISSN: 3078-7777
JDBV 2025; 2(1): 01-04
www.dravyagunajournal.com
Received: 06-11-2024
Accepted: 08-12-2024

Dr. Sahil Haque
Senior Lecturer, Department of Ayurvedic Pharmacology Institute of Indigenous Medical Education and Research, Khulna, Bangladesh

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Sahil Haque
Senior Lecturer, Department of Ayurvedic Pharmacology Institute of Indigenous Medical Education and Research, Khulna, Bangladesh

Comparative study of *Rasa-Panchaka* of Selected *Tikta Dravyas* used in Jwara Chikitsa

Sahil Haque

DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.33545/dravyaguna.2025.v2.i1.A.6

Abstract
Jwara (fever) is a primary disease entity in Ayurveda, regarded as a prominent *Roga* that affects both the *Sharira* and *Manas*. Tikta (bitter) Rasa is often the first line of choice in the management of Jwara, owing to its *Deepana*, *Pachana*, and *Ama-hara* properties. This article presents a comparative study of the *Rasa-Panchaka* (five pharmacodynamic parameters: Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka, and Prabhava) of selected Tikta Rasa-pradhana Dravyas commonly used in Jwara Chikitsa. The study aims to establish correlations between classical descriptions and therapeutic actions, enhancing rational herbal selection in clinical practice.

Keywords: Rasa-Panchaka, Tikta Rasa, Jwara, Dravyaguna, Ayurveda, Jwara Chikitsa, Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka

Introduction

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, views health as a dynamic balance among body (*Sharira*), mind (*Manas*), and spirit (*Atma*), governed by the equilibrium of *Tridosha*-Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Among the various diseases discussed in Ayurvedic literature, *Jwara* (fever) is considered one of the most significant and complex disorders. In *Charaka Samhita*, *Jwara* is described as the king of diseases (*Roganam Rajah*), owing to its profound ability to disrupt the normal functioning of the body, mind, and internal energies. It is the first disease elaborated in the *Chikitsa Sthana*, emphasizing its clinical relevance and philosophical importance in the Ayurvedic paradigm.

Unlike the modern view that considers fever primarily as a symptom of infection or inflammation, Ayurveda classifies *Jwara* as an independent disease entity. It is a condition marked by the derangement of *Agni* (digestive fire), accumulation of *Ama* (undigested toxins), and a disturbance in *Doshas*, particularly *Pitta* and *Kapha*. The Ayurvedic understanding extends further to differentiate various types of *Jwara* based on etiology (*Nidana*), doshic involvement, chronicity, site of manifestation, and accompanying symptoms. This comprehensive approach facilitates a multi-dimensional and individualized treatment strategy.

Among the several therapeutic tools available in Ayurvedic pharmacopeia, the concept of *Rasa-Panchaka* plays a central role in the understanding and selection of herbs and formulations. *Rasa-Panchaka* consists of five fundamental parameters: *Rasa* (taste), *Guna* (quality), *Virya* (potency), *Vipaka* (post-digestive effect), and *Prabhava* (specific action). These five pharmacodynamic factors are used to determine the effect of a *Dravya* (substance) on the human body and to classify herbs in accordance with their therapeutic roles. The integrative knowledge of *Rasa-Panchaka* helps identify not only the immediate effect of a drug but also its long-term systemic influence, making it a critical tool in Ayurvedic therapeutics.

Within the scope of *Rasa-Panchaka*, *Tikta Rasa* (bitter taste) holds a special place in the treatment of *Jwara*. Classical Ayurvedic texts repeatedly emphasize the use of *Tikta Rasa-pradhana Dravyas* in managing fevers, particularly in the early stages where *Ama* accumulation and *Pitta-Kapha* aggravation dominate the clinical picture. The *Tikta* taste is associated with specific properties such as *Deepana* (enhancing digestive fire), *Pachana* (digesting metabolic toxins), *Raktaprasadana* (purifying blood), *Doshashamana* (pacifying vitiated doshas), and *Srotoshodhana* (cleansing bodily channels).

These actions are especially valuable in *Ama Jwara*, *Pittaja Jwara*, and *Raktaja Jwara*, where toxic load, digestive suppression, and inflammatory reactions are involved.

Several herbs described in classical Ayurvedic literature possess predominantly *Tikta Rasa* and are extensively used in *Jwara Chikitsa*. These include *Nimba* (Azadirachta indica), *Guduchi* (Tinospora cordifolia), *Patola* (Trichosanthes dioica), *Vasa* (Adhatoda vasica), and *Bhunimba* (Andrographis paniculata). Each of these herbs, although united by their bitter taste, differ significantly in their *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, and *Prabhava*, which ultimately influence their site of action, mode of activity, and clinical applicability. For instance, Guduchi with its *Ushna Virya* and *Madhura Vipaka* behaves differently from Bhunimba, which is *Sheeta Virya* and *Katu Vipaka*. Such differences necessitate a comparative analysis to rationalize their usage in different types and stages of *Jwara*.

Modern research has increasingly validated the traditional uses of these herbs in febrile and inflammatory conditions. Guduchi has been recognized for its immunomodulatory, antipyretic, and anti-inflammatory properties. Nimba exhibits broad-spectrum antimicrobial effects, and Bhunimba is widely studied for its hepatoprotective and antipyretic potential. These pharmacological findings correspond closely to the Ayurvedic classification based on *Rasa-Panchaka*, further strengthening the need to investigate and understand these herbs within their traditional framework.

Despite their frequent usage, there is limited scholarly literature that compares these *Tikta Dravyas* through a comprehensive lens of *Rasa-Panchaka*, particularly in the specific context of *Jwara Chikitsa*. Such a comparison is valuable not only for academic purposes but also for clinical application. A detailed understanding of their similarities and differences can help Ayurvedic practitioners make informed decisions based on doshic involvement, symptomatology, patient constitution, and disease chronicity.

This paper, therefore, seeks to conduct a comparative study of the *Rasa-Panchaka* of selected Tikta Dravyas-Nimba, Guduchi, Patola, Vasa, and Bhunimba used in *Jwara Chikitsa*. The aim is to bridge classical knowledge with practical insight, thereby offering clarity and guidance in the rational selection of herbs in fever management. Through the analysis of *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, and *Prabhava*, this study attempts to highlight the uniqueness of each *Dravya* and its most suitable clinical context.

Furthermore, by revisiting classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*, alongside modern Ayurvedic commentaries and clinical case reports, the paper endeavors to create a synthesis of tradition and contemporary practice. The comparative analysis will also reflect on the implications of these Dravyas in managing complex febrile conditions, including those of viral, parasitic, or unknown etiology, where modern medicine often depends on symptomatic relief.

In conclusion, this study is an attempt to deepen the understanding of Ayurvedic pharmacology in the management of fevers through a structured evaluation of *Rasa-Panchaka*. By focusing on Tikta Dravyas with known application in Jwara Chikitsa, the paper contributes to the development of evidence-based, individualized, and context-sensitive therapeutic strategies in Ayurveda. It reiterates the timeless relevance of Ayurvedic principles and the need to continually refine them through comparative and critical inquiry.

2. Objectives

- To identify key Tikta Rasa Dravyas used in Jwara Chikitsa.
- To compare their *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, and *Prabhava*.
- To understand the pharmacological basis of their indication in Jwara based on Ayurvedic principles.

3. Materials and Methods

This study is based on classical textual analysis, primary sources include:

- *Charaka Samhita* (Jwara Chikitsa Adhyaya)
- *Sushruta Samhita* (Uttara Tantra)
- *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*
- Commentaries by Chakrapanidatta and Dalhanacharya

The selected Tikta Dravyas include:

- Nimba (*Azadirachta indica*)
- Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*)
- Patola (*Trichosanthes dioica*)
- Vasa (*Adhatoda vasica*)
- Bhunimba (*Andrographis paniculata*)

These were analyzed for their *Rasa-Panchaka*, therapeutic actions in Jwara, and comparative utility.

4. Rasa-Panchaka Analysis

Dravya	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Prabhava / Specific Action
Nimba	Tikta, Kashaya	Laghu, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Krimighna, Jwaraghna
Guduchi	Tikta	Laghu, Snigdha	Ushna	Madhura	Rasayana, Jwaraghna, Tridoshaghna
Patola	Tikta	Laghu, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Vishaghna, Pittahara, Jwarahara
Vasa	Tikta, Kashaya	Laghu, Snigdha	Sheeta	Katu	Kapha-Pittaghna, Shwasaghna
Bhunimba	Tikta	Laghu, Ruksha	Sheeta	Katu	Yakrituttejaka, Pittaghna, Jwaraghna

5. Discussion

The Ayurvedic concept of Rasa-Panchaka plays a pivotal role in understanding the pharmacodynamic profile of medicinal plants and in guiding therapeutic interventions, especially in conditions like Jwara (fever), where multiple Doshas and pathological stages are involved. This comparative study of selected Tikta (bitter-tasting) Dravyas-Nimba, Guduchi, Patola, Vasa, and Bhunimba-demonstrates how classical Ayurvedic principles remain relevant in identifying specific herbs for targeted fever management. In Ayurvedic pathology, Jwara is described as a Mahavyadhi, impacting both body and mind, and is intricately linked with Agni, Ama, and Tridosha imbalance. Tikta Rasa is consistently recommended in Ayurvedic texts such as Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita for its ability to stimulate Agni, digest Ama, and pacify Pitta and Kapha. Its Lekhana, Deepana, and Pachana effects align with the foundational therapeutic goals in Jwara Chikitsa. Across all five Dravyas studied, the presence of Tikta Rasa confirms their shared therapeutic relevance in early and active stages of Jwara.

The analysis further revealed that while all these herbs possess Laghu Guna, which supports metabolic enhancement and clearance of toxins, their accompanying properties influence their site of action and efficacy. For instance, the Ruksha nature of Nimba, Patola, and Bhunimba aids in drying the accumulated Ama and obstructed Kapha, thereby facilitating Srotoshodhana and resolution of low-grade fever. In contrast, Guduchi and Vasa, despite having Snigdha attributes, maintain Tridosha-shamaka utility, likely due to their unique balancing of other parameters such as Virya and Vipaka.

The Virya (potency) of the drugs provides critical insight into their immediate action. Most of the selected Dravyas exhibit Sheeta Virya, making them ideal for calming the aggravated Pitta Dosha seen in febrile conditions characterized by burning sensation, excessive thirst, and irritability. Bhunimba, Patola, Vasa, and Nimba are especially effective in conditions where Pitta or Rakta are involved in the pathology. Guduchi, on the other hand, stands apart with its Ushna Virya, yet it does not aggravate Pitta due to its Madhura Vipaka. This dual character renders it suitable in cases of chronic or recurrent fever, where digestive fire is suppressed but the need for nourishment and Rasayana is equally important. Vipaka (post-digestive effect) is another crucial determinant of long-term therapeutic influence. Four out of five herbs show Katu Vipaka, which supports Pachana, Shoshana, and helps in the breaking down of metabolic waste. This ensures the resolution of Ama and restoration of Agni, a critical outcome in Jwara treatment. Guduchi’s Madhura Vipaka, however, offers nourishing, tissue-regenerative, and restorative effects, which are particularly beneficial in the convalescent phase of fever, preventing Dhatu-Kshaya and helping regain strength. The analysis also considers the role of Prabhava the specific, often inexplicable, effect attributed to a drug. Guduchi, for instance, is known for its Rasayana and Tridoshaghna Prabhava, offering a broad therapeutic window in various subtypes of Jwara. Nimba exhibits a strong Krimighna action, making it beneficial in infectious fevers or those linked to parasitic infestations. Bhunimba and Patola are known to stimulate the liver and purify blood, aligning with their efficacy in Pittaja and Raktaja fevers, particularly when associated with jaundice or skin eruptions. Vasa, with its expectorant and mucolytic effects, is especially useful when Jwara is accompanied by upper respiratory tract involvement. Clinical interpretations from classical commentaries and modern observations further support these correlations. Chakrapanidatta mentions Guduchi as Jwaraghna, Vayahsthapana, and a Balya herb, indicating its rejuvenating and fever-reducing properties. Similarly, Bhavamishra emphasizes the use of Bhunimba in Vishama Jwara, a condition often resembling malarial or relapsing fever. Modern pharmacological studies also align with these descriptions-Guduchi has demonstrated immunomodulatory and antipyretic properties, Nimba exhibits anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial action, and Vasa is validated for its bronchodilatory and anti-allergic effects. The comparative relevance of these herbs becomes particularly significant when Jwara manifests with overlapping or shifting Dosha dominance. For instance, in an acute febrile condition with Pitta and Rakta predominance, Bhunimba or Patola are often favored. When the fever is intermittent or associated with post-infective debility, Guduchi becomes a preferred choice due to its deep-seated Rasayana impact. In cases involving upper respiratory symptoms such as cough, congestion, or breathlessness, Vasa shows optimal results due to its Shwasahara and Kapha-pacifying actions. Meanwhile, Nimba proves useful in fevers accompanied by Krimi, skin lesions, or elevated body heat. The real strength of the Rasa-Panchaka framework lies in its integrative and predictive nature. By evaluating the Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka, and Prabhava, an Ayurvedic clinician can not only identify the right herb but also determine the stage of disease at which it will be most effective, the Anupana (vehicle) that would enhance its delivery, and the Dosha-specific suitability based on patient constitution. In conclusion, this comparative analysis validates the classical knowledge on Tikta Dravyas and offers a nuanced understanding of their individual and collective utility in Jwara Chikitsa. The differences in their Virya, Vipaka, and Prabhava help distinguish their applications across the diverse landscape of febrile disorders. Modern clinical practice can benefit immensely from this insight, especially in designing rational herb-based interventions, polyherbal formulations, and even supporting evidence-based integration with conventional medicine.

6. Clinical Relevance in Jwara Chikitsa

The therapeutic application of Tikta Rasa-pradhana Dravyas in the management of Jwara is deeply rooted in the Ayurvedic understanding of disease pathogenesis and pharmacodynamics. The condition of Jwara, described as one of the most significant diseases in classical texts, is not simply a manifestation of elevated body temperature but a disorder that disrupts the equilibrium of the Tridosha, Agni, and Manas. The primary pathological basis of Jwara, especially in its early stages, is Agnimandya and Ama formation, often accompanied by the vitiation of Pitta and Kapha. These derangements necessitate the use of herbs that possess digestive, detoxifying, and anti-inflammatory actions-properties that are inherent in Tikta Rasa and its associated pharmacological features. In clinical practice, the choice of specific Tikta Dravya is informed by the type of fever, the stage of disease, the doshic predominance, the presence of systemic involvement such as hepatic or respiratory disturbances, and the patient's constitution. Guduchi emerges as one of the most versatile herbs in this regard. Its combination of Tikta Rasa, Ushna Virya, and Madhura Vipaka allows it to function as both a febrifuge and a rejuvenator. It is particularly effective in cases of Vishama Jwara, chronic or relapsing fevers, post-viral debility, and conditions where immune modulation is required. Its Tridoshaghna nature enables it to address all forms of doshic imbalances, making it suitable for use throughout the course of Jwara, from acute onset to recovery. Nimba, by virtue of its Tikta and Kashaya Rasa, Sheeta Virya, and strong Krimighna action, is especially indicated in fevers with a clear component of Pitta and Rakta Dushti, such as in eruptive fevers or those with dermal manifestations. Its antimicrobial and detoxifying actions make it a suitable choice in infectious fevers, particularly those accompanied by skin eruptions, itching, or burning sensations. It is also employed in fevers arising from parasitic infections or where a purificatory approach is desired at the onset of disease, patola is another herb that holds a central place in the treatment of Pittaja Jwara. Its hepatic stimulant action, along with its cooling and detoxifying nature, makes it highly effective in fevers associated with liver dysfunction, bilious symptoms, or elevated enzymes. It is particularly helpful in fevers that are accompanied by nausea, vomiting, or a bitter taste in the mouth, which are classical signs of Pitta aggravation. The presence of Ruksha Guna and Katu Vipaka also supports its use in metabolic correction and digestive stimulation, both critical in the early breakdown of Ama. Bhunimba, or Kalmegha, is regarded as a potent febrifuge with strong hepatoprotective and anti-pyretic effects. It is highly indicated in Vishama Jwara and fevers of malarial or viral etiology that present with chills, rigors, or fluctuating patterns. Its ability to normalize liver function, reduce Pitta, and clear toxins from the blood renders it a valuable drug in managing chronic fevers, fevers with jaundice, and febrile conditions with systemic toxicity. It is often used in classical formulations such as Bhunimbadi Kadha, which are traditionally prescribed in febrile illnesses associated with hepatic pathology. Vasa, though primarily recognized for its Kasa-Shwasa hara (anti-cough and anti-asthmatic) properties, finds relevance in Jwara where respiratory involvement is prominent. In fevers that begin with or are accompanied by productive cough, nasal congestion, or breathlessness, Vasa is an excellent choice due to its ability to clear Kapha from the chest, soothe inflamed mucosa, and reduce body heat. It is especially useful in cases of Kapha-Pittaja Jwara and in pediatric fevers with cold-dominant symptoms. From a broader clinical perspective, these Dravyas are often administered as Kashayas, Churnas, or in combination with other herbs to enhance efficacy. Their role is not limited to the acute phase of illness but extends into the convalescent stage, where restoration of Agni, rebuilding of Dhatus, and prevention of recurrence are essential. The Rasa-Panchaka parameters provide clarity in selecting the right herb for the right condition. For example, a febrile condition with pronounced thirst, irritability, and burning sensation will require cooling, bitter drugs like Patola or Bhunimba. Conversely, in patients with low digestive power, body ache, and fatigue, Guduchi may be more beneficial due to its strengthening and Ama-pachaka action.

Thus, understanding the clinical application of these Tikta Dravyas through the lens of Rasa-Panchaka allows for precision and depth in Ayurvedic prescribing. It not only ensures symptomatic relief but also addresses the root cause of fever by correcting the internal imbalances. This aligns with the holistic and individualized approach of Ayurveda, where each drug is selected not just for its pharmacological effect but also for its compatibility with the patient's unique constitution and disease stage. Through this comparative analysis, it becomes evident that these herbs, though similar in taste, offer distinctly nuanced actions and should be employed with awareness of their full therapeutic profile for effective Jwara Chikitsa.

7. Conclusion

This comparative study of *Rasa-Panchaka* in selected *Tikta Dravyas*-Nimba, Guduchi, Patola, Vasa, and Bhunimba-highlights the profound depth and clinical utility of Ayurvedic pharmacodynamics in the management of *Jwara*. Though all these herbs share the commonality of Tikta Rasa, their distinct *Guna*, *Virya*, *Vipaka*, and *Prabhava* offer diverse therapeutic applications tailored to different stages and types of fever. The understanding of these five attributes provides a rational basis for drug selection, beyond symptomatic relief, by addressing the underlying *Dosha* imbalances, *Agni* status, and presence of *Ama*.

Guduchi emerged as the most versatile herb due to its unique combination of *Ushna Virya* and *Madhura Vipaka*, making it suitable across a wide range of febrile disorders including chronic and *Vishama Jwara*. Nimba and Bhunimba were found to be potent in managing *Pittaja* and *Raktaja Jwara*, especially those involving skin and liver pathology, patola proved beneficial in hepatobiliary dysfunctions with fever, and Vasa displayed efficacy in fevers accompanied by respiratory symptoms.

The study reaffirms the classical Ayurvedic emphasis on *Tikta Rasa* in fever management and validates the practical relevance of the *Rasa-Panchaka* framework in guiding personalized herbal interventions. It also underscores the necessity of integrating textual wisdom with clinical reasoning to optimize the outcomes of *Jwara Chikitsa*. Such comparative pharmacognostic evaluations pave the way for a more structured, evidence-informed use of Ayurvedic herbs in both standalone and integrative healthcare settings.

8. References

1. Charaka. *Charaka Samhita*. Chikitsa Sthana, Chapter 3. Edited by Acharya YT. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan, 2008.
2. Sushruta. *Sushruta Samhita*. Uttara Tantra, Chapter 39. Edited by Kaviraj Ambikadutta Shastri. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, 2009.
3. Bhavamishra. *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*. Tikta Rasa Prakarana. Edited by Chunekar KC. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, 2006.
4. Sharma PV. *Dravyaguna Vijnana*, Vol. I & II. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Bharati Academy, 2001, p. 98.112, 245.259.
5. Dash B, Sharma RK. *Materia Medica of Ayurveda (Based on Ayurveda Saukhyam)*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, 2001, p. 212.234.
6. Murthy KR. *Illustrated Dravyaguna Vijnana*, Vol. II. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia, 2012, p. 147.166.
7. Sharma P, Singh RK. Clinical evaluation of Vasa and Bhunimba in the management of Kapha-Pittaja Jwara. *Journal of Research in Ayurvedic Sciences*. 2011;2(3):113.121.
8. Joshi V, Gupta B. A study on the efficacy of Guduchi in chronic fever with special reference to its Rasa, Guna, and Prabhava. *Ayurveda Mahasammelan Patrika*. 2010;45(2):64.71.
9. Tripathi SN, Shukla P. Comparative assessment of Patola and Nimba in Pittaja Jwara . A clinical perspective. *International Journal of Ayurvedic Medicine*. 2014;5(1):21.28.
10. Chakrapanidatta. *Ayurveda Deepika Commentary on Charaka Samhita*. Edited by Acharya YT. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, 2008.
11. Dalhanacharya. *Nibandha Sangraha Commentary on Sushruta Samhita*. Edited by Acharya YT. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan, 2010.
12. Vaidya Bhagwan Dash. *Fundamentals of Ayurveda*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2004, p. 67.75.