

RASAYAN - A CONCEPT FOR HEALTHY LIFE FOR AGES

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the ancient system of medicine in the world. This science of life deals with every aspect of life. *Ayurveda* has two aims i.e. 1- Promotion of Health and, 2- Cure from the disease. *Rasayan* may be employed for fulfilling both of them. *Rasayan* are the ways for attaining excellent *Ras* i.e. Attains longevity, memory, intelligence, freedom from disorders, Youthful age, excellence of luster, complexion and voice, ultimate strength of physique and sense organs, wisdom and successful words and brilliance. *Rasayan* also called a Rejuvenation therapy is one considered under *Ashtang Ayurveda*. *Rasayan* drugs are those which are capable of importing superior *Rasas* and *Dhatus* to the body and toning up the system of healthy persons. *Rasayan* aids in increasing natural immunity, enhancing general wellbeing, improving the functioning of all the fundamentals organs of the body and keep the signs of early ageing at bay. Moreover, it involves two opposite processes that simultaneously come into operation i.e. growth and atrophy. Ageing represents structural and functional changes of an organism over its entire life span. *Rasayan* is not a drug therapy but it is a specialized procedure practiced in the form of rejuvenate recipes, dietary regimes and special health promoting conduct and behavior i.e. *Achar Rasayan*.

Keywords: *Rasayan, Ashtang Ayurveda, Rasas and Dhatus, Achar Rasayan, Ageing.*

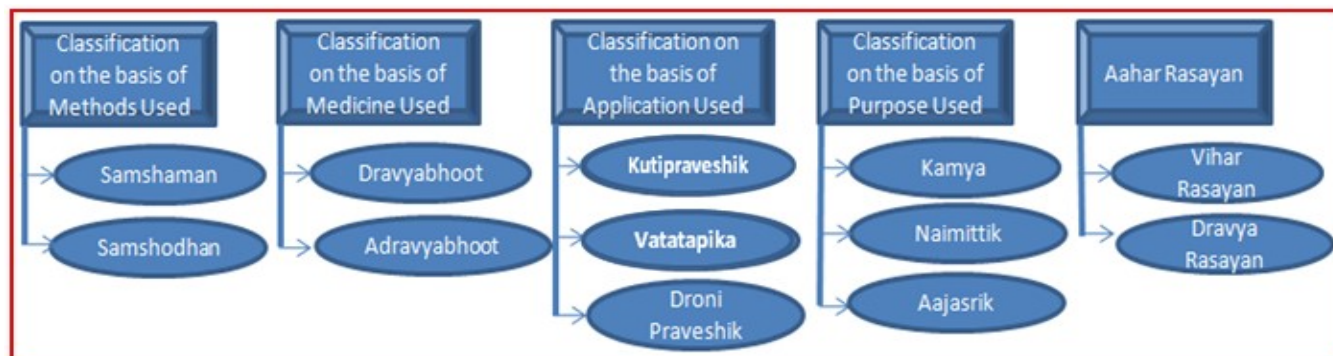
INTRODUCTION

Everyone wants to give the impression of being young forever and increase life span by staying healthy. But various cells and tissues of body undergo changes as age advances. So it is necessary to rejuvenate the body systems for a better harmony of the body, mind and soul.

Rasayan Chikista is also known as Rejuvenation therapy. *Ayurveda* had philosophy to establish good health

rather than just curing diseases. *Rasayan* is an active step towards achieving this. *Rasayan* claims that it retards the process of ageing. It basically boosts the *Oja* (the Immune System). It helps the person to maintain good health. Most of these *Rasayans* can be used regularly as a food for maintaining balanced mental and physical health. They may be used either alone or with other forms of treatment¹.

Classifications of Rasayan:



A. Classifications of *Rasayan* as per 'Acharya Dalhan'

B. Classification on the basis of contents of *Rasayan*.

C. Classification based on methods used for *Rasayan*.

There are various classifications for *Rasayan* therapy. This classification is as per 'Acharya Dalhan' as below²:

1. **Kamyas Rasayan.**

2. **Naimittika Rasayan.**

3. **Aajasrik Rasayan.**

1. **Kamyas Rasayan:** This is used to fulfill a wish or desire to serve a special purpose (Kama desire). It is also used to promote general physical and mental health. It is off three types;

a) **Prana Kamyas Rasayan:** it is used for achieving the best quality of Prana (Life Energy) in the body.

b) **Medha Kamyas Rasayan:** it is used for enhancing the memory and intellectual.

c) **Sri Kamyas Rasayan:** this is the promoter of complexion.

2. **Naimittika Rasayan:** the *Rasayan* indicated in the management of disease.

Bhallataka Rasayan: *Kaphaja roga, pippali Rasayan:* *Kasa, Shwasa and hikka, endra Rasayan:* *Shwitra* (Leucoderma), *Kushtha* (Skin Diseases), *pleeha roga* (Splenomegaly).

3. **Aajasrik Rasayan:** It is used to improve health and maintain good healthy life style diet or exercise. It involves utilization for enhancing the memory and intellect. For example: *Shankhpushpi, Ayush Kamyas* used for increasing longevity.

B) Classification on the basis of contents of *Rasayan*

1. **Aushadha Rasayan-** based on the *Aushadha* (Drug used for *Rasayan* purpose).

2. **Aahar Rasayan-** based on diet and Nutrition.

3. **Aachar Rasayan-** based on conduct and behavior³.

C) Classification based on Methods used for *Rasayan*

1. **KutiPraveshika Rasayan-** – Which can be administered by keeping the individual inside a cottage. It is also called as Indoor therapy.

2. **Vatatapika Rasayana** – This can be administered even if the individual is exposed to the wind and the sun. It is also called as Open air therapy or Out-door therapy⁴.

KutiPraveshika Rasayana

KutiPraveshika is made up of two words i.e. *Kuti* meaning "A hut or cottage" and *Praveshika* means "To enter" In this method, the person has to reside in a specially prepared cottage for a long period while receiving various *Rasayana* herbs. Elaborate arrangements are made there. The person has to strictly follow the prescribed diets and other instructions given by the physician. He should undergo *Panchakarma* therapy before taking the rejuvenation.

Therefore this type is not suitable for a person who has to carry on his profession or family responsibilities. This method strictly abides by the laws of nature; positive results can be obtained in shorter period of time. Before taking this form of rejuvenation therapy, the person has to undergo *Panchakarma* therapy⁵.

Construction of *Kuti*

Kuti should be constructed in a good site inhabited by the king, physician, *Brahmins*, saints and those who perform virtuous acts and place well ruled and freed from disturbances. The place is having adequate water storage. The *Kuti* should face towards the east or the north direction. It should have three concentric courts 'Garbhagrihas' (inner homes) and should be furnished with narrow ventilators. It should not be very tall, long or low. The wall should be thick and it should be pleasant to reside in all season. It should be well lighted and pleasant to the mind and be free from undesirable noise etc. The most important point in the construction is '*Ritu Sukha*' that means heat, cold and light should be adequate. The seasonal changes outside should not affect the *Kuti* inside.

The *Kuti* should be surrounded by compound wall, having lot of useful trees and medicinal herbs grown in the compound. The outer *Griha* should have its entrance in east, the centre

Griha should have the entrance in west and the inner one should have the entrance in north. It is designed so because north is the conceptual abode of Lord of Medicinal herbs. Also one can easily enter the inner house clockwise. Whatever may be the style it should be in such a way that there will be only minimum exposure to light and wind. None other than the physician and patient should be allowed to enter the *Kuti* during the course of treatment. Toilet and washing facilities should be there inside the *Kuti*. Only warm water should be used for all needs. If needed, a believable attendant can be employed. The physician should either stay there or come and visit the patient quite often⁶.

Vatatapika Rasayana

Vatatapika Rasayana, on the other hand, does not bear stringent rules and can be practiced in your routine life. This is rightly indicated in the name "*Vatatapika*", where "*Vata*" means air, and "*atapa*" means heat or sun. So this is a method of taking *Rasayana*, while a person remains exposed to air and heat and this type can be taken while working and doing your normal routine work. Because of scarce availability of time, resources and finances, staying in

health resorts may not be suitable for some people. Therefore this method is best and suitable for those people. It comprises of different types *Ayurvedic* herbal preparations. *Vatatapika Rasayana* can be given for even without undergoing the *Panchakarma* therapy⁷.

Importance of *Shodhana*

It is very essential for a person who wishes to undergo *Rasayana* therapy to undergo *samshodhana* as a preparatory procedure. *Rasayana* is more effective when it is given after *Panchakarma* therapy. The person is strongly advised to undergo *Snehana*, *Swedana* & *Panchakarma* i.e. *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, *Nasya*, *Rakta-mokshana*. The *samshodhana* process detoxifies both body and mind. This helps in the initial detoxification of the body and prepares it for the *Rasayana* regime. A detoxified body and mind is like a clean cloth which readily absorbs the color in which it has been dipped unlike a soiled cloth which looks soiled even after coloring with best colors. But when a person is not eligible for *samshodhana* or is not able to get *samshodhana* then he can also consume *Rasayana* preparations which still boost the qualities of *Rasa* in his body.

Indications: Rejuvenatory therapy is indicated either in young age (*Purvaya Vaya* i.e 16-30 years) or middle age (*Madhyam Vaya* i.e 30-60 years) person, only after proper oleation and purification of the body. Before giving the *Rasayan* therapy, the patient should not only be free from *Sharirik Doshas* namely *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* but also from *Manasik Doshas* namely *Raja* and *Tama*. *Rasayana* has to be selected for each individual appropriately in consideration of his *Vaya*, *Prakriti*, *Satmya*, state of *Agni* and *Dhatus*, *Srotas* and other factors like *Desha*, *Kala* etc.⁸. Though its use may prolong life span and impart longevity, the fundamental underlying theme of *Rasayana* is '**Nutrition**'.

Contra-Indications: *Acharya Sushruta* has said that *Rasayans* are Contra-Indicated to following 7 types of people;

- *Anatmavan* (those who are not self controlled).
- *Alasi* (Lazy).
- *Daridri* (financially weak).

- **Pramadi** (the indigent, unwise Not listening).
- **Vyasani** (addicted to vices addicts).
- **Papakrut** (the sinful).
- **Bhesajapmani**⁹ (Those who do not trust on medication)

They do not deserve the therapy due to following seven causes which act as Hindrance to the effects of *Rasayanas*;

- Ignorance
- Inactivity
- Unsteady mind
- Poverty
- Dependence
- Intemperance and impiety
- Inability to secure the genuine medicines.

Rasayana therapy is not to be used in the *Amavastha* too. *Rasayana* therapy used in this condition not only becomes useless but may also cause distressing symptoms as well.

BENEFITS OF RASAYANAS

- **According to Charaksamhita** - are as follows.
- Promotes Longevity of life.
- Improved mental and intellectual competence.
- Provides immunity against diseases resulting in positive health.
- Delays ageing process by preserving Youthfulness.
- Improvement in the complexion and luster of the skin (*Prabha* and *Kanti*).
- Enrichment in '*Swara*' (voice).
- Excellence of body glow.
- Optimization of strength of body and *indriyas* (motor and sense organs)
- Person becomes more helpful and generous.
- Physical and mental strength improvement.
- Command over speech (*Vaksiddhi*).
- Attaining Humbleness and politeness (*Pranati*).
- Proper, accurate balanced and premium production of all the *Sharir Dhatus*¹⁰ (Right from *Rasa Dhatu* to the *Shurka dhatu*).

Chakrapani while commenting on *Vakasiddhi* and *Pranati* says that *Rasayana* bestows the advantage of power of hypnotism and honour in society respectively.

Ashtanga Hridaya

It has also listed the benefits of *Rasayana* on the same lines of *Charak* with the only exception being that '*Pranati*' advantage is replaced by '*Vrishata*' i.e. aphrodisiac property. *Yogindra Nath* commentary on this verse also goes in hand with the above change done by *Vagabhata*.

Sushrutsamhita

- Sustains age and youthfulness.
- Increase in life-span.
- Increase intellectual capacity and strength
- Freedom from diseases (i.e. immunity is increased)
- *Sarva Upghatshamaniya* i.e. cures all the ailments and problems.
- Acts as rejuvenator and general restorative treatment¹¹.

Sharangdhar Samhita

Rasayanas destroys senility and diseases. *Acharaya Sharangdhar* has beautifully described the progressive Ageing where it has been described that every individual is at risk of losing one of the following properties at every decade.

Ageing is a natural process and the changes that occur due to Ageing are bound to occur. Life has to end at some point. *Rasayanas* are very efficient in delaying these impacts so these changes are not too troublesome to the patients. The preventable changes can also be barred with the use of *Rasayana*. The following table enumerates these changes of every stage of life and the possible *Rasayana Dravyas* prescribed to prevent those changes or to minimize their effect as per *Sharangdhar Samhita*¹².

Table 1: Age-wise Distribution of *Rasayan* Drugs.

Age (in years)	Decade wise Decline	Desirable <i>Rasayan</i> Drugs
1-10	<i>Balyam</i> - childhood	<i>Vaca</i> (<i>Acorus calamus</i>), <i>Kasmari</i> (<i>Gmelina arborea</i>), <i>Svarna</i> (<i>Aurum</i>)
11-20	<i>Vridhhi</i> – growth	<i>Kasmari</i> (<i>Gmelina arborea</i>), <i>Bala</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i>), <i>Aswagandha</i> (<i>Withania somnifera</i>)
21-30	<i>Chhavi</i> – lusture	<i>Amalaki</i> (<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>), <i>Lauha Rasayana</i>
31-40	<i>Medha</i> – sharpness in perception	<i>shankhapushpi</i> (<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i>), <i>Yashtimadhu</i> (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>), <i>Aswagandha</i> (<i>Withania somnifera</i>), <i>Guduci</i> (<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>)
41-50	<i>Twak</i> - skin and appendages	<i>Bhringaraja</i> (<i>Eclipta alba</i>), <i>Bakuchi</i> (<i>Psoralea corylifolia</i>), <i>Priyala</i> (<i>Buchanania lanzen</i>), <i>Haridra</i> (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)
51-60	<i>Drishti</i> – visual acuity	<i>Triphala ghrita</i> , <i>Saptamrita lauha</i> ,
61-70	<i>Shukra</i> – fertility	<i>Kapikacchu beeja</i> (<i>Mucuna pruriens</i>), <i>Aswagandha</i> (<i>Withania somnifera</i>), <i>Krishna Musli</i> (<i>Curculigo orchioides</i>), Milk, <i>ghrita</i> etc.
71-80	<i>Vikram</i> – valour and courage	These age groups are not fit for <i>Rasayana</i> karma.
81-90	<i>Buddhi</i> - cumulative intellect	
91-100	<i>Karamindriya</i> - physical capacities	

Possible mechanisms of *Rasayana* interpreted with modern aspects are as follows:

- Antioxidant action.
- Immuno-modulatory action.
- Hemopoetic effect.
- Adaptogenic action.
- AntiAgeing action.
- Anabolic action.
- Nutritive function.
- Neuroprotective action.

Antioxidant Action

Rasayana drugs acts as Antioxidants. Antioxidants are substances that reduce oxidative damage such as that caused by free radicals. Free radicals are highly reactive chemicals that attack molecules by capturing the electrons and thus modifying chemical structures. Well known Antioxidants include a number of enzymes and other substances such as vitamin C, Vitamin E and beta carotene (which is converted to vitamin A) are capable of counteracting the dam Ageing effect of oxidation. Antioxidants are also commonly added to food products like vegetable oils and prepared foods Researches show that Antioxidants are useful for protection of heart disease. This is because oxidation plays a big role in formation atherosclerotic

plaque which is a main Pathological event in coronary heart disease. So there is significant role of antioxidant in coronary heart disease. Antioxidants are having role in preventing diabetes mellitus. Antioxidant rich diet may prevent Diabetes. Taking Antioxidants rich food especially vitamin E, may lower risk of Type II DM. A new study show that people whose diets had the highest levels vitamin E were 30% less likely to develop type II DM. In addition, researchers found that people who ate a lot of carotenoids, a type of antioxidant found in colorful fruits and vegetables, also had a lower risk of developing type II DM. Oxidative damage to cells is also important phenomenon in Ageing process. So Antioxidants are also helpful in delaying Ageing. Antioxidants may possibly reduce the risk of cancer and age related macular degeneration. Many *Rasayana* drugs like *Amla*, *Ashwagandha* acts are Antioxidants. Main constituents of *Amla* are vitamin C, carotene, and riboflavin. It is having a role in cellular oxidation reduction. They have also a role in collagen fibrin synthesis, helps in formation of fibrin, Absorption of iron. Withanolide in *Ashwagandha* also acts as Antioxidants by increasing levels of three natural Antioxidants like super oxide-dismutase, Catalase, Glutathione peroxidase.

Immunomodulatory Action

Rasayana drugs also acts as immunomodulator. An immunomodulator is a drug used for its effect on the immune system. Clinical problems that require an evaluation of immunity include chronic infections, recurrent infection, unusual infecting agents and certain autoimmune syndromes.

The type of Clinical syndrome under evaluation can provide information regarding possible immune defects Certain *Rasayana* drugs at as Immunomodulator strengthening of immunity is done in various ways – by promoting bodily defense Mechanisms like increasing the WBC count, improving immune function. Bodily defense mechanism is promoted. Certain *Rasayana* drugs also increase number of immune cells known as T cells & B cells helping to fight infections.

Anti-ageing Action

Ageing is progressive change related to passage of time. By age 50-60 age related changes to begin to reflect like reduced power of muscle, reduced vision, memory, locomotion function, there is gradual decline in homeostasis and immune function predisposes them to infection, digestive problem and malignancy. Free radicals cause oxidative damage to various biological molecules e.g. hydroxyl radicals can damage cell membrane and lipoproteins by a process called lipid peroxidation which may contribute to ageing process. Certain *Rasayana* drugs likes *Ashwagandha* inhibits copper induced lipid peroxidation and also inhibits oxidative protein modification. *Rasayana* also acts as Antioxidants so they help in delay ageing.

The possible mechanisms may be by immune-stimulation, quenching free radicals, enhancing cellular detoxification mechanisms; repair damaged non-proliferating cells, inducing cell proliferation and self-renewal of damaged proliferating tissues, and replenishing them by eliminating damaged or mutated cells with fresh cells.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of *Rasayan* therapy has proved is a wind-fall to mankind. The *Acharya* has described different types of *Rasayan* in the *Ayurvedic* classics which are useful in many ways both to maintain the health of a

healthy person and to cure the diseased ones. Many referral ongoing studies and research works are on going to develop to improve and seek the efficacy of *Rasayan* Drugs effectively and efficiently. The *Rasayan* therapy has blessed the mankind with since ages.

The newer diseases and treatment are being invented continuously. The clinical trials and animal experimentation in the field of *Rasayan* in concern with different diseases have shown a very encouraging result such as minimizing radiation hazards, efficacy in tuberculosis, in rheumatoid arthritis. Apart from this it has shown its utility in genome stability, improvement of intelligence, senile memory impairment. This is also useful to improve the social health by which social peace will improve and the crime rate will decrease. In this way the *Rasayan* therapy is useful in different dimensions to mankind. The further clinical trials and experimentation in broader aspect is needed so it will be definitely create new dimensions in the field of medicine.

CONCLUSION

Finally it can be concluded that *Rasayan* therapy is a wonderful treatment procedure of *Ayurveda*. By the proper implication of *Rasayan* therapy one can have healthy and happy long life. During the course of *Rasayan* therapy a person should consume a suitable regime of diet and should follow a suitable code of psycho-social behavior as indicated by *Acharyas* under *Achar Rasayan*. In today's medical practice it has a vital role to serve mankind. *Rasayan* has proved its efficacy on sense organs. The effect of *Rasayan* is also influenced by *Agni* and *Srotas*. *Rasayan* is a form of medication that is known to promote positive health. After taking *Rasayan* we can learn how to maintain a balance between the material and spiritual aspects of life and help others also to understand it. This helps in establishing peace, happiness and love.

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