

## FOOD PROCESSING TECHNIQUES IN BHAVPRAKASH NIGHANTU AND THEIR CURRENT RELEVANCE

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### ABSTRACT

Many Ayurvedic texts elucidate profoundly on the *Kritanna* or cooked food. These techniques offer specific *Sanskaram* with respect to various *Ahara Dravya*. These techniques aim to aid easy metabolism of these *Dravyas* in the body to get their desired effects in the body. The food is no less than a drug to the body that has nourishing and therapeutic role to play if viewed from Ayurvedic perspective of holistic approach. The purpose of dedicating a whole segment to cooking techniques in the name of *Krititanna Varga* by Bhavmishra clearly highlights the importance of these techniques and recipes. The techniques and recipes enlisted in Bhavprakash's *Kritanna varga* are

still in practice in Indian households. These may not have the same name all across the regions but the recipes are similar. The *Kritanna Varga* here deals with modifications in the recipes too. These modifications change the properties of the recipe to suit different health conditions.

**KEYWORDS:-** Food, *Bhavprakash Nighantu*, *Kritanna Varga*, *Ahara*, Culinary, Ayurveda.

### INTRODUCTION

The history of food in Indian subcontinent goes back to some 6000 years ago during the Indus Valley civilisation. Archaeological testimonies have strongly suggested that barley, wheat, rice, lentils, peas and sesame were some of the crops grown during that period. The evidence of engravings of fish on the seals suggest the intake of aquatic animals like fish etc too. The discovery of fire perhaps could be the magna carta in the birth of primordial technique of cooking for the cooked meat tasted better to the early human.

The *Sanskaram* as it is said in Ayurvedic texts encompasses the techniques and processes that enhance the properties of a *Dravya* and to make it more pliable for human consumption. The Vedic period saw the coming up of the scriptures and manuscripts written on food which are important evidence in suggesting the existence of rituals and customary importance laid to food articles. The hymn from Rig Veda offers an insight into the importance of food offered as sacrifice in the *Yajya*. The references of the infamous drink, *soma* and the preparation of milk with grains and parched barley called the *Odana*. Many Ayurvedic texts elucidate profoundly on the *Kritanna* or cooked food. These techniques offer specific *sanskaram* with respect to various *Ahara Dravya*. These techniques aim to aid easy metabolism of these dravyas in the body to get their desired effects in the body. Bhavprakash Nighantu in his *Kritanna Varga's* elaborates some sixty food recipes which are still in a part of Indian culinary. The interesting fact is that these bear the same name of the recipe but their method of preparation has drastically changed. For an instance *Ksheerika* or *Kheer* is cooked by adding roasted rice in ghrta is added to parboiled milk and boiled till the rice softens which changes the properties of the recipe altogether.

Ayurveda emphasises on *Ahara* and *Aushadha* equally, the *Kritanna varga* of Bhavprakash Nighantu explains various forms of food preparations, designed keeping in view their nutritional, therapeutic value. The article aims at giving an insight into these food recipes which have derailed from the classical techniques are therefore a subject of scrutiny in the emergence of modern era of metabolic diseases.

#### Food techniques in kritanna varga of bhavprakash nighantu

Sr. No	Technique	Name of the Recipe	Properties
1.	Boiling in water	<i>Bhaatam</i>	Hot in potency, increases agni or digestive fire, does nourishment of tissues ( <i>Santarpan</i> ) <sup>[1]</sup>
		<i>Dali</i>	Causes constipation, <i>ruksha</i> or dry in property. <sup>[2]</sup>
		<i>Krishra</i>	It is <i>shukrala</i> (Increases semen production), <i>balya</i> or strength promoting, increases <i>kapha</i> or <i>pitta</i> . <sup>[3]</sup>
		<i>Mams-shringhatak</i>	<i>Ruchya</i> or appetiser, <i>brihmaniye</i> or bulk promoting, aphrodisiac, increases vigour and stability. <sup>[4]</sup>
2.	Boiling in milk	<i>Ksheerika</i>	<i>Durjara</i> or difficult for digestion, <i>brihmaniye</i> or bulk

			promoting, <i>vishtambhaka</i> or constipating, useful in <i>Rakta pitta</i> or bleeding disorders, causes <i>agnimandhya</i> or suppresses digestive fire. <sup>[5]</sup>
		<i>Narikerksheeri</i>	Cold in potency, <i>Atipushtikara</i> or nourishing, and aphrodisiac. <sup>[6]</sup>
		<i>Lapsika</i>	<i>Brihmanya</i> or bulk promoting, aphrodisiac, <i>kaphakaraka</i> , guru in property and best <i>tarpanam</i> or nourishing. <sup>[7]</sup>
3.	Steamed	<i>Akaleeka-matsya</i>	Rochana or appetiser, <i>vrishya</i> or aphrodisiac, slightly <i>pitta vardhaka</i> and useful in <i>arditavata</i> and <i>anustambha</i> . <sup>[8]</sup>
4.	Barbeque	<i>Shulapalam</i>	It is <i>ruchya</i> or appetiser, promotes digestive fire, light in property, <i>kapha vata shamaka</i> and slightly <i>Pitta vardhaka</i> . <sup>[9]</sup>
5.	Frying in ghruta/ oil	<i>Tapahari</i>	<i>Guru</i> or heavy to digest, <i>balya</i> or strength promoting, nourishing and <i>ruchya</i> or appetiser. <sup>[10]</sup>
		<i>Sevika modaka</i>	Heavy to digest, sweet in taste, bulking promoting and promotes digestive fire. <sup>[11]</sup>
		<i>Parpat</i>	<i>Guru</i> , dry in nature, <i>rochaka</i> or appetiser and digestive. <sup>[12]</sup>
		<i>Purika</i>	Impairs vision, but when cooked in <i>ghrita</i> it is good for the eyes, hot in potency and <i>snigdha</i> in property. <sup>[13]</sup>
6.	Deep Frying	<i>Masha Vataka</i>	<i>Guru</i> or heavy to digest, relieves constipation, <i>vidahi</i> or causes heartburn, <i>shukrala</i> or improves semen production. <sup>[14]</sup>
		<i>Sampava</i>	<i>Madhura</i> in <i>rasa</i> , <i>guru</i> in <i>guna</i> <i>ruchya</i> and <i>dipana</i> or appetiser. <sup>[15]</sup>
		<i>Fenika</i>	Easily digestible <sup>[16]</sup>
		<i>Shashkuli</i>	Easily digestible. <sup>[17]</sup>
		<i>Mukta mudga</i>	<i>Laghu</i> or easy to digest, <i>tridoshasmaka</i> , <i>madhura rasa</i> , cold potency, <i>Chakushya</i> or promotes vision, <i>jvarahara</i> or antipyretic and nourishing. <sup>[18]</sup>
		<i>Harisa</i>	<i>Balya</i> or strength promoting, <i>guru</i> in <i>guna</i> , laxative and <i>sandhankari</i> or fracture healing. <sup>[19]</sup>

		<i>Talita Mamsa</i>	<i>Tarpana</i> or nourishing, <i>oja vardhaka</i> , <i>snigdha</i> or unctuous in property, <i>dipana</i> or increases digestive fire, <i>ruchya</i> or appetiser and <i>medhya</i> or intellect promoting. <sup>[20]</sup>
		<i>Karpura Nalika</i>	<i>Madhura</i> in <i>rasa</i> , <i>guru</i> in <i>guna</i> <i>ruchya</i> and <i>dipana</i> or appetiser. <sup>[21]</sup>
		<i>Kundalini</i>	<i>Dhatu vardhaka</i> or tissue promoting, <i>indriya tarpaniye</i> or nourishing, <i>ruchya</i> or appetiser. <sup>[22]</sup>
7.	Dehusking	<i>Vesana</i>	<i>Balya</i> or strength promoting, <i>laghu</i> and <i>sheeta virya</i> . <sup>[23]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

The techniques and recipes enlisted in Bhavprakash's *Kritanna varga* are still in practice in Indian households. These may not have the same name all across the regions but the recipes are similar. The *Kritanna varga* here deals with modifications in the recipes too. These modifications change the properties of the recipe to suit different health conditions.

### *Bhaatam or boiled rice*

The *Bhaatam* or modern day recipe called Boiled rice is prepared by washing the rice before cooking or rice are allowed to soak in water before cooking. The alternate recipe of boiled rice or *Bhaatam*. It is by not washing the rice before cooking and not soaking in water is cold in potency, heavy to digest, increases *Kapha* or anorexia while the first recipe is *Ushna* in *Virya*, *Vishada* in *Guna*, good for health. It is *Laghu* and stimulates *Agni* or digestive fire and does *Santarpana* or nourishing. The practise of soaking rice in water before cooking is highly recommended from health perspective as emphasised by Bhavprakash Nighantu's *Kritanna varga*.

### *Dali or soup of pulses*

The *dali* or soup of pulses is a staple food in the north India. The recipe of dal in the *Kritanna varga* is made by cooking in water, added with *Lavana* (salt), *Ardraka* (ginger), *Hingu* (asafoetida). If this is taken with cold, it is *Vishtambhaka* (causes constipation) and causes dryness in the body. If the Dali is cooked after removing the husk of the pulses it becomes easily digestible. The recipe is devoid of tempering and uses no *Sneha* in preparation. The modern-day recipe uses tempering with onion, garlic, tomatoes and other spices. There is

liberal use of oils and butter. The modern day recipe of *Dali* is very different from the Bhavprakash's recipe. The cooking in pressure cooker may also change the properties of the Dali so prepared.

### ***Krishra or Khichdi / porridge***

The recipe of *Krishra* as mentioned in the *Kritanna varga* is made by boiling rice and pulses in water and *Lavan*, *Ardra* and *Hingu* are added for flavouring and taste. The *Krishra* is made is not easily digestible and promotes elimination of wastes and urine from the body and causes dullness of *Bhudhi* or intellect. This recipe is called *Khichdi* in modern day culinary. It is made by cooking under pressure in closed vessel. The recipe finds humongous variations. The modifications include tempering with oils, garlic, onion etc. The recipe is thought to be easily digestible contrary to Ayurvedic viewpoint of it being heavy to digest.

### ***Ksheerika or kheer***

The recipe of *Ksheerika* mentioned by Bhavprakash is prepared by boiling milk and reducing it to half the quantity. *Ghee* and rice is added to milk, this is cooked with sugar and *Ghrita*. The recipe of *Ksheerika* is known by the name *Kheer*. The *Kheer* is made by boiling milk and rice. This recipe is very different from the *Kritanna Varga* recipe. The difference in cooking technique can alter the properties of the food recipe therefore needs to be addressed.

### ***Rotika/ Chapati***

The *rotika* is made by cooking on an earthen pan or iron pan and over burning coal. This is stated to have *Balakarak* effect, *Dhatu vardhaka* property and heavy to digest. The modern day *Chapattis* are cooked over gas stove where the heat is even and consistently provided. The cooking vessels range from aluminium to non stick pan. The properties of *Rotika* so prepared would vary a great deal from Bhavprakash's enlisted attributes of *Rotika*.

## **CONCLUSION**

The modern day food techniques have evolved enormously. The properties of food recipes change not just with what is perceived with tongue but also at the *Rasapanchaka* or pharmacodynamics. The food is no less than a drug to the body that has nourishing and therapeutic role to play if viewed from Ayurvedic perspective of holistic approach. The purpose of dedicating a whole segment to cooking techniques in the name of *Kritanna Varga* by Bhavmishra clearly highlights the importance of these techniques and recipes. The food recipes may not offer us the benefits enlisted in the texts if these vary a great deal from the

techniques mentioned in the *Kritanna Varga*. Therefore, to the modern day health ailments these are an opportunity to explore the possible hazards food can offer for as we know from the texts of Ayurveda, everything in the world is a drug and even a the poison can be medicine if used wisely.

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