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AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE ON FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (VRISHYA) FROM CLASSICAL LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, the importance of diet (*Ahara*) towards improving reproductive health (*Vrishya*) is focused. Not only are fruits (*Phala Varga*) and vegetables (*Shaka Varga*) nutritive, but they have certain pharmacologically useful propertises that are helpful to *Shukra dhatu* (Semen). Numerous fruits and vegetables have been found to have the *Vrishya* (aphrodisiac and reproductive vitality-enhancing) effects in classical texts like *Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya and Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*. This paper is a critical review as well as a compilation of references to Vrishya fruits and vegetables as found in these texts.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Vrishya, Reproductive health, Phala Varga, Shaka Varga, Brihattrayi, Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*

INTRODUCTION

Reproductive health is a vital component of well-being as emphasized in *Ayurveda*. The term *Vrishya* refers to substances that enhance the quality and quantity of *Shukra dhatu* and promote fertility, vigor, and vitality. *Vrishya chikitsa* (aphrodisiac therapy) is one of the eight major therapeutic modalities described under *Ashtanga Ayurveda*. Among various therapeutic measures, *Ahara* (diet) plays a fundamental role. Certain fruits (*Phala Varga*) and vegetables (*Shaka Varga*) have been also categorized as *Vrishya* in classical texts. These descriptions not only highlight their nourishing potential but also their therapeutic

applications in infertility, sexual weakness, and reproductive disorders. This article compiles and critically reviews *Vrishya* fruits and vegetables described in *Brihattrayi* and *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*.

Review of Literature

The concept of *Vrishya dravyas* (aphrodisiac and fertility-promoting substances) has been extensively described in the ***Brihattrayi*** *(Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya)* as well as in post-*Brihattrayi* texts, particularly the ***Bhavaprakasha Nighantu***. These texts highlight the importance of fruits, vegetables, and other dietary substances in maintaining reproductive vitality by nourishing *Shukra dhatu*. Each classical text presents a unique yet complementary account of such food items, reflecting Ayurveda's holistic approach to reproductive health. Charaka emphasizes the importance of diet in nourishing *Dhatu* (body tissues) and supporting overall vitality, reflecting his holistic approach to systemic nourishment.[1] *Sushruta* classifies them in terms of their dietary use; *Vagbhata* provides an integrative description combining both perspectives[2] while *Bhavaprakasha* expands the Materia medica with detailed classifications.[3,4] Together, these works provide a comprehensive picture of diet-based rejuvenation and fertility in Ayurveda.

1. ***Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 27th chapter*** **describes several fruits and vegetables with *Vrishya* properties**

Fruit / Vegetable (Sanskrit Name)	Botanical / Common Name	Reference (Charaka Saṃhitā, Sūtrasthāna 27)
Makoy (माकोय)	*Solanum nigrum* (Black nightshade)	Ch. Su. 27/89
Vidarikanda (विदारिकन्द)	*Pueraria tuberosa* (Indian Kudzu)	Ch. Su. 27/120
Munakka (मुणक्का)	*Vitis vinifera* (Dried grapes)	Ch. Su. 27/126
Kharjur (खर्जूर)	*Phoenix dactylifera* (Date palm)	Ch. Su. 27/127
Amrataka (अम्रातक)	*Spondias pinnata* (Hog plum)	Ch. Su. 27/129
Badam (बदाम)	*Prunus dulcis* (Almond)	Ch. Su. 27/157–158
Abhishuk (अभिषुक)	*Juglans* (Walnut)	Ch. Su. 27/157–158
Mukulak (मुकुलक)	*Pistacia vera* (Pistachio)	Ch. Su. 27/157–158
Nikochak (निकोचक)	Chilgoza pine (Pine nut)	Ch. Su. 27/157–158
Urumanda (उरुमण्ड)	*Prunus armeniaca* (Apricot)	Ch. Su. 27/157–158

2. Vrishya Fruits and Vegetables in *Ashtanga Hridaya Sutrasthan 6th chapter.*

Fruit / Vegetable (Sanskrit Name)	Botanical / Common Name	Reference (Ashtang Hriday Sutrasthan 6)
Makoy (माकोय)	*Solanum nigrum* (Black nightshade)	A.H. Su. 6/74
Munjataka (मुन्जतक)	*Eulophia dabia* (Ground orchid)	A.H. Su. 6/83
Vidarikanda (विदारिकन्द)	*Pueraria tuberosa* (Indian Kudzu)	A.H. Su. 6/85
Kushmanda (कुष्माण्ड)	*Benincasa hispida* (Ash gourd)	A.H. Su. 6/88
Shobhanjana (शोभाञ्जन)	*Moringa oleifera* (Drumstick)	A.H. Su. 6/106–107
Moch (मोच)	*Musa* (Banana)	A.H. Su. 6/119-124
Kharjur (खर्जूर)	*Phoenix dactylifera* (Date palm)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Panas (पनस)	*Artocarpus heterophyllus* (Jackfruit)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Nariyal (नारिकेल)	*Cocos nucifera* (Coconut)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Falsa (फाल्सा)	*Grewia asiatica* (Sherbet berry)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Amratak (अम्रातक)	*Spondias pinnata* (Hog plum)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Taal (ताल)	*Borassus flabellifer* (Palmyra palm)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Gambhari (गम्भारी)	*Gmelina arborea* (White teak)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Rajadan (राजादन)	*Manilkara hexandra* (Khirni)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Madhuka (मधूक)	*Madhuca indica* (Mahua)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Sauveer (सौवीर / बोर)	*Ziziphus mauritiana* (Jujube)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Bilva (बिल्व)	*Aegle marmelos* (Bael fruit)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Falgu (फाल्गु)	*Ficus carica* (Fig)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Lasoda (लसोड़ा)	*Cordia myxa* (Indian cherry)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Badam (बदाम)	*Prunus dulcis* (Almond)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Abhishuk (अभिषुक)	*Juglans* (Walnut)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Mukulak (मुकुलक)	*Pistacia vera* (Pistachio)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Nikochak (निकोचक)	*Chilgoza pine* (Pine nut)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124
Priyal (प्रियाल)	*Buchanania lanzan* (Chirongi)	A.H. Su. 6/119–124

3. Vrishya Fruits and Vegetables in *Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthan* 46th Chapter.

Fruits / Vegetables (Sanskrit Name)	Botanical / Common Name	Reference (Sushrut Samhita Sutrasthan 46)
Amalaki (आमलकी)	*Emblica officinalis* (Amla, Indian gooseberry)	Su. Su. 46/143
Amra (आम्र)	*Mangifera indica* (Mango)	Su. Su. 46/153
Amrataka (आम्राटक)	*Spondias pinnata* (Hog plum)	Su. Su. 46/154
Priyal (प्रियाल)	*Buchanania lanzan* (Chirongi)	Su. Su. 46/156
Panas (पनस)	*Articarpus heterophyllus* (Jackfruit)	Su. Su. 46/181
Shunthi (शुण्ठी)	*Zingiber officinale* (Dry ginger)	Su. Su. 46/226
Ardraka (आर्द्रक)	*Zingiber officinale* (Fresh ginger)	Su. Su. 46/227
Rasona (रसोन्)	*Allium sativum* (Garlic)	Su. Su. 46/244
Poi ka shaak (पोई शाक)	*Basella alba* (Malabar spinach)	Su. Su. 46/259
Patol (पटोल)	*Trichosanthes dioica* (Pointed gourd)	Su. Su. 46/268

4. Vrishya Fruits and Vegetables in *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*

Fruits / Vegetables (Sanskrit Name)	Botanical / Common Name	Reference (Sushrut Samhita Sutrasthan 46)
Dugdhamra (आम दूध के साथ)	Mango with milk	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 11
Ambada (अमड़ा)	Hog Plum (*Spondias pinnata*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 20
Panas (पनस)	Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 26
Panas Bheeja (पनस बीज)	Jackfruit seeds	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 28
Lakuch	Ripe Monkey Jackfruit	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 32
Kela	Banana (*Musa paradisiaca*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 34
Nariyal	Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 41
Kharbuja	Muskmelon (*Cucumis melo*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 45
Taad	Ice Apple (*Borassus flabellifer*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 53
Ber	Indian Jujube (*Ziziphus mauritiana*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 73
Priyal	Chirongi (*Buchanania lanzan*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 85
Rajadan Khirni	Obtuse-leaved Mimusops (*Mimusops elengi*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 87
Kamalgatta	Lotus seeds (*Nelumbo nucifera*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 90
Singhaara	Water Chestnut (*Trapa*	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 93

	bispinosa)	
Mahua	Butter tree (*Madhuca indica*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 96
Anaar	Pomegranate (*Punica granatum*)	Amradiphalavarga – Shloka 102
Draksha	Grapes / Resins (*Vitis vinifera*)	Amradiphalavarga Shloka 113
Kharjur	Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*)	Amradiphalavarga Shloka 121
Badaam	Almond (*Prunus dulcis*)	Amradiphalavarga Shloka 124
Sev	Apple (*Malus domestica*)	Amradiphalavarga Shloka 126
Amrit Phala	Nashpati / Pear (*Pyrus communis*)	Amradiphalavarga Shloka 127
Bathua	Goosefoot (*Chenopodium album*)	Shakavarga – Shloka 7
Kalambi	Water Spinach (*Ipomoea aquatica*)	Shakavarga – Shloka 18
Gojivha	Sedge herb (*Onosma bracteatum*)	Shakavarga – Shloka 39
Kaasmard	Coffeeweed (*Cassia occidentalis*)	Shakavarga – Shloka 42
Kushmanda	Ash Gourd (*Benincasa hispida*)	Shakavarga – Shloka 53
Lauki	Bottle Gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*)	Shakavarga – Shloka 57
Patol	Pointed Gourd (*Trichosanthes dioica*)	Shakavarga – Shloka 69
Shimbhi	Sem Phali (*Dolichos lablab*)	Shakavarga – Shloka 75
Dodhika	Ridge Gourd (*Luffa acutangula*)	Shakavarga – Shloka 88
Aluk	Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*)	Shakavarga – Shloka 97

Across the major Ayurvedic texts—**Charaka Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Sushruta Samhita, and Bhavaprakasha Nighantu**—a wide range of fruits and vegetables are described as *Vrishya* (aphrodisiac and semen-promoting). Charaka highlights items like *Vidarikanda, Munakka, Kharjur, Almond, and Walnut*; Ashtanga Hridaya expands this list with *Coconut, Jackfruit, Banana, Drumstick, Fig, and Chirongi*; Sushruta emphasizes *Amla, Mango, Jackfruit, Garlic, Ginger,* and leafy greens like *Poi and Patol*; while Bhavaprakasha provides the most elaborate list, including *Pomegranate, Grapes, Dates, Coconut, Banana, Lotus seeds, Muskmelon, Bottle gourd, Ash gourd, Ridge gourd,* and many others. Collectively, these references reveal that Ayurveda places strong emphasis on both **sweet fruits** (like dates, grapes, pomegranate) and **nutritive vegetables** (like gourds, spinach, and potatoes) for maintaining reproductive health, vitality, and semen quality.

In addition to listing *Vrishya* (semen-promoting) fruits, the Ayurvedic classics also caution against certain fruits that are considered *Shukranashaka*, meaning those which deplete or reduce the quality of semen. *Sushruta (Su. Su. 46)* and *Bhavaprakasha (Amradiphala Varga)* both describe such examples. *Lakucha* (unripe monkey jackfruit) is mentioned as semen-depleting (Su. Su. 46/155; B.P. Amradiphala Varga–31), in contrast to the ripe fruit which is nourishing and beneficial. Similarly, *Kalinda* (unripe watermelon) is described as harmful for semen *(Su. Su. 46/214; B.P. Amradiphala Varga–43)*. These references highlight the Ayurvedic principle that the stage of ripeness and the method of consumption significantly influence the properties and post-digestive effects of fruits, thereby altering their impact on reproductive health.

DISCUSSION

The classical descriptions reveal that both common dietary items (such as banana, coconut, jackfruit, dates, almonds) and less commonly used fruits (such as *Vidarikanda*, *Munjataka*, *Rajadan*, *Priyal*) are endowed with *Vrishya* properties. These foods nourish *Shukra dhatu*, promote fertility, enhance sexual vigour, and strengthen overall vitality. The inclusion of *Shukranashaka* fruits also reflects Ayurvedic understanding of moderation and the importance of food maturity stage in determining its effect on reproductive health. This knowledge can be correlated with modern nutritional science, where fruits and nuts[5,6] such as almonds, walnuts, dates, and figs are rich in essential fatty acids, antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals that improve spermatogenesis, ovum health, and hormonal balance.[7] In Ayurveda, the influence of ***Rasa* (taste)** on reproductive health is profound, with each taste exerting a specific action on *Shukra dhatu*. Among these, ***Madhura rasa* (sweet taste)**—abundantly present in dates, grapes, banana, coconut, and jackfruit—is considered the most nourishing for the reproductive system. Classical texts associate Madhura rasa with *Shukra vardhana*, the promotion and enrichment of semen and ovum. Modern science offers a parallel explanation: these fruits are naturally rich in glucose, fructose, and polysaccharides, which serve as instant sources of energy for gametes, thereby enhancing sperm motility and ovum viability. Furthermore, their content of Vitamin B-complex and potassium plays a crucial role in regulating reproductive hormones, strengthening the traditional Ayurvedic understanding of their aphrodisiac properties.[8,9] Another significant taste, ***Amla rasa* (sour taste)**, is exemplified by fruits such as Indian gooseberry (Amla) and citrus varieties. Ayurveda recognizes sour fruits as stimulants of appetite and promoters of tissue metabolism. Modern evidence supports this by showing that Vitamin C, abundantly found in these fruits,

functions as a powerful antioxidant that protects sperm DNA from oxidative stress—a major factor in male infertility. Similarly, ***Kashaya rasa*** **(astringent taste)**, encountered in pomegranate, figs, and certain leafy greens, is described as having *stambhana* (stabilizing) properties, which help in semen retention. Biomedical research complements this claim, as these foods are polyphenol-rich, improving vascular health and testicular perfusion, ultimately enhancing erectile quality and reproductive vigour.[10]

Beyond taste, Ayurveda explains the effect of foods through their ***Guna*** **(qualities)**. Nourishing foods with ***Guru guna*** **(heaviness)**, such as almonds, walnuts, and *Vidarikanda*, are rich in proteins, omega-3 fatty acids, and zinc—nutrients that are indispensable for spermatogenesis and testosterone production.[11] On the other hand, foods with ***Snigdha guna*** **(unctuousness)**—such as nuts, coconut, and ghee-like fruits—are valued for their capacity to replenish and stabilize *Shukra dhatu*. From a modern perspective, this unctuous quality aligns with the presence of lipid-soluble antioxidants like Vitamin E, selenium, and omega fatty acids, all of which stabilize sperm cell membranes and improve egg quality.[12] The ***Virya*** **(potency)** of foods further refines their reproductive action. Fruits and vegetables with ***Sheeta Virya*** **(cooling potency)**—such as dates, coconut, and cucumber—are known to pacify *Pitta dosha* and prevent premature ejaculation or sperm damage due to excessive heat. This correlates with modern findings on hydration, electrolyte balance, and cooling antioxidants such as flavonoids and polyphenols, which protect gonadal tissues. Conversely, foods with ***Ushna Virya*** **(heating potency)**, including garlic, ginger, and drumstick, stimulate digestive fire (*Agni*) and circulation. Contemporary physiology validates their vasodilatory effects, which improve penile blood flow and sexual performance.[13] The ***Vipaka*** **(post-digestive effect)** of foods is equally critical in reproductive health. Substances with ***Madhura Vipaka***—such as dates, bananas, grapes, or the classical preparation of mango with milk—are regarded as *Shukra-vardhaka*. Biomedically, they sustain anabolic metabolism, support glycogen storage, and facilitate hormone synthesis, all of which enhance fertility. In contrast, foods with ***Katu Vipaka***, like garlic and ginger, sharpen metabolism and reduce *Kapha*-related infertility conditions such as obesity-induced PCOS or low testosterone. Research confirms that these substances improve insulin sensitivity, reduce inflammation, and modulate testosterone production. Finally, Ayurveda highlights the ***Prabhava*** **(special or unique action)** of certain fruits and vegetables that go beyond the framework of rasa, guna, virya, and vipaka. For instance, **pomegranate (Anaar)** is celebrated for its *Vrishya* and *stambhana* properties. Modern studies corroborate this by

demonstrating that pomegranate enhances testosterone levels, improves sperm motility, and supports ovarian function through its rich antioxidant content, particularly punicalagins. Similarly, ***Vidarikanda* (Pueraria tuberosa)** is revered as a rasayana for *Shukra dhatu*, with recent studies showing its phytoestrogens and isoflavones play a role in supporting gonadal function and female reproductive health. **Drumstick (Shobhanjana)**, frequently praised in both traditional and modern texts, is nutritionally dense in Vitamin A, Vitamin C, zinc, and powerful antioxidants, all of which improve sperm morphology and ovulation quality. Thus, when viewed through both the Ayurvedic and modern scientific lenses, the dietary inclusion of specific fruits and vegetables emerges as a potent and natural strategy for sustaining reproductive vitality. Ayurveda's insights into rasa, guna, virya, vipaka, and prabhava find convincing parallels in biochemical and physiological evidence, revealing a sophisticated ancient understanding of how food can serve as medicine for reproductive well-being.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda provides a detailed account of fruits and vegetables beneficial for reproductive vitality under *Vrishya dravyas*. The descriptions in *Brihattrayi* and *Bhavaprakasha Nighantu* highlight their role in nourishing *Shukra dhatu* and maintaining reproductive health. Future research should focus on clinical validation and phytochemical profiling of these fruits and vegetables to establish their efficacy in reproductive disorders. The Ayurvedic description of fruits and vegetables as *Vrishya dravyas* reflects a profound understanding of how diet directly nourishes *Shukra dhatu* and promotes fertility, vigor, and reproductive vitality. Parameters such as ***Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka, and Prabhava*** provide a holistic framework to explain their effects, many of which now find resonance in modern nutritional and biomedical sciences. Foods rich in ***Madhura rasa*** supply simple sugars, vitamins, and minerals that energize gametes and regulate reproductive hormones; those with ***Guru and Snigdha guna*** offer proteins, essential fatty acids, and antioxidants vital for sperm and ovum quality; while ***Sheeta and Ushna virya*** foods balance thermal regulation, circulation, and sexual performance. The ***Vipaka*** of substances explains their long-term metabolic influence on fertility, and unique ***Prabhava*** actions—such as the reproductive benefits of pomegranate, *Vidarikanda*, and drumstick—demonstrate Ayurveda's recognition of food beyond general classifications. Modern research substantiates these classical claims by showing that fruits and nuts like dates, grapes, pomegranate, bananas, almonds, and walnuts improve semen quality, ovum viability, hormonal balance, and overall reproductive health through their rich content of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, phytoestrogens, and essential fatty acids. Thus,

Ayurveda's time-tested dietary wisdom, when viewed through the lens of contemporary science, provides an integrated approach to reproductive well-being. Future research focusing on clinical validation and biochemical profiling of these *Vrishya dravyas* could further establish their therapeutic potential, bridging traditional knowledge with evidence-based medicine.

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