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Review Article

### ROHIT MATSYA AN AYURVEDIC AND MODERN VIEW

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### ABSTRACT

India being the richest nation with regard to genetics resources of fishes, among the Indian major carp *Rohu* is most preferred species and commands a higher price in the market. In ayurveda *rohit* is consider superior most among all fishes *रोहितोः मत्स्यानां* (ch.su.25/38). *Rohit matsya* flesh is considered *laghu*, digestive stimulant, promotive of great strength. Present article gives an overview of evaluation of *rohit matsya guna* on the scientific background.

**Keywords:** Rohit, Ayurveda, Guna, Matsya.

### INTRODUCTION

India being an agricultural country, its economy mainly depends on the successful production of agricultural products. Coming to the fisheries sector, India accounts for 4.4% of the global fish production. It is one of the richest nations in the world with regard to genetic resources of fishes which are distributed over a network of perennial river systems in the country.

India contributes around 3.6 million tons to world freshwater fish production in 2013 (FAO, 2013).

Among the Indian major carps, rohu is one of the most preferred species in the country and commands a higher price in the market.

Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam and Odisha are the most important states for aquaculture production and rohu is the most preferred species in these states and also in other states of the country.

In ayurveda also different type of fishes and its property described by different acharya. Among fishes almost every *acharya* considers *Rohit matsya (Labeo rohita)* as superior most

रोहितोः मत्स्यानां ch.su.25/38

#### Division of food in Ayurveda:

Acharya *charak* has divided *aahar dravyas* into different *vargas* depending upon there parts used;

शूकधान्यशमीधान्यमांसशाकफलाश्रयान्  
वर्गान् हरितमद्याम्बुगोरसेक्षुविकारिकान्॥  
दश द्वौ चापरौ वर्गौ कृतान्नाहारयोगिनाम्  
ch.su27/6-7

corn, pulse, meat, vegetable, fruit, greens, wine, water, milk, and its product, sugarcane and its product these ten and two more viz cooked food and adjuvant of food.

Acharya Charak has described eight varieties of source of flesh.

प्रसह्य भक्षयन्तीति प्रसहास्तेन सञ्जिताः॥

भूशया बिलवासित्वादानूपानूपसंश्रयात्

जले निवासाज्जलजा जलेचर्याज्जलेचराः॥

स्थलजा जाङ्गलाः प्रोक्ता मृगा जाङ्गलचारिणः॥

विकीर्य विष्किराश्चेति प्रतुदय प्रतुदाः स्मृताः॥

योनिरष्टविधा त्वेषा मांसानां परिकीर्तिता॥Ch.Su.27/53-55

The creatures that eat their food after tearing it from its place are known as tearer or of tearer group of creature.

Owing to making there lodgement into holes the earth, such creature are called burrowing creature.

those that dwell in wet land are known as wet land creature.

Owing to their living in water, some creature are called aquatic creature or water dweller.

Those that move about in water are known as water-roamer or amphibious creature.

Those that dwell and roam on jangala type of land are known as jangala creature.

Those that scatter there food with claws and pick it up are known as gallinaceous bird and those that seek and pick up there food are called peckers.

#### Aquatic creature:

कूर्मः कर्कटको मत्स्यः शिशुमारस्तिमिङ्गिलः |  
शुक्तिशङ्खोद्रकुम्भीरचुलुकीमकरादयः ||  
इति वारिशयाः प्रोक्ता... | Ch.Su.27/40

The tortoise, crab, fish, estuarine crocodile, whale, pearl oyster, conch snail, cat fish, gangetib ghariyal, susu, magar(the great Indian crocodile)-these are aquatic animal.

Acharya shusruta has divided aquatic creature as;

-shelled animal

-legged animal

-matsya

शङ्खशङ्खनकशुक्तिशम्बूकभल्लूकप्रभृतयः कोशस्थाः ||  
Sh.Su.46/109

Sankha, sankhanaka, sukta, shabuka, bhalluka, etc. Are called shelled animal

कूर्मकुम्भीरकर्कटककृष्णकर्कटकशिशुमारप्रभृतयः पादिनः  
||Sh.Su.46/110

Kurma, kumbhira, karkata, krashanakrakata, sisumara, etc are known as legged animal.

General properties of aquatic animal:

शङ्खकूर्मादयः स्वादुरसपाका मरुन्नुदः!

शीताः स्निग्धा हिताः पित्ते वर्चस्याः श्लेष्मवर्धनाः || Sh.Su.46/110

Conch, tortoise, etc are sweet in taste and vipaka, vata pacifying, cold, unctuous, wholesome in pitta, kapha-increasing and increases bulk of faeces.

कृष्णकर्कटकस्तेषां बल्यः कोष्णोऽनिलापहः |

शुक्लः सन्धानकृत् सृष्टविष्णुत्रोऽनिलपित्तहा || Sh.Su.46/111

Amongst them black crab, promotes strength, pacifies vata and is slightly hot; the white one promotes union, purgative, diuretic and pacifies vata and pitta.

#### Matsya:

Acharya shusruta has divided matsya into two viz; Nadeya and samudra.

मत्स्यास्तु द्विविधा नादेयाः सामुद्राश्च || Sh.Su.46/112

#### Nadeya matsya and its property:

तत्र नादेयाः-

रोहितपाठीनपाटलाराजीववर्मिगोमत्स्यकृष्णमत्स्यवागुञ्जारमुरल  
सहस्रदष्टप्रभृतयः Sh. Su.46/113

The varieties of fish living in river rohita, pathina, patala, Rajeev, varmi, gomatsya, krshana matsya, vangujara, murla, shasradmastra,etc

नादेया मधुरा तस्या गुरवो मारुतापहाः |

रक्तपित्तकराश्चोष्णा वृष्याः स्निग्धाल्पवर्चसः || Sh.Su.46/114

The types of fishes of river are sweet, heavy,vata pacifying, exite rakta-pita are hot, aphrodisiac and make faeces unctuous and little.

पाठीनः श्लेष्मलो वृष्यो-निद्रालुः पिशिताशनः |

दूषयेद्रक्तपित्तं तु कुष्ठरोगं करोत्यसौ |

मुरलो बृंहणो वृष्यः स्तन्यश्लेष्मकरस्तथा || Sh.Su.46/116

Pathina is kapha increasing, aphrodisiac, sleepy, carnivorous, vitiates rakta-pitta and causes kustha.

Murla is weight promoting, aphrodisiac, promotes breast milk and kapha.

सरस्तडागसम्भृताः स्निग्धाः स्वादुरसाः स्मृताः |

महाहृदेषु बलिनः, स्वल्पेऽम्भस्यबलाः स्मृताः || Sh.Su.46/117

Those living in lakes and tanks are unctuous and sweet, those living in big tanks and in shallow water they are poor in strength.

तिमितिमिङ्गिलकुलिशापाकमत्स्यनिरुलनन्दिवार(रु)लकमकरगर्ग  
रचन्द्रकमहामीनराजीवप्रभृतयःसामुद्राः || Sh.Su.46/118

Timi, timingla, kulisa, pakmatsya, nirula, nandivralaka, makara, gargara, chandraka, mahmina, rajiva, etc are those living in seas.

सामुद्रा गुरवः स्निग्धा मधुरा नातिपित्तलाः |

उष्णा वातहरा वृष्या वर्चस्याः श्लेष्मवर्धनाः |

बलावहा विशेषेण मांसाशित्वात् समुद्रजाः || Sh.Su.46/119

Types fishes of sea are heavy, unctuous, sweet, not highly pitta increasing, hot, vata alleviating, aphrodisiac, increase faeces and kapha, because of being carnivorous, they particularly promote strength.

#### Comparison between river and sea fish:

समुद्रजेभ्यो नादेया बृंहणत्वाद्गुणोत्तराः ||

तेषामप्यनिलघ्नत्वाच्चौण्ट्यकौष्यौ गुणोत्तरौ |

स्निग्धत्वात् स्वादुपाकत्वात्तयोर्वाप्या गुणाधिकाः ||  
Sh.Su.46/120-21

Fishes of river are superior to those of seas due to weight promoting property;amongst them too, those of swallow well and well are superior due to alleviation of vata; those of

staired well are superior to those of unctuousness and sweet vipaka.

Fish and different parts of body;

नादेया गुरवो मध्ये यस्मात् पुच्छास्यचारिणः |

सरस्तडागजानां तु विशेषेण शिरो लघु ||

अदूरगोचरा यस्मात्तस्मादुत्सोदपानजाः |

किञ्चिन्मुक्त्वा शिरोदेशमत्यर्थं गुरवस्तु ते ||

अधस्ताद्गुरवो ज्ञेया मत्स्याः सागरसम्भवाः |

उरोविचरणात्तेषां पूर्वमङ्गं लघु स्मृतम् ||

इत्यानूपो महाष्यन्दी मांसवर्ग उदीरितः|| Sh.Su.46/122-25

Fishes of river as they move with tail and front, are heavy in middle while those of lakes and tanks particularly head is light;

Fishes of water falls are heavy except some portion of head because of lack of exercise;

Those of seas as they move with chest, are tight in front and heavy are in front and lower parts.

*Mahabhisyadi; which causes excessive sliminess or moistening in channels of dosas, dhatus and malas .*

#### Rohit matsya;

Rohit matsya is nadeya matsya its superior most among all fishes

रोहितोःमत्स्यानां Ch.Su.25/38

Its bile is also used as bhavana dravya nad in different yogas. Identification of rohit matsya;

रक्त उदरो रक्त मुखो रक्त अक्षो रक्त पक्षतिः।

कृष्णपुच्छो झषः श्रेष्ठो रोहितो कथितो बुधैः॥

रोहितः सर्व मत्स्यानाम् वरो वृष्यो अर्दित अतिअर्जित्।

कषाय अनुरसःस्वादु वातघ्नो नाति पित्तकृत् ।

उर्ध्वजत्रुगतान हन्यात् रोहितमुण्डकम् || Bh.9/104-05

It has red coloured belly, face, eyes, and fins, black coloured tail. It is said to be best among fishes of all kind is aphrodisiac, cure facial paralysis/pain, sweet in taste with astringent as secondary taste mitigates but not going to increase pitta. Its head cures disease above the shoulder.

#### Modern view;

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Actinopterygii
Order:	Cypriniformes
Family:	Cyprinidae
Genus:	<i>Labeo</i>
Species:	<i>L. rohita</i>

Body bilaterally symmetrical, moderately elongate, its dorsal profile more arched than the ventral profile; body with cycloid scales, head without scale; snout fairly depressed, projecting beyond mouth, without lateral lobe; eyes dorsolateral in position, not visible from outside of head; mouth small and inferior; lips thick and fringed with a distinct inner fold to each lip, lobate or entire; a pair of small maxillary barbels concealed in lateral groove; no teeth on jaws; pharyngeal teeth in three rows; upper jaw not extending to front edge of eye; simple (unbranched) dorsal fin rays three or four, branched dorsal fin rays 12 to 14; dorsal fin inserted midway between snout tip and base of caudal fin; pectoral and pelvic fins laterally inserted; pectoral fin devoid of an osseous spine; caudal fin deeply forked; lower lip usually joined to isthmus by a narrow or broad bridge; pre-dorsal scale 12-16; lateral line distinct, complete and running along median line of the caudal peduncle; lateral line scales 40 to 44; lateral transverse scale-rows six or six and a half between lateral line and pelvic fin base; snout not truncate, without any lateral lobe; colour bluish on back, silvery on flanks and belly.

#### Rohit matsya property:

शैवालशष्पभोजित्वात्स्वप्नस्य च विवर्जनात् |

रोहितो दीपनीयश्च लघुपाको महाबलः|| Ch.Su.27/82

The flesh of rohita fish owing to its living on moss and its habit of not sleeping is digestive stimulant, light and promotive of great strength

कषायानुरसस्तेषां शष्पशैवालभोजनः |

रोहितो मारुतहरो नात्यर्थं पित्तकोपनः || Sh.Su46/115

Amongst them, rohita which eats grasses and saivala, is astringent in subsidiary taste, pacifies vata and aggravates pitta not highly.

Labeo rohita is a rich source of protein, fatty acids, and essential vitamins and minerals such as vitamin A, calcium, iron, zinc, and iodine. The vitamin A, calcium and iron found in small fish species are particularly bioavailable—that is, easily absorbed by the body.

Among fats, which include omega-3, essential fatty acids that benefit the body and help check occurrence of certain diseases. Beneath the skin of the fish the fat is actually its oil, which is termed omega 3 fatty acid and is of three types: alpha linolenic acid (ACA), eicosapentanoic acid (EPA) and docosahexanoic acid (DHA). Both EPA and DHA can be extremely helpful to counter heart diseases as also increase our immunity power.

These constituent are high in concentration in small fish, which are economically cheaper.

#### Rohit matsya yogas in Ayurveda:

घृतभृष्टान् रसे च्छागे रोहितान् फलसारिके |

अनुपीतरसान् स्निग्धानपत्त्यार्थं प्रयोजयेत्|| Ch.Ch.2/4/18

One desirous of progeny should take rohita fish fried in ghee together with meat juice of goat, prepared with fruit juices and take unctuous juices as after draughts.

पिप्पलीमरिचक्षारवचासैन्धवशिगुकाः।

पिष्टा रोहितपित्तेन घ्नन्त्यक्षिगतमञ्जनात्॥ Ch.Ch.23/183

The collyrium of the paste of long pepper, black pepper, alkali, sweet flag, rock salt and drum stick mixed with bile of rohita fish cures poison that have reach eyes.

कल्पशैष विष्किरप्रतुदप्रसहाम्बुचरेषु स्यात्, अक्षीरो रोहितादिषु च  
मत्स्येषु | Ch.Si.12/18

Enema may be prepared also with the meat-juices of the birds of the gallainaceous, pecker and tearer and aquatic groups. It may also be prepared with fish juices such as the rohita fish, but in that case milk should be omitted. This enema should be given to those who are debilitated by over indulgence in sex. It is promotive of sex, strength and complexion.

चूर्णितेषु यवगोधूमतिलमुद्गमाषेषु मत्स्यपिशितवेशवारो वा  
Sh.Ch.5/7

Flour of yava, godhum, tila, mudga and masa added with vesavara of fish, should be used in mahavata vyadhi.

वातघ्नसाङ्ग्राहिकदीपनीयैः कृतान् षडांश्चाप्युपभोजयेच्च [8] |  
खादेच्च मत्स्यान् रसमाप्नुयाच्च वातघ्नसिद्धं सघृतं सतैलम् ॥  
Sh.U.40/145-49

**Rasa prepared with drugs mitigating vata, causing constipation and increasing hunger may be consumed; or fish may be eaten, or meat soup boiled with vata mitigating drugs added with ghee and oil.**

## DISCUSSION

Due to presence of vitamin E, it is used as vajikar. Presence of high concentration of vitamin A which is because its feed on grasses and shaivala. Because of this property charak has mentioned its use in poison treatment, when poison reaches upto eyes. Its light and appetizer property is may be due to its higher activity as it sleeps less. Because of this property its

used in constipation caused by rasa dravya. Due to presence of high concentration of omega-3 fatty acid it causes unblocking of arteries and the artery being stasnas of vyan vayu which is the main cause of hridya roga. That's why in modern medicine doctors recommends eating of fishes on daily basis and popular slogan which says "A FISH A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTORS AWAY".

## CONCLUSION

India being agricultural country, its economically mainly dependent upon good management of agrarian system. Rohit matsya being superior most can also be due to because it can survive on minimum need. High concentration of different vitamins viz A, E and its other property such as mahabala i.e. Promotive of great strength may be the other reason for its superiority, but this needs a scientific ground its other parts such as rohit matsya pitta is also superior among all pitta gana mentioned in ayurveda but this also needs scientific validation.

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