

A Step for Healthy Life in Modern Era w.s.r. to Rasayana Therapy: A Review

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Abstract

In today's era of modernization and civilization, there are increased trends of many diseases like Diabetes, Hypertension, cancer and reduced average healthy life. The economic and social growth of any country depends on health of the population. By seeing importance of health and increased disease burden, Govt. of India had started "Health for All and All for Health" mission in 2005. *Ayurveda* is the ancient system of medicine in the world; it deals with every aspect of life. Primary aim of *Ayurveda* is prevention and promotion of health of healthy person and secondly cures of disease. *Rasayana* is intended in *Ayurveda* as an effective tool to synthesize the excellent quality of *Dhatu* and increases strength and immunity against diseases. In *Ayurvedic* classics plenty of *Rasayanas* are explained for longevity as well as management of diseases. So here an effort is made to review the classical knowledge and applicability of *Rasayana* in healthy and diseased condition.

Keywords

Rasayana, Ayurveda, Dhatu



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INTRODUCTION

Need of *Rasayana*-:

Our faulty lifestyle and diet is totally responsible for vitiation of *Doshas* in our body. These *Doshas* get vitiated because of unwholesome diet and ingredients of food which are alkaline, sour, salty and pungent. Ingestion of dry vegetables, meat and ingredients which are mutually contraindicated like fruit salad, banana with milk, fish and milk, *abhishyandi* diet (e.g. eating curd in night), heavy, putrid food and habits like irregular time of diet, taking meal before the digestion of previous meal. Lifestyle like addiction of day sleep, excessive sexual indulgence and alcohols, exposed to stressful life, excessive and irregular exercise, subjected to excess of fear, grief, hunger, greed and overwork. These factors vitiate *Doshas* and vitiated *Doshas* are responsible for manifestation of diseases in the body. There is impairment in the ejaculation of semen & the *Ojas* undergoes diminution. Because of these, person feels exhausted and becomes habitual to excess of sleep (*Tandra*), gets dyspnoea, loses initiatives and becomes incapable of physical and mental work. He also feels loss memory, intellect and complexion. *Ayurveda* is the science of life having two aims, one is to maintenance of health of healthy person

and the second is to cure diseases of diseased person¹. The maintenance of health may be achieved by *Rasayana* therapy which is a division among the eight specialized branches of *Ayurveda*. *Rasayana chikitsa* consist of certain dietary & therapeutic herbal preparations which are able to correct as well as improve *dhatu* immunity by proper nutrition.

The word *Rasayana* is made up of two words *Rasa* + *Ayana*. '*Rasa*' means nutritional fluid² and '*Ayana*' means path³. Technically *Rasayana* means obtaining "excellence of *rasa*" (the nourishing fluid which is immediately produced after digestion) is known as *Rasayana*. This *rasa* nourishes our body and stimulates immunity of the body and keeps us healthy. According to Vagbhatta⁴, by *Rasayana sevan* one can attain longevity, memory, intelligence, health, youthfulness, excellence of lustre, complexion and voice, optimum strength of physique and sense organs⁵.

Importance of *Rasa Dhatu*-:

Rasayana means the augmentation of *Rasa*. Establishment of good quality of *Dhatu*s may be achieved by this vital fluid. It is produced by the digestion of food. It is the *rasa* flowing in body which sustains



the life; when it stops flowing, life comes to an end. By the use of *Rasayana* this *rasa* is maintained, freshened, and augmented. According to Shusruta⁶ *Rasayana tantra* is meant for stabilising the youthful, promoting life-span, intellect and strength and eliminating diseases⁷.

Types of *Rasayana* Therapy:-

According to mode of administration⁸

1. *Kutipravesika Rasayana* (indoor rejuvenative regimen)
2. *Vatatapika Rasayana* (outdoor rejuvenative regimen)

According to modalities *Rasayana* is divided in to two types

1. ***Adravyabhuta Rasayana* or *Achara Rasayana*** (Behavioural modalities) - it is a type of *Rasayana* for psychological and spiritual health. Literally “*Achara*” means discipline. This type of *Rasayana* does not require internal administration of any type of rejuvenating medicine. Speaking the truth, practicing non-violence, living in harmony with the outside factors, following social morals and behaviours, everything included under this category of *Rasayana*. Following these ethics leads to establishment of superior class of dhatus (tissues) and provides better health and immunity by increasing the quantity and quality of *Ojas*.

2. ***Dravyabhuta Rasayana*** (Drug based modalities) - This type of *Rasayana* therapy includes some herb and food types which are beneficial for the optimum functioning of the body as well as the brain.

According to the achievable outcome⁹

Rasayana is of three types:

Naimittika rasayana, *Ajasrika rasayana*, and *Kamyas rasayana*.

1. ***Naimittika rasayana*** (*nimitt* – Sanskrit for “cause”) it is given to cure the diseases in the body. It is also called as *Rogapaharan* or Curative type of *Rasayan*. Some examples of this *Rasayana* are *Shilajatu*, *Bhallataka* and *Tuvaraka Rasayana* etc.
2. ***Ajasrika Rasayana*** or *Vayasthapan Rasayan* comprises use of milk, *ghrita*, honey healthy lifestyle, diet, exercise and adopting the principles of proper nap and celibacy it helps in maintaining good health. It also provides healthy and prosperous quality of life.
3. ***Kamyas Rasayana***¹⁰ is used to to serve a special purpose or desire (*kama* - desire). It is of four types:
 - *Prana Kamyas*; used to promote longevity and life span
 - *Medha Kamyas*; used for enhancing the memory and intellect. eg. *Shankhapushpi Rasayana*



- *Shrikamaya*; used to improve beauty and lustre of the body
- *Chakshu Kamyā*; used for maintaining healthy eyes.

Benefits of *Rasayana Chilkitsa* –:

According to Acharya Charaka, the person undergoing the *Rasayan* therapy benefits¹¹

- Enhancement of the intelligence, memory power, will power, body strength, skin lustre, sweetness of speech & physical power.
- It gives nourishment to all *dhatu*s & prevents chronic degenerative changes & illness. So it increases strength of *dhatu*s & protects from chronic degenerative disorders like arthritis & senile diseases.
- *Rasayana* deals with preventive health for enjoying normal life. To produce the superior quality of *dhatu*s *Rasayana* was designed in classical

Ayurveda. It involves in the prevention and alleviation of senility and maladies.

- It helps in achieving proper physical strength & sharpness of the sense organs.

Some commonly used *Rasayanas*-:

In Ayurveda, *Acharyas* have stated different *Rasayana* drugs according to different decades of life¹². The concept of this recommendation is just to promote good health and compensate body for natural decaying process and slow down the process of autopsy (programmed cell death). Different *Rasayana* drugs for different decades of life is described in Table 1, and *Rasayana* drugs for different diseases in Table 2, *Rasayana* drugs for different tissues in Table 3 and *Rasayana* drugs according to different systems are described in Table 4.

Some special classical *Rasayana* preparations-:

1. Indicated for longevity of life and prevention of diseases

2. *Brahma rasayana*¹⁴
3. *Dwitiya brahma rasayana*¹⁵
4. *Chyavanaprasha*¹⁶
5. *Chaturtha amalaka rasayana*¹⁷
6. *Amalaka ghrita*¹⁸
7. *Amalakavaleha*¹⁹
8. *Triphala rasayana*²⁰
9. *Nagabala rasayana*²¹
10. *Abhayamalaka rasayana*²²

11. Indicated in management of

- *Bhallataka Rasayana: Kaphaja roga* (The diseases of *kapha dosha*)²³.
- *Endra Rasayana: shwitra, kushtha* (obstinate skin disorders), *pleeha* (spleenomegaly), *vishamjwara* (fever)²⁴.
- *Pippali Rasayana: hikka* (hiccup), *shwasa* (dyspnea), *kasa* (cough), *arsha* (haemorrhoids), *grahani* (digestive disorders), *pandu* (anaemia), *peenasa* (coryza), *shopha* (oedema)²⁵.

Time of administration of *Rasayana*-:

According to Sushruta³⁰ *Rasayana* should be administered to a person in their early age or middle age³¹. *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana* therapies administered to those whose body has not been purified becomes useless, just as colouring a dirty cloth, so before administration of *rasayana* drugs purification of body is necessary³².

Rasayana chikitsa in modern research parameters-:

Various experiments have been done on *Rasayana* drugs to show their activity as immune stimulant, antioxidant, and anti-stress etc. *Rasayana* drugs act as-

Immunomodulator- an element that alters the immune response by augmenting the ability of the immune system. It reacts with the antigens by initiating the production of antibodies or sensitized cells³³.

diseases:

- *Vardhaman Pippali Rasayana: pleeha* (spleenomegaly), *udara* (ascites)²⁶, *kasa* (cough), *shwas* (dyspnea), *grahani* (digestive disorders), *pandu* (anaemia), *shopha* (oedema), *pleeha* (spleenomegaly), *vatashonit* (gout)²⁷.
- *Shilajatu Rasayana:* Useful in multiple disorders with proper adjuvant²⁸.
- *Tuvaraka Rasayan: Kushtha roga* (skin diseases)²⁹.

Adaptogen- The ability of an organism to adapting the environment is produced by a metabolic regulator which is called adaptogen. Environmental factors can be either physiological (external), such as injury or aging, or psychological (internal), such as anxiety³⁴. Some adaptogenic herbs- are Ashwagandha, Guduchi, Tulsi, Haridra, Shatavari, Amalaki, Pippali etc.

Antioxidant- Antioxidants are the substances whose presence in relatively low concentrations that prevents the degree of oxidation of targets. Being present in serum, these antioxidants circumvent the damage caused by oxygen free radicals³⁵.

Nootropic- Nootropic substances are those which promote functions of brain and intelligence. These drugs can be categorized as *Medhya Rasayana*. Acharya Charaka has described four important



Medhya Rasayana drugs namely- Mandukaparni, Guduchi, Yashtimadhu and Shankhpushpi³⁶.

DISCUSSION

Rasayana therapy is a boon to mankind, different *Rasayana* has been explained in the classics which are helpful not only to preserve the health but also to get rid of diseases. According to Sushruta a healthy man is who has equilibrium of *Doshas*, normal functioning of *Agni*, proper condition of *sapta Dhatus*. His soul, sense organs and mind should be happy and cheerful. *Rasayana* provides a healthy living with mental improvement and resistance against diseases. *Rasayana* is a tremendous therapy improving the fundamental aspect of body i.e. *Dhatu*, *Agni* and *Srotasa*. It produces the *Rasayana* effects which are mentioned in term of *Vayasthapana* and *Ayushkara*, *Medhakara*, *Urjaskara*. Probably *Rasayana* drugs are rich in various types of vitamins so that it may improve the particular nutritional values of *Poshaka Rasa*. *Rasayana* drugs are capable of counteracting the damaging effect of oxidation. So they work as anti-oxidants.

The possible mechanisms by which action of *Rasayana* can be interpreted with modern aspects are as follows:

- Antioxidant action
- Immuno-modulatory action
- Hemopoetic effect
- Nutritive effect
- Antiaging effect
- Antioxident action
- Neuroprotective action
- Adaptogenic function

CONCLUSION

At last it can be concluded that *Rasayana* therapy is a wonderful therapeutic procedure of *Ayurveda*. In today's medical practice it has vital role to serve mankind. It may lead to comprehensive clinical effects such as *Vayah sthapan*, *Ayushkara*, *Medhakara*, *Balakara* and *Jaravyadhi nashana* effects. By the proper use of *Rasayana* a person can live a disease free healthy and happy long life. *Rasayana* therapy is useful to achieve the physical mental and social wellbeing.



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