

REVIEW ARTICLE

The Concept of *Guna* and its Applied Aspect W.S.R. of *Gurvadi Guna* in Perspective of *Shadvidha-Upkrama*

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ABSTRACT

Guna is one of the fundamental principles of *Ayurveda* and plays an important role in understanding the properties and actions of *Dravya*. Among the various classifications of *Guna*, the 20 *Gurvadi Guna* have considerable importance in understanding physiological and pathological changes and in planning appropriate treatment. *Ayurveda* has indicated various types of *Chikitsa* for the management of diseases. Among these, *Shadvidha-Upkrama* bears a lot of significance. It is attained through the balancing of *Guna*, ultimately by achieving the *Panchabhautika* stability. *Shadvidha-Upkrama* acts on the principles of *Samanya Visheshasiddhanta*. *Upkrama* should be planned based on these *Gurvadi Guna* for a particular disease. That is why it is called *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa*. Thus, *Shadvidha-Upkrama* and *Gurvadi Guna* are used both for prevention and cure of disease.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda emphasizes a holistic and individualized approach to maintenance of health and management of disease. The concept of *Guna* occupies an important position in this framework as it helps in understanding the properties and actions of various *Dravya* and their practical application in diagnosis and treatment. In *Charaka Samhita*, *Guna* has been placed at the third position among all the *Shatpadartha*,^[1] and in *Vaisheshika* philosophy it has been placed at the second position. Among the different classifications of *Guna*, *Gurvadi Guna* are 20 qualities arranged into 10 opposite pairs: *Guru-Laghu*, *Tikshna-Manda*, *Hima-Ushna*, *Snigdha-Ruksha*, *Shlakshna-Khara*, *Sandra-Drava*, *Mridu-Kathina*, *Sthira-Sara*, *Sukshma-Sthula*, and *Vishada-Picchila*.^[2] These *Guna* are important because they influence the physiological and pathological state of the body. The aggravation or alleviation of *Dosha* can be understood in relation to corresponding *Guna*. Thus, knowledge of *Gurvadi Guna* becomes essential for understanding the mechanism of *Chikitsa*. *Shadvidha-Upkrama* is an important therapeutic framework described by *Acharya Charaka* and consists of *Langhana*, *Brimhana*, *Rukshana*, *Snehana*, *Swedana*, and *Stambhana*.^[3] These therapeutic

measures operate through specific qualitative attributes and are applied according to the condition of the patient and disease. Although *Guna* and *Upkrama* are individually described in classical texts, their systematic interrelationship and practical application require further conceptual understanding. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to analyze the relationship between *Gurvadi Guna* and *Shadvidha-Upkrama*.

1.1. Aim

- To study the concept of *Guna* and its applied aspect with special reference to *Gurvadi Guna* from the perspective of *Shadvidha-Upkrama*.

1.2. Objectives

- To explore the classical *Ayurvedic* description of *Guna*
- To describe *Shadvidha-Upkrama* as mentioned in *Brihatrayi*
- To study the interrelationship between *Gurvadi Guna* and *Shadvidha-Upkrama*.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

- Classical *Ayurvedic* texts and their commentaries were critically reviewed for descriptions related to *Guna*, *Gurvadi Guna*, and *Shadvidha-Upkrama*

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- The study primarily included *Brihatrayi* along with relevant classical literature and available authentic sources.

2.1. Concept of *Guna*

The term *Guna* is derived from the root “*Guna Aamantrane*,” which means to attract.^[4] *Acharya* P. V. Sharma explained in *Dravya–Guna–Vigyana* that *Guna* is that which draws people toward a *Dravya*, much like a rope that pulls a blind thing. The attributes of a substance – such as its taste, smell, or medicinal effect – attract people toward it. This is why qualities like *Guru* are known as *Guna*. According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Guna* is that which is *Samavayi* (*Aashraya* of *Aashrayi* and *Aadhara* of *Aadheya*), which is *Nischesta* and acts as a cause for the substance’s properties and effects (Table 1).^[5]

2.2. Enumeration of *Guna*

Acharya has enlisted 41 *Guna* into *Sartha Guna*, *Paradi Guna*, *Gurvadi Guna*, and *Prayatnadi Guna* (Table 2).^[6]

2.3. *Gurvadi Guna*

The 20 *Gurvadi guna* are arranged into 10 mutually opposite pairs (Table 3). These qualities are important because changes in *Dosha* can be understood in relation to corresponding qualities (Table 4).

2.4. *Paradi Guna* — Classical Concept and Applied Aspect

The source article specifically states that *Charaka Samhita* enumerates ten *Paradi Guna* in the 26th chapter of the first part and designates them as a distinct group. The 10 are: *Paratva*, *Aparatva*, *Yukti*, *Samkhyā*, *Samyoga*, *Vibhaga*, *Prithaktva*, *Parimana*, *Samskara*, and *Abhyasa*.^[9] Their practical relevance is chiefly in rational selection, combination, separation, measurement, processing, and repeated use in treatment and health maintenance (Tables 5 and 6).

2.5. *Adhyatmika Guna*

According to *Charaka*, the six *Adhyatmika Guna* are *Ichha*, *Dvesha*, *Sukha*, *Dukha*, *Prayatna* and *Buddhi*.^[13] These influence mental experience and are relevant to *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* and mental equilibrium.

2.6. *Shadvidha-Upkrama*

Shadvidha-Upkrama is described by *Acharya Charaka* in the *Langhana–Brimhaniya Adhyaya* of *Sutra Sthana*. The six measures are *Langhana*, *Brimhana*, *Rukshana*, *Snehana*, *Swedana*, and *Stambhana*. According to *Chakrapani*, these are broadly divided into *Santarpana* and *Aptarpana* (Tables 7-9).^[14]

3. DISCUSSION

The present conceptual study demonstrates that the therapeutic application of *Ayurveda* is deeply connected with *Guna Siddhanta*. *Guna* cannot exist independently and always resides in *Dravya*, thereby influencing its actions and therapeutic effects. The 20 *Gurvadi Guna* have particular clinical importance because they provide a qualitative framework for understanding physiological and pathological changes. The study establishes that alteration in *Dosha* can be understood as an alteration in corresponding qualities. Consequently, assessment of *Guna* can contribute to understanding the underlying state of *Dosha* and to selecting an appropriate therapeutic approach. The six *Upkrama* can therefore be viewed as practical expressions of *Guna Siddhanta*. *Langhana* reduces excessive and nourishing

qualities, *Brimhana* promotes nourishing qualities, *Rukshana* reduces unctuousness, *Snehana* introduces unctuousness, *Swedana* utilizes heat, and *Stambhana* promotes stability and control. This establishes a direct conceptual relationship: *Guna–Dosha* state–Assessment of imbalance–Selection of *Upkrama*–Restoration of equilibrium. The ultimate therapeutic objective is the restoration of *Guna* balance, *Dosha Samyata*, and *Dhatu Samyata*. The clinical significance of this approach lies in individualized treatment. The physician must consider the patient’s condition, strength, disease stage, and qualitative predominance before selecting a therapeutic measure. Thus, *Guna* serves as an important bridge between *Ayurvedic* theory and clinical practice.

4. CONCLUSION

The present conceptual study establishes that *Guna* is a fundamental principle of *Ayurveda* and is inseparably associated with *Dravya*. Among the different types of *Guna*, *Gurvadi Guna* have considerable importance in understanding physiological and pathological processes. The study demonstrates that *Shadvidha-Upkrama* represents the practical therapeutic application of *Guna Siddhanta*. The selection and efficacy of *Langhana*, *Brimhana*, *Rukshana*, *Snehana*, *Swedana*, and *Stambhana* are closely related to their predominant qualities. The relationship between *Gurvadi Guna* and *Shadvidha-Upkrama* is primarily explained through *Samanya-Vishesha Siddhanta*. Therefore, proper understanding of *Gurvadi Guna* is essential for appropriate diagnosis, treatment planning, and individualized *Ayurvedic* management. Overall, the study indicates that regulation of *Guna* is an important mechanism through which therapeutic interventions aim to restore *Dosha* and *Dhatu* equilibrium.

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Table 1: Classification of *Guna*

<i>Acharya</i>	Number	Classification
<i>Acharya Charaka</i>	41	<i>Sartha Guna</i> (5) <i>Paradi Guna</i> (10) <i>Gurvadi Guna</i> (20) <i>Prayatna Guna</i> (6)
<i>Acharya Sushruta</i>	20	
<i>Acharya Vagbhata</i>	20	
<i>Yogendranath Sen</i>	42	41 <i>Guna</i> + <i>Mana</i>
<i>Kanada</i>	17	<i>Roopa, Rasa, Gandha, Sparsha, Samkhya, Parimana, Prithaktva, Samyoga, Vibhaga, Para, Apar, Buddhi, Sukha, Dukha, Iccha, Dvesha, and Prayatna</i>
<i>Nyaya Darshana</i>	24	17+ <i>Gurutva, Dravatva, Sneha, Samskara, Dharma, Adharma, Shabda</i>

Table 2: Enumeration of *guna*

<i>Gurvadi guna</i> (20)	<i>Paradi guna</i> (10)	<i>Sartha guna</i> (5)	<i>Prayatnadi guna</i> (6)
<i>Guru-Laghu</i>	<i>Paratva</i>	<i>Shabda</i>	<i>Ichha</i>
<i>Sheeta-Ushna</i>	<i>Aparatva</i>	<i>Sparsha</i>	<i>Dvesha</i>
<i>Manda-Tikshna</i>	<i>Yukti</i>	<i>Roopa</i>	<i>Sukha</i>
<i>Snigdha-Ruksha</i>	<i>Samkhya</i>	<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Dukha</i>
<i>Sthira-Sara</i>	<i>Samyoga</i>	<i>Gandha</i>	<i>Prayatna</i>
<i>Mridu-Kathina</i>	<i>Vibhaga</i>		<i>Buddhi</i>
<i>Vishada-Picchila</i>	<i>Prithaktva</i>		
<i>Shlakshna-Khara</i>	<i>Parimana</i>		
<i>Sukshma-Sthula</i>	<i>Samskara</i>		
<i>Sandra-Drava</i>	<i>Abhyasa</i>		

Table 3: *Gurvadi guna*

S. No.	<i>Guna</i>	Opposite <i>guna</i>
1.	<i>Guru</i>	<i>Laghu</i>
2.	<i>Manda</i>	<i>Tikshna</i>
3.	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Ushna</i>
4.	<i>Snigdha</i>	<i>Ruksha</i>
5.	<i>Shlakshna</i>	<i>Khara</i>
6.	<i>Sandra</i>	<i>Drava</i>
7.	<i>Mridu</i>	<i>Kathina</i>
8.	<i>Sthira</i>	<i>Sara</i>
9.	<i>Sukshma</i>	<i>Sthula</i>
10.	<i>Vishada</i>	<i>Picchila</i>

Table 4: Applied aspect of *Gurvadi guna*

<i>Guna</i>	Explanation ^[7]	Applied aspect ^[8]
<i>Guru</i>	Strengthening and nourishing	Used in <i>Snehana</i> and <i>Brimhana Karma</i> where nourishment is required. Useful in <i>Aptarpanajanya Vyadhi</i>
<i>Laghu</i>	Produces lightness	Used in <i>Langhana, Rukshana</i> and <i>Stambhana Karma</i> . Useful in <i>Santarpanjanya Vyadhi</i>
<i>Sheeta</i>	Cooling and stabilizing	Used in <i>Brimhana</i> and <i>Stambhana Karma</i>
<i>Ushna</i>	Promotes sweating	Used in <i>Rukshana</i> and <i>Swedana Karma</i>
<i>Snigdha</i>	Soaking/unctuous	Used in <i>Snehana</i> and <i>Brimhana Karma</i> , particularly in <i>Ruksha/Vata</i> conditions
<i>Ruksha</i>	Drying/dehydrating	Used in <i>Langhana, Rukshana</i> , and <i>Stambhana Karma</i>
<i>Manda</i>	Mild/sluggish; Used in <i>Shamana</i>	Used in <i>Brimhana</i> and <i>Stambhana Karma</i>
<i>Tikshna</i>	Sharp; useful for <i>Shodhana</i>	Useful in <i>Rukshana/Swedana Karma</i>
<i>Sthira</i>	Stabilizing	Used in <i>Brimhana, Swedana</i> and <i>Stambhana Karma</i>
<i>Sara</i>	Promotes movement	Used in <i>Langhana, Snehana</i> , and <i>Swedana Karma</i>
<i>Mridu</i>	Soft	Used in <i>Snehana, Brimhana</i> , and <i>Stambhana Karma</i>
<i>Kathina</i>	Hard	Used in <i>Langhana</i> and <i>Rukshana Karma</i>
<i>Vishada</i>	Clear/non-slimy	Mainly used in <i>Langhana Karma</i>
<i>Picchila</i>	Coating/slimy	Used in <i>Snehana</i> and <i>Brimhana Karma</i>
<i>Shlakshna</i>	Smooth	Used in <i>Brimhana</i> and <i>Stambhana Karma</i>
<i>Khara</i>	Rough/abrading	Used in <i>Lekhana</i> and <i>Rukshana Karma</i> .
<i>Sukshma</i>	Penetrating	Used in <i>Swedana</i> and <i>Stambhana Karma</i>
<i>Sthula</i>	Gross	Used in <i>Brimhana Karma</i>
<i>Sandra</i>	Dense	Supports <i>Upachaya/nourishment</i> in <i>Krishna</i> persons
<i>Drava</i>	Fluid	Used in <i>Snehana, Swedana</i> , and <i>Stambhana Karma</i>

Table 5: *Paradi guna*

<i>Paradi guna</i>	Concept/applied aspect
<i>Paratva–Aparatva</i>	<i>Para</i> denotes better/superior and <i>Apara</i> inferior; applied in selecting the most beneficial or least beneficial therapeutic substance. <i>Agrya Varga</i> drugs may be understood in this context.
<i>Yukti</i>	Proper therapeutic application according to <i>Dosha</i> ; planning is based on <i>Hetu/Lakshana</i> and factors such as <i>Desha</i> , <i>Kala</i> , <i>Bala</i> , <i>Agni</i> and <i>Prakriti</i> . It is also used for <i>Pathya–Apathya</i> planning.
<i>Samkhyā</i>	Number/counting; important in <i>Ayurvedic</i> enumeration and in determining how many and how much of each ingredient is required during medicine preparation.
<i>Samyoga</i>	Union/combination of two or more substances; applied when drugs are combined in a formulation or therapeutic prescription.
<i>Vibhaga</i>	Division or separation; the opposite of <i>Samyoga</i> , applied when a component is separated from a combination.
<i>Prithaktva</i>	Distinctiveness/differentiation; helps distinguish one substance from another and supports identification of drugs or differentiation of conditions.
<i>Parimana</i>	Measurement; used for determining dose, quantity of ingredients and extent of procedures.
<i>Samskara</i>	Processing/modification that alters or enhances the properties of a substance; <i>Bhavana</i> is given as an example of a process used to augment efficacy.
<i>Abhyasa</i>	Repeated use/practice; applied in determining suitable and unsuitable dietary and lifestyle practices and in avoiding habitual disease-causing factors. ^[10]

Table 6: *Vishesh/sartha guna*

<i>Sartha/Vishesh Guna</i> ^[11]	Applied/sensory significance ^[12]
<i>Shabda</i>	Sound; perceived through the auditory sense and useful in sensory examination.
<i>Sparsha</i>	Touch; perceived through the tactile sense and useful in assessment of bodily qualities.
<i>Rupa</i>	Form/appearance; perceived through vision and useful in examination of color and appearance.
<i>Rasa</i>	Taste; perceived through the gustatory sense and useful in assessment of taste.
<i>Gandha</i>	Smell/odor; perceived through the olfactory sense and useful in examination of smell.

Table 7: *Shadvidha-Upkrama*

<i>Santarpana</i>	<i>Aptarpana</i>
<i>Snehana</i>	<i>Rukshana</i>
<i>Brimhana</i>	<i>Langhana</i>
<i>Swedana</i>	<i>Stambhana</i>

Table 8: Definition of *Shadvidha-Upkrama*

<i>Upkrama</i>	Principal definition/action ^[15]
<i>Langhana</i>	Produces lightness in the body
<i>Brimhana</i>	Promotes bulk or nourishment of the body
<i>Rukshana</i>	Produces dryness, roughness and non-sliminess
<i>Snehana</i>	Produces unctuousness, fluidity, softness and moisture
<i>Swedana</i>	Produces sweating and alleviates stiffness, heaviness and coldness
<i>Stambhana</i>	Restrains excessive movement or flow of bodily substances and fluids.

Table 9: Relationship of *Gurvadi guna* with *Shadvidha-Upkrama*

<i>Upkrama</i>	Predominant/important <i>Guna</i> ^[8]	Therapeutic principle
<i>Langhana</i>	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Ushna</i> , <i>Tikshna</i> , <i>Vishada</i> , and <i>Ruksha</i>	Applied when <i>Guru/Snigdha</i> and excessive nourishment predominate; reduces heaviness.
<i>Brimhana</i>	<i>Guru</i> , <i>Sheeta</i> , <i>Mridu</i> , <i>Snigdha</i> , <i>Sthula</i> , and <i>Picchila</i>	Applied when <i>Laghu/Ruksha</i> qualities predominate, and nourishment is required.
<i>Rukshana</i>	<i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Laghu</i> , <i>Khara</i> , <i>Tikshna</i> , <i>Ushna</i> , and <i>Sthira</i>	Applied in <i>Snigdha/Guru</i> states, including excessive <i>Kapha</i> and <i>Sthaulya</i> .
<i>Snehana</i>	<i>Drava</i> , <i>Sukshma</i> , <i>Sara</i> , <i>Snigdha</i> , <i>Picchila</i> , and <i>Guru</i>	Counteracts <i>Ruksha</i> quality; important in <i>Vata/Ruksha</i> conditions.
<i>Swedana</i>	<i>Ushna</i> , <i>Tikshna</i> , <i>Sara</i> , <i>Snigdha</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> , <i>Drava</i> , <i>Sthira</i> , and <i>Guru</i>	Acts mainly through <i>Ushna/Tikshna</i> ; useful in <i>Sheeta</i> , <i>Guru</i> , and <i>Snigdha</i> states.
<i>Stambhana</i>	<i>Sheeta</i> , <i>Manda</i> , <i>Mridu</i> , <i>Sukshma</i> , <i>Sthira</i> , and <i>Laghu</i>	Restrains excessive movement/flow and restores stability.