

AN INSIGHT IN TO RASAYANA THERAPY: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda does not merely believe in adding the number of years to life but it advocate to add life to the each year. This may be one of the reasons that the first aim of Ayurveda is to preserve and promote the health of healthy persons. To fulfil this aim Ayurveda maintains two separate branches viz *Rasayana* and *Vajikarana*. *Rasayana* mainly deals with promotion of physical and mental health. The properly and timely use of *rasayana* drugs promotes youthfullness, provides longevity, memory, intelligence, complexion, body glow and best physical strength as well as of senses. *Rasayana* drugs helps to prevent or cure health problems and promote good health in humans.

Key words: *Rasayana*, Immunity, Longevity, Rejuvenate, *Vyadhikshamatwa*, Nutrition

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda deals with the prevention and cure of various diseases, while it gives more emphasis on preventive aspects. Further this preventive aspect is divided into two therapeutic branches i.e *Rasayana* and *Vajeekarana*. *Rasayana* (*Rasa*- nutrition + *Ayana*- circulation and promotion) specially deals with the science of nutrition, geriatric care and rejuvenation. It signifies not a single drug or compound preparation rather refers to a rejuvenative regimen which includes drugs, dietetics and overall healthy life-style and positive psychosocial conduct. Ayurveda is the only ancient science which provided rational basis of thoughts like antiageing among the public. Chapter on *Rasayana* stands as proof even today. In various institutions of India different researches conducted on the effect of *Rasayana*. Ex- Administration of *Namittika rasayana* has the anabolic process, checks the further *dhatu* kshaya and helps

to regain health comparatively earlier. Radiological improvement along with marked increase in Hb% and body weight was noticed¹. In another study on *Agstyahareetaki rasayana* in improving the nutritional status in patients of *Rajayakshma* cases, along with ATT with the objective of reduction if adverse effects of multi drug therapy showed greater percentage of reduction of adversities in the *rasayana* group.² In a nutshell *Rasayana* therapy enhances the *Vyadhi kshamatwa* and serves the mankind in manifold ways.

Paribasha

*Labhopayohi shastanam rasadinam rasayanam*³ *Rasayana* is one which nourishes the rasaadi dhatus

*Yatjaravyadhidhwamsi beshajam tad rasayanam*⁴ The *bheshaja* which cures the diseases as well as *jara* is called *rasayana* *Rasayana tantram nama yavasthapanam ayumedhabalakaram rogapaharanam samartham cha*⁵ *Rasayana tantra* is one

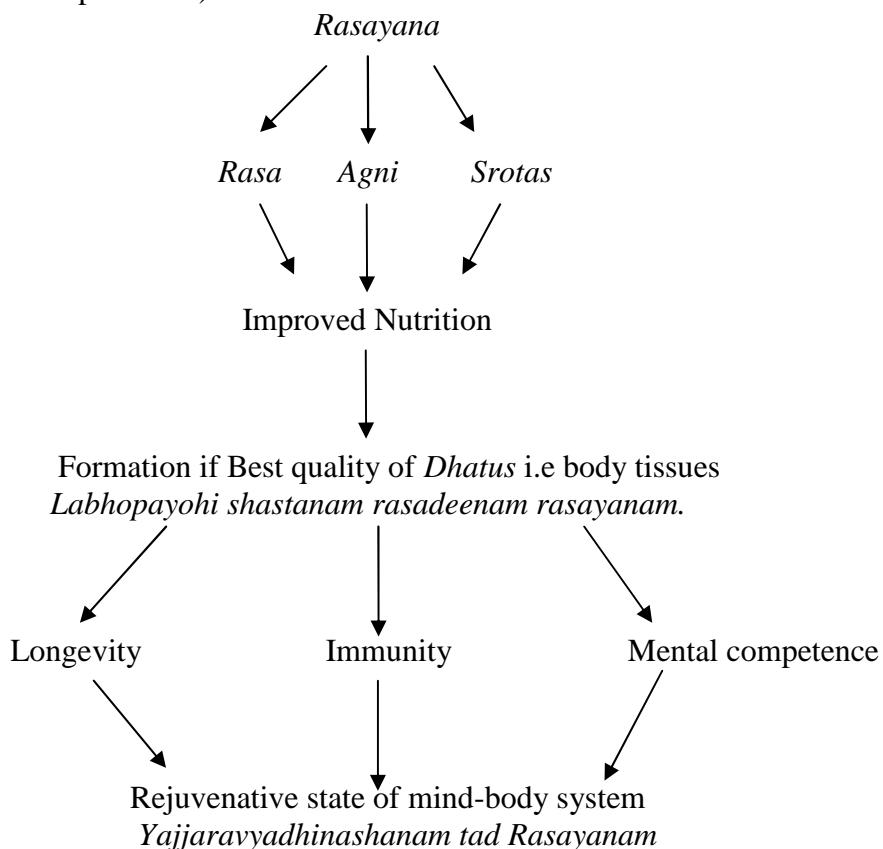
which does the *vayasthapana*, *medhya* and *balakara* and also which is capable of curing the diseases

The use of *rasayana* measures and remedies produces best qualities of *dhatus* i.e. body tissues by acting through one or all of the following three principal levels of biological system with net result of improved nutritional status leading, in turn, to better qualities of tissues, longevity, immunity, resistance against diseases and improved mental faculties. The Primary levels/modes of *Rasayana* effect are

1. At the level of *Rasa* (promoting nutrient value of plasma)
2. At the level of *Agni* (promoting bio fire system responsible for digestion and metabolism)
3. At the level of *Srotas* (promoting microcirculation and tissue perfusion). Besides

the above mentioned three generic modes of action of *Rasayana*, some *rasayanas* are organ and tissue specific and are used for specific indications like *Medhyarasyanaas* brain tonics, *Hridhya rasayana* as cardiotonics, *Twachya rasayana* as skin tonics and so on.

Some *rasayanas* are also age-specific and can be prescribed for particular age groups. As Ayurveda describes the qualities of each decade of the 100 years of estimated life-span. During the process of aging an individual goes on loosing these age related qualities and if this loss is compensated by age-specific *Rasayana* in specific age groups the rate of aging can be retarded to some extent and one can promote longevity.



Classification of *Rasayana*⁶ As per the method of use

- 1) *Vatatapika rasayana* – Out door regimen
 - 2) *Kutipravesika rasayana*- Indoor regimen
- As part of lifestyle-

- 1) *Ajasrika rasayana* (*Nitya rasayana*) - As content of daily diet.
- 2) *Naimittika rasayana* (*Vyadi nimitta rasayana*) –Promotes the vitality in specific diseases.
- 3) *Kanya rasayana*- Promoter of normal health

- a) *Pranakamya*- Promoter of vitality and longevity of life.
- b) *Medha kanya* – Promoter of intelligence.
- c) *Srikamya*- Promoter of complication.

As per content of *rasayana*

- a) *Aushadha rasayana*- Drug *rasayana*
- b) *Ahara rasayana*- Dietary *rasayana*
- c) *Achara rasayana*- Conduct of *rasayana*.

According to *Sushruta*⁷

- a) *Shodhana* (Does *dosha shodhana*)
- b) *Shamana* (Does *dosha shamana like nagabaladi*)

Probable mode of action⁸: *Rasayana* therapy acts at the sub cellular level and having neutraceutical action along with regenerative action and immunomodulatory action. Other actions like

A) Nootropic perspective (*Medhya karma*) *Rasayana* therapy incorporates *Medhya rasayana* as its specific branch. Various psychotropic *rasayanas* are enlisted which have their clinical effect at neurotransmitter and psychotropic synaptic level to modulate mind and neuropsychiatric imbalances.

Eg- *Jyothismati*, *Brahmi*, *Shankapushpi*, *Mandukaparni* etc.

B) Curative perspective (*Rogaprashamanam*) *Rasayana* is also classically indicated in the management of so many of age and organspecific disorders. *Rasayana* is choice of treatment in Geriatrics. Acharya *Sushrutha* has categorized it as *Naimittika rasayana* which is intended to cure the pathogenic state along with promotive and prophylactic effects. *Dhatu*, *srotas* organ and disease specific *rasayanas* are explained in various *samhitas*. Premature ageing due to stress and age related degenerative disorders are also treated with *rasayana*.

Eg- *Bhringaraja*- *Khalita*, *Shilajit*- *Sthoulya/ Madhumeha*, *Tuvaraka*- *Kusta* etc.

C) Immunological perspective (*Vyadhik-samatwa and Balakaram*): Prevention, cure and prophylaxis of the diseases

are also practice in *rasayana* therapy. Genetic material disorders and those diseases which are not responding to general line of treatment are again treated with *rasayana*. Eg- *Amalaki*, *Ashwagandha* etc.

- D) Psychobehavioural perspective: *Rasayana chikitsa* is incomplete without adopting *Achara rasayana*. Observing *Achara rasayana* it brings many bi-molecular level *rasayana* effects. The complete positive and promotive health care is achieved through *Achara rasayana* augmented with *Kanya rasayana* or any other suitable *rasayana*.
- E) Anabolic effect: *Rasayana* drug shows its effect of rejuvenation by its ability to build up the worn out tissue and replenish the nutritional deficient states. An apparent weight gain improved quality of life after using such drugs proves this hypothesis.
- F) Antiageing effect: - *Rasayana tantra* consists both the geriatrics and gerontological aspects. *Rasayana* drugs acts on the process and problems associated with ageing.

Purpose of *rasayana* therapy:-

- 1) Bringing back to balance one or more of the *pancha mahabhutas* which get put out of balance from improper diet and digestion.
- 2) Promotes equilibrium in the physical, mental and subtle levels of our existence.
- 3) Not aimed to kill pathogens but to increase the body's resistance to infection. (Immunomodulatory action).
- 4) Assisting the body's own healing energies with proper *rasayana* preparations and ideal individual diet.
- 5) To activate the immune system to work the way nature intended to do.
- 6) Can be used regularly as food supplement for maintaining balanced mental and physical health.
- 7) Can be given as tonic after prolong illness, after surgery, after radiation therapy etc.

DISCUSSION

Rasayana drugs act as scavengers helping to prevent cell and tissue damage. The nutrition's present in *rasayana* drugs acts as anti oxidants and does the prevention of cellular damage. Regular usage of *ajasrik rasayana* helps in preventing the formation of free radicals in the body. They enhance defence of the immune system, nourish the cells, tissues and extend early aging. The anti-oxidant property of *rasayana* drugs helps in preventing cardiac diseases, cancers and many other diseases.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana is the integral part of *Kaya chikitsa*. It has a definite targeted effect of healthy tissue generation. The *rasayana* remedies described in Ayurveda are claimed to possess special nutritional supplement effect. Most of the *rasayanas* are micro molecular nutrients and act through nutrition dynamics. Modern pharmacology introduced new terminologies like adaptogens, immunomodulators, and antistress etc are the outcome of certain herbal remedies. But the majority of these plants falling under *rasayana* drugs mentioned in the *Ayurveda* classics. The whole concept of *rasayana* therapy is oriented to enhance quality of health in an individual which is the prime motto of *Ayurveda*. The anti oxidant property of the commonly used *rasayana* drugs contributes to its action against pathological lesions. Many *rasayana aushadhes* are *agni deepaka* hence useful. They also act at the level of *dhatus* and are the treatment of choice in ageing process and degeneration. At the end the net effect of all the properties of *rasayana* drugs attributes is the anti ageing effect.

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