



REVITALIZING THE MIND: MEDHYA RASAYANA'S HOLISTIC INFLUENCE ON MENTAL WELLNESS.

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda's holistic approach to mental health, mainly through *Medhya Rasayana*, offers a comprehensive framework for enhancing cognitive and emotional well-being. *Medhya Rasayana* encompasses a range of rejuvenating herbs like *Brahmi* and *Shankhapushpi* described under *Chikitsa Sthana* of *Charaka Samhita*. Their description at the beginning of *Chikitsa Sthana* shows how important they are. They play a crucial role in supporting cognitive functions, improving memory, and alleviating symptoms of mental disorders. Mental health is deeply intertwined with physical health, lifestyle choices, and environmental influences. *Medhya Rasayana* uses are customised according to individual *Prakriti* and current *Dosha Vikriti*, ensuring that each treatment aligns with the unique needs of the person. By focusing on root causes rather than just alleviating symptoms, *Ayurveda* provides a multifaceted approach to mental health that encourages long-term wellness, self-discovery, and harmony in life.

Keywords: *Ayurveda*, Mental Health, *Medhya Rasayan*

INTRODUCTION

According to WHO, health relies on physical and mental wellness; both are interrelated. If one's physical health is hampered, one's mental health is affected, and vice versa. Poor health combined with a poor mental state is responsible for low intellectual ability.

Medhya combines three intellectual factors, *Dhee*, *Dhriti* and *Smriti*, which are interrelated.^[1] Many formulations of drugs described in *Ayurveda* have magical effects on the brain and its intellectual property, from which medhya rasayana are mainly used for this. They can be used in both healthy and ill persons. Healthy people enhance their intelligence capabilities. In neurological and psychiatric illness, cognitive deficiencies and imparted mental function help to retrieve from this condition. We can relate medhya rasayana as a “Nootropic Drug”.

Nootropics, also known as “smart drugs” in English language journals, are a heterogeneous group of compounds.^[2] The term “nootropic” was first used by Cornelius E. Giurgea in 1972/1973^[3] to describe substances that primarily activate cognitive functions, such as memory and learning, especially in conditions where these functions are impaired.^[4] In a sense, they interfere with the metabolism of neuronal cells of the central nervous system.^[5] The name consists of two Greek words: *nöos*, which means thinking, and *tropein*, which means to guide^[6]

Nootropics do not act directly by releasing neurotransmitters or as receptor ligands but improve the brain's supply of glucose and oxygen, have anti-hypoxic effects, and protect brain tissue from neurotoxicity.^[7] They also positively affect neuronal protein and nucleic acid synthesis and stimulate phospholipid metabolism in neurohormonal membranes.^[8] Some nootropics have been found to affect the elimination of oxygen

free radicals, possess an anti-aggregation effect, and improve erythrocyte plasticity. This improves the blood's rheological properties and blood flow to the brain.^[9] These substances are metabolically active, but most nootropics show no immediate effects after a single dose, requiring an extended period of use to produce results. They need to be able to penetrate the blood-brain barrier to improve brain metabolism, and long-term use is necessary to achieve stable changes.^[10] Nootropics treat memory, consciousness, and learning disorders in acute or subacute conditions. They are recommended for incipient brain damage, which manifests in memory loss, mental retardation, and qualitative changes in consciousness. This paper sheds light on the potential of medhya rasayana for mental health.

Aim and Objective:

Analysing the role of “*Medhya Rasayana*” in enhancing intellectual power.

Material and Method :

The paper comprises a review of available literature in ancient texts, *Charaka Samhita*, internet, web media, scientific journal, and research paper related to this concept.

Medhya Rasayana:

Buddhi, described in ancient texts, is composed of 3 parts:

Dhi, *Dhriti*, *Smriti*.

Dhi: Power of grasping.

Dhriti: Power of retention.

Smriti: Power of recollection.

Medha is the faculty of *Buddhi*; hence, it is composed of *Dhi*, *Dhriti*, and *Smriti*.

Relation between *Tridosha* and *Medha*:

Table 1

<i>Medha</i>	<i>Vata</i>	<i>Prana Vayu</i>	Controlling function of brain ^[11]
		<i>Udana Vayu</i>	Helps in recalling ^[12]
	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Sadhaka Pitta</i>	Promote medha ^[13]
	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Tarpaka Kapha</i>	Confer retention and control ^[14]

Like this, *Tridosha* helps the body maintain medha.

Medhya rasayana described in Charaka samhita under chikitsa sthana are

Table 2

Name	Botanical Name	Use as	Anupana	Dosage	Rasa	Gun	Virya	Vipaka
<i>Mandukaparni</i>	Centella asiatica	<i>Swarasa</i>	<i>Madhu</i>	10-20ml	<i>Tikta, Kashaya, Madhura</i>	<i>Laghu, sara</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
<i>Yashtimadhu</i>	Glycyrrhiza Glabra	<i>Churna</i>	Milk	3-5gm	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Guru, Snigdha</i>	<i>sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
<i>Guduchi</i>	Tinospora cordifolia	<i>Swarasa</i>	<i>Madhu</i>	3-6gm	<i>Tikta, Katu, Kashaya</i>	<i>Guru, Snigdha</i>	<i>Ushana</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
<i>Shankhapushpi</i>	Convolvulus plaricaulis	<i>Kalka</i>	Milk	10-20gm	<i>Tikta, Kashaya</i>	<i>Snigdha, Picchila</i>	<i>sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>

Medhya Rasayana is a class of *Rasayana* drugs that especially act on *Medha* (intellect) to promote its function to the optimum level. The word *Medhya* means that which is beneficial to *Medha*, produces or improves *Medha* in its absence or deficiency, and purifies.

"Long life span, improved memory, comprehension ability, health, lustre, improved voice, energetic body and organs, *Vaksiddhi*, an ability found in pious people by which their spoken words come out to be accurate, attractive nature are attained by *Rasayana*. Also, it ensures the health of all *dhatu*."^[15]

Action mechanism of Medhya Rasayana:

These drugs show their action by nourishing all the *Dhatu*s in the body, from *Rasa Dhatu* to *shukra Dhatu*,

ultimately enhancing the quality of *ojas* in the body. That helps to develop immunity to face any stress in the body. So, *Medhya Rasayana* works at the level of *Dhatu* and helps to enhance *Agni* and increase oxygen bioavailability in the brain by improving blood circulation.^[16]

Mandukaparni (Centella asiatica Linn.):

Mandukaparni affects behaviour and is also a brain growth promoter, improving learning and memory and having anticonvulsive activity. *C. asiatica*, owing to increase the concentration of GABA (γ -aminobutyric acid) in the brain.

Table 3

<i>Medhya Rasayan</i> Name	<i>Mandukaparni</i>
Role	Improve cognition and memory ^[17]
Properties	Anti-oxidant and anti-apoptotic property ^[18]
Parts used	Juice of whole plant juice is used as a cognitive enhancer property ^[19]
Major constituents	Saponin such as medacoside, asiaticoside, medacassoside, Asiatic acid and triterpenic acid. ^[20]

Action	Asiatic acid in Mandukaparni has neuroprotective effects ^[21]
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Yastimadhu (Glycyrrhiza glabra Linn.)

Yastimadhu significantly improves learning and memory in scopolamine-induced dementia and has significant action on memory-enhancing activity in dementia.

Table 4

Medhya Rasayan Name	Yastimadhu
Role	Effective for spatial learning and cerebral ischemia. ^[22]
Properties	It has free radical scavenger activity, Memory-strengthening activity and antioxidant activity ^[23]
Parts used	Fine powder of Yastimadhu dried root is used along with milk ^[24]
Major constituents	Glycyrrhizine, flavanones, phenolic compounds, isoflavones and Glycyrrhetic acid ^[25]
Action	It increases the circulation of the CNS system and helps to balance the blood sugar level. ^[26]

Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia):

Guduchi helps in cognitive enrichment by increasing the production of acetylcholine, which enhances choline

Table 5

Medhya Rasayan Name	Guduchi
Role	Immune-modulator ^[27]
Properties	It has neuroprotective activity, learning and memory enhancing activity, antioxidant and anti-stress activity. ^[28]
Parts used	Guduchi swarasa of its Kanda ^[29]
Major constituents	Major constituents of Guduchi are alkaloids, steroids, glycosides, diterpenoid lactones, phenolics and polysaccharides ^[30]
Action	Guduchi swarasa is a rich source of trace elements such as Zinc and Copper, which act as antioxidants and protect cells from the harmful properties of oxygen radicals generated at some stage of immune activation ^[31]

Shankhapushpi (Convolvulus pleuricaulis Chois.):

CCRAS develop Ayushman-8, which is effective in Manasika-Mandata (mental retardation), and its main ingredients are Shankhapushpi, Brahmi and Vacha^[32]

Table 6

Medhya Rasayan Name	Shankhapushpi
Role	It is effective in anxiety, neurosis, insomnia, and cerebral abnormalities and serves as an excellent nervine tonic ^[33]
Properties	It has neuroprotective and intellect-promoting properties, free radical scavenging and antioxidant activity. ^[34]
Parts used	Kalka of Shankhapushpi is used ^[35]
Major constituents	microphylllic acid, kaempferol-kaempferol-3-glucoside, 3, 4 dihydroxycinnamic acid and sitosterols ^[36]
Action	Shankhapushpi enhances memory function due to its Antioxidant and Acetylcholinesterase Inhibitory Properties. ^[37]

Result:

It is seen that *Medhya Rasayana* has an impact on their intellectual strength, which makes him capable of managing mental health problems.

DISCUSSION

In *Ayurveda*, cognitive difficulties and poor memory can stem from several factors, primarily malnutrition and imbalances in brain chemistry. Memory problems are frequently associated with a disrupted *Kapha dosha*, which can lead to mental sluggishness and a lack of engagement. Similarly, an imbalanced

Vata dosha can induce stress and confusion, negatively impacting memory and understanding since *Vata* governs all nerve activity.

To counteract these imbalances, *Ayurveda* utilizes individual remedies and herbal preparations known as "*Medhya Rasayana*." The *Charaka Samhita* identifies four key medicinal plants that fall under this classification. These herbs are specifically aimed at enhancing intellect, improving memory retention, and boosting cognitive function. Additionally, *Rasayana* drugs support the regulation of the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and help balance the secretion of neurotransmitters such as dopamine, serotonin, and acetylcholine, which are essential for optimal brain function.

CONCLUSION

Medhya Rasayanas effectively enhance memory, sharpen concentration, and improve comprehension without causing side effects, tolerance, or withdrawal symptoms. These herbal remedies boost blood circulation to the brain, regulate neurotransmitter levels, reduce brain inflammation, promote the growth of new brain cells, and protect against free radical damage. These formulations work at various levels, starting with *Rasa*, by stimulating and enhancing the function of *Jatharagni*. Opening and cleansing the microchannels supports overall mental health and cognitive performance.

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