

ROLE OF KSHEERA AND GHRITA AS RASAYANA FOR BETTER HEALTH OF CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Rasayana is one among the divisions of *Ashtanga Ayurveda* that primarily deals with the maintenance of health. The aim of *Ayurveda* is prevention and promotion of health and secondly to cure disease. This can be achieved through *Rasayana*. It improves immunity and performs many vital functions of the human body. *Rasayana* therapy which is given to children is known as *Bala Rasayana*. *Ghritha* and *Ksheera* are mentioned as *Ajasrika Rasayana*. *Ajasrika Rasayana* is one among the classifications of *Rasayana*, which when used regularly provide nourishment to *Rasa-raktadi dhatus* and which in turn enhances *Ojas*. In this developing world, the rate of occurrence of the disease is more, about 24% of individuals below the age of 19 years fell sick over three times a year according to a large-scale survey conducted across India in 2019. As children are easily exposed to various disease-causing agents due to low immunity, thus the development of strong immunity is important. It can be achieved through *Rasayana* which helps to maintain a strong and vital immune system.

Keywords: *Rasayana*, *Ksheera*, *Ghritha*, *Ajasrika Rasayana*, immunity

INTRODUCTION

Kaumarabhritya is one of the branches of *Ashtanga Ayurveda*. It deals with prenatal care till the child completes *Kumaravastha*. The aim of this branch is better development of children as they are easily prone to many infectious diseases because of the immature immune system. Thus, to increase the immunity of children, the knowledge of proper administration of *Rasayana* is sufficient.

According to *Acharya Sushruta*¹, *Rasayana tantra* deals with *Vayasthapana*, *Medhya*, *Balakara* and *Rogahara*. The word *Rasayana* consists of two words 'Rasa' and 'Ayana'². The literal meaning of the word *Rasa* means first *Dhatu* or nutrition and *Ayana* means *Marga* or Path. Thus, *Rasayana* means *Rasa* and its transportation in the body. The prime function of *Rasayana* is the nourishment of every cell or tissue of the body. It maintains the longevity of life, increases vitality and mental health.

The definitions for *Rasayana* are:

- “*Labhobayo hi shasthanaam rasadheenaam rasayanam* / “³- It means one which nourishes the *Rasa Dhatu* is known as *Rasayana*.
- “*Yath jaravyadhi vidhwamsi bhashajam tad rasayanam* /”⁴ – It means *Bhashaja* which cures the *Vyadhi*, as well as *Jara*, is known as *Rasayana*. *Acharya Dalhana*⁵ in his commentary on *Sushruta Samhita* in “*Sarvopaghata Samanya Rasayana*” chapter mentions the term *Rasayana* in two ways:
 - *Kutipravesika*: residing in a specially built home and undergoing therapy.
 - *Vataatapika*: undergoing therapy while moving about in wind and sunlight.

Further, it is again of three types:

- *Kamya Rasayana*- desiring benefits such as long life, great intelligence, wealth etc.,
- *Naimittika Rasayana*- consequent to diseases such as the use of recipes of *Silajatu*, *Bhallataka*, *Tuvaraka* etc. in diseases like *Prameha*, *Kushta* etc.
- *Ajasrika Rasayana*- habitual-to be consumed daily such as milk, ghee etc.,

Ajasrika Rasayana refers to continuous usage of a nutritious diet to maintain optimum nutrition by way of direct nourishment i.e., intake of *Ksheera* and *Ghrita* regularly. Among the three, *Kamya* and *Ajasrika Rasayana* are best indicated for *Kumaraas* because they are in a condition of *Aparipakwadhatu*. The application of these helps to promote the health of their *Dhatu* from the very beginning. That is why *Vagbhata* commented as '*Purvae vayasi madhya va...*'⁶. *Ajasrika Rasayana* is one of the classifications of *Rasayana* which are given in the form of nutrition by means of dietary regimens, which are extensively utilized on day-to-day basis. *Ghrita* and *Ksheera* which are used daily influence *Rasayana* hence these are considered as *Ajasrika Rasayana*⁷. *Ajasrika Rasayana* when used regularly provide nourishment to *Rasa-raktadi dhatus* and which in turn enhances *Ojas*⁸. According to *Acharya Charaka*, “*Ksheeraghritaabhyaso rasayananaam* | “⁹ i.e., intake of *Ksheera* and *Ghrita* are considered as *Rasayana*

Ksheera

There are various synonyms of milk¹⁰. They are *Ksheera*, *Piyusha*, *Udhastha*, *Stanya*, *Paya* and *Amrutha*. *Stanya* is the first feed which the child obtains soon after birth. *Stanya* is considered as an *Upadhatu* of *Rasadhatu*¹¹. It is produced from *Ahara Rasa*¹². *Stanya* is *Prasada бага* of *Rasa dhatu*, *Madhura rasa* and generated from digested food. Ideal milk must have normal *Prakrthi Varna*, *Gandha*, *Rasa* and *Sparsha*, dissolved absolutely in water because of its watery nature. Ideal milk provides nourishment and disease-free i.e., healthy state to the child¹³. If breast milk is insufficient, the child may be given milk of wet nurse, goat's milk, or cow's milk because in general milk is suitable to the child. In *Ashtanga Hridaya*, the milk should be processed with drugs of *Hrswa Panchamula* (roots of *Shalaparni*, *Prishniparni*, *Brihati*, *Kantakari* and *Gokshura*) or with two *Sthira* and mixed with sugar can be given in the non-availability of breast milk. Breast milk completely satisfies an infant's nutritional and fluid needs for the first six months.

Table 1: Properties of different Ksheera

Ksheera	Properties
<i>Gavya Ksheera</i> ¹⁴	<i>Madhura rasa, Sheeta veerya, Mridu, Snigdha Bahala, Guru, Manda, Prasanna, acts as Rasayana and Ojo vardhaka.</i>
<i>Aja Ksheera</i> ¹⁵	<i>Kashaya Madhura rasa, Laghu Guna, Sheeta veerya, Malasangraha, cures Raktapitta, Atisara, Kshaya, Kasa, and Jwara.</i>
<i>Mahisha Ksheera</i> ¹⁶	<i>Guru guna, Sheeta Veerya, Mandagnikaraka, Sneha, cures Anidra</i>
<i>Ushtra Ksheera</i> ¹⁷	<i>Ruksha, Ushna veerya, Lavana, Laghu, cures Vata kaphaja rogas, Anaha, Krimi, Shotha, Arshas</i>
<i>Aavika Ksheera</i> ¹⁸	<i>Ushna Veerya, Kapha pitta karaka, causes Hikka, Shwasa</i>
<i>Ashwa Ksheera</i> ¹⁹	<i>Ushna Veerya, Bala vardhaka, Stairyakara, cures Shakhagata Vata, Madhura Amla lavana rasa, Ruksha Ushna Laghu Guna</i>
<i>Maanushi Ksheera</i> ²⁰	<i>Vata pitta Raktaja vikara, Akshiroga, Abhigata</i>
<i>Hasti Ksheera</i> ²¹	<i>Balya, Guru, Stairyakara</i>

- The general properties²² of Ksheera are *Madhura Rasa, Guru, Pichila, Snigdha, Shlakshana, Sara, Satmya, Mridu, Satmya*
- It is *Preenana, Brimhana, Vrishya, Medhya, Balya, Jeevaniya, Shramahara, Deepaniya, Pathya* and *Satmya*.
- It is indicated in *Shwasa, Kasa, Raktapitta, Trishna, Pandu, Amlapitta, Gulma, Shosha, Udara, Atisara, Jwara, Daha, Shwayathu, Yonivikara, Shukravikara, Gratita Purisha, Vatapitta vikara*.

Ksheera as Rasayana:

Stanya is the *Upadhatu* of *Rasadhatu*, which is capable of *Prinana* for all seven *dhatu*s and other body entities, similarly, *Stanya* does nourishment of the baby. *Stanya* is *Satmya, Rasayana* and results in *Drdopachita Gaatra, reduces Meda* and able to subside tiredness.²³ The properties of *Goksheera* are *Madhura rasa, Sheetaviryra, Mridu, Snigdha, Bahala, Shlakshana, Guru, Manda* and *Prasanna* qualities. These ten qualities are like *Ojas*. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned that “*Sarvada Sarva Bhavanam Samanyam Vriddhikaranam*”²⁴ which means by consuming any *Dravyas* possessing similar properties in terms of *Dravya, Guna* and *Karma* are always increased or enhanced. *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned the use of “*Swayonidravaya Prayoga*” in *Dhatu Kshayaavastha* which means that any substance possessing similar qualities as that of *Dhatu* is going to increase that *Dhatu* by consuming the *Dravyas* of the same qualities. By use of *Goksheera*, which in turn helps to increase *Ojas* in our

body which are having similar properties. Thus, from the above points, one can understand that *Goksheera* acts as *Rasayana*. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned that *Godughdha* possessing ten *gunas* are like the *gunas* of *Ojas*, thus it leads to an increase in *Ojas*, which is very essential *Dhatu* in our body²⁵. *Goksheera* is considered as *Shrestha Rasayana* as it is the best among all *Jeevaniya Padarthas*. Among all, *Goksheera* is considered as best *Rasayana dravya* as it can be used as a dietary supplement for all age groups, and it is considered as a balanced diet. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Goksheera* is *Alpabhishyandhi*²⁶ and whereas according to *Acharya Charaka*²⁷, *Goksheera* is considered as *Jeevaniya* and performs *Ojovardhana* and *Rasayana* actions.

Milk acts as an important source of a diet in children as it contains nutrients to help in the development of bones, regulate blood pressure and maintain a healthy weight. Milk contains essential nutrients which help to support a child's growing body, including high-quality protein, calcium, potassium, Vitamin D, Vitamin B12, Vitamin A, Phosphorus, Vitamin B2 and Vitamin B3. Children with lower levels of vitamin D especially during the younger years will suffer a disease i.e., rickets and poor growth. Cow's milk is one of the best ways to replenish this vitamin and plays a key role in keeping the child healthy²⁸. Colostrum in breastmilk contains antibodies called immunoglobulins. These immunoglobulins are passed from mother to baby. They are kind of proteins. Breast milk contains the immunoglobulins IgA, IgM, IgG, and secretory versions

of IgM (SIgM) and IgA (SIgA). Colostrum contains a high amount of SIgA, which protects the baby by forming a protective layer in the nose, throat and digestive system²⁹. Milk from grass-fed cows is known to have higher omega-three fatty acids content (particularly C 18:3 Linolenic acid) and higher conjugated linoleic acid content than cow feeds on supplementary feeds. The milk has higher levels of vitamin E and beta-carotene. Also contains higher natural vitamin D due to cows' exposure to sunlight. Milk and dairy products from grass-fed cows are not only great sources of nutrition but are also common for people to consume probiotics and prebiotics. These help in boosting immunity by promoting the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut. A healthy interaction between the immunity system and gut microbiota is crucial for the maintenance of health in our body³⁰.

Ghritha

The synonyms of ghee are *Ghritha*, *Ghritham* and *Sarpi*. The Properties of *Ghritha* are

- *Rasa: Madhura rasa*
- *Guna: Snigdha, Mridu, Shlakshana, Guru*
- *Veerya: Sheeta Veerya*
- *Vipaka: Madura Vipaka*

- *Doshagnatha: Tridosha shamaka*

According to *Acharya Charaka*^{31,32}, *Ghritha* is *Pittanilaharam, Rasa, Shukra* and *Ojo hitam, Niravapanam, Mrdukaram, Swaravarna prasadanam, Kapha Medo Vivardhanam, Smruthi Budhi vardhakam* and *Agni vardhakam*. According to *Acharya Sushrutha*³³, *Ghritha* is *Madhura, Saumya, Guru* and *Mrdu Guna, Sheeta veerya, Anabhishtyandi, Snehana, Vatapitta Prashamana, Agni deepana, Smriti medha Kanthi Swara Lavanya Saukaumarya Oja Teja Balakara, Ayushya, Vrushya, Chakshushya, Shleshma Vardhaka, Papma, Alakshmi Prashamana, Vishahara* and *Rakshoghna*, According to *Ashtanga Hridaya*³⁴, *Ghritha* possess *Dhi, Smruthi, Medha, Agni, Bala, Ayu, Shukra-Chakshushya, Kanthi swararthi-nam, Saukaumarya, Sheeta, Vayasthapanam, Praja, Snehanamuttamam, Sahasraveeryam, and Kar-masahasrakrut*.

Purana Ghritha-

- According to *Acharya Charaka*³⁵, *Ghritha* which is preserved for ten years is referred to as *Purana Ghritha*. It has *Gunas* such as *Sara, Katu Vipaka, Tridosahara, Katu Tikta* in *Rasa, Ugra Gandha, Laksha-Rasa-Nibam, Sheeta, Medhya, Chedi, and Teekshna*. It alleviates *Mada, Apasmara, Murcha, Shosha, Unmada, Visha, Jwara* and *Shoola* in *Yoni, karna* and *Shiras*.
- *Acharya Vagbata* particularly mentions the *Vrana Shodhana* and *Ropana* action for *Purana Ghritha*.

Prapurana Ghritha

- The *Ghritha* which is preserved for more than ten years is referred to as *Prapurana Ghritha*.
- This *Ghritha* possess properties which are like that of *Laksha rasa*, which is *Sheeta Veerya, Graha dosha shamaka, budhi vardhaka* and is excellent for *Virechana*.³⁶

Ghritha as Rasayana:

The properties of *Ghritha* are *Madhura, Snigdha, Guru Guna* and *Sheeta Veerya* which helps to increase *Agni deepana* which helps in *Pachana* or digestion of *Ahara rasa*. This leads to nourishing the foremost *Dhatu* i.e., *Rasa Dhatu* and all other *Dhatu*s. Therefore, when all *dhatu*s are nourished, the essence of *Saptadhatu* i.e., *Ojas* also gets enhanced. Thus, *Ghritha* acts as *Ajasrika Rasayana* which yields *Ayuprakashya, Swara Varna prasadana, Medhya, Chakshushya, Shukravardhaka* etc. Ghee is a good source of energy for children. It contains saturated fatty acids, which provide energy as well as stamina. It helps in brain development. It also contains mono-saturated Omega-3s, fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, large quantities of butyrate, a fatty acid that has been linked to an immune system response for inflammation management. Ghee also improves gut health, which is directly linked to building immunity³⁷. Ghee helps in improving digestion, increases memory and intellect, improves skin and eye health along with that, acts as a lubricant for joints. As it is a good source of butyrate fatty acids which is essential for preventing diseases of the digestive system.

DISCUSSION

Rasayana dravya is digested by *Jatharagni* which is followed by *Butagni* and *Dhatuvagni*. During *Sara Kitta Vibhajana*, *Ahara Rasa* is produced along with *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas*. This qualitative *Ahara Rasa* produces pure *Rasa Dhatu*, which then continues the chain of production of other *Raktadi dhatus* with the help of respective *Dhatwagni* up to *Ojas* formation. This well-formed *dhatus* nourishes the body according to its intake. *Rasayana dravya* also influences *Ojas*, which increases *Shareera Bala*.

- At the level of *Dhatu*, *Rasayanadravyas* acts by improving the nutritional values of *Poshaka rasa*. Probably *Rasayana dravyas* are having *Madhura*, *Guru*, *Snigdha* and *Sheeta gunas* which act as *Rasayana* by promoting the nutritional value of *Rasa* which in turn helps in obtaining *Dhatus* having best qualities.
 - At the level of *Agni*, *Rasayanadravyas* acts by improving digestion and creating the excellence of *Saptadhatu*.
 - At the level of *Srotas*, *Rasayanadravyas* acts by cleaning and activation the microcirculatory channel that is *Srotoshuddhi* leading to improve microcirculation.
- The properties of *Ksheera* are like *Ojas*, hence it is responsible for *Ojovardhana*. Thus, it increases the *Bala* and *Vyadhikshamatva* of an individual and helps in attaining longevity.

Similarly, *Ghrita* is also *Ojo vardhaka* as it is *Ag-nideepaka* and helps in *Pachana* and proper formation of *Ahara Rasa*, hence helping in the nourishment of *Rasaadi Dhatus*. *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned the use of *Sheetodaka*, *Ksheera*, *Madhu*, and *Sarpi* separately or in combination having *Rasayana* action as well as *Ayusthapana* action. The important character of *Ghrita* is '*Samskarasya Anuvartanam*'³⁸ i.e., power to assimilate the *Gunas* of other substances effectively with which it is processed. Also, *Ghrita* does not give up its properties even if it is mixed with substances possessing other properties. It improves digestive power and other qualities are related to milk. *Ghrita Kalpana* plays a key role in the treatment of various diseases. So *Ghrita* consumption should be

done daily. By following *Ajasrika Rasayana* i.e., consuming *Ghrita* and *Ksheera* one can prevent and cure disease and promote health. It acts as an immune modulator as well as the best diet.

CONCLUSION

According to *Ayurveda*, preservation of health and manifestation of disease mainly depends on how a person maintains quality and quantity of food along with lifestyle, psychological status, and effect of environmental conditions. Thus, quality and quantity of food play a major role in the maintenance of health with due consideration of the status of *Agni*, suitability of individuals depending on *Prakriti*. This can be achieved through *Ajasrika Rasayana*, by giving suitable healthy food. Through *Rasayana Chikitsa*, one can influence the *Dhatu*, *Agni* and *Srotas* in our body. Thus, *Rasayana* is a unique treatment in influencing the fundamental aspects of the body. By proper intake of *Rasayana Dravya*, one can bring about proper growth and improvement of *Sapta dhatu*, which ultimately increase *Ojas*. Thus, there is the regeneration of cells and body tissues which leads to an increase of *Ojas*. As we know in this developing world, with increasing pollution, improper lifestyle, intake of fast foods, unhygienic living conditions, improper food habits; the chance of occurrence of infectious diseases is also increasing. Children are easily exposed to various disease-causing agents and thus gets affected badly. This leads to exposure to disease at an early age; can affect the whole life and sometimes results in chronic disorders. Thus, the development of a strong immune system is important. It can be achieved through *Rasayana*, and it helps to maintain a strong and vital immune system. *Rasayana Chikitsa* is used as a preventive remedy in children since it enhances immunity and thus protects them from various infectious diseases. *Ayurveda* described *Rasayana* for *Balaroga* with great care since *Rasayana Chikitsa* may become harmful in children if not used properly but *Ajasrika Rasayana* is an exemption for this. *Ajasrika Rasayana* is the best method to adopt in daily routine as there is no need for any *Shodhana* process. Thus, consuming *Ghrita* and *Ksheera*

are considered a simple method of practising *Rasayana*, which helps to restore immunity naturally.

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