Poison Apparatus and Biting Mechanism:1

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The poison apparatus consists of a pair of poison glands, their ducts, fangs and muscles.

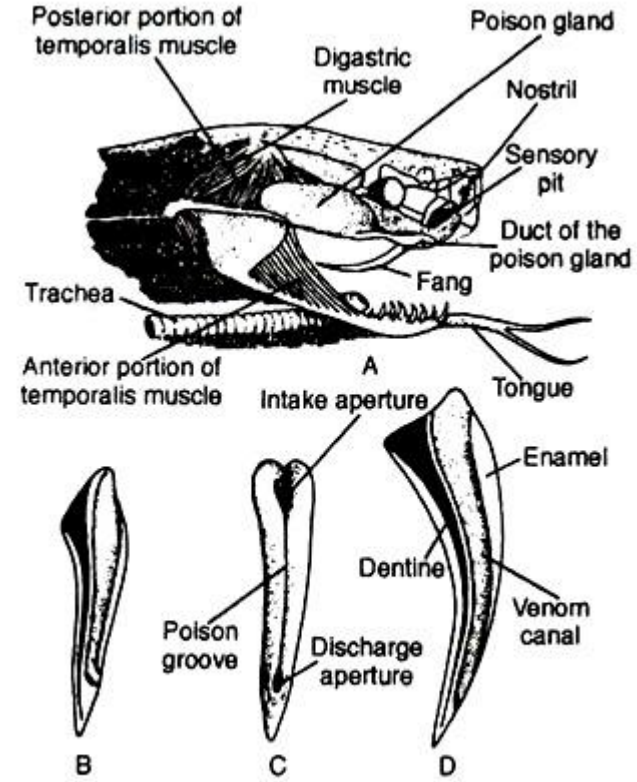

Fig. 2.46 : A. Poison apparatus of snake. B-D. Different types of fangs. B and D. in sectional view

(i) Poison glands:

The glands are situated one on either side of the upper jaw. The poison glands are possibly the modified superior labial or parotid glands. In Naia naja, it is in the shape and size of an almond kernel, thickly encapsulated with fibrous tissue.

In vipers it is large and tubular shaped, and the shape may vary in different genera. The capsule supports vascular fibrous septa, separating them gland into secretory pockets, the Poison lakes of

Bobeau. The section of the poison gland reveals the true structure of an exocrine gland.

(ii) Poison ducts:

The gland is provided with a narrow duct at its anterior end. The duct passes forward along the side of the upper jaw and loops over itself just in front of the fang and opens either at the base of the fang or at the base of the tunnel on the fang.

The duct actually opens in a pocket of mucous sheath that covers the basal part of the fang. In spitting cobra (Naja nigricollis), the poison duct is modified into an “L” shaped bend, just prior to exiting the fang, with the discharge orifice being located on the front of the fang.

TO BE CONTINUE…….