

A Critical Literary Review of Brihatrayi with Special Reference to the Role of RāJasika and TāMasikaāHāRa in the Etiopathogenesis of MāNasikavikāRa

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ABSTRACT

Background: Āhāra (diet) is recognized in Ayurveda as one of the three cardinal pillars sustaining life (Trayopastambha). The Brihatrayi comprising Charaka Saṃhitā, Suśruta Saṃhitā, and Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya systematically classifies food according to its Guṇātma (qualitative) properties. Rājasika and Tāmasika Āhāra are specifically implicated in the aggravation of Mānasika Doṣa (Rajas and Tamas) and the consequent development of psychological disorders. Despite the classical emphasis on the diet–mind continuum, a systematic scholarly synthesis from Brihatrayi remains limited. Objective: To critically review descriptions of Rājasika and Tāmasika Āhāra in Brihatrayi and evaluate their role in the etiopathogenesis of Mānasika Vikāra through textual, conceptual, and comparative analysis. Materials and Methods: A classical literary review was conducted using primary references from Charaka Saṃhitā (Chakrapāṇi datta's Āyurveda Dīpikā commentary), Suśruta Saṃhitā (Dalhaṇa's Nibandha Saṅgraha commentary), and Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya (Aruṇa datta's Sarvāṅga sundari commentary). Secondary sources included peer-reviewed Āyurveda journals, AYUSH publications, and contemporary nutritional psychiatry literature retrieved from PubMed/MEDLINE. Results: Rājasika Āhāra characterized by Kaṭu, Amla, Lavaṇa, Uṣṇa, and Tikṣṇa properties, provokes Rajo guna dominance, leading to emotional hyperactivation, anger, and anxiety-spectrum disorders. Tāmasika Āhāra-comprising stale, putrefied, heavy, and impure food amplifies Tamo guna, resulting in cognitive dullness, lethargy, and affective flattening. Both dietary patterns impair the Dhi-Dhṛti-Smṛti triad, predisposing to disorders such as Unmāda, Apasmāra, Viṣāda, and Chittodvega. Conclusion: Brihatrayi establishes a coherent theoretical framework linking Rājasika and Tāmasika dietary practices to mental disorder pathogenesis, which aligns with contemporary nutritional psychiatry and gut–brain axis research, under scoring the relevance of Sāttvika Āhāra as a preventive and therapeutic dietary protocol in mental health management.

Keywords: Āyurveda; Brihatrayi; Āhāra; Trigūṇa; Sāttvika Āhāra; Rājasika Āhāra; Tāmasika Āhāra; Mānasika Vikāra; Mānasika Doṣa; Unmāda; Nutritional Psychiatry; Gut–Brain Axis

INTRODUCTION

Mental health disorders constitute one of the foremost global health burdens, accounting for approximately 13% of the total global disease burden according to the World Health Organization.¹

Contemporary epidemiology highlights the escalating prevalence of anxiety disorders, depressive illness, and psychotic states, attributable in part to modern dietary patterns characterized by high consumption of ultra-processed, nutrient-depleted foods. Āyurveda- the ancient

Indian system of life science - offers a unique integrative perspective on health as the harmonious equilibrium of Śarīra (body), Manas (mind), Indriya (senses), and Ātmā (soul). Among the Trayopastambha - Āhāra, Nidrā, and Brahmacharya - Āhāra is accorded supreme importance, described by Charaka as the fundamental cause of all Bala (strength), Varṇa (complexion), and Ojas:

इष्ट वर्णं गन्ध रस स्पर्शं विधिविहितमन्नपानं प्राणिनां प्राणमाचक्षते कुशलाः...
तदिन्द्रिानाह्वान्तरग्नेः स्थितिः; तत्सत्त्वमूर्जयति;
तच्छरीरधातुव्यूहबलवर्णोन्द्रियप्रसादकरं... विपरीतमहिताय सम्पद्यते ॥
(Ch.Su. 27/3)

This passage affirms that wholesome food- possessing desirable qualities of colour, smell, taste, and touch, consumed according to prescribed principles - acts as the fuel for *Agni*, nourishes the *Dhātus*, enhances *Sattva*, and promotes strength, complexion, and sensory clarity. Conversely, improper dietary practices become a cause of bodily and mental imbalance. What distinguishes *Āyurvedic* nutritional science from modern dietetics is its emphasis on the *Guṇātmaka* dimension of food - its capacity to modulate the three psychobiological qualities: *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. The *Brihatrayi* contains systematic descriptions of *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika* dietary substances and their psychopathological consequences. The present review aims to: (i) compile and critically analyze textual references on these dietary categories from *Brihatrayi*; (ii) examine their pathogenic mechanisms in relation to *Mānasika Doṣas* and specific *Mānasika Vikāra*; and (iii) correlate classical observations with contemporary nutritional psychiatry and gut-brain axis research.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Aims

To critically review the role of *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika Āhāra* as described in *Brihatrayi* in the etiopathogenesis of *Mānasika Vikāra*.

Primary Objectives

To compile and critically analyze all references pertaining to *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika Āhāra* in *Charaka Saṃhitā*, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, and *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya*, and evaluate their contribution to the pathogenesis of mental disorders.

Secondary Objectives

- To review the classical concepts of *Manas*, *Triguṇa*, and *Mānasika Doṣa* from *Brihatrayi*.
- To classify dietary substances according to their *Sāttvika*, *Rājasika*, and *Tāmasika* properties.
- To analyze the psychopathological mechanisms linking *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika Āhāra* to specific *Mānasika Vikāra*.
- To correlate classical *Āyurvedic* observations with current evidence in nutritional psychiatry and microbiome-gut-brain axis research.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

Classical Literary Review Study

Primary Sources

- *Charaka Saṃhitā* (*Agniveśa*, revised by *Charaka* and *Drḍhabala*; *Chakrapāṇidatta's Āyurveda Dīpikā* commentary; *Chaukhambha Orientalia*, Varanasi).
- *Suśruta Saṃhitā* (*Suśruta*; *Dalhaṇa's Nibandha Saṅgraha*

commentary; *Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan*, Varanasi).

- *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya* (*Vāgbhaṭa*; *Aruṇadatta's Sarvāṅga sundari* and *Hemādri's Āyurveda rasāyana* commentaries; *Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan*, Varanasi).

Secondary Sources

Classical lexicons (*Amarakoṣa*, *Śabdakalpadrum*); AYUSH research publications; peer-reviewed articles from JAIMS, AYU, IJRAP, IAMJ, and J-AIM; and PubMed/MEDLINE-indexed nutritional psychiatry literature.

METHODOLOGY

All references pertaining to *Āhāra*, *Triguṇa*, *Manas*, *Mānasika Vikāra*, *Viruddh āhāra*, and *Pathya-Apathya* were extracted from the *Brihatrayi*. Extracted references were classified according to *Sāttvika*, *Rājasika*, and *Tāmasika* properties based on *Guṇa* predominance. Critical evaluation was performed by analyzing *Doṣa* involvement, *Mānasika Doṣa* aggravation, impairment of *Dhi-Dhṛti-Smṛti*, and specific disease pathogenesis described therein. A comparative review was conducted correlating classical findings with modern nutritional psychiatry literature.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Concept of Manas in Āyurveda

Āyurveda defines *Manas* as the subtle inner instrument (*Antarindriya*) governing cognition, perception, volition, and emotional regulation. *Charaka* describes the essential qualities of *Manas* as *Nityaga* (ever-active), *Aṇutva* (atomic/subtle), and *Ekatva* (singular/unitary):

अणुत्वंचैकत्वंद्वौगुणौमनसःस्मृतौ। (Ch.Su.1/19)

'The *Manas*, by virtue of its atomicity and singularity, is incapable of simultaneously grasping all sense objects.' *Suśruta* regards *Manas* as operating through *Manovaha Srotas*- the channels of mental conduction- whose obstruction precipitates psychological dysfunction^[1] *Vāgbhaṭa* situates the mind in relation to *Hṛdaya* (heart)

as its principal seat, affirming the psychosomatic integration central to *Āyurvedic* medicine.^[10]

Concept of Triguṇa and Mānasika Doṣa

The *Sāṅkhya*-derived *Triguṇic* framework is foundational to *Āyurvedic* psychology. *Sattva* represents mental clarity, discriminative intelligence, and emotional equilibrium; *Rajas* embodies activity, passion, and desire; *Tamas* signifies inertia, delusion, and cognitive suppression. *Charaka* identifies *Rajas* and *Tamas* specifically as *Mānasika Doṣas*:

मानसःपुनरुद्दिष्टोरजश्चतम एव च॥ (Ch.Su.1/57)

'Rajas and Tamas are the two recognized *Doṣas* of the mind; Sattva is considered free of *Doṣa* and endowed with virtue.'

Āhāra and Mental Health in Brihatrayi

The relationship between diet and mental constitution is articulated across multiple chapters of *Brihatrayi*. The Charaka *Samhitā* emphasizes that wholesome food is the foundation of physical and mental well-being. Inappropriate food (*Anucita Āhāra*) is cited as one of the direct causes of *Unmāda*¹¹. Crucially, *Charaka* articulates the psychosomatic basis of *Āma* formation through emotionally-disturbed eating:

चान्नपानानामुपसेवनंकामक्रोधलोभमोहेर्ष्याहीशोकमानोद्वेगभयोपतप्तमन
सावायदन्नपानमुपयुज्यतेतदप्याममेवप्रदूषयति॥ (Ch.Vi 2/8)

'The intake of food and drinks by a person whose mind is afflicted with desire, anger, greed, delusion, jealousy, shame, grief, pride, anxiety, or fear also leads to the vitiation and formation of *Āma*.' This passage underscores the intimate relationship between mental health and digestive physiology - the psychosomatic basis of health and disease. The same verse appears reinforced in the context of *Grahaṇī* pathology,¹² **affirming that emotional disturbances adversely affect *Agni* and promote *Āma* formation, impairing digestive homeostasis,¹³ underlines the role of *Āhāra* in maintaining *Ojas* - the essence of all seven *Dhātus* and the material substratum of mental fortitude:**

तत्ररसादीनांशुक्रान्तानांधातूनांयत्परंतेजस्तत्खल्वोजस्तदेवबलमित्युच्यते,
स्वशास्त्र सिद्धान्तात्॥

(Su. Su 15/19)

'The supreme essence of the *Dhātus*, from *Rasa* up to *Śukra*, is called *Ojas*; according to the principles of *Āyurveda*, this itself is known as *Bala* (vital strength).' Dietary habits that compromise *Agni* or generate *Āma* may disrupt *Dhātu* nourishment and diminish *Ojas*, predisposing to reduced psychological resilience. The philosophical foundation of the diet–mind relationship is elaborated in the *Chhāndopaniṣada*, which affirms that *Manas* is fundamentally constituted by *Āhāra* (*Annamaya*)⁹:

आहारशुद्धौसत्त्वशुद्धिः।सत्त्वशुद्धौध्रुवास्मृतिः।स्मृतिलभ्भेसर्वग्रन्थीनांविप्रमो
क्षः॥(Chhandopnisad 7/26/2)

'When food is pure, the mind becomes pure; when the mind is pure, memory becomes steady; with the attainment of steady memory, all the knots of the heart are released.' This Upaniṣadic insight - that dietary purity (*Āhāra śuddhi*) is the precondition of cognitive clarity (*Sattva śuddhi*) and ultimately of liberation - provides the philosophical foundation for the *Āyurvedic* diet–mind framework. Furthermore, *Ācārya Kāśyapa* regards *Āhāra*

as *Mahābhaisajya* (the supreme medicine), emphasizing that no therapeutic intervention can fully restore health in the absence of proper nourishment. *Vāgbhaṭa* in *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya* categorically states that *Sātmya* food sustains mental equanimity while *Asātmya* food - particularly *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika* varieties - constitutes a direct cause of *Manodūṣṭi* (mental vitiation).

RājasikaĀhāra: Classical Descriptions and Psychological Impact

Rājasika Āhāra is defined in classical texts primarily through its *Guṇa* profile.⁸ describes *Rājasika* food as predominantly *Kaṭu* (pungent), *Amla* (sour), *Lavaṇa* (salty), *Uṣṇa* (hot), *Tikṣṇa* (sharp), *Rukṣa* (dry), and *Vidāhī* (caustic). The *Bhagavad Gītā* corroborates this classification:

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः।आहाराराजसस्येष्टादुःखशोकाम
यप्रदाः॥ Bhagavad Gītā 17/9

'Food that is sharp, hot, rough, and caustic - provoking pain, grief, and disease - is preferred by those of *Rājasika* nature.' The psychopathological consequences of chronic *Rājasika* dietary intake documented in *Brihatrayi* include: -

- **Heightened *Krodha* (anger) and *Irṣyā* (jealousy)** :- attributed to the *Tikṣṇa* and *Uṣṇa* properties exciting *Pitta-Rajas* synergy.
- ***Cittodvega* (anxiety and restlessness)** :- arising from *Vāta-Rajas* aggravation through *Rukṣa* and *Laghu* properties.
- Impairment of *Dhṛti* (self-restraint and volitional control);-described in *Charaka Samhita*⁹
- Promotion of *Ahaṅkāra* (egoism) and excessive sensory engagement, predisposing to the volitional precursors of mental disease (*Prajñāparādha*).

Tāmasika Āhāra: Classical Descriptions and Psychological Impact

Tāmasika Āhāra is characterized in *Brihatrayi* by its *Guru* (heavy), *Sthira* (static), *Manda* (slow), and *Pūṭigandha* (malodorous) properties. The *Bhagavad Gītā* provides the classical canonical description:

यातयामंगतरसंपूतिपर्युषितंचयत्।उच्छिष्टमपिचामेध्यंभोजनंतामसप्रियम्
(Bhagavad Gītā 17/10)

'Food that is stale, tasteless, putrid, decomposed, left over from others, and impure is dear to those of a *Tāmasika* nature.¹⁰ further elaborates that food prepared prior to the preceding day (*Paryuṣita*), stored excessively, or derived from improper practices possesses *Tāmasika* properties that specifically impair *Buddhi* (intellect) and *Smṛti* (memory) through the vitiation of *Sattva*. The psychological consequences documented in *Brihatrayi*

include:

- **Viṣāda (despondency/depression):** - arising from the *Manda* and *Guru* properties suppressing *Prāṇa Vāyu* and *Udāna Vāyu*, which govern enthusiasm and motivation.
- **Moha (delusion and confusion):** - the direct psychological manifestation of unchecked *Tamoguna*.
- **Pramāda (heedlessness):**- described as a precursor to *Unmāda*¹¹
- **Impaired Dhi (cognitive discrimination)** -described in *Charaka Samhita*⁹
- Pathomechanism: From *Āhāra* to *Mānasika Vikāra*:-

The classical etiological chain linking *Rājasika/Tāmasika Āhāra* to *Mānasika Vikāra* may be reconstructed from *Brihatrayi* as a six-step sequence. First, prolonged consumption of *Rājasika* or *Tāmasika Āhāra* impairs *Ahāra-Rasa* and *Ojas* formation, disrupting the *Rasa-Rakta-Ojas* continuum that nourishes *Manas*. This is followed by amplification of *Rajas* or *Tamas* -suppressing *Sattva* - and consequent disruption of the *Dhi-Dhṛti-Smṛti* triad. The collective failure of intellect, self-restraint, and memory constitutes *Prajñāparādha* - the 'intellectual crime' or volitional transgression -described by *Charaka* as the root cause of all diseases¹²

The pivotal shloka is:

समदोषःसमानिश्चसमधातुमलक्रियः।प्रसन्नात्मेन्द्रियमनाःस्वस्थइत्यभिधीयते॥ (Su.Su. 15/41)

'One in whom the *Doṣas*, *Agni*, *Dhātus*, and *Malās* are in equilibrium, and whose *Ātmā*, *Indriya*, and *Manas* are in a state of contentment (*Prasanna*), is called a healthy person.' This definition underscores that mental contentment (*Prasanna manas*) is an indispensable component of health - and that dietary dysregulation which disturbs mental *Prasannata* directly contravenes this definition of *Svasta*. Depending on constitutional susceptibility and *Doṣa* predominance, specific disorders such as *Unmāda*, *Apasmāra*, *Viṣāda*, or *Cittodvega* develop as end-stage manifestations of this cumulative pathological process.

OBSERVATIONS

Table 1: Triguna Classification- Psychological Attributes and Dietary Correspondences

Guṇa	Psychological Attributes	Dietary Category	Mental Effect
Sattva	Clarity, equanimity, discrimination, wisdom, restraint	<i>Sāttvika Āhāra</i> (fresh, pure, nourishing, light)	Mental stability, memory consolidation, emotional balance

Rajas	Activity, passion, desire, aggression, restlessness, egoism	<i>Rājasika Āhāra</i> (pungent, sour, hot, stimulating, sharp)	Hyperactivation, irritability, anxiety, impaired <i>Dhṛti</i>
Tamas	Inertia, delusion, ignorance, lethargy, excessive sleep	<i>Tāmasika Āhāra</i> (stale, heavy, putrefied, impure)	Cognitive dullness, depression, <i>Moha</i> , impaired <i>Dhi</i>

Table 2: Rājasika Āhāra - Classical Guṇas, Examples, and Psychopathological Correlates

Guṇa (Property)	Classical Examples	Mānasika Doṣa Aggravated	Psychopathological Effect
<i>Kaṭu</i> (pungent)	Excessive spices, mustard, <i>asafoetida</i> in excess	<i>Rajas + Pitta</i>	<i>Krodha</i> (anger), <i>Iṣyā</i> (jealousy)
<i>Amla</i> (sour)	Excess fermented preparations (<i>Śukta, Kāñjika</i>)	<i>Rajas + Pitta</i>	Emotional instability, <i>Arati</i> (discontentment)
<i>Lavaṇa</i> (salty)	Excess salt, preserved/salted foods	<i>Rajas</i>	Heightened <i>Lobha</i> (greed), <i>Abhimāna</i>
<i>Uṣṇa-Tikṣṇa</i> (hot, sharp)	Fried, overheated, heavily processed foods	<i>Rajas + Vāta</i>	<i>Cittodvega</i> (anxiety), <i>Bhaya</i> (fear)
<i>Vidāhī</i> (caustic)	Alcohol (<i>Madya</i>) consumed habitually	<i>Rajas + Pitta + Vāta</i>	<i>Pralāpa</i> (incoherent speech), <i>Unmāda</i>

Table 3: Tāmasika Āhāra- Classical Guṇas, Examples, and Psychopathological Correlates

Guṇa (Property)	Classical Examples	Mānasika Doṣa Aggravated	Psychopathological Effect
<i>Paryuṣita</i> (stale)	Day-old cooked food, cold leftover grains	<i>Tamas</i>	<i>Smṛti-nāśa</i> (memory loss), <i>Moha</i>
<i>Guru</i> (heavy)	Excessive meat, fried preparations, dense sweets	<i>Tamas + Kapha</i>	<i>Ālasya</i> (lethargy), <i>Viṣāda</i> (depression)
<i>Pūti</i> (putrefied)	Decomposed, malodorous food	<i>Tamas</i>	<i>Buddhi-vibhrama</i> (confusion), <i>Pramāda</i>
<i>Ucchiṣṭa</i> (impure)	Food remnants, improperly handled food	<i>Tamas</i>	Cognitive impairment, <i>Apasmāra</i> predisposition
<i>Māmsala + Madyaja</i>	Excessive red meat, fermented spirits	<i>Tamas + Rajas</i>	<i>Unmāda</i> , loss of <i>Dhṛti</i> and <i>Smṛti</i>

Table 4: MānasikaVikāra-Classical Disease, Dominant Doṣa, and Dietary Etiology in Brihatrayi

Mānasika Vikāra	Dominant Doṣa(s)	Role of Rājasika/ Tāmasika Āhāra
<i>Unmāda</i> 13,14	Vāta, Pitta, Kapha, Rajas, Tamas	Both dietary types impair <i>Dhi-Dhṛti-Smṛti</i> ; Rājasika promotes overexcitation; Tāmasika causes confusion
<i>Apasmāra</i> 15,16	Vāta + Tamas predominant	Tāmasika Āhāra (Paryuṣita, heavy foods) depletes Ojas and impairs <i>Smṛti</i>
<i>Viṣāda</i> 17,18	Tamas + Vāta	Tāmasika Āhāra augments Tamas, suppresses <i>Udāna Vāyu</i> ; leads to affective flattening
Cittodvega 19,20	Vāta + Rajas	Rājasika Āhāra (<i>Uṣṇa, Tikṣṇa</i>) over stimulates Vāta-Rajas producing anxiety and agitation
<i>Avasāda</i> (Bhaya) 21	Vāta + Tamas	Both dietary types through Ojas depletion weaken psychological constitution

DISCUSSION

The present critical literary review reveals that *Brihatrayi* contains a sophisticated and coherent theoretical architecture linking dietary *Guṇa*-properties to mental health and disease. The evidence reflects a systematic etiological framework that integrates dietary science, psychophysiology, and nosology - not merely isolated aphoristic statements. The central mechanism proposed by classical texts operates through three inter-related pathways: **(i) The Dhātu-Ojas pathway**, wherein dietary qualities determine the quality of successive tissue transformations culminating in Ojas - the ultimate nourisher of Manas; **(ii) The Guṇa - transfer pathway**, wherein the predominant *Guṇa* of ingested food is transmitted to the consuming mind, amplifying the corresponding *Mānasika Doṣa*; and **(iii) The Manovāhasrotas pathway**- wherein the qualitative purity or impurity of food directly conditions the functioning of the channels of mental conduction.

Correlation with Modern Nutritional Psychiatry

The classical observations of *Brihatrayi* find remarkable resonance with the emerging field of nutritional psychiatry. Jacka et al. demonstrated in landmark epidemiological studies that 'Western' dietary patterns - characterized by high intake of refined carbohydrates, saturated fats, and ultra-processed foods - significantly increase the risk of depression and anxiety, while traditional dietary patterns are protective²² The *Rājasika* dietary profile (stimulating, excessively heating, fermenting) and the *Tāmasika* dietary profile (stale, heavy, processed) correlate respectively with the inflammatory

and ultra-processed dietary patterns implicated in modern neuropsychiatric research.

The gut-brain axis provides a plausible biological mechanism for the *Āyurvedic* diet-mind connection. The gut microbiome - established as a major modulator of mood, cognition, and behavior through the vagus nerve, tryptophan-serotonin pathway, and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis^{23,24} - is profoundly shaped by dietary composition. *Tāmasika* foods (putrefied, stale, heavily processed) alter the gut microbiome toward dysbiotic configurations associated with systemic inflammation and neuroinflammation, consistent with the *Āyurvedic* concept of *Āma doṣa* impacting *Manas* through the *Rasāyanī Srotas*. The *Āyurvedic* triad of *Dhi-Dhṛti-Smṛti* impairment corresponds structurally to the domains of executive function, emotional regulation, and episodic memory - precisely the cognitive-affective domains most consistently impaired in psychiatric disorders and most strongly associated with dietary quality in contemporary neuro-cognitive research.

Critical Appraisal

While the classical framework is internally consistent and theoretically robust, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. First, the classification of specific foods as *Rājasika* or *Tāmasika* is not always uniform across the three texts of *Brihatrayi*, reflecting the contextual and *Prakṛti*-specific nature of *Āyurvedic* dietary categorization. Second, the classical descriptions do not distinguish between acute and chronic dietary exposures, nor do they operationalize dose-response relationships amenable to clinical trial design. Third, the texts do not systematically account for the role of digestive capacity (*Agni*) and individual constitution (*Prakṛti*) as modifying factors — factors extensively addressed elsewhere in *Brihatrayi* that require integration for a complete understanding.

RESULTS

The critical literary review of *Brihatrayi* yielded the following principal findings:

- **Rājasika Āhāra**- augments *Rajo guna* through its *Kaṭu-Amla-Lavaṇa-Uṣṇa-Tikṣṇa* properties, producing a clinical syndrome of psychomotor excitation, emotional hyperactivation, impaired *Dhṛti*, and predisposition to *Cittodvega* and *Unmāda*.
- **Tāmasika Āhāra** - augments *Tamo guna* through its *Guru-Paryuṣita-Pūti-Ucchiṣṭa* properties, producing cognitive dulling, affective suppression, impaired *Dhi* and *Smṛti*, and predisposition to *Viṣāda* and *Apasmāra*.
- Both dietary categories impair the *Dhi-Dhṛti-Smṛti* triad and thereby promote *Prajñāparādha* - the *Āyurvedic* root cause of all disease.

- The mechanism operates through impairment of *Āhāra-Rasa-Ojas* transformation, vitiation of *Manovāha srotas*, and direct *Mānasika Doṣa* aggravation.
- Classical observations show significant conceptual alignment with contemporary evidence regarding inflammatory dietary patterns, gut microbiome dysbiosis, and neuroinflammation in psychiatric disorders.
- **Sāttvika Āhāra** - characterized by freshness, wholesomeness, adequate nourishment, and taste harmony - is identified across all three texts as the dietary foundation of mental health maintenance and disease prevention.

CONCLUSION

The *Brihatrayi* presents a theoretically sophisticated and clinically relevant account of the role of *Rājasika* and *Tāmasika Āhāra* in the etiopathogenesis of *Mānasika Vikāra*. The classical texts delineate a multi-layered pathomechanism involving *Guṇa*-transfer, *Ojas* depletion, *Manovāha srotas* vitiation, and *Dhi-Dhṛti-Smṛti* impairment - converging on the cardinal concept of *Prajñāparādha* as the proximate determinant of mental disease. These observations, formulated over two millennia before the advent of nutritional psychiatry, demonstrate a remarkable epistemological alignment with contemporary research on diet, the gut-brain axis, neuroinflammation, and psychiatric vulnerability. The systematic adoption of *Sāttvika Āhāra* as outlined in *Brihatrayi* offers a viable, accessible, and evidence-consonant dietary protocol for the primary prevention and adjunctive management of mental health disorders.

Further translational research - including controlled clinical trials and microbiome studies designed around the *Guṇa*-based dietary framework - is warranted to validate and operationalize the classical insights of *Brihatrayi* in contemporary integrative psychiatry.

LIMITATIONS

- The study is limited to literary analysis; no clinical or experimental data were generated.
- Minor discrepancies in dietary classifications across the three classical texts could not be fully resolved within a single review.
- The role of individual constitution (*Prakṛti*), digestive fire (*Agni*), and seasonal factors (*Ṛtucaryā*) as modifiers of dietary *Guṇa*-effects awaits separate systematic review.
- Modern psychological disorder nosology (ICD-11, DSM-5-TR) does not map directly onto *Āyurvedic Mānasika Vikāra* classifications, limiting direct comparative claims.

FUTURE SCOPE

- Randomized controlled trials assessing the mental health impact of *Sāttvika* dietary intervention in patients with anxiety and depressive disorders.
- Microbiome analysis comparing subjects following *Sāttvika*, *Rājasika*, and *Tāmasika* dietary patterns to evaluate gut-brain axis correlates.
- Neuroimaging studies examining the neural correlates of *Dhi*, *Dhṛti*, and *Smṛti* in relation to dietary *Guṇa* classification.
- Development of validated *Āyurvedic* dietary assessment tools (*Āhāra Guṇa* Questionnaire) for use in psychosomatic medicine research.
- Interdisciplinary studies integrating *Āyurvedic* *Guṇa*-based dietary science with precision nutrition and personalized psychiatry.

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DECLARATIONS

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