

# Role of *GurvaadiGuna* in Physiology and Pathology of Body: Perspective of Ayurveda

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## ABSTRACT

*Gurvaadigunas* are specific and very important contribution of Ayurveda, being a science of health. These *gunas* are a form of specific potential, able to perform specific type of work. These works may be for maintenance of health or cause for a disease or treatment for a disease. Therefore these *gunas* may be considered as one of the important basis of metabolism in the body. The *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *mala* are as important for body as roots are important for trees, described in Ayurveda. Among these *Dhatu* may be considered as prime structural component, *mala*, as by product of proper metabolism and *doshas*, as prime functional component of body. In this paper it is tried to explore that *Gurvaadigunas* make functional platform of body and an attempt also made here to establish a theory, on the basis of literature review, which reveals the clinical importance of *Gurvaadiguna*.

## Keywords:

## Introduction:

There are some properties of each components of body. These properties are in the form of *gunas* according to Ayurveda. These are 41 in number according to *acharya* Charaka. Among these, there are 20 *gunas* which specially named as *Gurvaadigunas*. *Guruguna* is one among twenty and described firstly therefore these *Gunas* are collectively called as *Gurvaadiguna*. *Dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala* and *oja* are the structural and functional components of body. Each of these components is actually the group of some specific type of *Gurvaadigunas* in the body. Due to these *gunas*, these components are able to perform their functions, either normal or abnormal because these *gunas* have potential to make any substance able to perform specific kind of work, in which these are present. Due to their normal functions, homeostasis get maintained and person becomes healthy and on the other hand due to their abnormal functions, homeostasis get disturbed and pathological conditions arise. So there may be a direct or indirect relation of these *gunas* in pathogenesis and treatment. There is another component named as *ojain* the body which may be considered as immune power of our body. *Oja* is also a group of some specific *Gurvaadigunas*. Therefore, there is a wide scope for study of the various dimensions of *gurvaadigunas* in human body.

## Aims and objectives:

The aim of this study is to collect, compile and explore the theoretical and applied aspect of *Gurvaadiguna* for healthy and diseased patient from various corners of *Ayurvedasastra* and to try to establish the fact that *gurvaadigunas* directly or indirectly relate with the imbalance of components of body as well as homeostasis of body, so that the vast knowledge of *gurvaadiguna* can be utilized in the diagnosis and treatment of various pathological conditions.

## Literature review:

Which shelter in *Dravya* with inseparable relation (*Samvay Sambhandh*) has no any type of activities (*Nishchesta*), property (*Gunaheen*) and *Asamvayi Karana* in performing any action.<sup>1</sup> To change the state of *Dravya* (substance), it is required to modify the property or energy of that particular *Dravya*, which is called as *Guna*. As *Cakrapāni* describes, *Dravya* and *Guna* nourish similar *Dravya* and *Guna*. Thus *Dravya*, *Parthiva* etc., nourish *Dhatu*, *Dosa* and *Mala*, while *Guna* such as *Gandha* (smell), unctuousness, hotness, heaviness etc. nourish similar *Guna* in the body. By nourishment of *Guna* that of *Dravya* is also get nourished. It is to be understood as without nourishing *Guna* it is not possible to nourish *Dravya*.<sup>2</sup>

Again the conversion of *Guna* from one form to another is required some energy in body as well as in the Universe. In body the conversion media is called '*Agni*'. As when heat is given to water it becomes hot water, more increase of heat converts into Gas. Reduction of heat energy converts the water into Ice. The same phenomenon pertains in the body. So it is described as- *Dravyas* are digested by *Bhutagnis*, the manifest result is that they acquire the specific properties and that is why it is said that properties rather than substance are produced. So the properties are developed by *Agni* not by substance.<sup>3</sup> The applied aspects

show the *Gunah* has some independent existence with its *Dravya*. A detailed study on *Gunais* required to establish the aspect.

*AcharyaSushruta* has stated - The qualities which, by themselves, cannot accommodate other qualities (to other within then). His also stated-various actions of substances are inferred by the different qualities present in them.<sup>4</sup>

*AcharyaP.V. Sharma* has described the *Guna* - The reason with which the peoples are attracted towards it. '*Dravya*' is used as equipment in performing various functions, but *Dravya* Can able to perform these functions only by presence of adequate *Gunas*.<sup>5</sup> So, the applied functions of *Dravya* depend on *Guna*.*Guna* begins production of identical *Guna*, so, it is fact that on the production of identical *Gunas*, *Gunas* are *Samvayikaran* not *Asamvayi*.<sup>6</sup>

### Number and Classification of *Gunas*:

Total 41 *Gunas* are accepted in *Ayurveda*.

*AcharyaCharak* has classified *Gunas* in 4 (four) groups -<sup>7</sup>

#### 1. *Saratha*

The *Gunas* which are objects of sense organs (*Sabda, Sparsa, Rupa, Rasa, Gandha*) and they are constituting the distinctive features of the five elements are kept in.

#### 2. *Gurvadayo - Guru - Laghu* etc.

#### 3. *AdyobuddhiPrayntanta - BucidhiPraytna*.

#### 4. *Paradayah - Para-Apara* etc.

In this way, *Gunas* are<sup>8</sup>

1. <i>VaisheshikaGunas</i>	5
2. <i>AdhyatmikGunas</i>	6
3. <i>ParadiGunas</i>	10
4. <i>Gurvadigunas</i>	20/41

### *Gurvaadiguna*:

These are also known as *SharirGunas* as they are found in body tissues and substances influencing them. While describing *SamanyaGunas*, description of these *GurvadiGunas* along with *ParadiGunas* is given by *AcharyaChakrapani*. Both these groups of *GunasGurvadi* and *Paradi* are present in *Panchmahabhutasi.e. Prithvi, Jala, Vayu* etc. So these *Gunas* are important part in treatment part of view also while application of *Samanya-VisheshaSiddhant*<sup>9</sup> etc. There are twenty *GurvadiGuna* appearing in ten pairs and each pair having opposite characteristics. These are as following-<sup>10</sup>*Guru, laghu, manda, tikshana, hima, ushna, snigdha, rukshna, slakshana, khara, Sandra, drava, mridu, kathina, sthira, sara, sukshma, sthula, vishadaandpicchila*.

*Charaka, Sushruta* and *vagbhatta* has mentioned the same number of *GurvaadiGunas* but there are some differences in type of *Gunas* considered by these *Acharyas*.

*AcharyaHemadri* has explained the functions of these *Gunas* as following-<sup>11</sup>

The power to increase weight or heaviness in body is *GuruGuna*.

The power to produce lightness in body is due to *LaghuGuna*.

The power to perform *Shaman* process is due to *Manda*.

The power to perform *Sodhana* process is due to *Tikshna*.

The power to stop the movement is due to *HimaGuna*.

The power to produce sweat is due to *UsnaGuna*.

Due to which *Kledana* is generated in body is called *SnigdhaGuna*.

Due to which absorption is done is called *RukshaGuna*.

The power of healing is *Slakshna*.

The power to perform the Initiation of scraping is *KharaGuna*.

Power of generation of *Prasadana* is *Sandra*.

Power of generation of *Vilodana* is *Drava*.

Due to which property *Slathanashakti* is called as *Mridu*.

Due to which stiffness is generated is called *KathinaGuna*.

*SthiraGuna* has power of *Dharana*.

*SaraGuna* has *PreranaShakti*.

*SukshmaGuna* has power to produce *Vivarana*.

*SthulaGuna* has power to produce *Sanvarana*.

*VishadaGuna* has power to produce *Chalana*.

*PicchilaGuna* has power to produce *LepanaKarma*.

**Discussion:**

The concept of *Guna* is described in *Ayurveda* from applied and therapeutic view. According to *Ayurveda* *Gunas* are classified as 'Sartha' (5 in number), 'Gurvaadi' (20 in number), 'Paraadi' (10 in number) and 'Adhyatmika' (6 in number). Only *Guru*, *Drava* and *Sneha* are mentioned in *Vaishesikadarshan* in addition of 17, but within 17 *Gunas*, any *GurvaadiGuna* has not been enumerated in Indian philosophy.

These are *Guru*, *Laghu*, *Manda*, *Tikshna*, *Sheeta*, *Usna*, *Snigdha*, *Ruksha*, *Slakshna*, *Khara*, *Sandra*, *Drava*, *Mridu*, *Kathina*, *Sthira*, *Sara*, *Sukshma*, *Sthula*, *Vishada*, *Picchila*. *AcharyaShushruta* has not considered the *Sthira*, *Kathina*, *Khara* and *SthulaGunas*. *Vagbhatta* has followed the *Charaka*. These *Gunas* are described with relatives as *Guru-Laghu*, *Sheeta-Ushna* etc. While other *Gunas* related to rest of 3 groups have not been described in such a manner because these *GurvaadiGunas* are backbone of *Ayurvedic* therapeutic procedure. The *Tridosha* theory is the clinical basis and a specific classification of *GurvaadiGunas*. i.e.

*Vata* - रूक्षःशीतोलघुःसूक्ष्मश्चलोऽथविशदःखरःCh Su 1/59

*Pitta* - सस्त्रेहमुष्णंतीक्ष्णं चद्रवमम्लं सरं कटुं Ch Su 1/60

*Kapha* - गुरुशीतमृदुस्निग्धमधुरस्थिरपिच्छिलाःCh Su 1/61

These 7 *Gunas* of *Vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* etc. are related with *Saptadhatu*, each *Guna* for each *Dhatu*.

The theory of *Guna* is the basis (specially *GurvaadiGuna*) of clinical evaluation of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* as for ex: *Kapha* has *GuruGuna* while *Vata* has *Laghu*. *Vata* has *SheetaGuna* while *Pitta* has *Ushna*. The relative *Gunas* like *Guru-Laghu*, *Sheeta-Ushna* etc. are sheltered in different three *Doshas* and have role to antagonizing activity to maintain the normal status. These *Gunas* are also responsible to produce the disease while virtue of these *Guna* any *Dosha* becomes aggravated. In other word it can be said that *Doshas* takes aggravation through *Gunas*. The 'AnshanshaKalpana' (clinical gradation) is based on these *Gunas*. Any *Dosha* can aggravate with one *Gunas* two *Gunas* or more. The gradation of aggravated *Dosha*, depends on increase or decrease state of *Guna*.

Even the assessment of *Prakriti* or characteristics of specific *Prakriti* is also described on the basis of these *Gunas* which are entitled as *Vataja*, *Pittaja* etc. The characters of *VatajaPrakriti* appears according to *Gunas* as due to *RukshaGuna*, rough body-voice etc. happens, lightness in body movements appears due to *Laghu*, the movements of eyes, brows etc. due to 'ChalaGuna, short temperament due to 'SeeghraGuna' etc. In *PittajaPrakriti*, among *Gunas* of *PittaDosha*, *UsnaGuna* produce 'UshnaMukha', *TeekshnaGuna* produce 'TikshnaParakrama' 'TikshnaAgni', *Dravaguna* produces loose and soft joint and muscles etc.

And in *KaphaPrakriti*, *SnigdhaGuna* is cause of *Snigdhatu* in organ and body, due to *MriduGuna*, smartness and gentleness increases in body, excessive *Sukra* occurs due to *MadhuraGuna* etc. Here in this reference it is clear that the assessment of *Prakriti* etc. is also based on these *Gunas*.

A specific concept of *Vyadhikshamatva/Bala* is entirely based on these 20 *GurvaadiGunas*. Among 20 *Gunas*, 10 *Gunas* have defensive character and have considered as *Gunas* of *Ojas*, while the relative or counter of defensive *Gunas*, remaining 10, have attacking characteristics and regarded as *Gunas* of *Visha*] means among 20 *GurvaadiGuna*, 10 *Gunas* are defensive and other 10 are attacking. This is the basic theory of *Vyadhikshamatva*, not only physical or somatic immunity, indirectly it has role in psychic Immunity too. The *SthiraGuna* of *Kapha* regulate the *ChalaGuna* of *Manas* and the *Snigdha*, *Madhura*, *Sukra* is responsible for regulating the *Manas* through *Dhriti*. In this discussion, now there is a position to say these *Gunas* have therapeutic and clinical importance.

The different *Padarthas* have been established in drugs i.e. *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Veerya*, *Vipaka* etc. Among these, *Prabhava* is different which is related to *Karma* while remaining all *Padarthas*, *Rasa*, *Guna*, *Veerya*, *Vipaka* are the forms of *Gunas*. Drugs affects on diseases through 'Veerya' which is the *Guna* only. It means the different stage of Pharmacological action are known on the basis of *Guna*. According to *PadiniSutra*, *Guna* is shelters in that which performs the work. It is clearly mentioned that *Guna* is quite different from *Karma*, but any *Dravya* performs the work by virtue of, which may be considered as, *Guna*. The Commentator *Hemadri* has considered *Guna* as a power of different clinical effects.

It is clear that *Hemadri* has considered the *Guna* as power of different pharmacological actions. A controversy is always existing before *Ayurveda* students and teacher to differentiate the *Guna* and *Karma*, but the commentary of *Hemadri* has been highlighted the fact of *Guna* and *Karma* through mentioning the 'Shakti' word in sense of power and strength. No doubt action or *Karma* is different, but the cause of action is essential cause as 'Pravritti' is *Karma* (*Kriya*) but the cause of this is *Rajas* which is *Guna*. In this sense *Hemadri* has considered *Guna* and power both are sheltered in *Dravya* in which *Guna* has role as a power or initiative entity. Characteristics of these *Gunas* have been identified through pharmacological effects as *Bhav-prakash*, has stated "Rukshanam" means *Ruksha* has 'Kaphahar' effect. The different *Acharya* has

identified the *Gunas* through its pharmacological effect as *Sushruta* has stated who has power or who performs the stability of body is '*Kathina*'.

### Conclusion:

1. *Gurvaaditwentygunas* are the functional basis of bodily components like *dosha, dhatu, mala, oja* etc.
2. Imbalance in these components is the effect of these *gurvaadigunas*.
3. Processes of maintaining homeostasis also depend on these *gurvaadigunas*.
4. Particular group of these *gunas* may be considered as immune power/*oja* of body.

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