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AYURVEDIC CONCEPT OF RASAYAN

Shilendra Kumar Mukati¹, Jyoti Singh² and Abha Singh³

¹P.G. Scholar, Department of Samihita, Govt. Auto Ayurvedic College Rewa, ²Lecturer, Department of Swasthavritta, Govt. Auto. Ayurvedic College Rewa and ³M.S.(Shalakyta Tantra,) and AMO in Uttarakhand Govt., Corresponding Author: Shilendra Kumar Mukati

Abstract: A long healthy life has been cherished wish of man since ages. Based on fundamental laws of nature Ayurveda propound a highly evolved science of life, health and cure, it is a unique approach because of its ability to promote longevity and influence all aspects of health in a positive way. The main utility of Rasayana therapy is in functional and degenerative disorders that have a chronic or long standing nature. Rasayana helps to maintain good health and to establish impaired physical or mental health in elderly people. The Rasayana therapy increases the life force (Ojas) and immunity of a person and thus there is regeneration of cells and tissues in the body. The present articles aims at putting forward the Ayurvedic Concept of Rasayana.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Rasayan, Immunity.

Introduction: *Rasayana Tantra* is one of the eight major specialties of *Ashtanga Ayurveda* exclusively devoted to rejuvenation. It aims at achieving a long and healthy life. *Rasayana Chikitsa* is not a drug therapy but a multiangle approach taking care of body and mind both, thus affording a total well being to an individual. It includes specialized procedures practiced in the form of rejuvenation practices, dietary regimen and special health promoting conduct & behavior i.e. *Achara Rasayana*. *Rasayana* therapy improves metabolic activities and results in best possible biotransformation. It promotes longevity, memory, youthfulness, strength of body and senses. *Rasayana Chikitsa* mainly used for maintaining the health of healthy individuals although can be used for curing disease.

Materials and Methods

Review of literature regarding Concept of *Rasayana* has been collected from *Ayurvedic* text books, different web sites. All compiled matter is recognized and critically analyzed for the discussion and attempt has been made to draw some fruitful conclusions.

Etymology of *Rasayana*: The word '*Rasa*' is formed from '*Rasa Gatau*' *Dhatu*, meaning that which moves night and day^[1]. In total, *Rasayana* means the pathway for essence of food towards

all body tissues so as to nourish and replenish them. It refers to acquisition & movement or circulation of *Rasa* (nutrition) needed to provide nourishment to body tissues.

Definition

1. *Rasayana* is that by which old age and diseases are averted^[2].
2. Means of obtaining the optimal nourishment to all the *Dhatus* of body are called *Rasayana*^[3]
3. *Rasayana Tantra* is one which deals with delaying of ageing process, increasing intellect and strength, prolongation of life and curing the disorders^[4].

Classification of *Rasayana*: In view of the scope, method and contents of use, *Rasayana* may be classified as follows:

A. As per Scope of Use^[5]

1. *Kamya Rasayana*

- *Pranakamya*
- *Shrikamya*
- *Medhakamya*

2. *Naimittika Rasayana*

3. *Ajasrika Rasayana*

B. As per Method of Use^[6]

1. *Vatatapika Rasayana*
2. *Kutipraveshika Rasayana*
3. *Dronipraveshika Rasayan*

C. *Acharya Rasayana* ^[7]

1. *Aushadha Rasayana*
2. *Ajasrika Rasayana*
3. *Acharya Rasayana*

A. As per Scope of Use: *Acharya Dalhana* has classified *Rasayana* according to scope of use as follows ^[5]

i. *Kamyā Rasayana* : *Kamyā* means a definite aim. These are promoters of normal health, immunity and energy levels. They can be further divided in following types-

A. *Pranakamyā*: Promoter of life, vitality and longevity.

B. *Medhakamyā*: Promoter of intellect.

C. *Shrikamyā*: Promoter of complexion and lusture.

ii. *Naimittika Rasayana*: *Nimitta* means things used for a short and specific period. It is not the specific medical treatment for particular disease but it is used as adjuvant along with the specific management of disease e.g. *Ashwagandha Churna*, *Ashwagandharishta* is indicated in the treatment of tuberculosis.

iii. *Ajasrika Rasayana*: *Ajsrika Rasayana* can be used daily as diet. *Dugdha* and *Ghrta* are common *Ajsrika Rasayana* ^[7].

B) As per Method of Use: *Acharya Charaka* has classified *Rasayana* according to mode of administration ^[6].

i. *Vatatapika Rasayana (Outdoor Regimen)*: It can be administered even if the individual is exposed to wind and sun. Hence it is called *Vatatpika Rasayana*.

ii. *Kutipravesika Rasayana (Indoor Regimen)*: This type of *Rasayana* is administered in a cottage (indoor) and the individual is not exposed to wind & sun. *Samshodhana karma* is required prior to this method.

iii. *Dronipravesika Rasayan*: It is a specialized procedure in which a *Droni* prepared from green wood of palash smeared with *sneha* is used to keep the person, who has taken the Juice of "Divya rasayan" (celestial drugs), which have wonderful effect on body. Some of these drugs are *brahma*, *suvarchala*, *adityaparni*, *nari*, *soma*, *padma* etc.

C. As per contents of *Rasayana*

1. *Aushadha Rasayana* (drug *Rasayana*)
2. *Ajasrika Rasayana* (dietary *Rasayana*)

3. *Acharya Rasayana* (conduit *Rasayana*)

***Acharya Rasayana (Conduit Rasayana)*:** One more *Rasayana* variety has been mentioned in *Charaka Chikitsa Sthana* i.e. *Acharya Rasayana* or *Nitya Rasayana* ^[8]. Persons who are truthful and free from anger, alcoholism, sexual indulgence; who do not indulge in violence and over exercise; who are peaceful and soft spoken, who practice *Japa*, *Tapa*, cleanliness, charity; who are stable and steady; who regularly offer prayers to Gods, cows, *Brahmanas*, teachers, preceptors and aged people; who are compassionate and merciful; who go to sleep and awake at regular time; who habitually take *Ghee* and milk; who are experts in the knowledge of rationality; who are free from ego; whose conduct is good; who are not narrow minded; who love spiritual knowledge; who have excellent sense organs, respect for elders; who believe in the existence of Gods; who have self control and who regularly study *Dharmasastras* will get best out of rejuvenation therapy. If persons endowed with these qualities practice rejuvenation therapy, they get all the rejuvenation effects described above.

According to Mode of Action

1. *Samshodhan*: The drugs used for the purpose of purification of body by the processes of *Vaman*, *Virechana* etc. Thus vitiated doshas enrooted out of body ultimately result in rejuvenation of body e.g. *Soma Rasayan*.

2. *Samshamana*: In this type, vitiated doshas are not expelled from body but get pacified inside the body e.g. *Nagbala*, *guduchi* *Triphala*, *rasayana*.

***Medhya Rasayana*:** *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned specific *Rasayana* for increasing *Medha* i.e. intelligence and memory like *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Madhuyasthi* (*Glycyrhiza glabra*), *Shankhapushpi* (*Convolvulus pleuricaulis*), *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*). These *Rasayanas* increase longevity, cure disease, and promote strength, *Agni*, *Varna* and *Medha*. Among them *Sankhapuspi* is an excellent drug for the promotion of intellect ^[9].

Effect of *Rasayana* Therapy: Following table shows the comparison of the effect of *Rasayana* given in the *Vrihatrayee*. The two major treatises of *Ayurveda*.

Effect of <i>Rasayana</i>	Charaka ^[10]	Astanga Hridaya ^[11]
<i>Arogya</i>	+	+
<i>Dirgha ayu</i>	+	+
<i>Tarunya vaya</i>	+	+
<i>Smriti</i>	+	+

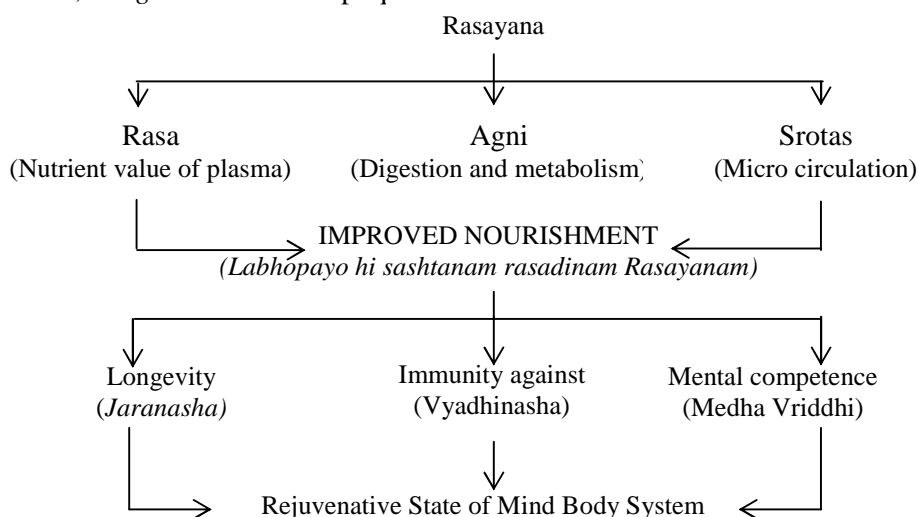
<i>Medha</i>	+	+
<i>Prabha</i>	+	+
<i>Varna</i>	+	+
<i>Swara</i>	+	+
<i>Deha bala</i>	+	+
<i>Indriya bala</i>	+	+
<i>Vaksiddhi</i>	+	+
<i>Pranati</i>	+	-
<i>Kanti</i>	+	+
<i>Virya</i>	-	-
<i>Odarya</i>	-	-
<i>Vrishyata</i>	-	+

From the above table, it is obvious that, *Astanga Hridaya* has followed the same ideology of the *Charaka Samhita*.

Mode of Action of Rasayana: *Rasayana* drugs are used for preservation & maintenance of positive health. *Acharya Sushruta* has defined a healthy man as one who has equilibrium of *Doshas*, normal functioning of *Agni*, normal condition of *Dhatu*s, along with the calmness of soul, sense organs and mind. *Rasayana* is a specialized type of treatment influencing the fundamental aspects of body i.e. *Dhatu*, *Agni* and *Srotas*. It is possible that different *Rasayana* drugs act with predominant effect at different levels. *Rasayana* effect is not a specific pharmacological action but is a complex phenomenon operating through a comprehensive mechanism involving the fundamental factors like *Rasa-Samvahan*, *Dhatu*s, *Agni* and *Srotas*. It may ultimately lead to the achievement of the comprehensive effect as stated by *Acharya Charaka* "लाभोपायो हि शस्तानां रसादीनां रसायनम्"⁽¹⁰⁾

Probably *Rasayana* drugs having *Madhura*, *Guru*, *Snigdha* & *Sheeta* properties.

act at level of *Rasa* by promoting the nutritional value of the *Rasa* which in turn help in obtaining the best quality of *Dhatu*s. Examples of such drugs are *Shatavari*, *Madhuyashti*, *Dugdha* and *Ghrita*. *Rasayana* drugs have a fundamental effect at level of *Agni* or digestion and metabolism. *Rasayana* drugs possessing *Ushna*, *Laghu*, *Ruksha Guna* and *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya Rasa* act at level of *Agni*. They vitalize the organic metabolism leading to an improved structural & functional pattern of *Dhatu*s and production of the *Rasayana* effects. Drugs such as *Pippali*, *Guggulu*, *Rasona*, *Bhallataka* and *Rudanti* mainly act at level of *Agni*. The *Rasayana* drugs with *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya Rasa*; *Vishada*, *Ruksha*, *Laghu Guna*; *Ushna Veerya* and *Katu Vipaka* may cause *Srotoshodhana*. *Rasayana* drugs which influence *Oja* are supposed to induce *Bala* and *Vyadhikshamatva* (immunity) e.g. *Jivaniya Gana* drugs, *Swarna* and *Pippali*.



Of all the types of treatment modalities described in *Ayurveda*, *Rasayana* can be considered superior because of its versatile actions. It can be employed as both preventive as

well as curative measure. It exerts purifying effect on *Srotas*, pacificatory effect on *Doshas* and at the same time, rejuvenates and revitalizes the *Dhatu*s.

Yogyakala (Age) for Administration of Rasayana: *Rasayana Aushadhis* are indicated in *Balya* and *Madhyavastha* of *Vaya*, as the *Dhatupaka* will be active during *Purva* (*Balya*-birth to 16 years) and *MadhyaVayas* (16-70). *AcharayaSushruta* has recommended this period of life as *Yoga* for administration of *Rasayanas* ^[12].

Procedure of administration of Rasayana

1. Age: For effective benefits of *Rasayana* therapy, it has to be advocated during childhood or in middle age, i.e. before the onset of old age.

2. Poorvakarma: *Rasayana* therapy should be preceded by specific pre-operative procedure (*Poorvakarma*), which includes *Samshodhana* (purificatory measures).

3. Bheshaja Kala: Generally *Pratahkala* i.e. *Anannakala* or early morning in empty stomach.

As per Body Constitution

Vataj Prakriti	Bala, Nagbala, Ghrita
Pittaj Prakriti	Amalaki, Shatavari
Kaphaja Prakriti	Bhallatak, Pippali, Vacha, Guggulu
Manasik Prakriti	Ashwagandha, Shankhapushpi and bramhi, Garlic for depression.

As per Climate

Sadharan desha	Simple rasayan drug of modest effect
Jangal desha	Snigdha, ushna, warm and salty rasayan
Anup desha	Ruksha or warm

As per specific Dhatus or Tissues

S.N.	Dhatu	Rasayana Drug
1.	<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Kashmari, Kharjura, Draksha</i>
2.	<i>Rakta</i>	<i>Lauhadi Rasayana,</i>
3.	<i>Mamsa</i>	<i>Kashmari</i>
4.	<i>Meda</i>	<i>Amrita, Haritaki</i>
5.	<i>Asthi</i>	<i>Vanshalochana, Laksha</i>
6.	<i>Majja</i>	<i>Lauha, Vasa, Majja</i>
7.	<i>Shukra</i>	<i>Vajikarana drugs</i>

Rasayana Drugs Recommended for Different Age Groups

Age group	Desired effect	Suitable Rasayana Drug
1-10	<i>Balyam</i>	<i>Vacha, Swarna, Kashmari</i>
11-20	<i>Vridhhi</i>	<i>Ashwagandha, bala</i>
21-30	<i>Chhavi</i>	<i>Lauha,</i>
31-40	<i>Medha</i>	<i>Jyotishmati, Shankhpushpi</i>
41-50	<i>Twaka</i>	<i>Bhringaraja, Priyala, Somraji</i>
51-60	<i>Drishhti</i>	<i>Triphala, Saptamrita Lauha</i>
61-70	<i>Shukra</i>	<i>Atmagupta, Ashwagandha</i>
71-80	<i>Vikrama</i>	<i>Amalaki, bala</i>
81-90	<i>Buddhi</i>	<i>Bramhi</i>
91- Above	<i>Karmendriya</i>	<i>Bala</i>

Results: *RasayanTantra* is one of the eight major specialties of *Ashtanga Ayurveda* exclusively devoted to rejuvenation and geriatric care. It aims at achieving a long and healthy life. It includes specialized procedures practised in the form of rejuvenation practices, dietary regimen and special health promoting conduct & behaviour i.e. *Achara Rasayana*. *Rasayana* therapy improves metabolic activities and results in best possible biotransformation. It promotes

4. Dose: Generally dose is not specified for *Rasayana*, as it varies to person to person, according to *Agni*. It is mentioned that, the dose of *Rasayana Dravyas* should not alter the consumption of next food, when *Rasayana* is taken.

5. Dosage form: The general dosage form for *Rasayana* drugs is in the form of *Lehya* (linctus). *Churnas* when used are also formed into *Lehya* (linctus) form by mixing either honey or ghee. Usually *Ksheera* is the *Anupana/ Sahapana* for *Rasayana*.

Some commonly used Rasayana Herbs: *Rasayana* brings about a striking improvement in the mental and physical health. Here is list of herbs used for *Rasayana* therapy and their action.

longevity, memory, youthfulness, strength of body and senses. *Rasayana Chikitsa* mainly used for maintaining the health of healthy individuals although can be used for curing disease.

Conclusion: *Rasayana* is not a drug therapy but is a specialized procedure practiced in the form of rejuvenative recipes, dietary regimen and special promoting conduct and behavior i.e. *Achara-Rasayana*. *Rasayana* means the way for attaining excellent *Rasa* i.e. One attains

longevity, memory, intelligence, freedom from disorder, youthful age, excellence of luster, complexion and voice, optimum strength of physique and sense organs, successful words, respectability and brilliance. Living the life healthfully is the prime motto of this era. Invention of modern medical equipments & medicines give good results in various health problems .But the increased use of pesticides, chemicals ,preservatives, sedentary lifestyle, increased use of antibiotics & immunosuppressive drugs, the quality of life get affected .Conservation of immunity, physical and psychological is the way to achieve the normal life span .*Ayurveda* is the science of life ,which has effective solution to overcome the physical as well as psychological health problems. In *Ayurveda* special branch of medicine which gives information about prevention of aging and longevity is *Rasayana*.

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