

# A Study of Underutilized Meat Sources in Bhav Prakash for Sustainable Protein Solutions from Ayurveda

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## Abstract:

This study explores the Ayurvedic evaluation of underutilized animal-based food sources, with a focus on sustainable nutrition. Drawing from the ancient text Bhav Prakash, it analyses the chapter 'Mamsa Varga' based on classification and qualities of meat as food. It systematically compiles, organizes, and interprets the qualitative information on 108 types of meats using traditional parameters like Taste, Potency, Post-digestive effect, Properties of food, Actions of food on human health, and Humers.

The primary objective of the study is to provide a qualitative Ayurvedic framework to assess lesser-known meat sources, many of which are excluded from modern food systems despite their historical nutritional and therapeutic value. The research also aims to bridge traditional dietary wisdom with modern food sustainability challenges by highlighting underutilized but ecologically viable animal foods.

Methodologically, the study employs a close textual analysis of the Sanskrit text Bhav Prakash with reference to the Marathi translation, supported by Ayurvedic dictionaries and expert consultations. Qualitative attributes from the chapter are extracted and categorized into 91 parameters across six major classification heads. These were then tabulated and analysed to identify meats with the richest profiles.

The study reveals that 25 meat types exhibit high Ayurvedic value based on 7 to 15 qualitative attributes each, with rabbit, goat, deer, and fish emerging as the most emphasized. Many of these are underexplored in modern diets but hold potential for sustainable protein diversification. The outcomes of this study present an opportunity to inform modern food policy, culinary innovation, and sustainable dietary practices through an Ayurvedic lens.

**Keywords:** Meat, Nutrition, Ayurveda, Food Qualities, Assessment of Meat

## Introduction

Ayurveda is the ancient science of medicine from India in practice. The scientific literature by definition should be neutral towards its investigations. We find Ayurveda to accommodate this definition. Since study field of this article is meat as food, the detailed information about it in great depth was into focus. Ayurveda discusses meat as not only a source of nutrition but also as medicine. By origin, it is a part of Atharva Veda and is based on Samkhya Philosophy. Ayurveda connects the health of an individual with the cosmos and sees it on a very

broad as well as minutest level. Thus, it is a knowledge system that is independent of religious beliefs and influences. (Santosh Kumar, 2019)

Bhav Prakash is the basic old Sanskrit Ayurvedic Text. It is written by Acharya Bhav Mishra . The Charaka Samhita, The Sushruta Samhita and The Ashtangahridaya are the three detailed Ayurvedic texts (Brihadtrayi) whereas Madhvanidana, Bhavaprakash, and Sharngadhara Samhita are the three brief texts (Laghutrayi). Bhavaprakash was written by Ayurvedic Acharya named **Bhavamishra** between AD1500 and AD1600. That makes it at least 400-year-old texts. The book seems to be written after the entry of outside cultures mainly Islam, Parsi, and Christians. It also seems that the new foods were tested researched and accepted for the sake of society.

The Meat sector today is a dynamic field. With the advancement of industrial technology, many developments are witnessed here. All the developments are oriented towards bringing convenience to the current lifestyle. But in the run to achieve higher and higher perfection somewhere need of healthy food was undermined and compromised. The results of such development are alarming, demanding for the application of wisdom with knowledge. As wisdom is the outcome of experience and time, Ayurveda has displayed it with the ancient scientific knowledge. The people in the food sector needs to be sensitized with the way in which Ayurveda sees the food. The scientific community today, has been seeing the food as the combination of nutrients. The food qualities are not much taken into cognizance. The food Science and Technology has tried to do so but with the motive of making food more and more attractive and tasty. Still is in its primary stage.

Ayurveda sees food through its qualities and their effect on human body and health. Meat is the type of food much ignored in India. On one hand due to its association with violence, religious directives often underestimated it and on the other hand, due to ignorance, it was mishandled leading to its unpopularity. The modern generation has overcome these resistances but is still devoid of qualitative information about the meats.

The purpose of this article is to bring forth the information about assessment of underutilised meat resources hidden in the Ayurvedic text called Bhav Prakash and hand it over to professional experts to utilize towards the wellbeing of humanity. The purpose behind selecting the book Bhav Prakash is that it is one of the basic texts of Ayurveda. It is the last text book which consolidates the Information from Charaka and Sushruta. The book is well organized in parts and chapters and is presented in an obvious sequence. The chapter Mansa Varga is the chapter which speaks on the concept of meat as food.

## Structure

This paper is a qualitative study on a chapter named Mansa Varga (Meat Class) from one of the basic Ayurveda texts called Bhav Prakash. Bhav Prakash is referred as one of the minor texts and is a representative text of the Major texts on Ayurveda, like “Charaka Samhita”, “Sushruta Samhita” and “Ashtanga Hridaya”.

It is a close study of Ayurvedic perspective about the Meat as the food. The Textbook referred is a Sanskrit book with Marathi language translation. The other support was taken from a popular Sanskrit dictionary by V. S. Apte.

Prior knowledge of food qualities was required from the Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medical Science textbook Swastha-vrutta and various research mentioned in the reference section. Here the broad categories of qualities of food like Rasa, Virya, Vipaka, Guna, Karma, and Dosha and their internal classification were studied and understood.

The Meat class chapter is closely studied verse by verse and the information was collected.

The collected data was sorted for types of meat and the food qualities which were recorded in a spreadsheet. The presence of the total number of qualities was recorded for each meat type. Thus, the highest to lowest qualifying meats are classified on which we can find the roots of currently consumed meats. It brings forth the dietetic information about the underutilised meats providing the source of high biological value proteins for the consumers. This study acts as a guideline for chefs, nutritionists and food product developers. It also erases the religious taboo that nonveg in Ayurveda is not allowed. It also establishes the ancient Ayurveda knowledge at par with concepts of modern Nutrition.

## Review of Literature

**Introduction:** According to World Health Organization "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (WHO, 2024). Food is the main contributor to the health of every individual. Food is composed of 6 nutrients of which protein is major role player in providing energy as well as growth and maintenance of the body. The major and best source of

Protein is considered as nonvegetarian diet. The high biological value of proteins is found in nonvegetarian proteins and are complete proteins that contain all essential amino acids. (Joshi, 2015) But due to many constraints like religious beliefs, sentiments, culture, etc., many people try to keep oneself away from a non-vegetarian diet.

The Ayurveda is an ancient science of medicine from India the concepts of which resemble the modern Allopathy concepts but displays absolutely different perspective of study of human health. According to Ayurveda, Diet or *Diet* is one of the three pillars of life. The classical texts of Ayurveda of 300 BC–700 AD dedicate elaborate sections on foods. Unique aspects include detailed descriptions of food and beverage, food classification based on their taste, therapeutic qualities, etc., food safety and measures for the same, different incompatibilities of food based on their tastes, processing, dose, time, place, etc., prescriptions of consumption, food qualities and intake based on the digestive ability of an individual, and the nature of food that is being consumed. (Unnikrishnan & Venkatasubramanian, 2016)

As per Ayurveda the 6 tastes of food get transformed with the help of digestive juices (categorised under word 'Pitta') into post digestive tastes called Vipaka. This process of transformation is important in digestion process. Food by virtue of digestive fire (Agni) in digestive system gets transformed into various Tissues (Dhatus). Basically, which make up the body. The concept of Calories and Nutrients unlike Modern Nutrition is missing in Ayurveda. Instead, the concept of digestive fire and Oja as energy defines the complicated processes of metabolism forming the Vitality (Oja). (Maas, 2018) (Khagen & Bhatta, 2019).

**शरीरबृंहणे नान्यत् खाद्यं मांसाद् विशिष्यते इति वर्गस्तृतीयोऽयं मांसानां परिकीर्तितः** (Charaka, Sutra Sthanam, shloka 87)

"In body building, there is no other food like meat; thus, it is said that meat is superior among foods."

This astonishing and remarkable concept put by Charaka clearly supports the necessity of meat as important part of diet. Even though it speaks a different parametric vocabulary, the concept supports the modern nutrition which mentions the need of high biological value nutrients as the best source of nutrient supply.

Original Ayurveda principles include eating meat (rarely) and Charaka mentions that meat is nourishing when prepared and eaten under certain circumstances. 'Charaka Samhita' has mentions each and every minute property of these animal meats right from fish to peacock.

Ayurveda speaks about the **Principle of Similarity and Dissimilarity** of food called 'Samanya Visheshha Siddhanta'. It is the fundamental principle that explains the effects of substances on the body: This principle mentions that substances (food) with similar qualities as that of human body is always the cause of increase of that quality by their application (here consumption).

Therefore, meat will increase muscle tissue in the body and can be used to restore the health according to their properties, benefitting the human body. (Pawar & Mishra, 2020)

Thus, with the extensive review of the literature of research on Ayurveda dietetics the Study of Meat Class from Bhav Prakash becomes important and necessary for achieving following objectives

#### **Objectives:**

1. To identify and document the diversity of animal-based food sources recognized in classical Ayurvedic literature, particularly from the Meat Class (Mamsa Varga) of Bhav Prakash, with emphasis on those underutilized in present-day food systems.
2. To assess these meats using the Ayurvedic qualitative framework of sensing parameters Viz. Taste, Potency, Post-digestive effect, Properties, Actions, and Humoral effects—and explore their nutritional and therapeutic potential.
3. To provide insights into traditional sustainable food wisdom that can complement modern efforts to diversify protein sources and reduce overreliance on a few conventional meats.
4. To bridge ancient Ayurvedic knowledge with contemporary food sustainability discourse, offering a culturally-rooted model for responsible meat selection, consumption, and dietary planning.

5. To offer a systematic dataset for chefs, dietitians, food technologists, and policymakers that can support innovation in sustainable meat-based diets grounded in both ecological and historical relevance.

### Research Methodology:

The study is an extensive textual analysis of the Chapter on meat class named Mamsa Varga of popular Ayurveda Text Bhav Prakash. The Study is oriented towards the fact finding about the mentions of Non vegetarian foods in this classical Ayurveda Text. The study is a generalised study of meat class mentioned in the said chapter.

#### 1. Prior Knowledge required

The study required prior knowledge of principles of Ayurveda Dietetics,

- It was achieved with the study of book “Swastha -Vrutta” which is the academic text book for course Bachelor in Ayurveda Medical Science.
- The text Bhav Prakash itself in its first part called Purva Khanda provides information about the basic principles of Ayurveda was studied.
- The various research papers were studied which already had sorted the basic information on Ayurveda Dietetics.

#### 2. The target study:

The chapter on meat class from Bhav Prakash with marathi translation was studied.

- a) There were many words which needed to be understood in today’s context.
- b) The Ayurveda expert was consulted for the right meaning and the context for the meaning of the word or verse where ever required.
- c) The data was classified on principles of Substance- Qualities (Dravya Guna) and recorded in a tabulated form in excel document sheet.

#### Collection and Analysis of Data:

- a) The Qualitative parametric data was collected from the text book Swastha-Vrutta and Bhav Prakash.
- b) The primary data collected is from chapter on meat class, ‘Mamsa Varga’, a chapter on meats from Bhavprakash.
- c) It is arranged in excel format and noted for the various parameters of Substances Qualities (Dravya-Guna) mentioned in Ayurveda.
- d) The parameters mentioned are verified from the Sanskrit Dictionary for the meaning.
- e) The dictionary used is Apte Sanskrit Marathi Dictionary.
- f) Broadly the parameters are classified into 7 main categories and their sub categories.
- g) Thus, in all 90 qualities are classified form Meat Class chapter.
- h) These are kept as quality parameters in the excel sheet arranged first row of the sheet.
- i) This data is arranged and consolidated to get the broader picture
- j) The consolidated data is presented in tabular format in Annexure
- k) Since the data collected is qualitative, the presence of the mentioned quality (parameter) is considered numerical 1.
- l) This numerical 1 in just a mark of presence of the quality and has no measurement value.
- m) The unpronounced data cells are kept blank.

#### Interpretation of Data

It is believed that Ayurveda does not support non vegetarian food consumption. But this is not true. The detailed study of food along with meat is available in the Ayurveda texts. The book Bhav Prakash has special chapter on meat which in itself is very detailed and vast subject. The information is presented in sutras or shlokas making it easy to translate understand and interpret.

In order to understand the Meat Class, one needs to understand basic concepts of Ayurveda. As per Ayurveda, there are basic five fundamental elements (Pancha Maha Bhutas) from which the universe takes form. They are Space Air, Fire, Water and Earth with various combinations. Thus, it is clear that the individual person’s nature is representation of these five fundamental elements. Also, what we refer to food is also composed of 5fundamental elements. The Nature of Individual is called Prakruti and is expressed as combination of three kinds of humors called Doshas. Humors or Doshas are the attributes which govern the various systems in human body. The are Kapha, Pitta and Vata. Kapha resembles with quality of coldness and heaviness in metabolism, where as pitta resembles with energy of hotness that breaks down of all foods into absorbable form. The third humor called Vata represents the energy inducing all sorts of internal and external movements in the body. Often Kapha is thought as Phlegmatic nature, Pitta as acidic nature and Vata as Active nature of a

being. All of these represent the combination of 5 fundamental elements called Pancha Maha Bhutas. Kapha represents Earth and Water, Pitta represents Fire and Water, and Vata represents Akash and Vayu. Kapha gives stability, it is cold by nature and has quality of inertia hence rules body structure. Pitta represents digestion and metabolism and is hot in nature. Vata represents all kinds of gross and subtle movements in body and is mobile in nature. (Bhavmishra, 1929)

The balance of all three doshas provides the health to an individual. The dominance of any one, two mostly represents the individual nature (prakruti). Every individual and has his own Prakruti, so do the food have too. Prakruti of food is represented by five kinds of attributes termed as Rasa Panchaka.

They are:

**Rasa (Taste):**

Madhura / sweet,

Amla / sour,

Lavana / salty,

Katu / pungent,

Tikta/Bitter,

Kashaya / astringent

**Guna (Property):**

These are 20 in numbers. They are:

Guru (Heavyness) Vs Laghu (Lightness), Shita (Coldness) Vs Ushna (Hotness), Snigdha (Unctuousness) Vs Ruksha (Roughness), Manda (Dullness) Vs Tikshna (Sharpness), Shlakshna (Smoothness) Vs Khara (Courseness), Sandra (Solidity) Vs Drava (Liquidity), Mridu (Softness) Vs Kathina (Hardness), Sthira (Stability) Vs Sara (Instability), Sukshma (Minuteness) Vs Sthula (Grossness), Vishada (Non slimyness) vs Pichhila (Slimyness)

**Virya (Potency):**

It is the power of food. It can be expressed as Thermal Property of food. It is of two types Ushna Virya (hot potency) vs Shita Virya (cold potency)

**Vipaka (post-digestive effect):**

They are of 3 kinds. They are. Madhura, amla and Katu. These increase Kapha, Pitta and Vata respectively.

**Karma (effects other than above 4 attributes)**

The last aspect is the Karma or cumulative effects of the food on the body, that cannot be readily explained by rasa, guna, viraya, or vipaka alone. There are over 600 pharmacological actions that can be described. This concept is more important for drug design. But Ayurveda considers food also as medicine, Karmas for food are 35 and can be broadly classified as six based on their effect on the three humors or Tridoshas.

Foods that increase kapha dosha, are said to have quality of Bruhmana (Strengthening) and that decrease Kapha as Lekhana (Scrapping). Foods those increase pitta dosha have two broad effects. Viz. Deepana (increasing digestion and metabolism) and Prashamana (reducing or slowing). Similarly, Vata Dosha has two effects as Sthaulyahara meaning fat reducing and Shulahara meaning pain relieving. (A. KUMAR, Dubey, & Singh, 2011)

Ayurveda categorizes Humanity into seven basic natures called Prakruti. These are based on the dominance of doshas in a person.

1. Vata, 2. Pitta, 3. Kapha, 4. Vata-pitta, 5. Pitta-kapha, 6. Kapha-vata, 7. Sama. (Equal levels of all three dosas) Ayurveda classifies foods, called "varga" similar to what we practice today. They are 1. Shukadhanya or cereals and Grains, 2. Shamidhanya or Pulses and Legumes, 3. Mamsa varga or Meats, 4. Shakavarga or Vegetables, 5. Phalavarga or Fruits, 6. Gorasavarga or Dairy products, 7. Jala varga or Water / liquid substances, 8. Madya varga or Fermented products, 9. Krutanna varga or Prepared food recipes. (Ranade, 2019)

This is the study of Mamsa Varga, a chapter from Ayurvedic Text Book called Bhav Prakash. The book referred here is a Marathi translation of Bhav Prakash by Ayurvedacharya Purushottam Nanal Vaidya. It is classified into 3 parts namely Poorva Khanda, Madhya Khanda and Uttara-Khanda. The information which we are trying to see about meat as the food, is Found in Poorva Khanda. The Poorva Khanda has two parts. The part two

begins with Mansa Varga i.e. Meat Class by the verse,” Atha Mamsa Vargah”, meaning “Now meat class is being discussed”. Mamsa Varga is the chapter that is being reviewed here.

Mamsa Vargah starts with the nomenclature of various meats and their qualities like bloating relieving, nutritious, energy giving, satisfying, heavy, lovely and digestible. These are the qualities defined with respect to food consumer. This is explained in unique Ayurvedic Vocabulary defining the very specific qualitative parameters.

In the beginning the various names of meat in Sanskrit are mentioned as synonyms. They are Mamsa (मांस), Pishita (पिशीत), Kravya (क्रव्य), Amisha (आमिष), Palala (पलल), and Pala (पल). (Bhavmishra, Sartha Bhavprakash, Mamsa Varga,, pp. 207-Shloka1)

It also mentions that all kinds of meat are Vata nashaka (relieves from over gas production), Pushtikara (Growth and health inducer), Bala Vardhaka (Energy Increasing), Trupti kara (Satiating), Jada (Heavy), Hrudya (Likable), Delicious (Madhur) and Rasa Vipaki (Metabolized).

Mamsa Varga classifies the meat in 2 classes:

- A. Jangal (जांगल) : it means the animals which live in dry, arid regions and  
B. Anoop (आनुप). Means wet, marshy , aquatic regions (Bhavmishra, Sartha Bhavprakash, Mamsa Varga,, pp. 207-Shloka 2)

**A. Jangal (जांगल) Class include 8 types of meat:**

1. Jangal pashu (जांगल पशु) means types of Deer
2. Bileshay (बिलेशय) means animals living underneath earth in holes,
3. Guhashay (गुहाशय) means those living in caves,
4. Parnamruga (पर्ण मृग) are herbivorous literally meaning Leaf eaters,
5. Earth diggers are termed as Wishkir (विष्कीर),
6. Pratuda (प्रतूद) i.e eating with beaks (birds),
7. Prasaha (प्रसह) meaning snatchers (Hunter birds).
8. Pets are called Gramya (ग्राम्य) Pashu.

(Bhavmishra, Sartha Bhavprakash, Mamsa Varga,, pp. 207- Shloka 3 and 4)

**Qualities:** The qualities of Jangala Meat together as Madhura (really sweet but here delicious) Ruksha (dry), Tuvara (Astringent), Laghu (light to digest), Balyah (energy giving), Bruhan (growth inducing), Vrushya (supportive in gaining reproductive energy) and Dipana (digestion and metabolism inducer), Dosha harinah (Reliever from many health disorders)

**The therapeutic effects** of these meats are said to be helpful in various diseases related to speaking ability and other mouth diseases, movement related disorders, Anorexia, Urinary Diseases, Vomiting, Deafness, Eliphantitis and Goitre.

(Bhavmishra, Sartha Bhavprakash, Mamsa Varga,, pp. 207-Shloka 5)

The qualities on Anoop kind of meat. Anoop in Sanskrit mean the marshy near water place. Thus, Anoop meat is class of such animals who live in or dependent on water. It gives the 5 sub classes of meat under Anoop class

**B. Anoop (आनुप) includes 5 types of meat:**

1. Kulechar (कुलेचर) are those living near water.
2. Birds who float in water (प्लव)
3. Oyster Muscles etc those living in kind of conches or shells called कोशस्थ
4. Reptiles are termed as Padi (पदी)
5. And last is Fish called Matsya (मत्स्य) or mina (मीन)

(Bhavmishra, Sartha Bhavprakash, Mamsa Varga,, pp. 207- Shloka 6 and 7)

Here in both the classes we can find that what today we classify as birds are subclassified and spread in both the classes.

- i. Pratuda means the birds eating with beaks in class A
- ii. Prasaha means hunter birds are also found in Class A
- iii. Birds dependant on water bodies are called Plava

The general qualities of Anoop meat are Sweet or delicious, unctuous, heavy, hunger reliver, Cold natured, slimy, tissue builder, juicy, and is a wholesome diet.

The above mentioned 13 types of meat are subclassified into further with specifications of particular species. It is as:

### 1. Jangal (जांगल)

- I.Harina (हरिण)
- II.Ena (एण)
- III.Kuranga (कुरंग)
- IV.Rushya (रुष्य)
- V.Prusha (पृष्य)
- VI.Nyanku (न्यंकू)
- VII.Sambara (सांबर)
- VIII.Rajiva (राजीव)
- IX.Mundi

These are different kinds of deer and their specifications for identifications are also mentioned.

### 2. Bileshay (बिलेशय)

- I.Godha (गोध)- alligator
- II.Shash (शश)- rabbit
- III.Bhujang (भुजंग)- snake
- IV.Aakhu (आखु)- mouse
- V.Shallyak(शल्यक)Porcupine

### 3. Guhashaya(गुहाशय):

The animals living in the caves are

- I.Lion,
- II.Tiger,
- III.Wolf,
- IV.Beer,
- V.Chittah,
- VI.Elephant,
- VII.Mangoose and
- VIII.Cat.

### 4. Parna Mruga (पर्णमृग):

These are the animals living on trees they include,

- I.Vanara (वानर)) Monkeys
- II.Vruksha marjar(वृक्ष मर्जार)
- III.Vruksha-markat(वृक्ष-मर्कट)

### 5. Vishkir (विष्कीर)

- I.Vartak (वर्तक)
- II.Lava (लावा)
- III.Vaartik (वार्तीक)
- IV.Tittir (तितीर)
- V.Chida (चीडा)
- VI.Kukkuta (कुक्कुट)

### 6. Pratuda (प्रतूद)

- I.Harita(हरित)
- II.Dhaval (धवल)
- III.Pandu(पंडू)
- IV.Chitra paksh (चित्र पक्ष)

V.Bruhad shuk (बृहद शुक)

VI.Kharavat (खरावत)

VII.Khanjarita (खांजरीत)

VIII.Pika (पीक)

### 7. Prasaha (प्रसह)

- I.Kaak (काक)
- II.Grudhd (गृद्ध)
- III.Uluka (उलूक)
- IV.Chila (चिल)
- V.Shasha Ghatak (शश घातक)
- VI.Chash (चष)
- VII.Bhasa(भास)
- VIII.Kurara (कुरर)

### 8. Gramya (ग्राम्य)

- I.Chhaga (छाग)
- II.Mesha(मेष)
- III.Vrusha(वृष)
- IV.Ashwa(अश्व)

### 9. Kulechar (कुलेचर)

- I.Lulay(लुलय)
- II.Gand(गंद)
- III.Varah(वराह)
- IV.Chamar(चमर)
- V.Airavan(ऐरावण)

### 10. Plava (पल्व)

- I.Hamsa(हंस)
- II.Sarasa(सारस )
- III.Karand(करंड)
- IV.Baka(बक)
- V.Krouncha(क्रौंच)
- VI.Sharari(शररी)
- VII.Nandimukhi(नंदीमुखी)
- VIII.Sakadamb(सकदंब)
- IX.Balaka

### 11. Koshastha (कोशस्थ)

- I.Shamkh(शंख)
- II.Shankhnakha(शंखनख)
- III.Shukti(शुक्ति)
- IV.Shambuk(शंबुक)
- V.Karkat(कर्कट)

### 12. Padi (पादि)

- I.Kumbhir(कुंभीर)
- II.Kurma(कूर्म)
- III.Godha(गोध)

IV. Makara(मकर)

V.Shakav(शाकव)

VI.Ghantika(घंटिक)

VII.Shishumar(शिशुमार)

**13. Matsya (मत्स्य)**

I.Matsya(मत्स्य)

II.Mina(मीन)

III.Vikar(विकर)

IV.Jhash(झष)

V.Visarina(विसरिण)

VI.Andaja(अंडज)

VII.Shakuli(शकुली)

VIII.Pruthuroma(पृथूरोम)

IX.Sudarshana(सुदर्शन)

X.Rohi(रोही)

Thus, in all Mamsa Varga mentions about 87 types of animal meat as edible. The ninety-ninth verse starts the discussion on fish. Mention of Fish is also not left.

We can tabulate the data in brief as:

Various fish like

- 1) Rohit (रोहित),
- 2) Shilighr (शीलीघ्न),
- 3) Bhankur (भांकुर),
- 4) Mochika (मोचीक),
- 5) Pathin (पथिन),
- 6) Shrunghi (श्रुंगी),
- 7) Ilsa (ईलसा)
- 8) Shashkuli (शशकुली),
- 9) Gargar (गर्गर),
- 10) Kavika (कविक),
- 11) Varmi (वर्मी)
- 12) Danda (दंड),
- 13) Mahashafari (महशफरि),
- 14) Garaghni (गराघ्नी),
- 15) Madgur (मदगुर),
- 16) Sapad (सपड),
- 17) Shafari (शफरि),
- 18) Kshudra (क्षुद्र),
- 19) Ati Sukshma (अतिसूक्ष्म),

It also describes the

1. Eggs of fish,
2. Dried fish,
3. Fried fish,
4. Fish from various types of water bodies, and their Rasa, Virya and Vipaka.
5. d Vipaka.

Like meat here also the Patthya (पथ्य) and Apatthya (अपथ्य) i.e. which fish to be consumed and which is not to be consumed is also mentioned. This all goes till the verse number 127 where the chapter ends. (Bhavmishra, Sartha Bhavprakash, Mamsa Varga,, pp. 207-208 Shlokas 8 - 38)

The 7 main categories of Dravya guna considered are:

**5 Rasa:** Madhura, Lavana, Amla, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya

**3 Doshas:** Kapha, Pitta, Vata

**2 Virya:** Ushna, Shita

**3 Vipaka:** Madhura, Amla, Katu

**23 Gunas:** guru, na ati guru na ati laghu, laghu, ushna, nati ushna na ati shita, shita, Ruksha, na ati ruksha na ati snigdha, snigdha, Tikshna, manda, shlekshna, khara, Sandra, drava, mrudu, kathina, sthira, sara, Sukshma, sthula, vishada pichchila

**32 karmas:** Brahmana- Kapha increasing, Lekhana- Kapha decreasing, Deepana- Pitta increasing, Prashamana- Pitta decreasing, Sthaulyahara- Vata increasing, Shulahara- Vata decreasing, Rakta Pitta nashaka, Tridosahara, Balya, Agnikara, Pushtidayak, Ruchikara, Vrushya, Virya vardhak, Virya haraka, Visha nashaka, Netra hitakara, glani karak, Swara kara, rasa kara, rakta kara, mamsa kara, meda kara, asthi kara, majja kara, shukra kara, oja kara, Mala kara, Mutra kara, Nidra janak, Buddhi Wadhaka, apathya

**22 therapeutic effects:** Hrudarog hara, Shwas-kas hara, Shushka Kasa hara, Kantha Roga Nashaka, Grahi, amavata karaka, sannipat nashaka, Raktavikar nashaka, Kshaya, Vanti, Vishamajwara, Atisara, Shosh, Swedaj, Sangrahani Nashak, Pinus nashaka, Urdhwa jatru, Prameha nashaka, Vishtambha karak, mamsa chhedak, Rakta dushaka, Pitta Kushtha karak

In Bhavprakash, about 22 types of animal meats are considered more than others for their meat as food. But today in India meat of about 6 types of animals is consumed excluding fish. The most consumed meats are goat, chicken, and fish.

**Therapeutic uses of various categories of meats:**

- All the Jangal pashu meat is destroyer of Kapha and Pitta Dosha and slightly increases Vat.
- Meat of Bileshaya is said to be Vata destroyer, sweet, digestible, stool and urine reducer, and hot by nature.
- Meat of Guhashaya animals is destroyer of Vata dosha, Heavy, Hot sweet, unctuous, and energy giving. It is helpful in diseases of eyes and sexual organs.
- The meat of Parna Mruga animals is helpful in increasing semen potency, helpful to eye disorders, tuberculosis, lactic and laxative and diuretic. It is beneficial to Asthma, piles and cough.
- The meat of Vishkir animals is sweet, cold, astringent, bitter, digesting, Energy giving, semen raising, remover of three doshas, wholesome and light.
- The meat of Pratuda group is sweet, remover of kapha and pitta dosha, astringent, cold, light, stool controller, and increases vata.
- The meat of Prasah animals, is too hot and it may cause dehydration, Polyphagia, and low or weak semen production.
- Meat of Gramys pashu is remover of vata dosha, increase metabolism, increase kapha and pitta, sweet, digestive, growth and energy giving.
- Meat of kulechar is remover of vata pitta dosha, increases semen, energetic, sweet, cold, unctuous, diuretic and increase kapha.
- Meat of Plava animals remover of pitta dosha, sticky, sweet, heavy, cold, increases semen, and strength giver.
- The koshastha animal meat is sweet. Sticky, removes vata, pitta dosha, cold, growth inducing, still building, semen increasing, and energy giving.
- The padi animal meat qualities are similar to koshastha animals.
- The Matsya category meat is sticky, hot, heavy, kapha pitta increasing, vata dosha removing, semen increasing, tasty, and energy giving. It is beneficial to the people with addictions of alcohol, sex, and hungry people.

(Bhavmishra, Sartha Bhavprakash, Mamsa Varga,, pp. 207- 208 Shloka 8-38)

Mamsa Varga also mentions qualities of animal specific including various ground animals as well as birds. (Bhavmishra, Sartha Bhavprakash, Mamsa Varga,, pp. 209-213 Shlokas 39 - 87)

After mentioning the kinds of consumable meats and their food qualities, Bhav Prakash mentions about the prohibited meats those are not recommended. For example:

- The dead animal meat and also old animal meat is heavy and unhealthy to eat whereas young animal meat is healthy to eat.
- Snake bitten animal meat, dry meat, as well as meat of animals killed by other animals is polluted and unhealthy.
- It forbids to eat sunken animal meat, watery meat as well as rotten flesh as it is tridoshakar (त्रिदोषकर) (Disturbing the balance of all three humors).

Bhav Prakash does not stop just by this and mentions the meat specifications as food with various cuts of meat and its digestibility. For example;

- Male meat of birds and female meat of mammals is easy to digest
- In male animal upper body part and in female animal lower body part is easy to digest whereas mid portion is supposed to be heavy to digest.
- But in birds' middle portion is lighter because of continuous movement of wings while flying.
- All kinds of Eggs are supposed to be heavy in Ayurveda
- Flesh from chest, shoulders, Ribs, legs, Limbs, Waist, Back, skin, Liver, Intestine are in sequence heavier to digest.
- About birds it mentions that cereal eater birds' meat is heavy and fruit eater birds' meat is lighter to digest.
- In large animals the small body meat is lighter to digest whereas in small animals, large body meat is easier to digest. Meat eating birds are heavy to digest but their meat is nutritious.

(Bhavmishra, Sartha Bhavprakash, Mamsa Varga, pp. 209-213 Shlokas 39 - 98)

Mamsa Varga also speaks in details about the qualities of various marine animals. (Bhavmishra, Sartha Bhavprakash, Mamsa Varga, pp. 214- 215 Shlokas 99 - 127)

It is very astonishing to find that quality of each of the classified meats is mentioned in great details on Ayurvedic parameters of Rasa (taste) Virya (Digestibility) and Vipaka (Post Digestive Effect). This is all expressed in the first 98 verses or shlokas.

The next mention of meats is found in the next chapter named as Krutanna Varga (कृतान्न वर्ग).

This chapter talks about the various methods of preparations of various foods. Here from Verse 78 discussion about cooking of meat begins.

The verse 78 mentions how to cook the plain pure meat by using medium as clarified butter or oil with various spices and turmeric.

It gives the recipe for:

तक्र मांस -Takra Mamsa (Cooked Goat mutton in spiced Butter milk.)

हरीसा i.e. Harisa (Spiced meat cooked with Lemon)

तलीत मांस -Fried Meat

शूल्य मांस -Shulya Mamsa (Kind of Seekh Kabab)

मांस शृंगाराष्टक -Mamsa Shrungrashtaka (Meat cooked in 8 spices)

मांस रस -Mamsa Rasa (Shorba or Consomme)

This discussion ends at verse number 96.

### Conclusion: -

This study successfully uncovered and systematized a vast repository of traditional knowledge on meat consumption as described in the ancient Ayurvedic text *Bhav Prakash*. Through qualitative analysis, the research identified 108 types of meat discussed in detail, out of which 25 types exhibited a rich profile of Ayurvedic food qualities, making them particularly noteworthy. These meats—such as rabbit, goat, various deer species, and certain fishes—were shown to possess a diversity of attributes related to taste (rasa), potency (virya), post-digestive effects (vipaka), pharmacological actions (karma), and dosha-specific influences. Many of these meat sources are either unknown or underutilized in the modern Indian diet, yet their classical therapeutic and nutritional value aligns with the goals of diversifying protein sources and enhancing food sustainability.

By offering a structured, classical framework to evaluate meat not through modern nutritional components alone, but through sensory and functional Ayurvedic parameters, the study presents a new lens through which to assess food value—especially in the context of sustainability. This opens possibilities for reviving and responsibly re-integrating lesser-known animal foods that are ecologically viable and culturally rooted. The findings are of potential value to chefs, dietitians, food technologists, and sustainability researchers seeking to explore ancient, health-centric alternatives to conventional meat sources. Furthermore, the study lays the groundwork for future interdisciplinary research combining traditional Ayurvedic food classification with modern sustainable food systems planning.

### Annexure 1

| Total Qualities discussed in Mamsa Varga from Bhav Prakash: 64 |                    |                           |      |                   |                           |      |                 |                           |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------|------|-------------------|---------------------------|------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| S No   | Meat type          | no of Qualities discussed | S No | Meat type         | no of Qualities discussed | S No | Meat type       | no of Qualities discussed |
| 1  | Shash (शश)- rabbit | 15                        | 25   | kavika            | 7                         | 49   |                 |                           |
| 2  | Prusha (पृष्ण)     | 13                        | 26   | Rajiva (राजीव)    | 6                         | 50   | Chaga suta      | 3                         |
| 3  | Harina             | 11                        | 27   | Chida (चीडा)      | 6                         | 51   | manduka         | 3                         |
| 4  | Chhaga             | 11                        | 28   | Harita            | 6                         | 52   | Pathin          | 3                         |
| 5  | Ashwa              | 11                        | 29   | Castrated chaga   | 6                         | 53   | shashkuli       | 3                         |
| 6  | Vartak (वर्तक)     | 10                        | 30   | Mesha             | 6                         | 54   | gargar          | 3                         |
| 7  | Kukkuta (कुक्कुट)  | 10                        | 31   | Shilighra         | 6                         | 55   | Tittir (तितीर)  | 2                         |
| 8  | Mochika            | 10                        | 32   | danda             | 6                         | 56   | Old/ dead Chaga | 2                         |
| 9  | garaghni           | 10                        | 33   | madgur            | 6                         | 57   | Chaga head      | 2                         |
| 10   | Kuranga (कुरंग)    | 9                         | 34   | sapaad            | 6                         | 58   | Castrated Mesha | 1                         |
| 11   | Rushya (रुष्य)     | 9                         | 35   | Lava (लावा)       | 5                         |      |                 |                           |
| 12   | Nyanku (न्यंकू)    | 9                         | 36   | Gaurak            | 5                         |      |                 |                           |
| 13   | Vrusha             | 9                         | 37   | kshudra matsya    | 5                         |      |                 |                           |
| 14   | Proshthi           | 9                         | 38   | Paundrak          | 4                         |      |                 |                           |
| 15   | Ena (एण)           | 8                         | 39   | Darbhar           | 4                         |      |                 |                           |
| 16   | Sambara (सांबर)    | 8                         | 40   | Vaartik (वार्तीक) | 4                         |      |                 |                           |
| 17   | Edaka              | 8                         | 41   | Mayur             | 4                         |      |                 |                           |
| 18   | Lulay              | 8                         | 42   | Rohi              | 4                         |      |                 |                           |
| 19   | Shrungi            | 8                         | 43   | Bhankur           | 4                         |      |                 |                           |
| 20   | matsya garbha      | 8                         | 44   | varmi             | 4                         |      |                 |                           |
| 21   | Aranya kukkuta     | 7                         | 45   | erangi            | 4                         |      |                 |                           |
| 22   | Paravata           | 7                         | 46   | mahashafara       | 4                         |      |                 |                           |
| 23   | Eggs               | 7                         | 47   | atisukshma        | 4                         |      |                 |                           |
| 24   | illisa             | 7                         | 48   | Panshul           | 3                         |      |                 |                           |

### Annexure 2

#### Glossary of terms from Mamsa Varga of Bhav Prakash

| Particulars               | Details    |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Types of animals for meat | <b>121</b> |
| Classes of meats          | <b>13</b>  |
| Total Meats discussed     | <b>108</b> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Meats discussed specifically                                       | 58   |
| Total quality Parameters classified                                | 6  |
| Total number of Quality parameters                                 | 91   |
| Number Qualities considered  | 64   |
| Maximum number of qualities discussed (grades)                     | 15   |
| Minimum number of qualities discussed (grades)                     | 1  |
| Animals with 7- 15 quality grades (number of qualities discussed)  | Shash (शश)- rabbit, Prusha (पृष्य), Harina, Chhaga, Ashwa, Vartak (वर्तक), Kukkuta (कुक्कुट), Mochika, garaghni, Kuranga (कुरंग), Rushya (रुष्य), Nyanku (न्यंकू), Vrusha, Proshthi, Ena (एण), Sambara (सांबर), Edaka, Lulay, Shrunghi, matsya Garbha, Aranya kukkuta, Paravata, Eggs, illisa, Kalvita   |
| Number of animals with 7-15 grades (number of qualities discussed) | 25   |
| Animals with 1- 6 quality grades (number of qualities discussed)   | Rajiva (राजीव), Chida (चीडा), Harita, Castrated chaga, Mesha, Shilighra, danda, madgur, sapaad, Lava (लावा), Gaurak, kshudra, Matsya, Paundrak, Darbhar, Vaartik (वार्तिक) , Mayur, Rohi, Bhankur, varmi, erangi, mahashafara, atisukshma, Panshul, Chaga suta, manduka, Pathin, shashkuli, gargar, Tittir (तित्तीर) , Old/ dead Chaga, Chaga head , Castrated Mesha |
| Number of animals with 1-6 grades (number of qualities discussed)  | 33   |
| <b>rasa</b>  | <b>Information about taste</b>   |
| Madhura  | Sweet  |
| Lavana   | Saline   |
| Katu   | Pungent  |
| Tikta  | Bitter   |
| Kashaya  | Astringent   |
| <b>potency or post digestive thermal effect</b>                    | <b>Information about digestibility</b>   |
| Ushna Virya  | High Potency   |
| Shita Virya  | Low Potency  |
| <b>vipaka</b>  | <b>Information about post digestive effect on stomach</b>  |
| Madhura  | Sweet, ease of absorption, smooth digestion,   |
| Amla   | Acidic, sour, involving much digestive juices  |
| Katu   | Hardest in digestion, involving guts, creating bi products, instigating excretory system.  |
| <b>Doshas</b>  | <b>Information about tridosha</b>  |
| kapha  | Related to stability coldness, moistness, heaviness, etc   |
| pitta,   | Related to digestibility, metabolism, hotness etc  |
| vata   | Gas, movement in body, activity, dryness etc   |
| <b>gunas</b>   | <b>Information about gunas</b>   |
| Guru   | heavy to digest  |
| Laghu  | light to digest  |
| Ushna  | hot meats  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Shita   | cold meats  |
| ruksha  | dry meats   |
| snigdha   | moist   |
| Tikshna   | intense meats   |
| Manda   | dull meats  |
| <b>Information about effects on health</b>  |   |
| Brahmana-   | Kapha increasing  |
| Lekhana-  | Kapha scraping  |
| Deepana-  | Pitta increasing  |
| Prashamana-   | Pitta decreasing  |
| Sthaulyahara-   | obesity increasing  |
| Shulahara-  | Pain reliving   |
| Rakta Pitta nashaka   |   |
| Tridoshahara  | balancing 3 doshas  |
| Balya   | energy giving   |
| Agnikara  | metabolism igniting                                       |
| Pushtidayak   | body building   |
| Ruchikara   | appitizing  |
| Vrushya   | increasing sexual desire                                  |
| Virya vardhak   | semen increasing  |
| Virya haraka  | destroying semen  |
| Visha nashaka   | toxins removing   |
| Netra hitakara  | good for eyes   |
| glani karak   | dullness inducing   |
| Swara kara  |   |
| rasa kara   | plasma/ lymph increasing                                  |
| rakta kara  | blood increasing  |
| mamsa kara  | muscle mass increasing                                    |
| meda kara   | lipids increasing   |
| asthi kara  | bone strengthening  |
| majja kara  | nerves strengthening                                      |
| shukra kara   | reproductive system strengthening                         |
| oja kara  |   |
| Mala kara   | stool forming   |
| Mutra kara  | urine forming   |
| Nidra janak   | sleep inducing  |
| <b>Information about meat as a therapeutic food on specific disorders of health</b> |   |
| Hrudarog hara   | supportive in reliving heart disease                      |
| Shwas-kas hara  | supportive in reliving diseases related to bronchitis     |
| Shushka Kasa hara   | supportive in reliving Dry cough                          |
| Kantha Roga Nashaka   | supportive in reliving throat infections                  |
| Grahi   | absorbing water from intestine                            |
| amavata karaka  | inducing incomplete digestion because of digestive juices |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| sannipat nashaka     |   |
| Raktavikar nashaka   | Reliving from blood disorders           |
| Kshaya               | Supportive in reliving from TB          |
| Vanti                | vomiting                                |
| Vishamajwara         | Supportive in reliving from Typhoid     |
| Atisara              | Supportive in reliving from Dehydration |
| Shosh                | energy sucking                          |
| Swedaj               | Sweat forming                           |
| Sangrahani Nashak    | Intestinal disorders                    |
| Pinus nashaka        | cold reliving                           |
| Urdhwa jatru         | related to organs above the neck        |
| Prameha nashaka      | Some kind of metabolic disorders        |
| Vishtambha karak     | Disease of large intestine              |
| mamsa chhedak        | Muscle decreasing                       |
| Rakta dushaka        | Blood polluting                         |
| Pitta Kushtha karaka | Causing skin related disorders          |

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Not Applicable

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The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

### Competing Interests

No Authors do not share any competing interests.

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