

ROLE OF *MEDHYA RASAYANA* IN *JARAJANYA SMRITI BHRAMSHA*

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ABSTRACT

Aging is a natural process that begins at conception, progresses throughout one's life and ends at death. It is the process of physical, physiological and social change in multidimensional aspects. Ayurveda describes ageing or *jaravastha* as *swabhavaja*. *Rasayana* concept of Ayurveda is believed to be useful to overcome age related disorders. The "*Medhya Rasayanas*" are known to be beneficial to improve the intellectual capacity. *Medhya rasayana* drugs are used for prevention & treatment of mental disorders of all age groups. These drugs promote the intellect (*dhee*), retention power (*dhruti*) and memory (*smriti*). Moreover, *Rasayana* drugs work on hypothalamus- pituitary- adrenal axis (HPA axis) & normalize the secretion of neurotransmitters such as dopamine, serotonin, acetyl choline & thus can improve the mental function.

Keywords: *Jaravastha, Rasayana, Medhya Rasayana, Dhee, Dhruti, Smriti, HPA axis, neurotransmitters.*

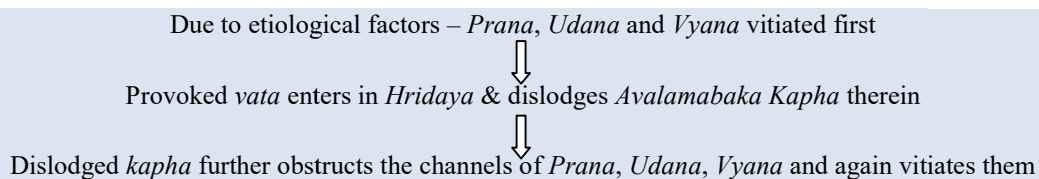
INTRODUCTION

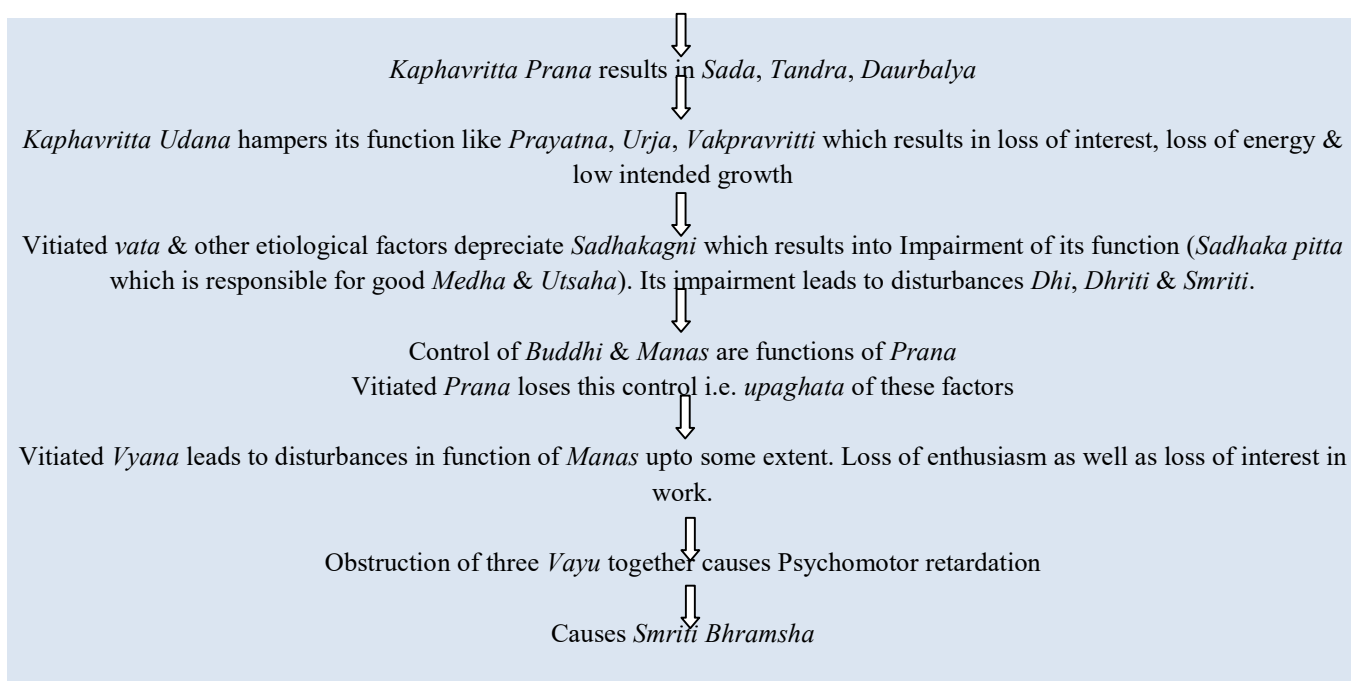
'*Medha*' means intellect and/or retention & '*Rasayana*' means therapeutic procedure or preparation that on regular practice will boost nourishment, health, memory, intellect, immunity and hence longevity. In Ayurveda, *Medhya* is described in broad way. *Medhya* comprises of all the three mental

faculties- *Dhee, Dhruti* and *Smriti* and these are interrelated with each other¹.

Rajas Ahara decreases *Dhruti* which is having control over the functions of *Manas*². Other causes are inability to restrain itself, excess thinking, loss of confidence, fails to achieve decided goals, persons who lags behind.

***Samprapti of Smriti Bhramsha* is below³ –**





Assessment scales in dementia⁴ -

Montreal Cognitive Assessment

The *et* Montreal Cognitive Assessment [Nasreddine *al.* 2005] was originally developed to help screen for mild cognitive impairment (MCI). It takes minimal training and can be used in about 10 min by any clinician. It assesses attention/concentration, executive functions, conceptual thinking, memory, language, calculation and orientation. A score of 25 or lower (from maximum of 30) is considered significant cognitive impairment. It performs MMSE, including in screening for dementia. It has been widely translated. As it assesses executive function, it is particularly useful for patients with vascular impairment, including vascular dementia.

Medhya Rasayanas in Brain Function and Disease⁵

Medhya comprises of all the three mental faculties- *Dhee*, *Dhriti* and *Smriti* and these are interrelated with each other. *Medhya* can also be subdivided into the following faculties:

1. *Grahana shakti* (Power of Grasping)
2. *Dharana shakti* (Power of Retention)
3. *Viveka shakti* (Power of Discrimination)

4. *Smriti* (Power of recollection)

The aim of *Rasayana Chikitsa* is to nourish blood, lymph, flesh, adipose tissue and semen. This prevents the individual from chronic degenerative diseases. The therapy influences the fundamental aspect of body viz. *Dhatus*, *Agni*, *Srotansi* and *Ojus*. In *Rasayana* therapy, the *Bheshaja* (medicine) is divided into two types:

- a. *Swasthasya urjaskara*-toning up the health of a healthy person
- b. *Kinchit Artasya Rognut*-treating the ailments of the patients

What is *Medhya Rasayanas*⁶?

The word '*medhya Rasayana*' has been derived from the Sanskrit words '*medhya*'- meaning intellect or cognition, and '*rasayana*'- meaning rejuvenation. The medicinal plants in the Ayurvedic system are classed as brain tonics or rejuvenators. Earlier reports indicate that these plants are used both in herbal and conventional medicine and offer benefits that pharmaceutical drugs lack. Neurological and psychiatric disorders are generally associated with loss of memory, cognitive deficits, impaired mental function etc. The

'medhya rasayanas' are known to be beneficial to improve the intellectual e.g., *mandukaparni swaras*,

yashtimadhu churna with *ksheer*, *guduchi swaras*, and *shankhapushpi kalka*.

Table 1 describes about drugs having the *Medhya Rasayana* property.

Medhya drugs	Synonyms	Properties			
		Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka
Mandukaparni (<i>Centella asiatica</i> Linn. Family – Umbelliferae)	<i>Manduki, Twastri, Divya, Mahausadhi. Dosh karma – Kapha-Pitta shamak.</i>	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Laghu</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhur</i>
Yastimadhu (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i> Linn., Family – Fabaceae)	<i>Yastimadhuk, Klitaka. Dosh karma – Vata- pitta shamak</i>	<i>Madhur</i>	<i>Guru, Snigdha</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhur</i>
Guduchi (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> Willd. Miers, Family – Menispermaceae)	<i>Amrita, Madhuparni, Chinnamula, Cakra-lakshanika, Amrita-valli, Chinna, Chin-nodhbhava, Vatsadani, Jivanti, Tantrika, Soma, Somavalli, Kundali, Dheera, Vi-shalya, Rasayani, Candrasahasa, Vayastha, Mandali, Deva-nirmita, Dosh karma – Tri-dosha shamak</i>	<i>Tikta, Kasaya</i>	<i>Guru, Snigdha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Madhur</i>
Shankhapushpi (<i>Convolvulus pleuricaulis</i> Choisi. Family – Convolvula-ceae):	<i>Ksheerpushpi, Mangalyakusuma. Dosh karma – Vata- pitta shamak</i>	<i>Tikta</i>	<i>Snigdha, Picchil</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhur</i>

Medhya Rasayana drugs are used for prevention and treatment of mental disorders of all the age groups. These drugs promote the Intellect (*Dhi*) Retention power (*Dhriti*), memory (*Smriti*). In fact they produce Neuronutrient effect by improving cerebral metabolism. *Medhya Rasayana* drugs are known to have specific effect on mental performance by promoting the functions of “*Buddhi*” and “*Manas*” by correcting the disturbances of “*Rajas*” and “*Tamas*”. The description of *Medhya Rasayana* found in Samhitas indicates the specific utility of this type of *Rasayana*. In Charaka Samhita, there is no direct mentioning of *Medhya Rasayana* as an independent chapter. But there is description of four drugs viz. *Mandookparni Swarasa*, *Yashtimadhu Choorna* with *go ksheera*, *Guduchi swarasa* & *Shankhapushpi kalka* as *Medhya Rasayanas*. The properties ascribed to these formulations include *Medha*, *Ayushya*, *Amaya nashana* & *Bala*, *agni*, *varna*, *svara vardhana*⁷. In Sushruta samhita, more information pertaining to the *medhya* drugs can be found in the chapter named ‘*medhayushkameeyaadhya*’⁸.

Smriti bhramsha occurs due to vitiation of *Rajas* and *Tamas Doshas* in the mind⁹. The appearance of *Jara* (ageing) at the appropriate age is termed as “*Kalaja Jara*”¹⁰ and memory impairment appears as a clinical feature (*Rupa*) of *Jara*¹¹. In Sharanghadhara Samhita, it is clearly emphasized that *Medha* (intellect) and *Buddhi* (wisdom) deteriorate in the fourth and ninth decades of life accordingly¹². Both are closely associated with the mind & helps for the normal functioning of the mind. If these components decrease in the mind, then it will affect the normal function of mind.

Moreover, Acharya Charaka has noted that cognitive functions are thoroughly affected in old age as *Grahana* (power of understanding), *Smarana* (power of memorizing), *Vachana* (speech) & functions of sense organs qualitatively¹³.

IMPORTANCE OF MEDHYA RASAYANA ON AGEING:

The decline in brain weight and volume, degeneration of intracellular organelles, changes in cellular DNA and RNA, neuronal degeneration as well as

significant loss of synapses are the salient features of ageing in brain¹⁴. Thus, therefore, physiological and neurological manifestations often form the hallmark of senility. *Medhya rasayana* drugs act on hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis & thus improve brain function.

According to Acharya Charaka, *Medhya rasayana* can be administered in the way of *vatatapika rasayana* (rejuvenation therapy having no restrictions) but as per Sushruta¹⁵, *kutipravesika rasayana* (rejuvenation therapy with specific rules) procedure is followed.

Mode of Administration:

1. *PURVA KARMA*: In the *purva karma*, *koshtha shuddhi* is done.
2. *PRADHAN KARMA*: Different forms of *medhya* drugs are administered with their proper dose, duration and adjuvant.
3. *PASCHATA KARMA*: After the digestion of *Medhya rasayana*, *pathya apathya* should be followed. *Shashtika Shali* with *go ghrita* and *ksheera* is the *pathya* mentioned for many of the formulations.

Time of administration: Early morning before the food.

DISCUSSION

Concept of Medha (Intellect)

The part of *Dhee* (Power of acquisition) which retains, understands, comprehends information is called as *Medha* (intellect)¹⁶. Since Dalhana defines it as the subtle part of *Buddhi* (Mind) that contains the things heard¹⁷ as well as an intellectual capacity to comprehend¹⁸ or retain books that are read¹⁹, we can also infer that in the context of medical text *Buddhi* (Mind) is synonymous to only *Dhee* (Power of acquisition) unlike in Sanskrit lexicons where it is synonymous to *Chitta* (Mind), *Chetana* (Consciousness), *Prajna* (Intelligence)²⁰.

Concept of Dhee (Power of acquisition)

Dhee (Power of acquisition) is synonymous with *Buddhi* (mind). *Buddhi* (mind) has been defined by as that faculty which judges good & bad²¹ and controls our activities (physical and mental)²². A good functional *Buddhi* (mind) is a function of *prakrata Kapha*²³, a sign of good *Twak* (skin) & *Satwa sara* in any person²⁴ and seen as a personality trait of a *Pitta & Kapha Prakriti* (body constituent) person²⁵. Its impairment is characterized by confusing permanent things with temporary things, temporary things with permanent things, beneficial things with harmful things and harmful things with beneficial things. Its health or normal functioning is recognized as the ability to view things as they are with no room for impaired judgment²⁶.

The medhya rasayana drugs acts in the following way-

The *medhya* effect of the *rasayana* can be considered as *prabhava janya*. Maintaining of normal functioning of *sadhaka pitta* and *tarpaka kapha* is the desired action of any *medhya* drug. *Medhya* drugs also act on *manasika bhavas* thereby relieving anxiety, stress etc. they are having *mastishka balya* (nourishing brain) property. *Medha* is the *karma* given to *prakrita pitta*. This can be related to orientation and grasping power.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, we can conclude that the *Medhya* action of *Medhya dravya* like *Mandookparni* (*Centella asiatica*), *Yashtimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) and *Shankhapushpi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*) are ascribed to its *Prabhava* (special action) and unexplainable to the virtues of its *Rasa* (taste), *Guna* (property), *Virya* (potency) & *Vipaka* (end metabolism). *Medhya Rasayanas* thus plays an important role in ageing and *Jara janya Smriti bhramsha*.

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Source of Support: Nil

Conflict Of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Tiwari Swati et al: Role Of Medhya Rasayana In Jarajanya Smriti Bhramsha. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2018 {cited April, 2018} Available from:
http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/866_871.pdf